

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL

CABINET
THURSDAY 16TH FEBRUARY 2006

Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership
Town Centre Management Business Plan

OPEN	
COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME:	Shared Prosperity
CORPORATE PLAN THEME:	Promoting Economic Prosperity
KEY PRIORITY:	Town Centres
CABINET MEMBER:	Cllr. James Dudley
RESPONSIBLE OFFICER:	Chief Executive
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APPENDICES:	Appendix A: KTCP Business Plan

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

1.1 To advise members of Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership's (KTCP) proposals to establish and fund a Town Centre Manager.

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE that:

2.1 The Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership's Business Plan for establishing and funding a Town Centre Manager be endorsed and supported.

2.2 The associated District Council Officer support that will be required to deliver the Plan be noted.

3. BACKGROUND

3.1 At its meeting on 20th April 2005 the Council approved the Kidderminster Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy.

3.2 Two of Strategy's aims are a) to appoint a Town Centre Manager and b) work up proposals to create a Business Improvement District.

4. **KEY ISSUES**

- 4.1 Members are advised that the Association of Town Centre Management (ATCM) define Town Centre Management as “a co-ordinated pro-active initiative designed to ensure that town centres are desirable and attractive places.”
- 4.2 The majority of such initiatives bring together a wide range of key interest groups, which result in a “partnership” being formed between the public and private sector.
- 4.3 Through these partnerships and with the effective support and involvement of key working and project groups, town centre management has the potential to:
- a) create environments that are clean and safe by investing in maintenance and security
 - b) improve transport, parking, orientation and accessibility
 - c) add vitality, through professional marketing and events programmes
 - d) stimulate growth by inward investment and development and through work with existing businesses
 - e) develop branding that stresses distinctiveness and changes perceptions
 - f) celebrate local heritage through tourism and destination management
 - g) expand opportunities through developing training and employment programmes
 - h) increase choice and diversity by promoting and integrating new amenities and developing the night-time economy
 - i) enhance quality through public art and major infrastructure improvements to the public realm
 - j) ensure that the town centre is welcoming to all and an experience worth having
- 4.4 The KTCP is one such “partnership”, set up to act in the early 1990’s. Since being formed, the KTCP has supported a number of projects, utilising funding from a variety of sources including the District Council (on average approximately £5,000 per annum). Such projects have included: town centre events (eg Farmers,

Craft and Continental Markets) town centre Christmas lights, contributing towards new and upgraded street furniture, the town centre CCTV scheme, marketing and promotions and inputting into redevelopment proposals.

- 4.5 A key element in KTCP's ability to deliver an improved and more co-ordinated approach to town centre management, is the need to have a dedicated town centre manager.
- 4.6 It is envisaged that a town centre manager would be employed by a restructured KTCP and have the capacity, freedom and flexibility to be a dedicated resource for the town centre. By acting as a co-ordinator and catalyst and encouraging co-operation between key stakeholders, users and service providers the post holder would be able to maintain and improve the quality and viability of the town centre for all users.
- 4.7 It is anticipated that the work of the Town Centre Manager would include the following:-
 - a) Prepare, deliver and monitor a new integrated Town Centre Strategy, incorporating the Wyre Forest District Council Local Development Framework – "Area Action Plan for Kidderminster Central Area". Such strategy to be developed in partnership with Wyre Forest District Council, other key stakeholders and local businesses to attract investment and trade to the town centre.
 - b) Monitor and report on progress of the agreed Key Performance Indicators set out within the Plan.
 - c) Co ordinate existing activity, resources and interests of all stake holders to enhance the attractiveness and security of the town centre.
 - d) Improve communication between providers and users of town centre services.
 - e) Organise events and marketing initiatives to increase the footfall and retail sales in the town centre.
 - f) Assist and liaise with potential investors and developers.
 - g) Secure additional private and public sector resources.
 - h) Liaise with District and County Council service managers on areas where service standards can be enhanced for the benefit of the town centre.

- i) Liaise with appropriate agencies to ensure retailers and other commercial interests received quality business advice and support.
- j) Develop proposals for a Business Improvement District in partnership with Wyre Forest District Council.
- k) Develop a comprehensive and maintained town centre WEB site.
- l) Encourage the town to be compliant with Access requirements.
- m) Develop "Evening economy" initiatives.

