

Chief Executive's Office

Chief Executive: N.M. Pringle

Your Ref:

Our Ref: NMP/CD

Please ask for: Mr. N.M. Pringle

Direct Line/Extension: (01432) 260044

Fax: (01432) 340189

E-mail: npringle@herefordshire.gov.uk

**To: All Members of Cabinet:
R.J. Phillips (Leader)
Mrs. L.O. Barnett
P.J. Edwards
Mrs. J.P. French
J.C. Mayson
D.W. Rule MBE (Deputy Leader)
R.V. Stockton
D.B. Wilcox
R.M. Wilson**

18th April, 2006

Dear Councillor,

**MEETING OF CABINET
THURSDAY, 20TH APRIL, 2006 AT 2.00 P.M.
THE COUNCIL CHAMBER, BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD**

AGENDA (05/24S)

**HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL - NOTICE UNDER REGULATION 15 OF THE LOCAL
AUTHORITIES (EXECUTIVE ARRANGEMENTS((ACCESS TO INFORMATION) REGULATIONS
2000 (AS AMENDED)**

Notice is hereby given that the following reports contains key decisions. When the decisions have been made, the Chairman of the relevant Scrutiny Committee(s) will be sent a copy of the decision notices and given the opportunity to call-in the decisions.

| Item No | Title | Portfolio Responsibility | Scrutiny Committee | Included in the Forward Plan Yes/No |
|----------------|---|---------------------------------|--------------------------------|--|
| 3 | Comprehensive Performance Assessment - Improvement Plan | Corporate Strategy and Finance | Strategic Monitoring Committee | Yes |
| 4 | Herefordshire Connects Update | Corporate Strategy and Finance | Strategic Monitoring Committee | Yes (as ICT Strategy and Corporate Strategy) |



Putting People First Providing for our Communities Preserving our Heritage Promoting the County Protecting our Future

County of Herefordshire District Council, PO Box 239, HEREFORD, HR1 1ZU

Main Switchboard (01432) 260000 - www.herefordshire.gov.uk

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest by members in respect of items on this agenda.

3. COMPREHENSIVE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - IMPROVEMENT PLAN

To approve the overall Council Improvement Plan. *(Pages 1 - 48)*

4. HEREFORDSHIRE CONNECTS UPDATE

To note the completion of Phase 1 of the Corporate Strategy Review and to endorse the arrangements for proceeding to the next stage. *(Pages 49 - 62)*

5. DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

To note progress in developing the Disability Equality Scheme for 2006/09. *(Pages 63 - 68)*

6. PROPOSED USE OF FORMER DENCO CAR PARK AT HOLMER ROAD, HEREFORD

To consider entering into a lease with Hereford City Council for the site for the purpose of the development of a skateboard park. *(Pages 69 - 78)*

7. WESLEYAN CHAPEL, KINGTON

To consider the disposal of the Wesleyan Chapel on the open market. *(Pages 79 - 80)*

8. INTEGRATED COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT SERVICE

To receive an update on performance and development plans related to the community equipment service. *(Pages 81 - 86)*

9. HOMELESSNESS UPDATE

To receive an update on progress to date with homelessness prevention in Herefordshire and to provide an overview of the shape of the homelessness and housing advice services provided by Herefordshire Council since transfer from Herefordshire Housing Limited on 1st April, 2006. *(Pages 87 - 88)*

Yours sincerely,



**N.M. PRINGLE
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

Copies to:

Chairman of the Council
Chairman of Strategic Monitoring Committee
Vice-Chairman of Strategic Monitoring Committee
Chairmen of Scrutiny Committees
Group Leaders
Directors
Head of Legal and Democratic Services

The Public's Rights to Information and Attendance at Meetings

YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:-

- Attend all Council, Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least five clear days before the date of the meeting.
- Inspect minutes of the Council and all Committees and Sub-Committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public Register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of the Cabinet, of all Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have a reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title.
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50, for postage).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.

Please Note:

Agenda and individual reports can be made available in large print or on tape. Please contact the officer named below in advance of the meeting who will be pleased to deal with your request.

The Council Chamber where the meeting will be held is accessible for visitors in wheelchairs, for whom toilets are also available.

A public telephone is available in the reception area.

Public Transport links

- Public transport access can be gained to Brockington via the service that runs approximately every half hour from the 'Hopper' bus station at the Tesco store in Bewell Street (next to the roundabout junction of Blueschool Street / Victoria Street / Edgar Street).
- The nearest bus stop to Brockington is located in Old Eign Hill near to its junction with Hafod Road. The return journey can be made from the same bus stop.

If you have any questions about this Agenda, how the Council works or would like more information or wish to exercise your rights to access the information described above, you may do so either by telephoning Mrs Christine Dyer on 01432 260222 or by visiting in person during office hours (8.45 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Monday - Thursday and 8.45 a.m. - 4.45 p.m. Friday) at the Council Offices, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford.



Where possible this agenda is printed on paper made from 100% Post-Consumer waste. De-inked without bleaching and free from optical brightening agents (OBA). Awarded the Nordic Swan for low emissions during production and the Blue Angel environmental label.

COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

FIRE AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire or emergency the alarm bell will ring continuously.

You should vacate the building in an orderly manner through the nearest available fire exit.

You should then proceed to Assembly Point J which is located at the southern entrance to the car park. A check will be undertaken to ensure that those recorded as present have vacated the building following which further instructions will be given.

Please do not allow any items of clothing, etc. to obstruct any of the exits.

Do not delay your vacation of the building by stopping or returning to collect coats or other personal belongings.

CORPORATE PERFORMANCE ASSESSMENT - IMPROVEMENT PLAN

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To approve the overall Council Improvement Plan at Appendix 1. The Appendix will be circulated separately.

Key Decision

This is a key decision because it is significant in terms of their effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards. It was included in the Forward Plan.

Recommendation

THAT the Improvement Plan be approved.

Reasons

Following Inspection there is a requirement to produce an Improvement Plan.

Considerations

1. Following the Corporate Assessment (CA) and Joint Area Review (JAR) which combine to form the Corporate Performance Assessment (CPA) which were conducted in the Autumn of 2005 and the subsequent report the Council is required to produce an Improvement Plan.
2. Although the JAR has its own action plan within a framework for monitoring progress on specific actions there are important linkages across to the overall Improvement Plan particularly in relation to performance management, elements of the Youth Service and other Council wide issues, for example, Communications.
3. On 30th March, 2006 a meeting was held with the Lead Inspector for the CA and the Council's Relationship Officer to discuss the draft Improvement Plan. There is no prescribed format and the Council's chosen approach was to include the recommendations from the Corporate Assessment, to link the JAR Improvement Plan and to include elements which can be termed organisational momentum. This covers areas of work which the Council has commenced and which need to be

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Jane Jones, Director of Corporate and Customer Services on (01432) 260037

followed through.

4. The Improvement Plan will not carry every detail of major pieces of work but will cross-reference to underlying projects and processes. So, for example, on accommodation the Improvement Plan carries headline targets but the Accommodation Strategy underpins the document and is the main focus for monitoring progress.
5. This approach was endorsed by the Audit Commission. However given the ambitious nature of the Plan it was agreed that there should be a “rain check” at three months and a detailed examination of progress at six months. This would link in to the Audit Commission’s intention to carry out an indepth study of the performance management arrangements in September 2006. The Plan has been updated to reflect those timeframes.
6. It has also been amended to include references to Members’ Development and Induction Programme for new Councillors.
7. The introduction sets out the monitoring arrangements for the Improvement Plan. These arrangements are being progressed.

Risk Management

None

Alternative Options

There are no Alternative Options.

Consultees

None

Appendices

Draft Improvement Plan (to follow)

Background Papers

None identified.

Herefordshire Council's Overall Performance Improvement Plan 2006

Introduction

This Plan comprises the key aspects of the Council's comprehensive programme of improvement. It provides the basis for the strategic management of performance improvement. It is underpinned by detailed action plans for the individual elements, including the Joint Area Review Performance Improvement Plan and the Adult Social Care Performance Improvement Plan. A number of these are already in place, with the others in development.

- ∞ Wider improvements than those included in this Plan continue, for instance in respect of the Youth Service, planning applications and welfare benefits.

It has been prepared with the Corporate Management Board and the Senior Management Team in the light of the 2005 Corporate Performance Assessment, the Joint Area Review of Services for Children and Young People, the Annual Audit and Inspection Letter, and the findings and recommendations of inspections generally.

It is equally rooted in the Council's own assessment of the need for continuous improvement in both customer services and greatly improved efficiency to yield high levels of savings for investment in priority services and to hold down Council Tax increases to the absolute minimum.

These considerations are at the heart of the Council's Corporate Plan 2006-09, which says:

"In a fast-changing world of increasing economic competition, social change, greater diversity and increased public expectations about the quality and flexibility of services, a successful future for Herefordshire will only be secured through an ambitious programme of continuous improvement.

"The Council is leading that programme. Developed with the enthusiastic involvement of people and organisations across the county, the new *Herefordshire Community Strategy* will set out the agreed vision for the next 15 years. Our *Local Area Agreement* with our partners and the Government will provide the core of the action plan for the next three years to turn the vision into reality.

→ "Recent major independent inspections rate highly our work with our partners and our achievements: despite spending power 8% lower than the average for other unitary authorities, our performance has improved against 52% of the national Best Value Performance Indicators, with 31% in the top quartile. But the inspectors also confirmed that our performance is not consistently high and that our pace of improvement should be faster. We agree.

"The Council is therefore determined to accelerate its rate of improvement and achieve a high standard of effectiveness and efficiency across all that it does.

"To do this it must:

- ensure that social care services for children are at least adequate in all respects, with priority accorded to the safeguarding of vulnerable children

- improve the performance and prospects of social care services for adults, including older people

- achieve a consistently high standard of planning and performance management across all aspects of the Council's work
- review and, if necessary, reconfigure political structures in line with our corporate priorities
- strengthen the scrutiny function in respect of its role in both performance enhancement and policy development
- increase the Council's capacity to deliver better services, by delivering its ICT and accommodation strategies and making significant further efficiency savings, particularly through the implementation of the *Herefordshire Connects* Service Improvement Programme"

This Overall Plan reflects these priorities. It begins with the *Herefordshire Connects* service improvement programme, which is the fundamental driver to achieve transformational benefits, with its three pillars of *Performance Management*, *Integrated Support Services* and *Integrated Customer Services*.

The second overarching element is the delivery of the new *Herefordshire Community Strategy* and the associated *Local Area Agreement*: leading a successful *Herefordshire Partnership* so that we match our unquestioned ambition with measurable improved outcomes for the people of the county.

The next elements of the Plan address directly the recommendations in the Corporate Assessment. At the heart of these is the rapid development and introduction of a comprehensive rolling programme of performance improvement, as an integral part of a business cycle that links corporate, service and financial planning and performance management.

These elements are followed by the Council's uppermost priorities for service improvement: social care for children and young people and for vulnerable adults, including the contribution of decent housing.

Most important of all is rapidly to ensure fully effective arrangements for safeguarding children, key steps towards which have already been taken or are in hand, as set out in the attached updated draft JAR Performance Improvement Plan.

9

The other elements are key cross-cutting issues that need to be followed through with renewed determination and rigour: promoting equality and diversity in all we do and seek to achieve; the development of managers and staff across the organisation to deliver sustained improvement; and ensuring truly excellent two-way communication with our customers and our staff to ensure responsive and effective services.

Performance management of this Plan

This Plan will be the basis for high-level performance monitoring and management. Its targets, milestones and actions are an integral part of the Council's Annual Operating Plan 2006-07 and will be, for the longer term, in the Corporate Plan for 2007-10.

An Overall Performance Improvement Plan Group is being established to oversee the delivery of the Plan. It will be chaired by the Director of Corporate and Customer Services, with its members including the Head of Policy and Performance. It will report in writing fortnightly to the Chief Executive.

