



Review of Hereford City Partnership

Report by the Hereford City Partnership Review Group

March 2007

**As presented to the Community
Services Scrutiny Committee**

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1 Introduction

The purpose of the Review was to undertake an examination of the Hereford City Partnership (subsequently referred to as HCP), which is supported by several partners, one of which is Herefordshire Council. HCP was set up as a company limited by guarantee in May 2000 and brings together public, private and voluntary sector partners who have an interest in the economic and environmental wellbeing of the City of Hereford.

1.1 A scoping statement including terms of reference was approved by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 6 June 2006, a copy of which can be found at Appendix 1.

1.2 It was agreed that the Review Group would consist of four Members from the Community Services Scrutiny Committee: Councillor H. Bramer, (Chairman) Councillor J.G.S. Guthrie, Councillor B. Hunt, and Councillor D.C. Taylor plus three Co-opted Members to be appointed by the Review Group including one Member of Hereford City Council, one representative from the retail sector, and one representative from the private sector.

1.3 Councillor Mrs. P.A. Andrews was appointed as the Hereford City Council representative. The retail sector representative was Mr. M. Jones of Philip Morris and Sons, and the private sector representative was Mr. W. Jackson of Bill Jackson International.

1.4 In order to ensure that the Review was truly independent it was required that all Herefordshire Council Review Group Members had had no previous involvement with HCP. This was achieved by appointing Committee Members from the wider County. However, for the Co-opted Members it was concluded that they were likely to have had some contact with HCP through their respective roles. Therefore it was agreed that a Co-opted Member would be permitted to join the Review Group so long as they were not a currently serving or previous HCP Board Member.

1.5 The Review was undertaken between June 2006 and December 2006, and this report summarises the key findings of the Review Group concluding with its recommendations to the Community Services Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet.

1.6 The Review Group would like to express its thanks to the many people who have presented evidence to the Group, and those who have provided further information as required. The Review Group would particularly like to thank the Members of HCP and Mrs Cynthia Spaul, the Hereford City Manager, for all their assistance in the Review.

2 Methodology

2.1 The Review Group agreed that a number of meetings needed to be held to collect the evidence to complete the review.

2.2 It was decided that interviews would take place with representatives of Hereford City Partnership, Herefordshire Council Members and Officers, a Hereford City Council Member and representatives of other key organisations and businesses based in Hereford, including Edgar Street Grid (ESG) Limited

2.3 Discussions took place about the necessity of visiting cities elsewhere to investigate how their City Partnerships were run. It was decided that as the Review needed to be a short, intensive piece of work, the cost of arranging visits outweighed the possible benefits, and a desktop exercise looking at comparative cities would suffice.

3 Interviews

3.1 A series of questions were proposed through discussions by the Review Group, based on the key questions in the scoping statement, linked to the key outcomes for the Review. These questions are given in Appendix 2. Some of the factual questions were answered through the Review Group's initial research. However, the majority of questions were answered through the interviews which were then conducted after the initial research.

3.2 Interviews were undertaken with representatives of the HCP Board and Management Committee, Hereford City Manager, Officers and Council Members of Herefordshire Council, a retail sector representative, and the Chief Executive of ESG Herefordshire Limited, the company responsible for the regeneration of the Edgar Street Grid area. The information gathered from researching the answers to the questions and the interviews is broken down by subject matter rather than being attributable to any particular individual. The list of interviewees is given in Appendix 3.

4 Background

4.1 Hereford is experiencing a period of considerable change and new development; this is creating challenges for everyone concerned with the City, and the County as a whole

4.2 A review of HCP was considered timely in relation to the new initiatives, to investigate the purpose, management, and work programme of HCP to ensure best value for the investment made by partners. The intention was to undertake a review which was short, intensive, and very focussed in its purpose and outcomes. HCP has been operating for a number of years, and the Review was also considered timely in relation to other initiatives which are emerging for the city, such as the Edgar Street Grid, city centre refurbishments, the £10m refurbishment of Marks and Spencers, Rotherwas Futures, and the South Wye Development Trust.

5 History of HCP

5.1 Prior to the setting up of HCP in 2000, Hereford was supported by a Herefordshire Council employed Town Centre Manager who also managed Ross on Wye. However, the view was expressed by Herefordshire Council and Hereford City Council that Hereford required a Manager of its own. This was also supported by businesses and other organisations.

5.2 Good practice elsewhere supported the formation of a City Partnership as there was a lack of suitable funding to provide a full time local authority funded manager. Successful examples of this practice at the time included the Worcester City Centre Forum set up in 1995 through a voluntary partnership of businesses, and Bath City Centre Management Partnership established in 1999 after local government reorganisation. Further details of other city partnerships are given in Section 13 below.

