

P R E S S R E L E A S E

Issued 21 October 2011

ERIC PICKLES MP PLEDGES SUPPORT TO WORCESTERSHIRE LEP PLANS FOR KIDDERMINSTER

Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government Eric Pickles MP has told delegates from Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (WLEP) he will provide his full support to develop their plans for an enterprise park in South Kidderminster.

Led by chairman Peter Pawsey, Worcestershire LEP representatives met Mr Pickles at a special meeting in Westminster yesterday, supported by Wyre Forest MP Mark Garnier and officials from Wyre Forest District Council and ReWyre.

Communities Secretary Eric Pickles said: "I was really pleased to meet with Mark and the Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership team to hear how they are pressing ahead with their own ambitious plans for encouraging enterprise and business growth in Kidderminster. This is exactly the sort of leadership we envisioned when we set up local enterprise partnerships and I support it wholeheartedly."

The delegation welcomed Mr Pickle's support to continue proposals to establish an enterprise park in South Kidderminster, which could lead to the creation of more than 4,000 new jobs in the area.

Speaking afterwards, Peter Pawsey said: "It was a very successful meeting with Mr Pickles. Our aim was to secure his support and his encouragement means we are able to start pressing ahead with our ambitious plans for the regeneration of South Kidderminster.

"Mr Pickles also pledged his commitment to ensure the issues facing South Kidderminster will receive the highest attention in his department. We are seeking all opportunities to secure business investment in the area and this is a great step forward."

The Secretary of State welcomed news that Wyre Forest DC is committed to taking forward key aspects of 'enterprise zone' status covering not only the former British Sugar site, but an area totalling about 200 hectares along the Worcester Road and Stourport Road corridors.

Mr Pawsey added: "We emphasised that significant parts of the site are already 'shovel ready' for development and that Wyre Forest DC is currently preparing a Local Development Order for consultation over the next few months. Such an Order would allow the fast tracking of planning processes for future development."

Superfast Broadband is also part of the plan for South Kidderminster. The provisions of the Localism Bill, which comes into effect in the spring, will allow the discounting of business rates on developments within the area.

The delegation also received encouragement from the Secretary of State to engage with the forthcoming Growing Places Fund to deliver improvements to key transport routes and other infrastructure, thereby unblocking hurdles to achieving strategic development.

Tony Hyde, Chair of ReWyre and Vice Chair of WLEP, said the meeting was very useful. "It provided significant encouragement that all the work and initiative being driven by the public and private sector partners to create inward investment and local jobs for Wyre Forest will be supported."

ENDS (459 words)

Media enquiries: contact Juliet Betterton or Claire Morris at betterpr on 01527 881965 or email: juliet@betterpr.co.uk or claire@betterpr.co.uk

Notes to editors:

Worcestershire Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)

WLEP is tasked with driving economic development and enterprise across the county and providing the strategic leadership required to stimulate local economic growth. It is led by the private sector in the county, working in partnership with the public sector. Worcestershire was approved as a standalone LEP in December 2010 by the Departments of Business Innovation and Skills (BIS) and Communities and Local Government (CLG).