- ~ The routinely scheduled bi-monthly corporate performance reports to Cabinet, Corporate Management Board and Senior Management Team will include progress and issues relating to the Plan. These will be underpinned by monthly exception reports to Cabinet, Corporate Management Board and Senior Management Team.

The latest progress report will be provided to each meeting of the Strategic Monitoring Committee.

Effective performance management is underpinned by the Plan identifying the accountable Director and/or Head of Service for each target, milestone or action. This will be reflected in their personal objectives and targets for 2006-07, against which their performance will be judged.

Performance management of the detailed supporting action plans

Similarly rigorous arrangements are either in place, or being put in place, for the detailed supporting action plans. They already are, or will become, an integral part of the relevant directorate and service plans for 2006-07.

Progress against their targets, milestones and actions, highlighting exceptions, will be reported monthly in writing to the lead Cabinet member and to the Overall Performance Improvement Plan Group. The latest relevant report will be provided to each meeting of the scrutiny committees. The designated responsible Director and/or Head of Service will be required to ensure that significant issues threatening the successful achievement of the detailed plans are highlighted.

∞

Project management

This overall plan and all the supporting plans have, or will have, a designated project manager, with a proportionate approach being taken to the extent and nature of the project management required in each case.

The detailed action plan follows below. Actions that have already been completed have been shaded.

THE OVERALL PERFORMANCE IMPROVEMENT PROGRAMME

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|------------------|------------------|--|---|---|---|
| 1. Herefordshire Connects | | | | | | |
| Comprehensive programme for improved customer services and organisational improvement to deliver the Council's priorities, including £ millions efficiency savings; with a prioritised programme for implementation | | | | | | |
| 1.1 Identify the priority areas for service improvement programmes that will deliver transformational benefits | DoCCS, HoITCS | February 2006 | Achieved: Project Board approval 14/02/06. Service Improvement Programme areas: Performance Management; Integrated Support Services; Integrated Customer Services | AXON; Project Board; assigned project roles | As for people/partners; continuity of the contribution by designated staff. Appointment of a permanent lead for the overall programme. | 70% plus return on investment over 5 years Measurable improvements in outputs and outcomes for customers (to be confirmed in the course of approving the business cases and reflected in the implementation plans) |

6

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|---------------|------------|--|---|---|---|
| 1.2 Develop full business cases for each of the identified Service Improvement Programme areas, including costs and benefits (the latter to include cashable and non-cashable savings) | DoCCS, HoITCS | March 2006 | Final drafts presented to CMB on 11 th April and submitted for Cabinet on 20 th April. | AXON; Project Board; assigned project roles | As for people/partners | 70% plus return on investment over 5 years Measurable improvements in outputs and outcomes for customers (to be confirmed in the course of approving the business cases and reflected in the implementation plans) |
| 1.3 Develop the costed and timetabled implementation plans, including interdependencies and the ICT Strategy | DoCCS, HoITCS | TBC | (Dependent on outcome from CMB and Cabinet) | Project Board; assigned project roles | TBC (will include costed spend-to-save programme for ICT and other investments, such as staff training and development) | |
| 1.4 Implement the programmes | DoCCS, HoITCS | TBC | | Project Board; assigned project roles | TBC | |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|-----------------|------------|---|---|--|---|
| 1.5 Develop and gain acceptance of a transformation programme to address the Herefordshire Connects Programme and other key authority projects | DCCS, HITCS | TBC | Draft change management approach developed; draft communications strategy developed and initial communications begun; change readiness assessments completed with change champions. Change toolkit drafted to include governance such as business case and programme/project management standards and templates; presented to CMB on 11 th April and submitted for Cabinet on 20 th April. | CMB Programme Board; SMT; HoC Change Champions; Corporate Programmes | As people/partners | Measurable improvements in outputs and outcomes for customers |
| 1.6 Herefordshire Connects | Change Team/HoC | March 2006 | Revised draft prepared and | ICT; SMT | Support of ICT for electronic | Targets to be set within strategy |

11

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|----------|---------|--|---------------------|---|----------------------------|
| Connects – communications strategy | Team/HoC | | prepared and implementation started. | | for electronic communications aspects | strategy |

Reference Documents

- Herefordshire Connects Strategy
- Business Cases for each of the 3 Service Improvement Programme areas
- ICT Strategy
- Herefordshire Connects Communications Strategy

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|----------------|------------|---|---|--|--|
| 2. The Herefordshire Community Strategy (HCS) 2006 - 2020 and the associated Local Area Agreement (LAA) 2006-09 | | | | | | |
| 2.1 Conclude the LAA, incorporating the LPSA2G, so it is operational from 1 April 2006 | DoCCS, HoPP | March 2006 | Negotiations concluded successfully. Agreement with Govt. signed on 23/03/06 | Cabinet; GOWM; Herefordshire Partnership Board members and secretariat, Performance Management Group, | | Realistic stretch targets for improved services to customers |
| 2.2 Develop the action plan to implement the HCS and the LAA | DoCCS, HoPP | April 2006 | Drafting commenced; Performance Management (PM) Group of the Board established; PM framework being drafted | SMT; CMB; Cabinet; Partnership Board, members and secretariat | New team structure to be implemented | SMART targets (outcomes for customers), milestones and actions defined, and lead responsibility for each agreed. |
| 2.3 Council and other Partnership members approve the HCS | DoCCS, HoPP | May 2006 | Strategy drafted | Cabinet; Council; Partnership Board members and secretariat | New team structure to be implemented | Strategy adopted by all key partners as the basis for their plans and programmes |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|--------------------|---|--|---|---|---|
| <p>2.4 Implement sound performance management (PM) systems to deliver the HCS and LAA action plan, integrated with those of the Council and any public service trust</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - First report to the Performance Management Group and Partnership Board - First progress report provided to GOWM | <p>DoCCS, HoPP</p> | <p>June 2006 to Group, and July to Board. Reports will be prepared bi-monthly. October 2006</p> | <p>PM template for Pls drafted using the Council's new model</p> | <p>Partnership Board and secretariat; Policy and Performance; ICT</p> | <p>Additional Research input to analysis for PM ICT investment, alongside the development of the Council's PM systems under Herefordshire Connects</p> | <p>Successful implementation of the action plan, particularly in terms of improved outcomes for customers</p> |

14

Reference Documents

- Draft Herefordshire Community Strategy
- Herefordshire's Local Area Agreement

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|---------------------------------|-----------------|---|--|--|--|
| <p>3. Robustly and consistently implement the performance management framework to ensure that there is:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a more systematic and rigorous approach to drive continuous improvement in standards of service and - an effective mechanism to maintain an overall view of performance against high level ambitions and cross-cutting issues | | | | | | |
| <p>3.1 Develop and implement a more robust performance improvement and management framework, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - a strengthened performance improvement – driven business cycle that fully integrates corporate, service and financial planning | <p>DoR, DoCCS, HoPP</p> | <p>May 2006</p> | <p>Outline proposals drafted for discussion with lead Directors</p> | <p>CMB; SMT; Cabinet; Scrutiny</p> | <p>To strengthen the capacity of senior management, a new Head of Policy and Performance commenced employment on 1st February. Dependent on full understanding and ownership by managers at all levels; to be achieved through improved communications (see below) and</p> | <p><i>Intermediate:</i> Improved Direction of Travel rating to 'Improving well' in 2006 <i>Ultimately:</i> Improved / better VFM services in accordance with the Council's priorities</p> |

15

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|------|-----------|--|---------------------|---|----------------------------|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - simpler, clearer and more consistent corporate and service performance reports - including regular reporting of performance in respect of Council-wide issues to Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny, CMB and SMT | | June 2006 | New strategic PIs template developed; being populated with comparative data, milestones, actions etc. for in-year performance management | | <p>(see below) and training and development, including new programme for the Managers' Forum</p> <p>PM framework now included in the Council's essential systems and its operation therefore subject to annual internal audit</p> | |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|------|----------|--|---------------------|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - disciplined system to ensure that all proposed strategies, policies, programmes and procedures are proofed as regards Council-wide policies, including in the presentation of reports to SMT, CMB, Cabinet and Scrutiny - consider participation in the ODPM 'Performance Management - Real Improvement, Real Time' | | | <p>Meeting taken place with Pricewaterhouse Coopers on 4th April. Consideration being given as to candidates.</p> | | | |
| <p>3.2 Implement a corporate-directed network of skilled policy</p> | HoPP | May 2006 | <p>JD & PS drafted for the lead managers and have been through job</p> | CMB; SMT | <p>May require some additional appointments.</p> | <p><i>Intermediate:</i> Better, more effective plans and performance</p> |

