10 Year Community Strategy for the Wyre Forest District 2004 - 2014

helping to transform your life
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We are proud of Wyre Forest. It is a district with a historic past, a diverse and challenging present, and a future full of promise and new opportunity.

There is a long and positive history of partnership working in the district, which has achieved real and lasting benefit for the area. However, much still needs to be done if we are to rise to the challenges we now face and build the best possible future for the district and its people.

Based on the issues and concerns of local people, this Community Strategy sets out how the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership, which brings together representatives from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors, will work together to improve the quality of life in the district over the next ten years.

The Strategy will be the district’s route map, to ensure that we are all working towards the same vision, tackling the big issues and making the most of the district’s resources. It will be the reference point for everything we do in Wyre Forest.

We will make the most of what we already have, build on our previous successes and look forward to a brighter future. However, it is going to take all of us working together to make the district’s vision real and this document is just the very start of the process.

Wyre Forest Matters Partnership
February 2004
About the Wyre Forest District

Wyre Forest is a diverse and special district. Situated in North West Worcestershire and with a population of 96,945 (2001 Census) the district takes its name from The Forest of Wyre, once a medieval hunting forest, now a popular tourist attraction.

The three towns of Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn form a triangle within the district and are surrounded by a number of outlying villages and hamlets.

Covering an area of seventy five square miles, the district is made up of a mix of urban, rural and market town communities. These very different but complementary areas provide a variety of landscape, flora and fauna, outstanding architecture and a range of shopping, educational, cultural, health and leisure facilities and tourist attractions.

The district is home to a range of industrial and commercial concerns and also has a proud history as a world leader in the carpet industry, which continues to maintain a strong presence.

Whilst generally perceived as being economically prosperous, the district is also home to the most deprived Ward in Worcestershire and has other areas that experience high levels of poverty, poor health, social exclusion and low educational attainment.

The perceived affluence of the district often presents challenges when seeking to secure external sources of funding for the regeneration of our deprived areas.
Introducing the Community Strategy

Everyone living and working in the Wyre Forest District is entitled to a high quality of life and effective services that meet their needs.

That is why over 100 local organisations from the public, private, voluntary and community sectors have come together as the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership to co-ordinate actions to improve the overall quality of life in the district, for now and future generations.

One element of this is the production and implementation of a Community Strategy, which is a statutory requirement placed on all Councils under the Local Government Act 2000. A Community Strategy should be prepared in conjunction with other organisations and aim to improve the social, economic, health and environmental wellbeing of the area and its inhabitants.

This is the first Community Strategy for the Wyre Forest District and has been developed by the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership.

Its purpose is to set out:
• The kind of district that local people want the Wyre Forest to be in ten years time and beyond;
• The key priorities that will be progressed to move the district towards that Vision; and
• How services, resources and expertise in the district will be joined up by the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership to make sure this happens.

As the overarching strategic document for the district, the Community Strategy will not replace the existing plans and strategies of the Council and other local organisations. Partners will continue to provide their individual services and tackle a wide range of important issues. However, when planning their services, activities and spending they will need to take into account the key priorities identified within this Community Strategy and set out their own contribution towards delivering them. This approach will allow all organisations to make better progress on the main issues impacting on local people’s quality of life. It will also help to reduce duplication of effort, time and resources.

How has this Community Strategy been developed?

This Community Strategy has been developed from the results of a robust community consultation programme, which was undertaken by the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership during 2003. This included an ‘on the street’ priority scoping exercise which involved asking local people the question ‘what is important to you about living or working in the Wyre Forest district?’. Over 5,000 individual priority statements were recorded. These priorities were debated at the first Wyre Forest Matters Partnership conference held in June 2003, which brought together over 100 representatives from across all sectors of the local community. Feedback from the conference was then used to develop and circulate a residents’ survey and a young people’s survey. Focus Groups with ‘harder to reach’ sectors of the community were also held. In addition, the Strategy has also been informed by previous research into local people’s opinion on a range of quality of life issues.

This Strategy is not intended to address all the concerns of local people. The key challenge will be to achieve the right balance between responding to Wyre Forest people’s immediate and very visible needs and investing in the future to create the right conditions which will secure the long term social, economic, health and environmental wellbeing of the district.
Our Shared Vision

‘By working together, Wyre Forest in 2014 will be a prosperous district where everyone can thrive at work and at play, at home and in the community, and can learn and develop throughout their lives in a safe, attractive and healthy environment’

Our Vision captures the shared aspirations of what local people, communities, groups and organisations want the Wyre Forest district to be in ten years time.

Achieving the Shared Vision will focus on the FIVE INTER-RELATED THEMES, as listed below.

- IMPROVED HEALTH & WELLBEING
- A BETTER ENVIRONMENT
- SHARED PROSPERITY
- SAFER COMMUNITIES
- GREATER LEARNING & PARTICIPATION
The following sections of this document outline the **FIVE THEMES** and for each one sets out:

- **AN AIM**
  
  The aim of the theme will support the delivery of the **SHARED VISION** for the District.

- **SETTING THE SCENE**

  A short summary explaining the importance of the theme for the District.

- **WYRE FOREST DISTRICT FACTS**

  The factual evidence about the theme.

- **WHAT WYRE FOREST PEOPLE SAID**

  The key issues and concerns of local people raised through the consultation exercises.

- **CHALLENGES INCLUDE**

  Identified by analysing ‘The Facts’ and ‘What Wyre Forest People Said’ and taking into consideration National, Regional or County agendas.

- **KEY PRIORITIES - WHAT WE WILL DO**

  Sets out the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership’s policy response in terms of key priorities for achieving the theme’s aim.

- **EXISTING ACTIVITY INCLUDES**

  Sets out some of the existing work which is contributing towards the key priorities.

- **SUPPORTING STRATEGIES AND PLANS**

  Identifies those strategies and plans whose work will contribute to one or more of the key priorities.

- **WE WILL MEASURE PROGRESS BY**

  Sets out a range of broad quantitative and qualitative indicators by which we will measure progress towards the aim and key priorities.

- **ACHIEVING OUR KEY PRIORITIES WILL MEAN**

  Identifies what the District will be characterised by (what people can expect to see or experience) when the aim and key priorities have been achieved.
Each **THEME** will have a **DELIVERY PLAN**. This will set out the programme of work to be delivered for all **KEY PRIORITIES** and will identify:
- specific targets and associated timescales;
- resource implications;
- the responsible partners for delivery; and
- monitoring and reporting arrangements.

The success of the Community Strategy will also depend on **effective connections** being made between the **KEY PRIORITIES** of each **THEME**. For example tackling crime and the fear of crime is not simply a matter for the Police. All partners have a role to play e.g. having a well designed built environment, taking action against truancy, providing safe and reliable public transport, using the arts and sports to equip young people with life skills and supporting people to access employment and training opportunities. For local people this joined up approach between the different organisations will mean that services are more efficiently and effectively managed and more mainstream resources should be available to target their real needs, in the right way, in the right place and at the right time.

Many of the key priorities reflected in this district Community Strategy are also identified in *Partnership Towards Excellence – A Community Strategy for Worcestershire 2003-2013* which was prepared by the Worcestershire Partnership and sets out the issues that are important to Worcestershire people generally. The Wyre Forest Matters Partnership will therefore seek to develop robust links between those countywide issues, which are also key priorities for the Wyre Forest district. This will ensure a co-ordinated and effective approach is taken in tackling them and will reduce duplication of effort and enable resources to be pooled accordingly. In addition, those Parish and Town Councils that are currently developing a local Parish Plan will also make appropriate links with the district Community Strategy.

Similar linkages and connections will need to be made with the vast array of **local plans and strategies** that have been listed for supporting the delivery of the key priorities as identified for the five themed sections of this Strategy. However underpinning the implementation of the spatial elements of the Community Strategy is the **Wyre Forest District Local Plan** whose vision and policy statements, in terms of housing, employment, design, natural resources, countryside, built heritage, nature conservation, transport and communications, leisure, recreation and tourism, community, retailing and town centres, will facilitate the land use implications envisaged by the Community Strategy through the control and development of land and infrastructure, ensuring that changes are beneficial to everyone.

