

POLICY STATEMENT FOR THE USE OF THE RIVERS WYE AND LUGG

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: HIGHWAYS AND TRANSPORTATION

CABINET

14TH DECEMBER, 2006

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To approve the draft Policy Statement for the Use of the Rivers Wye and Lugg as the basis for public consultation.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

THAT the draft Policy Statement for the Use of the Rivers Wye and Lugg be approved as the basis for consultation with relevant organisations and the public.

Reasons

To seek the views of parties with an interest in the use of the rivers Wye and Lugg and the public in general upon the draft policy statement.

Considerations

1. Herefordshire's rivers are important culturally, environmentally and economically to the County's future. The River Wye, in particular, is nationally renowned and together with the River Lugg is defined as navigable within the confines of the County.
2. These two principal rivers offer considerable opportunities in terms of contributing to the economic well being of the County yet by their nature the rivers have constraints that must be acknowledged if the qualities that make them so attractive are to be maintained.
3. Although Herefordshire Council is able to influence some aspects of the rivers' use and activities upon them the Environment Agency has prime responsibility for their management, including flood control, water abstraction, navigation, recreation and biodiversity conservation. Recently the Agency's duties have increased as a consequence of the Water Framework Directive, whereby it must produce River basin Management Plans. Furthermore it recently produced the Wye Waterway Plan, which incorporates the Wye Navigation Plan required under The Wye Navigation

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Bill Bloxsome, Conservation Manager on 01432 261783

Order 2002. The Waterway Plan covers both the Rivers Wye and Lugg.

4. It is however timely for the Council to develop a policy for the use of the two rivers and present this in a formal statement. One of the functions for such a policy statement would be to indicate how it would work with partners, in particular the Environment Agency, on matters of mutual interest and concern. It might, for example, assist the Council's representatives on such forums as the Wye Navigation Committee and the Herefordshire Partnership Board.
5. A draft statement has been prepared and is appended to this report at Appendix 1. Legal services were party to the document's preparation. Informal consultations were undertaken upon an initial draft with the Wye Navigation Committee, the Wye Management Committee and the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee. At this stage it is proposed to report to Cabinet recommending that the document be published for consultation including parish councils, representative bodies and relevant sporting and amenity bodies and organisations, as well as with the public.
6. The draft statement sets out the strategic background to the issue, a statement of principle, general policies setting out the Council's approach to the use of the two rivers, and finally operational policies covering those aspects for which the Council has some powers and responsibilities.
7. The financial implications of approving the document for consultation are limited to publication and circulation costs and these will be met from existing budgets.

Risk Management

The purpose of the policy statement is to set out the approach the Council wishes to pursue in relation to a range of matters that would otherwise be responded to in an ad hoc manner. Public consultation upon the policy statement will give it greater legitimacy and support.

Alternative Options

No options are presented at this stage but would be considered in the light public consultation.

Consultees

Informal consultations were undertaken upon an initial draft with the Wye Navigation Committee, the Wye Management Committee and the Wye Valley AONB Joint Advisory Committee.

Appendices

Appendix 1 Draft Policy Statement for the Use of the Rivers Wye and Lugg – Herefordshire Council; December 2006

Background Papers

Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan (Revised Deposit Draft)
Herefordshire Community Strategy
The Wye Navigation Order 2002
The Wye Waterway Plan
West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy
Herefordshire Local Area Agreement
Wye Valley AONB Management Plan
Tourism Strategy for Herefordshire 2002 – 2007
Herefordshire Rivers and Flat Water Study