

REGENERATION COMMITTEE

9 NOVEMBER 2005

**Report of the Director of Regeneration
BVPI 2ND QUARTER MONITORING UPDATE**

purpose of the report

1. To provide 2nd quarter monitoring information and to update Members on activity within the department during the period July to September 2005 on progress against the Department Service Plan for 2005/6.

background

2. The Regeneration Committee endorsed the Service Plan on 25 May 2005. In order to inform Members a quarterly review has been undertaken on implementation of the plan in respect of the three main service areas of the department: development and building control; planning and environmental policy; and economic regeneration. Summarised in Annex 1 to this report are measures of our performance against key targets and indicators.
3. The indicators show performance against target (where this can be measured) in the quarter and an indication of service improvement.

development and building control

development control

4. Throughout this year it has been extremely difficult to maintain the high level of performance achieved in previous years due to staff leaving and difficulties in recruiting new staff. Following the departure of the acting Principal Officer subsequent advertising of the post did not attract any applicants. Also workloads have remained high. Agency staff have had to be used to help with the processing of applications.
5. The performance is as follows:-

	2005/6 Q1	2005/6 Q2	Target (set nationally)	Oct 2004-Sept 2005 (Delivery Grant Period)
Major	44%	83%	60% in 13 weeks	63%
Minor	65%	69%	65% in 8 weeks	59%
Other	92%	93%	80% in 8 weeks	80%

6. A total of 277 applications were determined in Q2. The percentage of applications determined through delegation to officers was 94% (target 90%).

7. Despite the problems performance has improved across the board in the last quarter, with all targets being exceeded. The targets on majors and other applications in the Planning Delivery Grant accounting period (end of September) were met, thanks to the extra effort and resources over the last few months. It is, however, disappointing that having met all three targets in the previous time PDG periods this time we have hit only two.

appeals

8. During Q2, 2 appeal decisions were received (see Annex 2). Both appeals were dismissed (100%). In this Planning Delivery Grant period there were 15 appeal decisions. 10 of the appeals were dismissed (67%).

enforcement

9. During this quarter a total of 163 complaints were received. From 1st June 2005, and the employment of a second enforcement officer all sites of complaints are visited, the complainants are contacted and updated until the complaint is resolved. In Q2, 80 complaints received in the quarter were resolved (49%). To date in 2005 369 complaints have been received of which 157 have been resolved (42.5%). One temporary stop notice has been served (see Annex 3). This information is considered to be exempt in accordance with paragraph 13 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the Local Government Act 1972.

complaints

10. 12 complaints were received in Q2 compared to 8 in Q1. 8 were taken to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure and 2 were taken to Stage 3. In response to the number of complaints now being received a full analysis of reasons and response to complaints is being undertaken.

ombudsman cases

11. In Q2 there has been 1 Ombudsman decision. This is detailed in Annex 2.

building control

12. In the 2nd quarter of 2005/06 the section determined 166 full applications.
13. The percentage of inspections undertaken in one working day was 100% (target 100%).
14. It is proving very difficult to carry out plan vetting whilst maintaining the excellent inspections record due to heavy workloads. At the end of July one inspector left the authority and I was allowed to advertise for two new inspectors. No suitable applications were received and the post has been re-advertised. In the meantime some plan vetting has been passed to a consultant inspector in order to maintain the excellent inspections record. The consultant inspector is vetting about 65% of all applications and is replying within 3 weeks which has resulted in a much quicker decision making.