The Local Plan therefore has a critical role in complementing and working alongside the Community Strategy for the district. This relationship will be developed further through the introduction of **Local Development Documents** (LDDs) under the new **Local Development Frameworks** (LDFs) proposed in the forthcoming Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act proposed in summer 2004 which will replace the existing Local Plan approach. LDD’s will be shorter documents and will enable even closer linkages with Community Strategies to be developed. In particular the Wyre Forest LDD’s will aim to provide clearer delivery mechanisms for the key priorities identified in this Strategy that relate to use and development of land.
**Aim:** ‘To promote, sustain and improve the health and wellbeing of our local communities by working in partnership with local people and other organisations’

**Improved Health & Wellbeing**

tackling health inequalities……engaging local communities……
tackling the determinants of ill-health……supporting children and families……
prevention and treatment……housing needs and conditions

**Setting the Scene**

The key challenge in Wyre Forest is to reduce the health inequalities that exist across the district and to improve the general wellbeing of the local population.

Whilst some people are more prosperous and living longer and healthier lives, it is also true that throughout our communities there are individuals and groups who are suffering from poorer health and poorer access to health, social care and other necessary services. Additionally, access to decent affordable housing is a significant contributing factor to people’s physical and mental health and social wellbeing and is a central issue for Government policy. Of particular concern are the inequalities in men’s health, the high rates of coronary heart disease, the perception of local health services, the growing number of older people requiring health and social support and the need to address increasing levels of inactivity and obesity.

A complex range of factors such as lifestyle, housing needs, housing conditions, behaviour, social and community networks, living and working conditions, genetic, cultural and environmental conditions all interact to create and exacerbate inequalities. Particular to Wyre Forest is the strong industrial history, which brings its own health problems, coupled with recent industrial decline that has reduced employment opportunities, a key determinant of ill health.

The changing demographics of Wyre Forest pose particular challenges. 18,500 people are over 65 and of these just under 50% are over 75 (DPH Annual Report 2001). This ageing population places increasing demands on health, housing and social care services. National and regional policy objectives include trying to maintain older people and vulnerable people in their own homes and ensuring that their accommodation and support needs are provided for rather than reliant upon institutional care. The fact that we have a high proportion (23.6%) of households containing someone with a disability adds to the challenge of meeting this policy.

Understanding these complexities more effectively will require us to work in partnership with local people and other themed sections of the Community Strategy. This will enable us to gather both qualitative and quantitative data to identify and target what needs to change to improve the health and wellbeing of local people and reduce the levels of inequality. It will also involve us changing the ways in which we commission and provide services, including diverting resources to areas of greatest need, in order to have a more positive effect on people’s health and wellbeing.
Wyre Forest District Facts

• Significantly above average rates of coronary heart disease for under 75’s and those aged 65 and over compared with the rest of the county
• Significantly above average (West Midlands) incidence of breast cancer
• Deaths due to accidents (mainly road accidents) in the 15-24 age group are above average compared with the rest of the county
• Broadwaters and Oldington and Foley Park Wards have significantly higher rates of teenage conception than the remainder of the county
• 34% of the district population are in the lowest 3 socio-economic groups, compared with 28% for England and Wales
• Oldington and Foley Park Ward is the most deprived in the county and one of the 10% most deprived Wards in England, a contributing factor to health inequalities
• Men report more difficulties than women in accessing primary care services due to home and work commitments
• Life expectancy of men is 5 years less than for women
• We have 23.6% of households in Wyre Forest containing someone with a disability, which is higher than the national and county average
• The growth in the older population is placing increasing demands on health, social care and housing services
• There are high levels of homelessness in the area with a decreasing number of affordable Housing Association / Registered Social Landlord homes available.

What Wyre Forest People Said

• 59% of local people raised concerns about access to a local hospital, and concern was also expressed over the transfer of Accident and Emergency Services from Kidderminster to Worcester
• Local people want better access to local health care and support services and in particular stated the following problems:
  - Lack of parking at Kidderminster Hospital
  - Lack of transport to Worcester Hospital for patients, carers and visitors – access difficulties and cost
  - Difficulties in accessing an NHS dentist across the district
• Other key health priorities included:
  - Having a ‘one stop’ health advice centre for easier access to advice and information
  - More affordable leisure and recreation provision for all - especially younger age groups
  - More provision for supporting independent living
• There is a lack of health and social care for older people.

Challenges Include....

• Concern about the closure of Kidderminster Hospital A&E
• Financial position of Wyre Forest Health Economy
• Responding to the national priorities set out in the Department of Health ‘Tackling Inequalities: A Programme for Action’ (2003) and balancing these with local inequalities in access to services and health status
• Transport problems which prevent people from accessing services
• Making better use of existing services by changing the way we work, more effective partnership working and communication systems
• More focus on reducing inequalities through health improvement
• Shortfall of affordable housing
• Need for improved supported housing provision
• Continuing to improve housing conditions
• Co-ordinated approach to sustained funding for voluntary organisations and local communities
• Social Care Policy enabling people to maintain independence
• Measuring improvements in health
• Ageing population who have increasing needs.
Key Priorities - What we will do

Tackling the determinants of ill-health

- Enhance the quality and availability of public and community transport to reduce isolation and improve access to services
- Improve housing conditions in particular tackling fuel poverty
- Increasing the availability of appropriate housing for a range of housing needs
- Tackling and preventing homelessness
- Increase the uptake of unclaimed benefits
- Create learning and employment opportunities in the health and social care sector for local people
- Work effectively together to maintain the independence of vulnerable people including ensuring effective support for carers
- Develop a ‘one stop’ approach to accessing health, social care and housing information and support
- Improve access to cultural and recreational facilities.

Engaging Communities and Individuals

- Ensure a co-ordinated Wyre Forest approach to engaging and developing communities, service users and carers and effectively responding to health and wellbeing needs
- Engage with vulnerable groups and more effectively working together to understand and meet their health and wellbeing needs
- Raise the profile and understanding of the voluntary sector as valued partners in improving health and wellbeing
- Raise the profile and understanding of mental health issues in the Wyre Forest population ranging from bullying in schools, to suicides in men and the provision of appropriate services
- Increase the participation in local drug treatment programmes
- Implement a men’s health strategy based on the recommendations of the report - ‘The Health of Men in the Wyre Forest: An Agenda for Action.’

Existing Activity Includes

- Partnership approach to the health prevention agenda
- Health Inequalities Strategy in progress
- Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme Round 2 for Oldington and Foley Park
- Strengthening the partnership working between health, social services and housing to deliver joint strategies more effectively
- Wyre Forest Rural Bus Partnership Bid
- Reach II Affordable Warmth Programme
- Worcestershire Supporting People Programme
- Bid for a North Worcestershire Home Improvement Agency
- Stonham Housing Association Floating Support Scheme for vulnerable single people.

Existing Activity Includes

- Public Involvement Strategy in progress
- Community Action Wyre Forest activity
- Oldington and Foley Park Community Network
- Funding Compact between Wyre Forest Primary Care Trust and Wyre Forest Community Agencies Draft (April 2003)
- Wyre Forest Action Group for Older People
- Community Race Relations Group
- Active Communities Sport Project
- Walking the Way to Health
- Intermediate Care Team development and launch of 24 hour Night Service
- Consultation with users and carers through Supporting People, Better Care Higher Standards and implementing the district Housing Strategy.
Supporting Children and Families
- Provide more effective and co-ordinated cross agency support to young people and families
- Increase the availability and accessibility of affordable leisure opportunities including addressing transport issues
- Provide a ‘one stop’ health advice service by 2008
- Enable young people to be better equipped to maintain good health when leaving the education system
- Implement an effective, targeted and integrated teenage pregnancy strategy to address the high rates in specific areas and provide effective health and social support to young families.

