

SUBJECT:	Wye Valley Villages Future Plan
MEETING:	Place Scrutiny Committee
DATE:	30th June 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	Trellech United CC, Devauden CC, Wye Valley CC, St Arvans CC

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY AND PURPOSE:

- 1.1 Partnership work has been ongoing since 2019 involving the community councils and elected representatives for the Wye Valley, the Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) office and MCC officers to prepare the Wye Valley Villages Future Plan. This seeks to draw together various shared emerging topics such as road safety, placemaking and tourism into a joint Plan. It is intended that the Plan will be adopted by all of these bodies for implementation and to shape future decisions. If adopted, a delivery group will be established.
- 1.2 The purpose of this report is to brief members on the background to the development of the Wye Valley Villages Future Plan and to scrutinise the Plan and how the project might develop going forwards, prior to it being reported to Cabinet for adoption by MCC.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Scrutiny Committee notes the work undertaken to date to arrive at the Wye Valley Villages Future Plan and endorses the Plan for adoption by Cabinet to be implemented and to inform future decision-making (copy attached plus an executive summary – Appendices 1 and 2 respectively).

3.0 KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 Over the years there has been representations and lobbying on various matters by the various community councils that fall within the Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) boundary. In particular, the issue of road safety has been a consistent theme common amongst the community councils, albeit other matters have been raised by the community councils and residents such as public transport, public rights of way, road maintenance and a unified identity to support tourism.
- 3.2 At an inaugural meeting held in Tintern in October 2019 representatives from the community councils, relevant county wards and Wye Valley AONB convened to discuss interest in commissioning a joint project that would investigate a range of issues including, amongst other things, road safety (copy of agenda attached at Appendix 3).

- 3.3 Support was received from all of the community councils and Wye Valley AONB and subsequent to further meetings and preparation of a tender document, ARUP consultancy secured the contract to prepare the Plan.
- 3.4 There followed various workshops and meetings (described in the Plan) along with consultation exercises before the Plan was presented to the community councils and AONB in March of this year. Since then, a report has been presented to the community councils prior to elections in May seeking agreement to adopt the Plan. These authorities will now be invited to formally adopt the plan. Similarly, following Scrutiny Committee's consideration, MCC will consider if the Plan should be adopted, as will Wye Valley AONB Joint committee.
- 3.5 Assuming the Plan is adopted by all of the member organisations then a delivery group will be established from member representatives from the community councils, local county councillors., relevant cabinet member(s) plus officers from Wye Valley AONB and MCC. MCC would continue to act as the secretariat. The delivery group will have executive powers within the context of the actions contained within the adopted plan. Outside of that decisions will be referred back to the various councils/bodies for ratification
- 3.6 The project has been unusual in bringing together four community councils, county council and AONB to work and develop plans collectively. Furthermore that the plan works across an area and villages rather than a single town.
- 3.7 Whilst this approach is innovative and brings collective ownership it also brings risks if the group fails to gain a consensus on how to proceed on any matter. The delivery group will be pivotal in ensuring that any such matters are resolved by agreement and subsequent joint common goals and recommendations are submitted to member authorities.

4.0 EQUALITY AND FUTURE GENERATIONS EVALUATION (INCLUDES SOCIAL JUSTICE, SAFEGUARDING AND CORPORATE PARENTING):

- 4.1 The Future Generation and Equality Impact form is attached at Appendix 4.

5.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

- 5.1 The Wye Valley AONB Villages Future Plan has been based upon options development and consultation to arrive at a plan for adoption by the various councils and the AONB. As such the exercise has considered various options during its development to arrive at this Plan. It would seem regressive to contemplate further options at this stage. However the delivery of the actions within the plan will be subject to ongoing evaluation during implementation by the delivery group so further options might become appropriate during the life of the plan.

6.0 EVALUATION CRITERIA

- 6.1 Measuring the effect of actions within the Plan will be established where feasible. This will be established by the delivery group which is responsible for reviewing and delivering actions within the Plan. In some instances 'measurement' might be more qualitative than quantitative e.g. impact of new signage whereas other aspects e.g. changes to public transport may be measured by patronage.
Review and assessment will be the role of the delivery group in the first instance.

7.0 REASONS:

- 7.1 The reasons for developing the plan are touched upon in the Key Issues section above and within the report itself.
- 7.2 Overall it was seen as an opportunity to support a largely rural area and communities by inviting the local councils to work together. It is arguable that by working jointly, the project has become more meaningful and potentially with greater impact as community councils considered in isolation for this type of project may have insufficient impact or resources.

8.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

- 8.1 The study has been funded through Wye Valley AONB grant. Community councils have raised precept to fund projects including the installation of new village signs (project underway) and funding has again been found by Wye Valley AONB to fund the new village gateway sign project.
- 8.2 The plan has various initiatives outlined within it including cost estimates. Prioritising these projects will be the responsibility of the delivery group in consultation with the statutory responsible bodies. MCC will resource the delivery group via the regeneration team.
- 8.3 Similarly funding streams will be highlighted by the delivery group as projects are brought forward for implementation. Included within that exercise will be an analysis of funding demand and funding options (e.g. direct funding from county and community council budgets, grant application etc.)

8 CONSULTEES:

As described within the body of the report, this Plan has been developed in partnership with:

Devauden CC
Trellech Utd CC
Tintern CC
St Arvans CC
Wye Valley AONB

Public consultation took place in 2021.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Wye Valley AONB Villages Plan for the Future - attached

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Wye Valley Villages Future Plan

Appendix 2 Wye Valley Villages Future Plan executive summary

Appendix 3 Agenda of the inaugural meeting October 2019

Appendix 4 Future Generations and Equality Impact Assessment