economic regeneration

15. The number of relocations and re-investments (BV-EC17b) at the end of Q2 is 0 against a target of 8. The number of jobs created and safeguarded from firms moving to, or relocating within the District (BV-EC17c) is 0 against a target of 50. Lack of achievement against these targets is of concern however this does not reflect activity. We are currently in negotiations with 7 companies looking to locate into Wear Valley, these companies have the potential to create 117 jobs. Three of these companies are in knowledge intensive sectors and could potentially bring quality job opportunities into the District. All efforts are being made to secure these investment opportunities.
16. The West Durham Rural Pathfinder workshop at Hamsterley Village Hall on 28 June 05, attended by representatives of Teesdale and Wear Valley LSPs, considered the priorities for the four pathfinder themes:-
 - Community capability building and strengthening of social enterprise
 - Skills and enterprise development in support of sustainable tourism
 - Health and quality of life of our young people
 - Development of the “knowledge economy” in ways appropriate to West Durham.
17. Since then progress has been made through meetings of the four task groups to further consider delivery issues under each theme and to start developing the Task Groups.
18. Applications for ERDF and Single Programme funding have been submitted to create 1,547 sq m of office accommodation at Low Willington. Subject to funding approval to is hoped to start on site Q4 2005/06 with completion October 2006.
19. Work continues to implement the Coundon Settlement Renewal Initiative; Crook and Stanhope Market Town Initiative; and the SRB Round 6 and the European Objective 2 Packages.
20. Members of the team hosted a one-day whistle stop tour of the District's beautiful countryside, visitor attractions and accommodation on 31 August 05 to One NorthEast's new Tourism Marketing Team. The event provided an opportunity to raise awareness of Wear Valley as a visitor destination and develop closer working with individuals responsible for marketing the region.

brownfield land

21. Whilst the 1st quarter results show a continued improvement there has been a decline in the proportion of housing completions on brownfield land in the 2nd quarter. As stressed on previous occasions, increases in the use of brownfield land take time to feed through the system. The rate at which the existing permissions are taken up and developed is of course largely outside the control of the local planning authority. Allowance should, therefore, be made in interpreting the statistics for the “delay” between the actual grant of permission, and the results “on the ground”. Once output from brownfield sites benefiting from planning permission gathers momentum, the figure will

continue to improve. The percentage of development on brownfield land in Q2 was 33.3% compared to 60% national target.

22. BV200 is a recently introduced indicator to reflect how up to date the Council's Local Plan is. This indicator pre-dates changes in the planning system introduced by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act. In effect, authorities like Wear valley, which produced their local plan some time ago (1997) and are clearly on track to produce our Local Development Framework in accordance with the new Government target will inevitably not meet BV200.
23. In addition, Members should note the inclusion of two additional indicators relating to conservation areas. These will be reported on the next quarterly report.

private sector housing

24. BVPI 62 is monitored annually, however to date 30 properties have been improved to make these properties fit for human habitation based on the Governments fitness standard. This figure has been greatly improved over the last 2 years and continues to improve, one of the reasons for this improvement is down to the new Private Sector Grants Policy that was implemented in April 2005.
25. The number of empty properties that have been brought back into use over the last 6 months is 28. Again this is an increase over similar figures last year and it is hoped that our target of 60 properties will be exceeded.
26. The Dene Valley Renewal Area has seen a major focus over the past 6 months, Randolph Street has been subject to an extensive Environmental Facelift Scheme that has proven to be successful. This scheme will continue over the next 6 months and further improvements will be made.

RECOMMENDED	1	Members note the progress towards meeting the priorities of the Service Plan and meeting the BVPI's.
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REGENERATION COMMITTEE

9 NOVEMBER 2005

Report of the Director of Regeneration

**WEAR VALLEY DISTRICT LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK –
DRAFT STATEMENT OF COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT (SCI)**

purpose of the report

1. To inform Members of the outcome of public consultation on the draft Statement of Community Involvement.
2. To present a revised draft Statement of Community Involvement, in response to comments received, for Members' endorsement prior to formal submission of the document to the ODPM.

background

3. As part of the production of the Council's Local Development Framework (LDF) which will progressively supersede the currently adopted Local Plan a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) is being prepared. The SCI will inform third parties as to how this Council will provide them with the opportunity to become involved in the plan making and development control processes.
4. Members will recall that an initial draft SCI was reported and ratified at the Policy and Strategic Development committee held on 3rd August 2005. Public consultation on the draft SCI was subsequently carried out for a 6 week period between 19 August 2005 and 30 September 2005.

public consultation

5. To ensure that the draft SCI was the subject of full and meaningful consultation the following programme was implemented:-
 - Letter of explanation, full copy of draft SCI, summary, guidance notes and response forms sent out to 101 statutory consultees.
 - Letter of explanation, summary of SCI, guidance notes and response forms sent out to 276 parties. Subsequent request for full copies of the document were received.
 - Draft SCI and supporting documents published on the Council's website.
 - Poster displayed in publicly accessible establishments in each settlement publicising the draft SCI consultation event.
 - Article published in Wear Valley Matters.