Preventing illness and providing effective Treatment and Care
- Identify baseline data on health status to inform target setting and to assess progress
- Provide better information about health and social care services
- Develop a cross cutting health promotion and prevention (health inequalities) strategy for Wyre Forest
- Implement a district wide approach to promote increasing physical activity levels and involvement in local sports and leisure facilities and open spaces
- Develop effective and integrated services from local primary and secondary care services
- Provide better access/transportation to health facilities for patients, families and carers
- Ensure the implementation of integrated smoking cessation programmes targeting priority groups of manual workers and pregnant women
- Ensure the effective implementation of integrated primary and secondary prevention programmes for circulatory diseases – the predominant cause of mortality in the Wyre Forest.

Existing Activity Includes
- Sure Start Wyre Forest
- Healthy Schools Programme
- Personal, Social and Health Education & Citizenship in School Curriculum
- Supporting Teenagers and Young People Initiative
- Parent partnership service
- Home Start Wyre Forest.

Existing Activity Includes
- Mrs Smith project to improve patient pathways
- Programme to reduce the amount of waste medicines
- Treatment Centre Development provision of diagnosis and treatment services
- Older people schemes - e.g. falls prevention
- Information sharing schemes
- Primary care developments such as mental health
- Developing a joint Physical Activity Strategy
- Partnership with Worcestershire Smoking Advice Service.

Supporting Strategies and Plans
- A Cultural Strategy for Worcestershire - Wyre Forest Action Plan
- Department of Health Green paper - Every Child Matters 2003
- Director of Public Health Annual Report for the Wyre Forest District
- Joint Strategy for Physical Disabilities Service
- National Healthy Schools Standard - Worcestershire Programme
- Oldington and Foley Park Community Network Business Plan
- Partnership Towards Excellence - A Community Strategy for Worcestershire
- Sure Start Wyre Forest Strategy
- Worcestershire Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Worcestershire County Council Local Transport Plan
- Worcestershire Early Years and Childcare Development Plan
- Worcestershire Local Public Service Agreement
- Worcestershire Public Health Strategy (in development)
- Worcestershire Substance Misuse Action Team’s Plans and Strategies
- Worcestershire Supporting People Strategy
- Wyre Forest Affordable Warmth Strategy
- Wyre Forest District Council Community Development Plan
- Wyre Forest Domestic Violence Strategy
- Wyre Forest Empty Homes Strategy
- Wyre Forest Homelessness Strategy
- Wyre Forest Housing Strategy
- Wyre Forest PCT Local Health Delivery Plan (2003-2006)
- Wyre Forest Tackling Health Inequalities Strategy.
We Will Measure Progress By....

Tackling the Determinants of ill Health
- Increased number of community transport initiatives and improved access to public transport
- Improvement of 30% in domestic energy efficiency between 1996-2011
- Improvement in housing conditions
- Scheme in place to enhance career and skills development pathways across agencies and to improve recruitment levels from local communities into statutory and voluntary sector
- Increase the number of people aged 65 and over who will live independently at home by 2005.

Supporting Children and Families
- Meet national targets identified by Sure Start by 2012
- Smoking in pregnancy target achieved: 1% reduction per no. births in Wyre Forest. 10% in Sure Start area
- Ensure all schools in the Wyre Forest District maintain their Healthy Schools Status
- Ensure life-expectancy targets are achieved
- Ensure teenage pregnancy targets are achieved
- Increase the number of families receiving specialist parenting support services
- Decrease in the number of children on the Child Protection Register.

Engaging Communities and Individuals
- Wyre Forest Community Development and Involvement Strategy developed by 2004
- Increase the population of drug users in a treatment programme by 55% by 2005
- By 2020 – 70% of population doing 30 minutes of physical activity five times a week
- Measurable increase in the satisfaction of service users that Wyre Forest Matters partners are listening to and responding to needs effectively.

Preventing illness and providing effective Treatment and Care
- Lifestyle survey undertaken in the Wyre Forest area by 2005
- Implementation of the Health Inequalities and Prevention Strategies for the Wyre Forest
- Reduce Smoking in line with NHS targets by 2010
- Meet national targets to reduce the death rates from coronary heart disease, stroke and related illnesses
- A GP referral scheme will be planned and implemented.

Achieving Our Key Priorities Will Mean....
- Improved health for all and a reduction in health inequalities
- A reduction in the differences in health and wellbeing currently seen across the district
- There will be less people dying prematurely from heart disease, cancer, strokes, suicides and accidents
- Fewer people will smoke
- Improved access to health and social care services, which meet the needs of local people and promote health
- Improved perceptions of the provision of local health services
- More people will lead healthy lifestyles, which will include taking regular exercise and eating healthier foods
- Older people will find it easier to get to the services they need
- Improved public transport information, facilities and services, which will be accessible, affordable and safe
- People will be able to live independently in safe and warm housing appropriate to their needs.
A Better Environment

Planning and conservation......transport and access......biodiversity......energy......land use......environmental protection......waste management......re-use and recycling

Aim: ‘That the Wyre Forest’s built and natural environment is protected, improved and enhanced to provide an accessible, attractive, enjoyable and healthy place to be now and in the future’

Setting the Scene

The quality of the district’s environment is one of its most valuable assets, and includes a rich built heritage, diverse and sensitive habitats and attractive landscape. Much of the district’s countryside is statutory Green Belt or protected by special landscape value. This quality affects us all and influences how we live our lives and how we feel about the place, in which we live and work. We know however, that if we fail to protect the district’s environment today, each future generation including our children will pay the price.

Environmental pressures are of increasing concern to Wyre Forest people and revolve around the management of land, the siting of new development, the control of pollution, the management of waste, increasing demands on the area’s natural resources, the way we travel and a changing climate caused by global warming. Left unchecked, these pressures will almost certainly result in lasting damage and permanent change to the district’s environment. Managing and balancing these demands for now and the future is therefore a key challenge to be addressed through the local planning policies and development control.

A holistic approach to tackling these issues must be taken if we are to achieve real and lasting improvement. For example getting around the area is important for people who live, work, visit and do business in the district. However, many of our roads suffer daily from congestion, notably within and approaching the district’s three town centres. This reduces the quality of life of commuters and residents alike, is a major cause of air pollution, which can contribute to respiratory problems including asthma, and represents a large cost in terms of time and money. Tackling these interrelated issues will also involve the other themed sections of this Community Strategy considering the environmental implications of their actions and addressing them in a sustainable way.

This theme also captures the concerns that local people have about the environmental quality of their neighbourhoods and the gateways to the district. Litter, noise, graffiti, vandalism, neglect and lack of cleanliness all have a significant impact on everyone’s quality of life and in particular their confidence and perceived safety of the area. Local people should be able to have pride both in their neighbourhood and the wider district.

It is realised that the creation of a sustainable environment is, by definition, a long term aim and no one individual or organisation can do this on their own.
Wyre Forest District Facts

- 8,516 hectares of Green Belt land (44% of the district)
- There are 7 local nature reserves, 18 Sites of Special Scientific Interest and 58 Special Wildlife Sites
- The district has areas of heathland, wetland and woodland
- The Staffordshire and Worcestershire Canal offers a valuable wildlife corridor as well as bringing sustainable and low impact tourism to the area
- 16 Conservation Areas – ‘areas of special architectural or historic interest, the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance’
- Worcestershire County Council reports that local traffic growth has historically mirrored national traffic growth, predicting a 32% growth in traffic volume for the period 1996-2010
- Within the district’s three towns 45% of households own one car and 25% do not own a car
- Two locations, Welch Gate in Bewdley and Horsefair in Kidderminster, have been identified as having particular air quality problems, and traffic emissions are a significant contributory factor
- 38,000 tonnes of household waste is produced every year and only 10% is currently recycled with the rest going to landfill
- From April 2004, the District will offer re-use and recycling facilities of electrical appliances to compliment the existing furniture re-use facility.

