

HEREFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP AND THE LOCAL AREA AGREEMENT

REPORT BY HEREFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP TEAM MANAGER

HEREFORDSHIRE SCHOOLS FORUM

6 JUNE, 2007

School Affected

All

Purpose

To inform Schools Forum about the Herefordshire Community Strategy, the Herefordshire Partnership and the Local Area Agreement (LAA) and opportunities/implications for schools.

Report

1. In June 2006 the Herefordshire Community Strategy was launched. Each Local Authority must produce a Community Strategy, which should be based on issues or priorities for local services, reflecting the views of local people, businesses and organisations. The Community Strategy sets out a shared vision for the future of Herefordshire. This gives an idea of the sort of place that people would like Herefordshire to be in 2020. The Community Strategy also guides the Corporate and Business Plans of local organisations and future funding.
2. The Herefordshire Community Strategy has four themes, including a theme dedicated to Children and Young People. This theme has five outcomes which will be the focus of activity.
3. The Herefordshire Partnership is a voluntary partnership of key public, private, community and voluntary organisations. The Herefordshire Partnership acts as the Local Strategic Partnership, fulfilling the duty placed on Herefordshire Council to establish and run a Local Strategic Partnership.
4. The Herefordshire Partnership is the mechanism by which local organisations and sectors meet and work together to achieve the Herefordshire Community Strategy. The structure consists of a Board which leads policy development across the County; a Chief Executives Group which turns the policy into action and ensures input from local organisations/sectors; and, a Performance Management Group which monitors performance against key performance indicators, and recommends actions.
5. The Herefordshire Partnership has a dedicated website (www.herefordshirepartnership.com) where the Community Strategy and other interesting documents can be downloaded. It also contains more information on the Partnership and the groups mentioned above. A regular newsletter is also produced.
6. The Local Area Agreement (LAA) is a formal agreement between National Government and Local Authorities (acting on behalf of other local organisations and sectors). A LAA identifies priorities for action (taken from the Community Strategy)

and performance indicators to monitor progress, and it is the main way in which the Herefordshire Community Strategy will be delivered. All local organisations and sectors work together and have joint responsibility for achieving the LAA. The Herefordshire Partnership holds the responsibility of developing, monitoring and reporting progress on the LAA. The Herefordshire Partnership reports progress to Government Office West Midlands every six months, who in turn report directly to Government Departments.

7. The Local Government White Paper published in November 2006 places a key role on LAAs in the future, and local organisations will be judged on achieving the LAA through a Comprehensive Area Assessment.
8. Part of an LAA is the opportunity to “Pool” local area based funding streams that come to Herefordshire individually. This means that reporting and monitoring will be reduced and ring-fencing of the individual funding streams will be taken away. Herefordshire will receive the funding in one block with minimal reporting, rather than in individual “pots”. This gives more freedom and flexibility to the funding streams and the opportunity to use the funding more effectively and efficiently.
9. A number of funding streams are being pooled this financial year, including:
 1. Children’s Services Grant
 2. Secondary – Central Coordination
 3. Secondary – Behaviour and Attendance
 4. School Travel Advisors
 5. Schools Development Grant
 6. Primary Strategy Central Coordination
 7. Children’s Fund
 8. Extended Schools
 9. Education Health Partnerships
10. It is expected that more area based funding streams will be pooled each year. The pooled funding must support the outcomes in the Herefordshire Community Strategy and LAA.
11. For those funding streams pooled, there is now a requirement to report spend and progress to the Herefordshire Partnership. The Herefordshire Partnership has the responsibility for taking financial decisions on these funding streams and for monitoring progress overall. The Partnership must abide by standard accounting procedures and practices, and the single pot will be audited annually.
12. The Herefordshire Partnership Officers are keen to work with the Schools Forum on planning for future years, priorities for the funding and how these will support the LAA and outcomes in the Herefordshire Community Strategy. It is hoped that a method of working together in the future can be debated and agreed.

RECOMMENDATION

That a method for the Forum to work together with Herefordshire Partnership be developed.