- 5.3 HCP was formed in May 2000. The formation was facilitated by Herefordshire Council, following requests from a number of City businesses. An invitation was sent to all businesses in the City and other interested parties, including City and County Council members, to attend a meeting to discuss City Centre management. At this meeting a number of organisations and businesses offered their services to assist with attracting funding and putting together a properly constituted partnership.
- 5.4 HCP was set up as a legally constituted body, with the status of a company limited by guarantee and not having share capital.
- 5.5 HCP's principal objective as set out in its Memorandum and Articles of Association is: "to promote and improve the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of the City of Hereford".
- 5.6 To this end, a City Manager was appointed by HCP in May 2001. The focus for the Manager was to undertake a major regeneration of the City Centre with a specific focus on skills. Proposals were prepared to develop a vision for Hereford as a "City of Living Crafts". The main aim of the project was to help to physically and economically regenerate Hereford City through infrastructure improvements and training in crafts skills. The project was to be funded through the Rural Regeneration Zone, a sub-regional funding programme to support regeneration in rural areas.
- 5.7 A feasibility study for this project was undertaken by BCP consultants, who were appointed by HCP. It involved substantial consultation (at a cost of £100,000), funded by Advantage West Midlands (AWM), and private sector partners. However the Department for Trade and Industry subsequently changed their funding criteria which prohibited AWM from funding the regeneration scheme. The project was subsequently cancelled, but elements of the feasibility study have since been used to inform developments in the City such as the regeneration of Hereford Cathedral Close.
- 5.8 The failure of the City of Living Crafts project had a serious impact on HCP, with a loss of impetus and enthusiasm on the part of the Directors and the wider City community.
- 5.9 The City Manager subsequently left in March 2003 and the post was vacant until the current postholder, Ms Cynthia Spaul, was appointed in May 2004. In the intervening period the core function of supporting the City of Living Crafts feasibility study was undertaken by Herefordshire Council Officers seconded to HCP.
- 5.10 HCP receives £16,000 per year from Hereford City Council, plus £3,000 and in kind support including desk space, ICT equipment and support from Herefordshire Council for the Hereford City Manager. There are plans to roll out a business membership scheme which will produce revenue funding for HCP; details of this are in the business plan. A copy of the draft business plan for HCP is available on request.
- 5.11 HCP's boundaries extend to the City limits to enable participation of the business community in Holmer Road, Whitecross Road and Belmont Road. However, Rotherwas Industrial Estate is not within the remit of the Partnership.

5.12 HCP has a Board of 15 Directors, from which a Management Committee of four is drawn. The Management Committee also includes representation from Herefordshire Council via the Social and Economic Regeneration Manager, and the Board has Herefordshire Council representation from the Leader of the Council who holds the Economic Development Portfolio. A full list of Board and Management Committee members is given in Appendix 4

6 The Role of HCP

6.1 The September 2006 Draft Business Plan identifies six key objectives; these are:

- Working in Partnership
- Communication
- Marketing and Promotion
- City Environment
- Funding Opportunities
- Management and Leadership

6.2 Within the business plan are aims and actions to meet the objectives of HCP. These have key personnel and dates attached. These key personnel include members of HCP and outside agencies.

6.3 HCP is independent of both Herefordshire Council and Hereford City Council, but has representatives from both authorities on the Board and Management Committee.

6.4 The City Manager produces a quarterly newsletter for over 400 businesses in Hereford to keep them informed about the work of HCP.

7 Work of the Partnership and decision-making

7.1 Currently the Board of HCP meet on a quarterly basis. The Review Group heard that the frequency of meetings is to be increased to a bi-monthly timetable to enable more regular performance review of its work. The aims and actions in the HCP business plan are reviewed at each meeting. The City Manager reports to every Board meeting. The Review Group welcomed the increased frequency of meetings to enable closer performance monitoring for HCP.

7.2 The Management Committee of HCP meets on a six weekly basis prior to Board meetings. Work targets for the City Manager are set and monitored by the Management Committee.

7.3 All funders, which currently comprise Boots, Chadds, Maylord Orchards Shopping Centre and the Chamber of Commerce, are invited to attend the AGM and receive the business plan and minutes of meetings of the HCP Board and Management Committee. These funders also include Herefordshire Council and Hereford City Council.

7.4 Regular retail group meetings are held to gauge the views of the business community in the city.

7.5 Discussions about initial ideas and costings take place between the Chairman of the Board and the City Manager prior to proposals being put to the HCP Board. Proposals for events and activities are considered at Board meetings up to six months in advance of them taking place.

7.6 The Review Group welcomed the election of Mrs Bobbie Heavens as Chair of HCP. Her experience and knowledge of the tourism sector is seen by the Review Group as invaluable in continuing to drive forward the work of the organisation.

8 Funding arrangements

8.1 As mentioned earlier the City Manager is funded by Hereford City Council and Herefordshire Council to the tune of £16,000 and £3,000, plus aforementioned in kind support, respectively. It is important to note that HCP receives no other direct revenue funding apart from these contributions towards the Hereford City Manager's salary.

8.2 Whilst £19,000 of funding is provided directly to HCP this does not even cover the salary of the Hereford City Manager. The Hereford City Manager is required to raise the remaining portion herself. The Review Group heard that the post-holder is hampered by having to raise money to pay the rest of her salary and has on occasions to choose between being paid or running a project. The Review Group strongly believe that the time the Hereford City Manager spends raising money to cover salary costs would be used much more effectively if it could be concentrated on achieving HCP's priorities rather than covering its basic costs.