- Evening and weekend exhibition/discussion sessions at St John's Chapel; Stanhope; Wolsingham; Crook and Bishop Auckland.
- Draft SCI and supporting documents made available to view at the Civic Centre; County Hall; district libraries and leisure centres.

public response

6. Given the relatively uncontentious nature of a SCI and the experience of other councils who have already undertaken this activity it was not anticipated that there would be a significant level of response to the public consultation event.
7. A total of 48 response forms were returned. This rate reflects that experience by other Durham District Councils, though is considered low given the level of consultation which was undertaken by this Council. The discussion sessions were particularly poorly attended by only a handful of people, although their contribution is not to be underestimated. Reconsideration as to the format, time and location of any further discussion sessions is to be undertaken as a result for future purposes.
8. Notwithstanding the above the responses received have been generally supportive of the initial draft SCI. No outright objections were lodged. A number of parties requested alterations. These have been by and large constructive in their nature and are to be a welcomed improvement to the draft SCI. A summary of responses is contained in Annex 4 along with the action taken in response to them. The revised draft SCI is contained in Annex 5 for Members consideration.

next steps

9. Upon the ratification of the revised draft SCI (Annex 5) by Members, the document can be finalised for publication. From then on in, it will be referred to as the Submission SCI. It is proposed that this Submission document is formerly submitted to the ODPM at the beginning of December 2005. This accords with the "milestone" set out in the Local Development Scheme (LDS), the project plan for the LDF. The Submission SCI will also be the subject of further public consultation scheduled to run between 6th December 2005 and 31st January 2006. The consultation period is to be extended from the statutory 6 weeks to an 8 week period to take into account the Christmas period.
10. A copy of Annex 4 along with a copy of the Submission SCI will be forwarded to all parties who previously made representation to the draft SCI. In addition a further programme of consultation will be implemented. Any further representation received will be considered by the Planning Inspectorate. Until the nature of any further representations is known the Planning Inspectorate is unable to determine whether the Submission document will be subject to an Examination In Public or written representation process. It is anticipated that the Inspector will consider the Submitted SCI by whatever means during May 2006.

legal implication

11. The preparation of the SCI is being carried out in accordance with current Government policy guidance, good practice guides and relevant regulations. A procedural statement will be submitted with the Submission SCI to demonstrate conformity with the relevant regulation.

financial implication

12. The production costs for the draft and Submission SCI can be met out of this year's Development Plans budget. However, for future years commitment will need to be made through the budgetary process to accommodate the on-going increase in costs of production of subsequent Local Development Documents (LDDS) and holding Examinations In Public.
13. The vacant Forward Planning Officer post has recently been filled and the officer has commenced duties. However, the post of Head of Planning and Environmental Policy has been vacant since April 2005. This has placed additional pressures upon the Forward Planning Team. Whilst the production of the SCI is still on target in relation to the timescale set out in the adopted LDS, progress on the 4 proposed Development Plan Documents may be hindered by lack of staff resources.

conclusion

14. In general terms the responses received in relation to public consultation of the draft SCI are welcomed as constructive criticism of the document. The draft SCI has been modified to accommodate issues raised by third parties wherever practicable. The production of the LDF remains a challenge for the Council. However, it is anticipated that the SCI will enable this to be done with full and meaningful public involvement.

RECOMMENDED

- 1 That Members consider and approve the action taken in relation to consultation responses received.
- 2 That Members endorse the revised draft SCI and submission of the final document to ODPM in December 2005.

background information

Draft Statement of Community Involvement (July 2005). PPS12 Local Development Frameworks (2004). Creating Local Development Frameworks – a Good Practice Guide (2004). Wear Valley District Local Development Scheme (April 2005).

