

Chief Executive's Office

Chief Executive: N.M. Pringle

**To: All Members of Cabinet:
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P.J. Edwards
Mrs. J.P. French
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9th February, 2005

Dear Councillor,

**MEETING OF CABINET
THURSDAY, 17TH FEBRUARY, 2005 AT 2.15 P.M.
COUNCIL CHAMBER, BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD**

AGENDA (05/03)

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. MINORITY ETHNIC PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES IN HEREFORDSHIRE

To consider the report setting out the findings, conclusions and resulting recommendations of a research project examining 'minority ethnic people's experiences in Herefordshire'. (Pages 1 - 6)

4. DEVELOPING THE CHILDREN'S AGENDA IN HEREFORDSHIRE: CHANGE FOR CHILDREN

To note progress in the local change programme. (Pages 7 - 18)

5. DEVELOPING A COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN HEREFORDSHIRE

To note the requirement to develop a commissioning strategy for children and young people in Herefordshire, to receive an outline of the initial elements for such a strategy, and to consider the immediate priorities and responses to the challenges on resources and performance 2004-05.

(Pages 19 - 24)

6. HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL SUPPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR

To receive a report on the review of Herefordshire Council support to the community and Voluntary Sector (CVS), and to consider approving the report's recommendations. *(Pages 25 - 34)*

7. COURTYARD REVIEW

To consider the recommendations of the review of the Courtyard undertaken by the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee. *(Pages 35 - 60)*

8. COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT/INDEPENDENT LIVING

To receive a report on developments in the Community Equipment Service and to consider the future direction of the Service. *(Pages 61 - 64)*

EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

In the opinion of the Proper Officer, the next item will not be, or is likely not to be, open to the public and press at the time it is considered.

RECOMMENDATION:

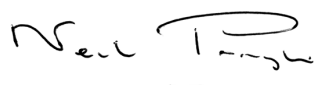
That the public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Schedule 12(A) of the Act as indicated below.

9. DEVELOPING SERVICES TO PEOPLE WITH LEARNING DISABILITIES

To receive a report on budget pressures in Learning Disability Services in 2004/05 and to consider the need for modernisation of services to people with learning disabilities. (Pages 65 - 78)

This item discloses any terms proposed or to be proposed by or to the authority in the course of negotiations for a contract for the acquisition or disposal of property or the supply of goods or services.

Yours sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Neil Pringle". The signature is written in a cursive style with a large, stylized 'P'.

**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
County Secretary and Solicitor
County Treasurer

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- 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.
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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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MINORITY ETHNIC PEOPLE'S EXPERIENCES IN HEREFORDSHIRE

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CABINET

17TH FEBRUARY, 2005

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider the report setting out the findings, conclusions and resulting recommendations of a research project examining 'minority ethnic people's experiences in Herefordshire'. An executive summary together with conclusions and recommendations are set out in the Appendices. The full report is enclosed as a separate document for Cabinet Members and is available in the Members' Room, on the Council's website and on request.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation

- THAT (a) the generally positive conclusions drawn from the research be noted, whilst recognising that there is no room for complacency and that there is still a great deal of work to be undertaken in ensuring that minority ethnic communities have equality of access to services and they are not discriminated against in the wider community,**
- (b) it be noted the actions taken to date which will address some of the areas of concern raised in the report, and**
- (c) it be noted that the revised Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan to be presented to Cabinet on 24th March 2005, will include proposals to address the issues raised by this report.**

Reasons

In its role as a direct service provider the Council has a duty to ensure equality of access to information, services and employment. In its community leadership role the Council also has a duty to promote the integration of communities and racial harmony.

The report's findings will be used to inform policy development in a number of areas including the revised Race Equality Scheme and Action Plan as required by the Race Relations Amendment Act 2000, which it is anticipated will be put before Cabinet for consideration on 24th March, 2005. The conclusions drawn from the research and resulting recommendations can be found at Appendix 2.

