

APPENDIX 2

ACTION	RESPONSE
<p>a. Re-focus and clarify the purpose, outcomes and actions of Herefordshire Connects. This should include formally considering in a short paper what other options are still open to the Council including the costs, benefits and risks of each option. It should also set out how the programme fits with the new joint working arrangements with the PCT.</p>	<p>The senior management teams from the Council and the PCT now meet on a regular basis. An away day is being arranged on 3rd March 2008 to consider, amongst other things, the future direction for Herefordshire Connects and how the report outlined by the Audit Commission will be produced. This will present an opportunity to outline the benefits of the programme to date.</p>
<p>b. Set out a clear vision of what are the scope, timing and benefits of the new joint working arrangements with the PCT.</p>	<p>The Herefordshire Public Services Steering Group continues to meet and is in the process of reviewing its remit and how the joint arrangements will be managed for the future.</p>
<p>c. Ensure that the necessary changes to the waste management contract are resolved promptly.</p>	<p>The joint PFI on waste disposal has been in standstill for many years following the failure to secure planning consent for an energy from waste facility in Kidderminster. Since that time technologies available have become far more advanced. As a consequence there are now credible proposals to build a waste processing plant at Hartlebury (with all necessary planning consents secured) and a strong political desire to see an energy from waste plant built in Herefordshire. The contractor, Mercia Waste, is bringing forward proposals on technology options and potential sites for formal consideration by Herefordshire and Worcestershire in the next few months. Consideration of these options will need to be in the context of the joint waste disposal strategy which is currently under review.</p>

<p>d. Implement successfully the recommendations from the Section 151 and Crookall reports and in so doing further develop the ethical governance and anti-fraud culture within the Council.</p>	<p>See management response to Use of Resources report 2008 – improvement opportunities 4.4, 4.5 and 4.6 refer.</p>
<p>e. Revise the corporate performance management framework to include a systematic review of value for money (VFM) which will measure and manage improvement in value for money in a consistent way across the Council. This will involve benchmarking costs and performance in a consistent way and setting targets for efficiency and VFM.</p>	<p>See management response to Use of Resources report 2008 – improvement opportunities 5.3 and 5.4 refer.</p>
<p>f. Monitor the development of corporate approaches to procurement.</p>	<p>Much progress has been made in developing the strategic procurement function with the result that significant contributions to the corporate financial position are being made and incorporated into the financial strategy. This has been achieved with a very limited resource base (one officer). In response to the Section 151 Officer and Crookall recommendations on strengthening the Council’s strategic procurement function, the Head of Financial Services is currently working with procurement specialists at the West Midlands Centre for Excellence to bring forward proposals on an appropriate staffing arrangement. This will potentially involve a transfer of staff in procurement related roles to the strategic team within the Resources Directorate. A review of the Council’s procurement strategy is also underway and is included as an action in the Financial Services service plan for 2008 – 2011. The Contract Procedure Rules have been revised and are awaiting Council approval on 7th March 2008.</p>

<p>g. Ensure that actions recommended by our recent culture inspection report are delivered.</p>	<p>Progress in key projects is as follows:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> a. The Museum Resource and Learning Centre was completed in November 2007. b. Discussions continue on adapting The Masters House, Ledbury as a multi-use centre for cultural and other services. c. Five new multi use game areas complete by April 2008 for Hereford City. d. A pilot cultural passport scheme was launched in January 2008 to increase use of libraries and heritage centres, funded by the LAA single pot funding. e. A set of outcome measures to be included in the Household Survey in response to recommendations in the CPA Cultural Services Assessment has been developed. f. The Economic and Community Services Division, in which Cultural Services sits, has produced a Medium Term Financial and Asset Management Plan that addresses the management of resources, that also takes a long view (to 2017) on the use of assets. g. Many of the performance data for cultural services is annual so not all figures on year on year progress are available but many show an improvement.
<p>h. Clarify the arrangement for improvement planning and increase the impact of the reporting.</p>	<p>See management response to Use of Resources report 2008 – improvement opportunity 5.3 refers.</p>