

## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2006

Report of the Director of Regeneration

### **MARKET TESTING OF “DURHAM DALES” BRAND**

#### **purpose of the report**

1. For members to consider the work being undertaken as part of the West Durham Rural Pathfinder in relation to sustainable tourism to tackle the lack of awareness of the District as a visitor destination and to agree the proposed action, to market test the ‘Durham Dales’ brand.

#### **background**

2. Wear Valley and Teesdale were chosen to be part of the West Durham Rural Pathfinder (WDRP), one of only eight Pathfinder groups in the Country. The purpose of the Pathfinders is to develop and test mechanisms aimed at bringing together local resources for dealing with social and economic issues in rural areas.
3. One of the WDRP’s themes is the further development of skills and enterprise in support of sustainable tourism. An issue raised as part of the Pathfinder process is the lack of general awareness of West Durham as a visitor destination. This has been evidenced in a number of ways:
  - Stage 1 of the Economic Futures study undertaken by DTZ (2005) stated that “Wear Valley has generally suffered from having a poor identity or brand, it’s profile outwith the area is largely negative with few investors or regional stakeholders having a positive image of the area, if any image at all”.
  - The Wear Valley District Council Tourism Baseline Study undertaken by Tourism Resources Company’ (2003) concluded that Wear Valley and AONB as brand identities do not have visitor awareness and that North Pennines is not well known to visitors.
  - The AONB Visitor survey of 2002 highlighted that the “North Pennines’ was not a well used name for the area, with only 1% of visitors using it”.
  - The same survey reported that 69% of visitors reported that they hadn’t been aware that the North Pennines was in an AONB area and 79% that they did not know what AONB stood for.

4. Tourism is a key sector within the Wear Valley economy, currently worth £37 million per annum to the local economy (STEAM Report). DTZ have identified tourism and leisure as a rapidly growing sector that the economy of the district could exploit. However whilst we have an established day visitor market we are missing opportunities in the overnight market, because of the lack of awareness of the district as a visitor destination.
5. It is suggested that we market test the 'Visit Wear Valley' guide book under the strap-line 'Durham Dales'. Using 'Durham Dales' as a strap-line captures the brand status which Durham already has, whilst drawing on the dales concept which has worked so well for Yorkshire. It also builds upon existing brands such as Durham Dales Centre, Durham Dales Primary Care Trust and CDDC's 'Durham Dales – Room to Roam'. It is hoped that combining the two will raise awareness of West Durham as a desirable visitor destination.
6. Under the Pathfinder Initiative Consultant's were invited to hold a workshop to test the validity of such an approach, which concluded that the proposed brand and method of test marketing was an appropriate way forward. Teesdale and Derwentside District Council's participated in the workshop. At this stage they have opted not to participate in a fully integrated Durham Dales visitor guide, but they await the results with interest. The guide will therefore focus upon Wear Valley but will provide links to their existing visitor networks, 'Discover Teesdale' and 'Explore Derwentside'.
7. There has been some resistance to the proposal from the North Pennines AONB and Killhope Museum who argue that the preferred brand should be 'North Pennines.' However the weakness of the North Pennines and AONB brand has already been highlighted above and there is wide support for the proposal from: the Market Town Initiative Steering Group, Weardale Visitor Network, Durham Dales Centre and the Wear Valley LSP and the WDRP Sustainable Tourism Task Group. The purpose of the proposal is to undertake limited test marketing of the Durham Dales as a brand through the visitor guide, which should not at this stage significantly undermine other existing brands

## **conclusion**

8. The WDRP proposal provides an opportunity to address an acknowledged weakness in efforts to promote the area as a visitor destination. Analysis of the levels of market penetration and increased visitor numbers will be carried out to establish the strength and acceptance of 'Durham Dales' by visitors to the District, helping to direct future promotional activities.
9. The 'Durham Dales' coversheet for visitor guide is at Annex 1 and display of images will be provided at the meeting.

**RECOMMENDED**

1. That Members agree the activity being taken through the WDRP and agree the course of action being proposed to market test the 'Durham Dales' brand.
2. That Members receive a further report when the results of this pilot are available.

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**Officer responsible for the report**

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## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2006

Report of the Director of Regeneration

### **URBAN AND RURAL RENAISSANCE INITIATIVE – IRESHOPEBURN MINOR SCHEME**

#### **purpose of the report**

1. To consider proposals for capital budget virement to contribute towards the proposed environmental improvement scheme in Ireshopeburn.

