

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
DECISION NOTICE

COUNCILLOR MRS M B ASTON

**CABINET MEMBER WITH RESPONSIBILITY FOR HOUSING, HEALTH
AND RURAL AFFAIRS**

SCRUTINY OF DECISIONS OF INDIVIDUAL CABINET MEMBERS

In accordance with Part 4 of the Council's Constitution Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules and Standing Order B4, any item on this decision notice may be scrutinised by the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee if it is 'called in' by any three non-Cabinet Members and the Chairman of the relevant Policy and Scrutiny Panel, or by three members of the Cabinet Scrutiny Committee and any member of the relevant Policy and Scrutiny Panel.

The deadline for 'calling in' this decision is

Councillors wishing to 'call in' a decision on this notice should contact Heather Jones, Acting Scrutiny Officer, on 01562-732733, e-mail: Heather.Jones@wyreforestdc.gov.uk

(Title) <u>Regional Housing Strategy consultation 2005</u>	Date of Decision: 23 June 2003
---	--------------------------------

DECISION: To agree joint and Wyre Forest District Council responses to the Regional Housing Strategy consultation process

Reason for Decision: *To ensure that WFDC fully contributes its views to the development of the forthcoming Regional Housing Strategy*

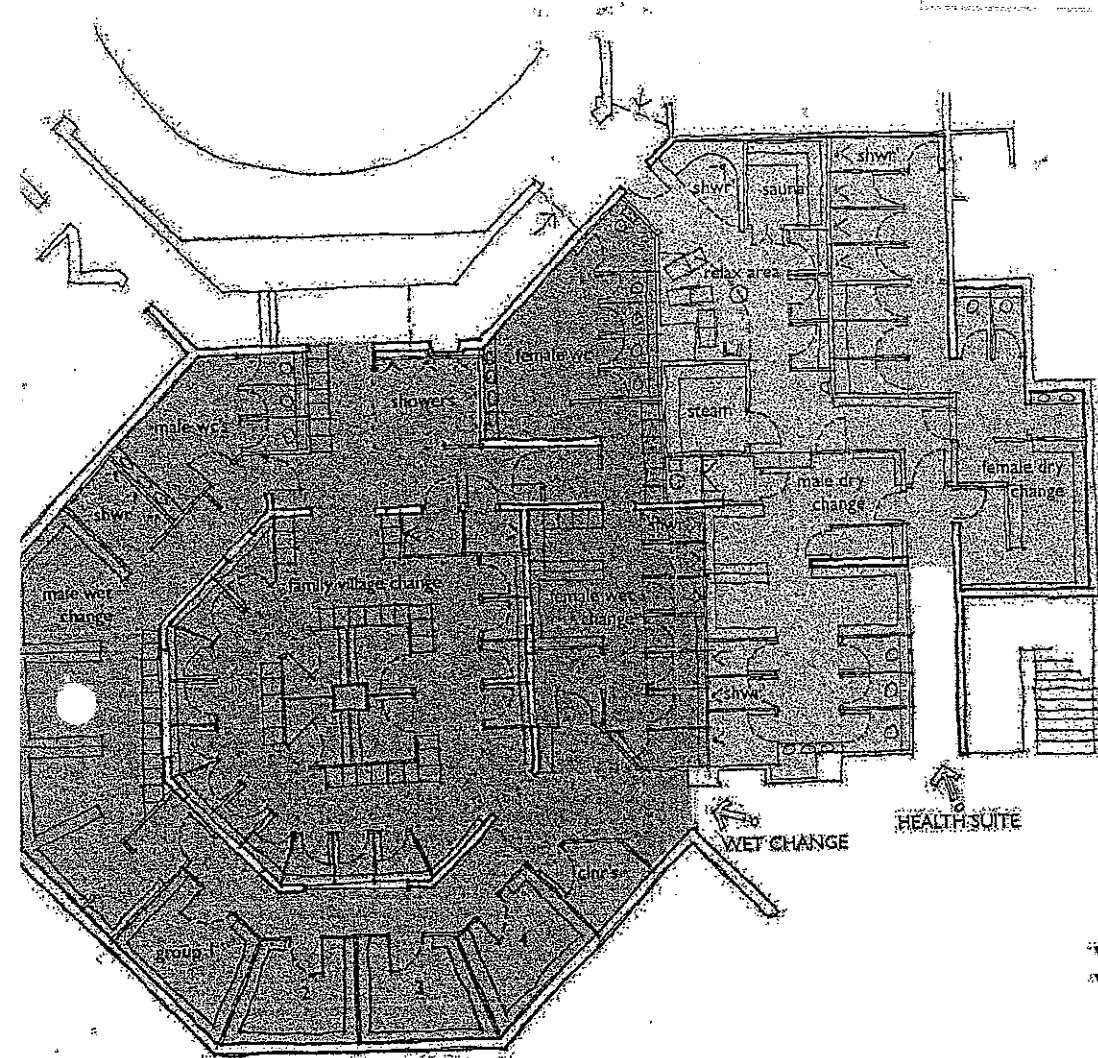
Note to Originating Officer

If this decision is not called in by the date specified above, the agreed action may be taken after that date. You will be notified of any call-in.



Manager at CLACS

WYRE FOREST LEISURE CENTRE 16.1.



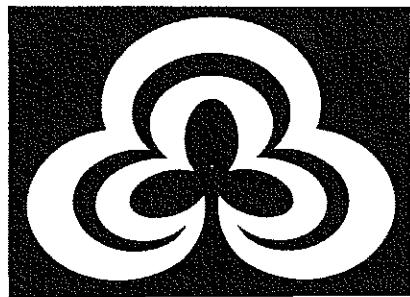
DC LEISURE MANAGEMENT

WYRE FOREST LEISURE CENTRE
WET CHANGE REFURBISHMENT
OPTION ONE

POZZONI DESIGN GROUP



1



**WYRE FOREST
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

THE CABINET

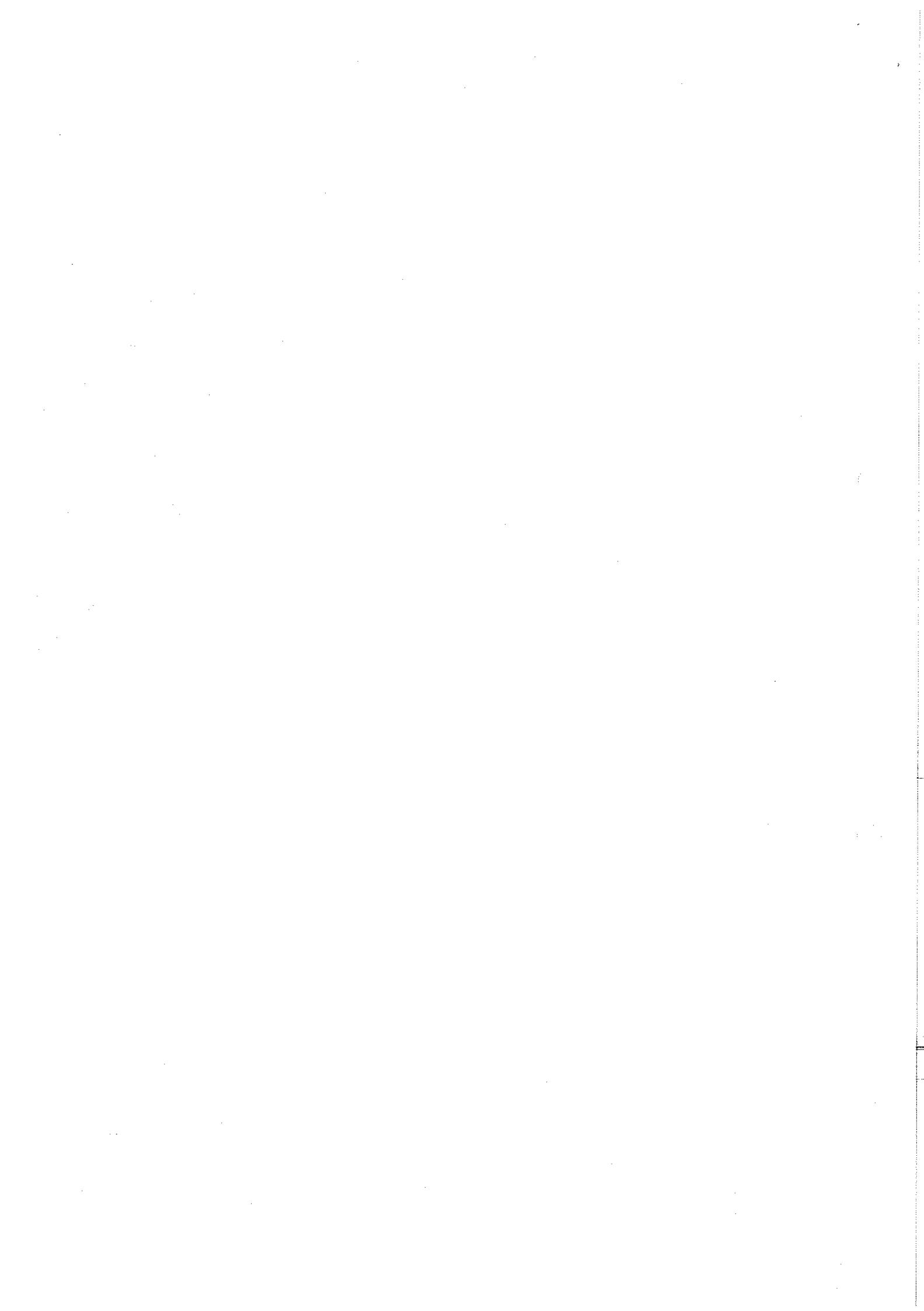
A G E N D A

Date: Thursday 30th June 2005

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Venue: Chaddesley Corbett Village Hall
Chaddesley Corbett
Nr. Kidderminster

Agenda Item No. 7.3.
Housing Benefits - Overpayments Policy - Update
Appendix





**HOUSING BENEFITS
OVERPAYMENTS POLICY**

JUNE 2005

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

HOUSING BENEFITS OVERPAYMENTS POLICY

1. Introduction

- 1.1 Housing Benefits overpayments are established through the review of the entitlement to Benefit or in some instances the correction of an error or from the set aside of an original benefit determination.
- 1.2 An overpayment can be described as an amount of benefit which has been paid but to which there was no entitlement under the regulations. This can relate to both Housing Benefit and Council Tax Benefit, however this document will deal only with Housing Benefit overpayments. Council Tax Benefit overpayments are recovered through Council Tax bills.
- 1.3 They can occur for various reasons including claimants or landlords not giving the correct notification of change of circumstances or providing incorrect information to support a claim and delays or mistakes by the Authority.
- 1.4 The Authority receives subsidy from the Government in respect of certain types of overpayment and, therefore, it is important that overpayments are correctly classified.

