

Wyre Forest District CouncilRural Economic Strategy: 2008 - 2014**Responses to Consultation**

<b>Respondent</b>	<b>Summary of Comments Received</b>	<b>Head of Planning Health &amp; Environment Response</b>	<b>Head of Planning Health &amp; Environment Recommendation</b>
	<b><i>Introduction &amp; Background Section</i></b>		
Environment Agency	Reference to the need for a strong evidence base is supported	Agree	Development of evidence base will be part of Action Plan.
Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council	Chaddesley Corbett Parish is still essentially an agricultural area and any intimation of it becoming attractive to other commercial users is likely to distress residents. The former residents with agricultural employment have now largely been replaced and most consider the Parish a highly comfortable residential area. There are some well supported businesses, many social and recreational community organisations catering for a high proportion of the population. There is good evidential support of a positive image and through the Parish Council the Friends of the Village and other articulate organisations the Community exercises opinions and makes a clear contribution to District and County Councils as well as other local and regional organisations.	Noted	Strategy proposals reflect comments.
Destination Worcestershire	If the intention is to provide a document for users other than local authority, it would probably be worthwhile having a plain language "Why do we need an economic strategy?" introduction	Strategy is "public sector" user focussed The "Introduction", "Background" and "Context" address this issue	No further action proposed

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West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum	The nature of the West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum is such that it represents a wide cross-section of stakeholders and interests. All are interested in seeking assurance that Wyre Forest District Council and its partners are committed to ensuring that the Rural Economic Strategy takes account of any specific needs and circumstances of rural areas as well as overall district performance.	Noted	The adoption of the Strategy and subsequent Action Plan should give the assurances sought.
West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum	We presume that opportunity will be given for the rural proofing of “the other strategies”, particularly with respect to rural-urban interdependencies.	Noted	Rural proofing of other relevant Strategies to be included in the Action Plan
	<b><i>Vision</i></b>		
Destination Worcestershire	The vision is written very much in the present tense, so have you already achieved this, in which case is it a “vision”? I would perhaps have expected something along the lines of “By 2012 WFD will be .....	Visions can be written in the “present tense” i.e. to show now, “where we are” in the future.	No further action proposed
Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council	The community is making an active contribution to the sustainability of Chaddesley Corbett Parish. The Council has published a Parish Plan and a Design Statement, and will participate in the widest range of consultative programmes to seek out and understand the opportunities, both within and externally, to ensure the well-being of residents and their contribution to the local economy.	Noted	No further action proposed
Chamber of Commerce	The above (Vision) seems to be more a description of the District as it is, rather than a vision for the future.	Visions can be written in the “present tense” i.e. to show now, “where we are” in the future.	No further action proposed

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West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum	We would ask the authors of the draft Rural Economic Strategy to consider strengthening the Vision through aligning it with UK SD (Sustainable Development) principles at the outset.	The refers to the principals of Sustainable Development	No further action required
West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum	A series of underlying principles (not dissimilar to those listed – although these are later alluded to as the “strategic aims”) backing up the vision could provide significant drivers for ensuring the needs and aspirations of rural areas are adequately addressed as the strategy rolls out.	Noted. The Strategy’s Vision, the Strategic Aims and the future Action Plan are considered to address this	No further action required at this stage
West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum	Aligning with “Connecting to Success” the West Midlands Regional Strategy is also important in terms of a clear commitment to the reduction in carbon emissions and becoming a more sustainable region. Rural areas have a particularly significant contribution to make in moving towards a low carbon economy, in terms of the production of renewable energy, in carbon sequestration and in developing new technologies.	Noted	No further action required
West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum	We would also advocate supporting urban and rural renaissance, including a commitment to continued rural proofing of implementation; recognising the responsibility on all to “think rural”, and a commitment to disaggregate monitoring data at urban/rural levels whenever possible.	Agree	Rural proofing of other relevant Strategies is to be included in the Action Plan