Background

1. Recognising that relatively little was known regarding those from ethnic minorities residing and working in the County, in order to inform development of the Council's Race Equality Scheme and associated Action Plan this research was commissioned.
2. The research was commissioned, and largely funded by the Council with a contribution from West Mercia Constabulary (Herefordshire Division), via the Herefordshire Race Equality Partnership.
3. As previously reported to Cabinet and Strategic Monitoring Committee, publication of the report has been delayed until now in order to resolve concerns over the content of one passage in the report which referred to a specific incident which had been the subject of a criminal trial and conviction. Following legal advice the detailed passage has been removed from the report. In order to maintain the integrity of the report a summary of the authors perceptions, based on the interviews conducted, has been included.
4. The research confirms the difficulty in achieving representative consultation and predicting the future needs of those from the relatively small and dispersed ethnic minority population within the County.
5. A review of the Council's Travellers Policy is underway and the appointment of a Travellers Liaison Officer is also planned which should assist in addressing some of the concerns raised in the report.
6. Since the report was commissioned the Council has commenced publishing copies of Herefordshire Matters in Portuguese and Russian, and is putting in place translation and interpretation services to facilitate easier access to services and information for ethnic minorities. The Council has commenced a three year programme of impact assessments to ensure that service delivery and policy development is sensitive to the needs of ethnic minorities, addresses inequalities and broader diversity issues.

Alternative Options

None identified

Risk Management

Not applicable

Consultees

As detailed in the report.

Executive summary

- 1) The composition of the minority population of the County is not typical of the UK as a whole
- 2) The largest single group comprises the seasonal workers, mainly of eastern European origin (3000 at most¹), followed by Irish (slightly over 700) and other white groups (about 2000)
- 3) The next largest groups are Romany Travellers (estimated at 750), people who are mixed white and Asian (260), Chinese (210) and Indian (168)
- 4) Some groups can clearly be identified from being in similar employment, but most minority ethnic people will have individual and unique motives for being in the County, preventing any meaningful generalisations
- 5) Aside from seasonal workers, there are low numbers of minority ethnic staff in most workplaces, even at levels where recruitment is done on a national basis. The clear exception is Hereford hospital where close to 50% of medical staff are from ethnic minorities
- 6) Minority ethnic people identified what they liked about the County as: the countryside, the people and the low crime rate. There was no pattern in what they disliked
- 7) With the exception of Travellers and Jews, it would be misleading to speak of minority 'communities'
- 8) The relative absence of such communities and the proportion of the minority population with mixed backgrounds mean that any specific needs related to culture are not easily predicted
- 9) The minority ethnic population proved harder to access than anticipated
- 10) The Jews in the County report no negative features about their life in the area
- 11) Educational provision for Traveller children is long established and compares well with provision elsewhere (with the exception, some argue, of provision for any boys with behavioural difficulties)
- 12) Health provision for Travellers is prioritised to an unusual degree but could be better supported by the Council
- 13) There are some persisting issues about Council provision for Traveller sites and stopping places which seem to be 'on hold' but which could be resolved. In this respect policy is inconsistent and incoherent
- 14) Some Romany Travellers (whether housed or not) feel a persisting hostility towards them from neighbours and the police
- 15) Other issues to do with Travellers involved youth provision, confident handling of child protection, relationships between different groups of Travellers, contact and liaison with officialdom, economic vulnerability

- 16) As regards seasonal workers, there are tensions between the market forces acting upon farmers, the physical requirements of housing large numbers of workers and meeting other reasonable needs, and public unease about the workers' presence. Herefordshire is a specific local example of the impact of changes in the European economy and the increased mobility of the European (and global) workforce. These changes are clearly not welcomed by some but are not reversible
- 17) Chinese and Bangladeshi restaurateurs reported little of the late night racial abuse that has been reported elsewhere, though it does occur and is seldom reported because of perceptions of response time
- 18) Though individuals report significant, persisting and distressing incidents, many mentioning children as perpetrators, we did not obtain consistent evidence of visible minorities facing high levels of discrimination or prejudice. *These experiences are dependent on many factors and neither part this summary statement should be cited out of context.*
- 19) The police were generally regarded positively; clear steps have been taken to improve the recording of and response to racial crimes, though there is a feeling amongst some that there is little point in reporting such things
- 20) There is evidence of poor relationships and negative expectations between *some* police officers and *some* Travellers
- 21) Almost no schools have significant numbers of minority ethnic children; the largest single group represented anywhere being Travellers (making up 4% of one school roll). One primary school had 7% minority ethnic pupils in 2003
- 22) While some parents reported concerns most who commented felt schools had dealt well with racist incidents
- 23) There is no evidence of a pattern of experiences of key services related to specific ethnicities, i.e. no group emerges as being particularly dissatisfied
- 24) Health care was regarded very positively
- 25) Environmental Health, Social Services and housing were barely mentioned by informants, most having had no contact with public provision in these areas
- 26) There is evidence of a positive climate of concern in public institutions in the County to promote acceptance of diversity. We were struck on several occasions by the support and goodwill shown towards the research by key managers and those who controlled access to data. This was echoed by other indices of official recognition of and support for diversity in exhibitions and posters
- 27) There is no pattern of the local press sensationalising or over-simplifying issues of diversity