17

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|------|---|--|---------------------------|--|---|
| of skilled policy, planning and performance staff in all directorates and HR, focusing central assistance where most appropriate | | | through Job Evaluation. Discussion to secure Directors' buy-in completed. Further discussion required with the Children's Services Directorate and the Adult & Community Services Directorate to determine individual requirements. HR process to be finalised by 28 th April. | | Review of existing structures, skills and development needs with the designated lead managers, when confirmed. Tailored individual and collective training and development programme for slotted in existing staff and new appointees. Rolling programme of network development | management [contributing to improved Direction of Travel rating]. <i>Ultimately:</i> Improved / better VFM services in accordance with the Council's priorities |
| 3.3 All managers' SRD objectives and targets for 2006-07 to reflect the agreed non | HoPP | May 2006. Assessment of performance - September | Initial non-negotiables to CMB in April 2006. | CMB; SMT; Managers' Forum | Effective two-way communication to embed the requirements | <i>Intermediate:</i> Better, more effective plans and performance management [contributing to |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|-----------------|--|--|-------------------------------------|---|---|
| agreed non-negotiables, including those necessary to implement the strengthened PM framework in 3.1 above | | 2006, December 2006, March 2007. | | | | improved Direction of Travel rating]. <i>Ultimately:</i> Improved / better VFM services in accordance with the Council's priorities |
| 3.4 Identify and secure appropriate performance management software as part of the Herefordshire Connects Programme. | HoPP, HoITCS | TBC as one of the priorities within the Herefordshire Connects programme | Need identified in the PM Service Improvement Programme business case under Herefordshire Connects | HITCS; Herefordshire Partnership | Software. Associated management and staff development programme to ensure effective rollout and operation. System to be capable of supporting Performance Management of the LAA and the Herefordshire Community Strategy. | <i>Intermediate:</i> Better, more effective plans and performance management [contributing to improved Direction of Travel rating]. <i>Ultimately:</i> Improved / better VFM services in accordance with the Council's priorities. |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|---------------------------|--------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|---------------------|--|--|
| 4. Review and reconfigure, if necessary, the current political structures in line with corporate priorities, particularly looking at the use of scrutiny in managing performance and in corporate policy development | | | | | | |
| 4.1 Reconvene the Constitutional Review working group | CE, Leader | Report to Annual Council in May 2006 | | | To strengthen the capacity of senior management, a new Head of Legal and Democratic Services has been appointed and commences employment on 3 rd April. | Structure that meets future business needs |
| 4.2 Review existing Scrutiny Improvement Plan and implement revised proposals | DoCCS, Chairman of SMC | April 2006 | Half day session planned for May 2006 | Committee staff | Establish the corporate-directed network of policy, planning and performance staff (see 3.2 above) | <i>Intermediate:</i> Effective scrutiny programme reflecting best practice. <i>Ultimately:</i> Demonstrable contribution of scrutiny to policy development and improved |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|-----------------|-----------|---|---------------------|---|---|
| | | | | | | performance. |
| 4.3 Develop a 2006 programme of enquiry visits for scrutiny members to best practice authorities | HoPP, HoLDS | June 2006 | | Committee staff | Members' Services Manager and Executive Officer | <i>Intermediate:</i> Effective scrutiny programme reflecting best practice. <i>Ultimately:</i> Demonstrable contribution of scrutiny to policy development and improved performance. |
| 4.4 Propose developments to Members' Development Programme to support changes | DoCCS, HoLDS | | Defined programme already exists for Members' Development Working Group | | | |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria | |
|--|--|---------|------------------|--|---|---|---|
| 5. | | | | | | | |
| a) Build on the investment the council has made and continue to enhance capacity through examining the effective use of ICT to transform services for people in Herefordshire | | | | | | | |
| 5a 1 | Develop and implement the Corporate ICT Strategy | HITCS | June 2006 | Draft strategy has been prepared and being finalised; cross-referencing with the Herefordshire Connects Programme has begun; priorities for the coming year to be agreed | CMB; ICT Services; Corporate Programmes | As for people/partners | Measurable improvements in outputs and outcomes for customers, plus efficiency savings. Deliver an ICT communications infrastructure capable of enabling the Herefordshire Connects Programme, the Customer Services Strategy and the Accommodation Strategy |
| 5a 2 | Continue the rollout of the new corporate voice and data network | HITCS | April 2007 | Data Centres are fitted out for the new network equipment; Plough Lane and Thorn office users have been migrated onto | ICT Services Siemens | Additional ICT engineers required to backfill | Measurable improvements in outputs and outcomes for customers, plus efficiency savings. Deliver an ICT Communications |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--------------------|------|---------|--|---------------------|--|---|
| | | | the new network; migration of the high schools has started - first phase due for completion by April; voicemail pilot roll-out due to conclude April 2006. | | | Communications infrastructure capable of enabling the Herefordshire Connects Programme, the Customer Services Strategy and the Accommodation Strategy |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|-------|---------------|---|--|--|---|
| 5a 3 Develop and implement a desktop standardisation | HITCS | April 2007 | | ICT Services Accommodation Board | | |
| 5a 4 Ensure the authority's e-Government programme is managed through Directorates and monitored by the Information Policy Group (IPG) | HITCS | April 2006 | Final IEG6 statement has been approved by CMB; on Cabinet agenda for 30/03/06; submission and acceptance by ODPM; IPG meeting 05/04/06 to ensure the handover to nominated officers | Directorate nominees | | Achievement of BVPI 157 target (99% e-enablement); successful implementation of the programme; evidence of benefits to the citizens of Herefordshire. |
| 5a 5 Ensure any outstanding priority outcomes are incorporated into the Herefordshire Connects Programme | HITCS | March 2006 | Requirements included in the programme; draft business cases presented to CMB on 11 th April and submitted for Cabinet on 20 th April. | AXON; Programme Board; Assigned programme roles | As for people/Partners | Measurable improvements in outputs and outcomes for customers, plus efficiency savings. |
| 5a 6 Ensure a robust succession | HITCS | February 2006 | e-Gateway continues to deliver new sites | Herefordshire Partnership; | As for people/Partners | A sustainable commercial model for |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|------|---------|--|---|--|--|
| strategy to ensure that the programmes hitherto carried out under Herefordshire in Touch are taken forward under the aegis of the Herefordshire Partnership and reflected in its governance arrangements | | 2006 | including the new community portal and the migrant workers' information site; that a sustainable commercial model for the ongoing support of the e-gateway is approved and implemented before external funding ceases; Broadband - the remaining 5 rural exchanges have been enabled; Community Access Points - a small pilot has been agreed. | Partnership; Web Services; CAPS Programme Board | people/Partners | the support of the e-gateway is approved and implemented before external funding ceases; Evidence that Broadband usage in the remaining 5 rural exchanges across the county is encouraged and happening; a regional strategy for addressing the broadband 'black spots' is in place; that broadband usage. The pilots undertaken are deemed successful and a broader rollout programme across the county is enabled. |

25

Reference Documents

- ICT Strategy
- IEG6 Statement

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|------|-----------------------------|--|---------------------|---|---|
| 5. | | | | | | |
| b) Build on the investment the council has made and continue to enhance capacity through examining the effective use of accommodation to transform services for people in Herefordshire | | | | | | |
| 5b 1 Cabinet to confirm approach to acquiring / developing the Plough Lane site | DoR | 20 th April 2006 | Paper submitted for Cabinet on 20 th April. Timetable for future actions will be confirmed when Cabinet decision is made. | | Further work in 2007 will be needed to introduce flexible /home working to increase the people to workstation ratio at Plough Lane so that the Council can pull out of additional properties. | <i>Intermediate:</i> Implementation of the Accommodation Strategy to schedule. <i>Ultimately:</i> Measurable productivity improvements and cash savings. |
| 5b 2 Appoint Facilities Manager for Plough Lane | | May 2006 TBC | | | | |
| 5b 3 Complete purchase of existing building at Plough Lane | | July 2006 TBC | | | | |
| 5b 4 Carry out adaptations to Plough Lane | | October 2006 TBC | | | | |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|------|----------------------|------------------------|---------------------|--|----------------------------------|
| 5b 5 Complete internal moves at Plough Lane | | October 2006 TBC | | | | |
| 5b 6 Complete moves from Blueschool House and Bath Street | | December 2006 TBC | | | | |
| 5b 7 Communications strategy to support Accommodation Strategy | HoC | April 2006 | Initial draft prepared | Project Board | Support of ICT for electronic communications aspects | Evaluation set in strategy (EOS) |

Reference Documents

- Accommodation Strategy
- Communications Strategy (Accommodation)

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|--------------|----------------------------|---|---|---|--|
| 6. Improving services and outcomes for vulnerable adults | | | | | | |
| 6.1 Adult Social Care Performance Improvement Plan a. Improvement proposal b. Full Improvement | DoACS, HoSCA | April 2006 May 2006 | New senior management structure determined and being rolled out. Improvement proposal being finalised for agreement with Dept. for Health by mid-April; Cabinet sign-off in May. | Dept. of Health consultant; PCT; voluntary sector; private care sector; customers and their reps; Policy and Research Manager | Strengthened management structure to be fully developed and implemented. Project Managers. Other: included in the improvement proposal. | <i>Intermediate:</i> Improvement in APA 2006 inspection rating to at least "Serving some people well" and "Promising prospects". <i>Ultimately:</i> Full achievement of the Improvement Plan and measurable improvements in outcomes for all the main categories of vulnerable adults |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|--------------|-------------------------------|---|---|--|---|
| Plan – first draft | | | | | | |
| 6.2 Assessment of future social care needs and services for older people and adults with learning disabilities: - assessment of needs - costed options for service development | DoACS, HoSCA | April 2006 August 2006 | Assessment brief and monthly milestones approved. First drafts of assessments of future needs were prepared by 31 st March. Comparator Las on board. | PCT; voluntary sector; private care sector; Police; Fire; customers and their reps; Policy and Research Manager | Expert consultants to advise, help develop and validate findings | <i>Intermediate:</i> Delivery of the assessment on schedule in accordance with the brief, with realistic options for improved services. <i>Ultimately:</i> Council commits to and delivers a five-year service improvement programme |
| 6.3 Develop and implement the Older People’s Strategy | DoACS | | Project scoped; consultation with stakeholders and agencies underway; | PCT; voluntary sector; private care sector; Police; Fire | TBC in light of the strategy. | <i>Intermediate:</i> Final strategy on schedule with clear objectives and targets. |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|-------------|---|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Consultation event with older people - First draft available for consultation - Final strategy in place and operational | | <p>June / July 2006</p> <p>July / August 2006</p> <p>October 2006</p> | <p>met with 'Better Government for Older People' in February</p> | <p>service; older people and their organisations</p> | | <p>objectives and targets.</p> <p><i>Ultimately:</i></p> <p>Successful delivery of the strategy with measurable improvements in outcomes for older people.</p> |
| <p>6.4 Priority being given to accommodation for single people within developments commissioned under the affordable housing development programme and achieved through planning plan</p> | <p>HoSH</p> | | <p>Seeking to expand support services to young people - already a high quality service</p> | <p>Enabling Manager</p> | | <p>Secure additional single person flats for care leavers (number to be confirmed).</p> |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|------|---|--|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Affordable Housing Agreement to seek RSLs to promote the provision of single person units or under-occupation of larger units - Complete negotiations with existing support providers for expansion of outreach floating support services - Identify £500,000 capital for single-person accommodation for vulnerable young people and care leavers | | <p>May 2006</p> <p>May 2006</p> <p>May 2006</p> | <p>Agreement drafted for approval / consultation with RSLs</p> | <p>RSLs; Housing Corporation; Enabling Manager</p> | <p>Rural Housing Enabler (rural exception sites); additional sites for affordable housing via developing Local Development Frameworks.</p> | <p>Delivery of a higher proportion of single person units as a proportion of all units developed (need to establish baseline position during 2006/07).</p> <p>Additional 16 young people receiving housing related support by March 2007</p> |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|------|----------------------------------|--|--|--|--|
| 6.5 Continue to actively negotiate affordable housing provision through planning gain. - Complete review of Housing Register - Review of Empty Property Strategy - Launch new scheme with Home Zone agents to promote and deliver low-cost home ownership options | HoSH | September 2006 April 2006 | 2005/06 targets likely to be exceeded; priority in the Council's Fit for Purpose Housing Strategy; Prevention Service established; reduction in waiting list from 7,500 to 5,250 applicants. | RSLs; Housing Corporation; Regional Housing Board; Planning Services; Parish Councils; Home Point Manager; Enabling Manager. | Capital reserves; land availability; Affordable Housing Development Task Group to be re-established. | 161 new affordable homes built or acquired in 2006/07. Meeting increased targets (TBC) in future years. Reduction in the number of homelessness acceptances to 417 during 2006/07. |

Reference Documents

- Adult Social Care Improvement Proposal
- Homelessness Strategy

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|------------------------------|--|--|---|--|---|
| 7. Improved services and outcomes for children & young people | | | | | | |
| 7.1 Preparation of the draft JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan | DoCS, Interim Senior Manager | To CSCI and DfE in early February 2006 | Draft submitted on time. CSCI and Government responses received. Consultant invited by DfES to make a proposal and assess progress to help improve our draft Plan. Meeting with her scheduled for 12 April 2006. | PCT; voluntary sector; schools; Probation; LSC; Connexions; Youth Offending Service; Herefordshire Hospital Trust | Included in the draft Action Plan proposals submitted to the Government. To be reviewed by the commissioned consultant. | Adequate arrangements for safeguarding children operating by April 2006. Improved services and outcomes for children with disabilities and special needs. Fully effective action planning and performance management. Others as specified in the Action Plan |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|------------------------------|-----------------------------|---|---|---|---|
| 7.2 Implementation of the JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan | DoCS, Interim Senior Manager | As in the draft Action Plan | <p>New threshold criteria set and rolled out March 2006.</p> <p>Robust new management arrangements put in place, including checks, regular reports and follow-up to ensure good practice followed.</p> <p>Embedding to be tested by the commissioned consultant and our APA self-assessment work.</p> | <p>PCT; voluntary sector; schools; Probation; LSC; Connexions; Youth Offending Service; Herefordshire Hospital Trust; Policy and Research Manager; critical social work friends from Salop and Worcs.</p> | <p>As identified in the draft Action Plan</p> | <p>Adequate arrangements for safeguarding children operating by 04/06.</p> <p>Action Plan deemed acceptable by CSCI and Govt. (timing depends on Govt. consultant's appointment).</p> <p><i>Intermediate:</i></p> <p>Improve inspection rating in APA 2006 to at least "Serving some children well" and "Promising prospects".</p> <p>Full achievement of Action Plan</p> |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|------|----------------------------|--|--|---|---|
| | | | Initial social work workforce action plan developed and being rolled out, including immediate additional capacity required. | | To be developed with partners from May to become a shared workforce strategy for all partner organisations. | <i>Ultimately:</i> Measurable improvements in C&YPs' life-chances in terms of Every Child Matters outcomes |
| 7.3 Publish the Children and Young People's Plan 2006-08 | DoCS | 1 st April 2006 | Published March 2006. First draft of Young Persons' version prepared; publication by 1 st June following consultation with young people. | CYY Partnership members; Children's Change Manager | | Measurable improvements in C&YPs' life-chances in terms of Every Child Matters outcomes |
| 7.4 Full SMART Action Plan in place for: - 2006-07 (organisational and service development milestones) | DoCS | April 2006 | Priorities identified in the plan to inform the action plan. | CYY Partnership members; Children's Change Manager; interim senior manager | Change Team | <i>Intermediate:</i> Specified organisational milestones <i>Ultimately:</i> Improved outcomes against targets for C&YP |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|------------|--|---|--|--|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - the period of the Children and Young People's Plan (organisational and service milestones, plus improved outcomes for C&YP) | | Yearly revisions building on the national improvement cycle. | | | | |
| 7.5 Secure adequate housing provision for families with young children | DoCS, HoSH | | Homelessness Prevention Service now in place. Needs analysis and family support audit completed. Children's Centres development on track. Bid made for Rural Housing Enabler. Ongoing programme of Housing Needs Assessments. | Registered Social Landlords; Shelter; Planning Services; West Housing Market area partners | Change Team and Key Managers | BVPI 183a outturn 2006/07 = 0 weeks. Additional 5 units of temporary family housing. 161 affordable homes built or acquired during 2006/07. Reduction in the number of homelessness acceptances to 417 during 2006/07. Care leavers in appropriate supported |

