

## **Revised Core Strategy Issues & Options Paper (December 2007)**

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### **Appendix 1 - Key figures and Statistics**

### **Glossary**

## Purpose of the Revised Core Strategy Issues and Options Paper

- 1.1 Wyre Forest District Council has produced this revised paper as part of the early stages in preparing the Core Strategy Development Plan Document. The Core Strategy will provide the strategic focus for development in the District up until 2026. It is important to get it right and your views form an essential part of this.
- 1.2 This paper takes the Issues & Options Consultation a step further to identify emerging options for the District's future development. The revised paper takes account of the consultation responses received during the summer on the Core Strategy Issues & Options Paper and focuses on options that may shape the District's future. It encourages views on the broad development options identified and also suggestions for other options that you may feel have been missed.
- 1.3 Your views will help to shape the future development of the District, particularly in the formulation of preferred options for the Core Strategy, which will be consulted on during summer 2008.

## Core Strategy Context

### Introduction

- 2.1 Under the new Planning System, the Council has to replace its Adopted District Local Plan (January 2004) with a Local Development Framework (LDF). The LDF is made up of a portfolio of documents which will provide a development blueprint for the District.
- 2.2 The Core Strategy is the key strategic level document within the LDF. It will set out the broad strategy and vision for the development blueprint that will guide planning and related initiatives up to 2026. Moreover, it sets the context for the detailed parts of the LDF and the overall development strategy for the District including the broad areas where new housing and employment development will be located up until 2026. It may also, as a result of proposed changes to the LDF System, consider the allocation of a strategic site where this is central to the achievement of the strategy and where investment requires a long lead in. More details on the parts of the LDF and the timetables for their preparation are set out in the Council's Local Development Scheme.

- 2.3 The timetable for the preparation of the Core Strategy is set out below:

Key Stages	Dates
<u>Issues &amp; Options</u>	
Consultation on Issues	Summer 2007
Consultation on Options	* We are here. January 2008
Preferred Options Consultation	August 2008
Proposed Submission Consultation	April 2009
Submission to Secretary of State	August 2009
Independent Inspectors Report	May 2010
Adoption	July 2010

### **Sustainability Appraisal**

- 2.4 The Core Strategy must contribute towards achieving sustainable development, aiming to achieve a better quality of life for everybody both now and in the future. Sustainability Appraisal (SA) has been introduced to ensure that this is fully considered as an integrated part of the plan preparation process. SA is an appraisal tool which identifies and evaluates the economic, social and environmental impacts of a plan. It incorporates the requirements of the EU Directive relating to Strategic Environmental Assessment.
- 2.5 An SA Scoping Report was published for stakeholder consultation in March 2007; the responses to this were incorporated within the Initial SA Report published for consultation alongside the Issues and Options paper. The Initial SA Report tested the emerging options put forward in the Issues and Options paper against the SA Framework. Three consultation responses were received, these related mainly to the objectives and indicators used in the SA Framework. The framework will be revised for use in the Full SA Report to be published alongside the Preferred Options. For a quick reference guide to the SA process please refer to the SA leaflet available on-line at [www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk).

### **Links with other Plans and Strategies**

- 2.6 The Core Strategy is a spatial plan, which will provide a wide ranging mechanism for delivering sustainable development objectives by addressing social, environmental and economic issues and relating them to the use of land. It should be in general conformity with the Regional Spatial Strategy and have regard to the Regional Economic Strategy, Regional Housing Strategy and the Regional Transport Plan, the main aims of which are set out below. The Strategy should act as a tool for implementing other strategies and

plans that cover the District including the Community Strategy and the Local Transport Plan.

- 2.7 National and regional policy and good practice is also at the heart of this paper and full account has been taken of this.

## **Regional Policy**

- 2.8 **West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) – Phase 2 Revision:** The key aspects of the RSS2 vision are economic success, a rich culture and environmental sustainability. The Core Strategy will help to deliver this vision through the regeneration of Kidderminster and Stourport, and a focus on locating new development in sustainable locations and linking the three towns and the rural areas through a green infrastructure network. The RSS sets out the number of dwellings, the amount of retail floor space and the amount of employment development which the District should deliver up until 2026. The Draft revision to the RSS allocates 3,400 dwellings (net provision) to be completed between 2006 and 2026, this equates to an annual build rate of 170 dwellings. The District should provide 33ha of employment land and the Strategic Centre of Kidderminster should provide up to 35,000 sq m of retail floor space and 40,000 sq.m of new office development. This paper will set out the options for the delivery of these allocations.
- 2.9 **Regional Transport Plan (RTP):** The RTP aims to improve accessibility through the promotion and development of sustainable transport links, reduce the need to travel by locating new development in established areas with public transport links and improve opportunities for walking and cycling.
- 2.10 **Regional Economic Strategy (RES):** The RES aims to develop a diverse and dynamic business base and support the rural renaissance.
- 2.11 **Regional Housing Strategy (RHS):** aims to create mixed, balanced and inclusive communities which are sustainable and assist in the delivery of the urban and rural renaissance set out in the RSS. It also aims to address a variety of housing needs through the delivery of affordable housing and by ensuring that Decent Homes targets are met.

## **Local Policy**

- 2.12 **Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 2 (LTP):** The LTP provides specific policies at the local level to achieve the objectives of the RTP. More details on the policies for Wyre Forest District can be found in the Transport section of this document.
- 2.13 **Wyre Forest Matters Local Strategic Partnership:** The Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) aims to improve the quality of life in Wyre Forest by addressing several key themes. “Improving Health and Well-Being” aims to improve physical and mental health, reduce health inequalities and improve quality of life for older people. “A Better Environment for Today and Tomorrow” focuses on protecting and improving Wyre Forest District's natural and built environment, reducing waste and energy consumption and promoting cleaner, greener neighbourhoods. “Economic Success Shared by All” aims to develop the District's economy, whilst “Communities that are Safe and Feel Safe” aims to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. The Core Strategy revised Spatial Vision reflects the vision set out in the emerging SCS and will help to deliver many of the key SCS Priorities, such as neighbourhood regeneration, economic prosperity and reducing traffic congestion.
- 2.14 **WFDC Housing Strategy:** Has four main objectives; meeting affordable housing needs; tackling homelessness and providing housing options; maintaining independence of older and vulnerable people through housing and support; and improving housing conditions within private sector housing.
- 2.15 **Parish Plans:** Upper Arley, Rock and Chaddesley Corbett currently have Parish plans. The main themes across the three parishes are the provision of affordable housing, the protection of woodland and footpaths, the provision of rural public transport and the provision of adequate services and amenities.

## **Cross Boundary Issues**

- 2.16 It is important to consider the implications that the planning policies of adjoining Local Planning Authorities might have on the Wyre Forest District Core Strategy. There are a number of cross – boundary issues between the Wyre Forest District and neighbouring authorities. These include:
- Working with Wychavon DC, Malvern Hills DC and Worcester City who are producing a joint South Worcestershire Core Strategy to ensure that this considers cross-border

issues which exist between Wyre Forest District and Wychavon and Malvern Hills Districts including:

- The relationship with, and role of, Hartlebury Trading Estate and the Roxel factory which straddles the border between Wyre Forest and Wychavon (South of Hoo Farm in Kidderminster); and
- The known development pressures for an urban extension of Stourport-on-Severn into Malvern Hills District.
- Working with Malvern Hills to ensure complementary policy for the village of Clows Top which straddles the District boundary.
- Other issues include shared areas of nature conservation importance including Wyre Forest (Bridgnorth & South Shropshire), Hartlebury Common (Wychavon), and Kingsford Country Park/Kinver Edge (South Staffordshire); cross-boundary public transport services; impacts of traffic and watercourses, especially the Severn Valley.
- Finally, guided by the Regional Spatial Strategy, the District Council will need to consider economic links with nearby centres of the Black Country, Birmingham and Worcester.

In order to identify emerging cross-boundary issues, we will consult all neighbouring authorities, and will ensure that we are aware of their LDF timetables, responding to consultations where relevant.

## **Results of Core Strategy Issues and Options Consultation (Summer 2007)**

- 3.1 During summer 2007, the District Council consulted widely on an Issues and Options Paper. The Paper set out some of the key issues which the Core Strategy could address and began to identify some general options for the District's future development. The issues set out in the paper were derived from extensive evidence gathering, the Sustainability Appraisal process and from close consultation with stakeholders including the Local Strategic Partnership. A series of stakeholder workshops were held during April covering areas such as housing, transport, economy, environment and flood risk and nature and biodiversity. The topic papers and notes from these meetings are available to view at [www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk](http://www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk).
- 3.2 Consultation response to the paper was generally positive with over 1900 comments received from key stakeholders such as the Environment Agency, Government Office West Midlands (GOWM), Natural England, English Heritage, Worcestershire County

Council, Parish Councils and from many local residents and business interests. There was a general view that both the spatial portrait and vision should be broader in their scope with a greater focus on social issues. In addition, there were a number of suggestions for options to deliver the future development of the District. Detailed summaries of the responses received are available to view on the website. However feedback on the Issues & Options Paper revealed that there is:

- Strong support for emphasis on brownfield development focussed on Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn but a perception that there is a need to provide some affordable housing for Bewdley and the District's larger rural settlements.
- Strong support for retaining existing greenbelt boundaries and a general presumption against Greenfield development within the District.
- Support for focussing economic development on Kidderminster and the Stourport Road Employment Corridor, but also that employment opportunities should be provided in the rural areas to maintain their vitality.
- Significant concerns over retaining the District's distinctive landscape character, particularly impacts to the west of the District.
- Strong support for an improved bus network across the District and enhancements to Kidderminster Railway Station.
- General perception of a need to develop a greater sense of community identity in Kidderminster through providing key landmarks and urban green space.
- That the Core Strategy needs to have a greater emphasis on health, education and public security, community and cultural facilities.

3.3 In light of the comments received it was agreed that a further "Revised Issues & Options Paper" should be developed, which takes into account the numerous responses received during the initial consultation period. This resulting paper contains a revised spatial portrait, vision and objectives and puts forward a number of options for consideration and further debate.

### **How to comment on the Interim Paper**

**Details to be finalised for web based consultation with key stakeholders and respondents, including a workshop early in 2008. Please refer to consultation plan.**

## **Draft Spatial Portrait**

### **Settlement Hierarchy**

- 4.1 Wyre Forest District is situated within North West Worcestershire. Covering 75 sq. miles, it has a population of approximately 98,200, which has grown at a modest rate since 1991. The over 65 age group is significantly higher than both national and regional averages.
- 4.2 The District comprises the three towns of Kidderminster, Stourport on Severn and Bewdley, together with a rural hinterland which includes a number of small villages. The three towns form a triangle of settlements at the centre of the District separated by narrow areas of open countryside. Despite their close proximity, each has its own particular character and community identity.
- 4.3 Kidderminster (56,000) is the main centre for commerce and is recognised in the Regional Spatial Strategy as a local regeneration area. It developed rapidly in the 19<sup>th</sup> Century with the expansion of the carpet industry to become a world leading centre for carpet production. Since the 1970s the town's carpet industry has been in decline and a gradual process of economic diversification has taken place. It is one of 25 strategic centres in the West Midlands.
- 4.4 Stourport on Severn (20,000) developed as an important industrial Georgian Canal Town at the confluence of the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal and the River Severn. For over 100 years this attractive town with its riverside meadows has been a popular day trip destination for residents from Birmingham and the Black Country.
- 4.5 Bewdley (9,000) is a Georgian riverside town, which saw significant development during the 1960s. Today Bewdley is an attractive historic market town and a popular visitor attraction.
- 4.6 The District's rural settlements have a limited range of facilities and are poorly served by public transport. To the east, the larger more accessible villages include Chaddesley Corbett, Blakedown, Cookley and Wolverley. Whilst to the West of the River Severn the smaller settlements of Clows Top, Far Forest, Callow Hill, Bliss Gate and Rock provide limited services to rural residents. The rural areas are influenced by the adjacent



conurbation in terms of attractiveness for commuting and house prices here are generally high.

## **Natural Environment**

- 4.7 Topography is uniquely shaped by the Severn and Stour river valleys which flow through the town centres of Bewdley and Kidderminster respectively, before joining at Stourport-on-Severn. The District has an intricate network of main rivers, streams and pools resulting in significant flooding risks. Part of the flood zones pass through the regeneration areas of Kidderminster and Stourport where there is pressure for brownfield redevelopment.
- 4.8 The rural landscape and Severn Valley play an important supporting role to the local economy. Open countryside to the east falls within the West Midlands Green Belt. There are significant areas of lowland heathland, acid grasslands and wetlands, which make a key contribution to biodiversity. To the west the land is elevated and is dominated by the Wyre Forest ancient semi-natural woodland and the Abberley & Malvern Hills Geopark. The District is home to a number of protected species which are often found along the watercourses and in the pools and marshland areas.
- 4.9 A rich heritage is present, including buildings, conservation areas, monuments, landscapes and archaeology. The physical environment is a key factor in the quality of life for local residents and access to nature parks, open spaces and the rural hinterland is highly valued. There are some 2,800 static holiday caravans in the area, which results in a proliferation of caravan sites, particularly concentrated along the Severn Valley and to the west of the District in the Landscape Protection Area.

## **Housing**

- 4.10 There are approximately 42,000 dwellings in the District. Over 80% of new housing has been provided on previously developed sites since 1996. There has been an increase in the average density of housing developments within the urban areas of Kidderminster and Stourport. Below average wage rates result in substantial demand for affordable housing provision across the District.

## **Employment**

- 4.11 The District enjoys some self containment in employment due in part to its location to the west of the conurbation and lack of direct motorway access. However it has not enjoyed significant office based development, other than generally local service sector companies.

- 4.12 The proximity of Birmingham provides opportunities for higher order and knowledge based jobs assisted by the improving rail service from Kidderminster. Worcester City is also accessible both by rail and road. Linkages with other nearby towns, such as, Wolverhampton and Bromsgrove, are less clear due to the poor road connections and the absence of direct rail services.
- 4.13 The main focus for employment is the Stourport Road Corridor (A451) running south out of Kidderminster. Well established as a manufacturing area, it contains some modern high quality premises together with significant major brownfield redevelopment opportunities. Although the majority of employment focuses on the urban areas including Worcester Road, Hoo Farm and the Sandy Lane Industrial Estates, there are some existing rural businesses such as Rushock Trading Estate and Titan Steel Wheels, which often employ local workers and contribute significantly to the rural economy. Agriculture remains the main activity in the rural areas, with high quality productive land around Kidderminster.
- 4.14 Key attractions such as the West Midland Safari Park, Severn Valley Railway, attractive towns, villages, and landscape, and proximity to the West Midlands conurbation, make the District a popular day visitor and tourist destination.