What Wyre Forest People Said

- Respondents said their main form of transport to the following locations was by car – supermarket (82%), school/college (69%), local government office (74%), sports/leisure centre (74%)
- 78% of residents drive to work, whilst 13% walk, 2.2% car share, 1.7% cycle and 1.3% use the bus
- 16% of 65+ year olds use a bus as their main form of transport to get to a town centre compared to 3% of 18-34 year olds
- 60% thought that the condition of the district’s landscape was good/very good and 52% said the same about wildlife habitats
- 77% rated the access to the district’s nature and countryside as good/very good and 46% of the respondents said the same about the quality of parks and open spaces
- The planning of the district was considered to be generally adequate
- 56% said the control of litter was poor/very poor and 56% said the same for dog fouling
- 45% rated the control of graffiti or vandalism as being poor/very poor
- 25% said they were very/fairly satisfied with the waste reduction advice that is available.

Challenges Include....

- Achieving a sustainable balance between development necessary to meet the needs of the district and the conservation of the diverse character of the area’s built and natural environment
- Raising awareness and involvement of school children in environmental issues
- Developing a shared sense of pride in making neighbourhoods and the district a more attractive place to live and work
- Reducing the need to travel
- Reducing the reliance on the car as a mode of transport by improving accessibility and promoting the use of sustainable means of travel
- Reinstating the many evening bus services
- Changing the culture and behaviour of seeing everything as ‘disposable’ and encouraging the practices of re-use and recycling to all age ranges
- Meeting Government recycling targets
- Bring all the Sites of Special Scientific Interest into a ‘favourable condition’
- Maximising the design and quality of new development
- Improving identified areas of poor air quality
- Balancing the demands of economic prosperity and tourism with preserving the heritage of the district’s environments
- Maintaining investment in the built environment to ensure the continued vitality and viability of towns and villages.
Key Priorities - What we will do

**Improve the provision and promotion of Sustainable Transport**
- Improve public transport provision so that it is affordable, reliable, accessible, safe, easy to use and an attractive option for both the district’s urban and rural communities
- Improve facilities for cyclists and pedestrians in order to reduce Wyre Forest people’s reliance and culture to travel by car and to have a positive benefit on the health of the community through increased physical exercise
- Education of travel choices and the promotion of a culture change that makes walking, cycling, public transport and car sharing alternatives more attractive in such a way that people consider these options first
- Reduce the need to travel by providing greater opportunities for more people to work, shop and use cultural and leisure facilities closer to home.

**Existing Activity Includes**
- Sustrans Severn Valley Cycle Route 45, Safer Routes to Schools, Walking the Way to Health project
- Cycle Forum, Bus Quality Partnership and Rural Transport Programme
- County Council has completed a transportation study in Stourport-on-Severn
- Traffic management studies are being undertaken in Bewdley and Kidderminster to address air quality problems
- Bus priority measures for Kidderminster town centre are being developed.

**Protect and enhance our natural and built Environment**
- Sustain and improve the biodiversity of the district’s natural environment, green spaces and countryside
- Enable the broadest access, understanding, enjoyment and active involvement by local people in the district’s natural environment
- Safeguard and enhance the quality of the district’s countryside and built environments through appropriate conservation, pollution prevention, control of development and attention to design
- To retain the local character and distinctiveness of the district’s landscapes and settlements
- Make our streets, open spaces, parks, play areas and neighbourhoods cleaner and tidier by improving services and increasing community awareness and pride in the local area
- Research and prepare for future impacts on the natural and built environments e.g. flooding, climate change, and drought.

**Existing Activity Includes**
- Maximising S106 obligations to improve the built and natural environment and provide new facilities
- Policies of the District Local Plan and Design and Quality Supplementary Planning Guidance including Stourport-on-Severn: Severn Road Development Brief and Lichfield Basin Design Guidance
- Shop Front Design Guidance anticipated 2004
- District Council’s Rangers Service Environmental Programme which includes conservation works for improving Biodiversity within the District’s land holdings
- Environment Agency’s Flood Alleviation work at Bewdley
- Developing a Local List of Important Buildings
- Investing in the improvement of Play Areas
- Applying for Green Flag Quality Awards for two District Council Parks
- Public Art activity.
Promote effective and minimal use of Natural Resources

- Reduce the production of waste and increase re-use and recycling through education, awareness and improved and accessible facilities
- Encourage organisations to follow guidelines for ‘Green Procurement’
- Increase awareness and use of existing business support initiatives to help them reduce wastage of resources and manage their environmental impact
- Encourage the responsible usage of natural resources, and the use of renewable energy sources
- Increase participation by all sectors of the local community in sustainability initiatives.

Existing Activity Includes

- Kerbside Recycling Scheme
- Oldington and Foley Park Community Network Furniture Centre
- The Network (Worcestershire) Electrical Appliance Recycling Centre
- Wyre Forest Friends of the Earth public awareness campaigns to reduce waste and increase recycling
- Environment Agency Netregs Project
- Worcestershire, Coventry and Warwickshire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre Initiatives.

Supporting Strategies and Plans

- A Cultural Strategy for Worcestershire - Wyre Forest Action Plan
- A Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire & Worcestershire 2004-2034 - Pre-Consultation Draft
- British Waterways Strategic Plan
- Environment Agency Strategic Plan
- Partnership Towards Excellence - A Community Strategy for Worcestershire
- The Network (Worcestershire) Business Plan
- West Midland Regional Planning Guidance
- Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plan
- Worcestershire Bus and Information Strategy
- Worcestershire Countryside Access and Recreation Strategy
- Worcestershire County Council Local Transport Plan
- Worcestershire County Structure Plan
- Worcestershire Landscape Character Assessment
- Wyre Forest Cycle Strategy
- Wyre Forest District Council Cleansing Services Improvement Plan
- Wyre Forest District Council Contaminated Land Strategy
- Wyre Forest District Council Rangers Service Development Plan
- Wyre Forest District Council Sustainability Strategy
- Wyre Forest District Local Plan and Supplementary Planning Guidance
- Wyre Forest District Town and Parish Plans
We Will Measure Progress By....

Provision and Promotion of Sustainable Transport
- Work, school and general journeys - % increase by cycle, by public transport, walking and car sharing
- % increase in awareness and satisfaction of public transport
- Increase in number of schools and companies with a Travel Plan
- Increase in length and usage of cycle path provision.

Promote effective and minimal use of Natural Resources
- Reduced number of kilograms of household waste collected per head
- % increase of household waste that is recycled, re-used, composted, or used for energy production
- Decrease in tonnage of household and industrial/commercial waste landfilled
- Decrease in energy use per household (gas and electricity)
- Increase in number and type of businesses accessing environmental management help services.

Managing the Built and Natural Environment
- % increase of new development on previously developed land
- Increase in number of hectares of Biodiversity Action Plan habitat being managed for wildlife
- Increase in number of Sites of Special Scientific Interest in favourable condition
- % increase of people satisfied with their local area as a clean and pleasant place to live
- % increase of highways that are either of a high or acceptable standard of cleanliness
- In identified areas, improvement in monthly/annual average of pollutants measured.

Achieving Our Key Priorities Will Mean....

- Improved public transport information, facilities and services which will be accessible, affordable and safe and used by more people
- More people will be cycling and walking
- Cleaner streets and public places with less litter, graffiti and vandalism
- Attractive, well designed buildings, spaces and neighbourhoods
- More recycled household and business waste
- Flora and fauna will be protected and wherever possible enhanced
- More awareness, protection, respect and care for the natural and built environment
- The overall character and individual features within the Wyre Forest landscape will be protected
- New development, as far as possible, will be well designed, locally distinctive, energy efficient and environmentally sensitive
- Increased awareness and access to business support to encourage the wise and sustainable use of resources.
Aim: ‘That the Wyre Forest District has a thriving and sustainable economy, offering its residents, businesses, investors and visitors recognised areas of excellence, a diverse, dynamic and competitive business and employment base and a high quality of lifestyle for all’

Shared Prosperity

attracting investment……building on strengths and opportunities……tourism……
creating employment……entrepreneurship……embracing technology……
encouraging business growth and innovation……regeneration……skills training

Setting the Scene

The economic base of the district is home to a variety of industrial and commercial concerns which include many diverse manufacturers and engineers producing items such as luxury motor cruisers, vehicle components, ceramic, hi-technology, defence industry and steel products. The carpet industry continues to maintain a strong presence, the rural economy supports a number of key enterprises and major tourist attractions bring money into the area.