#### **background**

2. I have been requested by Durham County Council and by Councillor J Shuttleworth to consider making a financial capital contribution to the proposed small scale environmental improvement scheme at Ireshopeburn in Weardale.
3. The scheme has been included in the Countywide Urban and Rural Renaissance Initiative (URRI). This is being undertaken as a small neighbourhood scheme for 2005/6, together with Stanley Village Hall Recreation Scheme, Witton Park (improvements to community areas) and Roddymoor Village Hall access. In addition the URRI has included major schemes in Bishop Auckland, Coundon and Crook over the last 3 years.
4. The scheme at Ireshopeburn involves repaving of footpaths in materials suitable for use in a conservation area and random kerb replacement as necessary. New street furniture including seating and bollards to an agreed design will be installed. A co-ordinated approach to traffic/pedestrian safety improvements will be undertaken including the relocation of both bus stops, one of which is located on a dangerous bend, the other which prohibits residents parking. As part of this work raised kerbs and appropriate paving will be installed to improve access to public transport.
5. Public consultation is currently being undertaken to determine the precise nature of the work.

#### **council objective**

6. The physical environmental enhancement of Ireshopeburn would meet the Council Environmental Objective which seeks to secure new public and private investment to improve the built and natural environment; and in doing so make the village more attractive to potential tourist development and activity.

## **financial implications**

7. The total cost of the scheme is estimated at £50,000. The County Council has agreed to fund £30,000 towards the cost from the Urban and Rural Renaissance fund, MAP and LTP.
8. The Council has no budget allocation for this project. It has, however, an allocation of £40,000 in 2005/06 and £10,000 in each of the following two years towards the cost of a proposed West Auckland Improvement Scheme. This scheme, valued at £380,000 in total for the three years was pre-dedicated on a successful bid for £190,000 from Heritage Lottery Fund. The remaining funding being met by the Council and the County Council. Funding in 2005/06 from HLF has been denied, due to a shortage of regional funds in the current financial year. It is proposed to reapply to Heritage Lottery Fund for 2006/07 as part of a wide South Durham Heritage Corridor incorporating work in Teesdale District. A further Capital bid has been made for consideration in the Council's budget for 2006/7 for this scheme.
9. It is, therefore, proposed to vire £20,000 from this year's allocation to West Auckland Scheme to match DCC contribution to achieve improvement in Ireshopeburn.

### **RECOMMENDED**

1. That Members agreed to vire £20,000 within the capital programme from West Auckland Environmental Enhancement Scheme to Ireshopeburn.

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#### **Officer responsible for the report**

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**REGENERATION COMMITTEE**

**18 JANUARY 2006**

**Report of the Director of Regeneration  
BVPI 3<sup>RD</sup> QUARTER MONITORING UPDATE**

**purpose of the report**

1. To provide 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter monitoring information and to update Members on activity within the department during the period October to December 2005 on progress against the Department Service Plan for 2005/06.

**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 2 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. The high level of performance achieved in previous years has been reinstated with all three key performance indicators being achieved in the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter and for the PDG period this year June/July, all three are currently on target. Workloads, however, have remained very high. Agency staff continue to be used to help with the processing of applications. In October a new Principal Planning Officer took up post.
5. The performance is as follows:-

	2005/6 Q1	2005/06 Q2	2005/06 Q3	Target (set nationally)	July 05-June 06 Delivery Grant period
Major	44%	60%	80%	60% in 13 weeks	70%
Minor	65%	69%	68%	65% in 8 weeks	68%
Other	92%	93%	76%	80% in 8 weeks	87%

6. A total of 176 applications were determined in Q3. The percentage of applications determined through delegation to officers was 91% (target 90%).
7. Despite the problems performance on major and minor applications exceeded the target. There was a slight drop in performance in determining other applications due to the push in Q2 to determine applications in time which left a small number of the applications to be determined at the beginning of Q3.

### **appeals**

8. During Q3, 7 appeal decisions were received (see Annex 3). Three appeals were dismissed (43%) and four appeals were allowed (58%). In the Planning Delivery Grant period (July 2005-June 2006) there have been 9 appeal decisions. 3 of the appeals were dismissed (55%).

### **enforcement**

9. During this quarter a total of 112 complaints were received. From 1<sup>st</sup> 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 Q3, 40 complaints received in the quarter were resolved (36%). Since 1 April 2005, 413 complaints have been received of which 208 have been resolved (50%). One enforcement notice has been served (see Annex 4). 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. 5 Stage 1 complaints were received in Q3 compared to 12 complaints received in Q2 and 8 in Q1. 1 was taken to Stage 2 of the complaints procedure. This is detailed in Annex 3. There are currently 5 Stage 3 complaints being dealt with by the Chief Executive.

