

WYRE FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL**CABINET**
19th February 2009**Partnerships Report 2008**

OPEN	
SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY THEME	All Themes
CORPORATE PLAN AIM	All Aims
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APPENDICES	Appendix A – Six monthly Partnership Progress Reports (April to September 2008). Appendix B – Summary of partnership activity delivering Worcestershire LAA, Wyre Forest Matters LSP targets and Council priorities. These documents have been circulated electronically and a public inspection copy is available on request (see front cover for details)

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To report on the Council's involvement in strategic and operational level partnerships for 2008 and how their outcomes support delivery of the Worcestershire Local Area Agreement (LAA).

2. RECOMMENDATION

The Cabinet is asked to DECIDE that:

- 2.1 **The Council's involvement in strategic and operational level partnerships for 2008 has effectively supported the delivery of targets within the Worcestershire LAA.**
- 2.2 **The Council develops a Community Engagement Framework to further support its public participation role in partnership working and to help with its preparation for the Comprehensive Area Assessment.**
- 2.3 **The Council's financial contribution to partnerships be kept under review and should in the first instance be directed to those activities which support delivery of the Council's annual priorities.**

3. **BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Council is committed to working with partners and recognises the value of effective partnerships in the delivery of its strategic priorities and contributing to the well-being of our local communities.
- 3.2 The trend for partnerships is set to continue and to grow, with impetus coming from the Comprehensive Area Assessment and the Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007. Both focus on Local Strategic Partnerships, Local Area Agreements, Shared Services, community engagement, efficiencies and value for money, of which partnerships have a key role.
- 3.3 Flexibility, innovation and many other benefits allow partnerships to address issues that individual organisations could not tackle alone. To guide and support the Council with its involvement in partnerships and to capture their effectiveness in the delivery of outcomes, the Council has adopted a Partnerships Framework, which requires officers to submit six monthly progress reports on the following:
- a) Key outputs of the partnership
 - b) Council's role in key outputs and financial contribution
 - c) Partnership's workplan for the next 6 months
 - d) Public participation in the partnership
 - e) Participation in Wyre Forest Matters LSP Forum
 - f) Contribution to delivery of targets in the Worcestershire LAA 2008, Community Strategy 'Making a real difference' 2008-2014 and the Council's Corporate Plan Aims and Priorities

4. **PROGRESS OF PARTNERSHIP INVOLVEMENT**

- 4.1 A full and comprehensive progress report on the Council's participation in all partnerships for the period of 1st April to 30th September 2008 is set out in **Appendix A**. Headline points to note for the stated period include:
- (a) The Council was actively involved in 50 partnerships operating at Sub District/District, North Worcestershire, Worcestershire and Regional levels;
 - (b) Table 1 shows that Council participation in partnerships continues to be rationalised due to a more effective joined up approach through the work of the Wyre Forest Matters LSP;

Table 1

WFDC involvement in partnerships	2004	2005	2007	2008
Sub District / District	36	36	33	25
North Worcestershire		3	3	1
Worcestershire	27	26	24	22
Regional	4	2	3	2
Total number of Partnerships	67	67	63	50

- (c) From divisional budgets/service options 2008/09 the Council financially contributed a total of £95,936 across 13 of the 50 partnerships for the stated six month period. The areas of work the money funded were:
- **£36,331 – Regeneration / Town Centres** (*Funding between Bewdley Town Centre Management Forum, Kidderminster Town Centre Partnership and Stourport-on-Severn Town Centre Forum*) [Council Priority 2008/11]
 - **£30,000 – Regeneration and Quality of Life** (*Co-ordinator post for Horsefair/ Broadwaters and Greenhill Partnership*)
 - **£10,000 – Tourism** (*Funding for Destination Worcestershire*)
 - **£6,466 – Sport / physical activity** (*Funding for Herefordshire and Worcestershire County Sports Partnership*)
 - **£6,000 – Quality of Life Issues** (*Co-ordinator post for Wyre Forest Matters LSP and funding to pump prime projects*)
 - **£2,250 – Arts** (*Funding for Worcestershire Sub Regional Arts Partnership*)
 - **£1,693 – Community Safety** (*Funding for Wyre Forest Community Safety Partnership*)[Statutory responsibility]
 - **£1,582 – Bewdley Museum** (*Funding for Friends of Bewdley Museum*)
 - **£964 – Customer Service** (*Funding for Worcestershire Hub Operational Management Group*)
 - **£500 – Health** (*Funding for Wyre Forest Healthy Ageing Group*)
 - **£150 – Cycling** (*Funding for Wyre Forest Cycle Forum*)
- (d) It should be noted that the majority of the above funding is for the full financial year of 2008/09 and not just for the stated six month period that this report refers to. From an administrative perspective it is far more efficient to provide the full funding for a project at the beginning of the financial year than to transfer monies in monthly or quarterly instalments. However, for the majority of partnerships the Council gives officer time as an 'in kind' resource rather than providing a specific financial contribution.
- (e) In addition, the Partnerships Framework does not capture financial information relating to the distribution of the Councillors' Community Leadership Fund (£42,000 for 2008/09) which in many cases supports a range of partnership projects.
- (f) The Council has been involved in a range of significant partnership outputs and outcomes which include:
- Facilitated the successful 'Better Welcome' Funding application of £25,000 for the Bewdley Development Trust
 - Assisted with the re-launch of Stourport-on-Severn Town Centre Forum
 - Taken an active part in work which will provide supported housing services and a foyer facility for young people in the district
 - Supported the development of 'No Rogue Trader Zone' in Offmore, Kidderminster
 - Played an integral role in the re-branding exercise for tourism in Worcestershire and the production of 3 key event publications
 - Supported the development of a GP exercise referral scheme with DC Leisure
 - Organised and delivered the annual Wyre Forest Showcase of Services