### **Transport and Access**

- 4.15 Traffic congestion is prevalent within and between the three main towns. Kidderminster Ring Road experiences severe congestion at peak times and from visitor traffic to the safari park during the summer months. The Stourport Road Corridor is a particularly congested route. Air quality is deteriorating in the town centres and there are two designated Air Quality Management Areas (AQMAs) at Horsefair in Kidderminster and Welch Gate in Bewdley. Currently bus service coverage is poor with few high frequency routes linking to the town centres and key services.
- 4.16 Passenger numbers at both the District's railway stations – Kidderminster and Blakedown, have increased significantly in recent years. Kidderminster Station is a key gateway to the town and forms part of the core route into central Birmingham where 4 trains per hour operate. However, the station is poorly served by bus routes, is not conducive to access on foot or bicycle and has poor disabled access and facilities.

### **Quality of Life**

- 4.17 There is a complex network of communities ranging from the isolated rural areas, and market towns to the urban neighbourhoods of Kidderminster. Generally perceived to be

relatively prosperous, the District is also home to the most deprived Worcestershire ward – Oldington & Foley Park.

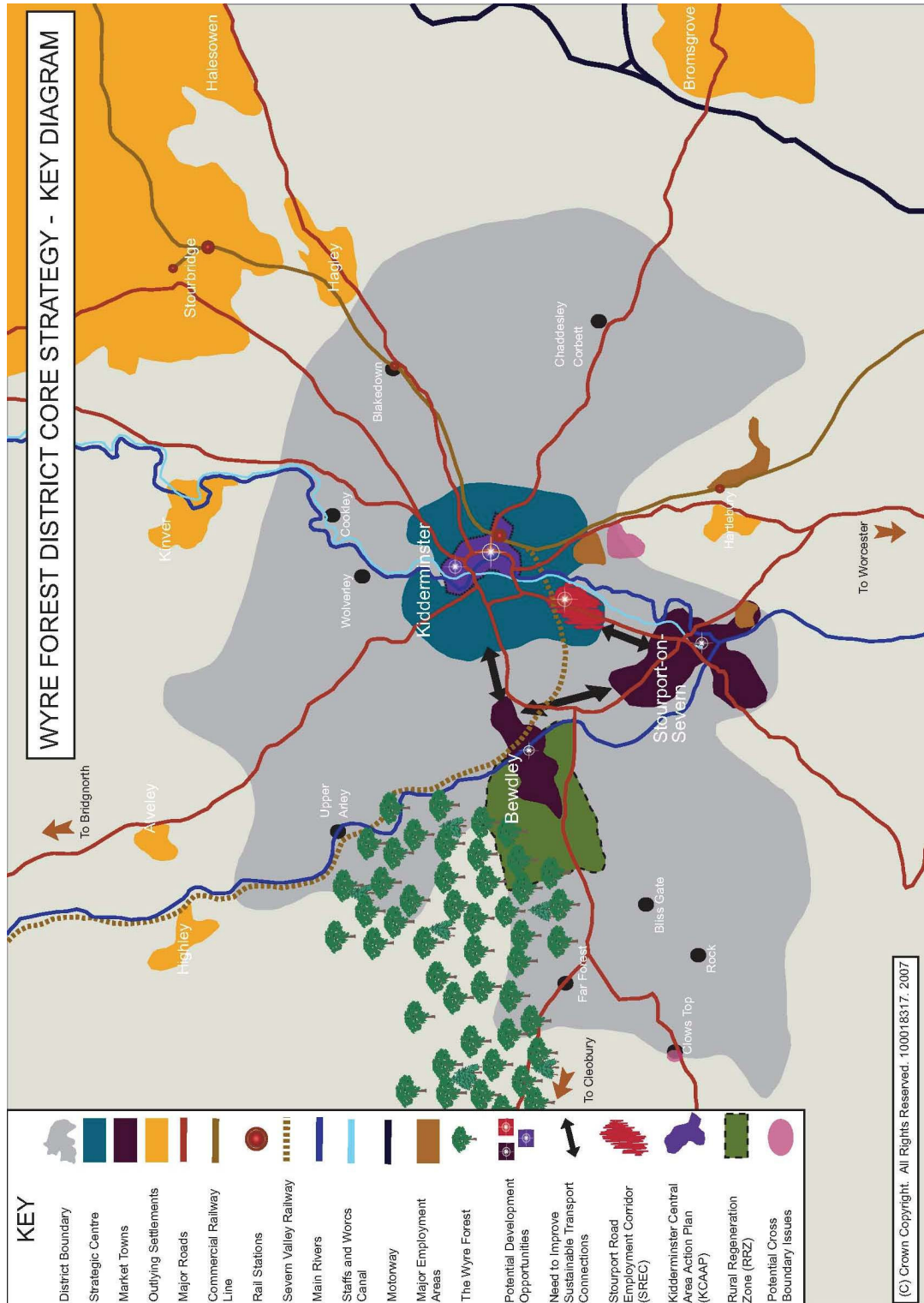
- 4.18 The local population generally enjoys good health, although some wards have levels of poorer health with a higher incidence of Chronic Heart Disease. Access to health care remains a major concern for local residents. Since Kidderminster General Hospital was downsized, residents are now required to travel further distances for A&E facilities.
- 4.19 Levels of crime are lower than the national average although there are some hotspots in the Kidderminster ward of Greenhill (which includes the town centre). Anti social behaviour is the most common offence reported. The fear of crime amongst local residents remains disproportionately high.
- 4.20 Educational attainment is lower than the regional and national averages and is particularly poor within the Oldington & Foley Park and Broadwaters Wards. The number of 16-18 year olds not engaged in education is increasing in the area.

***Note: Key figures and statistics are attached at Appendix 1 to support the Spatial Portrait.***

***1. Do you think the spatial portrait adequately identifies the key issues & challenges that face the future development of the District?***

## Key Diagram

- A revised Key Diagram has been produced taking on board response from public consultation during the summer.



- 6.1 The Spatial Vision sets out the aspirations for the type of place the Wyre Forest District will be in 2026. This revised vision has been developed in more detail in response to stakeholder feedback and also reflects the vision and priorities set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy.

### Draft Spatial Vision

- 6.2 In 2026 Wyre Forest District comprises an interactive triangle of the thriving riverside towns of Kidderminster, Stourport on Severn and Bewdley and outlying villages. The distinctive and separate identities of the three towns are maintained and enhanced. The Rivers Severn and Stour and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal together with other green infrastructure are valued links between the town centres, the surrounding countryside and villages.
- 6.3 The District's varied natural habitats and diverse landscapes are thriving, offering a range of outdoor interests, contributing to local educational opportunities and sustainable tourism. Residents and businesses rely increasingly on energy from renewable sources, particularly biomass. They also find it convenient to recycle and minimise waste. The threat of flooding is reduced due to a programme of flood plain management, softer landscaping and extensive use of Sustainable Drainage Systems in new developments.
- 6.4 Kidderminster has benefited from sustainable brownfield regeneration which recognises its unique carpet industrial heritage. The attractive and accessible town centre fosters community pride, providing many opportunities to enjoy urban greenspace. It serves the District's needs with quality leisure, learning, health care, shopping facilities and employment opportunities. Kidderminster supports a vibrant visitor economy and its evening economy is flourishing, providing a choice of quality commercial leisure facilities, restaurants and cultural opportunities.
- 6.5 Stourport-on-Severn offers convenient leisure, learning, healthcare and shopping facilities to its residents and its canal and riverside assets continue to be a key visitor attraction. Its public realm is enhanced through the restoration of its unique heritage including the canal basins and the regeneration of Bridge Street.
- Bewdley remains a thriving market town which meets the local community's needs. The town's historic character is preserved and its flourishing riverside environment offers many opportunities for visitor attraction.

- 6.6 To the east of the District, the larger villages of Wolverley, Cookley, Blakedown and Chaddesley Corbett continue to provide local residents and the surrounding rural hinterlands with key local services. Limited services remain viable to serve their local communities in settlements to the west such as Rock, Clows Top and Far Forest.
- 6.7 The District's local population has a choice of housing, catering for a variety of needs and offering opportunities to live in sustainable communities. Attractive, affordable housing is accessible in the three towns and larger rural settlements. Existing housing offers a comfortable environment for residents and supports sustainable lifestyles.
- 6.8 A vibrant and sustainable economy exists providing a range of jobs across the service, retail, research and development sectors, with the infrastructure and a skilled population in place to support it. The urban areas of Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn centred on the Stourport Road Employment Corridor, offer attractive, accessible and high quality employment locations. There has been significant growth in innovative manufacturing, recycling, and sustainable technologies.
- 6.9 Many rural residents now have the option to work from home. Farming retains an important role in local food and biofuel production and helps to conserve the District's varied landscape character. Sustainable tourism contributes significantly to the rural economy.
- 6.10 The three towns and rural areas are well served by a sustainable transport network that delivers high levels of accessibility to key services and attractions. Local residents benefit from a variety of transport choices and no longer have to rely on the private motor car. The urban environments experience reduced levels of traffic congestion and air quality within the town centres has improved. Kidderminster Rail Station acts as a high quality gateway to the District providing convenient interchange for bus users, pedestrians and cyclists alike. Frequent rail links to the nearby Regional Centre of Birmingham and the sub-regional centre of Worcester are provided.
- 6.11 Crime and disorder in the District remain low and local residents feel safe. Residents have the opportunity of healthier lifestyles with enhanced access to clean and attractive green spaces, facilitated by a comprehensive network of walking and cycling routes. Young residents can access a variety of activities and facilities in the three towns and can make better use of community facilities in the rural villages. Educational achievement rates have

improved, particularly in the more deprived wards. Local residents are more skilled through improved access to training opportunities. As they get older, residents' good health and well being continues through easy access to quality health care and community facilities. Vulnerable people are able to remain longer in decent homes.

***2. Do you agree with this Spatial Vision for the district's development up until 2026 or do you feel there are aspects it doesn't address?***

- 7.1 The following spatial objectives will be used to deliver the vision. They have been revised to reflect stakeholder comments and in particular to provide a more strategic focus.

### **Revised Spatial Objectives**

1. To provide a range of high-quality, housing options for residents of all ages to achieve sustainable communities.
2. To diversify and grow the District's economy, emphasising the development of the service sector, high tech industry and sustainable tourism.
3. Continue to develop Kidderminster as the strategic centre for the District and to enhance the unique roles of Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley as market towns.
4. Support the viability of the District's villages and rural areas and assist in opportunities for diversification.
5. Safeguard and enhance the District's unique landscape character, Green Belt and historic environment.
6. Safeguard natural resources, minimise waste and increase recycling, especially the recycling of land and buildings.
7. Protect and enhance the District's rich and varied biodiversity, geodiversity and water resources, including within the three town centres.
8. Ensure the District is equipped to adapt to and mitigate the impacts of climate change by ensuring that future developments are low or zero-carbon and that they do not increase flood risk to new and existing property.
9. Improve the District's air quality, particularly in the town centre areas of Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley.
10. Support the development of an accessible, integrated, sustainable transport network to provide an attractive alternative to the car for all residents and visitors.
11. Help foster community pride and healthy lifestyles in the District through supporting and involving its many local communities in both the urban and rural areas.

12. Maximise community cohesion and safety and ensure new developments positively contribute towards crime reduction, improved healthcare and education across the District for the benefit of all residents.

### ***3. Is there anything missing from the Revised Spatial Objectives?***

## **Key issues and options for policy choices**

### **Strategic approach to growth for the District**

- 8.1 The Draft Revision (Phase 2) to the Regional Spatial Strategy allocates 3,400 dwellings (net of losses through demolitions) to be completed between 2006 and 2026, this equates to an annual build rate of 170 dwellings. The District is required to provide 33ha of employment land and the Strategic Centre of Kidderminster may need to provide up to 35,000 sq m of retail floor space.
- 8.2 Kidderminster is identified in the Regional Spatial Strategy as a Local Regeneration Area, where the aim is to improve longer term economic prospects. Areas for new housing development are to be accommodated within and adjacent to other urban areas and market towns of the West Midlands. Locations for new development across the region need to be capable of creating balanced opportunities for housing and employment and should already have a range of local services.
- 8.3 The District Council carried out a broad Housing Land Capacity survey for the three main towns focussing on potential brownfield sites, which could be brought forward in the medium to long term through the LDF. This work indicates that the level of provision arising from the submitted draft revision to the RSS could be accommodated on urban brownfield sites, in sustainable locations, principally with the towns of Kidderminster and Stourport on Severn. Kidderminster is the principal town and potentially is the most sustainable settlement for future development with some key regeneration opportunities within and adjacent to the town centre. Stourport on Severn is also a sustainable settlement with a reasonable range of local facilities and a number of brownfield sites offering development potential adjacent to the town centre.



***Policy Options:***

***Option SD) 1***

- Accommodate 3,400 dwellings (RSS Draft Revision) on allocated urban brownfield sites principally within Kidderminster & within and to the east of Stourport-on-Severn.

***Option SD) 1a***

- Accommodate a significant element of growth at a specific brownfield strategic site in Kidderminster on land at Churchfields/Clensmore Street/Stoney Lane.

- 8.4 Provision above this level of dwellings could be accommodated if a reasonable allowance for future unidentified windfall sites is made, however, it may require consideration of a limited number of small urban Greenfield sites and possibly, as a reserve, the Areas of Development Restraint identified in the Adopted Local Plan.

***Option SD) 2***

- Accommodate an increased number of dwellings through a limited number of small urban Greenfield sites and as a reserve the ADRs identified in the Adopted Local Plan. Development above these levels would be more likely to necessitate greenfield urban extensions and a review of the adopted Green Belt boundary.

***Option SD) 3***

- Accommodate higher levels of housing growth through Greenfield urban sites or extensions including a review of the adopted Green Belt Boundary.

***4. Do you have any comments on the options put forward for the strategic approach to growth within the District up until 2026?***

**Key Issues derived from the Spatial Portrait**

- 8.5 The following inter-related key issues and challenges facing the future development of the District have been identified from the Revised Spatial Portrait. They are grouped under 4 categories; Sustainable Communities, Regenerating the Local Economy; Climate Change and the Natural Environment and Health & Well Being. However all key issues are inter related.

## **Sustainable Communities**

1. Retain focus on Kidderminster as the strategic centre for the District and conserve and enhance the character and community identity of each town.
2. Retention of services within the District's rural settlements.
3. Providing a balanced housing market with a higher proportion of affordable homes across the District.
4. Protecting and enhancing the District's unique historic character.

## **Regenerating the Local Economy**

5. Providing opportunities to diversify and grow the local economy.
6. Addressing increasing traffic congestion within the District's three towns and reducing the need to travel.

## **Climate Change and the Natural Environment**

7. The need to balance regeneration with flood risk and mitigation for climate change.
8. Safeguarding the District's diverse landscape character and the greenbelt.
9. Maximising opportunities to safeguard and improve biodiversity within new development.