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	<b>SWOT Analysis</b>		
Destination Worcestershire	I don't think you've mentioned HEFF (Heart of England Fine Foods) as an opportunity to address some of the agricultural produce supply chain issues, there's also some small potential from a programme Destination Worcestershire will be running for three years from mid 2008 as part of the regional RDPE Tourism programme.	Noted – Now included an “Opportunity” and to be included in the Action Plan	To be included in the Action Plan
	As part of the regional programme there will also be a small grants programme – Rural Enterprise Grant (REG) AWM have developed this grant as part of RDPE package to reflect the demand from farmers and rural micro-businesses for a simple capital grant scheme , which is easy to access and allows for investment in their businesses (rather than collaborative ventures). There will also be some funding for micro businesses and tourism promotion	Noted – Now included an “Opportunity” and to be included in the Action Plan	To be included in the Action Plan
Environment Agency	The lack of potential investment in the environment and rural infrastructure is supported as a weakness. This investment is necessary to provide sustainable development and to maintain and enhance the natural environment free from pollution and risk of flooding.	Noted	No further action required
	The use of biomass for fuel should be treated with caution to ensure that its benefits outweigh any possible adverse impacts on people, places and businesses.	Noted	Strategy proposes to investigate whether a role exists bio fuel/biomass production

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	We support the opening up of culverts both for the biodiversity, amenity and the flood risk reduction benefits.	Agree Strategy to include the issue under "Place Objectives"	No further action required
	It should be noted that changed regimes in water course management and the use of water retreat in selected areas of main rivers, although cited as a threat, can also provide opportunities for increased biodiversity as well as reduced flood risk in other areas, and, can improve wider cost effectiveness.	Agree Strategy to include issue as an "Opportunity" as well as a "Threat"	No further action required
	Climate change is listed as a threat and the potential impacts need to be further investigated and its impacts monitored. It may also provide opportunities. Actions will need to be taken to reduce any adverse impact and to take advantage of any new opportunities.	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment.	No further action required
Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council	There is nothing surprising in this very comprehensive SWOTS list.	Noted	No further action required
Chamber of Commerce	I think that this needs a careful review to remove duplication and overlap, such as the threats of "the ageing population" and "demographic change". The two overlap.	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment	No further action required
	Some are not clear. For example the "Lack of entrants of young people" might refer again to demographic change or it could mean not enough entrants to further or higher education or to local employment.	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment	No further action required

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	Under opportunities, no mention is made to the existence of the Central Technology Belt. This is one of the key mechanisms for the development of new knowledge based businesses and the transfer of technology and should be an important partner for the District.	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment	No further action required
	While demographic change features under threats – correctly – it also offers opportunities as well. Older people can be encouraged to contribute their knowledge and skills to the local economy, not always in the way that they have done during the majority of their working life.	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment	No further action required
Natural England	The “SWOT” Analysis in Section 3 is welcomed as a clear and concise way of presenting the various considerations. The inclusion of environmental factors in this is welcomed. This section would be further completed by the inclusion of bullets around ‘resilience to climate change’ and ‘condition of environmental assets’.	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment	No further action required
West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum	We would ask the authors to consider annexing this section:	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment	No further action required
West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum	This is a highly detailed eclectic and predictable mix of issues which, no doubt, reflects the scoping exercise(s) that was/were carried out prior to the development of the draft strategy. Extreme care must be taken to ensure that these lists have integrity and where possible can be backed up by a sound evidence base,	The SWOT analysis gives an objective “snapshot” of the rural areas. Any actions undertaken as a result of issues raised will be backed up by sound evidence base.	No further action required at this stage

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	<b><i>Comments on Aims</i></b>		
Destination Worcestershire	These are the AWM aims or closely related, so makes sense, although possibly doesn't generate a great deal of "ownership" with the non local authority community.	Noted	No further action required stage
Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council	It is difficult to convince the community that this approach to rural regeneration in Chaddesley Corbett Parish will be compliant with its Parish Plan and Design Statement ie to meet the reasonable expectations of the community and the pressure on service providers to maintain and improve facilities.	The Parish Plan and Design Statement together with the District's Rural Strategy and subsequent Action Plan are all aimed at improving services and facilities	No further action required at this stage
Chamber of Commerce	<p>Within Business I would suggest the following</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• a stable economic base with sustainable new and traditional employment opportunities</li> <li>• An environment that welcomes and supports new business formation and diversification and where innovation is encouraged.</li> <li>• Business support is provided through an easily accessible and business friendly range of organisations in the public, private and voluntary sectors that are flexible and willing to work together.</li> </ul>	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment	No further action required
	<p>Within People I would suggest</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• improved access to, and choice of, quality learning and skills provision open to people of all ages</li> <li>• Employers in all sectors and all sizes are encouraged to recognise the contribution that older people can make to the workforce and to be willing to invest in appropriate training to support them.</li> </ul>	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment	No further action required