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- for Older People's event, which was attended by over 300 people
 - Contributed to the successful Pathfinder and Playbuilder / Youth capital applications for the Wyre Forest District
 - Instrumental in the delivery of the Worcestershire Children and Young Peoples Plan
 - Chair the Wyre Forest Affordable Warmth Steering Group and Wyre Forest Communities Activities Network
- (g) The above outputs and outcomes plus those identified in **Appendix A** have contributed significantly to the delivery of Worcestershire LAA and Wyre Forest Matters LSP targets and Council priorities. This information is summarised in **Appendix B**. The greatest contribution of partnership activity has been towards targets in the following areas:
building safer communities,
improving healthy lifestyles for adults, children and young people; and
regeneration [Council Priority 2008/11]
- (h) Through the Wyre Forest Matters LSP, it is envisaged that the Council's financial support towards achieving a range of the Local Area Agreement Reward Targets will result in funding being allocated by the Worcestershire Partnership for 2009/10 to support future quality of life projects in the Wyre Forest District.
- (i) From the reports provided there is a lack of public participation in the majority of partnerships with only 9 out of the 50 stating members of the public attend meetings. It is recognised that some of the partnerships may not be currently set up to accommodate public engagement in their meetings, however this is area that all partnerships the Council is involved in, will need to consider to ensure that legislation is met and services meet the needs of our communities.
- (j) Similarly only 12 of the partnerships stated that they are involved in the Wyre Forest Matters LSP Forum, which acts as the co-ordinating body for all district partnerships. The Forum was only launched in July 2008 which may explain why the representation is currently low. This is an area which the LSP Manager will be addressing with the relevant partnerships.

5. NEXT STEPS

- 5.1 Whilst partnership working is integral to service delivery of most Council business, we must continue to scrutinise the information captured by the Partnerships Framework and in particular the Council's role, contribution and the difference that is being made as a result of our involvement.
- 5.2 We also need to be clear of our partnership contribution against the following questions which are likely to form part of the Council's Comprehensive Area Assessment inspection:
- a) Do local priorities reflect community needs and aspirations?
 - b) Are the required outcomes and improvements being delivered?
 - c) What are the prospects for future improvement?

6. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The six monthly progress reports will now enable the Council to monitor its financial contribution to partnerships as this is the first time that financial information has effectively been captured. The effectiveness of the Council's investment will be measured when outcomes have been realised and reported in the future.

7. LEGAL AND POLICY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council has a duty to work in partnership with others in the public, private and voluntary sectors to promote social, economic and environmental well-being (Local Government Act 2000).
- 7.2 Both the Local Government White Paper 'Strong and Prosperous Communities' and Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007 further emphasise the role of local partnerships in the delivery of better high quality public services for citizens.

8. RISK MANAGEMENT

- 8.1 Through the Council's Risk Management processes, 'Partnerships' has been identified as a corporate risk. The Partnership Framework, therefore actively mitigates that risk by implementing a measured, appropriate and comprehensive control.
- 8.2 Failure to become involved in appropriate partnerships can result in loss of external funding potential, specialist knowledge or skills, or opportunities to learn from others.

9. CONCLUSION

- 9.1 The benefits of partnership working in assisting the Council to achieve its strategic priorities are recognised, and by receiving regular six monthly progress updates in line with the Council's Partnerships Framework will enable all partnership participation including resource investment to be kept under review.

10. CONSULTEES

- Leader of the Council
- Corporate Management Team

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Comprehensive Performance Assessment Inspection Report – December 2004
- Developing a Partnerships Framework – Report to Cabinet on 22nd December 2005
- Governing Partnerships – Bridging the Accountability Gap – Audit Commission – October 2005
- Internal Audit Review Report Recommendations – August 2006
- Local Government White Paper – Strong and Prosperous Communities – October 2006
- Local Government and Public Involvement in Health Act 2007

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- Revised Partnerships Framework – Report to Cabinet on 26th April 2007
- Revised Partnerships Framework – Report to Cabinet on 20th November 2008