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REGENERATION COMMITTEE

9 NOVEMBER 2005

Report of the Director of Regeneration

NINTH ANNUAL HOME ENERGY EFFICIENCY REPORT (HECA)

purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to inform members of the annual progress made in reducing energy usage and carbon dioxide emissions in domestic housing in the Wear Valley District.

background

2. The Home Energy Conservation Act 1995 (HECA) places a duty on the authority to provide an annual progress report on its reductions in energy usage and carbon dioxide emissions in domestic housing and requires local authorities to achieve a 30% improvement in energy efficiency within 15 years or by the year 2010. (Equating to an annual average improvement of 2% per year).

previous progress

3. The last Home Energy Conservation report (8th), highlighted the positive approach the authority has taken towards home energy efficiency and showed that it was 'on track' to achieve the governments fifteen year target, with an overall energy efficiency improvement since 1996 of 27.45%.
4. Amongst all Energy Conservation Authorities in the UK, the North East are one of the better performing regions, and within the region, Wear Valley have improved their position from the previous year, from being third in the table to one of the top two achievers. See Annex 6.
5. In their 'feedback' of the 8th HECA report, Government Office were impressed with the latest improvement figures and congratulated the authority on "*...reaching our targets so successfully*", and despite achieving those targets, were encouraged at our efforts to continue to plan new projects.

current progress

6. The authority has maintained the momentum of the previous year and strives to 'lead the way' in improving its energy efficiency service to the residents of the District via partnerships, funding 'leverage' and its energy efficiency education programme.

7. The continuation of EEC (Energy Efficiency Commitment) funding from utility companies has enabled the authority to develop its heating and insulation programme for its social housing, providing a 'thermal comfort' rating above the national average.
8. We have developed closer links with community groups and other external agencies which allowed us to extend our Education and Awareness energy efficiency programme.
9. The development of our partnership with the Home Improvement Agency has provided a framework for targeting and delivering the necessary heating and insulation needs for those elderly and vulnerable members of the community.
10. Private householders have taken advantage of energy efficient grants to the value of £57,568, made available under the *Durham Energy Savers* scheme. (a County wide local authority scheme which aims to maximise funding for households within its partnership).
11. *Warm Front* grant eligible householders (private householders that receive a specific benefit) across the district received Government grants to the value of £344,589 for insulation and central heating measures.
12. Grant assistance for Renewable energy measures has been maximised and there has been a marked interest in the private sector following talks and workshops in the community regarding alternative domestic energy systems.
13. Research studies with our partners have enabled us to identify those least efficient households within the rural communities of our district allowing us to accurately 'direct' any available funding.

ninth annual progress report 2004-2005

14. The annual report, the ninth since 1996, documents the work that has been carried out, across all tenures, in the Wear Valley District and shows the progress made towards reductions in energy usage and carbon emissions over the period April 1st 2004 to March 31st 2005.
15. The table shown below is a summary of the results of the latest annual report between April 1st 2004 to March 31st 2005, and shows a total improvement in energy efficiency of 3.64% for domestic housing in the Wear Valley District for that period. (2% being the average required by Government).

summary of eighth annual heca progress report

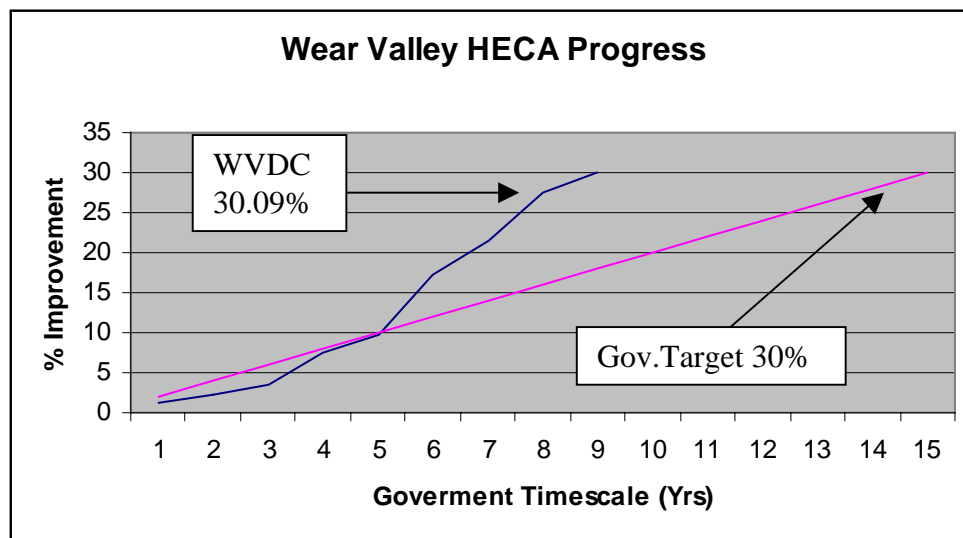
% Improvement in energy efficiency by tenure	%	Reduction in CO² emissions (tonnes)
Owner Occupied	4.00	5,782.00
Local Authority	7.91	5,055.90
Private Rented	2.37	1,392.40
Housing Associations	1.00	69.21
% Total for Housing in Wear Valley	3.64	12,299.51