36

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|------|----------|------------------|---------------------|--|--------------------------------|
| - appoint Move-On Officer to target reducing families with young children occupying temporary accommodation | | May 2006 | | | | appropriate supported housing. |

Reference Documents

- Draft JAR Performance Improvement Action Plan
- Children and Young People's Plan 2006-08

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|-------------|----------------|--|-------------------------------------|--|---|
| 8. Promoting equality and diversity (milestones for individual actions to be agreed April 2006) | | | | | | |
| 8.1 Complete the programme of Y3 EIA's across all services and have action plans in place | DoCCS, HoPP | September 2006 | Y1&2 training given and documentation produced | All service areas | Monitoring of actions and service changes within each directorate. Dedicated Manager post created for Equalities and Diversity from 1 st April; Diversity Assistant post confirmed and arrangements to fill are in hand. | Level 2 of the Equality standard by March 2007. |
| 8.2 Develop and implement consultation process with designated community, staff and stakeholder groups to | DoCCS, HoPP | December 2006 | Initial discussion and budget resources identified | Stakeholders; HEP; voluntary sector | Support needed from PR unit and community involvement team | Information / feedback that initiate change at service level identified in service plans. |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|--------------|--------------|---|-------------------------|--|---|
| underpin the rolling programme of impact assessments | | | | | | |
| 8.3 Develop information and monitoring systems for service users, staff and complaints process. | HoITCS, HoPP | March 2007 | Equality categories agreed. Some budget identified | Research; HR; PR | Directorate support needed to embed in service areas | Data produced by all service areas regarding service users |
| 8.4 Develop an equality action planning process for employment, pay and service delivery | HoHR | March 2007 | | HR; Directors | | Increased number of employees from the Equality categories |
| 8.5 Develop and implement new Disability Equality Scheme and action plan | DoCCS, HoPP | October 2006 | Timetable in place for the development of the strategy; meeting with disability organisations held 14 th March; survey | Stakeholders; Research. | | <i>Intermediate:</i> Delivery of best practice scheme and action plan to schedule. <i>Ultimately:</i> |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|------|------------|--|---------------------|--|---|
| | | | questionnaires to employees and the public designed. | | | Measurable improvements in outcomes for people with disabilities. |
| 8.6 Develop a system of self assessment, scrutiny and audit to drive the Council's continuing improvement | HoPP | March 2007 | | | | Level 5 by 2010 |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|------|-----------|--|------------------------|--|---|
| 9. Ensuring that the Councils Managers and staff are able to deliver sustained improvement | | | | | | |
| 9.1 Agree timetable for achieving Investors In People, including key actions and milestones, based on 'light touch' assessment report. | HoHR | July 2006 | | Senior Management Team | Possible consultancy support. | Agreed timetable in place. |
| 9.2 Implementation of the Pay and Workforce Development Strategy <i>Children's and Adults' Social Care</i> | HoHR | | Recruitment Centre in operation since 1 st April. Revised local advertising established. | | | Strategy actions delivered and targets achieved. Sickness levels reduced to 9 days by March 2007 Turnover maintained at no more than 9% |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|------|---|------------------|---------------------|--|----------------------------|
| <p>- develop full plan for Social Care workforce development</p> <p><i>Sickness</i></p> <p>- identify 'problem sickness areas'</p> <p>- develop action plans for improving levels of sickness in 'problem areas'</p> <p><i>Workforce Planning</i></p> <p>- scope workforce planning system requirements and identify key shortage areas</p> <p>- assess good practice in workforce planning (benchmarking with Staffordshire)</p> | | <p>May 2006</p> <p>April 2006</p> <p>May 2006</p> <p>June 2006</p> <p>July 2006</p> | | | | |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|------|-------------------------------------|------------------|---------------------|--|----------------------------|
| - recommendations for workforce planning system - implement workforce planning system | | September 2006 March 2007 | | | | |

Reference Documents

- Pay and Workforce Development Strategy

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|------|------------|---|--|---|---|
| 10. Improving the Council's communications with its customers and staff | | | | | | |
| 10.1 New integrated internal and external communications strategy to be created and implemented | HoC | April 2006 | Initial draft prepared | Cabinet; CMB; SMT; HR; ICT; Media | To strengthen the capacity of senior management, a new Head of Communications commenced employment on 30 th January. Support of ICT for electronic communications aspects | Strategy approved by cabinet in May. Targets to be set by strategy |
| 10.2 Annual Public Satisfaction Surveys - First annual survey results | HoPP | March 2006 | Survey conducted and report written. Presented CMB and SMT; Lead Members briefed. | Cabinet; CMB; SMT; all Managers and staff; Herefordshire Partnership | In-house team established | <i>Intermediate:</i> SMART actions to improve services identified and included in service plans. |

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|--|------|---|---|--|---|--|
| <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - BVPI General Survey results - Follow-up work to establish the reasons for particular lack of satisfaction in priority areas - Supporting communications plan | HoC | <p>February 2007 (TBC)</p> <p>TBC in April 2006</p> <p>March 2006</p> | <p>Proposal approved and being implemented.</p> | <p>Partnership</p> <p>Policy and Research.</p> | | <p>in service plans.</p> <p><i>Ultimately:</i></p> <p>Improved public satisfaction levels with key services and the Council as a whole.</p> <p><i>Intermediate:</i></p> <p>Positive media coverage.</p> <p><i>Ultimately:</i></p> <p>Improved public satisfaction levels with key services and the Council as a whole.</p> |
| 10.3 Team briefing system to be implemented | HoC | April 2006 | Proposals approved | SMT; CMB | | 70 per cent of service areas regularly implementing team brief in year one |
| 10.4 Communications structure to be upgraded | HoC | April 2006 | Principles paper agreed | Cabinet; CMB; SMT; unions | £20,000 rise in salary costs to be top sliced through | New structure to be implemented by April |

45

| Action to be Taken | Lead | By When | Progress to date | People/ Partners | Additional Capacity/ Requirement | Target/Success Criteria |
|---|------|----------------|--|---------------------|---|----------------------------|
| | | | | | directorates – further savings to be identified | |
| 10.5 Significant increase in volume of positive media coverage | HoC | September 2006 | Strategy and structure to be finalised | | None | 200 increase in volume |
| 10.6 Internal and external communications channels to be upgraded | HoC | June 2006 | Reviews of quality underway | SMT | None | Targets to be set |

Reference Documents

- Draft Herefordshire Council Communications Strategy
- Annual Satisfaction Survey Communications Strategy

GLOSSARY

| | | | |
|-------|---|--------|---|
| DoCCS | Director of Corporate & Customer Services | HoITCS | Head of Information, Technology & Customer Services |
| HoPP | Head of Policy & Performance | DoR | Director of Resources |
| HoLDS | Head of Legal & Democratic Services | DoCS | Director of Children's Services |
| DoACS | Director of Adult & Community Services | HoSCA | Head of Social Care (Adults) |
| HoSH | Head of Strategic Housing | CDT | Corporate Diversity Team |
| HoC | Head of Communications | CIC | Community Involvement Co-ordinator |
| HoHR | Head of Human Resources | CE | Chief Executive |

HEREFORDSHIRE CONNECTS

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To note the completion of Phase 1 of the Corporate Strategy Review and to endorse the arrangements for proceeding to the next stage.

Key Decision

This is a Key Decision because it is significant in terms of the effect on communities living or working in Herefordshire in an area comprising one or more wards. It was included in the Forward Plan.

Recommendations

THAT Cabinet

- (a) **approves the Herefordshire Connects Programme including the outline financial appraisal at Appendix 1;**
- (b) **receives further updates on the Herefordshire Connects Programme in due course including a more detailed financial appraisal so that changes in the approved revenue and capital spending plans can be made;**
- (c) **approves the strategy of using the £1.928m Invest to Save budget for 2006/07 to fund additional capital financing costs and direct revenue costs resulting from the Programme in 2006/07 and 2007/08; and**
- (d) **notes the potential need to revisit the Prudential Borrowing limits for 2006/07 and beyond as a result of the additional long-term borrowing required to pay for the Herefordshire Connects Programme.**
- (e) **confirm that the governance arrangements be developed in accordance with the framework set out in paragraphs 37 – 47.**

Reasons

To note progress with the Herefordshire Connects Programme and its potential impact on the Council's financial position.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Julie Holmes, Head of Information, Technology and Customer Services on (01432) 260403

Considerations

Background

Central Government Context

1. Beyond tackling both the financial challenge facing the authority in the coming few years and therefore the affordability of the Council's Herefordshire Connects Programme, Central Government is itself increasingly conscious of the need to improve the efficiency of public service provision; to maximise the value of public services to citizens and stakeholders. At the same time, there is also a concerted drive to encourage local government to deliver internal and external services electronically. More specifically, the Council has to address:
2. **Council's Financial Position** – The key points of the Local Government Financial Settlement for Herefordshire and known budget pressures are as follows:
3. This budget cycle has been a difficult one for the Council. Herefordshire faces huge challenges in meeting rising customer demand, statutory duties and rigorous inspection regimes whilst maintaining financial stability into the future.
4. Herefordshire schools are amongst the worst funded in England on a per pupil basis but the increase in Dedicated Schools Grant was comparatively good at 4.3%. In contrast, the 2.4% increase in non-schools funding will barely cover inflation.
5. The scope to make good the shortfall in Government funding is severely limited by the cap on Council Tax increases. Reviewing the scope to raise additional income sensitively through fees and charges may reveal opportunities for bridging the funding gap.
6. The budget outlined in this report represents a significant step towards addressing some of the structural issues within the Council's budget for the future. However, reserves will be significantly depleted in 2005/06 as prior year and current year over spends are written off to help establish a stable budget position going forward.
7. The creation of a Social Care contingency in the event demand continues to increase to the extent currently predicted is an important step towards managing the key financial risks Herefordshire is facing. It is essential that these demand led pressures are fully understood and the resource implications assessed as soon as possible.
8. There will be limited capacity to deal with the level of over spending in key service areas that occurred in 2004/05 and is happening in the current year. These service areas need to consider whether alternative service delivery models may achieve more with less.
9. The medium-term financial prognosis is not good with SR07 looming large. The pressure from the Government to deliver efficiencies whilst improving outcomes and outputs continues to increase. The limited capacity in Herefordshire's financial reserves to provide the flexibility needed to achieve a soft landing in the budget means there is a pressing need to develop a Council-wide Service Improvement Programme supported by implementation of appropriate ICT, accommodation and organisational development strategies. The pay back in terms of budget reductions resulting from the investment needs to be certain and be delivered if Herefordshire is to maintain its current financial standing.