8.3 The Review Group was concerned that Herefordshire Council contributes what appears to be a small amount of funding and support to HCP. The Review Group heard that this arrangement is historical from when Herefordshire Council only had funding to support a part time post rather than a full time Officer for the City.

8.4 It was felt by the Review Group that there were advantages to the Hereford City Manager being independent of both Herefordshire Council and Hereford City Council as this allowed her to focus on HCP's priorities and operate objectively between the two authorities. Whilst Herefordshire Council does not provide full time officer support to Hereford City examples were cited by Review Group Members of the Market Towns in the County where full time officers are employed by Herefordshire Council to support the respective Towns through funding provided by Advantage West Midlands via the Market Towns Initiative (MTI). The MTI currently provides funding for economic regeneration projects in Leominster and Ross on Wye, having previously supported over a three-year period community and economic regeneration projects in Kington, Bromyard and Ledbury.

8.5 The Review Group heard that the centre of Hereford was ineligible for grants through many of the major funding streams such as LEADER+, Rural Regeneration Zone and MTI. The eligibility criteria for funding are based upon many factors but the principal factor expelling Hereford City from LEADER+ and MTI is the size of its population which is too big. Even though Hereford has a larger population and is one of the major focal points for the County it is not eligible for grants to provide it with Officer support similar to that provided to the Market Towns via the MTI. However, support has been received through funding programmes for South Wye via the Single Regeneration Budget over a seven-year period, and for developments on the Rotherwas Industrial Estate. Specific projects in Hereford have received major funding through the National Lottery, including the Courtyard Centre for the Arts, and Hereford Cathedral.

- 8.6 The Review Group felt that HCP needed to be able to generate or obtain more income to develop as an organisation. Therefore the Review Group considered ways in which HCP could raise additional income itself.
- 8.7 One potential source of income for HCP identified was Street Trading Consents. It was suggested that HCP could begin to administer and issue Street Trading Consents for stalls in Hereford City Centre and retain the associated fees charged for their issue. Currently Street Trading consents are granted by Herefordshire Council through the Trading Standards Department, with an Officer Group running the scheme under the Council's scheme of delegation. The City Manager is invited to meetings and can comment but not vote on consents. Other organisations are represented at meetings when required, for example, West Mercia Police. A list of officers on the Panel is given in Appendix 5.
- 8.8 Member involvement for Street Trading consents is by consultation on a ward-by-ward basis for each pitch. In Hereford, Hereford City Council is informed of regular pitches, but not informed of the one-day pitches; one-day pitches are notified to the relevant ward Herefordshire Council Member but usually at short notice.
- 8.9 In addition to issuing Street Trading Consents it was suggested to the Review Group that HCP could increase the price of pitches as the current price was substantially lower than their real value. It was thought it would be considered reasonable to increase the current fees dramatically and still maintain the viability of the businesses which purchased them. An example was presented to the Review Group from Plymouth, where the income from Street Trading Consents is used to help finance the Plymouth City Partnership, but the Plymouth City Partnership is funded directly via the City Council.
- 8.10 Further investigation by the Review Group established that Street Trading Consents can only be issued by a local authority under the auspices of the Local Government Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982, and not by any other body. Income levels are set through agreed formulae, and are bench-marked against other local authorities within the New Unitary Benchmarking (NUB) Group a list of the authorities in this Group is included at Appendix 6. Herefordshire Council's fees would now stand up to legal scrutiny and processes were scrutinised by the Local Government Ombudsman in 2001 and found to be appropriate.
- 8.11 Income raised from the issuing of Street Trading Consents is used to support the salaries of staff plus administration and enforcement of the scheme. However, the Review Group thought the fees were comparatively low compared to the value of the pitch location and the associated income that it would bring in. The Review Group felt that there was scope to review the fees currently paid for Street Trading Consents with the view to increasing them to their real value.
- 8.12 In kind support is offered to HCP by Herefordshire Council Trading Standards through income from specific consents, such as the carousel in High Town which generates income for the Christmas Lights Switch On and through the waiving of fees for events including the Motor Show. This means that HCP does not need to pay for such events, and the officer time supporting them. £6,000 of funding for HCP is also received from the pre-Christmas trading in the City Centre.
- 8.13 Another potential source of income which was highlighted to the Review Group was the precept set by Hereford City Council. It was noted that the City Council levied a relatively low precept compared to the other Market Towns in the

County, and could potentially raise more money for expenditure in the City with an increase in the precept. The Review Group agreed that this could potentially be a future source of income for HCP.

8.14 The Review Group noted from HCP's draft business plan that there are plans to introduce a Retail Membership Scheme from April 2007. The Review Group welcome this Membership Scheme and suggest that different levels of Membership are introduced so that all businesses, no matter now large or small, will be able to buy into the scheme at an appropriate level. Currently HCP are implementing a membership scheme called Retail Plus which costs £10 per month (£120 pa). The scheme involves support for retail businesses through the Hereford City Manager and the Chamber of Commerce, and will ensure the continued funding of £2,000 per year from the Chamber of Commerce towards the work of HCP.