## **Health & Well Being**

10. Providing the environment to offer residents the choice of healthier lifestyles.
11. Helping local residents and visitors to feel safe, particularly within the three town centres and some of the most deprived neighbourhoods.
12. Improving access to community, cultural, leisure and educational services for all sections of the community.
13. Meeting the needs of an ageing population.

**5. Are there any key issues which you feel are not identified here?**

## **Policy options for addressing key issues**

- 9.1 Suggestions for policy options are identified under sub headings for each key issue. These are based on the issues & options consultation undertaken during the summer. The Council is particularly interested to hear of further suggestions for assessment as policy options from consultees.

## Sustainable Communities

**Key Issue 1: Retain focus on Kidderminster as the strategic centre for the District and conserve and enhance the character and community identity of each town.**

- 9.2 National policy places emphasis on the progression of sustainable economic development. A key element is the focus of development on town centres and the RSS recognises Kidderminster's strategic role in providing a focus for retail, leisure, business and commercial development. Kidderminster is one of 25 strategic centres within the West Midlands and provides the main focus of economic development in the District.
- 9.3 As identified in the Spatial Portrait, the Wyre Forest District is considerably diverse with particular distinctive characteristics including the three towns – Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley; the Wyre Forest; historical rural settlements and landscapes shaped by the Wyre Forest and the River valleys of Severn and Stour; the Staffordshire & Worcestershire Canal and the basins in Stourport-on-Severn and the carpet industry heritage.
- 9.4 The Core Strategy will emphasise these diverse characteristics and help to deliver the vision by maximising opportunities for the regeneration of Kidderminster and Stourport, retaining a focus on locating new development in sustainable locations. It will seek to preserve the distinctive character of the three towns and link them with the rural areas through a green infrastructure network.
- 9.5 Kidderminster town centre will continue to be a focus of major change. Given the economic and social importance of the central area a Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan DPD will be produced under the LDF. This will have a key role to play in clarifying the regeneration potential of the area.

### ***Policy Options:***

- 1i)** Re-use redundant and low grade employment sites adjoining the canal and rivers within the town centres for alternative uses such as housing to enhance the regeneration potential of the waterways.
- 1ii)** Improve links to Kidderminster town centre from Comberton Hill, the rail station and Park Lane.
- 1iii)** Realise the opportunity presented by older industrial areas adjacent to Stourport-on-Severn town centre.

**1iv)** Seek contributions from new town centre developments towards public art to enhance local identity.

**6. What are your views on the policy options for enhancing the role and character of the three main towns?**

**Key Issue 2: Retaining services within the District's rural settlements.**

9.6 All of the District's rural settlements are influenced by the adjacent conurbation in terms of attractiveness for commuting. Consequently house prices are generally the highest in the District and there is a need for affordable housing. The range of facilities within the settlements is generally restricted and most look to the three towns for many services. The rural areas are poorly served by public transport. In sustainability terms the scale of development should be significantly restricted particularly when compared to potential market demand.

**Policy Options:**

**2i)** Allocate small sites for live work units in the rural settlements to reduce the need to travel and support local services.

**2ii)** Allocate small sites for mixed use development in the larger villages

**2iii)** Restricting change of use for community uses and local services within the rural settlements.

**2iv)** Encourage the shared use of community facilities

**7. What are your views on the policy options for retaining rural services?**

**Key Issue 3: Providing a balanced housing market with a higher proportion of affordable homes across the District.**

**3i) Affordable Housing**

9.7 Access to the housing market across the District has become more difficult for new households increasing the need for affordable housing, particularly within Bewdley and the rural areas. Current policy seeks up to 30% affordable housing on sites comprising 15 or more dwellings or if the site is larger than 0.5 hectares. However, the South Housing Market Area (SHMA) assessment concludes that the net affordable housing need across the SMHA (both social rented and shared ownership) is projected at 175 dwellings per annum. Current committed sites in the District are expected to produce about 60 new affordable dwellings per annum over the next 5 years. Clearly the SMHA demonstrates a

shortfall in the provision of affordable homes and more comprehensive policy options will need to be considered for its delivery in the Core Strategy.

- 9.8 Bewdley provides only a restricted range of facilities and very limited employment opportunities. For most higher order services the town is served by Kidderminster. In view of the reduced range of services and limited potential availability of brownfield sites, it would be appropriate to consider restricting provision just to meet local needs with an emphasis on affordable housing. To meet local community needs for more affordable housing options within the rural areas alternative options to the current rural exceptions policy need to be considered.

***Policy Options:***

**3i)a** Increase the % of affordable housing provision on market sites to 50% and reduce the site size threshold to below 15 dwellings. (EG: below 10 dwellings for Kidderminster & Stourport and below 5 for Bewdley and the Rural Areas)

**3i)b** Allocate some 100% affordable housing sites within the three towns of Kidderminster, Stourport and Bewdley to sites with a capacity of less than 30 dwellings.

**3i)c** Reduce threshold to 10 dwellings for on site provision and an off site contribution in lieu of affordable housing to be made for sites of less than 10 dwellings.

**3i)d** Restrict housing provision in Bewdley to meet local needs with an emphasis on affordable housing.

**3i)e** Maximise the re-use of empty homes for affordable housing.

**3i)f** Focus some new housing on the larger villages. Allocating small sites specifically for affordable housing as part of a rural exception site policy.

**3i)g** Allocate redundant farm buildings for affordable residential development.

***8. What are your views on the policy options for affordable housing provision?***

***3ii) Gypsy and Traveller site provision***

- 9.9 The District's gypsy population is mostly settled and site provision is currently concentrated in the south of Stourport on Severn in the long established Lower Heath/Sandy Lane area which provides relatively good accessibility to the town's services. A Gypsy and Traveller Accommodation Assessment has been undertaken during 2007 for the South Housing Market Area which establishes a need for additional pitches mainly

within the Stourport-on-Severn area. The assessment recommends 1-2 new sites preferably located in the Stourport area.

***Policy Options:***

**3ii)a** Locate further gypsy site provision to the South of Stourport-on-Severn in the Lower Heath area.

**3ii)b** Identify an alternative location for gypsy site provision, with easy access to services and facilities, in the Stourport-on-Severn area.

**3ii)c** *Identify an alternative location for gypsy site provision, with easy access to services and facilities elsewhere in the District.*

***9. What are your views on the policy options for Gypsy and Traveller site provision?***

**3iii) Housing Density and Type**

- 9.10 In applying a density policy there are a number of factors to take into account such as future accessibility, characteristics of the area and the availability of infrastructure including greenspace. For Wyre Forest District the household projections to 2026 indicate that nearly all the growth is expected to arise from one person households. In recent years, flats have become more prevalent, accounting for 1 in 3 completions in the District. However, in 2001, flats only made up 11% of the housing stock.
- 9.11 Current policy seeks a mix of dwelling types and sizes on sites of 15 or more dwellings to include a proportion of one or two bedroom units. It also seeks to maximise the benefit of accessible, sustainable locations through securing housing densities of at least 70 dwellings per hectare within Kidderminster Town Centre; at least 50 dwellings in areas adjacent to the Town Centre and the railway station; and within Stourport on Severn Town Centre. For other areas in these towns adjacent to high frequency bus corridors a minimum density of 40 dwellings is required. Elsewhere in the District a minimum of 30 dwellings applies. This has led to an increase in the average density of housing developments in the District and a number of high quality schemes have been built at densities above the minimum levels. However the emphasis on brownfield redevelopment within the town centres and increased densities needs to be carefully balanced with the need to retain greenspace.

- 9.12 The 2001 census showed that nearly 10% of the District's resident working population worked mainly at or from home. Numbers are expected to continue to rise with the growth of high speed broadband and the change in office working practices and the implementation of 'work-life' balance policies. This trend could have implications for the future type of housing needed within the District in order to provide space for home working.

***Policy Options:***

**3iii)a** Secure housing densities of at least 70 dwellings per hectare within Kidderminster town centre, with at least 50 dwellings per hectare in areas adjacent to the town centre and the railway station and within Stourport town centre.

**3iii)b** Require a minimum of 30 dwellings per hectare elsewhere in the District.

**3iii)c** Seek a mix of dwelling types and sizes on sites of 15 or more dwellings to include a proportion of 1 or 2 bedroomed units.

**3iii)d** Prevent the redevelopment of large houses and their gardens to provide higher density developments within the three towns.

***10. What are your views on the policy options for housing density and type?***

**Key Issue 4: Safeguarding and enhancing the District's unique historic character.**

- 9.13 Wyre Forest District contains a variety of heritage interests, including buildings and structures, conservation areas, monuments, landscapes and archaeology. At April 2006, there were six Grade I, twenty-five Grade II\* and 659 Grade II lists entries on the statutory lists, covering over 900 individual buildings and structures. The Hereford and Worcester Gardens Trust has identified 31 landscaped parks and gardens of interest within the District. Safeguarding and enhancing the distinct historic character of the three main towns and the wider historic environmental resource is important in delivering wider social and economic benefits. The Core Strategy will promote a positive approach to the protection and conservation of historic buildings and landscapes

**Local Distinctiveness**

- 9.14 Local Distinctiveness is defined as "the positive features of a place and its communities which contribute to its special character and sense of place". The historic environment makes a fundamental contribution to the local distinctiveness of the area, underpinning

the unique character of the District's towns and villages but also rural landscapes. The District is considerably diverse with particular distinctive characteristics including:

- The three historic towns – Kidderminster, Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley
- Wyre Forest
- Historic landscape character
- Staffordshire and Worcestershire canal and the basins in Stourport
- Carpet Industry heritage

***Policy Options:***

**4i)** Link the historic towns and landscape along the Severn Valley from Ironbridge to Stourport into a new designation of the Severn Valley Regional Heritage Park.

**4ii)** Protect and enhance the historic town and village centres.

**4iii)** Reuse and renewal of key historic buildings and structures.

***11. What are your views on the policy options for enhancing historic character?***

## **Regenerating the Local Economy**

**Key Issue 5: Providing opportunities to diversify the local economy.**

**5i) Employment land requirements**

9.15 The Draft Revision (Phase 2) to the Regional Spatial Strategy sets out the employment land requirement for the District up until 2026. The RSS indicates that the District will need to make provision for 33ha of employment land throughout the plan period. Additionally, there is a requirement for a continuing 5 year reservoir of readily available employment land to be planned for, with the RSS proposing this at 11ha. This takes the total employment land allocation for the District, up until 2026, to 44ha. Furthermore, it is proposed that the Strategic Centre of Kidderminster will need to provide 40,000 sqm (Gross) of office space over the plan period.

9.16 The RSS proposes that an additional 25,000 sqm (Gross) of comparison retail floorspace may be required in Kidderminster up until 2021, with a further 10,000 sqm (Gross) during the period 2021-2026.

9.17 The RSS recognises Kidderminster's strategic role in providing a focus for retail, leisure, business and commercial development. It is one of 25 strategic centres within the West Midlands and provides the main focus of economic development in the District. The



WMRES identifies Kidderminster as a town whose economy is undergoing, or has undergone, significant economic restructuring – it is classed as a Second Tier Spatial Focus. The WMRES also advocates the Market Towns Programme, which supports the ongoing regeneration of Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley. These two towns provide an important role for residents, businesses and visitors alike, whilst also supporting the rural hinterlands to their south and west.

- 9.18 Challenges facing Kidderminster include below average household incomes, below average skills levels and significant regeneration opportunities. It is therefore essential that local partners can demonstrate a coherent regeneration strategy for the town. The strategy will need to address the development of underused and vacant sites into high quality employment areas, attracting new companies; encouraging people to stay in the area and connecting people to economic opportunity through enhancing accessibility, skills and training.
- 9.19 The main focus for employment within the District is the Stourport Road Employment Corridor (SREC) that runs to the south of Kidderminster. The area is well-established and contains a number of significant redevelopment opportunities. The host Ward (Oldington and Foley Park) is the most deprived ward in Worcestershire and is one of the most deprived 10% nationally. There are a number of underused and derelict sites including the former British Sugar site, which at 24ha is one of the largest sites in the region and the former RomWire site. The focus on this corridor reflects its importance as a manufacturing area and its potential in offering major brownfield redevelopment opportunities. It is also relatively central to the District's main population centres.

***Policy Options:***

- 5i)a** Promote the main focus for economic development on Kidderminster town centre and the SREC
- 5i)b** Identify the former British Sugar Site – Stourport Road as a strategic employment site expected to accommodate a significant element of employment growth up to 2026.
- 5i)c** Direct retail development to Kidderminster Town Centre
- 5i)d** Allocate a business development capable of accommodating units of up to 1858 sq.m within or adjacent to Kidderminster Town Centre.
- 5i)e** Retain and enhance major sites such as Sandy Lane Industrial Estate for employment development within Stourport-on-Severn.

**5i)f** Promote the development of small scale business and start up units within the three main towns.

**5i) g** Enhance the roles of Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley as market towns, which supply local service, leisure and produce across a range of activities.

## ***12. What are your views on the policy options for employment land provision?***

### **5ii) Rural Economy**

9.20 Due to the rural and semi-rural nature of a large part of the District, the rural economy is significant. Although the majority of employment is focussed on the nearby urban areas of the District, there are a number of small-scale rural businesses that exist within the area, which often employ local workers and contribute to the rural economy. Important rural employment sites include:

- Rushock
- Lea Castle
- Bewdley Business Park
- Cursley
- Cookley

The Council is keen to promote the Lea Castle site at Cookley for employment uses. In particular due to its park land setting, there is potential to promote it as an attractive high technology business park.

9.21 There are increasing opportunities for economic diversification into the sustainability and waste recycling sectors, in addition to tourism and home working and the continued development of the service sector. The recent success of the 'Grow the Wyre' lottery funding bid highlights the prospect of environmental and forestry related technologies growing particularly in the rural west of the District. The £2m+ project proposals includes biomass fuels and enhanced visitor and education facilities and could have a catalytic impact particularly on the rural areas around the Wyre including the area adjacent to Bewdley Business Park. However, this will need to be carefully balanced with the impact on the landscape character and biodiversity of the area.

### ***Policy Options:***

**5ii) a** Safeguard rural employment sites for local employment and the expansion of small businesses.

**5ii) b** Seek to develop the former Lea Castle Hospital site for employment uses and in particular high technology industries.

**5ii) c** Allocate specific areas in the District for small scale biomass processing.

**5ii) d** Adopt a more flexible approach to farm diversification opportunities.

**5ii) e** Promote a more flexible approach to live-work units within the District's rural areas.

**13. What are your views on the policy options for the District's rural economy?**

**5iii) Commercial Leisure & Evening Economy**

9.22 Despite being the smallest of the three main towns, Bewdley currently perhaps has the most vibrant evening economy with a focus on food and drink. It is anticipated that Stourport's offer will significantly improve following the completion of the canal basins refurbishment and opening up of the canal basins through the Bridge Street link. In Kidderminster, there is perhaps the greatest challenge requiring a joined up approach to tackle environmental, economic and social challenges. There is significant opportunity to tap into the visitor economy with over 250k visitors per annum visiting the Severn Valley Railway in Comberton Hill for example. The provision of a sustainable public transport system, which runs in the evenings, will be key to the success of Kidderminster as an attractive evening destination for family entertainment.

