

CORPORATE AND COMMUNITIES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY PANEL

7 September 2015

PLACE PARTNERSHIP - PROGRESS

Summary

1. The Cabinet Member for Transformation and Commissioning, and the Director of Commercial and Change are invited to provide an update on the development of Place Partnership Ltd (a Joint Property Vehicle).

Background

2. The Panel has received regular updates on the development of the Joint Property Vehicle since the Better Use of Property FutureFit programme was proposed in 2011/12. The aim was to significantly reduce the number of Council owned and leasehold buildings, using building and land for development sites to encourage economic growth. It was envisaged that a Joint Property Vehicle (JPV) would manage the property estates of partner organisations, with savings being made in the rationalisation of property and staff structures. Other savings would come from having a single contractor framework.

3. The Panel discussed progress on the Joint Property Vehicle in November 2013 and in January 2014 as part of the budget discussions. Cabinet had agreed an Outline Business Case on 6 March 2015 and concluded that there were significant financial benefits to be achieved.

4. The Panel discussed progress in detail on 2 July 2014 and received a brief update on 5 November 2014 as part of budget discussions. On [18 December 2014](#) [Cabinet](#) approved the Full Business Case for a Joint Property Vehicle. For the County Council, it was estimated that potential savings of circa £11.35m could be realised over a 10 year period. The Panel received a brief update as part of the discussion on performance in January 2015.

5. In March 2015, 'Place Partnership Ltd' was the name selected for the Joint Property Vehicle by representatives of the six founding partner organisations: Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service, Redditch Borough Council, Warwickshire Police, West Mercia Police, Worcester City Council and Worcestershire County Council. All have unanimously agreed to proceed with Place Partnership. The combined estate portfolio, includes 1,323 assets across the four counties.

6. During the last update on the Place Partnership Ltd on 23 June 2015 (part of a wider discussion on progress and future plans), members were advised that: staff consultation had been completed; a Managing Director had been recruited and had started on 22 June; and a Board of Directors was in place, chaired by Bruce Mann, Executive Director, Government Property Unit at the Cabinet Office. The next stage

was finalising accommodation, contracts and management team recruitment. The transfer of staff and launch was planned to take place in September 2015.

Purpose of the meeting

7. The Panel is asked to consider and comment on the development of the Place Partnership. As part of the discussion, the Panel may wish to consider:

- What are the Council's governance arrangements for the new legal entity, Place Partnership Ltd?
- How will the Council ensure control over its assets and their future use to support the Council's objectives?
- How will the Council effectively manage the services that are provided by Place Partnership Ltd?
- How does the creation of Place Partnership Ltd help drive the future economic wellbeing of the Council and the County?
- How can Local Members be involved and how can they access information on plans for assets in their Divisions?
- How many assets does the Council now own or lease (compared to previous years)?

8. The Panel is asked to determine any issues it wishes to highlight or comments it wishes to make to the Cabinet Member with Responsibility.

Contact Points

County Council Contact Points

Worcestershire County Council (01905) 763763

Worcestershire Hub (01905) 765765

Email: Worcestershirehub@worcestershire.gov.uk

Specific Contact Points for this report

Stella Wood, Overview and Scrutiny Officer, Commercial and Change Directorate Tel: 01905 82 2873

Email: scrutiny@worcestershire.gov.uk

Background Papers

In the opinion of the proper officer (in this case the Head of Legal and Democratic Services) the following are the background papers relating to the subject matter of this report:

Agenda and Minutes of

- Cabinet on 6 March and 18 December 2014
- Resources Overview and Scrutiny Panel (which became the Corporate and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Panel from May 2015) – 20 November 2013, 17 January, 2 July 2014, 22 January, 15 May and 23 June 2015

All of which are available on the Council's website at

<http://www.worcestershire.gov.uk/cms/democratic-services/minutes-and-agendas.aspx>