### **ombudsman cases**

11. In Q3 there have been no Ombudsman decisions.

### **building control**

12. In the 3<sup>rd</sup> quarter of 2005/06 the section determined 80 full applications.
13. The percentage of inspections undertaken in one working day was 100% (target 100%).
14. At the end of July one inspector left the authority and I was allowed to advertised for two new inspectors. No suitable applications were received to the first advertisement and the posts were re-advertised. Appointments have now been made and the officers will be taking up the posts in February/March 2006. In the meantime some plan vetting has been passed to a consultant inspector in order that the current staff can 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 Q3 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 10 companies looking to locate into Wear Valley, these companies have the potential to create 137 jobs. All efforts are being made to secure these investment opportunities.
16. Work started on Innovation House extension on 24 October 05 to create a further 26 office units and despite the recent bad weather is on schedule for completion in June 06.
17. 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.
18. Work is progressing, by the four West Durham Rural Pathfinder Task Groups, to consider delivery issues and to develop the Task Groups around 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.
19. A competition called “Wolves Lair” is being developed with an aim of encouraging young people to learn more about the world of business. Year 10 students would be invited to develop a business idea and present it to a team of business people, (including two local business people Mitchell Wolfe of Mechatronics and Bob Wolff of Wolff Commercial hence the title of the competition), with the aim of persuading them that their idea is the best.

## **brownfield land**

20. The 1<sup>st</sup> quarter results showed a continued improvement, however, there was a decline in the proportion of housing completions on brownfield land in the 2<sup>nd</sup> 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. Q3 has experienced a marked increase in brownfield housing completions from 33.3% in Q2 to 59.5%. This is almost on par with the national target of 60%.
21. BV200a,b,c recently introduced an indicator to reflect how up to date the Council's Local Plan is. These indicators pre-date 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



a & b. However, in respect to BV200c the Council met the target of publishing an Annual Monitoring Report in December 2005.

22. In addition, Members should note the inclusion of two additional indicators relating to conservation areas. BV219a relates to the number of conservation areas within a local authority area, of which there are 20 in Wear Valley. It is unlikely that this figure will alter in the foreseeable future pending Conservation Area Appraisal being carried out. BVPI 219b & c relate to the number of conservation areas with Conservation Area Appraisals and Manager Plans respectively.
23. A programme of work is currently being prepared to prioritise the production of Conservation Area Appraisals in tandem with the LDF production. Given the amount of work required to prepare these appraisals and the limited resources available to carry them out it will inevitably be several years before full coverage can be met. Conservation Area Management Plans will develop from this work.

### **private sector housing**

24. BVPI 62 is monitored annually, however to date the Private Sector Housing Team have successfully delivered a total of 69 grant through DFG and repairs assistance, there has been a general increase in the demand for housing grants over the last 12 months, this upturn in demand is expected to continue.
25. To date we have spent 84% of our total budget. This is an excellent position to be in as it will ensure that the highest level of Government Grant can be attracted through the subsidy that can be claimed. It is projected that the total budget will be fully spent on improving private properties throughout the District.
26. Although not a current indicator, it has been highlighted that a new indicator relating to the monitoring of improving properties within the private sector will be introduced. Therefore the team are now fully trained in the Governments Housing Health and Safety Rating System (HHSRS), this will see new ways or working and will result in compliance with the 2004 Housing Act.

**RECOMMENDED**                      1                      Members note the progress towards meeting the BVPI's.

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## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2006

### 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 (LEGI) process for Wear Valley and seek retrospective endorsement to the submission made on 9<sup>th</sup> December 2005.

#### **introduction**

2. Members will recall that at the meeting of 9<sup>th</sup> November a report was tabled outlining the proposed approach to submitting a bid for LEGI. Members supported the development of a joint 'round 1' bid with the other eligible districts in County Durham (Derwentside, Easington and Sedgefield). Furthermore, given the short timescales for submission it was agreed that the bid document could be endorsed by the Leader of the Council and Chair of Regeneration and reported to this committee at the next opportunity.
3. The LEGI bid, entitled "Enterprising Communities – transforming the local economy of East and West Durham" was submitted to Government Office North East within the deadline of 9<sup>th</sup> December 2005. Indications are currently that the bids will be assessed regionally and nationally and that the announcement of successful bidders will be made in mid-February.
4. A full version of the submission is tabled for information and summarised herein.

#### **enterprising communities – transforming the local economy of east and west durham**

5. The vision for the LEGI bid is that by 2016 "Derwentside, Easington, Sedgefield and Wear Valley will be the most enterprising communities in the North East and the fastest improving area for enterprise and productivity in England."
6. The bid recognises that in order to achieve this and raise entrepreneurial activity in the 4 local authority areas requires long-term and sustained intervention to bring about cultural change. To achieve this the bid proposes a 10-year funding programme peaking in 2008/9 and tapering through to 2015/16. In total £10.2m has been requested for the 3-year period 2006/7 to 2008/9 and an indicative figure of c£31m for the 10-year programme.