8.15 There is no regular budgeting process for HCP but there are full income and expenditure accounts by HCP.

8.16 The Review Group were told by witnesses that HCP needed an injection of funding in the short term to help the immediate work of the Hereford City Manager and provide administrative support. The Review Group agreed that this approach would help to increase the profile of HCP and enable specific projects to be undertaken.

8.17 It was agreed by the Review Group that a short term programme of funding should be provided for three to five years to enable HCP to gain a firm footing with existing and planned projects, and then be able to liaise more appropriately with ESG and other programmes planned for the City. This funding should support the post of Hereford City Manager and administrative support prior to the emergence of a whole City vision and the fulfilment of ESG.

8.18 The Review Group felt that Herefordshire Council should match the revenue funding provided by the smaller Hereford City Council and provide £16,000 of funding towards HCP as well as maintain the existing additional in kind support. This extra income, along with the Hereford City Council money, would fund the whole of the Hereford City Manager's salary which would then allow her to concentrate on other tasks rather than have to raise money to pay her own salary, as well as allowing some extra money to fund administrative support and other activities. However the Review Group felt it was important that income generation is maintained by HCP to enable activities and events to continue and develop.

9 Work programme for City Manager

9.1 The Review Group were pleased to hear from many sources that it was widely felt the Hereford City Manager does an excellent job and has developed good relationships with City Centre businesses and retailers. However, the Review Group heard that the work of the City Manager is often diverted to immediate problems and issues in the City and the longer-term work programme is not being fulfilled. The lack of administrative support means that the City Manager has to undertake all administration functions which the Review Group heard is not the best use of her time. This situation should be reviewed.

9.2 The City Manager is seen as the first port of call for problems, but confusion can arise as to the role of the City Manager. The Review Group also heard that there

is confusion over whom the City Manager works for; the postholder is perceived as working for Herefordshire Council on some occasions, and for the City Council on others.

9.3 The work programme for the City Manager is led by the HCP business plan. Work targets are set and monitored by the Management Committee. The City Manager reports to the Management Board at each meeting and provides a written report on all their activities.

9.4 The City Manager is line managed by the Chairman of HCP Board. An annual staff review and development structure is in place with a review in March each year, and work programmes are developed in line with the business plan. The Review Group discovered that whilst the Hereford City Manager post has a Job Description no Person Specification for the position exists. The Review Group would like to suggest that one is developed.

9.5 The accommodation supplied for the Hereford City Manager is at the Herefordshire Council offices in Plough Lane. This means that the Hereford City Manager spends considerable time travelling between the City Centre and Plough Lane. There is also limited accessibility to the Hereford City Manager by HCP Members as a result of this. The Review Group heard that an office in the City Centre would aid the work of the Hereford City Manager in terms of time management and accessibility to businesses and organisations. The Review Group agreed that this would help in raising the profile of the City Manager and enable more time to be spent in the City rather than travelling to and from Plough Lane. Therefore the Review Group would like to recommend that the Herefordshire Council relocates the Hereford City Manager to one of its City Centre Office spaces.

10 Herefordshire Council Representation

10. 1 The Hereford City Manager regularly provides updates on the work of HCP to Hereford City Council, and the Leader of Herefordshire City Council sits on the HCP Management Committee. Currently updates are not formally provided to Herefordshire Council and no one has been identified to receive the updates. Concern was expressed by the Review Group that no direct feedback is given to Herefordshire Council Members about the work of HCP.

10.2 The Review Group heard that Herefordshire Council representation was through the Leader who sits on the Board of Directors. The Leader sits on the Board as he currently holds Cabinet Member Portfolio responsibility for Economic Development. However the Review Group felt that the Leader of the Council was not the most appropriate Executive Member to sit as a Director of HCP due to the many varied pressures and time commitments placed on the Leader of the Council through his role as set out in Herefordshire Council's Constitution.

10.3 The Review Group appreciated the circumstances which had led to the role of the Leader picking up the Economic Development Portfolio but were still concerned that as the role is so complex it is difficult to devote sufficient time to HCP. The Review Group felt that consideration should be given to Herefordshire Council's Executive representation on the Board. Considerable time has elapsed since the Economic Development Portfolio was held by a specific Cabinet Member. Current and forthcoming developments in Hereford City are of such significance in both financial and economic terms that the Review Group felt the reinstatement of the post of Cabinet Member for Economic Development would be timely. This would also

reduce the number of activities expected to be completed by the Leader of the Council.

10.4 Projects such as the Edgar Street Grid development are going to require many hours of dedicated and detailed consideration which are key to the development of Hereford as a sub-regional centre. To ensure that this project delivers economic prosperity to Hereford and Herefordshire is going to require careful management and consultation with a whole host of interested parties, stakeholders and the public. The ESG project is ambitious and will require a strong and equally ambitious Herefordshire Council focal point to carry the project through to delivery through current and future Local Government initiatives and reviews including the proposed development of the Public Service Trust.

10.5 The economic well being of Hereford will always cause a ripple effect on the wider County so reappointing a Cabinet Member for Economic Development will not have an adverse affect on the residents of the wider County, and indeed, will have a positive impact in ensuring the strategic vision for the County is enhanced through better direct involvement of the City of Hereford.