4.8 In light of the Councils approved Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy and the need to develop the KTCP into a vibrant partnership, the Partnership has resolved have a commercially and financially viable town centre management structure in place by April 2007.

4.9 In this regard, the KTCP has adopted a Business Plan for funding a Town Centre Manager (Appendix A). It has also agreed to look at how it might restructure to, a) employ a Town Centre Manager and b) work up and develop proposals to establish a Business Improvement District.

5. THE PROPOSAL

5.1 The KTCP aim is to have a fully funded Town Centre Manager in post with effect from April 2007.

5.2 Given the integral role of the District Council to the work of KTCP, some dedicated Officer time will be required to progress the development of the Business Plan. A key element is to seek and secure funding from both private and public sources, to fund the initial appointment of Town Centre Manager. In addition, funding will be required to develop a working budget, until the end of 2008/09, when, it is envisaged, more sustainable sources of funding investment will have been established.

5.3 One such source of funding could be through the development of a "Business Improvement District".

5.4 Members are advised that the Association of Town Centre Management has worked with Government for some years to bring about the introduction of Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) into the UK. This new funding mechanism allows for a local levy to be raised from businesses in a specific area in order to fund improvements and activities agreed by the businesses themselves.

- 5.5 The key difference from any existing funding approaches is that once a majority of businesses within an area vote in favour of a BID, all businesses in the area are committed to contribute throughout the life of the BID - a maximum of five years.
- 5.6 A Kidderminster BID would enable the Town Centre Partnership to deliver on its future Strategy and Action Plan more quickly and with more certainty.

6. THE WAY FORWARD

- 6.1 In the event of existing budgets, currently within the control of the Council's Strategy and Performance Unit, being maintained during 2007/08 and 2008/09, the potential exists for the District Council to contribute up to £15,000 per annum towards the required funding for a Town Centre Manager for Kidderminster.
- 6.2 Members are advised that consideration has been given to the potential of extending the Town Centre Manager's remit to include Stourport-on-Severn and Bewdley.
- 6.3 The possibility does exist, subject to agreement being reached on drawing up an appropriate structure as to who would be the employing organisation.
- 6.4 However, given the potential for Opportunity Bewdley to reform and continue its work as a "Development Trust" (subject to District Council support) and given the current activities and remit of Stourport Forward, it is considered that a more immediate need for a Town Centre Manager exists in Kidderminster, given the current challenges of the town and its position and status within the district and wider area.
- 6.5 It is therefore proposed to continue to work with the KTCP to progress its Business Plan. This will include seeking both capital and revenue funding streams from a range of agencies and organisations (public and private sectors) in order to create and secure a meaningful budget for a minimum of 2 years from April 2007 to March 2009.

7. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 In the initial planning stages, up to April 2007, it is envisaged that there are no financial implications for the Council.
- 7.2 Subject to existing budget commitments being maintained, it is envisaged that there should be no additional financial implications for 2007/08 and 2008/09.

8. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 In the event of external funding streams being obtained, it is possible that the Council may be requested to be the accountable body for such monies. If this is the case a separate report will be submitted to Members accordingly.
- 8.2 The principal of establishing a town centre manager has been accepted through the adoption of the Kidderminster Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy.

9. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 9.1 The main risk identified is the issue of funding the post of Town Centre Manager. The partnership funding approach that is favoured for the post and budget for the first two years of the project will ensure that the risk is minimised and that the Manager will have the opportunity to establish a sustainable source of funding through other funding streams.

10. CONCLUSION

- 10.1 A Town Centre Manager would be a focal point and provide a much needed dedicated resource to co-ordinate the many and various businesses, groups, organisations, events, issues and needs of the town centre to enable Kidderminster to adapt itself to meet the retailing, commercial and leisure challenges of businesses, shoppers and visitors.

11. CONSULTEES

- 11.1 CMT

12. Background Papers

- 12.1 Wyre Forest District Council's approved Kidderminster Economic Development and Regeneration Strategy.

SRS/DY
31st January 2006