7. The bid focuses upon raising enterprise and entrepreneurial activity in the most employment-deprived Super Output Areas (SOAs) in the 4 local authority areas. There are a total of 96 SOAs comprising the bid area incorporating parts of the main settlements of Bishop Auckland, Crook, together with Peterlee, Seaham (Easington), Shildon (Sedgefield) and Stanley (Derwentside). Wear Valley has 14 SOAs in the most deprived 10% for employment and therefore included within the LEGI eligible areas. Woodhouse Close is the only ward with all 3 of its SOAs eligible. In addition 2 of the 3 SOAs in the West Auckland and Tow Law & Stanley and 2 of the 4 SOAs in Willington Central are eligible. Finally 1 SOA from Coundon, Crook South, Dene Valley, Henknowle, Wheatbottom & Helmington Row are also included in the eligible area.
8. The activities proposed (detailed below) have been developed in consultation with local and regional partners and the submission has been supported and endorsed by a number of key organisations integral to the successful delivery of the proposals.
9. The LEGI submission proposes 9 inter-linked programmes which we believe will address the most acute symptoms of deprivation and tackle the underlying causes of deprivation in the SOAs by:-
  - creating / safeguarding employment
  - reducing worklessness
  - reducing poverty
  - raising aspirations for work and learning
10. The 9 inter-linked programmes have been incorporated into the 3 themes of activity LEGI is designed to focus upon:
  - Theme 1 - Increasing total entrepreneurial activity in deprived areas.
  - Theme 2 - Supporting sustainable growth and reducing the failure rate of locally-owned businesses in deprived areas.
  - Theme 3 - Attracting appropriate inward investment and franchising into deprived areas.

#### **theme 1 - increasing total entrepreneurial activity in deprived areas**

11. The LEGI bid has a strong focus on this theme with significant resources identified to bring about short-term activity to increase new firm formation and self-employment as well as longer-term approaches to changing attitudes and culture. It is proposed to do this by utilising the voluntary and community sector organisations closest to the hardest to reach groups to target deprived communities and individuals.

#### **start-up network**

12. This workstream proposes to extend the support delivered through the current start-up network across the four districts to provide a comprehensive and tailored package of advice, grants, loans and aftercare support for those residents of our most deprived communities who are considering starting up a business or entering self-employment.

enhancing enterprise education

13. This activity is about raising aspiration and rebuilding an enterprise culture to give our young people confidence that enterprise and self-employment are valid and realistic career choices. The proposals are about extending and expanding existing activity such as Enterprise Place, Enterprise Advisors and the Aspire Programme.

improving access to workspace / incubator accommodation

14. The lack of suitable accommodation is a critical barrier to enterprise. This work is around developing an incubation programme to provide a common approach to on-site business support services including a 'virtual office' concept. Also a small-scale capital programme is envisaged to complement existing capital funds.

## **theme 2 - supporting sustainable growth and reducing the failure rate of locally-owned businesses in deprived areas**

15. This theme is also an important aspect of the LEGI bid ensuring that the existing businesses located in the deprived communities or providing employment opportunities to residents of these areas are supported to ensure they continue to survive and where possible helped to create new jobs.

developing local clusters

16. Designed to capitalise on and expand existing business-to-business networking activity this theme will enable support to be given to increase competitiveness and productivity in key business sectors including potentially textiles, local foods, retail, tourism and construction.

the 50 fastest

17. This scheme is designed to showcase business growth and innovation in the most deprived areas and support the 50 fastest growing businesses across the LEGI bid area.

enterprising centres

18. Town centres offer accessible employment opportunities to the most deprived neighbourhoods. This proposal seeks to strengthen the provision of business support to town centre businesses by building upon the County Durham Economic Partnerships Major Centres Investment Programme by providing tailored support to encourage sustainable growth and support employment creation.

worklessness and skills

19. Growth in key business sectors is being constrained by having 'hard to fill' vacancies. This concept proposes to boost productivity and competitiveness in these businesses by developing a programme to match employers needs to economically inactive residents of the deprived communities.

improving access to opportunity

20. This area of work seeks to complement many of the other workstreams identified in this theme by seeking to address problems of accessibility to employment opportunities by a variety of methods including subsidised transport and some modest improvements to transport facilities and infrastructure.

### **theme 3 - attracting appropriate inward investment and franchising into deprived areas**

21. The Enterprising Communities bid is strongly focused on indigenous economic growth, boosting start-up and self-employment rates, enhancing business competitiveness and rebuilding a culture of enterprise. Large-scale inward investment is no longer a central plank of economic strategy and therefore this is a relatively small part of the LEGI bid.

franchising pilot

22. Whilst a relatively small part of the submission there remain some opportunities to increase enterprise through the franchising model. It is proposed to establish a pilot franchising programme as part of the start-up network (see theme 1) to offer an alternative for those wishing to start a business. The pilot will focus on the retail / leisure sectors in town centres.

### **conclusion**

23. There is a great deal of commonality of issues across the 4 eligible local authority areas. Having jointly developed this submission with the consultants and the other 3 local authorities we believe this programme of activity will enable us to boost existing activity, tackle the identified barriers to enterprise and achieve the vision outlined.
24. Further development and refinement of the proposals will be required but overall, if successful this additional LEGI resource together with existing programmes of activity will enable us to tackle the underlying causes of deprivation and develop a strong, more vibrant Wear Valley economy.

