

**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**CABINET**  
**19<sup>th</sup> FEBRUARY 2009**

**‘Connecting Kidderminster’ Regeneration Prospectus  
Adoption Document**

<b>OPEN</b>	
<b>SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME</b>	Multi Theme
<b>CORPORATE PLAN AIM</b>	Multiple
<b>KEY PRIORITY</b>	District-wide Regeneration
<b>CABINET MEMBER</b>	Councillor Stephen Clee
<b>HEAD OF SERVICE</b>	Head of Planning, Health and Environment
<b>CONTACT OFFICER</b>	Ken Harrison Ext 2557 Ken.harrison@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
<b>APPENDICES</b>	<b>Appendix 1</b> – ‘Connecting Kidderminster’ Adoption Document <b>Appendix 2</b> – Stage 2 Consultation – summary of responses from the public <b>Appendix 3</b> – Stage 2 Consultation – summary of responses from stakeholder consultees. <i>The appendices to this report have been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request. (</i>

**1. Summary**

- 1.1 To inform Cabinet of progress on the development of the Kidderminster Prospectus and consider the adoption of a strategy set out in the ‘adoption document’ to take forward the initiative to implementation.

**2. RECOMMENDATION**

**The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE:**

- 3.2 That the ‘adoption document’ at Appendix 1 to this report be recommended to Council for adoption as Council Policy;
- 3.3 That the recommended responses of the Head of Planning, Health and Environment set out in Appendices 2 and 3 be approved; and
- 3.4 Delegated authority be given to the Head of Planning, Health and Environment to finalise the launch material.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.2 Early last year the District Council launched public consultation on a Scoping Paper to prepare a Regeneration Prospectus for Kidderminster which will highlight the town's challenges and opportunities. This Paper generated considerable interest both locally and within the wider region and helped to secure additional funding support from Advantage West Midlands, Worcestershire County Council and more recently British Waterways. This support has led to the creation of a small project Steering Group and has enabled the commissioning of supporting studies in design and economic appraisal.
- 3.3 Taylor Young have been commissioned to prepare architectural illustrations and master planning frameworks to graphically demonstrate the potential scale of change. Amion Consulting are undertaking an economic appraisal and considering the deliverability of emerging ideas. Crucially, Amion will identify possible headline outcomes in terms of jobs created or safeguarded and potential levels of inward investment for key sites. Their preliminary findings are appended to the draft adoption document (see appendix 1).
- 3.4 In November a second stage of consultation was launched with a document furnished with images prepared by Taylor Young architects. The consultation process continued the innovative partnership with the Kidderminster Shuttle through a series of eight features. As part of the process, a delegation of students from King Charles High School attended a workshop event in Churchfields.
- 3.5 A significant level of public response was generated during this second stage of consultation which was assisted by the graphic presentation of clear proposals for major sites and opportunities.
- 3.6 Roadshows were held throughout the town including the new Morrisons where a joint event was held with the Carpet Museum Trust and where some 1,500 leaflets were distributed to interested shoppers. Other events included the Swan Centre, market stall, Radford Avenue and Dowles Road with a permanent exhibition also on display in the library. Presentations to community groups included the Kidderminster Civic Society.
- 3.7 Responses received indicated an overwhelming supportive of the initiative, although one or two concerns were also highlighted by respondents; the feedback is summarised in Section 5 below.
- 3.8 The Regeneration and Enterprise Committee considered this report at their meeting on the 18<sup>th</sup> February 2009 and their recommendations will be reported at the Cabinet meeting.

**4. CONTENT**

- 4.1 With a number of new ideas generated through the consultation, the Head of Planning Health and Environment's comments at Appendices 2 and 3 help to explain how the various consultation responses will be taken on board as the initiative is prepared for launch.
- 4.2 The proposed key messages together with the main site and project opportunities are clearly set out in the strategy of the adoption document. They will form the main structure underpinning the final publications.
- 4.3 The next stage of the process involves preparing the launch documentation and electronic media including web enabled publications and a film which are explained further in the adoption document. This will involve finalising the images and content of the Prospectus brochure and is part of the Strategy contained in Appendix 1 to this report.