Footnote 1. *The sources of these figures are discussed on page 5.*

Conclusions and recommendations

1. It should be recognised that since the composition and pattern of settlement of the minority population of the County is not typical of the UK as a whole, assumptions cannot be 'imported' from more 'typical' areas nor are useful generalisations easily made
2. With the exception of Travellers and Jews, it is misleading to speak of minority 'communities'. This means representative consultation is problematic and any specific needs related to culture are not easily predicted
3. As regards seasonal workers, in the light of some hostility evident in the County, the tensions between the economic pressures on employing farmers and the strain (or perceived strain) on local facilities needs the involvement and understanding of local permanent residents. The wider impact on and benefit to the local economy from the foreign workers could clearly do with more publicity. This might include the argument that foreign workers – especially when temporary - involve no costs to the area or the UK for prior education, very little for health and by definition none for old age
4. The provision of English lessons for seasonal workers, though difficult to arrange, would significantly enhance their experience in the UK
5. Accessible email provision for seasonal workers should be prioritised by whoever is in a position to provide it
6. Relevant findings from this report should be made available on a website so as to make it accessible to the county's seasonal workers
7. Better understanding and support at a high level within the Council could lead to coherent provision for Travellers that would make the County a model for other areas
8. While health provision for Travellers is prioritised to an unusual degree it could be better supported by the Council
9. There are some persisting issues about Council provision for Traveller sites and stopping places which seem to be 'on hold' but which could be resolved.
10. Any proposal from outsiders to administer a private site on behalf of the County should not diminish its responsibility to Travellers, and should have clear and agreed criteria in relation to selecting tenants, tenancy rights, rent control and rights of access by TES and health services
11. There is a need for continued development of County services for Travellers in relation to: provision of places for boys with behavioural difficulties; youth provision; confident handling of child protection; relationships between different groups of Travellers, appointment of planned Gypsy liaison officer, awareness raising training for staff
12. The police service should examine as a matter of some urgency its relationships with all Traveller groups

13. The response to claims of unlawful discrimination under the Race Relations Acts should be pursued as actively on Travellers' behalf as for any other group
14. In relation to its enforcement activities on Travellers stopping places, the Council might consider the risk of being in breach of its duties under the Race Relations Amendment Act
15. While the police were generally regarded positively; continued work needs to be done towards achieving a 'true vision' of racial crime. Some of this work probably involves tackling *perceptions* about response time
16. The police should consider involving Chinese, Indian and other ethnic minority restaurants in the radio network currently operating for pubs and clubs. They might also consider establishing regular meetings with restaurateurs in relation to community safety. This may be especially relevant as new licensing laws come into operation, allowing longer opening hours
17. As the largest employers of minority ethnic staff, public sector agencies need to be aware that while there is no clear evidence of visible minorities facing high levels of discrimination or prejudice expressed towards them, individuals report significant, persisting and distressing incidents. Many mention children as perpetrators
18. Good practice in dealing with racist incidents in schools should be celebrated and shared widely in the County to increase teachers' and parents' confidence. At the same time the prevalence of children's involvement in racial incidents outside school should be made known to all high schools
19. The positive climate of concern in public institutions in the County to promote acceptance of diversity should be affirmed by senior management to help ensure its continuation

*Minority Ethnic People's
Experiences in
Herefordshire*

*a Report
Commissioned by
Herefordshire Council*

September 2004

Chris Gaine



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Preface: the research brief

The main objective of the survey is to undertake quantitative and qualitative research into the stable and transient minority ethnic populations of Herefordshire in relation to the following areas:

- a To gain an accurate baseline of the stable and transient minority ethnic populations of Herefordshire, in addition to census data, including data on (but not exclusively):
 - Number
 - Geographical spread
 - Age
 - Gender
 - Marital status
 - Employment
 - Income
 - Health
 - Housing tenure
 - Household makeup
 - Length of residency
 - Languages spoken
- b To gain an overall assessment of minority ethnic perceptions of living in Herefordshire based on (but not exclusively):
 - Their interaction with the rest of the population
 - Their interaction with service providers, especially the Council and the health services
 - The availability of formal and informal support networks and community groups in the county
- c To gain more detailed information on a number of specific issues, namely:
 - Housing
 - Employment
 - Leisure
 - Education
 - Health
 - Social welfare
 - Culture and religion
- d To gain an insight into the aspirations for the future of minority ethnic residents of Herefordshire.