10.6 If as the Review Group recommends the potential extra funding for HCP from Herefordshire Council is made available over the next three years means that there will be an increased stake in the work of HCP. This needs to be closely supported and monitored. The Review Group felt that the reinstatement of a Cabinet Member post for Economic Development would be able to offer this support.

10.7 It was felt by the Review Group that a mechanism needed to be implemented to enable feedback to reach Herefordshire Council at both Member and Officer level so that support for the City Manager can be made available. At Member level the Review Group suggest that that contact should be the Executive Member appointed to HCP, with reappointed Cabinet Member for Economic Development the recommended post holder. At Officer level the Review Group suggest that the Hereford City Manager corresponds with Heads of Service who can then cascade information and decisions to other Officers. This would mean that the Hereford City Manager does not need to spend time diverting enquiries and problems to a wide range of Herefordshire Council officers.

11 Partnership working and shared objectives

11.1 The Review Group heard that representation on the HCP Board of Directors, and consequently its Management Committee, has changed considerably since HCP was established. This was due to issues around the failure of the City of Living Crafts project, and natural turnover of personnel.

11.2 However, the Board and Management Committee has become more stable recently and has worked to produce a business plan for HCP which will form the basis of work for the next two years.

11.3 The Review Group heard that there was no major national retail representation on the HCP Board or Management Committee at present. Representation comes from local businesses and organisations. The Review Group believe that the lack of major retail representation puts HCP at a disadvantage. HCP needs such representation to support its work. This would put HCP on a similar footing to other City Partnerships, and potentially attract further financial support.

11.4 HCP has a series of key objectives which have led to the development of an action plan and timetable in the Business Plan. However, the Review Group heard that the action plan is very wide ranging and felt that work needed to be done to focus on specific projects within the city.

11.5 The Review Group heard that there is considerable confusion from outside organisations and individuals about the employment status of the Hereford City Manager. The Review Group felt that relationships between HCP and Herefordshire Council could be improved, and a means of communicating the City Manager's reports to appropriate Herefordshire Council staff needed to be sought.

11.6 The Review Group felt the reappointment of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development would improve the relationship between Herefordshire Council and HCP.

11.7 Furthermore, the significant developments taking place and planned for the City over the next few years will require a strong lead from Herefordshire Council, and the presence of a Cabinet Member for Economic Development would raise the profile of both the City and the County, and act as a spokesperson for the millions of pounds worth of regeneration.

12 Vision and Strategic Plan for Hereford City

12.1 The Review Group repeatedly heard from witnesses that HCP does not appear to have a strategic vision for Hereford.

12.2 However, the Review Group also heard from other witnesses that the HCP should not be responsible for the strategic management of Hereford City Centre but rather it should retain its current day to day involvement with the City Centre. There are specific programmes in place for regeneration in South Wye, Rotherwas and the Edgar Street Grid (ESG), and these will require liaison rather than direct involvement.

12.3 Currently liaison between ESG and HCP is through the Leader of Herefordshire Council, who sits on both Boards. However, the Review Group heard that time pressure on the role of the Leader prevents full involvement in HCP.

12.4 The Review Group heard that HCP were unclear about their role in the vision for Hereford, but looked to Herefordshire Council for the lead for strategic planning and vision for the City.

12.5 The Review Group heard that the Hereford City Manager is sidetracked by day-to-day issues rather than being able to look at strategic developments in the City. The Review Group agreed that this was a serious issue, but questioned the need for a strategic approach by the Hereford City Manager, feeling that a better means of strategic planning was through Herefordshire Council, with the Hereford City Manager dealing with day-to-day issues. HCP would welcome strategic guidance from Herefordshire Council.

12.6 However, the Review Group also heard views that Herefordshire Council did not always give sufficient attention to the City. It was felt that the City and County could not be divorced, but needed to be seen as parts of a whole, as the economy of the City relies on the support it receives from the rural hinterland.

- 12.7 The potential impact of ESG development on the City was noted by the Review Group. Links between ESG and HCP are via Board level representation by the Leader. On hearing the evidence, the Review Group felt that the vision and strategic plan for Hereford City should be coming from Herefordshire Council, with support from organisations such as HCP.
- 12.8 The Review Group felt the appointment of a Cabinet Member with Portfolio responsibility for Economic Development would enable the strategic overview for the City to be integrated into the overall vision and strategic planning for the County.