conclusions

16. This year's energy efficiency improvements in domestic dwellings have again taken Wear Valley District above the level of progress expected by Government.
17. The latest figures achieved, show an overall improvement in energy efficiency, since 1996, of 30.09% against the anticipated Government target of 18% for this period. This is a positive indicator of the commitment made by the authority towards meeting its energy efficiency obligations and confirms that the methods being employed are obtaining the necessary results. (See Fig.1).
18. The Authority has maintained a successful programme of improvements to its own housing stock with private households also able to take advantage of generous government grants and available funding for energy efficient measures, this point is reflected in the overall reduction in CO2 emissions in the district.
19. The authority has now achieved the Government target of a 30% reduction in domestic energy consumption, as required by the Home Energy Conservation Act of 1995 and before the statutory deadline of 2010.
20. As we reach a 'saturation' point of improvements via ordinary measures, it will become apparent that in order to make further progress, the authority needs to increase investment towards renewable energy alternatives both in the public and private sector.

Fig.1

Graph showing Wear Valley progress against Government targets



RECOMMENDED

1. Committee notes the level of achievement in energy efficiency by reaching the Governments Home Energy Conservation target prior to 2010.
2. Committee encourages the Council to:-
 - (a) Maintain the progress made in its energy efficiency programme and develop its partnerships with neighbouring authorities and other agencies.
 - (b) Extend its energy awareness programme into rural communities and specifically those 'hard to treat homes'.
 - (c) Seek to develop alternative funding sources.
 - (d) Develop more opportunities for renewable energy measures.

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REGENERATION COMMITTEE

9 NOVEMBER 2005

Report of the Director of Regeneration

PROPOSED VIREMENT OF PROJECTED UNDERSPEND TO PUBLIC AND PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING GRANTS

purpose of the report

1. The purpose of this report is to consider virement of resources in the Capital Programme from the Dene Valley Renewal Area Budget to tackle Housing Unfitness throughout the District.

background

2. The Council's Capital programme for 2005/06 has allocated £700,000 to private sector housing improvement, disabled facilities grants and the Dene Valley Group Repair Scheme. This comprises:-
 - £196,000 p.a. to be spent on delivering housing grants to customers in the private sector.
 - £204,000 is allocated to Disabled Adaptations.
 - £300,000 p.a. is allocated to the Dene Valley Housing Renewal Area to be spent on private sector housing and environmental improvement.
3. The budget for private sector housing grants has remained static over recent years whilst the demand has increased significantly and continues to increase on a daily basis. The increase in demand is due to a number of factors. Over the last year the Durham Dales Home Improvement Agency and the Private Sector Housing Team have been increasing the profile of the services we deliver, this has led to an increase in demand.

current situation

4. The Dene Valley Housing Renewal Area programme has seen a large amount of work over the last 5 years with work in The Hollow, Bridge Place and Randolph Street. The scheme for Randolph Street was completed in June 2005. The next phase, as agreed at Regeneration Committee on 13th July 2005, is scheduled to tackle improvements in High Street. At present, through our consultants, Accent Regeneration, we are at an early stage of consultation with property owners. It is not anticipated that physical work will commence until the final quarter of this financial year. It is, therefore, anticipated that there will be an under spend on this account that will not be fully spent by 1st April 2006.