The research was carried out between September 2003 and May 2004 by Professor Chris Gaine with the assistance of Dr Pam Carroll, Ms Vida Lau, Mrs Karen Burch and Ms Jasmin Rahm.

Executive summary

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Research approach

Demography

One of the goals of the research was to accumulate reliable evidence about numbers of specific groups of people. To a great extent this goal was supported by the Census carried out in 2001, with consequent data being available by the time the research was being undertaken.

However, while the Census is by far the most thorough demographic survey available, and its resources far exceed anything other researchers can hope to match, it does not provide answers to everything local service providers may wish to know:

- The considerable numbers of migrant workers in the county would not have been counted in the Census, even they had been present on any scale on the Census date, which was outside of their usual season. Their numbers have also increased to quite an extent since the Census.
- One group is known to seldom declare themselves as such on Census forms (or other official records): Travellers. This is due to the historic stigma of 'being a gypsy' and the absence of any faith that declaring themselves would bring any benefit.
- It is possible that in a growing climate of what the Runnymede Trust first called 'Islamophobia' some Muslims did not indicate their faith on the Census form (even though it was issued before the events of September 11 2001).
- Identifying one's ethnicity is not straightforward. It is known that some people of overseas descent declare themselves as ethnically British because that is how they wish to be seen. Several LEAs also experience parents from visible minorities recording their child's ethnicity for school records as 'white'.

As a result the figures and patterns we suggest in the Report are almost always composites drawn from

- The Census
- Local institutional records (such as school and college databases)
- Databases from large employers and employment agencies
- Discussion with local professionals with contact with specific groups
- Wider research evidence and experience.

Some figures are rounded where it is felt either census or other sources have built in inaccuracy.

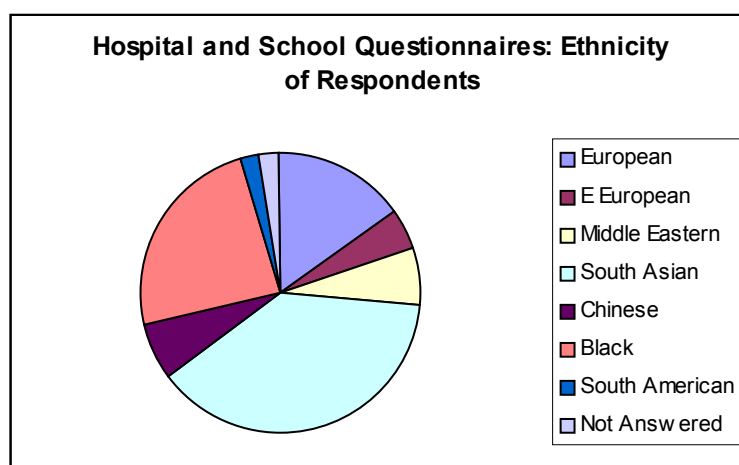
The estimates were made in December 2003.

The study was undertaken between August 2003 and April 2004.

Contacting the relevant population

Given the variety of minority individuals, small numbers and consequent absence of cohesive minority communities, several approaches were tried in an attempt to reach the County's minority ethnic people.

- Letters and questionnaires were sent through specific institutions using organisational databases (examples of these are reproduced in Appendix One) thus preserving individuals' anonymity unless they chose to contact us. The letters explained the purpose of the research and invited people to complete the questionnaire and/or contact us for a telephone or face-to-face interview. Three routes were used:
 - the hospital trust (as the largest employer and also one which had several minority ethnic staff) which forwarded the letters through their internal post, enclosing an additional letter backing the research
 - the three post-16 colleges, who again were asked to forward letters and questionnaires in this case to minority ethnic students. They also forwarded the letters through their internal post
 - the schools, which were asked to forward letters and questionnaires to minority ethnic parents, typically by giving the envelopes to the minority ethnic children and asking them to take them home. A number of schools were unwilling to forward the letters although it was clear in the covering letter that the LEA supported the research. One decided not to forward the letter to Traveller parents, one said they only had one set of minority ethnic parents (who were Chinese), one said 'not applicable to the families concerned'. The schools who offered no explanation were contacted by phone: two no longer had minority ethnic pupils, one (with Traveller pupils) had a new head and could not account for the acting head's decision, one refused to explain their decision.















