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<b>REPORT TO:</b>	<b>ENVIRONMENTAL AND DEVELOPMENT SERVICES COMMITTEE</b>	<b>AGENDA ITEM:</b>	<b>7</b>
<b>DATE OF MEETING:</b>	<b>3<sup>RD</sup> OCTOBER 2002</b>	<b>CATEGORY:</b>	<b>DELEGATED</b>
<b>REPORT FROM:</b>	<b>CHIEF EXECUTIVE</b>	<b>OPEN:</b>	
<b>MEMBERS' CONTACT POINT:</b>	<b>Peter Woolrich Ext: 5726</b>	<b>DOC:</b>	<b>Xregional strat.doc</b>
<b>SUBJECT:</b>	<b>Cross Regional Economic Development Strategy for the National Forest and Surrounding Areas</b>	<b>REF:</b>	<b>myfiles/committees/EnvSer/Xregional strategy</b>
<b>WARD(S) AFFECTED:</b>	<b>All</b>	<b>TERMS OF REFERENCE:</b>	<b>ES10</b>

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## **1.0 Recommendations**

- 1.1 That Member's approve the preparation a Cross Regional Economic Development Strategy for the National Forest and surrounding areas and agree to contribute the sum of up to £1,000 towards the consultancy fees for its production.

## **2.0 Purpose of Report**

- 2.1 To consider the preparation of a Cross Regional Economic Development Strategy for the National Forest and surrounding areas.

## **3.0 Detail**

- 3.1 At a meeting held in April between the East Midlands Development Agency (EMDA), Advantage West Midlands (AWM), and the Chief Executives from the District Councils of South Derbyshire, North West Leicestershire, East Staffordshire and Hinckley and Bosworth, it was decided that it would be inappropriate to establish a Sub-Regional Strategic Partnership (SSP) based on the area of the National Forest. However it was agreed that support could be given to the development of a cross regional strategy for the area focussing on those common strategic issues covering the area.
- 3.2 In the East Midlands, with the advent of 'Single Pot' funding becoming more apparent as former schemes such as SRB come to the end of their life, increasing amounts of funding from EMDA will be targeted to meeting the aims and objectives of the Regional Strategy. This is to be achieved through the SSP's by way of their own Sub-regional strategies which are to be prepared over the ensuing months.

- 3.3 The Leicestershire and South Derbyshire Coalfields Partnership which presently represents the former coalfield area will in all probability cease its functions at the end of the current Rural Priority Area and SRB6 Programmes in March 2004. The Derby & Derbyshire and Leicestershire Strategic Economic Partnership SSP's will become responsible in sub regional terms for the economic regeneration of their respective areas from April 2003 and will be required to produce sub regional strategies and delivery plans to meet these ends. Regeneration monies will then start to be funnelled through the SSP's by EMDA. In this context there is a danger that there could be no common strategy which recognises the unique interests and potential of the area which is loosely defined by the National Forest, which has a common sub-regional identity and common interests but which transcends both local, and regional boundaries. A National Forest Strategy would help both to inform and complement the emerging SSP strategies particularly in terms of the potentially common interests across their respective boundaries.
- 3.4 Officers of the RDA's, the District Councils and National Forest Company have subsequently met to discuss the potential and possibility of producing such a strategy. The indications were that the two RDA's may favourably consider part funding such a strategy subject to matched funding from partners and have suggested that a bid be submitted. The National Forest Company, in partnership with East Staffordshire Borough, North West Leicestershire District, Hinckley and Bosworth Borough and South Derbyshire District Councils propose to submit a bid to the two RDA's to commission consultants to prepare such a strategy as soon as possible and certainly before April 2003. The designated area will be the whole of the Districts of ESBC, NWLDC, SDDC and that part of HBBC within the designated area of the National Forest. The contract is likely to be in the order of £20,000 of which £15,000 would be from the RDA's and the balance from the proposed partners. A contribution of up to a maximum of £1,000 would be required from this Council. A draft Consultant's Brief is attached as Annex A.

#### **4.0 Financial Implications**

- 4.1 The preparation of the strategy is likely to cost in the order of £20,000. A bid is to be made to the Regional Development Agencies for £15,000 with the balance from the proposed partners. A contribution of up to a maximum of £1,000 would be required from this Council which can be met from existing budgets.

#### **5.0 Conclusions**

- 5.1 It is considered that a strategy for the National Forest local authority areas is required to provide an overarching insight to the common needs and aspirations of the area and as a basis for influencing the preparation of the emerging Sub-regional Strategic Economic Partnership strategies. In this context it is proposed that a partnership bid be made with the National Forest Company to the Regional Development Agencies for finance to employ consultants to produce a National Forest Strategy for our respective District Council areas.

#### **6.0 Background Papers**

- 6.1 Meetings with Regional Development Agencies and the National Forest