**5. CONSULTATION FEEDBACK**

- 5.1 Formal responses have been received from both the general public and statutory consultees. These responses are summarised at Appendices 2&3 together with the comments and recommendations of the Head of Planning, Health and Environment.
- 5.2 The consultation responses received from both statutory and public consultees are generally very supportive of the concepts put forward in the Prospectus, with many statutory bodies expressing interest and stressing the importance of working in partnership with WFDC to achieve these goals.
- 5.3 However, there were a number of themes and issues that consistently emerged from the responses received. The summary of responses in Appendix 1 has split the individual comments in to such theme groups. The main topics included:
- Canal/Canalside Development – utilising the canal, creating a more attractive environment, creating development that fronts the canal, marina and mooring facilities, attracting boaters.
  - Open Spaces – support for more open spaces in the town; support for Bull Ring and Town Hall concepts.
  - Transport – the need for a more integrated transport network, the importance of having an efficient public transport system, concerns about the effect of new development on congestion in the town, criticisms of the existing bus station, lack of parking, support for Hoo Brook Link Road.
  - Ring Road/Subways – mix of support for the removal of the subways and introduction of surface crossing, although there was some opposition arising from a fear of creating congestion.
  - Town Economy – concern over the future of Worcester Street and filling the vacant units, the future of the Horsefair shopping area.

- Evening Economy/Entertainment – the need to bring people and life into the town in the evenings, the need for more restaurants/bars/cafes.
- Employment – Importance of the British Sugar site, the need to explore and target growth industries, the need for the right facilities to attract and retain business.
- Community, Skills & Learning – Importance of a skilled workforce, partnership working with education institutions, role of the voluntary and community sector in regeneration.

5.4 The schedule at Appendix 2 includes individual responses from members of the public but these are kept anonymous as it was not made clear to respondents that responses would be made public. The statutory consultee respondents included the Learning & Skills Council; Worcestershire County Council; British Waterways and others.

5.5 All of the comments have been distilled and summarised in Appendices 2&3. In terms of the comments and recommendations of the Head of Planning, Health and Environment, most of these can be categorised in one of the following ways:

- a) No further action required
- b) Agree – further consideration to be given as part of detailed development

## **6. NEXT STEPS**

The key next steps in the project are listed in Section 6 of Appendix 1 to this report as:

- a) Completion of background technical studies including Amion and Taylor Young work informed by consultation responses;
- b) Complete the design and publication of printed documents and electronic media including film footage;
- c) Hold the launch event & action planning event to develop a Business Plan;
- d) Implementation including establishing a partnership to deliver the Prospectus; and
- e) Continue to support the development of key projects and initiatives through the statutory planning system.
- f) Take on board the Prospectus as a material planning consideration when deciding planning applications and reviewing planning policy.

**7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The costs of preparing the Kidderminster Regeneration Prospectus will be met from existing budgets with the assistance of Advantage West Midlands, Worcestershire County Council and British Waterways. Implementation will be considered as part of the next steps.

**8. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS**

- 8.1 There are no legal or policy implications arising from this report.

**9. RISK MANAGEMENT**

- 9.1 There are no direct risk management implications arising for the Council from this report. However, a failure to deliver the Prospectus in line with shared expectations could serve to undermine investor confidence in the local area. Furthermore, it could also inhibit the rejuvenation of the local economy once the current economic downturn is reversed.

**10. CONCLUSION**

- 10.1 The development of a regeneration prospectus for Kidderminster has gained momentum and enthusiasm both locally and across the region. Following two stages of public consultation the final brochure and launch material will now be put together in order to provide a basis for taking the initiative forward.

**11. CONSULTEES**

- Head of Community and Partnership Services
- Head of Property and Operational Services
- Head of Legal and Democratic Services

**12. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Kidderminster Economic Development & Regeneration Strategy, 2005
- 'Connecting Kidderminster' – Scoping Paper, January 2008
- 'Connecting Kidderminster' – Consultation Document, November 2008
- Wyre Forest District Local Development Framework: Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan, Issues and Options Paper, January 2009