In total we received 46 returned questionnaires, about half from the hospital staff and half from parents. 80 hospital questionnaires were sent and we believe about 300 were actually sent home via schools. (The results from the college students have generally been analysed separately and integrated into the text, because for the most part those who received them were in their late teens and early 20s, so the focus of questions was slightly different and much shorter).

- Contacting minority ethnic students at the RNCB and interviewing them.
- Using professionals as go-betweens to establish contacts. This was particularly used to make contact with Travellers.
- Writing to and subsequently visiting minority ethnic restaurants (specifically Bangladeshi and Chinese). Interpreters were used and the letters were translated (Appendix 2).
- Interviewing seasonal workers, farmers, and the recruiting agencies that organise work visas.
- Interviewing some key professionals from the Police, Traveller Education and the Health Service
- Interviewing others with voluntary involvement in race and ethnicity equality issues.

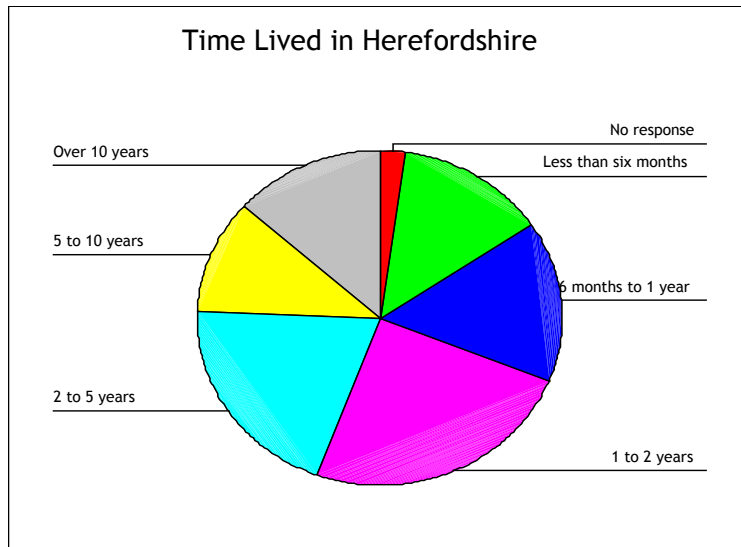
The forwarded letters and questionnaires produced very few interviews, which was disappointing since it is a strategy that has worked reasonably well elsewhere. The explanation may be that in the other places where we have done similar work we were able to give a local telephone contact number and indeed an institutional address rather nearer than the distance between Sussex and Hereford.

As a result we have fewer in-depth and detailed insights into minority experience in the County that we would have wished. The following table summarises something of the sources of evidence against each of the identified groups.

<i>group</i>	<i>number in County</i>	<i>interviews</i>	<i>questionnaires</i>	<i>information from professionals, allies, officials, employers etc</i>	<i>Statistics, document or policy analysis</i>
Jews	130	Jewish Council Secretary	Not used	summary circulated and approved	
Travellers	1000	19	Not used	6 + summary circulated & modified	
Seasonal Workers	3000	38 (in 6 groups)	Not used	10	
EU workers	1000?	2	12	1	
Chinese	210	22	2	1	
Bangladeshis	37	1	2	1	
Pakistanis	46	2	5	Not available	
Indians	168	4	9		
Asian white mixed	260	2	0		
Asian other (incl SE Asian)	300	0	5		
Black people (incl mixed)	445	5	7		
All others	100	3	6		

The following graph indicates length of residence in the County of the questionnaire respondents.

Time Lived in Herefordshire



Introduction: Diversity in Herefordshire

As regards 'race' and ethnicity Herefordshire is not a microcosm of the UK as a whole. This is obviously so in the case of numbers but less obviously so in the composition of the minorities that are present in the County, and the reasons for their presence.