There are opportunities for retail, manufacturing and commercial business to either set up or expand within each of the three towns, thereby taking advantage of the area’s proximity to Birmingham and the motorway networks. Raising the profile of the district as a business location and boosting the confidence in the area must be our main focus for attracting new investment to Wyre Forest whilst supporting existing and established companies. Having available appropriate land and premises, a good transport infrastructure, robust information and communication technology systems, a well educated and skilled population, available affordable housing and maintaining, protecting and respecting the environment are other key factors that will have a major influence on sustaining the future economic wellbeing of the district.

The district also has a varied and flourishing tourism industry, offering a range of accommodation and first class visitor attractions including the West Midland Safari Park, the Severn Valley Railway, the Wyre Forest itself and the riverside towns of Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley.

With low unemployment rates the district is generally perceived as being economically prosperous. However it is not the case that everyone benefits from this prosperity. The district is home to the most deprived ward in Worcestershire and has a number of other areas that experience high levels of poverty, poor health, social exclusion and low educational attainment. We must therefore ensure that the needs of these areas are targeted to enable all of our residents to maximise their economic potential and enjoy a better quality of life. The perceived affluence of the area often presents challenges when seeking to secure external sources of funding for the regeneration of our deprived areas, which can also impact when competing for inward investment opportunities.
Wyre Forest District Facts

**Economic Sectors (2002)**
- Primary Sector & Utilities: 1.4%
- Manufacturing: 24.1%
- Construction: 6.0%
- Distribution: 31.5%
- Business & other services: 14.7%
- Non Marketed services: 22.4%

**Economic Sectors (2002)**
-allis (Males and Females): 71,041
- Unemployment (Dec 03): 2.1% (1042 total)
- Wyre Forest District: 2.1%
- Worcestershire: 1.9%
- West Midlands: 2.8%
- UK: 2.4%

**Average Gross weekly earnings (2002)**
- Wyre Forest District: £364.30
- Worcestershire: £400.50
- West Midlands: £427.30
- UK: £464.70

- £64 million

**No. of VAT Registered Businesses (2002)**
- 2835

**Average House Price (2003)**
- Wyre Forest District: £129,348
- Worcestershire: £154,953
- West Midlands: £125,817

Deprivation indicators show that the Oldington and Foley Park Ward is the most deprived area in Worcestershire (2000).

What Wyre Forest People Said

- The three priorities that local people said should be focused on for improving the economic wellbeing of the district were:
  - The regeneration of run down areas: at 49%
  - Encouraging businesses to the area at 42%
  - Reducing unemployment at 40%
- Other key priorities included: developing the District’s transport infrastructure at 36%, promoting local business and produce at 29% and promoting tourism at 26%

- 43.9% rated the availability of affordable housing as poor/very poor
- 29% rated the availability of local employment opportunities as being very good/good
- 40% rated the quality of shops as being adequate
- Local people who are not working but expect to be in the future said they will be looking for employment in the following sectors – Banking, Insurance, Finance 15%, IT & Internet 11%, Secretarial, PA’s, Administration 8.5%

- The number of people surveyed who work in the district was 60.7%.

Challenges Include....

- Bringing forward “brownfield” employment sites on Stourport Road and other identified locations for future employment needs
- Improving the transport infrastructure
- Marketing and promotion of area
- Provision of affordable housing to accommodate workers
- Addressing the diverse needs and opportunities in each town centre
- Removing the pockets of higher than average unemployment and deprivation

- Uplifting the relatively low wage levels of the district
- Facilitating the skills needs of all future businesses and individuals
- Addressing the education and skills gap
- Co-ordinating business support
- Regenerating rural businesses and addressing rural issues
- Addressing the effect that Weavers Wharf may have on the remaining town centre and on Bewdley and Stourport-on-Severn
- Providing more quality overnight accommodation.
Support Business Development and Investment

- Establishing, enhancing and maintaining the district as a recognised area of business growth that attracts inward investment and generates high quality jobs.
- Providing and attracting companies to available quality employment sites and commercial properties ensuring these are linked to the needs of all, including start up and high technology businesses.
- Establishing, enhancing and maintaining accessible, attractive and safe business areas, facilities and centres in which to work and visit.
- Researching, developing, providing and promoting appropriate business support and opportunities.
- Supporting the provision of and access to all elements of technology and an Information Communications Technology infrastructure to all businesses.

Promote and Market the District’s Diverse Economy

- Promoting the district as a high quality residential and business location building on the strengths of each of the three towns and the rural hinterland.
- Promoting the district as an attractive recreational and short break destination, providing quality information, visitor attractions, leisure facilities and overnight visitor accommodation.

Existing Activity Includes

- Regeneration of Kidderminster Town Centre - Weavers Wharf, Crossley Park and Green Street Business Centre.
- Proposed Stourport Road Employment Corridor (A451).
- Central Technology Belt (Worcestershire).
- District Council Business Start Up Grant.
- Opportunity Bewdley and Stourport Forward.
- Carpet industry identified in Advantage West Midlands ‘High Value Consumer Products’ cluster.
- District Local Plan Policy Statements.
- District Council operates a commercial property search service.

Key Priorities - What we will do
Connecting people to economic opportunity

• Creating a skilled, trained and motivated workforce to meet the demands of existing and future businesses, ensuring that education and training providers offer and deliver appropriate courses
• Supporting excluded people and local communities by addressing neighbourhood renewal, equal opportunities, financial empowerment and work/life balance
• Encouraging and supporting community enterprise
• Identifying economic activities that may be at risk with a view to developing them and/or promoting alternatives for the workforce
• Maximise the provision and use of all sources of available economic regeneration funding.

Existing Activity Includes

• Neighbourhood Management Pathfinder Programme Round 2 for Oldington and Foley Park Ward
• Learning and Skills Council, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Strategic Area Review
• Wyre Forest Lifelong Learning Partnership
• Oldington and Foley Park Community Network Furniture Centre, Training Development Workers and Advice Shop
• The Network (Worcestershire) Electrical Appliance Recycling Centre
• Kidderminster College training and outreach courses
• Emerging County Credit Union.

Supporting Strategies and Plans

• A Cultural Strategy for Worcestershire - Wyre Forest Action Plan
• Advantage West Midlands Regional Economic Strategy - Agenda for Action
• Bewdley Town Centre Management Forum Strategy and Action Plan
• Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership Strategy and Action Plan
• Learning and Skills Council, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Strategic Plan
• Oldington and Foley Park Community Network Business Plan
• Opportunity Bewdley Action Plan
• Partnership Towards Excellence - A Community Strategy for Worcestershire
• Sandy Lane Industrial Estate Action Plan
• Stourport Town Centre Forum Strategy and Action Plan
• The Network (Worcestershire) Business Plan
• Worcestershire County Council Economic Development and Regeneration Business Plan
• Worcestershire County Council Tourism Strategy
• Worcestershire County Structure Plan
• Worcestershire Creative Industries Strategy
• Wyre Forest District Town and Parish Plans
• Wyre Forest Tourism Strategy.
We Will Measure Progress By....

Support Business Development and Investment

- % increase in employment
- % increase in average earnings for both males and females
- % increase in VAT registered businesses in the area over the last year
- Number of business start ups per annum
- % increase in business start up survival rate per annum
- Number of business support enquiries and completions of “planned business start up courses”
- Number of Wyre Forest District Council start up business grants
- Number and value of relocations and re-investments annually as a result of “inward investment”
- % of allocated land brought forward for development.

Promote and Market the District’s diverse Economy

- No. of promotional campaigns per annum
- Increase in number of accommodation providers
- % increase in visitor spend per annum
- % increase in overnight stays per annum
- % increase in user satisfaction with the district as a business and tourism location.

