

RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW OF HEREFORD CITY PARTNERSHIP

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

CABINET

6TH SEPTEMBER, 2007

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To respond to the "Review of the Hereford City Partnership" outlining acceptance or otherwise of the recommendations made.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

THAT the recommendations and Action Plan as set out in the report be endorsed.

Reasons

The Community Services Scrutiny presented a report on the "Review of the Hereford City Partnership" on the 26th March to consider the recommendations. 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. A copy of the Review is attached for Members attention.

The desired outcomes for the scrutiny review were:

- 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 at a method for performance management, with specific targets, milestones and outcomes

Out of the desired outcomes of the review the method of performance management has not

been addressed and recommendation (vi) aims to address this point.

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.

In reference to the financial arrangements Herefordshire Council contributes a cash contribution of £3,000 plus in kind contribution through office accommodation, IT support, post costs and telephone. In terms of clarifying the financial position, at local government re-organisation Herefordshire Council funded the post of City Centre Manager as a joint post covering Hereford and Ross. Herefordshire Council led the establishment of the City Partnership as a way of ensuring that all key stakeholders were involved in the management of the City Centre. With the establishment of the City Council the funding from the precept which had previously been raised by Herefordshire Council passed to the City Council who are now the major public sector funder. The overall amount of public sector funding does however remain the same. When the post of Hereford City Manager was created it was expected that time was allocated to raising external funding/income to contribute to salaries and activities. Other funding currently comes from Boots, Chadds, Prudential Property Services Ltd. a total of £6,700, and potentially £2,200 via the Chamber of Commerce to be confirmed. Fairs & Street Trading Section, also currently provides support to the Hereford City Partnership through free assistance in helping to organise a number of different promotions and events throughout the year, the waiving of certain consent fees and the allocation of specific income generated by nominated festive street traders. This amounts to circa £10k p.a.

Also, for a point of clarity, Hereford City Partnership is an independent organisation to the Council, and as such the Hereford City Manager is line managed by the Chairperson of HCP Board. Market Town Support Officers are partially funded by Advantage West Midlands as part of the Markets Towns Initiative Programme. Hereford City is not eligible for this funding, but can apply for Rural Regeneration Zone funding if the project or programme is deemed appropriate.

Paragraphs 8.7 to 8.11 of the report rightly point out that street trading consents can only be issued by the local authority. Street trading consent fees are set through agreed formulae. This income contributes to the running of the administrative and enforcement functions of a street trading section for the whole of the county. HCP are already part of an established consultative process on assessing both existing and future street trading consent and highways amenities licence applications.

The council established the Hereford City Partnership understanding that Hereford as our key retail and business centre needed to be competitive with other areas outside the county. It is through collaboration and a positive approach by the City Partnership and its partners, including the council, that the City can succeed in creating a competitive edge, now and in the future with the development of the Edgar Street Grid.

Considerations

1. This report considers each recommendation as highlighted below:

- (a) **Recommendation 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.

Response – Cabinet lead is Councillor Blackshaw, with responsibility for Economic and Community services. That the adopted vision linked to the City of Living Crafts is the basis for development in the City and linked to specific objectives relating to Hereford in the Economic Development Strategy.

2. (b) **Recommendation 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 (Economic Development and Community Services) is accepted then that Portfolio Holder should assume this appointment.

Response – that Councillor A Blackshaw is the Council representative.

3. (c) **Recommendation 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.

Response – reporting to cabinet member is through attendance at the City Partnership Board meetings.

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

Response – The City Manager has been relocated to Hereford Town Hall. However, relocation away from Plough Lane means the City Manager loses some of the beneficial contacts with Council Officers.

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

Response – As the City Partnership is the employing body, this recommendation should be passed to them for consideration.

6. (g) **Recommendation 17.6** The Hereford City Manager be provided with administrative support.

Response – This recommendation should be passed to the City Partnership to confirm the level of administrative support that is required.

7. (h) **Recommendation 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.

Response – recommendation passed to the City Partnership.

8. (i) **Recommendation 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.

Response – the Council will consider proposals from the City Partnership for additional funds if a contribution from the Council is required. This will be considered as part of the budget process for 2008/09.

9. (j) **Recommendation 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.

Response – See response to recommendation (i) above.

10. (k) **Recommendation 17.10** That Hereford City Council investigates the possibility of increased support for HCP through the level of precept levied in the city.

Response – That the City Partnership negotiates this point with the Hereford City Council.

11. (l) **Recommendation 17.11** That Hereford City Partnership commences regular budgeting procedures and produce income and expenditure accounts.

Response – The principle of regular budget and performance monitoring is endorsed and should be referred to the City Partnership for consideration.

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

Response – Accepted in principle and should be referred to the City Partnership to evaluate the merits.

13. (n) **Recommendation 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.

Response – that this recommendation is accepted.

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

Response – this recommendation is not necessary and current arrangements continue with reporting to the Social and Economic Regeneration Manager who is involved in the management of the other programmes in market towns and economic development schemes.

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

Response – this recommendation is not accepted with decision on operational management of street trading made at an officer level. That policy framework is decided by the Cabinet Member for Environment & Strategic Housing holding the relevant portfolio.

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

Response – that this recommendation is passed to the City Partnership as one

way of providing the ongoing funding needed to pay for additional resource requirements identified.

Risk Management

Not identified

Alternative Options

Recommendations reviewed.

Consultees

Trading Standards Manager

Background Papers

Scrutiny Review of Hereford City Partnership of 26th March