Drawn from a variety of sources (see page 5) we would **estimate** these figures for 2003:

Temporary workers	Eastern European	3000
Temporary workers	Portugal	100
Other white minorities	Irish	800
	All others (Welsh, French, USA, etc)	2000
	Jewish (all also counted as white)	130
Travellers	Irish Travellers (some counted above)	100
	Romany Travellers	750
South Asian	Indian	168
	Pakistani	46
	Bangladeshi	37
	Asian 'other'	84
	Mixed white/Asian	260
Chinese	Chinese	210
'Other' ethnic groups	S E Asian, Middle Eastern etc	163
Black	Caribbean	65
	African	88
	Mixed white/African	80
	Mixed white/Caribbean	195
	Other black	17

The groupings in this table reflect a number of assumptions. In common parlance 'minority ethnic' is widely recognised as shorthand (or a euphemism) for people who are distinguishable by skin colour: those in the table described as Asian, South East Asian, of Middle Eastern origin and Black. The total number within these groups is about 1400 people, or rather less than one per cent.

It is increasingly recognised, however, that this shorthand obscures aspects of cultural identity and experiences of discrimination that are not simply tied to colour, nor do they reflect the legal situation. Romany Travellers constitute an ethnic group under the Race Relations Acts, as do Jews; the presence of both groups in the County presents opportunities and challenges to agencies' provision.

Having said this, and noting that it is very obvious from the table that the County's largest minorities are white, we have concentrated *mainly* on groups who from much evidence elsewhere may be expected to have specific issues of culture or discrimination which merit our attention. It is also true that while accessing *all* of our target research population has been difficult, there were even fewer ways open to us as researchers to access the 700 Irish people who categorised themselves in the Census as ethnically not British. The same applies to the 2000 white 'non British', but to a lesser extent since some were seasonal workers.

We would also want to underline another aspect of the shorthand about being British. The Census is careful to often include the term (e.g. 'Asian or Asian *British*

Bangladeshi’) and our omission of it in some tables and charts is simply for brevity. Based on national patterns of settlement, schools data and questionnaire returns it is reasonable to assume that the majority in most of the categories above are British citizens – the obvious exceptions being the seasonal workers and the Irish Travellers. It may be the case that the majority of the 90 or so Africans do not have British citizenship, but it is impossible to say without knowing which of the many countries in Africa they originate from. The Census shows about 2300 people born outside the UK but within the EU and 3400 outside it. Just over half of the latter are ‘white British’ (some likely to have had armed forces or Commonwealth connections of some kind) and a further quarter are ‘non-British white’. Put another way, of the 5700 Herefordshire residents born outside the UK, less than 700 are non-white.

Religion

The following table *combines* what the Census reveals about religious allegiances in the County, together with some wider research evidence and a few details gathered during the course of this research to summarise what is known about local ethnic minorities and religion.

Eastern European migrant workers	3000	Mainly Catholic, some Orthodox, observance not widespread
Portuguese migrant workers	100	Catholic background
Irish	700	Catholic background
All others (Welsh, French, mixed etc)	2000	Very varied but mainly Christian
Jews	130	About 50 practising
Irish Travellers (some counted above)	100	Almost all Catholic
Romany Travellers	750	Christian, but very varied observance
Indians	168	Slightly more Hindu than Sikh
Pakistanis	46	Almost all Muslim (but see below)
Bangladeshis	37	Almost all Muslim (but see below)
Asian ‘other’	84	About a third Christian, rest Muslim, Hindu, Buddhist
Mixed white/Asian	260	Christian or ‘no religion’
Chinese	210	Probably evenly split between Buddhist, Christian and no religion
‘Other’ ethnic groups	163	About half are Christian, the rest very mixed
Caribbean	65	Christian or no religion
African	88	Mainly Christian
Mixed white/African	80	Mainly Christian
Mixed white/Caribbean	195	Christian or no religion
Other black	17	Christian or no religion

The 347 Buddhists counted in the Census comprise around one third of the Chinese group, together with some Sri Lankans, Thais, and Nepalese. The rest are white.

Apparently precise Census data is sometimes misleading. The following table is extracted from one available from the ONS and contributes to the table above, but needs some commentary. The cells to which we want to draw attention are boxed and shaded.