10. **Gershon Report** – this is of particular relevance to the issue of public sector efficiency savings and sets out the scope for further efficiencies within the public sector’s back office, procurement, transactional services and policy making functions.
11. The Gershon Review also identified opportunities for increasing the productive time of professionals working in schools, hospitals and other frontline public services and makes a series of cross-cutting recommendations to further embed efficiency across public sector. Further it seeks to make efficiency gains through the scale economies of more effective cooperation and coordination between agencies across the whole of the public sector, not excluding the independent, voluntary and private sectors. By deploying new ICT applications for example, it is envisaged that the delivery of corporate resources, e-procurement and e-government can be shared resulting in lower costs, thereby, releasing more resources to front-line services.
12. The only further cashable efficiency saving that has been identified since the last budget report is in recruitment advertising (£44k in 2006/07 and £88k in 2007/08). This figure will need to be allocated to Directorates based on staff turnover statistics. The remainder needed to meet the £1.65m target is £494k in 2006/07 and £225k in 2007/08. The target for the next two financial years will be achieved from additional vacancy savings allocated to Directorates on the basis of total base budget for employees in 2005/06. It may be possible to update the efficiency plan for 2006/07 as a result of the Corporate Strategy Review currently underway.
13. **The National eProcurement Project** – identified that local authorities should aim to reduce the cost of goods and services by 2.8% through strategic sourcing and e-procurement.
14. **The legacy ICT environment** - within the aforementioned strategic context, the Council is faced with immediate challenges regarding its current applications systems infrastructure in a number of areas. Work on the “as is” architecture has shown that there are in excess of 900 separate individual applications in operation.
15. These systems whilst in some instances perfectly adequate for the limited user communities they serve, are in the main now limiting the Council’s ability to implement the Service Improvement Programme and its corporate priorities.

Herefordshire Connects

16. The financial context for Herefordshire Connects is compelling. Service areas have already identified that in order to fund the level of service we know is required the Council need to secure an additional £20 million. There is no scope for increasing council tax above the government’s cap of five per cent, the prospects for any material increase in the revenue support grant are pessimistic and room for manoeuvre in terms of raising income or cutting discretionary services is limited. Rather than wait until the Council’s financial position becomes serious, the authority has sought to implement now a strategic transformation of its business and services – to determine new and more efficient and flexible ways of working to deliver high quality services focused around the needs of our customers, and all of this for less cost.
17. ‘Herefordshire Connects’ is the council’s strategic transformation project - previously called the Corporate Strategy Review. The project will address the service improvements required and mean substantial investment in staff and support systems in order to revolutionise the delivery of council services.
18. The vision is for every local citizen to have considerably improved access to services and information, at a time and a location that is convenient to them, and by any means

that suits them, so they can communicate with a single point of contact, who is trained and empowered to respond effectively to their request across the full range of council services available. The project will also transform the performance of the council, helping us all to work more closely together, supporting service areas to focus on delivery and developing customer-facing staff and services.

19. The 12 week programme launched in January 2006 included a review of processes, organisation and systems across all Directorates and was charged with recommending a series of defined service improvement opportunities inclusive of the associated investments and benefits.

20. Whilst technology is one of the enablers to achieve this vision, the project is principally about transforming our services; changing our culture and focus for the benefit of local citizens.

21. The review has recommended:

- A cross directorate service delivery model and operating structure that provides a single face to the customer and is oriented around customer demand and preferences
- A council wide transformation programme consisting of a series of clearly defined but interlinked activities with clearly articulated costs and benefits
- Significant changes to customer service, support and performance management processes, organisation and technology to create a more integrated and flexible model for these areas
- The provision of a platform for tighter integration with key partners such as the PCT, Police Authority and the voluntary sector.

22. The approach to the review has been to

- create a core team comprising a change manager, change champions and core team representatives from all Directorates
- time box the review to maintain momentum and focus on critical challenges and those solutions which will deliver maximum benefit
- focus on the elements within the immediate control of the Council rather than agencies, partners and organisations outside the core control of the Council
- hold a series of service improvement workshops (21 in total) to agree a set of outcomes, projects and benefits for each Directorate
- translate these service improvement plans into three prioritised council wide business cases focused on specific improvement themes with a more detailed view of the costs and benefits
- involve an appropriate cross section of employees to validate those costs and benefits
- seek approval to proceed with the implementation of the review's recommendations.

23. The Herefordshire Connects Programme Board recommends an integrated programme of change across the Council structured around the three work streams:

Integrated Customer Services – a simple, multi-channel way of interacting with citizens using an electronic records and document management system to ensure that the right information is immediately available.

Integrated Support Services – an integrated capability covering finance, procurement, HR and asset management; ensuring data is only entered into the system once and the timely availability of accurate information.

Corporate Performance Management – a cross Council corporate performance management framework linking the planning of budgets, other resources and activities to the achievement of specified outputs and outcomes including performance indicators for different levels of the authority.

24. The requirement for flexible working and workflow management is consistent across all work streams.
25. Furthermore, it is important that the momentum built up to date in the programme is not lost and that the skills and knowledge already captured in those core team members is put to best effect. It is therefore recommended that as many of the core team members are retained on the programme moving forward as possible.
26. As these resources are seconded to support the procurement and implementation elements of the programme, the issue of backfilling key post holders' positions will need to be addressed on the basis of demonstrable need. This may incur additional expense not accounted for in the confidential financial appraisal attached at Appendix 1.

Corporate ICT Strategy

27. In addition, work has been ongoing on the underlying Corporate ICT Strategy. This has highlighted the need for work to continue on those key building blocks such as the network replacement project and ICT disaster recovery as well as future programmes around the standardisation of infrastructure and desktop, the implementation of further systems management tools and the extension of the web infrastructure.
28. Given the overall context in preceding sections of this report, a key consideration for the achievement of the Herefordshire Connects vision is the use of enabling technologies. The options available to the Council in terms of the technology solutions to underpin the Herefordshire Connects Programme are limited.
29. Two options prevail. Namely, the use of:
 - A single vendor system to deliver the breadth of functional and information requirements set by both the Herefordshire Connects Programme and current management demands. Such systems are more commonly referred to as Enterprise Resource Planning (ERP) systems. Owing to market consolidation over the past 2-3 years, two vendors dominate this marketplace: Oracle Corporation and SAP AG.
 - A selection of “boutique” systems from vendors who specialise in UK local government and have well regarded specialist systems. These vendors and their specialisms include, for example, Northgate (HR, GIS and CRM), Civica (ePayments), Agresso and CedAR (Financials), Selima (Payroll), Academy (Revenues & Benefits), etc. These systems are more commonly referred to as “best of breed” (boutique) systems.
30. The ICT Strategy Report agreed by CXMT dated 4th October, 2005 agreed a number of key assumptions in order to kick-start the planning process for Herefordshire Connects.

31. The programme should be:

- service driven
- contain realistic work packages
- deliver rapid time to benefit
- adopt the best practice business processes within the application rather than modifying them

32. The technology should be

- A single integrated environment as the standard (a whole council architecture)
- A commercial 'off the shelf' package(s) rather than boutique solutions
- Leverage applicable existing corporate systems
- Must offer an enterprise services architecture – this will allow us to plug in any "boutique" offerings more easily

33. The Programme should allow for:

- Enforcement of current corporate standards
- A phased approach to implementation
- The formation of one ICT organisation ; and
- For resources to be made available to the project in a timely manner.

34. The transformation programme we must undertake is further complicated in so far as much of the business critical data required by the Council is held in a large number of disparate forms. These include; spreadsheets, access databases and word documents. This poses significant risk in respect of accuracy and duplication of data, potential for non-compliance to Freedom of Information requests and unacceptable levels of business continuity risk (e.g. failing to meet levels of availability required to fulfil the Civil Contingencies Act).

35. Certain existing systems are based on outdated technologies that are costly to integrate, support and develop. Management information is often limited as a consequence and data quality variable.

36. As a consequence of the functional limitations of many of our existing systems, Directorates and the corporate centre are heavily dependent on paper based transactions, manual approval and distribution processes, and inadequate management information. Implicitly this has led to inefficient resource management processes and acts as a barrier to more innovative, technology enabled and flexible working practices.

Programme Governance

37. Herefordshire Connects represents a major transformation programme for the Authority. Whilst the report this far has focused on the business requirements together with the enabling technology aspects, it is our handling of the people and cultural changes that are required which will determine, or not, the success of this key initiative.

38. Many of the key governance structures are in existence across the Council, however, are in need of review or indeed reworking. A major challenge of the governance arrangements will be the need to transition from a governance model which today is essentially based on organisational structures (Directorates, Services, ICT ...) to one which addresses both the organisational and process governance challenges.
39. A further commitment to a corporate programme and project management framework based on OGC best practice to include gateway reviews and based on Managing Successful Programmes (MSP) and Prince2 as part of this corporate governance model must also be included as part of the programme's initiation.
40. Further, to minimise the risk of programme failure to deliver the required benefits a revised corporate governance model including a benefits realisation framework is included as part of the initiation of this programme, which additionally manages other key priority programmes across the authority as well.
41. It is evident that a new model for the governance arrangements is required. Essentially whilst recommending that the Information Policy Group (IPG) remain albeit with a reworked format and membership, the overall governance body for this and other programmes becomes the Corporate Transformation Board. This Board would comprise the Chief Executive, the Director of Corporate & Customer Services, one operational Director, Director of Resources and the Change Manager. It would become the responsible body for all matters relating to business transformation including but not limited to:
- Strategic direction and policies
 - Investment appraisals
 - The benefits realisation framework
 - Risk management
42. In this model the IPG would act in support of the Corporate Transformation Board continuing its existing role as the authority's overall ICT governance body with responsibility for policy and procedure, and acting as the Information Security Forum on a quarterly basis.
43. It is further recommended that an enhanced capability be developed with respect to the current Programme and Project Support Office (PPSO) with particular regard to programme management standards, quality assurance and monitoring. It is proposed that the OGC model based on Centres of Excellence be used as the framework moving forward.
44. Given that this is the most significant transformation programme the authority has undertaken which will involve significant process, organisational and cultural change together with the high degree of interdependency between this and other programmes such as the Accommodation Strategy and Corporate Customer Services Strategy, it is recommended that the Council approve the formation of a dedicated change management team to oversee and lead on both the communication and change plans.
45. There will also be a requirement for suitable project team infrastructure and facilities to include both accommodation and ICT. Neither have been costed as part of the financial appraisal appended.
46. The reality of Herefordshire Connects means that the programme will have to define accountable benefits realisation owners both within the programme and across Directorates. The framework for defining and measuring these benefits has yet to be

defined, however, a robust mechanism will be required to ensure that benefits are both realised and pulled out of service budgets.

47. Under Phase 1 of the Project the reference group of Members was established. The Leader, Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) and Cabinet Member (Resources) were briefed regularly on progress. This arrangement would continue, with reports to Cabinet at key points in the life of the programme.

Outline Financial Appraisal

48. The outline financial appraisal shown in the confidential Appendix 1 is provisional at this early stage in the development of the Herefordshire Connects Programme. The figures are sufficiently robust enough, however, to provide a feel for:

- the likely level of cost of implementing the Programme through to 2011/12);
- the level of potential cashable benefits in implementing the Programme through to 2011/12;
- the likely level of additional capital financing costs falling on the revenue account through to 2011/12; and
- the point in time at which potential benefits will exceed costs in a financial year.

49. The outline financial appraisal assumes that:

- Most of the costs can be capitalised alleviating pressure in the revenue account;
- the £1.928m Invest to Save budget will be used to smooth the impact of the Programme on the revenue account in 2006/07 and 2007/08;
- there are no further reductions in costs through the procurement process for the Programme when it is likely (but not yet possible to estimate) that this will be the case;
- Herefordshire Council bears the total cost of the Programme and enjoys 100% of the potential benefits (a situation that may alter depending on the procurement decisions ultimately taken);
- there is no separate external funding available for this Programme (some may be available to help pay for integrated children's services and social care projects and other external improvement funds should be applied to this Programme where grant conditions allow);
- the balance of costs will be financed through long-term borrowing as the prudential case can be demonstrated as potential cashable benefits from 2008/09 onwards far exceed the additional capital financing costs in the year; and
- there is no double counting of benefits in the Programme and in other Corporate or Directorate plans and strategies.