2. Purpose

- 2.1 It is essential that Wyre Forest District Council demonstrates that it undertakes the administration and recovery of Housing Benefit overpayments efficiently and effectively and by doing so it
 - reduces the losses to public funds
 - provides revenue for the Authority and helps reduce the loss from overpayments.
 - deters fraud and error
 - demonstrates the Authority's commitment to accuracy and provision of a quality service to customers.
- 2.2 The aims of this policy are:
 - to be a guide to all staff involved, and
 - to set out a clear debt recovery strategy.
- 2.3 The policy will be published on the Council's website and subject to regular monitoring to ensure it remains in accordance with the approved vision for the Benefits Service.
- 2.4 At six monthly intervals, the Benefit Section will report to the Cabinet the Benefit Overpayment Debt Position. The report will analyse the debts between less than and more than 3 months old, for those debts more than 3 months a detailed position is reported of the action being taken and against target.

2.5 In line with the National BVPI's the Benefit Section will set annual targets to improve the level of recovery with the objective of reaching and maintaining recovery action equal to or greater than the top quartile BVPI for the recovery of overpayments to ensure continuous improvement. The performance is reported six monthly to the Cabinet.

3. **Scope**

3.1 This policy applies to all Council employees involved in the Benefits Service.

4. **Staffing**

4.1 The Authority has a

- Benefits Team consisting of 1 Benefit Manager, 1 Principal Benefit Officer, 5 Senior Benefit Assessors, 18 full-time equivalent Benefit Assessors, 4 Benefit Assistants, 2 Customer Service Assistants, 2 Visiting Officers and a Part-time Accounts Assessor, and an
- Investigations Team consisting of 1 Principal Fraud Investigator, 2 Senior Fraud Investigation Officers and a Part-time Administration Assistant.

4.2 The recovery of overpayments from on-going benefit is undertaken by the Benefits Assessors and the recovery of Sundry Debtor Invoices is undertaken by the Control Team comprising a Senior Benefit Assessor and 2 Benefit Assessors.

5. **Identification of Overpayments and Decisions on Recoverability**

5.1 Accurate and prompt identification of an overpayment is important in order to

- ensure that the incorrect payment of Benefit is discontinued
- maximise the chances of the successful recovery of the overpayment
- reduce the number of complaints and appeals.

5.2 In order to identify overpayments promptly the Section uses a Remote Access Terminal linked to the Benefits Agency. Details of cessation of Income Support and Income Based Jobseekers Allowance are downloaded on a daily basis.

5.3 Where possible, incoming mail which advises of a change in circumstances is identified and prioritised, with the aim to action it within eight days. It is important to establish the correct effective date of the change. If the date is not included in the original notification an attempt to contact the customer by phone will be made. If this is not successful the change in circumstances is cancelled from the date that the notification is received. A letter is then sent to the customer requesting the correct date and any necessary amendments will be made when this is received.

5.4 Overpayments are identified by the Benefits Officers and they will establish the cause of the overpayment, whether it is recoverable and from whom it should be recovered.

- 5.5 Correct decision making on whether or not there is an overpayment and whether it is recoverable is essential because
- there are consequences for the rights of claimants and other affected persons
 - the decision can affect the finances of the Authority if it is not recoverable
 - decisions made and the reasons for them can provide an indication of the levels of fraud and error against inefficiency.
- 5.6 An overpayment is recoverable generally unless it is due to an official error. However, the overpayment is recoverable where the claimant or someone acting on their behalf, or the person to whom the payment was made, could reasonably have been expected to realise that an overpayment was taking place at the time of payment or upon receipt of any notification relating to the payment.
- 5.7 An official error does not include circumstances where the claimant, or someone acting on their behalf, or the person to whom the payment was made, caused or materially contributed to the error. These circumstances are classed as claimant error, claimant fraud or third party error and are recoverable.
- 5.8 Whether a recoverable overpayment is recovered is at the discretion of the Council and regard should be given to the individual circumstances when deciding whether recovery is appropriate.
- 5.9 If a Benefit Officer is in any doubt as to whether an overpayment is recoverable such cases should be referred to the Principal Benefit Officer.
- 5.10 When the overpayment is calculated on the Benefits System the system is set to automatically note as to whether it arose as a result of an error by the customer or the Authority. If there is any fraud involved then the system must be updated to indicate this.
- 5.11 The calculation of a recoverable overpayment is arrived at by deducting the amount of benefit that should have been paid, over the period in question, from the amount of benefit actually paid. Consideration is given to any uncashed or returned cheques or underpayment of benefit and customers are given the opportunity to provide evidence of any possible underlying benefit entitlement.
- 5.12 If an overpayment is deemed irrecoverable it is to be authorised on the Claimant Information Sheet by either the Principal Benefit Officer or Benefit Manager.

6. Who to Recover the Overpayment from?

- 6.1 A recoverable overpayment can be recovered from the customer or from the person who received the payment - e.g. a landlord who has been paid direct (case law has shown that recovery can be sought from the landlord, if he has been paid direct even if the landlord did not contribute to or have knowledge of the overpayment). In coming to a decision as to who recovery will be sought from all relevant factors will be taken into account and it should be noted that such a decision can be the subject of an appeal.
- 6.2 If an overpayment has occurred due to a misrepresentation or failure to disclose a relevant fact by the customer, someone acting on their behalf or the landlord (or agent) the overpayment can be recovered from that person.

6.3 If an overpayment has been made to a deceased person recovery can be sought from their estate.

7. **Notification of an Overpayment**

7.1 The Housing Benefit regulations state that any person affected by a decision relating to an overpayment must be notified in writing e.g. if recovery is to be from a landlord, a notification must be sent to the claimant and the landlord. A notification of the decision is sent out immediately stating clearly the reasons for the overpayment (and why it is recoverable) and advising the customer of the rights of appeal/review.

7.2 All notifications are checked by the Benefit Assessors to ensure that they are accurate prior to despatch.

7.3 As an aid to staff when the notification is produced a note should be made on the Claimant Information Sheet (within Comino) as to the reasons for the overpayment, classification of overpayment and decision on recoverability.

7.4 In the event of a request for a review or appeal, legal challenge, complaint or civil proceedings it is possible for a copy of the notification to be obtained from Comino system.

8. **Recovery of the Overpayment from On-going Benefit**

8.1 Where there is still entitlement to Housing Benefit the overpayment can be recovered from the on-going Benefit and this will be arranged by the Benefits Assessors.

8.2 The rate of recovery from on-going Benefit will take into account individual circumstances.

8.3 DWP circulars state the maximum rate per week of recovery from on-going Benefit, however, this can be increased with the consent of the debtor. The Benefit Section will continue to increase this rate in accordance with future Up-rating Circulars. If the debtor is working the amount recovered from on-going benefit can be increased by calculating 50% of the disregarded part of the income.

8.4 Where the overpayment is to be recovered from on-going Benefit details of this are shown on the notification letter. If the debtor is still in receipt of Housing Benefit but there is not sufficient in payment to enable the maximum DWP recovery rate the Authority will reduce the rate of recovery per week.

8.5 In cases where a fraud has been identified and the debtor, as a result of an investigation, has admitted knowing intent the recovery rate will be the maximum allowed by the DWP.

8.6 It should be noted that recovery from on-going Benefit is counted as recovery from the claimant and not the landlord. Consequently the landlord is not a person affected and cannot apply for a revision of the decision or appeal it. The claimant must make up the shortfall in the Housing Benefit in order to avoid any rent arrears. If a rent arrears situation develops the landlord should pursue recovery on that basis.

9. **Recovery of an Overpayment, where there is no On-going Benefit**

9.1 Where there is no on-going Benefit the Control Team will decide from whom the debt will be recovered. Recovery will be from the landlord in accordance with Regulations. After 28 days has elapsed the debt will be referred to the Sundry Debtors system, an account is created for the debtor and an invoice is produced. This 28 day period is to allow for a new claim being received and helps prevent unnecessary invoices being produced. It also allows the customer time to appeal against a decision.

9.2 The Invoice will request payment within 28 days. If customers are unable to pay alternative arrangements can be made.

9.3 Methods of Payment

9.3.1 Several options for payment are available and the Council can accept payment of an overpayment by the following means:

- Cheque
- Cash
- Debit Card
- Standing Order
- Credit Card (there is a small percentage charge)

9.4 Non-payment

9.4.1 If there is no further benefit entitlement and no arrangement has been made with the debtor a Reminder Notice will be issued after 21 days of issue of the invoice. The letter states what action will be taken if the debt is not paid within the specified time.

9.4.2 If full payment is not made within 28 days of the invoice being sent appropriate action will be taken to recover the debt i.e. forwarded to the appointed Council's Debt Collecting Agency or fast track court action.