13 Gloucester, Worcester and Shrewsbury: partnership arrangements

- 13.1 Gloucester City Centre Management Partnership was created in 1996, and has evolved into the Central Gloucester Initiative (CGI). CGI involves businesses, residents and other companies. CGI is supported directly by Gloucester City Council, and has a number of core funders including the City and County Councils, Gloucestershire Constabulary, the University of Gloucestershire, The Mall Eastgate, Boots the Chemist, Marks & Spencer, Kings Walk Shopping Centre, Sainsburys, Cheltenham and Gloucester plc, Lincoln Financial Group, SW RDA/Gloucester Docks, Quick Print, Highstar Developments and the Gloucester Chamber of Commerce and Trade. CGI has three staff members, including an administration officer. The main objective is “Improving Gloucester’s economy, environment and image for the benefit and enjoyment of residents, visitors, workers and businesses”.
- 13.2 Worcester City Centre Forum began in 1995. The vision for the Forum is that “the city centre will be at the heart of Worcester which is a cosmopolitan city where lifestyles blend in an exciting mix – every citizen feels like a tourist, and every tourist feels like a citizen”. The Forum is now a voluntary grouping of around 40 private, public and voluntary organisations. The Forum employs a City Centre Manager, who is funded by Boots the Chemists, Chamber of Commerce Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Crowngate, Lychgate Shopping Centre, Marks & Spencer, and Worcester City Council. In addition, the City Council provides office space and accounting services for the City Centre Forum. The Forum was succeeded in October 2006 by VisitWorcester, a new independent company, which is a single point of focus for all activities in the City centre and promotes the City, covering the same area as Worcester City Council.
- 13.3 As from the 1st April 2005 Destination Shrewsbury, as a business unit within Shropshire County Council, took over many of the roles and responsibilities previously undertaken by Shrewsbury Town Centre Management Partnership (STCMP). This change emerged as a result of the Council's wish to achieve a more co-ordinated approach to town centre activities. The result of the emergence of Destination Shrewsbury is that STCMP is no longer in existence in its original form. As well as Destination Shrewsbury, a brand new collective has been formed to draw the 700 retailers in the town centre group together. The aims of the group are to contribute to marketing the town as a prime retail destination, develop seasonal campaigns and events, work with local councils to make serious improvements to the street environment and to provide a network with business neighbours. The Management Board come from a broad cross section of retailers and meet bi-monthly to discuss seasonal campaigns, compare notes with other businesses, liaise with Destination Shrewsbury on promotional activities and review transport and access issues with the County Council (the Highways Authority for the town centre).

14 Strategic links

- 14.1 The Review links with the Herefordshire Community Strategy under the priority for Economic Development and Enterprise which aims to: 'improve business, learning and employment opportunities in Herefordshire enabling sustainable prosperity for all'.
- 14.2 The Review also links with the Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy 2005-2025, produced by Herefordshire Council. A major theme within this is Business and Enterprise, with objectives to develop Hereford City, both in terms of environment and facilities available, to increase its attractiveness to entrepreneurs and provide a boost for local businesses, and to develop Hereford City into a major regional centre in terms of environment, services, retail and leisure facilities.

15 Conclusions

15.1 The Hereford City Manager does an excellent job, but the role is dominated by 'fire fighting' and day-to-day issues.

15.2 The Hereford City Manager needs additional officer support.

15.3 It is good that the Hereford City Manager is not an Officer of Herefordshire Council although there is some confusion over the post. However, the Hereford City Manager sometimes finds it difficult to communicate with some Council Officers.

15.4 In addition to this the Hereford City Manager has to spend time raising money to pay her own salary and has to find additional funding for events and activities.

15.5 The Hereford City Manager should have an office in the City Centre rather than be located in the Herefordshire Council Offices at Plough Lane.

15.6 The Hereford City Manager is well known to the majority of all retailers in the City and is their first port of call in many situations, particularly when there is a problem.

15.7 The HCP Board and Management Committee are run by volunteers, some of whom are very enthusiastic.

15.8 However, the HCP Board appears to lack leadership and expertise and fails to provide a strategic vision to the City and the Hereford City Manager.

15.9 The Review Group believe that the HCP is not in a position to provide a strategic vision, and needs to be consulted rather than take the lead. The Strategic Vision for Hereford should be provided by Herefordshire Council with HCP as one the principal partners in its development and implementation.

15.10 HCP lacks major retail Board and Management Committee members which is detrimental to its overall effectiveness.

15.11 There was an issue of whether or not HCP should be able to administer street trading licences and retain any income.

15.12 It was asserted that income from Street Trading could rise considerably which could then go towards funding additional HCP employees and other activities.

15.13 The Review Group found that it would not be legally possible for HCP to administer Street Trading Consents but the Review Group felt that there was scope for the fees to increase.

15.14 The Review Group believe that it is essential to refocus the remit of HCP to concentrate on the City Centre retail core.

15.15 Herefordshire Council does not give enough attention to the City or HCP. A means needed to be sought to strengthen the link between Herefordshire Council and HCP, and also develop a stronger link between HCP and ESG. It is believed that due to time constraints on the role of the Leader, the leader was not the best Herefordshire Council representative to have on HCP Board and that a Member who can devote more time to HCP be appointed.

15.16 The Review Group would also like to see the Cabinet Member Portfolio for Economic Development reinstated. In view of the importance of Hereford City to the wider County and as a sub-regional centre it is believed that the Cabinet Member for Economic Development will enable the profile of the regeneration work happening in the County to be raised. This Portfolio would have an important long-term role to play in developing the economic and environmental wellbeing of the City Centre as well as play a key role in the Edgar Street Grid proposals, with the capability of retaining an overall understanding of the strategic vision for the regeneration of Hereford City and wider County.

15.17 In order to develop and improve the work of HCP a medium-term funding package for its development over the next 3-5 years needs to be produced so that HCP can play a full and important role whilst long term plans for the City's redevelopment are drawn up.