Connecting people to economic opportunity

- % increase in participation in employment training and/or qualifications
- % decrease of unemployed people claiming benefit who have been out of work for more than a year
- Increase in the amount of funding secured for regeneration and renewal projects
- Position of district and wards within Index of Multiple Deprivation.

Achieving Our Key Priorities Will Mean....

- A raised and positive profile as a business and tourism location within the West Midlands Region, which increases investor and visitor numbers
- A broader economic base that reflects a balance between the service, knowledge based, rural and manufacturing sectors
- An increase in the number of businesses offering quality, skilled permanent jobs that provide higher wages and excellent training for local people
- An increase in businesses having access to and using new technologies
- An increase in local people with high levels of education and skills deciding to live and work in the district
- Fewer barriers to employment that will help to keep unemployment low
- Fewer local areas in need of regeneration with reduced levels of deprivation and a better quality of life for residents
- Successful and prosperous market town centres and rural villages providing a good mix of facilities and services
- More local supply networks for businesses and communities
- A balanced supply of a range of housing to accommodate workers.
Aim: ‘That the Wyre Forest District is a safer place to live, work, visit and do business. Communities will feel secure and different needs will be valued’

Safer Communities

crime and disorder......anti-social behaviour......fear of crime......
property crime......drugs and alcohol misuse......
safer neighbourhoods......hate crime

Setting the Scene

Promoting Wyre Forest as a safe district is going to be one of the key challenges of the Community Strategy. The district is already a safe place to live, work and visit. However even the low levels of crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour and fear of crime that are experienced can have a significant impact on local people’s lives and the cohesion of our rural and urban communities. These issues can also deter private sector investment to the area.

Since the Crime and Disorder Act 1998, our local approach to tackling crime and disorder has been to work in partnership. A strong and robust Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership exists, which brings together partners such as the Police, Local Authorities, Health Service, Fire Brigade and Registered Social Landlords, as well as representatives from the voluntary and community sectors. Through this Partnership, significant progress has been made in keeping crime levels low. This has included looking at the complex relationship between crime and social factors such as poor housing, unemployment, truancy and ill health. It is therefore important that there are policies and plans in place to tackle both the causes and effects of crime. This includes new developments being designed, as far as possible, to reduce the potential for criminal acts and to reduce fear of crime.

A greater focus has also been placed on working more closely with those communities that suffer disproportionate levels of crime and disorder in order to tackle the root causes to the problems and to help rebuild the confidence of those communities.

But there is still much that needs to be done. The Community Safety Partnership’s problem solving approach to deliver sustainable solutions and a willingness to do things differently will help to meet the many new challenges that lie ahead in reducing crime levels even further.
Wyre Forest District Facts

• The district continues to be and is recognised as being one of the safest places in the Country in which to live, work and visit
• Total crimes per 1000 population from April 2002/April 2003 was 91.11 compared to the national average of 113.25
• The probability of having your home burgled is the lowest across North Worcestershire
• Burglary (dwelling) per 1000 population from April 2002/April 2003 was 11.85 compared to a national average of 20.19
• The area has experienced the largest reduction of incidents of theft from motor vehicles across North Worcestershire compared to 2001/2002
• The district has a nationally recognised team of Neighbourhood and Street Wardens patrolling local estates and working to reassure local communities
• In 2001/2002, the drug offence rate was above the county rate but below the national rate.

What Wyre Forest People Said

• Top priority for residents was ‘more visible policing’
• ‘Reduce burglaries’ was the second highest priority. Over two thirds of the sample was worried about having their home burgled
• ‘Sort out vandalism’ was the third highest priority. 61% agreed that vandalism was a particular problem in the town centres
• ‘Deal with drugs’ was the fourth highest priority. Just under a third of the sample (32.5%) agreed that drug use was a problem in their local area
• CCTV in towns was the fifth priority and this view was consistent across the three town centres in the district
• ‘More facilities to get kids off the street’ was the sixth highest priority
• 78.5% supported the use of Neighbourhood Wardens to deal with less serious community safety issues.

Challenges Include....

• To reassure the community that they are safe in Wyre Forest
• The identification of anti-social behaviour hotspots and a multi-agency approach to resolving the issues
• Supporting local community initiatives to reduce crime and disorder
• Responding to the national community safety agenda and balancing this with local priorities
• Improving the design of new developments to reduce incidence of crime
• Adopting a problem solving approach using “victim”, “offender” and “location” analysis to produce long term solutions to crime and disorder
• Reduce inequalities in recorded crime and fear of crime within vulnerable communities including Oldington and Foley Park and Horsefair/Broadwaters
• To reduce further the number of domestic burglaries and the fear of becoming victims of burglary
• Through increasing public confidence, aim to increase the number of hate crimes and domestic violence crimes reported
• To reduce theft of and theft from motor vehicles by improving car park security and raising awareness of vehicle security
• Providing specialist help and assistance for persons known to be misusing alcohol and drugs.
Key Priorities - What we will do

**Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and help people feel safe**
Tackle the local priorities to reduce crime and disorder, through implementing the Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership Strategy and supporting local strategies and plans to tackle:
- Anti-social behaviour
- House burglary
- Vehicle crime
- Violent crime.

**Use a problem solving approach to deliver sustainable solutions to local problems**
Use the problem solving approach to create:
- Safer Transport Systems
- Safer Neighbourhoods
- Safer Town Centres through increased use of CCTV
- Safer Homes.

**Tackle drugs and alcohol misuse**
- Reduce the supply of Class A drugs
- Increase provision of drugs and alcohol referral schemes within the criminal justice system
- Strengthen communities to resist drugs and drug related crime and disorder.

**Value diversity, promote positive, inclusive behaviour and challenge discrimination**
- Engage with disadvantaged communities and in particular those within Oldington and Foley Park and Horsefair and Broadwaters areas as already identified in the District Community Safety Strategy
- Empower and support communities to develop
- Target hate crime
- Challenge discrimination and bigotry
- Promote community cohesion.

**Existing Activity Includes**
- Partnership approach to the use of Anti-Social Behaviour Orders
- Intelligence Led Policing to target crime hotspots
- Action planning to target burglary, vehicle crime and crimes involving violence
- Design and Supplementary Planning Guidance.

**Existing Activity Includes**
- Problem solving training delivered to multi-agency forums
- Increases in CCTV coverage
- Neighbourhood and Street Wardens patrolling local communities
- District Council Parks Patrol Officers
- Secured Car Park Award standards being adopted
- District Council’s Community Development Section offers a range of diversionary activities for young people in target areas.

**Existing Activity Includes**
- Drug and alcohol referral for offenders at point of charge
- Increased detection targets for those dealing Class A drugs
- Improved multi-agency working through Substance Misuse Action Teams.

**Existing Activity Includes**
- Worcestershire Racial Equality Council opening North Worcestershire office
- Specialist Hate Crime Investigation Team established (Police)
- Horsefair/Broadwaters Community Neighbourhood Partnership
- Oldington and Foley Park Community Network
- Community Action Wyre Forest activity
- District Council’s Community Development Section activity and programmes.
We Will Measure Progress By....

Reduce crime and anti-social behaviour and help people feel safe
- % decrease in reported crimes per 1000 population
- % decrease in levels of anti-social behaviour recorded
- % of people who feel safe in their neighbourhood and in their local town centre.

Tackle drugs and alcohol misuse
- % decrease in the number of drug and alcohol related crime
- Proportion of repeat offending amongst substance misusing offenders
- % increase in number of arrests and convictions for supply of Class A drugs
- Increase in number of drugs/alcohol referral workers in the district.

Value diversity, promote positive, inclusive behaviour and challenge discrimination
- % increase in number of reported hate crimes
- % increase of detected hate crimes.