9.4.3 If the debt is forwarded to the Debt Collecting Agency, they will take action to recover the debt either in full or in instalments. The Agency will pay Wyre Forest District Council all monies collected within the month and invoice the Authority in respect of their costs against those collections. Where the Agency have been unable to secure repayment on any of the debt within 90 days, they will return the case to the Authority for further action to be considered.

9.4.4 If the debt is not paid and no arrangements to pay have been made approaching the Benefits Agency to make deductions from Income Support, Jobseekers Allowance or State Retirement Pension will be considered. The Benefits Agency will have to be satisfied that the overpayment occurred as a result of false information being given or a failure to disclose a material fact by, or on behalf of, the claimant (or by another person to whom a payment of Housing Benefit has been made). The person must be receiving a sufficient amount of one or more Benefits in order for the deductions to be made.

- 9.4.5 In addition consideration will be given to taking legal action ensuring that it is cost effective to do so in terms of the age and amount of the debt.
- 9.4.6 If the customer is no longer within the Council's area but is in receipt of Housing Benefit at another Authority a request can be made for the debt to be recovered from that Benefit.
- 9.4.7 If correspondence is returned undelivered and marked Gone Away, or similar and a forwarding address is not already known efforts will be made to find a new address for the customer. Benefit records will be checked and the landlord or agent of the property will be contacted. If a new address is found the system is amended to show the revised details and recovery will recommence at whatever stage it had reached when contact was lost.
- 9.4.8 As a last resort the debt will be written off in accordance with Council's procedures.

There are various reasons for a debt being passed for write-off including:

- The overpayment is not recoverable, including where the overpayment has arisen as a result of an official error and the customer could not reasonably have been expected to realise the overpayment was occurring.
- The amount outstanding is not economical to pursue (less than £5)
- The customer is deceased and there are insufficient funds with which to discharge the debt
- The customer cannot be traced.
- All recovery options, including legal action, have been exhausted with no result.

- 9.4.9 In the first four examples the case should be referred to the Benefits Manager for a decision to be made. In the last example the case should be prepared for write-off (i.e. a report written of the action taken on the case). Reference should be made to the Council's Financial Procedure Rules detailed in the Constitution for the amount of debt which is currently :
 - less than £1250 the report to be passed to the Head of Financial Services for a decision, and
 - for amounts greater than £1250, referred to members for the decision.In all cases, the overpayment will be actioned as per the decision made by members or relevant Officer i.e. to be written off or put for further action.

- 9.5 If agreed for write-off then the case will be actioned on the computer system, the claimant file information sheet will be noted accordingly and the case closed. If further action is required then the case will be actioned accordingly.

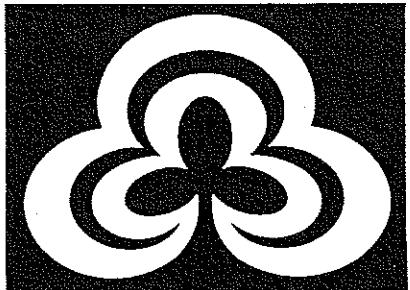
- 9.5.1 Any debts written off will be monitored on a monthly basis to identify if:
 - the claimant (having moved out of the area) returns to the Wyre Forest District
 - the claimant commences claiming Housing Benefit again.
 - In either case, then the overpayment will be resurrected and (providing it was not deemed to be non-recoverable) recovery will be either sought from on-going benefit or by means of a further Invoice where the claimant has not re-applied for benefit.

9.6 Arrangements to Pay

- 9.6.1 If a debt cannot be paid in full, instalments can be arranged on a weekly or monthly basis.

- 9.6.2 In the first instance the minimum repayment that is acceptable is the maximum level set by the DWP for recovery through ongoing benefit. Ideally attempts are made to recover the debts within a year, each case being considered on its own merits. Confirmation of the arrangement is sent in the form of a letter, showing the relevant instalments and dates for payment.
 - 9.6.3 If any arrangement payment is not received reminder and final notices will be issued.
- 9.6 Where payment has not been made in accordance with an arrangement the debt will be pursued as for non payment of the debt.

June 2005



**WYRE FOREST
DISTRICT COUNCIL**

THE CABINET

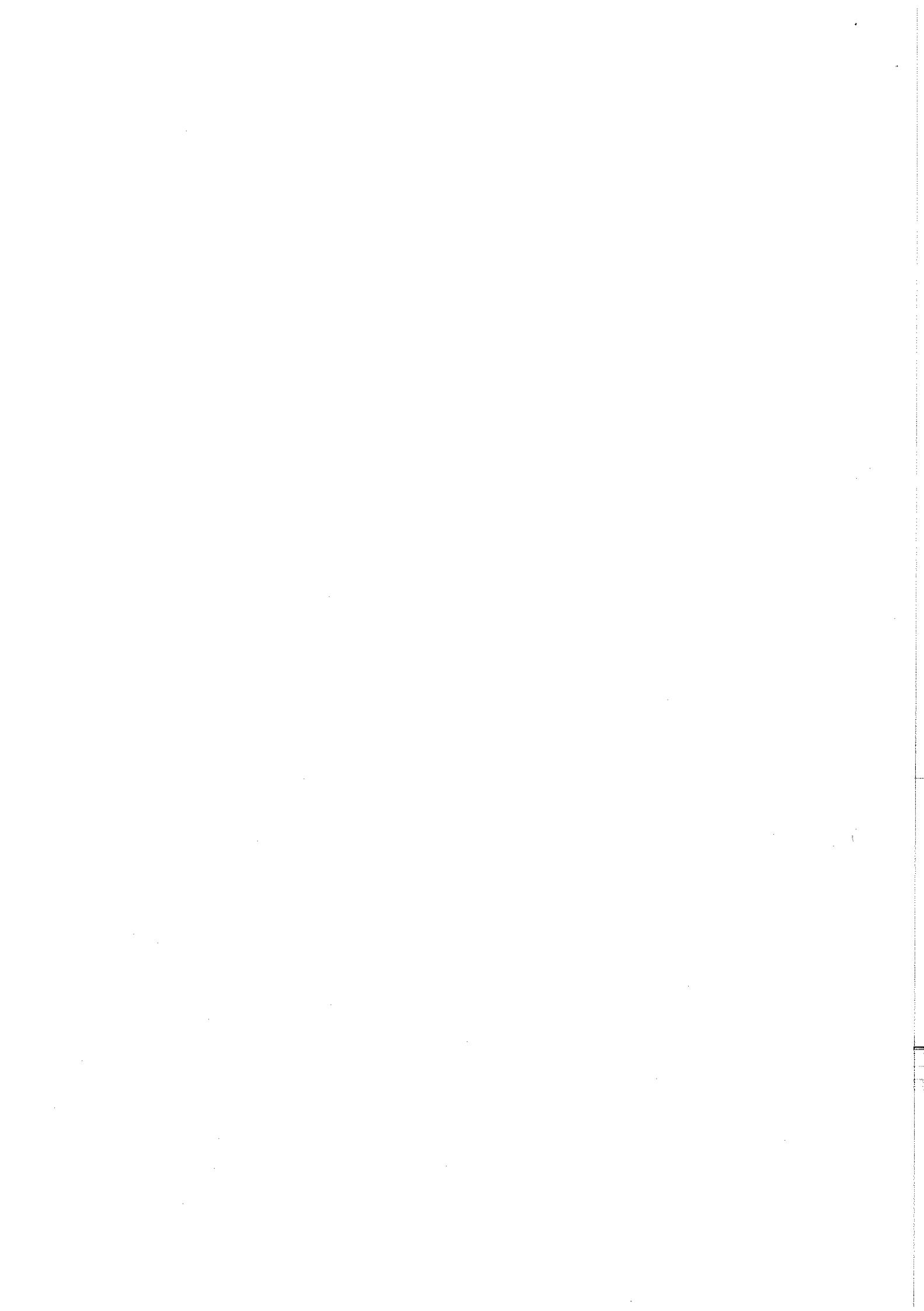
AGENDA

Date: Thursday 30th June 2005

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Venue: Chaddesley Corbett Village Hall
Chaddesley Corbett
Nr. Kidderminster

Agenda Item No. 6.2,
Community Strategy - Annual Progress Report 2004/2005
Appendix



AGENDA ITEM 6

Appendix B
Pages 4 -16

WYRE FOREST MATTERS THEMED DELIVERY PLANS

PERFORMANCE OF ACTIONS 04/05

POSITION STATEMENT – MARCH 2005

- A Better Environment
- Shared Prosperity
- Improved Health and Wellbeing
- Safer Communities
- Greater Learning and Participation

KEY FOR PROGRESS



A BETTER ENVIRONMENT

WEEKLY THEME	ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY	OUTCOMES & TIMESCALE	STATUS OF PROGRESS	COMMENTS
JANUARY	Improve the provision and promotion of sustainable transport BE8) Secure cycle stands for short term parking in identified areas of the District.	WCC WFDC	A number of new secure cycle stands for short term parking have been installed at a number of locations throughout the district, including the SVR, Bewdley, Load Street Car Park, Bewdley and Duke House, Kidderminster.	✓	
FEBRUARY	Protect and Enhance Our Natural and Built Environment BE10) To identify needs and locations of species identified in the Biodiversity Action Plan. Promote effective and minimal use of natural resources BE3) Identify current and forthcoming environmental legislation affecting business.	WCC WFDC Wildlife Trust Env Agency WFDC	Wyre Forest has been selected as the pilot area for a new habitat inventory for the county. Aerial photographs have been taken and an ecologist has begun the long process of identifying the habitats important for supporting protected species. £10,000 has been secured through a partnership agreement between the Environment Agency, Wyre Forest District Council, Bishops Wood Environmental Education Centre and the WEEAC to carryout a project to engage businesses on the Stourport Road Corridor in Kidderminster to improve their environmental performance.	★ ✓	