5. The budget for housing grants is fully committed for 2005/2006 and the waiting list is now increasing at a rapid pace for both Major and Minor Repair Grants. This highlights a number of problems, the main problem being that a customer's home that may have major health and safety issues can not be dealt with as quickly or efficiently as in the past. Whilst efforts are made to 'fast track' these sort of instances, they are becoming more frequent and budgets are becoming increasingly stretched.
6. In addition the Disabled Adaptation Grants for the Public Sector is also in great demand with a waiting list now in place to treat our customers that are in most need. It is envisaged that by 1st April 2006 the waiting list will stand at £100,000. The budget allocation for this year is £122,000 and, therefore, in theory any potential allocation in next year's budget is almost fully committed.

proposal

7. It is proposed to vire resources from the Dene Valley Scheme to help meet some of the existing demand for private/public sector improvements.
8. It is anticipated that the current proposals in this phase of the Dene Valley Renewal Area will cost £240,000. It is proposed that the forecast underspend is transferred for the Public Sector Disabled Adaptations and for Major and Minor Repair Grants.
9. This would enable the waiting list for the Public Sector Disabled Adaptations to be reduced and would reduce the fear that disabled customers could be forced to wait over a year for an adaptation to their property.
10. It would also help reduce the waiting list for Major and Minor Repair Grants and have a large impact on the amount of time customers wait to get their essential work completed on their homes.
11. The Dene Valley Renewal Area scheme would not be hindered as we are currently going through the early stages of the consultation exercise. The next phase of works will not begin early 2006. A large proportion of the work is through savings made by working closely and carefully monitoring the last phase of work at Randolph Street and this scheme coming in under budget.
12. I believe that by targeting the underspend to our customers that are in most need it will have a real positive impact across the district.

financial implications

13. This report outlines the need to vire £60,000 from the Dene Valley Renewal Area Budget and to transfer it the budgets for Public Sector Disabled Adaptation and Major and Minor Repair Grants for the Private Sector.

legal implications

17. There are no legal implications.

human resource implications

18. There are no Human Resource Implications.

i.t. implications

19. There are no I.T. Implications.

crime and disorder implications

20. If a Public or Private Sector property becomes void due to being unable to live in satisfactory conditions that meet the individuals needs, there could be cases of crime targeted on those empty properties.

monitoring

21. The monitoring of both the Dene Valley Renewal Scheme and the Grant regime continues to be monitored by the Principal Housing Strategy Officer. The monitoring will continue to ensure that funding is targeted in a pragmatic way.
22. Support for this proposal has been expressed by the Director of Housing.

RECOMMENDED

1. That committee agree to the virement of £60,000 from the Dene Valley Housing Renewal Scheme to the budgets for Public Sector Disabled Adaptations and Major and Minor Repair Grants.

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REGENERATION COMMITTEE

9 NOVEMBER 2005

Report of the Director of Regeneration **LOCAL ENTERPRISE GROWTH INITIATIVE**

purpose of the report

1. To update Members in relation to the Local Enterprise Growth Initiative process for Wear Valley and seek endorsement as to the approach and next steps outlined.

introduction

2. The Local Enterprise Growth Initiative (LEGI) was announced by the Chancellor of the Exchequer in his March budget and will be worth £300m over 3 bidding rounds in 2006/7, 2007/8 and 2008/9.
3. The aim of the initiative is *“to release the productivity and economic potential of our most deprived local areas and their inhabitants through enterprise and investment – thereby boosting local incomes and employment opportunities.”* The aim is supported by three outcomes:-
 - To increase total entrepreneurial activity among the population in deprived local areas.
 - To support the sustainable growth – and reduce the failure rate – of locally owned businesses in deprived areas.
 - To attract appropriate inward investment and franchising into deprived areas, making use of local labour resources.
4. Only the 88 Local Authority areas eligible for NRF are eligible to apply for LEGI, and each has access to a pot of ‘development money’ to be used to develop and produce their LEGI proposal. Wear Valley has been successful in obtaining £80,000 of funding to develop our proposal.
5. The LEGI process is competitive and ultimately it is anticipated that only around 30 bids will be able to access the resources available of around £2m - £10m in the 3 rounds.
6. The proposed LEGI initiative has been subject to a major consultation exercise between April and July and the results of the consultation were expected to be published, together with bid guidelines, at the end of September. As yet no published guidance has appeared. In the meantime, and in advance of the consultation results, HM Treasury, ODPM and SBS have published a ‘next steps’ document which outlines the forward process and timescales for local authorities bidding for LEGI funding. Bids are requested by December 2005.