**Policy Options:**

**5iii)a** Promote Worcester Street as a leisure quarter, to develop into a major commercial leisure and evening economy venue, that ensures the town makes the most of its unique setting.

**5iii)b** Seek the integration of Weaver's Wharf into Kidderminster town centre to link food and drink aspirations to improve the evening economy's offer.

**5iii)c** Seek contributions from new town centre developments to facilitate sustainable evening public transport services.

**14. What are your views on the policy options for commercial leisure & evening economy?**

**5iv) The Visitor Economy**

9.23 Tourism in the Wyre Forest area has been growing steadily - West Midlands Safari Park, the Severn Valley Railway and Bodenham Arboretum are all key tourism attractions.

There are also proposals for a carpet museum in Kidderminster town centre. The value of the tourist industry to the District's economy is clear and there is considerable potential for growth in the short stay holiday market. To cope with increasing tourism enhancing facilities and accommodation for visitors is vital. At present, Kidderminster does not offer a budget hotel for visitors and there is considerable potential to locate a hotel in the town centre, which would improve accommodation choice for visitors and also contribute significantly to the town's evening economy.

- 9.24 There is scope to enhance sustainable tourism opportunities in the District. The area has some formidable natural assets such as the Wyre Forest, River Severn, the Abberley & Malvern Hills Geopark representing key opportunities to access outdoor pursuits. The visitor economy must support and protect the landscape character of the District - supporting the role of local produce and sustainable transport access such as the Sustrans National Cycle Network, which runs through the District. The canal network already attracts many visitors enjoying narrow boating holidays and there is scope to enhance its role in sustainable tourism, particularly with regard to improvements to the canal basins at Stourport-on-Severn.

***Policy Options:***

**5iv)a** Allocate possible sites for a new budget hotel development within Kidderminster town centre.

**5iv)b** Develop a series of leisure/outdoor activities focused on the District's natural assets which are well connected by public transport.

**5iv)c** Promote the inland waterway network as a key visitor attraction.

**5iv)d** Improve sustainable transport links between Kidderminster town centre the Safari Park and Severn Valley Railway.

***15. What are your views on the policy options for the visitor economy?***

**Key Issue 6: Addressing increasing traffic congestion within the District's three towns and reducing the need to travel**

**6i) Tackling traffic congestion and traffic management**

- 9.25 Traffic congestion is rapidly increasing within the District and is prevalent within the three main towns. In particular, Kidderminster Ring Road experiences severe congestion at peak times. This has adverse impacts on the environment and also impinges on the local

economy. The District's urban environments, in particular Kidderminster, are focussed on the needs of the motor car. Kidderminster's ring road, although facilitating traffic movement, is experiencing increasing congestion levels and has a collar effect on accessibility to the town centre by non-car modes. Inevitably, this has an adverse impact on quality of life for local residents and visitors.

- 9.26 The urban areas of the District are experiencing declining air quality and the District currently has two designated Air Quality Management Areas at Horsefair in Kidderminster and Welch Gate in Bewdley. Traffic fumes are a large contributing factor to the poor air quality in these areas. There are also other borderline air quality areas, such as Stourport Town Centre and St Mary's Ringway. Worcestershire LTP2 includes proposals and funding for traffic management schemes within these areas. A key consideration for future development proposals is to develop a holistic approach to ensure that they don't increase adverse effects on congestion and air quality levels.
- 9.27 There is a need to provide realistic and suitable, sustainable alternatives to private car travel throughout the District to reduce congestion levels. Policy options are outlined under provision of a sustainable transport network.

***Policy Options:***

**6i)a** Support and progress traffic management scheme proposals at Welch Gate, Bewdley and Horsefair, Kidderminster.

**6i)b** Major new residential developments located nearby to AQMAs or borderline AQMAs will be required to provide transport infrastructure and robust travel plans to demonstrate improved air quality within these areas.

**6i)c** Reduce the impact of Kidderminster Ring Road through future development proposals and improving the environment for pedestrians and other vulnerable road users.

***16. What are your views on the policy options for tackling traffic congestion?***

***6)ii) Enhancing accessibility for everyone***

- 9.28 Enhancing accessibility for residents is crucial for the District and can have a profound impact on quality of life issues. This is particularly important for those residents in areas where many households do not have access to a car such as the Oldington and Foley Park and Areley Kings Wards. Currently, there is an over reliance on the private motor car

to access key services such as healthcare, education, employment and retail centres. This is entrenched by the lack of any realistic transport alternatives and an ailing public transport system.

- 9.29 The future development strategy for the District should seek to continue to deliver housing and services in locations which reduce the need to travel. Emphasis for new development should focus on the more accessible areas of the District with the greatest potential for public transport use. The LDF needs to promote opportunities for improving transport choice and should seek to locate developments in areas which are fully accessible by a full range of transport choices. Worcestershire County Council has developed accessibility mapping analysis for the District which will act as a useful tool for assessing the accessibility levels of proposed new development.

***Policy Options:***

**6ii)a** Locate new development within easy reach of existing services.

**6ii)b** Encourage higher density development in areas where there are high levels of public transport accessibility.

**6ii)c** Safeguard existing facilities and services particularly within the rural areas.

**6ii)d** Sensitive siting of new rural development to take advantage of existing rural transport options, services and facilities to help make them sustainable.

***17. What are your views on the policy options for enhancing accessibility?***

***6iii) Providing and sustaining a sustainable transport network***

**Enhancing rail opportunities**

- 9.30 There has been a rapid increase in passenger numbers at both of the District's railway stations – Kidderminster and Blakedown, in recent years. This forms part of the core route into central Birmingham where 4 trains per hour operate. There is potential to increase this to 6 trains per hour in the medium term following completion of a signalling improvement scheme. Chiltern Rail provides an important commuter service to London Marylebone. However, the facilities and modal integration at Kidderminster Rail Station are currently inadequate. The station is poorly served by bus routes, is not conducive to access on foot or bicycle and has very poor disabled access. The car park is well used and is currently running at around 80-85% occupancy.

- 9.31 Network Rail is developing plans that could provide a new modular station within the timescale of the Core Strategy. It is vital that these proposals take full account of integration with other modes of transport and encourage people to access the station by alternative modes. The provision of a new and improved railway station is a key priority for the District and the LDF will need to play a supporting role for this.
- 9.32 The Stourport-on-Severn – Hartlebury former railway line is currently safeguarded as a sustainable transport route. In the long term there may be potential to re-open this railway line for light railway purposes to link with the national rail network. Future opportunities may also arise to introduce a light commuter service from Bewdley to Kidderminster along the privately operated Severn Valley Railway line.

#### Bus Network

- 9.33 The District's bus network is inadequate and has suffered decline with a legacy of service cutbacks and poor patronage. It suffers from poor reliability due to highway congestion particularly affecting radial routes into Kidderminster, irregularity of rural services and poor interchange with Kidderminster Rail Station. There is a critical need to consider road space reallocation for bus priority along key routes. Currently there are no prioritisation measures in place to deliver a reliable service adding to the poor image of buses within the District. The LDF should ensure that the bus network forms a key consideration when planning new developments and that bus priority measures should be incorporated. It should support the Worcestershire Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy (WITPS), which seeks the development and provision of a high quality public transport system. There is a need to consider how bus networks can be developed to support the sustainability of existing housing development and businesses and also future development proposals. This will play a key role in helping to regenerate the local town centre economies through providing transport choice and reducing congestion to maximise town centre access.

#### Enhancing the cycling and walking network

- 9.34 Public health considerations are important in the District. Obesity levels within the area are increasing and Chronic Heart Disease (CHD) is rising in some wards - this has a strong correlation with more sedentary lifestyles. More active modes of travel for utility trips, such as cycling and walking should be encouraged to change travel patterns. Such measures will help to reduce the impacts of traffic congestion and have a positive benefit on the health of the community through increasing opportunities for physical exercise.

This parallels with provision of improved leisure and open space opportunities. The District's green river and canal corridors have great potential for enhancing sustainable transport routes and opportunities for physical exercise. Opportunities for cycling and walking for both utility and leisure purposes are currently limited in the District. This is directly related to the over reliance on the private car leading lack of investment in such infrastructure. The Wyre Forest Cycle Strategy identifies a strategic network of cycle routes and the LDF should endorse these aspirations for a cycle network.

#### Providing transport choice for rural residents

- 9.35 The rural areas both to the West and East of the District are very poorly served by public transport and some areas have no bus service at all. This contributes to the District's dependence on the private motor car and can isolate some rural households – particularly those who only have 1 car per household.
- 9.36 The LDF should support the development of an innovative and sustainable rural transport network. Greater transport choice within the District's rural areas will also help to boost the rural economy through assisting with diversification. Improved public transport in these areas will also help to support the role of sustainable tourism.

#### Car parking standards

- 9.37 Any future development strategy for the District should take full account of parking standards to reduce the overall reliance on the private car. This needs to be balanced with enhancing short stay parking in all three town centres to promote regeneration and retain their viability. Long stay parking – particularly for commuters, could be limited to encourage more sustainable modes of travel, however this should take into consideration the creation of a competitive office environment within Kidderminster town centre.

#### ***Policy Options:***

**6iii)a** Provide a new modular station at Kidderminster Rail Station taking full account of integration with other modes of transport.

**6iii)b** Continue to safeguard the line of the Stourport – Hartlebury former railway line as a sustainable transport route to link to the national rail network.

**6iii)c** Possibility of rail connectivity with the Severn Valley Railway line at former British Sugar Site to connect to the national network.



**6iii)d** Require major new developments, particularly out of centre, to incorporate bus priority measures or contribute towards improving the bus network as required by the Worcestershire Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy.

**6iii)e** Require major new developments to contribute towards new or improved walking and cycling facilities.

**6iii)f** Require new developments within the District's rural areas to contribute towards improved public transport services to cover the rural areas.

**6iii)g** Identify sites for and provide Park & Ride facilities for the three towns

**6iii)h** Seek contributions from major new developments to soften the town centre ring road and key radial routes to improve pedestrian connectivity.

**6iii)i** Introduce a local car and cycle parking standards policy focussing on short stay parking and based on the availability of sustainable public transport.

***18. What are your views on the policy options for providing a sustainable transport network?***

**6iv) Strategic transport links to aid regeneration**

9.38 Relative inaccessibility and an ageing infrastructure are particular challenges for the sustainable economic development of the area. The regeneration of key employment and town centres sites within the District such as the Stourport Road Employment Corridor and the Horsefair, will require the delivery of improved transport links.

9.39 The Adopted Local Plan safeguards the proposed line of the Stourport Relief Road. Estimated to cost nearly £50 million, this scheme is included in the indicative list of post 2004 transport schemes contained in the West Midlands Regional Funding Allocations. The County Council has undertaken a Wyre Forest Transportation Study looking at future movement patterns particularly in and around the Stourport to Kidderminster corridor. This will be used to evaluate the benefits of existing and potential proposals. A key issue to consider is whether the Stourport Relief Road should continue to be safeguarded on the Core Strategy Key Diagram given the funding difficulties or would a better solution be provided through a Stourport Road/A449 link road facilitated through the former British Sugar Site. This would need to be very carefully balanced with the potential for adverse environmental impact on interests of acknowledged importance such as the Wilden Marshes SSSI.

- 9.40 The Local Development Scheme identifies a Kidderminster Central Area Action Plan which incorporates regeneration proposals for the Horsefair. Strategic transport infrastructure provision will form an important part of regeneration proposals and this will need to be considered during the Core Strategy's timescale. Other town centre challenges include improving the pedestrian environment to the ring road and radial routes in addition to key public places.

***Policy Options:***

**6iv)a** Provide a Stourport Relief Road to relieve traffic congestion in the historic town centre and assist with regeneration.

**6iv)b** Provide a Stourport Road/A449 Hoo Brook link road to facilitate the regeneration of the SREC .

**6iv)c** Provide a new link road as part of regeneration proposals for the Horsefair area of Kidderminster.

**6iv)d** Provide systematic bus priority measures along the Stourport Road Employment Corridor.

**6iv)e** Provision of a park and ride facility at former British Sugar Site.

***19. What are your views on the policy options for strategic transport links?***

## **Climate change and the natural environment**

**Key Issue 7: The need to balance regeneration with flood risk and mitigation for climate change.**

### **Climate change – recognising our role**

- 9.41 The UK's climate is expected to become warmer by between 0.5 - 3 degrees by the 2050s and heavy winter precipitation may become more frequent. Inevitably new development proposals within the District will have major implications for resources in relation to energy supply, waste production, transportation and air quality and flood risk. The proofing of developments to design for and manage the risks associated with climate change is a key issue to be addressed in the Core Strategy.

### **7i) Flood risk and mitigation**

- 9.42 The District has an intricate network of rivers, streams and pools and the risk of flooding is a very important issue within the District. One of the key issues for future development is

to avoid inappropriate development within the flood zones and it is particularly important to balance this with the need for regeneration within Kidderminster and Stourport. A large part of the flood zones pass through these main settlements and there is pressure for development within these areas. Rural areas with watercourses such as Wolverley and Wribbenhall were subject to severe flooding episodes this summer. The District Council is undertaking a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment to provide a sound basis for planning new development.

- 9.43 Other types of flooding are also prevalent; these include surface-water run-off, this can lead to problems with foul water drainage and can adversely affect watercourses. Future development proposals should take full account of their impact on surface water run off. Construction methods will need to take full account of the impacts arising from climate change, such as increasing flood risk and subsidence and incorporate appropriate mitigation measures. Natural floodplains in the District will need to be safeguarded and could provide benefits as part of a wider greenspace plan to contribute towards improving health and biodiversity opportunities.

***Policy Options:***

**7i)a** Require the incorporation of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SUDs) into new developments.

**7i)b** Secure developer contributions from new developments within the flood zones towards flood alleviation and protection schemes.

**7i)c** Identify locations for restoring functional flood plain areas to address climate change and improve biodiversity and amenity.