ACTION		STRATEGIES(S) / MEASURES		STATUS OF PROGRESS	
MONTH	ACTION	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY	AGENCY
MARCH	Protect and Enhance Our Natural and Built Environment BE13) To continue to preserve archaeology of recognised importance in the District.	WCC WFDC	WFDC have submitted a bid to DEFRA for funding to enable them to prepare an archaeological survey of the Rifle Range Nature Reserve. Currently waiting for a response from DEFRA. The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Earth Heritage Trust have also joined the Better Environment Group.	★	
	Promote effective and minimal use of natural resources BE3) Identify current and forthcoming environmental legislation affecting business.	Env. Agency	The Engaging Businesses in improving their environmental performance site visits are underway. Businesses on the Stourport Road, Kidderminster are now receiving expert on site advice from a trained Envirowise Advisor.	✓	
	Improve the provision and promotion of sustainable transport BE7 d) To improve the Kidderminster Park and Ride Bus Service including safety measures, marketing and promotion.	WFDC	The Sustainable Transport Sub Group have identified an illuminated shelter, improved waiting area and an information board at the Stadium Close Park 'n' Ride as a priority for 2005/6. They are now working with Wyre Forest District Council to secure funding for this project.	Information not available at time of printing.	
MARCH	Shared Prosperity <u>Support Business Development & Investment</u>	WFDC/ Chamber of Commerce	Business day scheduled for end 2005 – date to be confirmed	★	

Shared Prosperity

MONITORING TEAM	ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY	OUTCOMES(S) & TIMESCALE	STATUS OF PROGRESS	COMMENTS
Shared Prosperity	SP 2a) Share WFDC's annual Employment Land Availability Study with relevant landowners producing an Assessment Paper regarding availability and marketability.	WFDC	Planning Division updated Planning position regarding planning applications Economic Development section written to relevant landowners requesting advise as to any proposals for their sites – awaiting responses		
	SP 5b) District Council to publish and provide relevant information, links and services in electronic format and regularly update its Web site.	WFDC	Relevant information is available on Web site including appropriate links. WFDC to review WEB site and contents Spring 05		
	Open a Pilot TIC in Stourport-on-Severn	WFDC	Original target to open for 2005 season will not be achieved as MTI Implementation Plan not yet drafted. Also requirement to identify premises and more recently issues regarding Worcestershire Hub and the "sharing" of its services.		
	SP3a) Undertake a dialogue with the leaders of the Environment Well being and Community Safety Theme Groups to identify relevant business areas, facilities and centres and to agree a phased programme of action.	WFDC/ West Mercia Constabulary	Initial meeting held October to scope issues. WFDC Street Scene section to advise as to how issues sit with existing business plan. Ongoing dialogue		
	SP3 b) Begin to assess the feasibility of establishing a Business Improvement District within the area	WFDC	WFDC Cabinet approved proposals to work up a BID at Sandy Lane Industrial Estate Stourport – November 2004. Pilot BIDs are ongoing – their development will lead future legislation scheduled for Spring 2005.		
	SP2 c) In partnership with others outline a development brief for the former British Sugar Site	WFDC	Discussions ongoing with Local Planning Authority regarding proposals to draft any "Supplementary Planning Document". Site is the subject of Kidderminster Regeneration Strategy and potential County Council LTP 2 study into new road link between Stourport Road and A449		

STRATEGIC PRIORITY	ACTIVITIES	RESPONSIBILITY	OUTCOMES	TIME SCALE	STAKEHOLDERS	COURSES
Shared Prosperity	SP4 b) Continue to promote and provide the planned business start up courses through Business Link and Kidderminster College	WFDC	Progress and review meeting between College and WFDC held January 2005	Joint networking evening with business start ups and Kidderminster College planned for April 2005		
	SP4a) Review the criteria by which the District Council assesses its "new business start up" grant (and its success rate) whilst continuing to provide the funding.	WFDC	Review part of Business Links application for ESF funding - desire for more "Entrepreneurs" businesses. Bid scheduled for approval January 2005			Issues over the definition of Entrepreneurs"
	SP1 a) Collate appropriate database of Wyre Forest based companies utilising existing information sources. Consider the options to produce Directory of Wyre Forest District Businesses in hard copy and/or electronic format.	WFDC	Assess appropriate database sources and liaise with other Local Authorities to identify most suitable electronic format. Significant number of Web databases – consideration being given to worth and benefit of local directory. March 05.			
	SP 5 c) Embrace the emerging Central Technology Belt inputting into its activities for the benefit of local economic development	WFDC	Appointed consultants for Kidderminster Regeneration Strategy to report on local input and impact by March 2005			
	Promote and Market the District's diverse economy	WFDC	Promotional leaflet for Kidderminster (town centre and environs) to be distributed regionally to 05/06.			
	SP7 b) Continue existing District and County promotional activity		Taken out advertising in relevant property related journals.			
	SP6 a) Finalise draft brief to full service marketing organisation for the promotion of Kidderminster town centre	WFDC	Partner members met with responsibility for maintenance of town centre public realm August. Issues identified. Promotion for Spring 2005			

VISION / THEME	ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY	OUTCOMES & TIMELINE	STATUS OF PROGRESS	COMMENTS
Shared Prosperity	SP 7 a) Produce District Tourism Plan based on the Regional and County Strategies to include; training needs of industry employees, increasing the provision and registration of accommodation.	WFDC	Plan to be incorporated into WFDC Integrated Economic and Tourism Strategy March 2005	★	
	SP7 b) Continue existing District and County promotional activity including publishing the accommodation guide, producing leaflets and information.	WFDC	Proposals to develop a County Destination Management Partnership (DMP) across County. Consultants appointed January 05 to advise on feasibility and structure. Meetings ongoing for draft Plan March 2005	★	
	Connecting people to economic opportunity	WFDC	Shared Prosperity lead consulted on Draft Pathfinder Business Plan October 2004. Liasing with Co ordinator regarding strategic fit with emerging Kidderminster Regeneration Strategy Economic theme identified in Pathfinder Delivery Plan launched February 2005.	★	
	SP9 a) Identify the representative from the business community in order to actively engage in the Oldington & Foley Park Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Project.	WFDC	Financial Services Authority approved to a new Countywide organisation October 2004. Awaiting formal launch Spring 2005	★	
	SP 9b) Determine appropriate business representation on the group facilitating the development of the Worcestershire wide Credit Union and within it a Wyre Forest District focussed group.	WFDC			

Milestone	Outcome(s) / Timescale	Lead Agency	Key Action		Comments
			Start Date	Completion Date	
SP12b) Identify, develop, submit, implement, co ordinate and monitor relevant regeneration and funding initiatives with a range of agencies, partners, organisations and businesses to ensure strong partnership working and promote Economic Prosperity in accordance with the Council's Corporate Plan	WFDC				Implementation Plan to be drafted following with appointment of Programme Manager – target for January /Feb 05
					
					
Shared Prosperity	Stourport-on-Severn Market Towns Initiative: Strategic Action Plan approved August 2004. Implementation Plan being drafted March/April 2005 for adoption May 2005				
	Opportunity Bewdley Market Towns Initiative: Projects ongoing including Business Premises Grant, Business Support, Park and Ride, Development of Bewdley's "Local Distinctiveness".				
	Kidderminster Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy: Appointed consultants October 2004 to undertake a "reality check" and economic impact assessment. Report to Shared Prosperity Theme Group February 2005. Presentation to WFDC, AVM and GOWM Spring 2005.				
	Sandy Lane Business Association: Liasing with Association and British Business Parks over a range of improvement proposals including highway improvements and community safety issues – key projects to be embraced within Stourport-on-Severn Market Town Initiative – see above				
	SP12 a) Develop and implement a Strategic Funding Plan to maximise the District Council's effectiveness in bidding for external resources for relevant regeneration initiatives	WFDC			Following launch of WFDC "External Funding Working Group" a strategy to be scheduled for approval in March /April 2005.
	SP 10 a) Produce needs assessment, assess the potential, feasibility and appropriate locations of areas that would benefit from a community enterprise project	WFDC/WCC			Part of Countywide research into Social Enterprise. County proposals developing March 2005

VOLUME	TITLE	ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY	OUTCOMES & TIMESCALE		STATUS OF PROGRESS	COMMENTS
				OUTCOME	TIMESCALE		
Shared Prosperity	SP9 c) Actively engage in the work of the Horsefair and Broadwaters Community Safety Partnership with the aim of bringing about economic benefit to the immediate locality and wider district		WFDC	Proposal to LSP Board to make Horsefair/Broadwaters the key cross cutting geographical area for the whole Community Strategy. Initial meeting held in February 05 with Chair of Horsefair and Broadwaters Community Safety Partnership. Presentation to Partnership due 18 th March 2005		★	
	SP11 a) Support the District's carpet manufacturing industry by engaging local employers, representatives and relevant agencies in a series of relevant and appropriate measure that address local needs and bring about benefit to the local economy.		WFDC/ Kidderminster College	Funding identified at LSC to fund study into national carpet Industry skills academy / heritage centre. Consultant appointed December 2004. Draft report February 2005.		★	

IMPROVED HEALTH AND WELLBEING

VOLUME	TITLE	ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY	OUTCOMES & TIMESCALE		STATUS OF PROGRESS	COMMENTS
				OUTCOME	TIMESCALE		
Improved Health and Wellbeing	Supporting Children and Families		Children's and Young people Strategic Partnership/ WFPCT/WFDC	Clear direction and performance measures to be agreed with partners- (work commenced).		★	
	HW8 c) Effective involvement of young people from the beginning of planning services, building on local and national good practice models (commence work).			Agreed performance measures demonstrate improvements- through e.g. annual returns. Mapping exercise in place to support improved service provision. Physical Activity Strategy produced by April 2005- work commenced in April 2004.		○	Strategy Planning Group in early stages of development. April deadline may not be met.
	HW9 a) Implement action plan to increase awareness of availability and use of leisure services and evaluate effectiveness of the plans (commence work).		WFDC				New time 4u service also now offered from the Advice Shop, Rifle Range
	HW12 a) Increase sexual health service available to young people (6 more pharmacists to provide EOC April-June)		WFPCT	(6 more pharmacists to provide EOC April-June).		★	
	HW11 a) Through partnership agencies strengthen the work to prepare young people for leaving schools (ongoing).		Children's and Young people Strategic Partnership	3 Life Skills training courses and after schools services being made available- ongoing work. Detailed targets to be agreed by July 2004.		★	Alison Reeds to add