legi next steps

7. There are a number of explicit statements within the document which need to be considered in the development of the LEGI bid for Wear Valley.
8. It is clear that the intention is for LEGI to be used for "... in-depth interventions in a limited number of local authority areas both with a need (measured by level of deprivation) and potential (business potential inhibited by market failures)." It is therefore essential that clear consideration needs to be given to identifying the key causes of economic deprivation suffered in Wear Valley, identify the potential projects which can solve the market failures and ensure that the benefits in the deprived areas are maximised.
9. It is also essential that structures, relationships and communication infrastructure are all looked at to ensure that we are in a position to be able to proactively deal with the introduction of LEGI.
10. The document also stresses that successful LEGI bids will be based upon submissions that focus on "... good ideas with robust implementation strategies that are designed to have a real tangible impact on outcomes." In particular proposals are expected to follow 6 key principles:-
 - a) effective targeting,
 - b) effective solutions,
 - c) significant long term commitment,
 - d) strong local and regional partnerships,
 - e) integration, and
 - f) evaluation and evidence building.
11. There is also a recognition that deprivation issues do not take account of local authority boundaries and that therefore "... imaginative cross-boundary applications ..." should be encouraged.
12. These are all important considerations for Wear Valley in the submission of its LEGI bid especially given the opportunity that it presents to deliver the aspirations and needs of our most deprived communities.
13. It is also clear that local authorities can bid into each round. A successful or unsuccessful bid in Round 1, does not preclude a further bid in later years.

implications and wear valley approach

14. It has been important to consider:-
 - Whether a Round 1 bid is possible; and
 - Should opportunities be explored for joint working with other Durham Districts.
15. The scale of economic problems facing Wear Valley is well documented and demonstrated by the additional award of NRF last year to help improve economic performance and by the red/amber assessment of the LSP (Annual Performance Review) in meeting the economic floor target. LEGI presents a

further opportunity to identify the underlying causes of deprivation in the area and propose solutions and projects that can deliver tangible outcomes. This is a real opportunity to make a difference to the lives of people in our most deprived communities and we need to ensure that we have a degree of certainty that the proposals we put forward are the best solutions on offer.

16. It has been clearly indicated that success or failure in Round 1 does not preclude further bids. I consider it is essential that the Council clearly demonstrate its commitment to tackling the economic conditions of the District by seeking to access Round 1 funds.
17. There is a clear “strategic fit” between the proposal outcomes of LEGI and the adopted priorities of the Council and LSP as expressed through the Community Plan and the Forum for Business priority actions. An individual bid by the Council could, therefore, be supported. LEGI, however, needs to demonstrate added value to challenge existing approach and to lead to a transformation of economic conditions. GONE are actively encouraging collaboration, to help learn from best practise and seek co-ordinated approaches to delivery to address common entrepreneurial and economic issues across target areas.
18. Discussions with other eligible authorities (Derwentside, Easington and Sedgefield) and with GONE indicated clear support for collaboration on a Round 1 submission.
19. In order to develop a bid in the timescale it has been necessary to appoint external consultants and to pool “development funding” to develop a bid. The consultants brief is attached see Annex 7. In order to meet the timetable imposed the process of appointment has been completed through procurement undertaken by Derwentside District Council. The appointed consultants (Shared Intelligence) are reporting to a steering group comprising officers of the four Councils.
20. As part of their remit Shared Intelligence will be collating baseline information from each of the four districts, which will include our “Vision for Wear Valley to 2020” recently completed by DTZ Pidea Consulting, in addition to interviews with key stakeholders. Following which SI will identify key issues and make suggestions as to where potential LEGI funding should be directed, for consideration and approval by the individual districts to ensure activity will address local need.

financial implications

21. It is proposed that up to £20,000 of the Council’s allocated £80,000 development funding be allocated to this task.

procurement

22. Procurement has been undertaken by Derwentside District Council and the Council’s input is a financial contribution to the development of the bid.

conclusion

23. LEGI presents the Council with a further opportunity to help tackle economic deprivation in the District. Joint working with other Durham Districts provides an opportunity to develop a strategic approach to the issue.

RECOMMENDED

1. That Members endorse the actions of the Director of Regeneration in association with Corporate Management Team to:-
 - a) develop a round 1 joint bid with Derwentside, Easington and Sedgefield;
 - b) jointly appoint consultants to develop a bid;
 - c) make up to £20,000 from the LEGI “development fund” available to the proposal.

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