### **RECOMMENDED**

1. That Members note and support the proposed approach to LEGI as identified in the submitted bid.
2. That a further report will be made to members once the outcome of the bid is known.

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## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2006

### Report of the Director of Regeneration **DENE VALLEY COMMUNITY WIND TURBINE**

#### **purpose of the report**

- 1 The purpose of this report is to inform members of the installation of the first community Micro Wind Turbine in the North East, at Dene Valley Community Centre, Bishop Auckland and to seek approval for the work on energy conservation.

#### **background**

- 2 Climate change is now recognised by many as the most important environmental issue of the 21<sup>st</sup> Century. Action to combat climate change is needed by individuals, business and local community groups and the Council is working with partners to raise awareness of alternative energy supplies.
- 3 The Council already has a commendable track-record in domestic energy efficiency and leads by example in working in partnership with the community towards overcoming the challenge of dealing with the effects of climate change.

#### **introduction**

- 4 As previously reported to Committee in November 2005, in *the Ninth Annual Home Energy Efficiency Report*, the authority has achieved the Governments Home Energy targets in advance of the statutory deadline of 2010.
- 5 It was highlighted in the report that in order to maintain progress we should look towards increasing the number of renewable energy alternatives with two of the main recommendations being to “...Develop more opportunities for renewable energy measures” and “...Seek to develop alternative funding sources”.
- 6 By working in partnership with the National Energy Action charity (NEA), and the utility company, Scottish and Southern Energy, we are endeavouring to achieve both of these recommendations, in this instance, by working in partnership with the Dene Valley Community to install the first community micro-wind turbine in the North East.

## **dene valley community centre**

- 7 The Dene Valley Community Centre was specifically chosen for this innovative project as it is located in a targeted area of regeneration, is a popular resource with local residents and positioned in an ideal location to exploit the wind's energy.
- 8 In consultation with the management of the Centre, who are keen on developing alternative energy systems to the building, the authority has been instrumental in the leverage of funding for a micro-wind turbine and other renewables, which would be installed at a later date.
- 9 The aim of this scheme is to make the Dene Valley Centre an exemplar, within the community, for its utilisation of renewable technologies

## **the swift micro-wind turbine**

- 10 The SWIFT micro-wind turbine is the world's first silent, rooftop-mountable wind turbine capable of providing a cost-effective renewable energy source for domestic, community and industrial use.
- 11 The rooftop mounted wind turbine is fixed to the gable end of the community building and simply and easily connected to the local electricity grid so that the energy generated is offset directly against the electricity consumption expended by the centre.
- 12 The rated power output of the turbine is 1.5kW and overall it can be expected to generate up to 4,000kWh per year (depending on wind speeds) providing a net financial benefit of up to £440 per year.
- 13 In environmental terms, each unit of electricity generated from the micro wind turbine displaces one unit generated from fossil fuels, this amounts to a displacement of approximately 1.6 tonnes of CO<sup>2</sup> per year –which is a significant environmental contribution towards any energy savings.

## **project monitoring and financial implications**

- 14 In this particular instance, Scottish and Southern Energy, who were the main benefactor from the project, were keen to work with progressive communities and local authorities and would install this wind turbine as a pilot, to be observed during its lifetime.
- 15 The installation of a SWIFT micro-wind turbine can cost from as little as £1500 up to around £4000, however, by the leverage of alternative funding from government and charitable sources it has been possible to install this project at no cost to the Dene Valley Community Centre. If successful, it is proposed to develop the project across the district.
- 16 The Dene Valley Community Micro-wind turbine will be monitored and assessed over the next financial year and its benefits will be reflected against any savings made.

## conclusions

- 17 The real success of this project is without doubt, in its actual installation and location, however, the authority must congratulate itself in taking a small but relatively large step in encouraging the Dene Valley Community to embrace this project, which in turn will help raise awareness and develop their education towards new and sustainable energy technologies.
- 18 It is proposed to install a further 9 micro-wind turbines in both community and private dwellings in the Wear Valley district before April 2007.

## RECOMMENDED

1. Committee notes the achievement in delivering alternative technologies to the Dene Valley community and the success of the installation of the first community micro-wind turbine in the North East.
2. Committee encourages the Council to:
  - (a) Seek to develop alternative technologies and funding streams in its challenge towards tackling Climate Change.
  - (b) Extend the project into rural communities and domestic dwellings.

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## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2006

Report of the Director of Regeneration

### **GROUNDWORK WEST DURHAM: NEW PROJECTS FOR INITIAL APPROVAL**

#### **purpose of the report**

1. The purpose of the report is for members to consider and agree the latest projects, identified by Groundwork West Durham and Officers of the Council. Groundwork has proposed these projects for implementation within the District by the submission of a Project Initiation Form.