Objectives	Actions	Lead Agency	Completion Date	Outcomes	
				Strategic	Operational
Improved Health and Wellbeing	Engaging Communities and Individuals HW2 c) Support Services Roadshows to older people.	Older People's Forum	Roadshows improve the awareness of older people of available services and thus increase access. Launch Event held in Town Hall on 12 August - 36 organisations exhibited and over 300 older people attended.		Showcase event booked for Thursday 11 August at Kidderminster Town Hall.
	Tackling the determinants of ill health HW22 a) Launch Affordable Warmth Strategy.	WFDC	Strategy launched in April 2004.		
	Preventing illness and providing effective treatment and care HW17 a) Disability Forum training for social services and NHS Staff.	Social Services and Acute Trust	Training complete.		
	HW13 a) Wyre Forest Health Mapping Exercise and target setting across health and well-being theme action plans (commencing).	WFPCT	Baseline data identified and targets set for the Improving Health and wellbeing theme. Draft survey produced by April 2004. Survey completion date to be agreed.		Lifestyle survey has been delayed- this is currently taking place- targets will need to be developed in 2005
	HW19 Implement Smoking Cessation service developments.	WFPCT	Updated smoking cessation action to be completed by July 2004. Targets achieved on a quarterly basis.		Wyre Forest Quit Smoking Targets have been exceeded
	Tackling determinants of ill health				Start of a process that needs a detailed action plan. No further development at this stage- there is potential to develop this work as part of the Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder.
	HW25 a) Establish baseline position of systems and programmes to support local recruitment and to enable staff to work across local partner's organisations where appropriate.	WFPCT	Meeting of partners has taken place to map current programmes and to agree an action plan/way forward.		
	HW26 b) Agencies working together towards improvements in joint strategic planning and service provision (in relation to vulnerable people Workshop in May to start process).	WFPCT / Social Services	A workshop will take place to agree key action that will improve the strategic planning process of services for vulnerable people in May/June. Action agreed will feed into the commissioning round for 2004/5		

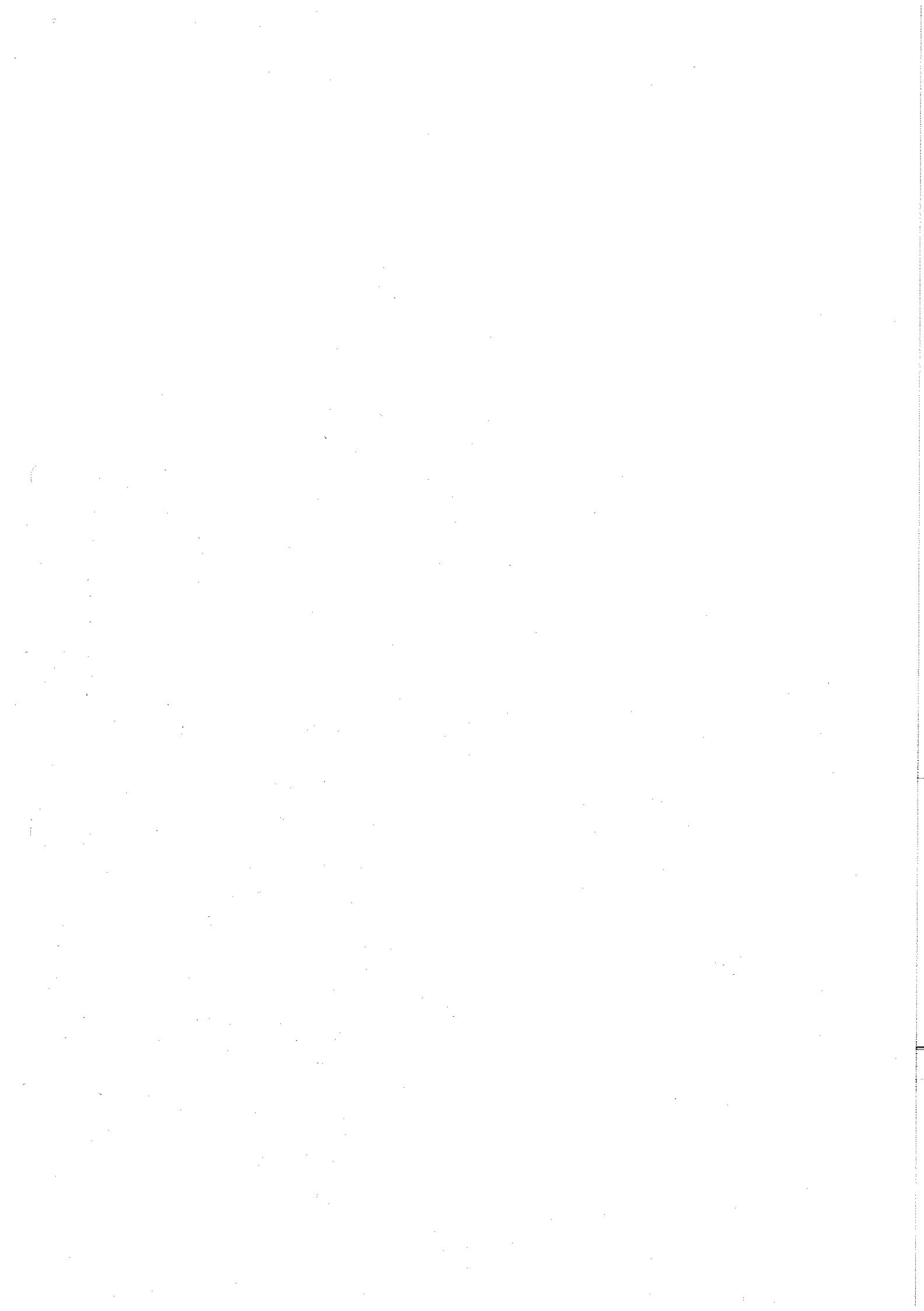
MONITORING TEAM	ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY	OUTCOMES & TIMELINE	STATUS OF PROGRESS	DOCUMENTS		
Improved Health and Wellbeing	Preventing illness and providing effective treatment and care HW14 a) Establish an effective and sustainable model of providing a one-stop service (make connections with Worcestershire Hub). HW18 a) Feed into Patient and Transport group - Countywide.	WFPCT / Worcs Hub Bus Quality Partnership	Meeting has taken place in May with Worcestershire Hub to agree how health information can become part of the one stop service. Relationship between the BQP and Health and Wellbeing theme groups is strengthened. Theme group agrees the focus of their action from the overall BQP action plan.				
	Preventing illness and providing effective treatment and care NW16 b) Develop a strategy to implement the recommendations of the National report 'Reducing Obesity and Preventing Obesity - everything must change' (start process). HW25 b) Identify / action plan for implementation in 2005/6- (to increase recruitment of local people).	PCT Health and Wellbeing Group	Detailed targets to be set in 2004 based on national guidance, the current audit if current local initiatives and establishment of baseline data.				
		LSC, PCT Wfdc, WCC Connexions KC, Chamber of Commerce Not for Profit Sector, Nexus	Action plan for 2005/06 developed by March 2005.				
SAFER COMMUNITIES							
MONITORING TEAM	ACTIONS	LEAD AGENCY	OUTCOMES & TIMELINE	STATUS OF PROGRESS	DOCUMENTS		
Safer Communities	SC1. Drugs and Alcohol.	Wyre Forest PCT	The Community Safety Partnership's final year of its three year work programme commenced on 1 st April 2004. <ul style="list-style-type: none">Monitor on six monthly basis the Wyre Forest Night Stop and Mediation Scheme.Siting of Used Needle and Syringe Bins now that consultation has been completed.Continue vulnerable young peoples group – 8 weekly sessions per group.Contribute to the West Midlands Health and Lifestyle Survey being undertaken by the West Midlands Public Health Observatory – to be completed by Aug 04.				
					Public Health Observatory is now unable to incorporate the drugs questions we require. A separate drugs survey has been undertaken.		

