

VOLUNTARY & COMMUNITY SECTOR SUPPORT STRATEGY

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: COMMUNITY SERVICES

CABINET

17 NOVEMBER, 2005

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To receive a progress report on the development of a Voluntary & Community Sector (VCS) Support Strategy for the Council and its relationship to the Local Area Agreement (LAA), and to approve of proposed actions for future implementation of the Strategy.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

- THAT (a) progress towards the development of a Council Strategy for Voluntary & Community Sector Support be noted**
- (b) the draft Strategic Framework be approved for consultation.**
- (c) the principle of maintaining existing funding arrangements to Age Concern, Community First, Community Voluntary Action Ledbury & District and Herefordshire Voluntary Action, pending final adoption of the Strategic Framework and agreement of the Infrastructure Consortium Business Plan be approved.**

Reasons

The 2004 Review of Council Support to the Community & Voluntary Sector highlighted the need for a Council Strategy for Voluntary & Community Sector Support.

Considerations

1. Consultants were appointed to work with a cross-sector project group to take this forward and the Project Report attached at Appendix A outlines the process adopted.
2. A draft Strategic Framework and Action Plan have now been produced. A summary of the Strategic Framework is attached at Appendix B. Cabinet should be aware that, following consultation with the VCS, it is proposed not to use the terminology of a 'Support Strategy' which was felt to be paternalistic, but rather that of a 'strategic framework defining the role of Herefordshire Council'.

3. The draft framework identifies four areas within which the Council has a role. The first two, relating to the end user, are supporting community activity and opening up opportunities for the VCS to deliver services. The remaining two, those being investment in support and development services for the VCS and building a strong relationship with the VCS including the development of their representational role, relate to infrastructure support organisations and underpin the first two areas.
4. The development of this framework is particularly timely given the key role the VCS has to play in the planning and delivery of the LAA, and recent discussions with GOWM regarding potential resources to facilitate VCS delivery of this role.
5. It is proposed that the draft Strategic Framework is now issued for consultation. To be compliant with the principles of the national COMPACT, the consultation period should be a minimum of twelve weeks. Allowing for this, and taking into consideration the ongoing development of an Infrastructure Consortium Business Plan, it is proposed that existing funding arrangements with Infrastructure Organisations (those being Age Concern, Community First, Community Voluntary Action, Ledbury & District, and Herefordshire Voluntary Action) be maintained pending final adoption of the Strategic Framework, and agreement of an Infrastructure Consortium Business Plan.

Alternative Options

No alternative options have been identified.

Risk Management

Failure to progress the implementation of a Voluntary & Community Sector Support Strategy may result in damage to the credibility of the Council and hinder development of an open and effective relationship between the Council and the Voluntary & Community Sector.

Consultees

A list of those involved in the development of the draft Strategic Framework is included within Appendix A. External consultation will form the next step.

Appendices

Appendix A – Project Report

Appendix B – Summary of Draft Strategic Framework

Background Papers

Review of Herefordshire Council Support to the Community & Voluntary Sector – November 2004

Draft Strategic Framework “A Voluntary and Community Sector Fit for Purpose – Defining the Role of Herefordshire Council”