Supporting Strategies and Plans
- Hereford and Worcester Combined Fire Authority Plan
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Youth Justice Plan
- Local Health Delivery Plan
- National Probation Service, West Mercia Area Business Plan
- Oldington and Foley Park Community Network Business Plan
- Partnership Towards Excellence – A Community Strategy for Worcestershire
- West Mercia Constabulary’s Strategy and Basic Command Unit Policing Plan
- Worcestershire Community Safety Strategy
- Worcestershire Local Public Service Agreement
- Worcestershire Road Safety Plan
- Worcestershire Substance Misuse Action Team’s Plans & Strategies
- Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership Community Safety Strategy
- Wyre Forest District Council Community Development Plan
- Wyre Forest Domestic Violence Strategy.
Greater Learning & Participation

Involvement……..early years……..school years education……..
adult and community learning……..access to cultural activity……..inclusion……..
education and skills for employment……..affordable childcare……..lifelong learning

Aim: ‘That the Wyre Forest District supports and stimulates excellence within an inclusive approach to increasing participation in learning and cultural activity, which will inspire local people and communities to raise their aspirations, maximise their potential and fulfil their own personal development’

Setting the Scene

Wyre Forest has the usual mixture of learning and participation opportunities. Currently most of the schools fall within a three tier system (including sixth forms), there is a college of further and higher education, a collection of work based learning providers and various community networks facilitating and delivering community learning and numerous cultural and sports venues.

It is recognised that opportunities for developing adult and community learning in community venues, schools and other locations across the Wyre Forest area need to be developed further. The Local Education Authority wishes to see the development of community schools. These schools could offer their local communities a range of services such as wrap around childcare, health provision and adult learning.

On the whole Wyre Forest schools have lower achievement rates than the rest of Worcestershire and have a low staying on rate into school sixth form. The college has recently re-located to a new building in Kidderminster town centre and sees itself as a community college. Although adult and community education is delivered effectively through collaborative provision with a range of partner organisations and via supported learning run through voluntary and community organisations, it needs to be extended in terms of its availability in particular parts of the Wyre Forest. There is a good sports and leisure infrastructure. Cultural activities are perceived as limited and many are supported through voluntary groups.

If we fail to respond to the need for a lifelong learning culture today, then we will pay the price with poor aspirations tomorrow. If we take action to develop a district that aspires towards excellence, keenly engages with learning and participation, uses resources wisely, and is aware of social, cultural and political issues, future generations will benefit.

There is a growing recognition of the role that arts, heritage, sport and creative activity can play in increasing participation in learning particularly within some of the district’s disadvantaged communities.

All activity within this theme will be geared towards improving opportunity and raising achievement and educational standards and promoting excellence for all. If we harness the strengths of the district’s numerous learning and participation groups to benefit local business and communities, and to support the cultural and creative sectors then we can change to better meet the challenge of lifelong learning and the aspirations of future generations.
Wyre Forest District Facts

• There is limited collective detail on participation venues
• Recognised formal active venues for learning, there are:
  - Schools: 52
  - Colleges of Further Education & Higher Education: 1

Learning statistics:
• 72% of 16 year old learners continue to stay on in full time learning
• 6½% of 16 year old learners continue to stay on in non employed training
• 4% of 16 year old learners progress into employment without training
• 7½% of 16 year old learners progress into employment with training
• 57% of 16 year olds progressing to college within Worcestershire stay in Wyre Forest
• Progression rate into Higher Education at Year 13 is 76%
• 4300 post 16 learners participate at Kidderminster College. 83% are adult learners (19+)
• Country wide DETR Multiple Index of Deprivation 2000 regarding education shows Oldington and Foley Park Ward is in the bottom 3%, Broadwaters and Sutton Park Wards are in the bottom 12%, and the Greenhill Ward is in the bottom 20%.

What Wyre Forest People Said

• 65% typically feel they are not very involved in their local community
• 62% believe it is unlikely they would undertake training or further study in order to move into a new area of work
• 67% believe it is unlikely they would undertake training or further study for their current employment without the support of their employer
• Most respondents would be encouraged to undertake training or further study if it gave them personal satisfaction, if the cost was covered by someone else and if it increased their knowledge
• Areas of interest that respondents were most likely to study in the next 3 years are computer literacy, foreign languages, sport, leisure, fitness including yoga, arts, humanities and performing arts, personal development, health and social care, and first aid
• Young people 9-11 years old overwhelmingly agree that what they learn at school will help them get a job. The things they would like to do more of is draw pictures or make something.

Challenges Include....

• Increasing the proportion of residents that participate in cultural, leisure and learning activities
• Accessibility to cultural, leisure and learning activity
• Promoting interest particularly for young people in the past and future developments of their community and its built and natural environment
• Encouraging active citizenship by enabling local people and communities, particularly those living in the more deprived areas to articulate and, where possible, take responsibility for meeting their own needs
• Improvements as a result of the Wyre Forest Schools Review
• Improvements as a result of the Learning and Skills Council, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Strategic Area Review
• Increasing the proportion of 16+ year olds participating in education and employment with training
• Increasing the proportion of adults achieving literacy and numeracy skills qualifications
• Increasing the number of adult learners progressing to a nationally recognised qualification
• Increasing the proportion of employees in the local workforce actively involved in learning
• Increasing the proportion of Small and Medium Sized Enterprises involved in training.
**Maximise residents' potential personal development and fulfilment through engagement with learning and cultural activity**

- Encourage more residents to participate in arts, heritage, sport and creative activities and learning
- Encourage more residents to improve their level of literacy and numeracy skills
- Encourage more young people to continue further with their initial education before leaving learning and gaining employment
- Encourage more residents to gain an appropriate whole Level 2 qualification (5 GCSE's at pass grade or vocational equivalent).

**Create a collaborative learning infrastructure that will provide better transport links, childcare provision and support to improve accessible learning opportunities for all ages**

- Identify and map those locations that provide learning and participation opportunities (e.g. community venues, employer venues, sports/activity venues)
- Ensure better provision of information on cultural and learning opportunities within the community (a single source, 'one stop' shop, structured learning path)
- Improve availability and access to appropriate local learning and participation facilities/resources
- Improve learning links and collaborative work between schools, colleges, community and voluntary groups including youth groups, church groups and drama societies.

**Existing Activity Includes:**

- Adult and community learning
- Wyre Forest Arts Forum
- Wyre Forest Youth Strategy Group
- Recreational and vocational courses (Kidderminster College, schools and other community venues)
- Bewdley Museum and associated education programme
- Extended Schools Initiative
- Oldington and Foley Park Community Network
- Horsefair/Broadwaters Community Neighbourhood Partnership
- Wyre Forest Lifelong Learning Partnership
- Community Action Wyre Forest
- Wyre Forest Volunteer Bureau
- Bewdley, Kidderminster and Stourport on Severn Civic Society meetings and visits
- District Council's Events Programme
- Passport to Leisure Scheme in Sports and Leisure Centres
- District Council's arts, sports, and rangers activity programmes.

**Existing Activity Includes:**

- Wyre Forest Schools Review
- Learning and Skills Council, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Strategic Area Review
- Wyre Forest Lifelong Learning Partnership
- Sure Start Wyre Forest
- Wyre Forest Schools Partnership (Secondary Schools and College)
- Wyre Forest Primary Care Trust Partnership
- North East Worcestershire Partnership in Education and Training Partnerships for Progression
- District Council’s Community Development Section including play development
- Use of the District Council’s Civic Halls and Bewdley Museum as accessible learning venues.
Increase employers’ awareness, involvement and contribution to the benefits of workforce development

- Encourage employers to provide opportunities and encourage their workforce to continue learning while in work
- Improve workforce employability and adaptability by improving levels of literacy and numeracy.

Existing Activity Includes:

- Business Link (Chamber of Commerce)
- The Skills Station (Advantage West Midlands & Learning and Skills Council, Herefordshire and Worcestershire)
- Opportunity Bewdley (Advantage West Midlands)
- Work Based Learning Training Providers
- Business Development Unit (Kidderminster College).