WYRE FOREST POLICE & COMMUNITIES Safeguarding Children & Young People Community Crime Reduction		Safeguarding Children & Young People Community Crime Reduction	
Safer Communities		Safer Communities	
SC2. Violent Crime / Domestic Violence.	Wyre Forest PCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Sustain Domestic Violence Helpline being operational 24 hours. Specialist Training for frontline staff by April 05 to be provided by Worcestershire Domestic Violence Forum and Wyre Forest Women's Aid. Support National and Countywide campaigns. 	★ ✓ ★
SC3. Violent Crime and Hate Crime.	Wyre Forest PCT	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> All Community Safety Partners to have equality and diversity policies in place by April 05. Increase the reporting of race / hate crimes. 	★★★★★
SC4. To reassure the community that they are safe in Wyre Forest.	West Mercia Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 25 New Neighbourhood Watch Schemes opened by April 05. 2 Further Urban Safety Initiatives in place by April 05. Ringmaster system being used to full potential including email broadcasts by April 05. Increase by a further 10% in recruitment of active Special Constables by April 05. 	★★★★★
SC5. To reduce theft of and from motor vehicles by improving car park security and raising awareness of vehicle security in car parks as well as residential areas in Wyre Forest.	West Mercia Police	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 800 more vehicle crime packs intelligently distributed by April 05. A further 130 vulnerable vehicle scheme packs to be delivered by April 05. 3 car parks achieve secure car park status by April 05. Continue with intelligence led patrols – introduce summer and autumn plans. 	★★★★○ ★

ACTIVITY	GOALS	OUTCOMES & TIME SCALE	STATUS OF PROGRESS	COMMENTS
Safer Communities	SC6. Vulnerable Communities.	Wyre Forest District Council <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Training and Development Workers to report progress in target wards (O&FP) and (H/B) by Oct 04. Young people's worker employed in target wards by Oct 04. CCTV system in Kidderminster Town Centre to be running by December 2004. Expand WFDC's summer hotspot work programme within vulnerable communities. 	✓ ✓ ✓ ✓	Deadline of December was not met due to installation issues. Scheme was up and running by first week in February 05.
GREATER LEARNING AND PARTICIPATION				
Learning & Participation	VISION <u>Maximise residents potential personal development and fulfilment through engagement with learning and cultural activity</u> GLP1 a) Map participation and learning venues across WF.	VISION WFLLP 75% of wards mapped by March 2005.		Patti Rookes has already made good progress with this activity and it is ahead of schedule.
	Maximise residents potential personal development and fulfilment through engagement with learning and cultural activity GLP2 a) Identify non-school venues where literacy and numeracy support is provided and which ones it is not available at and share best practice.	WFLLP 10 venues to share best practice by Dec 04.		Venues identified, process for sharing of best practice part way through planning. Update on progress still to be confirmed as member unable to attend last meeting.
	GLP4 b) Develop a briefing / fact sheet that explains in simple language the evidential benefits to potential learners on what is in it for them (increased earning potential, increased employability, etc). Distribute among partners for use as reference when meeting residents.	WFDC Availability of leaflets to all partners by July 04.		Production and distribution of the initial run completed.

WORK STREAM	ACTION	LEAD AGENCY	FUNCTION(S) INVOLVED	STATUS OF PROGRESS
Learning & Participation	<u>Increase employers awareness, involvement and contribution to the benefits of workforce development</u>	WFLLP	6 sponsorships to be identified by Oct 04.	
	GLP9 a) Encourage larger employers to sponsor local community learning activities.	KC	Increase by 20 year on year.	✓
	<u>Maximise residents potential personal development and fulfilment through engagement with learning and cultural activity</u>			
	GLP4 a) Promote flexible learning opportunities within schools and community to encourage top up qualifications.	WFDC	Common District wide collation point by July 04.	✓
	Create a collaborative learning infrastructure that will provide better transport links, childcare provision and support to improve accessible learning opportunities for all ages			
	GLP5. a) Plan out structure for a web-based information point and collate cultural / arts / exhibitions / learning opportunities and information within an electronic repository.	WFDC	Information leaflet available and distributed to partners July 04.	✓
	<u>Increase employers awareness, involvement and contribution to the benefits of workforce development</u>			
	GLP9. c) Develop a briefing / fact sheet that explains in simple language the evidential benefits to employer's bottom line of investing in training and qualifications for their workforce. Distribute among partners for use as reference when meeting employers.			
	<u>Maximise residents potential personal development and fulfilment through engagement with learning and cultural activity</u>	WF Arts Forum	18 events by April 2005.	
	GLP1. g) Identify and target diverse non-related events that we can piggyback, and at which display boards can be displayed / promoted.			

GOAL	OBJECTIVE	LEAD	COMPLETION DATE	TIME SCALE	STATUS OF PROGRESS	DOCUMENTS
Learning & Participation	<p><u>Create a collaborative learning infrastructure that will provide better transport links, childcare provision and support to improve accessible learning opportunities for all ages</u></p> <p>GLP8. c) Establish a repository of anonymised successful bids for funding / grants, etc made by partners to facilitate sharing of best practice to increase funding levels within the partnership.</p>	OFFPCN	12 bids by Sept 04.			Significant number of bids identified. Ellen Green collating information. Target will be met but timescale was too ambitious.
	<p><u>Create a collaborative learning infrastructure that will provide better transport links, childcare provision and support to improve accessible learning opportunities for all ages</u></p> <p>GLP7. a) Develop a range of collectively agreed protocols to enable sharing of facilities.</p>	OFFPCN	Agreed protocols by November 2004.			Outline in place, detail to go to next working group meeting.
	<p><u>Increase employers awareness, involvement and contribution to the benefits of workforce development</u></p> <p>GLP10. a) Share / promote existing best practice in Numeracy and Literacy provision with employer's, community groups, schools and W/F Matters members.</p>	WFLLP	200 key groups by January 2005.			Update on progress still to be confirmed as member unable to attend last meeting





THE CABINET

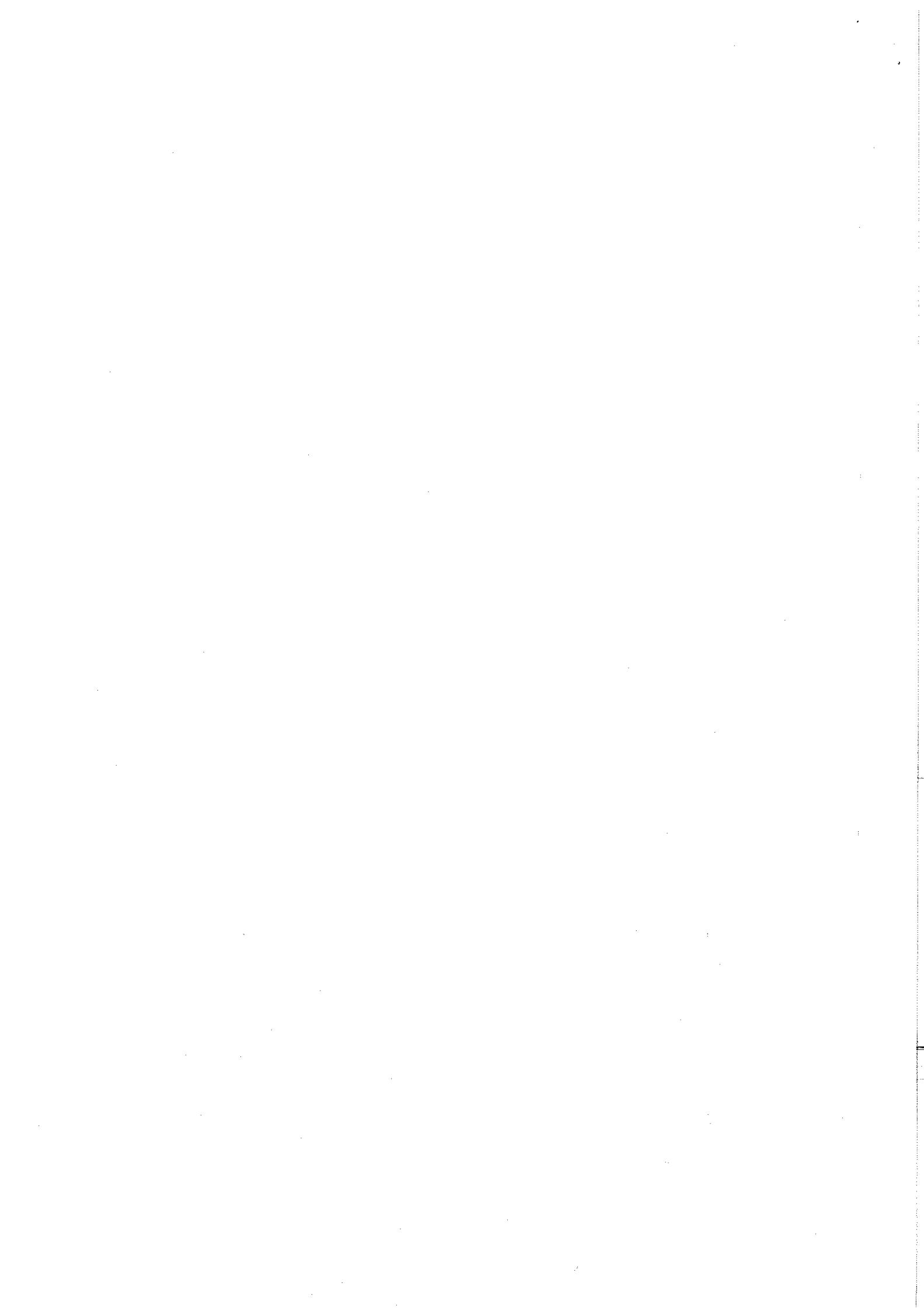
AGENDA

Date: Thursday 30th June 2005

Time: 6.00 p.m.

Venue: Chaddesley Corbett Village Hall
Chaddesley Corbett
Nr. Kidderminster

Agenda Item No. 9.1.
Integrated Economic Development and Tourism Plan
Appendix



**WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL
ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND TOURISM PLAN**

2005 - 2007

1. Introduction

1.1 The District Council has a key role in co-ordinating and guiding the activities of all those involved and/or interested in making sure the District is an excellent place to live, work, visit and invest in.

1.2 This District Council Economic Development and Tourism Plan:-

- promotes a shared understanding of the main economic development and tourism issues affecting the district
- recognises the wider economic picture and identifies how the District's needs relate to the Sub Region and Region and related plans and actions
- provides a framework so that organisations are able to make their plans and activities fit with the Plan
- is a mechanism for prioritising resources and obtaining funding
- provides a tool for measuring progress in meeting specified targets.

1.3 The Plan links the District Council's "Corporate Plan" with the Strategy and Performance Unit's (Economic Development & Tourism Section) Business Plan. In addition, it links in with the Local Strategic Partnership "Wyre Forest Matters" and the "Shared Prosperity Theme" of its Community Strategy "Helping to Transform Your Life" adopted in 2004.

1.4 The Plan has a relatively short time frame (2005 - 2007) as it recognises the emerging County "Destination Management Partnership" (DMP) – the proposed joint private/public sector structure being proposed to deliver the future tourism services throughout Worcestershire from 2007.