**7i)d** Ensure new developments incorporate systems to recycle rainwater

<b><i>20. What are your views on the policy options for flood risk and mitigation?</i></b>
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***7ii) Renewable energy***

- 9.44 The District is currently heavily reliant on fossil fuels with low usage of energy from renewable sources. In 2003 it released 670,000 tonnes of carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions. The average dwelling within the District emits 5.304 tonnes of CO<sub>2</sub> per year. The Energy White Paper (2003) aims to reduce CO<sub>2</sub> emissions by 60% by 2050 with real progress by 2020. In order to contribute to this locally, new development proposals will need to reduce their overall energy requirements through energy efficient design and layout; and incorporate on-site renewable energy generation to contribute to meeting regional

renewable energy targets which are set out in the West Midlands Regional Energy Strategy. There are a number of different ways in which energy can be generated from renewable sources and the most appropriate method will differ between developments. Currently there are very few examples of renewable energy schemes within the District. The Core Strategy will establish a minimum target for renewables within new development proposals.

- 9.45 Development strategies for the future will need to embrace new renewable technologies whilst carefully balancing this with the impacts on the District's varied landscapes. A key issue therefore is what type and scope of renewable energy production might be appropriate and viable within the District?

***Policy Options:***

**7ii)a** The Core Strategy should set a minimum target for renewable energy production in all new major developments.

**7ii)b** The Core Strategy should set a target for carbon emissions reduction by 2026.

**7ii)c** Identify locations where renewable energy schemes could be located within the District.

**7ii)d** Set out a timetable for achieving Code for Sustainable Homes Level 6 ahead of the national target date of 2016.

***21. What are your views on the policy options for renewable energy?***

***7iii) Materials recycling and waste minimisation.***

- 9.46 Waste minimisation and recycling is a major issue facing the District. Recycling rates have been low in the past but are improving. Future development proposals should contribute to waste minimisation and materials recycling.

***Policy Options:***

**7iii)a** Require new development proposals to utilise on-site or locally sourced construction materials.

**7iii)b** Require all new developments to provide facilities for waste recycling.

***22. What are your views on the policy options for materials recycling and waste minimisation?***

**Key Issue 8: Safeguarding the District's diverse landscape character and the greenbelt.**

- 9.47 The Spatial Portrait (page 7) highlights the importance of the District's Landscape Character with the key elements including: the River Severn and Stour Valleys, the Wyre Forest ancient semi-natural woodland, undulating sand lands, significant areas of lowland heath land, lowland acid grasslands and wetlands. The Abberley and Malvern Hills Geopark covers the majority of the District West of Kidderminster and includes the towns of Bewdley and Stourport on Severn. The District has a very rich landscape character, which is considered by both its residents and visitors to be one of its key assets. The surrounding rural landscape and the River Severn Valley play an important supporting role to the local economy. In recent years there has been a proliferation of mobile home and caravan sites within the Landscape Protection Area and there is growing local concern over the impact on landscape character. Local landscape designations such as 'Landscape Protection Areas,' which have historically covered the western part of the District are to be phased out and replaced with Landscape Character Assessments. This advocates a more holistic approach, which incorporates biodiversity, geodiversity, the historic environment and the human elements of the landscape.

***Policy Options:***

- 8i)** Produce a detailed Landscape Character SPD through the Local Development Framework.
- 8ii)** Use the Historic Landscape Characterisation project and Landscape Character Assessments to underpin a criteria based approach to safeguard and enhance landscape character.
- 8iii)** Continue to protect discrete areas via local landscape designations.
- 8iv)** Restrict the further development of caravan, mobile home and chalet sites to the west of the District.

***23. What are your views on the policy options for safeguarding landscape character?***

**Key Issue 9: Maximising opportunities to safeguard and improve biodiversity within new development.**

- 9.48 The District contains a rich and diverse variety of nature conservation interests. It is home to a number of protected species. These are often found along watercourses and in the

District's pools and marshland areas. Development proposals should seek to enhance and safeguard the District's biodiversity and geodiversity.

### **Balancing regeneration needs with enhancing biodiversity**

- 9.49 The focus on brownfield redevelopment within the town centres and increasing housing densities mean it will be increasingly important to enhance biodiversity in green spaces and amongst urban developments so that it forms a key aspect of regeneration. In particular the value of the Rivers Severn & Stour as wildlife corridors should be maximised in regeneration proposals and protected in the network of green infrastructure. The canal corridor can also play a role in the creation, protection and enhancement of the natural environment, ecology and biodiversity, however this needs to be balanced with its wider regeneration role in creating a more attractive and safe environment in which communities can live, work and play. Kidderminster town centre has historically been industrial and functional in form, yet it has some formidable natural assets which often go unnoticed. There is a need to provide better access to high quality green space within the town centre area and make more of the assets including the river channels, canal, wooded escarpments and formal parks and spaces.
- 9.50 The remediation of contaminated land is an essential aspect of the regeneration process and can help to improve biodiversity opportunities within the urban areas. The District has some important water resources including the Rivers' Severn and Stour and the Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal and an extensive underground aquifer. Many of these water resources have an important recreational role. Major parts of the District are underlain by the Sherwood Sandstone major aquifer. This is particularly vulnerable to the effects of pollution from contaminated land.

### **Policy Options:**

- 9i)** Require all new major developments to make a contribution towards on or off site biodiversity projects.
- 9ii)** Ensure new developments have adequate gardens, including shared gardens for flatted developments.
- 9iii)** Safeguard existing allotments and provide for new sites within the urban areas.
- 9iv)** Incorporate green roofs into new developments.

## **24. What are your views on the policy options for enhancing biodiversity?**

## Health & Wellbeing

**Key Issue 10: Providing the environment to offer residents the choice of healthier lifestyles.**

### **10i) Providing Healthcare facilities**

- 9.51 Access to local healthcare facilities is an important issue for residents given the downgrading of Kidderminster Hospital and the requirement to travel further afield to access hospital facilities. It is important that existing facilities are maintained and enhanced in the three towns and that access to healthcare in the District's villages and rural areas is improved. The District Council will look to work closely with the Worcestershire PCT to put health at the heart of the regeneration agenda. During the Core Strategy's timeframe pressure on health care facilities is likely to increase due to the ageing population.

#### ***Policy Options:***

**10i)a** Seek contributions towards new and improved healthcare facilities from major new residential developments in the District.

**10i)b** Work with the Primary Care Trust to increase the capacity of existing primary healthcare resources.

**25. What are your views on the policy options for providing healthcare facilities?**

### **10ii) Linking with the Health Agenda**

- 9.52 The provision of open space and sports facilities has strong links with health, particularly obesity. There are positive links between the provision of open space and sports facilities, including linear open spaces to promote walking and cycling, and improved health. Children should be able to walk and cycle to school safely in order that good habits are formed early and continue into adulthood.

#### ***Policy Options:***

**10ii)a** Provision of better walking and cycling networks as integral parts to new developments.

**10ii)b** Require major new residential developments to incorporate homezones and encourage the development of homezones in existing residential areas.

**26. What are your views on the policy options for promoting the health agenda?**

**10iii) Accessing Green Space**

- 9.53 Within the principal urban areas of Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn there are a number of strategic parks. There is also a network of green space within the urban areas although these seem fragmented despite the presence of potential connectors including rivers, the canal and pockets of semi-natural habitat. Consultation with stakeholders has identified the need to provide improved access to greenspace within these areas and to establish a clear network, particularly for the principle town of Kidderminster where the town centre is perhaps overly dominated by the ring road. There is also a need to promote opportunities for improving biodiversity and living landscapes within these urban environments.
- 9.54 The District's rivers and waterways are important recreational routes. There is great scope in the future to enhance their environmental roles as strategic green corridors as part of the wider regeneration of Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn. Natural floodplains will also form important greenspaces in the District, which can also act as green lungs to help promote the health agenda and mitigate against the impacts of climate change.

**Policy Options:**

**10iii)a** Establish a green space plan for the District.

**10iii)b** Enhance the environmental role of the rivers and waterways as strategic green corridors

**10iii)c** Protect and enhance natural floodplains as important greenspaces.

**27. What are your views on the policy options for accessing green space?**

**Key Issue 11: Helping local residents and visitors to feel safe, particularly within the three town centres and some of the most deprived neighbourhoods.**

- 9.55 Although Wyre Forest is a relatively safe area there are particular areas that are more susceptible to criminal activity and anti-social behaviour particularly focussed on the urban wards and town centres. A complex relationship exists between crime and social factors such as poor housing and design, unemployment and ill health. Although crime levels are generally low, the fear of crime remains disproportionately high. For quality of life to



improve people must feel safer living, working and visiting the District. There are obvious links with improving the public realm in our urban areas here. In particular the Kidderminster Ring Road has had a severance impact on the local communities and the pedestrian subways heighten the fear of crime amongst residents.

- 9.56 The Core Strategy and LDF can assist in delivering safer places through including policies to design safer environments by providing opportunities for natural surveillance and in-built security. On a broader scale places can be planned for maximum levels of vitality with people presence throughout the day and night providing surveillance opportunities. Providing activity and multi-functional areas that meet the needs of all residents including young people can also help deliver improvements.

***Policy Options:***

- 11i)** Ensure new development complies with West Mercia Constabulary's Designing Out Crime Standards wherever possible.
- 11ii)** Planning for a range of uses in the town centres to promote natural surveillance.
- 11iii)** Providing more accessible facilities for the District's younger residents.
- 11iv)** Providing viable alternatives for people to access Kidderminster Town Centre other than the pedestrian subways.

***28. What are your views on the policy options for reducing the fear of crime?***

**Key Issue 12: Improving access to community, cultural, leisure and educational services for all sections of the community.**

**12i) Education & Learning**

- 9.57 Education provision has recently undergone a significant reorganisation based on a new two-tier system of primary and secondary schools. New secondary schools are identified as the top priority for funding under the Building Schools for the Future Initiative. Schools will be expected to develop links with their local communities through extended schools initiatives, children's centres and shared use of facilities. New housing developments will need to provide necessary contributions to extend or enhance local education provision. There are pockets of acute deprivation in educational attainment within the District specifically Kidderminster where part of the Oldington & Foley Park Ward is 16<sup>th</sup> worst out of a total 32,000 areas in the UK., The Core Strategy should support the important role of education and training providers in regenerating Kidderminster building on the successes

of local institutions such as Kidderminster College and the Oldington & Foley Park Pathfinder. Kidderminster College enjoys a synergy with the performing arts and Information Communications Technology. It plays an important role in vocational learning for self employment. .

***Policy Options:***

**12i)a** Support the extended schools initiative and the shared use of school facilities.

**12i)b** Continue to seek planning contributions towards local education provision from new housing developments.

**12i)c** Enhance the role of Kidderminster College and links with Worcester or Wolverhampton University.

<b>29. What are your views on the policy options for education and learning?</b>
--

**12ii) Accessing, Community, Cultural and Leisure Facilities**

9.58 The District has a complex network of communities from the rural areas to the urban neighbourhoods of Kidderminster. However, community and cultural facilities are limited within some areas. Residents within the rural areas and some outlying housing estates such as Spennells in Kidderminster may find it more difficult to access such facilities, which can lead to a lack of community identity.

9.59 The Core Strategy should support an inclusive approach to increasing participation in learning and cultural activity. There are some excellent cultural facilities available in the District, which should be safeguarded, including the Rose Theatre on Kidderminster's outskirts. However, currently Kidderminster town centre does not have a strong cultural sector and it is considered that this would help to promote vitality and enhance the town's evening economy. Similarly cultural opportunities are scarce in the District's villages and more use could be made of existing community facilities

***Policy Options:***

**12ii)a** Make more efficient use of existing community facilities for shared use purposes and wider community benefit.

**12ii)b** Promote the development of hubs where residents can access a range of facilities.

**12ii)c** Seek planning contributions towards the provision and improvement of community facilities

**12ii)d** Allocate a cultural quarter focussed on arts and learning in Kidderminster town centre as part of its redevelopment proposals.

**12ii)e** Safeguard community facilities within the District's villages and promote their use for cultural opportunities.

**30. What are your views on the policy options for the provision of community, cultural and leisure facilities?**

**Key Issue 13: Meeting the needs of an ageing population.**

9.60 The District has an ageing population profile as identified in the revised Spatial Portrait. This results in the potential for significant growth in older person households which may necessitate increased demand for housing and specialist accommodation for the elderly in future years.

9.61 The location of such accommodation needs to be chosen with great care taking into consideration ease of access to local shops, medical facilities, social and other amenities. The provision of specific housing schemes for the elderly and vulnerable people should be assessed as needs. Opportunities for individuals to lead independent lives should be maximised and a range of housing options, including making existing homes warm, safe and accessible for older people need to be further considered.

**Policy Options:**

**13i)** Establish a % of homes to be built to lifetime homes standards and a % to be fully accessible.

**13ii)** Require all new homes to be built to lifetime homes standards.

**13iii)** Ensure that all ground floor apartments are fully accessible and that lifts are provided to upper floors.

**13iv)** Allocate sites within the three towns where facilities, services and public transport are accessible, specifically for housing and specialist accommodation for the elderly.

**31. What are your views on the policy options for meeting the needs of the District's ageing population?**

## **Monitoring and Implementation Framework**

- 10.1 The Core Strategy will need to include a monitoring framework with clear objectives for achieving delivery. By ensuring strong association with the Community Strategy and Corporate priorities, implementation should be via well-defined objectives. Monitoring will include measures such as Corporate Performance Assessment and the Annual Monitoring Report. A monitoring framework will be developed during the Preferred Options stage in summer 2008. The submitted Core Strategy will contain clear information on how it will be implemented and monitored and will include a monitoring implementation plan that identifies specific targets.
- 10.2 The Monitoring Framework will provide a range of indicators, base line information and targets, linked to the policies and options being developed. Some key questions that the Monitoring Framework and AMR will need to answer include:
- Are policies achieving their objectives and in particular are they delivering sustainable development?
  - Have policies had unintended consequences?
  - Are the assumptions and objectives behind policies still relevant?
  - Are the targets being achieved?
- The findings from this data collection will then be used to inform reviews of the existing Development Plan Documents or highlight a need for a new document.

