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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>Council</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM: 22</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>19<sup>th</sup> April 2007</b>	<b>CATEGORY: DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>Deputy Chief Executive</b>	<b>OPEN:</b>
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>Ian Bowen (01283) 595821</b>	<b>DOC:</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Woodville to Swadlincote Area Action Plan: Issues and Options Consultation</b>	<b>REF:</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>Woodville, Swadlincote, Church Gresley</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE: EDS03</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

That Members:

- (a) note the responses to the recent consultation on the Woodville to Swadlincote Town Centre Area Action Plan;
- (b) agree the boundary of the AAP as amended to exclude land to the west of Bridge Street and include land to the north of Woodhouse Street
- (c) agree that proposals for a 'preferred option' as supported by the LDF Member Panel be developed in detail focusing on an economic regeneration-led strategy and incorporating the Swadlincote Regeneration Route. The Strategy should not seek to relocate all existing businesses in the area, but should be comprehensive and include provision for ancillary leisure, open space and community facilities and significant environmental improvements.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To consider the outcome of the Issues and Options consultation on the Woodville to Swadlincote Area Action Plan (AAP) and to establish the broad principles for preparing a 'preferred option' as supported by the LDF Member Panel.

### **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 Work has commenced on the 'Woodville to Swadlincote Town Centre Area Action Plan' – incorporating the Swadlincote Regeneration Route. This work is being taken forward as the first of the formal Local Development Framework (LDF) documents to be produced by the Council. Development consultants Atkins have been appointed (minute EDS/33refers) to assist with 'masterplanning' work for the area and geotechnical work is also being undertaken on the land.
- 3.2 The AAP is intended to bring forward much needed economic regeneration and environmental improvements on a 70 ha site of largely under-used land between Woodville and Swadlincote Town Centre.
- 3.3 As an early stage in this process, an 'Issues and Options' leaflet and questionnaire was widely circulated to residents, local employers, landowners, developers, local groups and voluntary organisations and key stakeholders in the area. This marked the start of a 4 week consultation period in February and March of this year. In addition at the request of the LDF Working Panel, two staffed public exhibitions were held on 12th and 16th March in Woodville and Swadlincote town centre, which were visited by some 130 people.
- 3.4 The consultation set out three strategic options for the achievement of these objectives, although these were not to be regarded as mutually exclusive. All three options proposed predominantly job-creating development, but essentially with differing degrees of intervention in terms of the relocation of existing businesses in the area. Option 1 represented the 'do minimum', whilst Option 3 would see the comprehensive redevelopment and landscaping of the whole area. Common to all options was the provision of Phase 2 of the Swadlincote Regeneration Route – a road linking Swadlincote Town Centre to Occupation Lane, and onwards to the A511 (via Phase 1 of the route, which has already been committed as part of the Woodville Woodlands development).

### **Summary of Responses to the Consultation**

- 3.5 Around 145 responses were received raising over 970 individual comments. A brief synopsis of the headline results is attached and described in this report. Many other comments were raised, however, and a full list of responses summarising individual comments has been placed in the Group lounges and the Members Room. It is also available to view on the Council's website at <http://www.south-derbys.gov.uk>
- 3.6 Overwhelming support was expressed for the 'vision' which had been set out in the

consultation questionnaire i.e. “to open up opportunities for increased prosperity, access to jobs and a greener and safer environment”. There was also strong support for the construction of the Swadlincote Regeneration Route along the indicative alignment set out in the leaflet, together with the provision of access to the area by non car modes of transport.