15.18 Herefordshire Council should increase the level of its funding for HCP to £16,000 per annum in line with the contribution made from Hereford City Council to develop this medium term plan. Hereford City Council should also consider increasing its Parish Precept to provide further funds to HCP. In addition to this HCP should continue to maintain, develop and explore ways to provide its own independent revenue stream.

16 Next Steps

16.1 The Review Group anticipate that, if approved by the Community Services Scrutiny Committee, this report will be presented to Cabinet for consideration. The Review Group hope that the findings contained in this report will form the basis of any future agreement with HCP.

16.2 The Review Group recognises the achievements HCP has made to date, and feels that there are opportunities for future development of the organisation.

16.3 The Review Group anticipates that if the report is approved, HCP and Cabinet acts upon the recommendations and suggestions made in the report, summarised in section 17 below.

16.4 The Review Group also expects Cabinet to report back to the Community Services Scrutiny in six months time with a detailed action plan reporting on activity taken in view of the Review Groups recommendations.

17 Recommendations

17.1 That Herefordshire Council reinstates the Cabinet Member Portfolio with responsibility for Economic Development This Cabinet Member should take the lead on a strategic vision for Hereford City with support from partner organisations such as HCP and ESG, and ensure links with the wider County. (10.30)

17.2 That Herefordshire Council representation on the HCP Board is revisited and a member representative with potentially more time to support the work of HCP is appointed. If the recommendation for the reinstatement of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development is accepted then that Portfolio Holder should assume this appointment. (10.2)

17.3 That reporting mechanisms are put in place to enable the Hereford City Partnership manager to report to the Cabinet Member (Economic Development) on a regular basis. (10.1)

17.4 Herefordshire Council relocates the Hereford City Manager to one of its City Centre Office spaces, rather than being based at Plough Lane. (9.5)

17.5 That the Hereford City Manager's job particulars have a person specification prepared to go with the job description. (9.4).

17.6 The Hereford City Manager be provided with administrative support. (9.1)

17.7 The Membership of Hereford City Partnership be reviewed to ensure that all areas of the City are represented including the addition of major retailers as Members. (11.3)

17.8 That additional funding is put into HCP to support the Hereford City Manager and administrative support be provided in the short term prior to the emergence of a whole city vision and the development of ESG. (10.6)

17.9 That the annual funding of £16,000 which is put into HCP by Hereford City Council is matched by Herefordshire Council over the next three years, plus HCP maintains its existing funding and infrastructure support commitments to continue and develop its activities and events. (10.6).

17.10 That Hereford City Council investigate the possibility of increased support for HCP through the level of precept levied in the city. (8.13).

17.11 That Hereford City Partnership commence regular budgeting procedures and produce income and expenditure accounts. (8.15).

17.12 That Hereford City Partnership concentrate their main activities on the City Centre's economic and environmental wellbeing. (5.11).

17.13 That Hereford City Partnership liaise with other key partners with an interest in the City, including Hereford City Council, Herefordshire Council, Edgar Street Grid, South Wye Development Trust, and Rotherwas Futures. (10.4).

17.14 That mechanisms are put in place by Herefordshire Council enable the Hereford City Manager to report to Officers at Head of Service level. (10.7).

17.15 That the Street Trading Panel procedures are reviewed to enable direct reporting to the Cabinet Member (Economic Development). (8.11).

17.16 That Hereford City Partnership fully instigates the proposed retail membership scheme with varying levels of membership to generate income. (8.14).

Appendix 1 Terms of Reference for Review of Hereford City Partnership

REVIEW:	Review of the City Partnership	
Committee:	Community Services Scrutiny Committee	Chair: Councillor Bramer
Lead support officer:	Clare Wichbold MBE, Regeneration Co-ordinator	

SCOPING

Terms of Reference
<p>Specifically this review will cover:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ An understanding of the purpose and objectives of the City Partnership and the work of the City Partnership Officer ▪ To assess the management arrangements and decision making process ▪ To review the work programme and strategic plan
Desired outcomes
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • To gain an understanding of the role of the City Partnership • To outline a shared, strategic vision for Hereford City • To ensure the Council's support is used to best value and fulfilling the corporate objectives • To work with partners on an agreed way forward in relation to new initiatives coming to fruition in the City and the activities of new emerging groups • To look a method for performance management, with specific targets, milestones and outcomes
Key questions
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • What is the role of the City Partnership? • How does the partnership work and make decisions? • What are the funding arrangements for the partnership and is there opportunity for additional external funding? • What is the work programme for the year in relation to the activities of the City Centre Manager? • How does the mutual support and understanding of partners operate – are there a shared or conflicting objectives? • What is the strategic plan for the next five years? • What should be the key points in creating a vision for Hereford City?