#### **background**

2. Continuing its regeneration role within the District, Groundwork West Durham has identified a number of projects, which require Members initial approval to develop and progress further.
3. Funding through Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, European Regional Development Fund, County Durham Environmental Trust will support some of these projects, however Groundwork will, where appropriate, seek additional funding from other avenues.
4. It is intended Groundwork will work closely with community groups and the Council in order to develop these projects and agree their content with appropriate Officers as some of the projects will impact on the Council's maintenance budgets.
5. Preliminary details of the individual projects follow, however for those which the Council is client and which have an impact upon maintenance budgets, I will submit detailed individual reports for consideration of the Regeneration Committee once the project plans have been developed and funding packages in place.

#### **projects for initial approval**

6. The following projects relate to land owned by Wear Valley District Council or where it is proposed the Council is client.

##### Challener Way Pocket Park

7. Environmental improvements to the former play area at Challener Way, Saint Helen Auckland, which will include new fencing, creative play markings and planting. It is intended the project will be funded via Section 106 Monies

relating to the St. Helen Ward, the approximate value of the works being £20,000. There will be no play equipment in the park.

#### North Bitchburn Allotment and Cricket Field

9. To consult with the local community to develop a master plan for the regeneration of the cricket field and allotments. Approximate project value £600, secured via the Wear Valley Community Network.

#### Coundon and Leeholme Shop Fronts

10. To encourage owners and occupiers of commercial buildings in Coundon and Leeholme to improve the external appearance of their premises and by so doing contribute to the economic regeneration of the area. Approximate project value £70,000 via Single Programme.

#### Wolsingham Eastend Riverside

11. Initial consultation and design plans for the improvement of the riverside park. Mainly environmental and footpath improvements. There will be no play equipment. Initial consultation exercise funded by 2D to the value of £705.

#### Roddymoor Recreation Ground

12. Upgrading of the existing play equipment, and the provision of a ball court footpaths and lighting within the recreation ground. Approximate project value £65,000 with funding via Neighbourhood Renewal Fund, the Home Housing Association and Urban Rural Renaissance.

#### **Other projects within the District**

13. The following projects proposed within the District are summarised for information only as they do not relate to Council owned land nor is the Authority client for the project.

#### Wear Valley Car Loan Scheme

14. The project will provide car hire, which will enable unemployed people in Wear Valley to access work, it will be administered by the Action Team for Jobs.

#### Action Team for Jobs

15. To provide pre-employment training for people in Wear Valley who are excluded from the labour market but not seeking job seekers allowance.

#### Grosvenor House

16. Initial feasibility work to convert the existing Groundwork Offices at Grosvenor House, 29 Market Place Bishop Auckland, into residential units.

#### 17/17a North Bondgate

17. To renovate this property to house the Discovery Centre which is to be relocated from Grosvenor House.

#### Wear Valley Project Support

18. Project support officer to develop projects within the Wear Valley area.

#### Coundon and Leeholme Youth Project

19. The delivery of a programme of activities to engage young people in the regeneration of their community, to include project groups, motivate unemployed young people, accreditation and training and linking with Rural Young Voices.

#### Rural Young Voices

20. To enable young people and adults to work together in the regeneration of their villages through project groups, accreditation and training.

#### South Bishop Auckland Community Caretakers 05/06

21. To provide training and employment opportunities for unemployed residents of south Bishop Auckland.

#### Crook and Willington Caretakers 05/06

22. To provide training and employment opportunities for unemployed residents of Crook and Willington.

#### Wear Valley and Tow Law Task Force Caretakers 05/06

23. To provide training and employment opportunities for unemployed residents from the Wear Valley and Tow Law.

#### Bishop Auckland Discovery Centre 05/06

24. The Discovery Centre aims to provide a community exhibition space for local artists, history groups, special interest groups, community groups and projects which will attract visitors.

#### **conclusion**

25. The programme of new projects echo the principles of previous successful schemes, which have been implemented in the District to the benefit of both the community and the environment. The latest proposals are to be welcomed.

**RECOMMENDED**

- 1 Members welcome the preliminary proposals and give their initial approval to the projects, subject to planning, other approvals and a detailed report, where appropriate.

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**Officer responsible for the report**

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## REGENERATION COMMITTEE

18 JANUARY 2006

Report of the Director of Regeneration

### **LOCAL DEVELOPMENT FRAMEWORK: ANNUAL MONITORING REPORT**

#### **purpose of the report**

1. To present for endorsement an initial Annual Monitoring Report which includes a monitoring framework, developed to enable current and future planning policy performance to be monitored in accordance with ODPM requirements.
2. To highlight to the need for the Council to adopt a corporate approach to monitoring in the future.
3. To advise of emerging issues identified through current monitoring activity.