50. The outline financial appraisal does not include the cost of the underlying ICT strategy needed to support the Programme or the cost of strengthened change management arrangements.

51. The outline financial appraisal indicates a benefit to cost ratio over the period to 2011/12 of 2:1 excluding capital financing costs. Compared to benchmark data, the cashable benefits identified are thought to be realistic and potentially on the low side. The overall financial summary indicates there is a comfortable margin for costs to increase/benefits to reduce before the Programme becomes non-viable for purely financial reasons. A more detailed sensitivity analysis can be carried out as the detailed Programme and hence detailed financial appraisal develops. Significant non-cashable benefits of circa £18m are also anticipated. The non-financial benefit of this Programme should not be overlooked.
52. The financial appraisal will change over time as the details of the Programme are developed. Cost and benefit profiles may change as the phasing of the various projects making up the Programme is determined. Regular monitoring of the financial position will be included in the Integrated Performance Report on an exceptions basis.
53. The outline financial appraisal at this stage looks promising with the likelihood that significant revenue benefits will accrue from 2008/09 onwards. This is perfect timing in terms of SR07 which is anticipated to prove difficult for local government and will set the basis of the three year settlement starting in 2008/09.
54. From a purely financial viewpoint, there is much to commend the Herefordshire Connects Programme given the medium-term financial outlook highlighted in recent budget reports. A key issue for the Council will be maintaining pace so that the Programme delivers a full year of benefits in the critical 2008/09 financial year as indicated in the outline financial appraisal.
55. Development of a robust benefits realisation programme is critical to success to avoid the risk of the Programme being overlaid with a cost reduction programme involving service cuts rather than improvements.
56. The Programme will involve a significant procurement exercise. It is important that the Herefordshire Connects Programme Board seeks external advice (from the OGC) and internal advice (from the statutory monitoring and chief financial officers) on the appropriate procurement procedure.

Alternative Options

The only viable option to the Herefordshire Connects Programme would be a dramatic cost reduction programme involving aggressive reductions in service delivery and personnel.

Risk Management

1. The current financial appraisal does not include the financial requirements for key elements of the enabling ICT Strategy such as desktop standardisation; ICT infrastructure replenishment and requirements for flexible working.
2. The impact of other key programmes and partnership working such as the LAA and Children's Act have yet to be factored into the programme.
3. Key skills and resources are not in existence inside the council today. Additionally, other key resources which do exist may not have sufficient capacity.

Consultees

Members of the public

Member Reference Group

Directors and Heads of Service

Members of the Herefordshire Connects Core Team

Change Champions

Representatives of the Resources Directorate.

Background Papers

None identified.

Document is Restricted

DISABILITY EQUALITY SCHEME

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE AND CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To note progress in developing the Disability Equality Scheme for 2006/09.

Key Decision

This not a key decision.

Recommendation

THAT the progress in developing the Disability Equality Scheme (DES) for 2006/09 be noted.

Considerations

1. The Disability Discrimination Act 2005 requires organisations across the public sector to be proactive in ensuring that disabled people are treated fairly. However, this duty is not necessarily about changes to buildings or adjustments for individuals, it's all about including equality for disabled people into the culture of public authorities in practical and demonstrable ways.
 2. The tool used to demonstrate how public sector bodies will achieve this duty is the Disability Equality Scheme (DES). Local Authorities have to produce a DES by December 2006 that shows they have considered the impact of their policies, practices and procedures on disabled people.
 3. Herefordshire Council has had a DES since 2002, but this needs updating to take account of the new Duty to:
 - Eliminate discrimination that is unlawful under the DDA
 - Eliminate harassment that is unlawful under the DDA
 - Promote equality of opportunity between disabled persons and other persons
 - Take steps to take account of disabled person's disabilities, even where that involves treating disabled persons more favourably than other people.
 4. The programme of consultation and involvement (shown below) is on schedule, and the summary of the event held on 14th March, 2006 is shown at Appendix 1.
-

5. The results of the employee and public surveys will be used to guide the priorities of the DES, and inform the action plan. The PCT has contributed a section to the public questionnaire. The public questionnaire will be the second Council initiative to make use of the e-consult software, enabling people to respond on-line from the Council's website.

Timetable

| | |
|-----------------------|---|
| 14 March 2006 | Hold "Involvement Meeting" for representatives of local disability organisations (The purpose of this was to inform the process of the consultation) |
| Month of April | Carry out employee disability survey |
| Month of May | Carry out public disability survey |
| 23 May | Hold public "Open Forum" meeting for those who want to debate further the barriers they encounter in their everyday lives, and how to make improvements |
| May | Carry out focus groups to involve people with learning disabilities and children |
| August 2006 | Draft DES to Cabinet for approval |
| October 2006 | Publish DES |

Risk Management

None.

Alternative Options

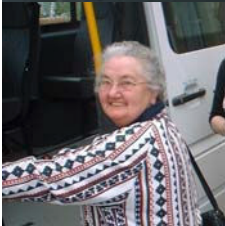
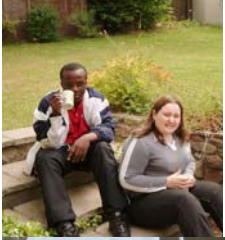
None.

Appendix

Summary of Involvement Meeting

Background Papers

None identified.



HEREFORDSHIRE
COUNCIL

Summary of Disability Involvement Meeting

14 March 2006
Three Counties Hotel

If you need help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call 01432 260216 or e-mail diversity@herefordshire.gov.uk

Outline of the Event

On 14 March 2006, the first Herefordshire Council “Disability Equality Scheme Involvement Meeting” was held at the Three Counties Hotel, Hereford.

George Salmon (Head of Policy & Resources and Chair of the Council’s Disability Working Group) opened the event by explaining the Council’s legal and moral responsibility to eradicating unlawful discrimination and making information and services accessible to all.

Lucy Davies (Assistant Solicitor) then explained the reasons why the Council needs to produce a Disability Equality Scheme, and asked the audience to guide this process by identifying the priorities on which the Scheme should focus.

The main priorities identified were (in no particular order):

- 1. Accessible Information** (incl. literature and signage)
- 2. Transport**
- 3. Coordination of Consultation**
- 4. Disability Officer for Herefordshire Council**
- 5. Work Placements/Training**
- 6. Housing** (provision and support needs)
- 7. Environmental Design** (incl. car parking, toilets, physical access, street furniture)

Some of the suggestions for changes to the questionnaire were:

- 1. The questionnaire is unsuitable for children and those with a learning disability**
- 2. Incorporate carer support**
- 3. Incorporate cycles lanes and Blue Badge scheme into questions**
- 4. Reduce the number of answer options to make the questionnaire simpler**

Harriet Yellin (Diversity Officer) introduced the audience to the draft public questionnaire which aims to identify what the key issues around disability equality are for Herefordshire. The audience were asked for their feedback on the proposed questions and wording.

Carol Trachonitis (Service Manager, Corporate Diversity Team) then outlined the Council’s approach to equality policies, and progress with the Equality Impact Assessment initiative.

The audience were then asked about their own contact with Herefordshire Council over the past few months, and whether their experience had been positive or negative.

Some of the comments about Council services were:

- 1. On the whole good service with friendly staff**
- 2. Many buildings inaccessible**
- 3. Some lack of staff understanding regarding issues that are relevant to disabled people**
- 4. Lack of disabled parking spaces and misuse of these spaces**

What Else Was Discussed

Disability Officer for the Council

Several people in the audience were keen that the Council should recruit an officer dedicated to Disability, with a remit for access, networking and coordinating consultation. The Council representatives agreed that much more work needs to be done with the disabled community, and on influencing other organisations to improve access and service delivery. However the Council has a duty to promote equality of opportunity for all and to eliminate discrimination in all its forms. The Council is in the process of recruiting a second Diversity Officer who will have a personal understanding of the diversity agenda, and work across the whole scope of equality issues.

Currently the Council does have an Access Officer - who was present at the meeting - who has a specific remit for ensuring that the council fulfils its responsibility with regards to the DDA and accessible buildings. However it was felt that the Council should exert more influence on the private/commercial sector to make a real difference across the county.

Social Model of Disability

It was noted that there are discrepancies in the Council's adoption of the Social Model of Disability, in that we don't always fully adhere to it. The Council representatives accepted that this was the case, because it is sometimes more practical to use medical terms in order to get exactly the information we need, and also because it will take time to fully embed the Social Model into the organisation.

Diversity Monitoring

The personal information section at the back of the proposed public questionnaire generated some debate, with an audience member querying why the Council needs to collect this information. It was explained that this information will help the Council to understand the needs of the people it serves and continue to improve the services it delivers. In this way we will continue in our attempts to eliminate discrimination.

As a result of this discussion, the Council will produce a public information leaflet explaining in very simple terms the reasons why the information is needed, and how it will be used.

Who was Involved

75 Herefordshire disability groups were invited to attend the meeting, and 21 people from the following groups did attend:

- ABLE
- All About Ability
- Alliance Hereford
- Courtyard Audio Description Assoc
- Deaf Direct
- ECHO
- Guide Dogs for the Blind
- Hereford Centre for Independent Living
- Hereford Access for All
- Herefordshire Carers Support
- Herefordshire Disability Action
- Ledbury Access Group
- Older People's Voices Project
- Royal National College for the Blind
- St Owen's Centre
- The Multiple Sclerosis Society
- Herefordshire Disability Action

Written responses were received from:

- Amputee Support Group
- Herefordshire Fibromyalgia Information and Support Service
- Herefordshire Mencap
- Leominster Shopmobility
- Shaw Trust

The following Council services were represented:

- Children's Services
- Corporate Diversity Team
- Information & Communications Technology
- Legal
- Leisure, Parks & Countryside
- Property Services

What Happens Now?

1. The priorities identified will be incorporated where possible into the draft Disability Equality Scheme (however further consultation may result in them being amended).
2. The suggestions made about the public questionnaire will be fully explored and incorporated where appropriate.
3. The experiences of the audience noted in the final exercise will be used when analysing the results of the Council's many Equality Impact Assessments.
4. A survey of Herefordshire Council employee opinions will be carried out in April 2006, and results published at a later date.
5. The survey of public opinion will be carried out in May 2006, and results published at a later date.
6. More work will be done with schools and specialist organisations to ensure that children and people with learning disabilities are encouraged to participate.
7. A public Disability Forum will be held on 23 May at the Three Counties Hotel to more fully consult with those who wish to attend.
8. The Council's 2006-2009 Disability Equality Scheme (and Action Plan) will be published in October 2004.
9. The Disability Equality Scheme will be reviewed each year, and a report published.
10. The Council's Corporate Diversity Team will drive and co-ordinate the actions identified in the Action Plan to really make a difference to the lives of disabled people living and working in Herefordshire.

PROPOSED USE OF FORMER DENCO CAR PARK AT HOLMER ROAD, HEREFORD

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: RESOURCES

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected

Three Elms, Hereford.

Purpose

To consider entering into a lease with Hereford City Council for the site for the purpose of the development of a skateboard park.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

- THAT (a) the former Denco car park site be leased to Hereford City Council for the purposes of developing a skate park facility for use by the wider community.**
- (b) this lease be for a period between 10 and 25 years and to be offered at a peppercorn rent.**
- (c) the opportunity cost to the Council of not realising the market value of this asset be noted. This is estimated to be in the order of £10,000 p.a. at current levels.**

Reasons

The former Denco car park was handed back to the Council when the company relocated to Moreton Business Park in October 2005.

The consultation undertaken in accordance with the Council's Asset Disposal Policy has failed to produce a substantial full time requirement from within Council Directorates for the site.

