Have your say on where new development should go within Wyre Forest District

This Issues and Options Consultation is the first stage of the Plan Review. We want your views on the issues we have identified and the options for addressing them.

The District Council is preparing a new Local Plan which will bring together all the existing planning policy documents into a single Local Plan document. This new Local Plan will identify development needs for the District up until 2032. With recent changes to Government policy at both national and regional level, local planning authorities are now responsible for setting their own targets for housing, employment, retail, open space and community uses.

The map below shows the District’s main character areas:

**Strategic Character Areas**

Work is currently being undertaken to identify how much housing, employment and retail development is required up until 2032. This consultation includes 7 potential growth options for allocating new development.
Where should new housing be located?

**OPTION 1**
Brownfield regeneration which focuses on the main towns of Kidderminster and Stourport-on-Severn - this would continue the focus of the existing Local Plan. However, there may not be enough deliverable brownfield land available.

**OPTION 2**
Brownfield regeneration focused on the main towns and expansion of Kidderminster to the North East via a sustainable urban extension which would take some land out of the Green Belt between the A449 Wolverhampton Road and the A456 Birmingham Road. A full Green Belt boundary review would be required.

**OPTION 3**
Brownfield regeneration focused on the main towns and expansion of Kidderminster to the South East via a sustainable urban extension which would take some land out of the Green Belt between the A456 Birmingham Road and the A449 Worcester Road. Again, a full Green Belt boundary review would be required.
**OPTION 4**

Brownfield regeneration focus for Stourport-on-Severn – there are still large amounts of brownfield land available for development in the town. If Greenfield sites are required, this would mean encroaching either into open countryside (south of the river) or into the Green Belt (north of town) where a full Green Belt boundary review would again be needed.

**OPTION 5**

Allocate some development to Bewdley through an amendment to the town’s settlement boundary to accommodate new development – this would require some Greenfield sites to be released. Land east of the River Severn is in the Green Belt and a Green Belt boundary review would be required.
Where should new housing be located?

OPTION 6
Allocate more new development to the villages and settlements within the District’s Rural East - this would require a full review of settlement boundaries as well as a Green Belt boundary review. There are a number of previously developed sites in the Green Belt which could become potential allocations.

OPTION 7
Allocate more development to the villages and settlements within the District’s Rural West – this option would help to retain services. However, a comprehensive review of settlement boundaries would be needed.

Please let us have your views on which of these options (or combinations of options) you consider to be the most appropriate.
Developing Planning Policies

In addition to the strategic growth options, the Issues and Options Consultation poses questions and includes options for the development of planning policies for the following topics:

HOUSING
Since 2006, almost 2,500 homes have been built in the District. Some of these have catered for smaller households. Should we now plan for more executive and family housing? Current policy requires 30% of new homes to be affordable. However, development costs have prevented most sites achieving this. The majority of affordable housing has been provided by Wyre Forest Community Housing rather than private developers. Is 30% a suitable affordable housing target? The District’s population is aging. How can we make sure we meet the housing needs of older people? Wyre Forest District has 85 pitches for Gypsies and Travellers, mostly in the Sandy Lane area of Stourport-on-Severn. How do you think we should plan for future needs?

EMPLOYMENT
Employment opportunities are mostly focussed around the South Kidderminster Enterprise Park, which includes the industrial estates along the Stourport and Worcester Roads. A Local Development Order (LDO) is in place to support employment development in this area. Should we retain all the existing sites, consider alternative uses on some sites or allocate new sites which could potentially be Greenfield?

RETAIL
Town centres need a mix of uses including retail, leisure, commercial, community, cultural as well as residential. How do you think town centres can be regenerated? How do we ensure the survival of local shops and services?
Developing Planning Policies

TOURISM
Tourism makes a vital contribution to the local economy; most visitors are daytrippers with few overnight stays. Should we concentrate on improving the existing offer or should we plan for new attractions?

CHARACTER AND LOCAL DISTINCTIVENESS
The built and natural environment is one of the District’s strengths with open countryside easily accessible from all areas. Our area contains a wealth of heritage assets which play an important role in its character and identity. How can we protect and enhance the landscape and heritage of the District?

TRANSPORT
Congestion and poor air quality are significant issues in parts of the District. How can policy encourage less dependence on the private car? Should we continue to safeguard the route of the Stourport Relief Road? There are a number of potential options for new link roads in the Churchfields area of Kidderminster which may help improve air quality. What are your views?

CLIMATE CHANGE
Flood risk is a significant issue for the District. How should we manage existing flood risk and ensure that new development does not increase flood risk? How can we encourage the use of renewable energy technologies?
The local plan review process

We are here

Issues and Options
September/October 2015

Preferred Options
June/July 2016

Pre-Submission Publication
January/February 2017

Submission
May 2017

Examination
August - October 2017

Inspector’s Report
November 2017

Adoption
December 2017

Planning affects many aspects of our lives and it is important to get the balance right. Please get involved and have your say on the amount and type of development needed and where it should be located. We look forward to hearing from you.

Please submit your comments to us by Friday 16th October in one of the following ways:

On-line: www.wyreforestdc.gov.uk/localplanreview
By email: Planning.policy@wyreforestdc.gov.uk
By post: Planning Policy Team, Wyre Forest DC, Wyre Forest House, Finepoint Way, Kidderminster DY11 7WF

Look out for opportunities to engage via social media including a live Q&A:

Like us on Facebook - Wyre Forest District Council
Follow us on Twitter - @WyreForestDC