2. Economic Development and Tourism Challenges

2.1 The District faces a number of challenges, which are threatening the long-term vitality of the economy. For example:

- The district and particular Kidderminster has a significantly large manufacturing sector, (including carpet manufacturing), which is expected to decline in future years;
- Although the retail sector (within Kidderminster in particular) has expanded, the growth of other service sector industries has been relatively slow;
- There is a shortage of quality and "budget" price hotel accommodation for visitors and business travellers.
- A high proportion of local jobs pay relatively low wages;
- A high proportion of the local population is employed in lower skilled, lower order occupations;
- The district has a relatively low skilled labour force and a high proportion of the local workforce do not possess the necessary skills to work in expanding 'higher order' service industries or higher value added manufacturing industries;
- There are areas with significant 'pockets of deprivation' (most notably the Oldington and Foley Park and Broadwaters wards) that are experiencing a number of socio-economic problems;
- There are a number of high-profile tourist attractions in the district. However Kidderminster town centre in particular has yet to capitalise fully on the proximity of these attractions;
- There is a shortage of readily available and quality employment land. There are however a number of former industrial sites not being used, but which could become key employment sites and key income generating uses in the longer-term;
- The road network is relatively poor and major roads experience some significant levels of traffic congestion.
- Kidderminster in particular has a relatively low quantity of people living within its town centre and in addition, the town's 'evening economy' is significantly underdeveloped;
- The key strengths and opportunities that the area offers have not been marketed and promoted sufficiently.

3. Future Economic Trends

- The population aged between 0 and 19 is expected to decline between 2004 and 2015; however, the size of the population aged over 60 is likely to increase.
- Economic activity rates are expected to increase between 2004 and 2015.
- Overall levels of Gross Value Added (GVA) are expected to increase with the manufacturing, transport and communications, and distribution and catering sectors all experiencing significant increases.

GVA measures the total value of final goods and services produced in a year in the geographical area under consideration, less the taxes on those products but including the subsidies on these products, and also excludes the role of intermediate products and sale of second hand goods, and is normally expressed at constant prices, after deducting the effects of inflation
- The share of manufacturing employment in the district is expected to decline between 2004 and 2015; however, the share of employment for the distribution, hotels and catering and 'other services' sectors is likely to increase.
- The share of GVA of the manufacturing sector is likely to decrease between 2004 and 2015; however, the share of GVA for the transport and communications and 'other services' sectors is likely to increase.
- Self employment levels are expected to increase by 1.8% between 2004 and 2015, with increases in self employment forecasted in the distribution and catering, transport and communications and 'other services' sectors. Self employment levels in manufacturing, construction, mining and quarrying, and banking, finance and insurance are expected to decrease.
- The net rate of out-commuting from the district is likely to decrease between 2004 and 2015.
- The rate of unemployment is likely to increase significantly between 2004 and 2006 but then decrease once again between 2006 and 2015.
- The district is home to the most deprived ward in Worcestershire and has a number of other areas that experience high levels of poverty, poor health, social exclusion and low educational attainment.
- Tourism and the rapid development of the retail sector particularly in Kidderminster is a vital part of the district's economy. But this has implications in that the sectors usually offer relatively low wages and they are vulnerable to downturns in the economy.

4. SWOT Analysis

Strengths

- Local Strategic Partnership and Community Strategy
- WFDC Corporate Plan
- Kidderminster Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy
- Council adopted External Funding Strategy
- Adopted Local Plan (January 2004)
- Diversifying economic/business base
- Private sector investment into Kidderminster's Weavers Wharf and Crossley Park
- Geographically centrally located within the country with good radial road and rail networks outside the District
- Headquarter location to several leading companies and agencies
- Proximity to Birmingham, UK's 'Second City'
- Good access to several technology and research centres
- Good quality environment in which to live, work and holiday
- Relatively affordable house prices;
- Established and nationally recognised tourist and day visitor attractions;
- Well developed training, business support and education infrastructure;
- Kidderminster College Town centre location
- High quality sports and leisure facilities
- River and/or canal side in all three towns and some outlying rural areas
- Market town status in Stourport and Bewdley

Weaknesses

- Educational attainment and skill levels are below average
- Lower than average household incomes
- High unmet demand for 'affordable housing'
- Localised areas with a poor built environment
- Very few "large" companies in District (ie over 250 employees)
- Traditional and manufacturing industry is in decline
- Limited "dynamism" within and lack of interest from outside District
- No established 'hi-tech' areas or science parks
- Shortage of readily available industrial and commercial development sites
- Road and transport infrastructure is relatively poor
- Shortage of multi-modal connections (e.g. rail and bus);
- Key corridors/gateways are uninviting
- Shortage of quality overnight accommodation for business and tourist visitors
- No "big name" hotels
- Kidderminster:
 - Limited coach parking for visitor / day trip market in Kidderminster town centre
 - Limited "long stay" parking in town centre
 - No "identity"
 - Evening economy underdeveloped
- Geographical 'hot spots' of deprivation with higher than average unemployment
- Shortage of strategic external funding
- Limited overnight accommodation

- Stourport:
 - Peak season traffic congestion
 - No TIC facilities
 - Poor public WC facilities
 - Limited heritage interpretation
 - Poor promotion and limited choice of "quality" eating establishments at higher end of market

Bewdley:

- Poor signage (especially to car parks)
 - Limited activities to make a meaningful day visit
 - Limited use of riverside and events
 - QE II Gardens, "hidden"
 - Lack of tea shops and availability of early evening food
 - Shortage of overnight accommodation
- Threats
- Competition from other regions and areas including: grant aid, resources and jobs
 - Competition from other areas with tourism
 - Growing level of international competition and weak domestic market forcing the decline of the area's carpet and some other manufacturing industries;
 - Prolonged shortage of public sector finance

Opportunities

- Proximity to major investment areas – eg Longbridge, Malvern Science Park, Stonebridge Cross, Hartlebury Trading Estate
- Former British Sugar site and the Stourport Road Employment Corridor, Kidderminster
- 'KTC 3' site in Worcester Street, Kidderminster

- Weavers Wharf development and town centre enhancements in Kidderminster
- Green Street Business Centre, Kidderminster
- Capitalise on visitors going to and coming from Kidderminster's (and the Wyre Forest District's) established tourist attractions
- Capitalise on reputation and history of carpet industry
- Peak time Kidderminster direct rail link to (am) & from (pm) London
- Expansion of New Road (Kidderminster) car park
- Oldington and Foley Park ward, Kidderminster has 'Enterprise Area' status
- Neighbourhood Renewal funding awarded to Oldington and Foley Park ward, Kidderminster
- Rivers and canals
- Stourport Canal Basins
- "STC4" site Bridge St Stourport
- Stourport Riverside Meadows
- Business Improvement District proposals in Sandy Lane Industrial Estate, Stourport and Kidderminster Town Centre
- Bewdley Museum and QEII Gardens
- Chiltern Railways to obtain rail franchise
- Opportunity Bewdley Local Distinctiveness project

5. Vision

6.1 That the Wyre Forest District has a thriving and sustainable economy, offering its residents, businesses, investors and visitors a diverse, dynamic and competitive business and employment base and a high quality lifestyle for all'

6. Key Priorities

- A. Business Development & Advice**
 - To provide support for new and existing businesses; develop suitable business sites and premises, improve connections to modern information and communications technologies.

B. Regeneration

To promote and market the District, train and motivate individuals, support excluded individuals and local communities, assess sectors “at risk” and/or promote alternatives, maximise available economic regeneration funding.

C. Support, develop and promote the Visitor Economy

To research, develop and promote existing attractions and accommodation providers, provide Tourist Information, liaise with relevant local and regional agencies, partnerships, organisations and private sector organisations.

D. Town Centres

To develop and support partnership working with public and private sector stakeholders and external funding providers to promote and attract visitors into the town centres and where appropriate attract inward investors.

7. Objectives**A. Business Development & Advice**

1. To establish enhance and maintain the District as a recognised area of business growth that attracts inward investment and generates high quality jobs.
2. To establish, enhance and maintain accessible, attractive and safe employment areas in which to work and visit.
3. To research, develop, provide and promote appropriate business support and opportunities.
4. To support the provision of and access to all elements of technology and an Information Communications Technology infrastructure to all businesses

B. Regeneration

1. To create a skilled, trained and motivated workforce to meet the demands of existing and future businesses, ensuring that education and training providers offer and deliver appropriate courses.
2. To promote and market the District as a high quality residential and business location, building on the strengths of each of the three towns and the rural hinterland.
3. To identify economic activities that may be at risk with a view to developing them and/or promoting alternatives for the workforce.

- 4. To maximise the provision and use of all sources of available economic regeneration funding.
- 5. To support excluded people and local communities by addressing neighbourhood renewal, equal opportunities, financial empowerment and work/life balance.
- 6. To encourage and support community enterprises.

C. Support, develop and promote the Visitor Economy

- 1 To promote and market the District as a high quality visitor and short stay destination to encourage greater visitor numbers, business tourism, longer stay visitors and increased spend in the local economy.
- 2 To research all relevant policies and undertake appropriate surveys to raise awareness and improve visitor expectation and experience.
- 3 To improve the delivery of tourist information through the Tourist Information Centre, electronic and hard copy media
- 4 To work with and regularly network with the private sector accommodation and attraction providers and support agencies to raise quality standards, improve the performance of business and appeal to visitors.
- 5 To improve the local tourism infrastructure, signage and accessibility to improve visitor experience and satisfaction.
- 6 To develop the sub regional "Worcestershire Destination Partnership" and partake in relevant local and sub regional partnerships utilising external funding where possible, to influence the local tourism product.