***32. Do you have any comments on the proposals to include a monitoring and implementation framework?***

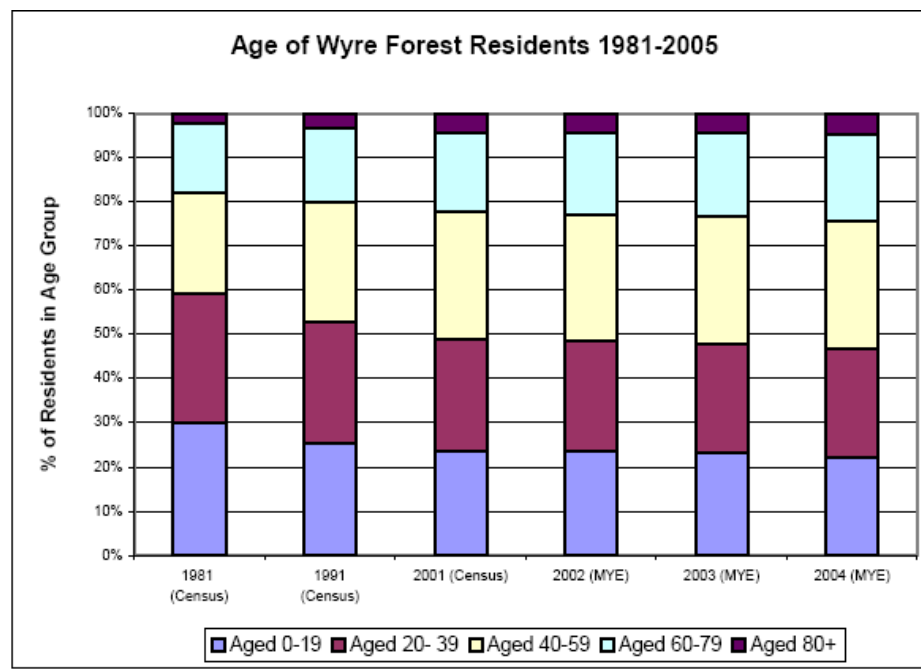
## Appendix 1: Key Figures and Statistics

### District Demographics

#### Population Age and Structure

The table below displays population change between 1981 and 2004. The chart shows that the district's population is ageing. The % of 0-39 year olds residing in the district has decreased, while the % of residents aged over 40 has increased. There has been a notable increase in the % of residents who are aged 80 and over.

Total District Population	1981	1991	2001	2002	2003	2004
	91,169	94,814	96,970	97,400	97,900	97,000

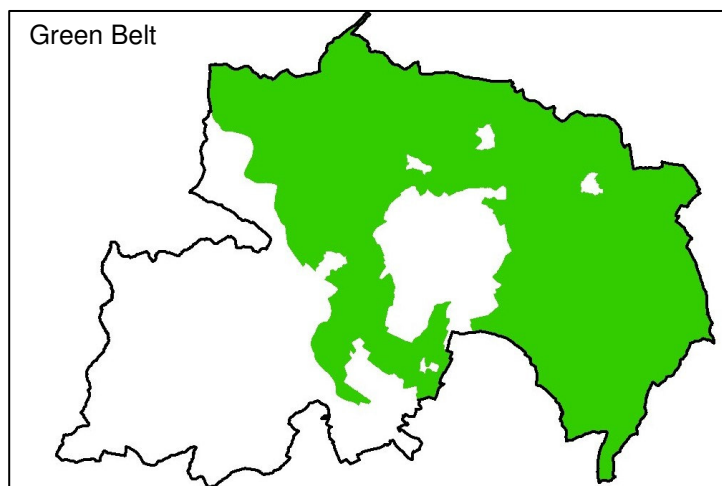


(Source: [www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk](http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk) and WFDC)

### Natural Environment

#### Green Belt

The map below indicates the areas in the District designated as part of the West Midlands Green Belt.

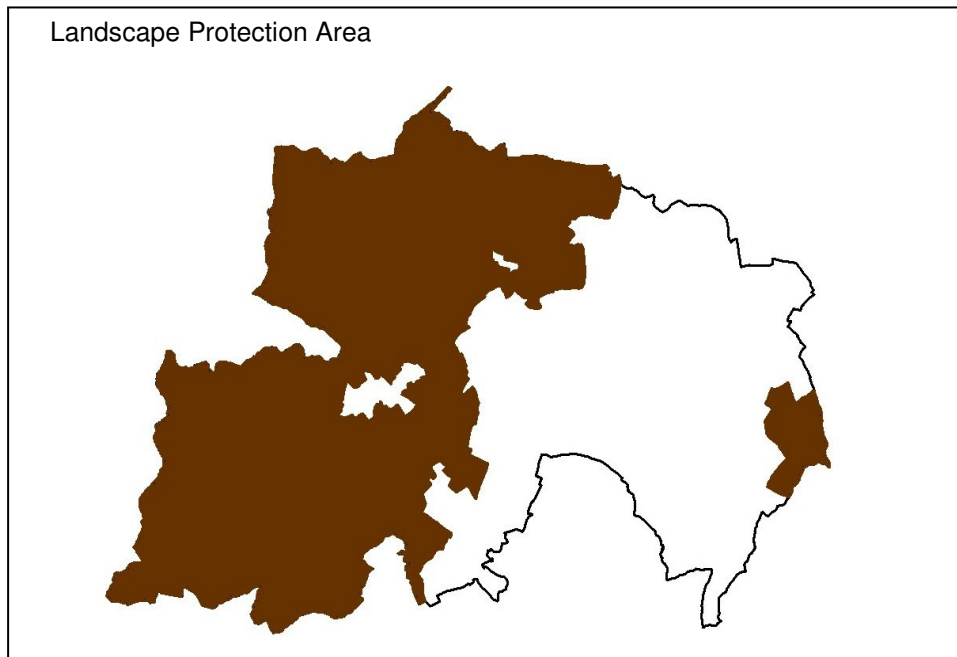


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Source: Wyre Forest District Adopted Local Plan 2004

## Appendix 1: Key Figures and Statistics

### Landscape

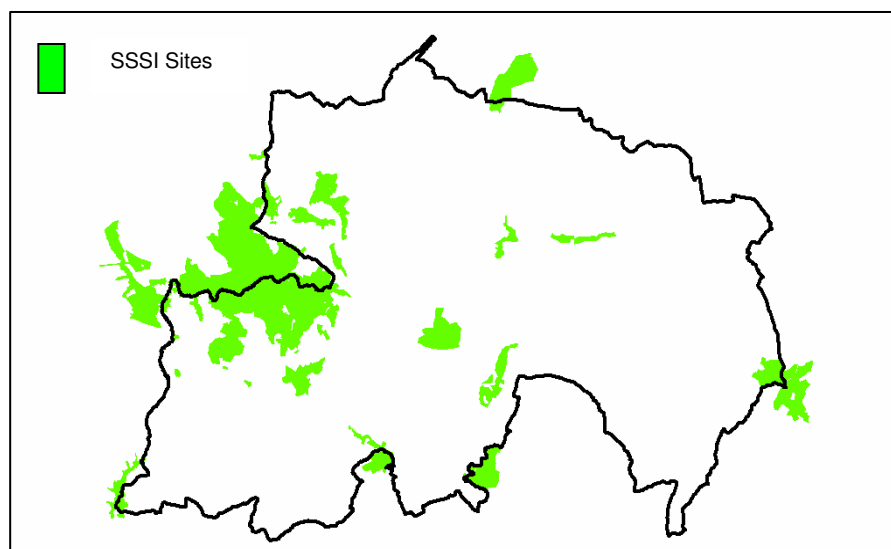
The designations shown in the maps below originate from the first local definition of areas of high quality landscape which was undertaken in 1957.



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Source: Wyre Forest District Adopted Local Plan 2004

### Sites of Special Scientific Interest

The district contains a rich variety of nature conservation interests. A number of areas of national importance are found within the district with 6% of the land area designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). A variety of habitats are found including broadleaved mixed woodland, neutral grassland, acid grassland and heathland. The largest such designation is that of the Wyre Forest itself.



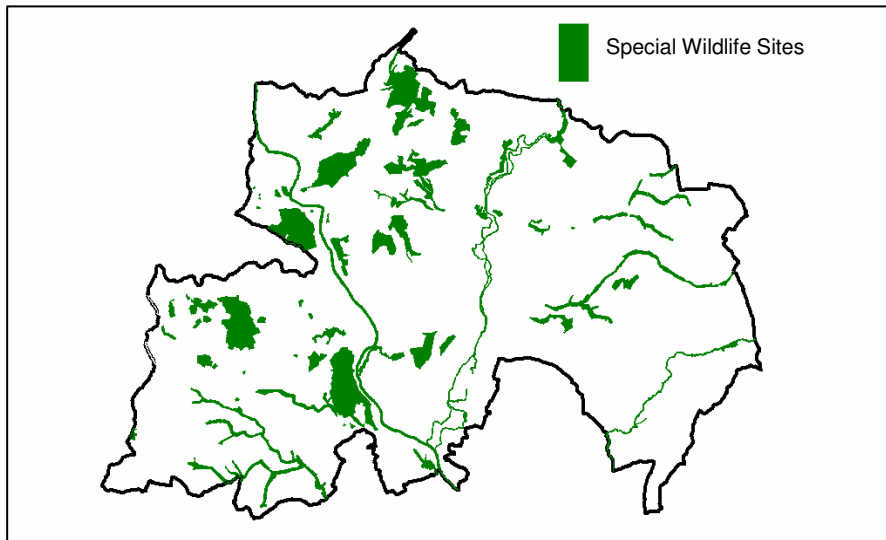
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Source: Wyre  
Forest District  
Adopted Local  
Plan 2004

### Special Wildlife Sites

The District has a large number of SWSSs, which are particularly concentrated to the West of the River Severn and to the North of Kidderminster. They show a strong correlation with the designated Landscape Protection Area. In contrast there are relatively few sites to the east of

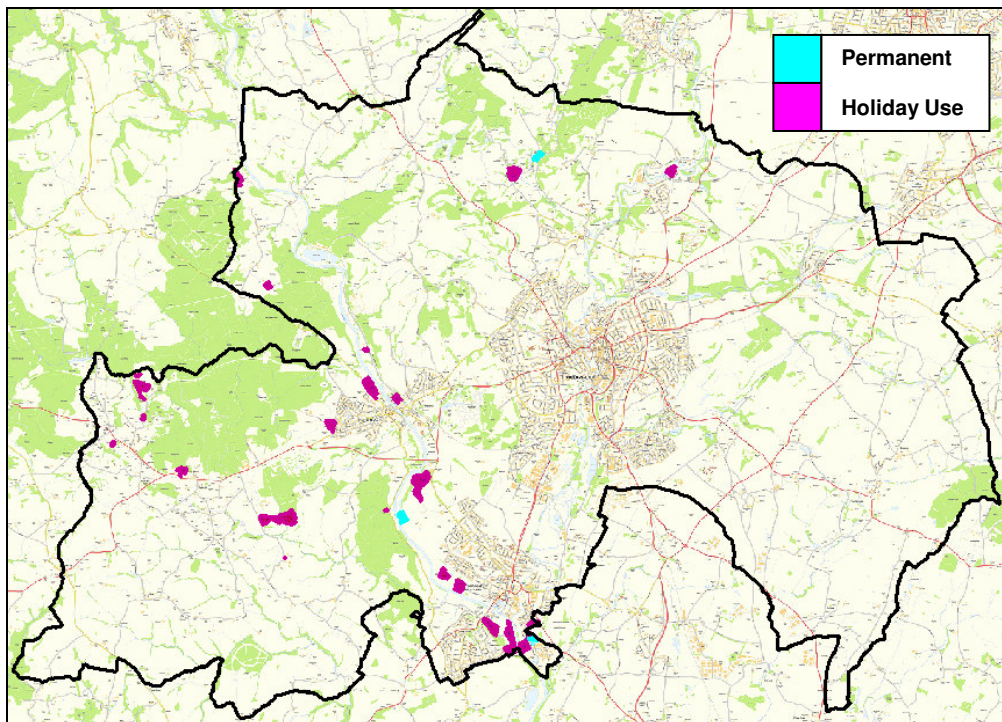
## Appendix 1: Key Figures and Statistics

Kidderminster, which is washed over by Green Belt. (It should be noted that WWT is currently undertaking a review of all SWSs and that this data should be available shortly).



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Source: Wyre Forest District Adopted Local Plan 2004

### Caravan Sites



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Source: Wyre Forest District GIS

The District currently has 211 caravans that are licensed for use 12 months of the year. The majority of these are situated within two caravan parks, Severn Bank Caravan Park in Stourport on Severn (86) and Kinverdale Park, Kingsford Lane, Wolverley (104). There are also in excess of 2750 caravans licensed for holiday use. The period for permitted use of these caravans ranges from 6 to 12 months.

## Appendix 1: Key Figures and Statistics

### Housing

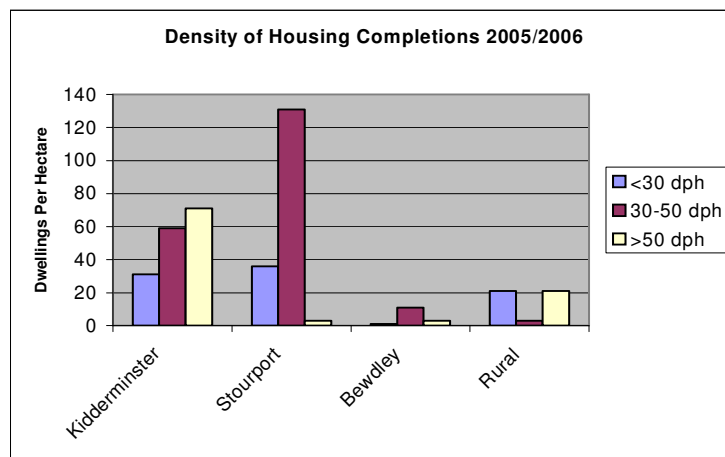
#### Average House Prices

Property Type	West Midlands	Worcestershire	Wyre Forest
Terraced	£121,982	£144,567	£130,838
Semi Detached	£149,774	£172,914	£157,350
Detached	£275,378	£291,880	£255,711
Flats/Maisonette	£124,176	£125,998	£113,395

Source: Land Registry Average Prices Oct 05-Sept 06 (2006)

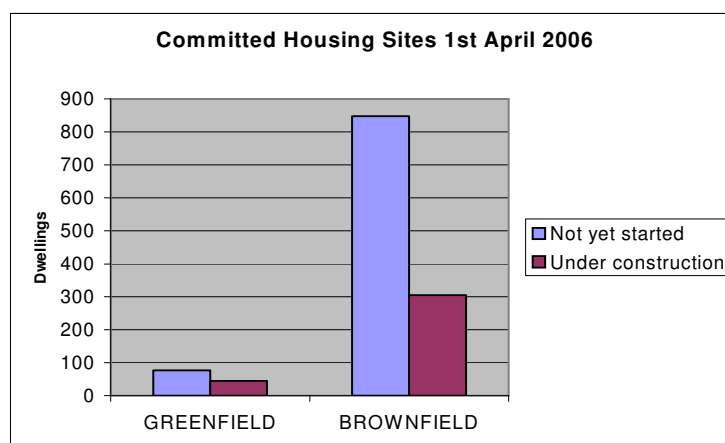
#### Average Density of New Development

During 2005/06 there were 391 new dwellings completed in the district. 3 in every 4 dwellings completed in 2005/06 were at a density of at least 30 d.p.h.



(Source: Wyre Forest District Council Residential Land Availability Report)

In 2005/06 83% of completions were on brownfield sites. 90% of houses under construction, with permission or a local plan allocation at April 2006 were on brownfield sites.