#### **background**

4. The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 introduced a number of significant reforms to the planning system. In particular with respect to the development plan system there is now a statutory need to monitor the performance of existing development plans in accordance with specific ODPM requirements. In March 2005 'Local Development Frameworks: a Good Practice Guide' was issued which has provided clarity on this matter. This guidance was subsequently the subject of revision in November 2005. Consequently the Council is obliged to submit to the ODPM an Annual Monitoring Report (AMR) by the end of December each year.
5. The existing Local Plan was adopted in 1997. Historically the monitoring of the performance of this plan has not been comprehensive. This is largely the product of continuing staff resource issues and the fact that there was no prescribed requirement. The majority of monitoring over the plan period has related to housing, though in more recent years there has been a requirement to provide data for the monitoring of Regional Planning Guidance 1.
6. A monitoring report was produced in 2002 as part of the previous Local Plan review that the Council embarked upon. This provided a baseline of information upon which the subsequent Key Issues document was based. However this monitoring exercise was largely focused upon how often and why policies had been used and the result as opposed to assessing the actual impact the plan policies have had on the District.
7. The first 'new style' Annual Monitoring Report, the subject of this agenda item was submitted to the ODPM in December 2005 in order to meet the statutory deadline. This is contained in Annex 5. This document has been prepared in

accordance with the ODPM publication 'Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide'.

8. The Annual Monitoring Report will be a component of the emerging Local Development Framework. By meeting the submission 'milestone' it is anticipated that this year the Council will be awarded Planning Delivery Grant (estimated to be in the region of £50,000). It is anticipated that this award would continue to be applied for the lifetime of the PDG system. It must be noted that for the first Annual Monitoring Report, PDG is awarded for the submission of the document to the ODPM before 31<sup>st</sup> December 2005, whereas, for future Annual Monitoring Reports PDG will be awarded according to the content of the document.

### **proposed monitoring framework**

9. The ODPM has recognised that local planning authorities may not be in the position to be able to provide a fully completed AMR for this first year. The level of data which can be provided is dependent upon how sophisticated a monitoring system they have had in place the past, coupled with the nature of statutory Core Indicators which have been introduced. In view of this ODPM has specified that as a minimum the Council needs to provide:-

- A review of plan preparation progress against the Local Development Scheme (LDS) key 'milestones', and consideration as to whether any amendments to the LDS are needed.

The year for which performance is being assessed is 1 April 2004 - 31 March 2005. However, Government Office North East (GONE) has advised that such review should to be as up to date as possible i.e. report on progress up to the date of publication of the AMR.

- An analysis of the performance of existing 'saved' policies.

As there are currently no Development Plan Documents (DPDs) adopted yet it is accepted that the first AMR will relate wholly to the Council's 'saved' local plan. GONE has advised that councils should use their own judgement in deciding what is going to be most useful by way of monitoring 'saved' policies. They have suggested that it may be best to focus on key policies (e.g. those for housing provision) or on those which have been most regularly used. Furthermore GONE have indicated that information should be presented on as many as possible of the Core Indicators, and where this is not possible the AMR should explain how it is intended to address the gap or gaps in the future. This is an approach taken by this Council for the purposes of this initial AMR.

- Identification of policies which are not being implemented in order to accord with Regulation 48 of the Town & Country Planning (Development) Regulations 2004.

This analysis needs to include the reasons why such policies are not being implemented, the steps (if any) that the authority intend to take to secure that they are implemented and whether the authority intend to prepare a DPD to replace or amend the policy.

- A housing trajectory.

As there are no adopted DPDs yet, it is accepted by ODPM that the first housing trajectory will need to be based on the saved local plan. The good practice guide confirms that the trajectory should set out the past and anticipated supply of housing over the past 5 years. However, GONE is encouraging councils to go further than this, and to prepare a housing trajectory that looks forward for at least 10 years. This would ideally show how the RSS housing figures would be delivered (though the uncertainty surrounding these figures is recognised).

### **an executive summary in non-technical language**

10. In view of the absence of a comprehensive and integrated monitoring system the amount of data which it has been possible to collate has been very limited. Given that staff resources have been dedicated to the production of the Local Development Scheme and Draft Statement of Community Involvement it has not been possible to create a resource to input data retrospectively into the appropriate database. Therefore, the Forward Planning team has used this first year as an opportunity to develop an initial monitoring framework which will continue to evolve as DPDs are progressed.
11. In addition to the above minimum requirements this first AMR sets out:-
  - the methodology upon which this and subsequent AMR's are to be based
  - relevant Contextual Indicators and where available their results
  - the statutory Core Indicators and where available their results
  - proposed Local Indicators considered appropriate to the existing Local Plan objectives and policies and where available their results.
12. It is important to note that the initial Local Indicators have been identified having first considered both their relevance to existing policy and the feasibility of being able to set up means by which to collate the relevant data in subsequent years. As new policies are developed the Local Indicators may be amended, increased or decreased. Consideration has also been given to co-ordinating the local monitoring system with the Council's current responsibility to input into regional and national monitoring documents prepared by other bodies.
13. At this stage it has not been possible to identify Significant Effects Indicators. Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA) of emerging policy options will inform the development of these in due course.