D. Town Centres

- 1. To develop and support a restructured Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership working with stakeholders, including the Local Planning Authority to produce a Strategy to take the town forward
- 2. To support and develop the Market Towns Initiative and other external funding opportunities in Stourport on Severn.
- 3. To support and develop the Market Towns Initiative, Rural Regeneration Zone and other external funding opportunities in Bewdley.

8. Action Plan

KEY PRIORITY	OBJECTIVE	ACTIONS	TIMESCALE	OFFICER
A. Business Advice & Development	1. To establish enhance and maintain the District as a recognised area of business growth that attracts inward investment and generates high quality jobs.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Arrange for relevant officers and Members responsible for Environment and Economic Regeneration to visit local authority areas that have a successful track record of successful inward and indigenous investment and of attracting high quality jobs (e.g. with Beacon Council status in Economic Development and Regeneration) to assess realism of achieving high growth and high value companies to Wyre Forest. • In partnership with Shared Prosperity Theme Group of Wyre Forest Matters scope out the potential of holding a local seminar with invited speakers from "high growth" and knowledge based industries both within and outside of the area to develop proposals 	July 2005 November 2005	EDTM

A. Business Advice & Development	<p>2. To establish, enhance and maintain accessible, attractive and safe employment areas in which to work and visit.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Undertake a dialogue with the leaders of the Environment Well being and Community Safety Theme Groups of the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership to identify relevant employment areas and to agree a phased programme of action • Progress the establishment of a pilot Business Improvement District at Sandy Lane Industrial Estate. Business Association to draft Action Plan. • Liaise with WFDC Planning, Health and Environment Division and potential developers/site owners regarding the bringing forward of allocated employment sites for development • Attract to the District and/or safeguard a minimum of one company employing over 50 employees 	July 2005	September 2005	August 2005	March 2006	EDTM	EDTM/EREFO	EDTM/EDA	EDTM/EDA
A. Business Advice & Development	<p>3. To research, develop, provide and promote appropriate business support and opportunities</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • In partnership with Kidderminster College's new business start up course provide 20 new business Start up grants • Hold new business start up "networking" event • Collate appropriate data base of Wyre Forest based companies utilising existing information sources 	EDTM/EDA	EDTM/EDA	EDTM/EDA	EDTA	EDTM	EDTM/EDA	EDTM/EDA	EDTA

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Maintain regularly updated database of commercial and industrial property for Wyre Forest's Commercial Property Guide and search service. Promote the Oldington and Foley Park "Enterprise Area" status through commercial agents and advertising 	Ongoing	EDTM/ EREF0/ EDA
A. Business Advice & Development	4. To support the provision of and access to all elements of technology and an Information Communications Technology infrastructure to all businesses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Liaise with Business Link to ensure all businesses receive the opportunities to access appropriate ICT 	Initial contact by July 2005	EDTM
B. Regeneration	1. To create a skilled, trained and motivated workforce to meet the demands of existing and future businesses, ensuring that education and training providers offer and deliver appropriate courses.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Shared Prosperity Theme Group and Learning and Participation Theme Group of Wyre Forest Matters Partnership to liaise to ensure training and skills provision meets the needs to business. 	Hold Joint meeting of Theme Groups Sept. 2005	EDTM
B. Regeneration	2. To promote and market the District as a high quality residential and business location, building on the strengths of each of the three towns and the rural hinterland.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Pilot advertising campaign in predetermined publications promoting redevelopment opportunities. Minimum of one advert per month 	March 2006	EDTM /EDA
B. Regeneration	3. To identify economic activities that may be at risk with a view to developing them and/or promoting alternatives for the workforce.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Support Business Link/Advantage West Midlands "rapid response unit" activity advising it of known forthcoming redundancies in order for them to support affected employees. 	Ongoing	EDTM

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Receive the report of the Learning and Skills Council regarding proposals to develop a district centre for carpet manufacturing skills 	Receive report 2005	EDTM
B. Regeneration	4. To maximise the provision and use of all sources of available economic regeneration funding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Implement objectives of WFDC External Funding Strategy 	During 2005/06	EREFO
B. Regeneration	5. To support excluded people and local communities by addressing neighbourhood renewal, equal opportunities, empowerment and work/life balance	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Financially support the Wyre Forest District element of the new Worcestershire Credit Union • Actively engage with the Oldington and Foley Park Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder project 	Sept. 2005 Ongoing	EREFO
B. Regeneration	6. To encourage and support enterprise	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Engage with the Herefordshire & Worcester Community Enterprise Support partnership which co-ordinates the development and delivery of support to social enterprises. • Send a representative to partnership meetings. • Work with partners, where appropriate to deliver support infrastructure for social enterprise. 	July 2005 During 2005/06 During 2005/06	EREFO

C. Visitor Economy	<p>1 To promote and market the District as a high quality visitor and short stay destination to encourage greater visitor numbers, business tourism, longer stay visitors and increased spend in the local economy.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Production & promotion of annual Holiday Guide, supported by private sector finance. Production & promotion of Travel Trade Manual. Involvement through Worcestershire Tourism in Trade Familiarisation Visits. Production of appropriate leaflets and involvement in PR activities to encourage both staying visitors, business tourism & VFR market Investigate feasibility of attracting a hotel developer to the District. Develop a study brief with Head of Planning Heath and Environment 	<p>Annually</p> <p>TO</p> <p>TO</p> <p>On-going</p>	<p>TO</p> <p>TO / PHE Division</p> <p>June 2005</p>
C. Tourism	<p>2. To research all relevant policies and undertake appropriate surveys to raise awareness and improve visitor expectation and experience.</p> <p>3. To improve the delivery of Tourist information through the Tourist Information Centre electronic and hard copy media.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Participate in County-wide Visitor Surveys including Economic Impact Assessments Undertake Holiday Guide conversion and research. 	<p>Every 2-3 years</p> <p>Alternate years</p>	<p>TO</p> <p>TO</p>
C. Tourism		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake annual Satisfaction Surveys Undertake a Mystery Shopper Survey 	<p>Annually</p> <p>Alternate years</p>	<p>TO</p> <p>TO</p>

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improve provision of tourist information on the Council's web site • Improve use of computerised systems within the TIC 	On-going	TO
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Membership of the Wyre Forest Tourism & Leisure Network. • Produce 2 Newsletter per year • Organise 2 Social events with speakers per year • Organise programme of Familiarisation visits to raise awareness & network • Involvement in and promotion of appropriate training courses, quality schemes and award schemes to raise quality • Investigate the introduction of the "Fitness for Purpose" initiative to raise accommodation standards in the area 	<p>On-going</p> <p>Spring & Autumn</p> <p>April-June</p> <p>On-going 2005/6</p> <p>During 2005</p>	<p>TO</p> <p>TO</p> <p>TO</p> <p>TO</p> <p>TO/WFDC Env. Health/ DMP</p>
C. Tourism	<p>4. To work with and regularly network with the private sector accommodation and attraction providers and support agencies to raise quality standards, improve the performance of business and appeal to visitors.</p>		

C. Tourism	<p>5. To improve the local tourism infrastructure, signage and accessibility to improve visitor experience and satisfaction.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> In conjunction with Worcestershire Tourism/Worcs. CC work towards introducing an agreed Brown & White signing policy Liaise with WFD CLACS on matters of car parking and toilet provision to improve the visitor experience Liaise with appropriate agencies to promote DDA within local tourism businesses. 	on-going	TO / Worcs. County Council TO / CLACS
			on-going	TO
C. Tourism	<p>6. To develop the sub regional 'Destination Partnership' and partake in relevant local and sub regional partnerships utilising external funding where possible, to influence the local tourism product.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Actively involved in the DMP process. Member of the Steering Group working with consultants to formulate a Business Plan. Wider working within Worcestershire Tourism, including holding annual Tourism Forum to promote public/private sector initiatives. 	December 2005	TO During 2005/06

D. Town Centres	<p>1. To develop and support a re structured Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership working with stakeholders, including the Local Planning Authority to produce a Strategy to take the town forward</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Begun to have re launched and re structured the Town Centre Partnership with a view to establishing by April 2007 a fully commercial and financially viable town centre management structure. • Assess the feasibility of establishing a Business Improvement District for Kidderminster Town Centre. 	March 2006	EDTM
D. Town Centres	<p>2. To support and develop the Market Towns Initiative and other external opportunities in Stourport on Severn</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Work in partnership with Stourport Town Centre Forum and Stourport Forward to develop and promote opportunities at the Canal Basins, Bridge St, the Riverside and for business support that benefits the town centre 	March 2006	EDTM/ EREFO
D. Town Centres	<p>3. To support and develop the Market Towns Initiative, Rural Regeneration Zone and other external funding opportunities in Bewdley.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Review and update the Opportunity Bewdley Action Plan (2002) and work in partnership with the Rural Regeneration Zone and Opportunity Bewdley to continue to develop and seek funding for projects for the benefit of the town centre. • Project to include Local Distinctiveness and Load St Car Park proposals 	March 2006	EDTM/ EREFO

EDTM
 EDA
 TO
 EREFO

= Economic Development Manager
 = Economic Development Assistant
 = Tourism Officer
 = Economic Regeneration & External Funding Officer

APPENDIX 11 - Policy Context

Regional

West Midlands Economic Strategy – 2004
AWM Regional Tourism Strategy - 2004
Regional Planning Guidance (RPG)

Sub Regional

Worcestershire Tourism Strategy – 2002
Worcestershire Economic Development Strategy 2004 – 2014
Worcestershire Rural Action Plan - 2004

The Learning and Skills Council (LSC)
Herefordshire and Worcestershire Business Link/Small Business Service and Chamber of Commerce
Worcestershire County Structure Plan
Central Technology Belt

Local

Wyre Forest Community Strategy – 2004 - 2014
Wyre Forest District Council Corporate Plan : 2003 to 2008
Wyre Forest District Local Plan - January 2004

