

HEREFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP GOVERNANCE REVIEW

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY & FINANCE

CABINET

22 JANUARY 2009

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

For Cabinet to note the outcome of the Herefordshire Partnership Governance Review and the impact this new structure will have on performance management and achievement of outcomes for the local community.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendations

THAT: the outcome of the review and the new governance structure be noted.

Reasons

To ensure that Cabinet is central to the ongoing development of the Herefordshire Partnership and its governance structures and to ensure that Member involvement and links through to the community are maximised.

Considerations

- 1 In 2007 the Board and Chief Executives' Group of the Herefordshire Partnership initiated a review of the Governance arrangements with a view to improving accountability and performance management arrangements and ensure the structure was responsive to the requirements of central government and the needs of the local community.
- 2 The 2006 Government White Paper, Strong and Prosperous Communities, and the subsequent 2007 Local Government Involvement in Public Health Act brought in new and challenging requirements for Local Strategic Partnerships; requirements which the existing structure was not robust and responsive enough to respond to.
- 3 The review was conducted by Jennifer Watkins (firstly in her role as Partnership Manager and latterly as an external consultant) and Oliver Goode from the Regional Improvement and Efficiency Partnership (RIEP).
- 4 Following the review, the Herefordshire Partnership Board has agreed that the new structure will consist of a Board and a Management Group. The current plethora of partnerships will be focused into six Policy and Delivery Groups, which will be

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Chris Bucknell, Acting Partnership Manager on (01432) 261789

represented on both the Board and the Management Group in order to give a clear focus on delivery of outcomes. These groups will (broadly) follow the themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy and Local Area Agreement and be responsible for commissioning, delivering and monitoring activity funded through a range of funding streams, including the Area Based Grant.

- 5 The Terms of Reference and membership of the Board have been refreshed. The Board will be chaired by the Leader of the Council, supported by two Vice Chairs, one from the Third (voluntary and community) Sector and one from the Private Sector. Government Office and AWM will be co-opted members of the Board.
- 6 Draft Terms of Reference for all the governance groups are attached as Appendices 1-3. These are currently being refined to further strengthen accountability, decision making and reporting routes between groups. Membership will be reviewed periodically to ensure comprehensive coverage and balance between organisations and sectors
- 7 There are currently no mechanisms in place for engaging the community in scrutiny of the effectiveness of the Herefordshire Partnership. Clearly it will be important to develop this and give consideration as to how this can be achieved, possibly through the Council's scrutiny process.
- 8 The first meeting of the new Board was held on 8th January 2009 with a specific focus on the current economic crisis and the Partnership's response to this. The first regular meeting of the Board will be held on 11th February 2009.

Financial Implications

- 9 The six outcome groups will have responsibility for commissioning and delivering activity through the Area Based Grant, as well as through other mainstream funding streams. The new structure will provide an arena for Policy and Delivery groups to work together to gain efficiencies and add value through joint commissioning and multi agency delivery. Policy and Delivery Groups will have a requirement to include duty to co-operate organisations, as well as other stakeholders, giving access to a wider range of funding streams has hitherto been the case.

Risk Management

There is a risk of disengagement from organisations that are not included in the new structure. This has been mitigated by the requirement on Policy and Delivery Groups to review their membership to ensure wide and inclusive representation.

Partnership processes and delivery of LAA outcomes are some of the most visible manifestations of the requirements of Comprehensive Area Assessment and there is a risk that the new Partnership structure does deliver outcomes quickly enough to impact on the outcome of the assessment. This risk will be minimised by a structured implementation plan and early review which will embed the new structure quickly and effectively.

Legal Implications

All the requirements outlined in the 2006 Strong and Prosperous Communities White Paper, the Local Government Involvement in Public Health Act 2007 and the Local Area Agreement Statutory Guidance have been taken into account during the governance review.

All areas related to the distribution of Area Based Grant have been carried out in conjunction with the Resources Directorate and Legal Services. There are no additional legal

implications to the proposals outlined above.

Alternative Options

A number of alternative options were considered while the review was being carried out. It is felt by the existing Herefordshire Partnership Board and Chief Executives Group that there are no alternative options which would ensure a responsive and accountable framework within which to successfully deliver outcomes for the community.

Consultees

Herefordshire Partnership Board
Herefordshire Partnership Chief Executives Group
Joint Management Team
Herefordshire Partnership Support Team
Representatives from Thematic Partnerships

Appendices

- Appendix 1** Terms of Reference and Membership of the Board
- Appendix 2** Terms of Reference and Membership of the Management Group
- Appendix 3** Terms of Reference and Membership of the Outcome Groups

Background Papers

None identified.