- 3.7 In terms of development options, more people preferred the more radical Option 3 to either of Options 1 and 2, although strong support was also expressed for the adoption of a mixture of the options.
- 3.8 Very strong support was offered for the redevelopment of the area for job-creating development and, despite the preferences expressed for Option 3, many respondents felt that it was important that existing businesses in the area should generally remain in their current locations, with development and environmental improvements occurring around them. There were, however, a number of specific requests for the recycling facilities on the Clock Roundabout to be relocated.
- 3.9 Specific new types of employment uses suggested were for small start-up units, manufacturing and engineering, IT/High Tech and office use and other clean/eco developments.
- 3.10 In terms of housing, over half of those responding on this issue were opposed to any house building at all within the area – largely on the basis of the substantial volume of recent house building which has already occurred in Woodville, pressures on infrastructure and local facilities and a concern over the increasing loss of existing employment sites. Around 20% actively supported housing but the majority of these called for starter homes or affordable housing. A further 20% supported housing if it was limited, or if major upgrades to infrastructure and local facilities were to be provided. The agents acting for two landowners covering the bulk of the undeveloped parts of the AAP area made strong representations that large scale housing should be provided on site, partly in order to be able to contribute to the Regeneration Route and to overcome abnormal land remediation costs arising from previous uses of the land.
- 3.11 Many respondents felt that leisure and community facilities could be incorporated into the site including a Village Hall, training and crèche facilities, sports/leisure and facilities for young people. Respondents overwhelmingly felt the need for open space and woodland planting reflecting the National Forest location. The conservation of wildlife was felt to be important as well as the creation of new habitats including wildlife corridors. A clear desire for environmentally friendly and energy efficient buildings was expressed. Also, the inclusion of a ‘greenway’ for cycling and walking, perhaps along the route of the former railway line from Moira Road was broadly supported.
- 3.12 Certain comments were also raised in relation to the treatment of land in the western part of the AAP area at Bridge Street, land which is reserved under the

terms of a section 106 agreement for a specific leisure use. Other comments relating to the boundary of the AAP were also raised to the effect that land should be included to enable the junction of the northern part of the Regeneration Route with the main highway to be incorporated. Representations also requested that the boundary of the AAP be extended to include land to the north of Swadlincote Road currently used for building materials and a petrol filling station. Finally, a suggestion was made that the AAP should be prepared jointly with North West Leicestershire District Council to enable the comprehensive treatment of the land immediately adjoining the AAP to the south west.

### The Councils Response

- 3.13 The LDF Member Panel, which was established to act as a sounding board and to make recommendations to Council on LDF matters, considered the responses to the AAP consultation on 4<sup>th</sup> April. The Panel welcomed the broad support for pursuing job-creating development and environmental improvements in the AAP area. The Panel were particularly conscious of the strong desire to avoid major house-building. Whilst the representations made on behalf of the majority land-owners were noted, members were aware that considerable evidence and feasibility work was still being collected, and in the absence of firm evidence that a substantial housing element was necessary, the AAP should focus on bringing forward much needed economic development.
- 3.14 In terms of the options, the Panel felt that a hybrid was most appropriate. Whilst the relocation of some firms may be appropriate, the consultation had also demonstrated that there is a case for retaining most existing businesses in their current location. The inclusion of high quality landscaping and open space would be important in improving the environmental quality of the whole of the AAP area.
- 3.15 In considering the boundaries of the site, the panel concluded that as the land to the west of Bridge Street was already being safeguarded for a specific leisure use, its inclusion within the AAP boundary was unnecessary. Conversely, the area of land to the north of the area does need to be included to incorporate the junction of the Regeneration Route with the main highway. The Panel did not agree that the boundary should be extended to cover the northern side of Swadlincote Road as this forms a sensible and manageable boundary. Similarly, the preparation of a joint LDF document with the neighbouring authority was not feasible given the already tight timescales set out in the South Derbyshire LDS, but that close liaison with North West Leicestershire District Council should be achieved as the preferred option is worked up in detail.

## **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 Day to day work on the preparation of the AAP is accommodated within the existing budget for the service. The Council is being assisted in the preparation of specific aspects and studies by external funding from the Derby and Derbyshire

Economic Partnership (DDEP) and Derbyshire County Council. If additional resources are required in future then funding bids will be submitted in accordance the Council's financial procedures.

## **5.0 Corporate Implications**

- 5.1 The economic regeneration driver for the AAP is supported by the Council's Economic Regeneration Strategy and will involve other departments in due course e.g. Leisure.

## **6.0 Community Implications**

- 6.1 Providing new and securing retention of existing jobs, environmental improvements and improved access to the area will benefit the community as a whole.

## **7.0 Background Papers**

- 1. Consultee responses file.
- 2. Woodville to Swadlincote Area Action Plan – Issues and Options Consultation leaflet and questionnaire.