### **main findings**

14. The Annual Monitoring Report highlights that a reasonable proportion of site specific 'saved' Local Plan policies have been implemented, at least in part. The least amount of uptake has been in relation to employment land allocations. Two of these 'saved' site specific policies have been implemented in past years and can therefore be deleted.

15. The Annual Monitoring Report identifies that a total of 8 current Local Plan policies are not in accordance with national policy introduced since their adoption. These should therefore be deleted with immediate effect.
16. An analysis of appeals that were determined within the monitoring period (2004/05) is presented in section 3. This highlights that of the 14 cases only 1 appeal was allowed contrary to the relevant 'saved' policies.
17. The District Urban Capacity Study (2004) indicates that of the total number of potential sites identified as being suitable for housing development only some 46.2% is classified as brownfield. In view of this it could be argued that a stage will be eventually reached when achieving the Government target of 60% brownfield development will be impossible, unless build rates on greenfield land are cut dramatically. On average 50.39% of dwellings completed within this monitoring period were on brownfield sites. This falls below ODPM's target of 60%.
18. A district housing trajectory has been developed and is summarised in a series of graphs to show past and estimated future rates of housing completions. It compares these rather to the overall housing allowance for the District proposed in the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy. At this point in time this initial trajectory confirms a current excess of 191 units above the housing total for the District set out in the Draft RSS for the period 2004 - 2021. This highlights the need for the Council to consider how to respond to the potential non compliance with the RSS requirements.

### **legal implications**

19. The Council now has a statutory responsibility to prepare and publish an AMR from now on in. Monitoring activity will need to be continuous to ensure that Freedom of information Act related requests can be dealt with and that the emerging DPDs are prepared using a sound evidence base.

### **resource implications**

20. Bearing in mind other additional requirements the new development plan system places upon the Council, including increased community involvement, the cumulative impact that this statutory requirement has upon what is a relatively small team is not to be underestimated. Whilst some of the required data will be derived through the determination and implementation of planning applications other data may fall under the jurisdiction of other departments within the Council.
21. In view of the above, to be successful monitoring activity will need to become deeply embodied into day to day activity of the Council rather than being dealt with retrospectively or in isolation. It will need to run seamlessly with the DPD production so that progress on neither priority is prejudiced by the other. This is particularly important given the statutory requirements and milestones attached to each. Such activity will also feed into other Council monitoring activity.



22. A considerable amount of data can be collated from planning applications. In relation to this it is recognised that the current SX3 iPlan system is an appropriate existing tool that can be readily used to manage much of the monitoring activity that will be required. However, a significant amount of data over and above that which is currently logged will need to be input into this system during the determination of each planning application. As well as informing the monitoring report such data could also be used in the generation of delegated and committee reports. Nonetheless such activity will have workload implications for officers beyond the Forward Planning team. In addition options regarding procedures to facilitate the collation of data in relation to completed developments that then in turn could be input into SX3 iPlan are being considered.

### **next steps**

23. This first new style Annual Monitoring Report represents an initial framework that has been developed by Officers in relation to the current adopted policies of the Local Plan. It is an initial foundation stone that needs to be developed further in response to future policy formulation. In order that a robust system may be developed over time it will be essential for Members to contribute to the further development of this aspect of the Local Development Framework when considering future policy options. For example as policy objectives and options are considered it may be apparent that some indicators which have been identified in this current monitoring framework are no longer relevant or need supplementing. Provision will be made by Officers to ensure that this opportunity is given throughout LDF production.
24. The government expects that subsequent Annual Monitoring Reports will contain the relevant data to enable policy implementation and effectiveness can be measured. In relation to this initial monitoring report the availability of relevant data has been problematic. Given the scale of the task ahead in relation to data collation it is intended that work by the Forward Planning team will be on going throughout 2006 in the preparation of the next Annual Monitoring Report.

### **conclusion**

25. The statutory requirements placed upon the Council in relation to development plan monitoring require a cultural change within the organisation as a whole. This will provide a firm evidence base upon which to build future planning policy for the District.
26. This first AMR is by no way complete. Rather, it provides a framework upon which future monitoring activity can be based. It is important to note that the framework presented will evolve in parallel to the development of future planning policy.
27. The main findings of this first Annual Monitoring Report relate to the extent of the current housing land supply which exists in relation to the requirement set out in the Draft Regional Spatial Strategy. In response to these findings it is considered prudent to present to identify the options and implications of these and present these to Members at the next Regeneration Committee.

**RECOMMENDED**

1. That Members endorse the AMR detailed at Annex 5 to the report and initial monitoring framework contained within it.
2. That Members request for future consideration the identification of options and implications relating to the current housing land supply that exists.

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