Considerations

1. The Council owns the Freehold interest in 0.4474 hectares of land situated between the overspill car park to the Leisure Centre and the allotments.
2. An expression of interest in the site was registered by Hereford City Council for use as a Skateboard Park.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Colin Birks, Acting Head of Property Services on 01432 261890 and Tony Featherstone, Parks,
Countryside and Leisure Development Manager on 01568 798321

3. A planning application was submitted by Herefordshire Council for change of use of the area to allow a public skate park facility to be built on this site. This application was approved in December 2005.
4. The site is currently registered as corporate property and comes under the responsibility of the Resources Directorate.
5. The expressions of interest arising from the consultation were as follows:
 - a) Children's Services – Special Education Unit.
 - b) Strategic Housing – Residential development.
 - c) Adult & Community Services – Skate Park (to be managed by a third party).
 - d) Highways & Transportation – For a periodic Park & Ride Scheme.

Subsequent advice has suggested that the site would be unsuitable for residential or educational development in planning terms.
6. Should the Council wish to consider leasing out the site an annual income of approximately £10,000 p.a. could be expected from its present planning use classes.
7. Despite nearly 10 years of constant reviews of land ownership, this Council and its predecessor Hereford City Council, have failed to identify an appropriate site for the development of a skateboard facility.
8. The matter of the provision of skate park facilities in Hereford City has been repeatedly raised at subsequent full Council meetings of this Council over the last two years, and most recently by Notice of Motion by Councillor Mrs. M.D. Lloyd-Hayes.
9. The future use of this site was considered by the Cabinet Members for Community Services and Resources on 2nd February, 2006.
10. The leasing of the site to Hereford City Council would be negotiated on a term of between 10 and 25 years at a peppercorn rent and with a break clause of 12 months by either party.

Risk Management

1. The potential risks for the management of this site will be transferred to the City Council.
2. The Council will lose an income of provisionally £10,000 as a result of this lease arrangement.

Alternative Options

Alternative Option 1

The Council advertises externally for expressions of interest in the site with a view to a commercial leasehold opportunity.

Alternative Option 2

The Council seeks to dispose of the land at a market consideration.

Consultees

All Directorates of Herefordshire Council via Directors and Heads of Service.
Hereford City Council.
Local Members.
Halo Leisure.
Wheeled Sports for Hereford.

Appendices

1. Letter dated 15th March, 2006 from the Leader of the Council.
2. Report to Cabinet Members dated 2nd February 2006.

Background Papers

None identified.

Leader of the Council
Councillor R. Phillips

Mr M Fellows
Town Clerk
Hereford Town Council
Town Hall
St Owen Street
HEREFORD

Your Ref:
Our Ref:
Please ask for: Natalia Silver
Direct Line / Extension: (01432) 262072
Fax: (01432) 383031
E-mail: nsilver@herefordshire.gov.uk

15th March, 2006

Dear Mr Fellows,

LEASE ARRANGEMENTS FOR SKATEBOARD PARK

In relation to our meeting yesterday regarding the development of a Skakeboard Park at the current Denco carpark, I would like to confirm our offer of a lease.

That:

- The lease would be for between 10 – 25 years depending on the requirements on funders, this would be at a “peppercorn” rent with a yearly break clause
- The lease will be between Herefordshire Council and Hereford City Council, with the latter operating as the accountable body for the Skateboard Park with final responsibility for its upkeep and security
- Any agreement with Halo Trust for the day to day management of the site is outside the financial agreement with Herefordshire Council, and should be negotiated between Halo and the City Council
- Consideration is given to the planning conditions for the development of the site, particularly regarding flood lighting

As mentioned at the meeting I would recommend that a realignment of the site in relation to an entrance to the Racecourse is not pursued because of the resource implication.

I would like to finally make the point that we are encouraged to see the progression of the Skakeboard Park for all young people in the City, and that our contribution has enabled the development of the project.

Yours sincerely,

ROGER PHILLIPS
LEADER OF THE COUNCIL



FUTURE USE OF FORMER DENCO CAR PARK AT HOLMER ROAD, HEREFORD

REPORT BY DIRECT OF ADULT & COMMUNITY SERVICES

**REPORT TO CABINET MEMBER FOR COMMUNITY SERVICES & CABINET MEMBER
FOR RESOURCES**

DATE REPORT WILL BE CONSIDERED: 2ND FEBRUARY 2006

PROPOSED DATE OF DECISION: 2ND FEBRUARY 2006

Wards Affected

Three Elms, Hereford

Purpose

To seek a decision on the future use of the former Denco car park at Holmer Road, Hereford.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision.

Recommendation

- THAT**
- a) Part of the former Denco car park site be leased to an appropriate third party for the purposes of developing a skate park facility for use by the wider community.**
 - b) This lease be initially for a 3 year period to enable the organisation to fund raise and establish the facility. The opportunity to extend this lease up to 10 years be considered should this be the condition of any long term funding award.**
 - c) The opportunity cost to the Council of not realising the market value of this asset be noted.**

Reasons

The former Denco car park was handed back to the Council when the company relocated to Moreton Business Park in October of last year. The Council now has to determine the future use of the area which is situated between the Hereford Leisure Centre and the allotments on Holmer Road.

The consultation undertaken in accordance with the Council's Asset Disposal Policy has failed to produce a substantial full time requirement from within Council Directorates for the site.

Considerations

1. Hereford City Council have identified a strong body of support for the development of a skateboard park on this site.
2. There is a private company that has indicated that should a skate park facility be developed on this site that they may be prepared to provide substantial capital funding for that undertaking.
3. A planning application was submitted by Herefordshire Council for change of use of the area to allow a public skate park facility to be built on this site. This application was approved in December 2005.
4. The site is currently registered as corporate property and comes under the responsibility of the Resources Directorate.
5. The expressions of interest arising from the consultation were as follows: -
 - a) Children's Services – Special Education Unit
 - b) Strategic Housing – Residential development
 - c) Adult & Community Services – Skate Park (to be managed by a third party)
 - d) Highways & Transportation – For a periodic Park & Ride Scheme

Subsequent advice has suggested that the site would be unsuitable for residential or educational development in planning terms.

6. External expressions of interest have been received from halo, in respect of an overspill car park to that existing for Hereford Leisure Centre and a local garage for a parking area. There has, however been no formal external advertisements to suggest the availability of the land.
7. Should the Council be minded to externally advertise the availability of this land to seek market interest, the likely rental would potentially be as much as £10,000 per annum. The market value in disposal terms may be significantly more.
8. Given the information available at present, the most economically advantageous option to be recommended, based upon good estate management advice, might be
 - a) An external letting for which we would get a rental income (potentially £10k pa) combined with
 - b) A covenant requiring that the land be made available for Park & Ride requirements at specific times of the year, and
 - c) That periodic use be made of the area by halo to facilitate overspill parking for major events, namely during the evenings and weekends.
9. Despite nearly 10 years of constant reviews of land ownership, this Council and its predecessor Hereford City Council, have failed to identify an appropriate site for the development of such a facility.
10. The matter of the provision of skate park facilities in Hereford City has been repeatedly raised at subsequent full Council meetings of this Council over the last 2 years.

11. Provision of this type of facility in other market towns within the County has been undertaken by the appropriate Parish Councils at no cost to this Council. The only exception to this is where the Council has provided its own land at Wilton car park in Ross-on-Wye for pieces of equipment to be placed for the purposes of skateboarding activity. The equipment was funded by the community.

Risk Management

1. Skate park provision is a costly activity in both capital and revenue terms. Facilities are subject to European Safety Standards and inspection regimes by ROSPA qualified inspectors on a regular basis are required to indemnify the occupier against insurance claims.
2. The activity by its nature is hazardous and the potential for injury high. The need for a managed site is imperative to ensure that personal and public safety are not compromised.
3. The Council needs to be mindful that in supporting one facility in a market town it does not inadvertently create a precedent in the eyes of other potential or existing providers. Members have expressed a desire to see a strong degree of consistency applied to the level and nature of the support provided for this type of activity.
4. In the granting of any lease, the Council would need to satisfy itself of the competency and capacity of the proposed organisation wishing to develop such a facility. It may also wish to take a view of the ability of that organisation to adequately resource the ongoing maintenance and development needs of the site.
5. Local experience has shown that such facilities are not without adverse publicity. There is a potential reputational risk to the Council and its partners should the initiative be unsuccessful.

Alternative Options

Alternative Option 1

The Council adopts the option detailed in Consideration 8 of this Report.

Alternative Option 2

The Council advertises externally for expressions of interest in the site with a view to a commercial leasehold opportunity.

Alternative Option 3

The Council seeks to dispose of the land at a market consideration.

Consultees

All Directorates of Herefordshire Council via Directors and Heads of Service

Hereford City Council

Local Members

Halo

Wheeled Sports for Hereford

Background Papers

None at this stage

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
on Mr Geoff Hughes, Director of Adult & Community Services on (01432) 260695

WESLEYAN CHAPEL, KINGTON

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: RESOURCES

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected:

Kington Town

Purpose:

To consider disposal of the Wesleyan Chapel, Kington on the open market.

Key Decision:

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation

THAT approval be given to proceed with the disposal of the Wesleyan Chapel on the open market.

Considerations

1. The Wesleyan Chapel was originally acquired by Leominster District Council. It is a Listed Grade II building that has been in a poor state of repair for many years.
2. In order to keep the building wind and water tight, over the last 5 years the Council has incurred grounds maintenance costs of £3,200 and building maintenance costs of £11,081.74, including in 2004/05 roof and structural repairs of £7,210.90.
3. Over the last two years officers, Cabinet Members and local interested parties have endeavoured to find a sustainable use for the Wesleyan Chapel in Kington town centre. Given the Chapel's central location the Kington Area Regeneration Partnership were particularly anxious to include community usage into any proposals for the building.
4. Since 1992 a number of feasibility reports have been prepared on potential uses for the building; these include a youth hostel, Info Centre and Library and a Sure Start Centre. More recently a mixed private sector and community use was considered. In all cases the high cost of conversion and the ongoing revenue costs rendered each scheme non-viable.
5. The costs of conversion range from £950,000 to in excess of £1.6 million.
6. External sources of funding were explored including Heritage Lottery, Objective 2 and Rural Regeneration Zone, and although some end uses could be eligible for funding the level of grants available were inadequate for the extent of work that would be involved.

7. Meetings have been held recently with representatives from Kington Regeneration to look at the business case for retention. It has been concluded that a viable business case cannot be achieved.
8. In terms of the Leominster District Adopted Plan policy K7 indicates that civic and/or community uses would be appropriate for the building although other uses, e.g. commercial are not necessarily ruled out. The Local Plan indicates that the garden land could provide for ancillary requirements of any use within the building itself, e.g. car parking and servicing, and there has been permission in the past (now expired) for retail uses on the land. The policy also stresses the importance of retaining the stone wall along the western edge of the site.
9. Officers have investigated the possibility of de-listing the Chapel, but following consultation with planners it appears that this option is fraught with difficulties. A de-listing is unlikely, as there is no precedent for a local authority being granted approval to de-list a building.
10. AWM advised that in the current market the building could hold development potential for a mixed commercial/office and residential type scheme.
11. A number of local agents have been approached. Most were confident that they could secure the sale of the building. Disposal by means of auction is, therefore, proposed. It is proposed that this capital receipt be earmarked for the Accommodation Strategy.

Risk Management

The major constraint for the building is likely to be its Grade II listed status. The local plan indicates that 'particular care will be required for the restoration and conversion in order to ensure that the architectural characteristics and features of the building are retained'

Consultees

- Advantage West Midlands.
- Kington Area Regeneration Partnership.
- Local Member for Kington.

Background Papers

None identified.