Corporate Plan Priorities

Economic Development, community well being and enterprise

Timetable (NB this was revised with the agreement of the Review Group)	
<i>Activity</i>	<i>Timescale</i>
Agree approach, programme of consultation/research/provisional witnesses/dates	June 06
Collect current available data	June and July 06
Collect outstanding data	September 06
Analysis of data	September 06
Final confirmation of interviews of witnesses	June 06
Carry out programme of interviews	July 06
Agree programme of site visits	June 06
Update to Economic and Community Scrutiny Committee	October 06
Final analysis of data and witness evidence	August 06
Prepare options/recommendations	September 06
Present Final report to Economic and Community Scrutiny Committee	October 06
Present options/recommendations to Cabinet	November 06
Cabinet response	December 06
Implementation of agreed recommendations	January 07 onwards
Members	Support Officers
Cllr Mrs PA Andrews - Hereford City Council Representative Mr W Jackson - Private Sector Representative Mr M Jones - Retail Representative Cllr H Bramer Cllr J G S Guthrie Cllr B Hunt Cllr D C Taylor	Clare Wichbold MBE – Regeneration Coordinator Craig Goodall – Democratic Services Officer

Appendix 2 Questions for Review Interviewees

1. When was HCP formed?
2. Who was it formed by?
3. What status does HCP hold? Is it a legally constituted body?
 - a. Can we have a copy of constitution/any legal docs on HCP outlining its role?
4. Who are the Members of HCP?
 - a. How do they benefit from being a part of HCP?
 - b. How do Members join the Board?
 - c. Is there a Membership fee?
5. How is HCP funded?
 - a. How much?
 - b. From whom?
 - c. For how long?
 - d. Future fund raising plans? Any external funding opportunities?
 - e. What financial commitments does HCP have? eg wages
 - f. Can we see a copy of accounts?
6. What are the main aims and objectives of HCP?
7. What geographical area does HCP cover?
8. What is the work programme of the Board?
9. What is the work programme of the Hereford City Manager?
10. Are there any future events planned?
11. What is the strategic plan for the next five years?
12. What are the achievements of HCP to date?
13. How would you judge the success or otherwise of HCP to date?
14. What should be the key points in creating a vision for Hereford City?
15. Can you describe the decision making process of HCP and how an idea forms from inception through to delivery?
 - a. Can we have an example of this?
16. How is HCP monitored and evaluated?
 - a. How could this process be improved/strengthened?
17. How does HCP report back to its funders?
 - a. Are there any feedback mechanisms?
18. How does the mutual support and understanding of partners operate?
 - a. Are there any shared or conflicting objectives?

19. Is there a staff review and development structure in place for HCP employee?
20. Do other cities have similar Partnership arrangements?
 - a. Which cities?
 - b. What do they do?
 - c. Similarities/differences compared to HCP?

Appendix 3 List of interviewees

Name	Representing
Cllr David Fleet	Hereford City Council
Bobbie Heavens (Chair)	Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire
Penny Jones	Herefordshire Council
Gary Woodman (Vice-Chair)	Hereford Chamber of Commerce
Kirsty Chadd	Chadds
Luke Conod	Denim Nation Group Ltd (DNG)
Cllr Alan Williams	Hereford City Council
Paul Hodgson	Cross & James
Alan Ronald	Herefordshire Council
Cynthia Spaul	HCP
Juliet Coard	HCP
Jane Lewis	Herefordshire Council
Jonathan Bretherton	ESG Herefordshire Ltd
Nick Romans	Marks & Spencer plc, Hereford Store
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council

Appendix 4 Hereford City Partnership – Board of Directors and Management Committee Membership

Board of Directors

Name	Representing
Adrian Blackshaw	Visit Herefordshire
Donna Burgess	Gabbs Solicitors
Kirsty Chadd	Chadds
Luke Conod	Denim Nation Group Ltd (DNG)
The Dean – The Very Reverend Michael Tavinor (ex-officio)	Hereford Cathedral
Frankie Devereux	The Hereford Haven
Cllr David Fleet	Hereford City Council
Bobbie Heavens	Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire
Paul Hodgson	Cross & James
Ernie McVay	Eign Enterprises
Cllr Roger Phillips	Herefordshire Council
Simon Pullen	Maylords
Lewis Rogers	Young & Co
Cllr Alan Williams	Hereford City Council
Gary Woodman	Hereford Chamber of Commerce

Management Committee

Name	Representing
Cllr David Fleet	Hereford City Council
Bobbie Heavens (Chair)	Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire
Penny Jones	Herefordshire Council
Lewis Rogers	Young & Co
Gary Woodman (Vice-Chair)	Hereford Chamber of Commerce

Appendix 5

Members of the Street Trading Panel

Name	Post
Mike Pigrem (Chairperson)	Trading Standards Manager
Jeff Owen	Markets & Fairs and Street Trading Manager
Kevin Price	Licensing Officer, Street Trading
Dave Osborne	Senior Technical Engineer, Highways
Fred Spriggs/Jane Acaster	Licensing Officer, Street Trading
Geoff Hardy	Principal Lawyer
Penny Jones	Community and Economic Regeneration Manager
Alan Ronald	Economic Regeneration Officer
Paul Nicholas	Environmental Health Manager – Commercial
Cynthia Spaul	Hereford City Manager (Non-Voting)

Appendix 6 New Unitary Benchmarking Group members

Bath and North East Somerset Council
Darlington Borough Council
East Riding of Yorkshire Council
County of Herefordshire District Council
County of Isle of Wight Council
North Lincolnshire Council
North Somerset Council
South Gloucestershire Council
Telford and Wrekin Council
West Berkshire Council