

SUBJECT:	Wye Valley Villages Future Plan
MEETING:	Cabinet
DATE:	27th July 2022
DIVISION/WARDS AFFECTED:	Trellech United CC, Devauden CC, Wye Valley CC, St Arvans CC

1. PURPOSE:

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to brief Cabinet on the background to the co-produced Wye Valley Villages Future Plan, how the project might develop going forwards, and to seek Cabinet's agreement to adopt the Plan to inform future activity and decisions. It is intended that the Plan will be adopted by all parties (community councils, Wye Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) office and MCC). If adopted, a delivery group will be established.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS:

- 2.1 That Cabinet adopts the Wye Valley Villages Future Plan for implementation and to inform future decision-making (copy attached at Appendix 1).
- 2.2 That Cabinet authorises the Chief Officer for Communities and Place, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Sustainable Livelihoods and advised by the delivery group, to source funding, undertake community and stakeholder consultation as needed, and to decide to proceed with any of the projects outlined in the Wye Valley Villages Improvement Plan where those projects involve MCC.

3.0 KEY ISSUES:

- 3.1 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 co-produce the Wye Valley Villages Future Plan. This seeks to draw together various shared emerging topics such as road safety, public transport, public rights of way, road maintenance, placemaking and tourism into a joint Plan.
- 3.2 An inaugural meeting was held in Tintern in October 2019 between representatives from the community councils, relevant county wards and Wye Valley AONB to gauge interest in proceeding and to agree the scope of the project. Support was received from all parties. Following further meetings and preparation of a tender document, ARUP consultancy secured the contract to prepare the Plan.
- 3.3 Various workshops and meetings (described in the Plan) were held along with consultation exercises, following which the Plan was presented to the community councils and AONB in March of this year. All parties, including MCC, are now invited to formally adopt the plan (many Community Councils have already done so). This report seeks Cabinet's agreement that MCC formally adopts the Plan.

- 3.4 Assuming the WVV Improvement Plan is adopted by all of the member organisations, a delivery group will be established comprising representatives from the community councils, county councillors for the relevant Wards, relevant cabinet member(s) plus officers from Wye Valley AONB and MCC. MCC would continue to act as the secretariat. It is intended that the delivery group will be empowered by the respective organisations to implement the Plan. To that end, Cabinet is invited to authorise the Chief Officer for Communities and Place, in liaison with the Cabinet Member for Economy and Sustainable Livelihoods and advised by the delivery group, to source funding, undertake community and stakeholder consultation as needed, and to decide to proceed with any of the projects outlined in the Wye Valley Villages Improvement Plan where those projects involve MCC.
- 3.5 The project has been unusual in bringing together four community councils, county council and AONB to work and develop plans collectively, working across an area and multiple villages rather than a single town. 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 organisations.

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 3. There are no corporate parenting of safeguarding concerns, nor issues in relation to our economic impact duty.

5.0 OPTIONS APPRAISAL

Options	Benefits	Risks	Comments/Mitigation
Adopt the Wye Valley Villages Improvement Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Actions can be prioritised and delivered on this co-produced Plan in a co-ordinated manner; • It cements the informal collaboration and offers opportunities to benefit placemaking and tourism activity to the benefit of communities and visitors 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Lack of identified funding for many of the projects 	The co-produced Plan provides a positive framework to shape and prioritise activity that would otherwise still arise but in an ad hoc and unco-ordinated manner.
Make amendments to the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Amendments would presumably be intended as improvements 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Plan has been co-produced, so any amendments would need the agreement of other parties who are already happy with the content 	

Do not adopt the Plan	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • None 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The positive collaboration and working relationships that have been established would be undermined 	
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5.1 The preferred option is for Cabinet to adopt the Plan as attached at Appendix 2.

6.0 REASONS:

6.1 The Wye Valley AONB Villages Future Plan has been co-produced and consulted upon and is now seeking agreement from all parties to adopt it. During Plan formulation, various options and priorities were considered and either included or discounted. It would seem regressive to decide against adopting the Plan at this stage. Overall, the Plan is seen as an opportunity to support a largely rural area and communities by inviting the local councils to work together. By working jointly, the project has become more meaningful and potentially has greater impact as community councils considered in isolation for this type of project may have insufficient impact or resources.

6.2 It should be noted that delivery of the actions within the Plan will be subject to ongoing discussion and evaluation during implementation by the delivery group. The delivery group will be 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.

7.0 RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS:

7.1 The study has been funded through Wye Valley AONB grant. Community Councils have raised precept to help fund projects and funding has been found by Wye Valley AONB to fund the new village gateway sign project.

7.2 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.

7.3 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.). Resourcing some of the Plan recommendations will be challenging because most grant funding streams are geared at town centres rather than rural areas.

8 CONSULTEES:

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

- Devauden CC
- Trellech United CC

Tintern CC
St Arvans CC
Wye Valley AONB

Public consultation took place in 2021.

The Plan was considered by the Place Scrutiny Committee on 30th June 2022. That Committee endorsed the Wye Valley Villages Future Plan and was content that it be taken to Cabinet, but with the recommendation that the plan is aligned to other workstreams being undertaken on phosphates and river pollution i.e. that both groups work together to align their work. The Committee also wishes to scrutinise the report on Rivers and Ocean prior to it being considered by Council on 22nd September.

Officers note this recommendation and are satisfied that the recommendations arising in the Wye Valley Villages Improvement Plan align with and support wider work to address river pollution and to promote natural flood mitigation measures.

Senior Leadership Team
Communities and Place DMT
Monitoring Officer
S151 Officer

Ward Members, Community Councils and the Wye Valley AONB office
The Plan was subject to community consultation and engagement in 2021.

9 BACKGROUND PAPERS:

Wye Valley AONB Villages Plan for the Future - attached

10 AUTHOR:

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APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Wye Valley Villages Future Plan

Appendix 2 Wye Valley Villages Future Plan executive summary

Appendix 3 Future Generations and Equality Impact Assessment