(Source: Wyre Forest District Council Residential Land Availability Report)



## Appendix 1: Key Figures and Statistics

### Employment

#### Unemployment Percentage

Although Wyre Forest's unemployment is higher than the County's, the District is performing well when compared to the West Midlands and to England. Unemployment in the District fell from 2.5% in January 2000 to 2.2% in January 2007. Both the regional and national unemployment rates have fallen during this time but began to increase again at the start of 2006.

Date	England	West Midlands	Worcestershire	Wyre Forest
January 2000	3.3	3.7	2.3	2.5
January 2001	2.8	3.4	2.0	2.2
January 2002	2.7	3.1	1.7	2.0
January 2003	2.6	3.0	1.8	2.0
January 2004	2.5	3.0	1.7	2.0
January 2005	2.2	2.7	1.6	1.7
January 2006	2.5	3.2	2.0	2.2
January 2007	2.6	3.4	2.0	2.2

(<http://www.nomisweb.co.uk>)

#### Employment Percentage by Sector

	Total no.	% in Wyre Forest	% in Worcs	% in England
Agriculture, hunting and forestry and fishing	725	1.5	2.1	1.5
Mining and Quarrying	51	0.1	0.1	0.3
Manufacturing	11,967	25.4	20.2	14.8
Electricity, gas and water supply	359	0.8	0.8	0.7
Construction	2,915	6.2	6.3	6.8
Wholesale and retail trade, repairs	8,714	18.5	18.4	16.9
Hotels and catering	2,041	4.3	4.3	4.7
Transport, storage and communication	2,415	5.1	5.2	7.1
Financial Intermediation	1,091	2.3	3.1	4.8
Real estate, renting & business activities	4,853	10.3	12.3	13.2
Public admin & defence	1,903	4.0	4.9	5.7
Education	3,142	6.7	7.7	7.7
Health and social care	4,966	10.5	10.4	10.7
Other	2,019	4.3	4.2	5.2

(Source: Census 2001)

The above table provides a breakdown of employment by industrial sector for persons aged 16-74. The largest employer in the Wyre Forest District, in terms of sector, remains the manufacturing industry.

#### Employment Sector over Time

	Wyre Forest employee jobs		Wyre Forest %		Worcester-shire %		West Midlands %	
	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004	2003	2004
Total employee jobs	34,081	35,574						

## Appendix 1: Key Figures and Statistics

	Wyre Forest employee jobs		Wyre Forest %		Worcester- shire %		West Midlands %	
<b>Full-time</b>	22,390	22,475	65.7	63.2	66.1	65.3	68.6	68.0
<b>Part-time</b>	11,690	13,099	34.3	36.8	33.9	34.7	31.4	32.0
<b>Manufacturing</b>	7,255	7,050	21.3	19.8	18.7	18.3	18.0	16.6
<b>Construction</b>	1,515	1,547	4.4	4.3	4.4	4.6	4.3	4.3
<b>Services</b>	24,844	26,535	73.0	74.6	76.2	76.3	76.3	77.8
<b>-Distribution, hotels &amp; restaurants</b>	9,566	9,852	28.1	27.7	25.7	25.1	23.8	24.8
<b>-Transport &amp; communications</b>	1,115	1,244	3.3	3.5	4.0	4.0	5.6	5.4
<b>-Finance, IT, other business activities</b>	4,539	4,934	13.3	13.9	17.3	17.0	16.5	17.3
<b>-Public admin, education &amp; health</b>	8,061	8,961	23.7	25.2	23.6	24.8	25.6	25.8
<b>-Other services</b>	1,563	1,544	4.6	4.3	5.7	5.4	4.8	4.5
<b>-Tourism-related</b>	3,386	2,875	9.9	8.1	8.6	7.5	6.9	7.4

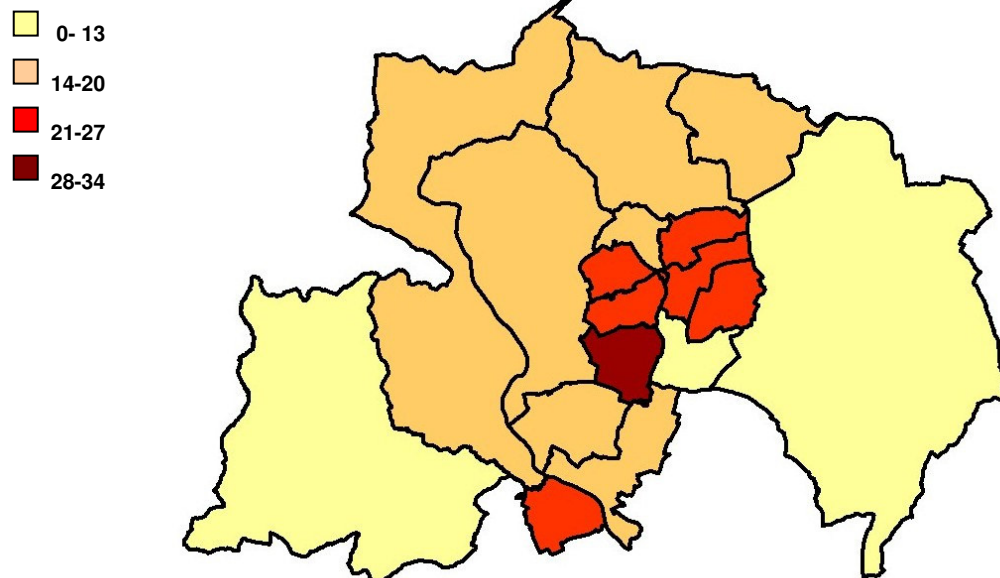
(Source: Annual Business Inquiry employee analysis Dec.2004.)

The above table shows how the Wyre Forest economy has changed in the twelve months since December 2003. The number of jobs has risen by nearly 1,500 but most of these have been part-time. The service sector has gained almost 1,700 jobs, whilst manufacturing has seen a loss of 200 jobs. Manufacturing now accounts for just below 20% of local jobs, whereas in 2001 it accounted for more than 1 in 4 jobs. However, 6 of the 10 largest employers are in the manufacturing sector, including Brintons carpets, Sealine Industries (luxury boat-builders) and Titan Steel Wheels (Source: Chamber of Commerce).

## Transport & Access

### Car Ownership Levels

Key – Percentage of Households with no Car



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Source: 2001 Census via  
<http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

The above map indicates the percentage of households, by ward, with no car. The ward with the highest percentage (i.e. where the least cars are owned) is Oldington and Foley Park.

## Appendix 1: Key Figures and Statistics

### Rail Transport within the Wyre Forest

Worcestershire Station Usage – Annual Journeys 1994 – 2005

Station	1994	2005	% Change
<b>Kidderminster</b>	645,517	1,038,129	61%
<b>Blakedown</b>	23,894	45,802	92%

Source: Worcestershire Local Transport Plan 2006 – 11 (WCC) p.97

Kidderminster is the 2<sup>nd</sup> busiest station in Worcestershire, carrying over a million passengers a year, with a significant growth having been recorded over the past 11 years. This increase can be attributed to the continual improvement of services from Kidderminster to Birmingham operated by Central Trains and the introduction of peak time train services to London Marylebone by Chiltern Railways during 2002. It is notable that Kidderminster and Worcester Stations generate more passengers per train than any other comparable non-metropolitan stations within the West Midlands region. There has also been significant growth in passengers using Blakedown Rail Station with a 92% increase over the 11-year period. This can also be attributed to improved services and the increase in commuters into the metropolitan areas.

### Cycling

The 2001 Census Results showed that from a total of 47,161 working Wyre Forest residents aged 16-74, 1,033 people cycled to work. This represents a total of 2.19%. 2002/03 statistics from the WCC cycle counter located on Minster Road, Stourport demonstrate that the numbers of cyclists increase during the warmer spring and summer months when it is lighter in the mornings and evenings. Figures are set out below for information:

Jun 02	Jul 02	Aug 02	Sep 02	Oct 02	Nov 02	Dec 02	Jan 03	Feb 03	Mar 03
79	80	77	72	63	59	43	54	57	57

(Source: WCC Cycle Counter Data representing an average daily flow for the specified month)

WCC also has limited figures from the counter located on the canal towpath adjacent to the Gilgal. These show that average daily flow figures have nearly doubled from 36 cyclists in March 2003 to 71 cyclists in April 2004.

## Quality of Life

### Health Status

The below table shows that overall the District's population has a good level of health.

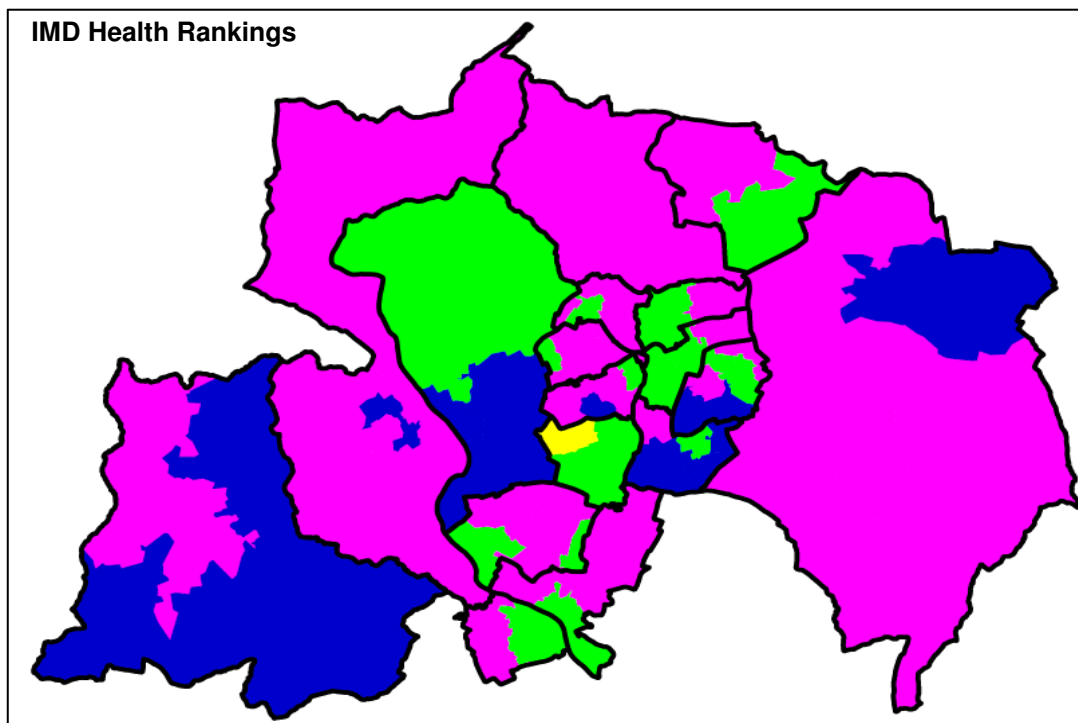
Health Status % of resident population in each group				
	General health: Good	General health: Fairly good	General health: Not good	People with a limiting long-term illness
England and Wales	68.6	22.2	9.2	18.2
West Midlands	67.2	23.1	9.7	18.9
Wyre Forest District	67.5	23.7	8.9	17.9

(Source: Census Statistics, 2001)

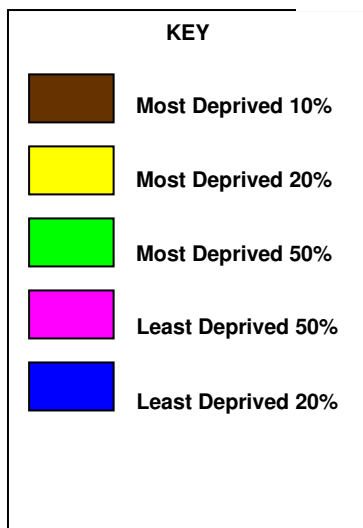
## Appendix 1: Key Figures and Statistics

### Index of Multiple Deprivation Health Profiles

The 2004 Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) is a Super Output Area level measure of multiple deprivation. There are seven different domains: income deprivation, employment deprivation, health deprivation and disability, education, skills and training deprivation, barriers to housing and services, living environment deprivation and crime. The health domain identifies areas with high concentrations of people who die prematurely whose quality of life is reduced by poor health or disability.



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Source: Indices of Multiple Deprivation (2004). Based on 2001/02 Data



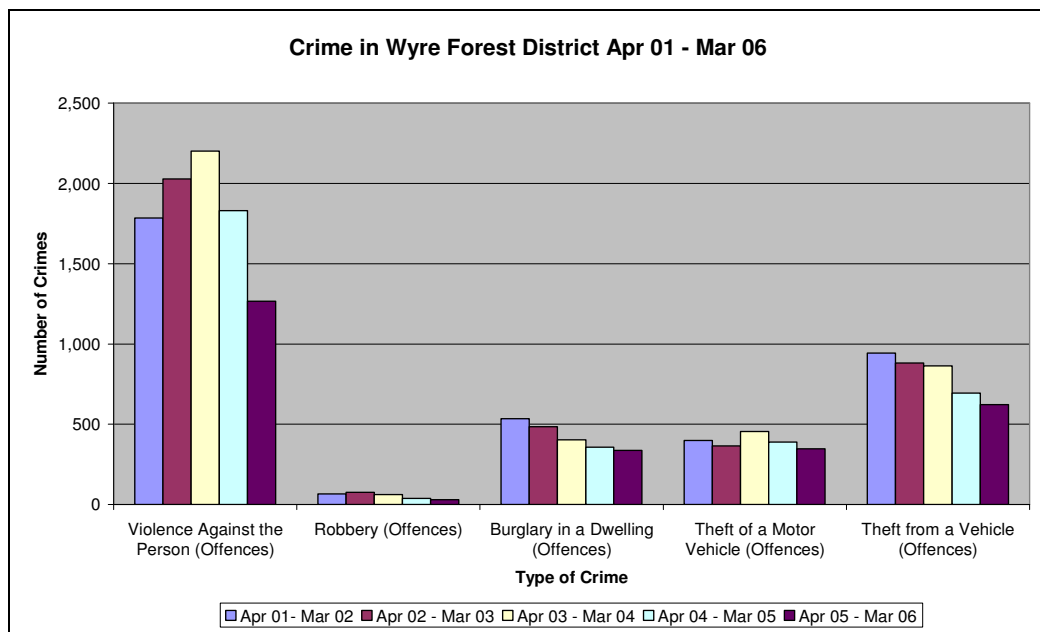
The map above shows the Ranking of the Super Output Areas (SOAs) within the District. SOAs are small areas which fit together to make up wards. The ward boundaries are shown on the map. There are no SOAs in the top 10% most deprived nationally for health. The least deprived wards are Rock, Blakedown and Chaddesley, Wolverley, and Bewdley and Arley where all of the SOAs are in the 50% least deprived nationally. The most deprived SOA is in Oldington and Foley Park ward and is one of the 20% most deprived wards nationally in terms of health.