Supporting Strategies and Plans

- A Cultural Strategy for Worcestershire - Wyre Forest Action Plan
- Connexions Service Business Plan
- Kidderminster College Strategic Plan
- Learning and Skills Council, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Strategic Plan
- Lifelong Learning Strategy - Wyre Forest Lifelong Learning Partnership
- Partnership Towards Excellence - A Community Strategy for Worcestershire
- Sure Start Wyre Forest Strategy
- Worcestershire County Council Local Transport Plan
- Wyre Forest District Council Bewdley Museum Forward Plan
- Wyre Forest District Council Community Development Plan.
We Will Measure Progress By....

Maximise residents’ potential personal development and fulfilment through engagement with learning and cultural activity

- % increase in number of residents participating in arts, heritage, sports and creative activities
- Increased number of residents achieving a literacy or numeracy qualification for the first time
- Increase in 16 yr old + learners staying on in learning and training to 75% by 2005
- Increased number of residents achieving a whole Level 2 or equivalent qualification for the first time
- Development of Kidderminster Town Hall into an Arts Centre for the District by 2006
- Improved ranking position within the DETR Multiple Index of Deprivation Education Indicator for our most deprived wards.

Create a collaborative learning infrastructure that will provide better transport links, childcare provision and support to improve accessible learning opportunities for all ages

- Increased residents take up of learning pathways promotional information
- Increased number of local participation and learning venues across the Wyre Forest
- Increased number of successful and viable participation and learning activities as a result of partnership working.

Increase employers’ awareness, involvement and contribution to the benefits of workforce development

- Increased number of employers providing training and/or working with training organisations
- % increase of residents likely to undertake training or study for employment reasons.

Achieving Our Key Priorities Will Mean....

- There will be enhanced engagement of the local community with community issues
- There will be increased interest and participation in the evolution of the district’s Community Strategy
- High quality education for all children in schools that are secure, happy and motivating places
- More young people continuing their education beyond 16 at school, in further education and in workplace learning
- More people will enjoy community life and have access to leisure, entertainment and cultural activities
- Significant improvements in the level of literacy and numeracy skills
- A greater range and choice of learning opportunities for everyone young and old
- More people aspiring to and achieving learning in higher education
- Good quality training designed to support people in their work or help them to find new jobs
- Better support for those who are not involved in learning or training and who are at risk of social exclusion
- We will attract new business, as we will be recognised as a district with a skilled workforce
- There will be improved access to learning and cultural opportunities.
Implementation & Monitoring Arrangements

The Wyre Forest Matters Partnership has achieved a great deal in the production of this first district Community Strategy. It is now responsible for overseeing, co-ordinating and monitoring its effectiveness. To help achieve this, the Partnership has adopted the following shared values, which will feature in all its activity for improving the quality of life for people in the district.

The Partnership will:

- Listen to and involve local people and communities;
- Respond to the changing needs of local communities;
- Ensure that procedures, decisions and actions are properly communicated;
- Reduce inequalities in those geographic communities, groups and individuals where needs are greatest;
- Treat people with equality and value diversity;
- Encourage new ideas and ways of working;
- Work together with honesty, integrity, openness and purpose;
- Make the best use of skills and resources;
- Strive for ‘the best’ in all that we do;
- Learn from others; and
- Make sure that decisions will benefit both present and future generations.

The Community Strategy must remain up to date and relevant as the district develops and circumstances change. The Wyre Forest Matters Partnership which is served by a Strategic Board, five Theme Working Groups and a Forum will monitor performance through the delivery plans and will also take into account the changing expectations of local people on a regular basis. The Partnership will report annually on progress and will review and revise the overall balance of the Community Strategy several times as progress is made in implementing the key priorities to achieve the district’s shared vision.

This first edition of the Community Strategy is the start of a developing and evolving process. It is not set in stone.

TO FIND OUT MORE ...

- **Wyre Forest Matters Partnership**  
  C/o Wyre Forest District Council  
  Telephone 01562 732781

- **Improved Health & Wellbeing**  
  Wyre Forest Primary Care Trust  
  Telephone 01562 826329

- **A Better Environment**  
  Wyre Forest District Council  
  Telephone 01562 732718

- **Shared Prosperity**  
  Wyre Forest District Council  
  Telephone 01562 732718

- **Safer Communities**  
  West Mercia Constabulary - Wyre Forest District  
  Telephone 08457 444888

- **Greater Learning & Participation**  
  Kidderminster College  
  Telephone 01562 512072
The following organisations and groups of the Wyre Forest Matters Partnership have committed themselves to delivering the district’s ten year shared vision:

- Advantage West Midlands
- Age Concern Wyre Forest
- Alcohol Advisory Service
- Alzheimer’s Society - Wyre Forest and District Branch
- Baxter College
- Beacon Employment
- Bewdley High School
- Bishops Wood Environmental Education Centre
- Bodenham Arboretum
- Bramble's Trust
- Brintons Limited
- British Beer and Pubs Association
- British Waterways
- Churches of Wyre Forest
- Community Action Wyre Forest
- Community Drug Team North Worcestershire
- Community Health and Research Trust
- Countryside Agency
- Disability Action Wyre Forest
- English Nature
- Environment Agency
- Ethical Training Company
- Federation of Small Businesses, Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- Forestry Commission
- Government Office for the West Midlands
- Headway - Wyre Forest
- Hereford and Worcester Fire Brigade
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Chamber of Commerce
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Connexions Service
- Herefordshire and Worcestershire Youth Offending Team
- Home Start Wyre Forest
- Job Centre Plus
- Kemp Hospice
- Kidderminster and District Training Company
- Kidderminster Civic Society
- Kidderminster Choral Society
- Kidderminster College
- Kidderminster Prostate Cancer Support Group
- Kidderminster Shuttle, Times and News
- Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership
- Kidderminster West Team Ministry
- Kidderminster Youth Trust
- King Charles I School
- Learning and Skills Council, Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- Mencap - Wyre Forest
- Mind Wyre Forest
- National Farmers Union
- National Osteoporosis Society Kidderminster Support Group
- Nexus Housing Association
- North Worcestershire Disability Information Advice Line
- Oldington and Foley Park Community Network
- Opportunity Bewdley
- Quaestor Cost Consultants
- Rocksor Limited
- Social Security Office – Kidderminster
- South Worcestershire Primary Care Trust
- St. John’s Middle School
- St. Mary’s C.E. First School
- St. Peter’s Birchen Coppice Church of England
• Stourport Forward
• Stourport High School
• Stourport-on-Severn Civic Society
• Stourport-on-Severn Town Centre Forum
• Sure Start Wyre Forest
• Sustrans
• The Network (Worcestershire)
• Tree Spirit - Wyre Forest Branch
• West Mercia Constabulary
• West Mercia Probation Service
• Wolverley High School
• Women’s Royal Voluntary Service
• Worcestershire Acute Hospitals NHS Trust
• Worcestershire Biodiversity Partnership
• Worcestershire County Association of Local Councils
• Worcestershire County Council
• Worcestershire, Coventry and Warwickshire Energy Efficiency Advice Centre
• Worcestershire Substance Misuse Action Team
• Worcestershire Wildlife Trust
• Wyre Forest Action Group for Older People
• Wyre Forest Arts Forum
• Wyre Forest Business Club
• Wyre Forest Business Forum
• Wyre Forest Citizens Advice Bureau
• Wyre Forest Community Housing
• Wyre Forest Community Network
• Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership
• Wyre Forest Cycle Forum
• Wyre Forest District Council
• Wyre Forest District Parish and Town Councils
• Wyre Forest Friends of the Earth
• Wyre Forest Heart Start Group
• Wyre Forest Highways Partnership Unit
• Wyre Forest Lifelong Learning Partnership
• Wyre Forest Primary Care Trust
• Wyre Forest Race Relations Council
• Wyre Forest Schools Partnership
• Wyre Forest Stroke Association
• Wyre Forest Tourism and Leisure Network
• Wyre Forest Young Voices
• Wyre Forest Youth Strategy Group

Copies of this Strategy can be made available in larger print or audio cassette on request
Call: 01562 732781

If you need help with understanding this in your own language contact Ethnic Access on: 01905 251212

This Strategy is also available on the Internet:
www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk
A booklet summarising the main points of this Strategy, intended primarily for community use is available from:

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