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West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum	We would recommend a look at the West Midlands Rural Delivery Framework	Noted The Rural Priorities for the Region are considered to be reflected in the Strategy's Aims	No further action required
	<b><i>Comments on Objectives</i></b>		
Destination Worcestershire	Should WFDC make some sort of commitment under "Place" to maintaining and developing public infrastructure? Eg: public toilets, signage	Noted – Some infrastructure issues are not just WFDC but County Council responsibility	Issues to be included as part of the Action Plan
	Under powerful voice potentially have something along the lines of "Working with existing partnerships such as Destination Worcestershire"	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment	No further action required
	You don't seem to mention other initiatives that might help address some of the issues identified, whilst I know the names of these change as frequently as the wind, it might be worth either referring to "national skills initiatives" for example or skills for life / train to gain etc	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment	No further action required
Environment Agency	It would be advantageous to extend the paragraph on conserving natural resources by stating "conserving and enhancing natural resources" and "biological conservation and enhancement of natural resources".	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment	No further action required
	It is important to manage the implementation of the business objectives to ensure that they all contribute to the environmental (Place) objectives and do not produce conflict.	Agree The objectives will be implemented through the Action Plan	The objectives will be implemented through the Action Plan



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Chaddesley Corbett Parish Council	A clear articulation of the aims and objectives as they will or might affect the Chaddesley Corbett Parish will be essential and to overcome fear of a suburban approach to regeneration it seems sensible to arrange a plan for open consultation.	The Chaddesley Corbett's Parish Plan and Design Statement together with the District's Rural Strategy and subsequent Action Plan should address this concern	No further action required at this stage
	A schedule of activity will be welcome to include meetings and dates for the staged implementation of decisions taken and actions required.	Agree A schedule of dates will be included as part of the Action Plan	No further action required at this stage
	Finally as with any proposal there will need to be targets and measurable results. Most solutions cost money and it will be essential to put a cost to the programme before any agreement to commit to the project could be encouraged.	Agree Each proposal will need to be resourced and this will be included as part of the Action Plan	No further action required at this stage
Chamber of Commerce	In Business I suggest the following change:- Encouraging innovation and entrepreneurship in people of all ages. In People I suggest:- Continually developing and retaining the skills of all people of all ages.	Agree Strategy to reflect this comment	No further action required
Natural England	The role of 'green' businesses in the future of the District could be clarified. Examples of green businesses might include the production of solar panels or recycling and composting plants. If green businesses are considered desirable support should be presented in the Objectives.	The Strategy is for the development of all types of businesses. "Green" businesses are included within the overall definition	No further action required at this stage

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West Midlands Rural Affairs Forum	Either at this stage or later, indicative actions could be listed making it easy to translate across to the accompanying Action Plan.	Indicative actions are to be encompassed with the Action Plan	Issues to be included as part of the Action Plan
Citizens Advice Bureau	We have now had details of all the Post Offices earmarked for closure and I do not think that we will be able to do much to prevent them but I think that we may be able to pressure them into ensuring that the basic level of facilities such as free ATM machines and access to Paypoint/ Pay Zone area available at all outlets. This is clearly an issue if people in rural communities have to go to a number of different places to access services which they are used to finding in one place	Propose to include issue within the Action Plan and write to Post Office Ltd with proposal	Issue to be included as part of the Action Plan
Natural England	The associations between the environment, economy and society are fundamental to sustainable development and this relationship should be explained.	Agree	Sustainable Development principals to be included within the Strategy.
	This Strategy should clarify the interrelationships between the natural environment and the individual components presented and set environmental standards which future development must adhere to.	Established Planning policies and Building regulations Planning Policies set the environmental standards for future developments	No further action required