INTEGRATED COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT SERVICE

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: SOCIAL CARE ADULTS AND HEALTH

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To receive an update on performance and development plans related to the community equipment service.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

That the proposed plans for current and future development of the Integrated Community Equipment Service to meet growing demand for specialist equipment services for people with disabilities across Herefordshire be approved.

Reasons

Following the presentation of a report on 15th December, 2005 Cabinet requested an update report on performance and a Business/Action Plan, detailing the programme of work for ICES.

Considerations

1. The Integrated Community Equipment Service (ICES) is a joint service provided by Herefordshire Council under a pooled budget arrangement with Herefordshire Primary Care Trust. In 2005/6, the pooled budget is £486,940. This budget covers all running costs, including accommodation and staffing costs, as well as the purchase of equipment items.
2. Integrated Community Equipment Services were established under guidelines issued by the Department of Health requiring health and social care to work together. ICES has now become an essential part of mainstream services and is a key component in the prevention agenda, the importance of which has been highlighted in the recent Department of Health white paper on the future of community services.
3. Performance is monitored by the key indicator BVPI56/D54, which measures the percentage of items satisfactorily installed within seven days of the decision to supply date. The service has worked hard over the past year to improve the ratings for this indicator. This has involved working across both health and social

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Sue Dale, Prevention Services Manager on 01432 261778, or Jo Hart, Partnership Manager on 01432 383485

care to improve time scales on a range of activities. The target for 2005/6 is 86%. Current projections show that 91% of items are being installed within seven days of the decision to supply, therefore we are exceeding our 2005/6 target. This places Herefordshire in the top quartile of our comparator authorities.

4. Appendix 1 is a Business Action Plan, which shows those areas of activity, both current and planned, outlined in the report presented to Cabinet in December 2005. It identifies the actions required to implement these plans, together with an outline of the resource implications. These plans will inform the ICES Management Advisory Board's work plan for the coming year. The Board is made up of stakeholders in the service, including representatives of user organisations. Recommendations for improvements and changes to the service will be developed by the Advisory Board and submitted to the Older People's Programme Board for approval and for funding decisions.
5. At this stage the majority of actions identified in the Business Action Plan will be supported through existing resources and will not require any additional investment. However, it has been identified that the introduction of a new Driver/Fitter Service, to deliver and install equipment, will require an increase of £30,000 per annum in the current ICES budget. A Joint Commissioning Strategy for ICES is being developed to plan for future service developments, which will meet the needs of a growing older and vulnerable population in Herefordshire. It is proposed that the Commissioning Strategy be submitted to Cabinet in March 2007, in order to highlight areas where future investment will be required.

Risk Management

In order to meet the needs of a growing older and vulnerable population in Herefordshire it is recognised that there will need to be future investment in ICES in order to provide a service that supports these service user groups to continue to live in their own community.

Alternative Options

Not applicable.

Consultees

A process of consultation will be undertaken within partner organisations and with other stakeholders by the ICES Management Advisory Board, on proposed developments within the service. All proposed developments will be submitted to the ICES Older People's Programme Board.

Background Papers

None identified.

Herefordshire Integrated Community Equipment Service

Business Action Plan 2006/7

a. Current Activity

| Area of operation | Target | Action(s) required | Resource implications | Timescale |
|--------------------|---|---|--|--|
| Hospital Discharge | To ensure that discharges are not delayed by the need for equipment to be in place | To work with health and social care colleagues to address equipment needs as a part of the planning for discharge. | Within available resources | September 2006 |
| Intermediate Care | Provision of equipment within 7 days of decision to supply | Work with Intermediate Care teams to ensure an integrated assessment/delivery/fitting process | Within available resources | September 2006 |
| Links with Housing | <p>a) Installation (fitting ready for use) of equipment items by in-house handyman agency to improve performance ratings (D54/BVPI56).</p> <p>b) Close working with Housing OT</p> <p>c) Minor adaptations (funded by ICES, delivered by Private Sector Housing through You @ Home) carried out within 7 days</p> | <p>a) Following the Driver Fitter pilot scheme, evaluate and, if appropriate, develop as a part of the ICES service</p> <p>b) Housing OT appointed. In post from 3 April</p> <p>c) Establish internal service level agreement with Private Sector Housing</p> | <p>a) Estimated Driver/Fitter pilot cost £2000, to be met from existing revenue budget. A bid for continuation funding will be made to Older Peoples Programme Board, annual cost c£30K.</p> <p>b) No revenue cost</p> <p>c) No revenue cost</p> | <p>a) Pilot scheme February 2006; full introduction planned for April 2006, depending on funding.</p> <p>b) On going.</p> <p>c) September 2006</p> |
| Direct Payments | Support and contribute to PI C51 (Direct Payments) – target for 2005/6 = 100 service users receiving a Direct Payment | <p>a) Finalise policy & procedures for equipment and put in place</p> <p>b) Develop policy & procedures for minor adaptations</p> | To be met from revenue as no separate funds are identified for this. There will be implications for the Section 31 ICES budget due to loss of economies | <p>a) April 2006</p> <p>b) Work to be commenced beginning 2007.</p> |

| Area of operation | Target | Action(s) required | Resource implications | Timescale |
|--|--|---|---|--|
| Direct Payments | | | of scale in purchasing and fewer items will be returned for re-use. | |
| Competency Framework | <p>Broaden range of staff able to access equipment Reduce OT waiting times for assessments.</p> <p>Average wait for OT assessment: 7 months N.B. These assessments are holistic and not purely related to equipment needs. The OT service is implementing a range of strategies to address this issue.</p> | Implement competency frameworks so that care staff are able to undertake simple assessments for equipment | Staff time. Training session time. NB Saving on OT time | September 2006 |
| ICT – software upgrade | Upgrade to version 4 of MESaLS software to allow direct access to online ordering by clinicians and to improve management reporting | ICT agreement Order and install new software. Staff training Clinician training | Capital (£15k) already identified | April 2006 Software provider has given notice that support is to be withdrawn from the current version by September 2006. |
| Compliance with BVPI56/D54- % of items satisfactorily delivered and installed within 7 days. | <p>Target for 2005/2006 86%</p> <p>Target for 2006/2007 88%</p> | Improve satisfactory installation returns by making equipment ready for use at time of delivery | See above (Links with Housing a)) | March 2007 |

b) Future Activity

| Area of operation | Target | Action(s) required | Resource implications | Timescale |
|-----------------------------|--|--|---|--|
| Telecare and Smart Houses | Support PI C32 (Help to Live at Home) | Run 3 development projects – dementia; intermediate care; frail elderly. | Preventative Technology Grant to initiate and develop the infrastructure. £114k Year 1 £192k Year 2 Bid for Supporting People monies to joint fund development. Expect that savings made elsewhere will be assigned for the long term. | From April 2006 to March 2008 |
| Wheelchair Service | a) ICES contracted to store & distribute wheelchairs b) Wheelchair service to co-locate | a) agreement with wheelchair service b) Suitable premises required | Income generator for pooled budget. Estimated value of contract £16k The service has around 3,500 users. | a) PCT has recently extended the existing contract for a further year to April 2007 to allow further discussions to take place. b) See Location of Services (below) |
| Short term wheelchair loans | Introduce a loan service for Herefordshire, to operate under ICES | Scope volume and need. Determine eligibility. Develop procedures. | Development money of £10k required. Additional revenue of approx £5k p.a. required to operate the service and to maintain stock. Identify funding through Older People's Programme Board | March 2007 |

| Area of operation | Target | Action(s) required | Resource implications | Timescale |
|-------------------------------|---|---|---|------------|
| Mobility Aids | Incorporate walking aids currently managed by community physiotherapists into ICES | Scope volume and identified need. | Income generation for pooled budget as existing funding will be transferred to ICES. | March 2007 |
| Location of Services | Occupy larger premises to allow for expansion. To include additional services outlined above; assessment, demonstration and training facilities; increased storage, cleaning, maintenance and office space. | Identify suitable premises Plan logistics of move | Capital (£100k) already identified. Additional funding from inclusion of further services and through Older People's Programme Board. | March 2008 |
| Commissioning Strategy | Develop joint commissioning strategy for all ICES services | Identify funding streams and agree levels of service provision | Staff time | March 2007 |
| Local Targets for performance | Develop local performance indicators to track service development and outcomes e.g. % of equipment re-cycled. | Agree targets with partners and stakeholders via Management Advisory Board. Increase awareness amongst users of the need to return equipment. | Staff time (see also ICT – software upgrade above) | March 2007 |

Sue Dale – Prevention Services Manager
March 2006

HOMELESSNESS UPDATE

PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: SOCIAL CARE ADULTS AND HEALTH

CABINET

20TH APRIL, 2006

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

To receive an update on progress to date with homelessness prevention in Herefordshire and to provide an overview of the shape of the homelessness and housing advice services provided by Herefordshire Council since transfer from Herefordshire Housing Ltd on 1st April, 2006.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendations

- That (a) the report be noted; and
- (b) reports on progress and developments in homelessness prevention services and the work of the Homelessness and Housing Advice Steering Group, now services have been transferred back in-house, be submitted to Cabinet on a regular basis.

Reasons

The number of homelessness presentations and acceptances in Herefordshire has risen steadily since 2002, accompanied by a significant rise in spending on temporary accommodation. There were 510 homelessness acceptances in 2004/05.

In July 2005, Cabinet agreed a number of 'spend to save' initiatives, based upon a homelessness prevention agenda. Since then, changes have been implemented which have led to an improving position around homelessness prevention in Herefordshire. Herefordshire Council is now once again providing homelessness and housing advice services following the transfer of services back in-house from Herefordshire Housing Ltd.

Considerations

1. Two full time equivalent homelessness prevention officers have dealt with over 100 homelessness cases since they took up post in January 2006. Less than 10% of these cases have gone on to become homelessness applications under the Housing Act 1996. These officers are also tackling some of the wider issues around homelessness prevention such as liaising with private landlords and setting up a programme of interventions in schools.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from Richard Gabb, Head of Strategic Housing Services, 01432 261902, or Derek Allen, Homelessness Service Change Manager, 01432 261567

2. The spend to save fund has enabled 30 successful homelessness prevention payments to be made between January and March 2006. The total value of these payments is £9,000, representing a projected saving of approximately £300,000 by preventing temporary accommodation bookings to bed and breakfast establishments.
3. Successful mediation services are being provided by Herefordshire Mediation, which has enabled young people to stay at home where appropriate and Women's Aid has ensured sanctuary options are being explored where appropriate, in cases of domestic violence.
4. The number of new families booked into bed and breakfast accommodation monthly has fallen steadily from 24 in November 2005 to 9 in March 2006, leading to an improved out turn position in this particular budget year.
5. Under the previous arrangements staff were located in one central office in Hereford. Now the team is back in-house, they are based across a number of locations in Herefordshire, utilising the opportunities afforded by the Info in Herefordshire model.
6. Negotiations with Shelter are taking place over re-specifying the Herefordshire project 'Homeless to home' service to give an increased homelessness prevention focus, to include co-location with Strategic Housing staff. These new arrangements are being trialled now.
7. The historical accumulation of the number of families living in temporary accommodation remains a challenge, although this number is reducing slowly. A new one-year secondment will be available within the homelessness team, designed to focus on monitoring temporary accommodation usage and encouraging active bidding by homeless service users.
8. Early indicators remain encouraging for an improving position during 2006/07. For comparison, during the final quarter of 2004/05, 188 homelessness applications were made, resulting in 118 acceptances. During the final quarter of 2005/06, 94 applications were made, resulting in 45 acceptances.

Risk Management

The budget for bed and breakfast accommodation in 2006/07 may not be adequate, despite additional budget being allocated. The implications will be reported as part of the integrated performance report throughout the financial year.

Continued use of bed and breakfast accommodation for families could result in judicial review proceedings being taken against the Council by families accommodated in Bed and Breakfast for longer than six weeks contrary to the Homelessness (Suitability of Accommodation) Order (England) 2003.

Alternative Options

Not applicable.

Consultees

Not applicable

Background Papers

None identified.