## Appendix 1: Key Figures and Statistics

### Crime

The graph and the table below illustrate the number of notifiable offences recorded by the Police in Wyre Forest between Apr 2001 and March 2006. There has been an overall decrease in all types of notifiable offences during this period.

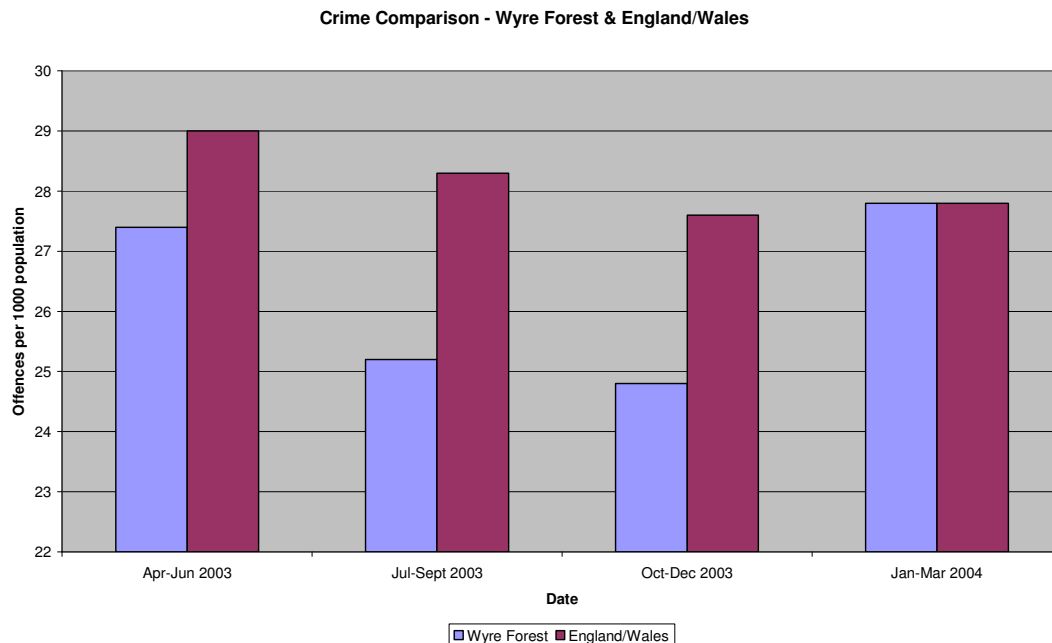
	Apr 01- Mar 02	Apr 02- Mar 03	Apr 03- Mar 04	Apr 04- Mar 05	Apr 05- Mar 06
Violence Against the Person (Offences)	1,785	2,028	2,202	1,830	1,266
Robbery (Offences)	66	75	62	38	30
Burglary in a Dwelling (Offences)	534	485	403	356	336
Theft of a Motor Vehicle (Offences)	399	365	454	389	346
Theft from a Vehicle (Offences)	944	882	864	694	622



Source: <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

The graph below shows that levels of crime in Wyre Forest are, generally, lower than figures nationally.

## Appendix 1: Key Figures and Statistics

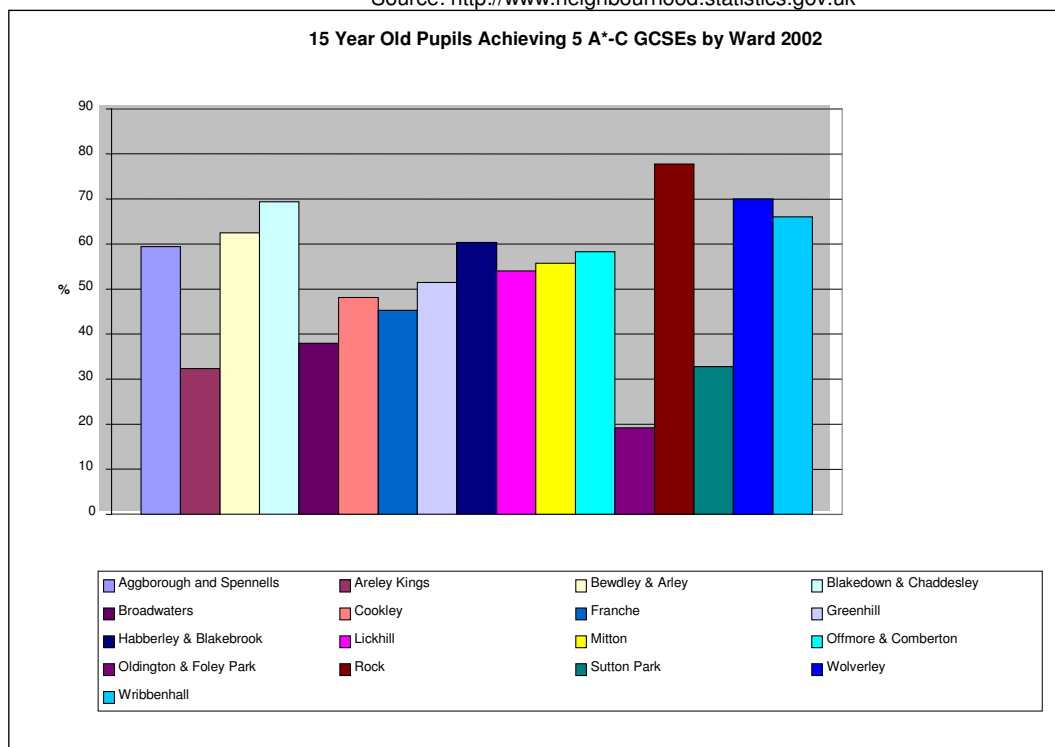


Source: <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

### Qualifications – GCSE

The graph below shows the percentage of 15 year olds achieving 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE by place of residence. Educational attainment varies markedly between the wards within the District. Arley Kings has the highest educational attainment, with over 75% of pupils gaining 5 A\*-C passes at GCSE.

Source: <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>



## Appendix 1: Key Figures and Statistics

Educational attainment at GCSE is considerably lower in Oldington and Foley Park than anywhere else in the District with less than 20% of pupils achieving 5 A\*-C grades compared to a District average of 49.8%.

The adjacent table shows the percentage of 15 year olds achieving 5 A\*-C grades at GCSE over time and compared to regional and national averages.

	Wyre Forest	West Midlands	England
Sept 04 - Aug 05	49.8	54.3	56.0
Sept 03 - Aug 04	49.9	50.9	53.6
Sept 02 - Aug 03	45.1	50.3	52.9
Sept 01 - Aug 02	49.8	48.3	51.2

Source: <http://www.neighbourhood.statistics.gov.uk>

## **GLOSSARY**

### **Adopted Local Plan 2004-2011**

The existing planning policy document for the Wyre Forest District, this was adopted in 2004 to guide future development within the district until 2011. Along with the Worcestershire County Structure Plan 1996-2011 and the Hereford and Worcester County Minerals Local Plan (1997) it constitutes the Development Plan for the Wyre Forest District and will remain as such until the LDF is finished, at which time it will be replaced.

### **Advantage West Midlands (AWM)**

Advantage West Midlands is the Regional Development Agency (RDA) for the West Midlands. For more information please see [www.advantagewm.co.uk](http://www.advantagewm.co.uk).

### **Affordable Housing**

The District Council has adopted the definition of Affordable Housing as set out in national planning policy; Planning Policy Statement 3, Annex B as follows:

'Affordable Housing includes social rented and intermediate housing, provided to specified eligible households whose needs are not met by the market. Affordable Housing should:

- Meet the needs of eligible households including availability at a cost low enough for them to afford, determined with regard to local incomes and local house prices.
- Include provision for the home to remain at an affordable price for future eligible households or, if these restrictions are lifted, for the subsidy to be recycled for alternative affordable housing provision.

### **Air Quality Management Area (AQMA)**

Areas designated by Wyre Forest District Council where the level of pollutant concentrations in the atmosphere results in the air quality not meeting the objectives set out by central government in 2005.

### **Annual Monitoring Report (AMR)**

An annually produced document which sets out the progress made in achieving the timetable set out in the Local Development Scheme as well as measuring the effectiveness of the development plan policies.

### **Area of Development Restraint (ADR)**

ADRs are areas which have been protected from development in the current Adopted Local Plan. These areas provide provision for longer term development.



**Brownfield Land/Previously Developed Land (PDL)**

Land which has previously been developed. The term may encompass vacant or derelict land, infill sites, land occupied by redundant or unused buildings, and developed land within the settlement boundary where further intensification of use is considered acceptable.

**Development Plan Documents (DPDs)**

The collective term given to all statutory documents that form the Development Plan for the Local Authority. Comprises the Core Strategy, Site Specific land Allocations, Area Action Plans and a Proposals Map.

**English Heritage**

English Heritage exists to protect and promote England's spectacular historic environment and ensure that its past is researched and understood.

**Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM)**

The regional Government Office based in Birmingham responsible for implementing national policy in the region and ensuring local authority planning policies and plans are in line with national guidance.

**Green Belt Land**

Land which is situated between urban areas on which development is restricted so as to ensure urban sprawl – the uncontrolled, unplanned growth of urban areas – does not occur.

**Greenfield Land**

Land which has never been developed, this includes greenbelt land and areas of open countryside, as well as undeveloped land within urban areas.

**Landscape Character Assessment (LCA)**

An assessment of landscape character, which is defined as 'a distinct, recognisable, and consistent pattern of elements in the landscape which makes one landscape different from another.

**Landscape Protection Area (LPA)**

An area originally outlined in the 1986 District Local Plan which protects from inappropriate development areas which are worthy of special protection and enhancement.

**Local Development Framework (LDF)**

This will provide the framework for delivering the planning strategy and policies for Wyre Forest District.

**Local Development Scheme (LDS)**

A three year timetable for the production of documents for the LDF.

**Local Regeneration Areas (LRA)**

Areas designated as LRAs commonly face regeneration challenges associated with the decline or restructuring of traditional industries.

**Major Developments**

Major developments include;

- Residential development comprising at least 10 dwellings or a site area of at least 1 hectare if the number of dwellings is not specified.
- Other uses where the floor space to be built is greater than one thousand square metres or the site area is at least 1 hectare in size.

**Major Urban Areas (MUAs)**

The focus of Urban Renaissance which underpins the RSS. Of the 4 MUAs established in the RSS, Birmingham and the Black Country have the most relevance to the Wyre Forest District.

**Natural England**

Natural England works for people, places and nature to conserve and enhance biodiversity, landscapes and wildlife in rural, urban, coastal and marine areas.

**Oldington and Foley Park Pathfinder**

A seven year regeneration programme and partnership for the Oldington and Foley Park Ward which is one of the 10% most deprived Wards of the Country.

**Parish Plans**

Reflect the planning issues present at a local level in the rural areas of the District. These plans carry no weight in the planning system but are designed to inform the District Council of local planning issues.

**Rural Regeneration Zone (RRZ)**

One of six Regeneration Zones designated by Advantage West Midlands in which the majority of its activity and funding will be concentrated over the next ten years.

**Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)**

A specifically defined area within which protection is afforded to ecological or geological features. Sites are officially notified by English Nature.

**South Housing Market Area (SHMA)**

A number of sub-regional Housing Market Areas have been identified which display similar characteristics. Wyre Forest has been included within the South Housing Market Area (SHMA)

which comprises the six districts of Worcestershire together with Warwick and Stratford Districts.

### **Stourport Forward**

Stourport Forward is a Company Limited by Guarantee that has been formed to utilise the £500,000 “Market Towns Initiative” (MTI) funding distributed by Advantage West Midlands (AWM).

### **Stourport Road Employment Corridor (SREC)**

This is the main focus for employment within the District. This corridor runs south out of Kidderminster towards Stourport, is well established and contains a number of modern high quality premises together with significant redevelopment opportunities. Underused and derelict sites along this corridor include the former British Sugar site, which at 24 hectares is one of the largest sites in the region.

### **Strategic Centres**

There are 25 town centres in the West Midlands region that are defined as in the Regional Spatial Strategy as ‘Strategic Centres’ and recognised for their crucial role in meeting the shopping and commercial needs of the region. Kidderminster is one of only three Worcestershire centres recognised in this way (together with Worcester City and Redditch).

### **Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA)**

An SFRA will be undertaken to guide development decisions and meet the requirements of the Planning Policy Statement 25 *Development and Flood Risk*.

### **Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)**

Provides additional information to guide and support Development Plan Documents.

### **Sustainable Communities**

Defined on the Communities and Local Government website ([www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)), sustainable communities are places where people want to live and work, now and in the future. They meet the diverse needs of existing and future residents, are sensitive to their environment, and contribute to a high quality of life. They are safe and inclusive, well planned, built and run, and offer equality of opportunity and good services for all.

### **Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS)**

An environmentally friendly way of dealing with surface water run-off, which increases the time taken for surface water to reach watercourses, thereby reducing flash flooding.

**Sustainability Appraisal (SA)**

The purpose of SA is to ensure that all Development Plan Documents (DPDs) and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs) conform to the Government principles of Sustainable Development, which are;

- Living within environmental limits
- Ensuring a strong, healthy and just society
- Achieving a sustainable economy
- Promoting good governance
- Using sound science responsibly

**Travel Plans**

Travel Plans are designed to present a more economical, efficient and socially responsible way to travel. They are often used by individual organisations to encourage their employees to travel in a more socially and environmentally responsible manner to and from work.

**Travel to Work Area (TTWA)**

An area where, of the economically active resident population, at least 75% work within that area, and also, of everyone working in the area, at least 75% live within that area. These areas have been defined using 1991 census data.

**West Midlands Regional Assembly (WMRA)**

The WMRA was set up in 1999 and has 100 members from local authorities, businesses and stakeholder groups. The WMRA is the Regional Planning Body and is therefore charged with the production and implementation of the Regional Spatial Strategy.

**West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS)**

A planning policy document that provides the long-term land use and transport planning framework for the West Midlands region. This framework guides the preparation of the Wyre Forest Local Development Framework.

**Worcestershire Integrated Passenger Transport Strategy**

The purpose of the Strategy is to set out the process and approach required to establish the best possible passenger transport network facilities addressing the needs of passengers and which delivers sustainable transport objectives.

**Worcestershire Local Transport Plan (LTP) 2006-2011**

This sets out Worcestershire's transport strategy for this five year period, as well as identifying major long-term transportation pressures on the County.

**Wyre Forest Matters Local Strategic Partnership**

The Community Strategy aims to improve the quality of life in Wyre Forest by addressing five key themes. Improved health and Well-Being aims to tackle ill-health, engage communities and support children and families. A Better Environment focuses on sustainable transport, protecting and enhancing the natural and built environment and promoting the efficient use of natural resources. Shared prosperity aims to improve the economy of the District and Safer Communities aims to tackle crime and anti-social behaviour. These themes will be addressed through the Core Strategy.