Table S104 ETHNIC GROUP BY RELIGION

Table population : All people

Geographical level:

Herefordshire

	ALL PEOPLE	Christian	Buddhist	Hindu	Muslim	Sikh	No religion	Not stated
ALL PEOPLE	174,866	138,165	347	103	173	61	21,950	13,491
White	173,291	137,444	263	18	65	17	21,641	13,287
British	170,566	135,501	241	18	43	17	21,201	13,027
Irish	785	639	10	-	-	-	68	65
Other White	1,940	1,304	12	-	22	-	372	195
Mixed	697	393	5	3	27	-	170	88
White & Black Caribbean	195	120	-	-	-	-	49	26
White & Black African	83	54	-	-	5	-	17	4
White and Asian	262	140	5	3	13	-	61	37
Other Mixed	157	79	-	-	9	-	43	21
Asian	336	63	15	79	65	44	27	37
Indian	167	18	3	67	6	44	13	16
Pakistani	47	9	-	-	21	-	3	11
Bangladeshi	38	6	-	-	24	-	3	5
Other Asian	84	30	12	12	14	-	8	5
Black or Black British	165	128	-	-	-	-	12	25
Black Caribbean	64	49	-	-	-	-	9	6
Black African	83	67	-	-	-	-	-	16
Other Black	18	12	-	-	-	-	3	3
Chinese or Other Ethnic Group	377	137	64	3	16	-	100	54
Chinese	212	49	34	-	3	-	84	39
Other Ethnic Group	165	88	30	3	13	-	16	15

Cells in this table have been randomly adjusted to avoid the release of confidential data.

2001 Census © Crown Copyright

To take the Christian column first, in our judgement the figure of 9 Pakistani Christians (out of 47 in all) and six Bangladeshi Christians (out of 38) is so untypical nationally that it has to be questioned. The most thorough recent survey of minority

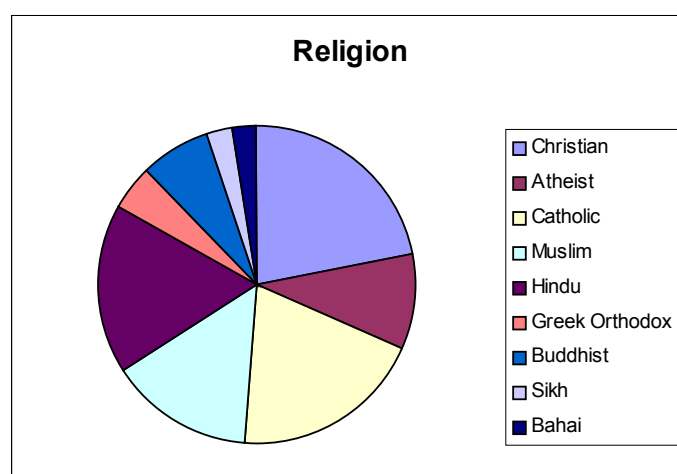
ethnic people in the UK was the Policy Studies Institute's *Ethnic Minorities in Britain* (1997) by Tariq Modood and others. This indicates 0% of Pakistanis identifying themselves as Christian and just 1% of Bangladeshis, and these very low figures are confirmed in the Census data for England and Wales (<http://www.statistics.gov.uk/statbase/Expodata/Spreadsheets/D6891.xls>) . Our suggestion would be that in each case these numbers are made up by one family, and that to base any policy on the assumption that this is typical of Pakistanis and Bangladeshis in general would be to take the Census data too uncritically.

Similar observations do *not* apply to the numbers of Hindus and Buddhists listed as white, since both these faiths actively proselytise in the UK with some success.

The numbers of white Muslims is much more intriguing. The Census lists 173 Muslims, of which half are apparently white. Islam does proselytise amongst white people but not to the extent that would produce proportions like this. Modood et al argue that their numbers are insignificant nationally (1997: 298); the Census for England and Wales shows 0.38% of white people are Muslims, of which the majority are 'white other' - in this context generally taken to mean Turkish.

The last misleading data from the Census tables concerns Sikhs, of which apparently 17 out of 61 in the county are white. The Census identifies 0.1% of English and Welsh whites as Sikhs and there are small percentages from some other ethnic groups. In practice, however, virtually all Sikhs have a heritage in the Punjab region of the sub-continent (even if born in the UK, Malaysia, Sri Lanka, Hong Kong, East Africa, or other places to which their families may have migrated). A very small number of white people who marry Sikhs convert, but it is highly unlikely that such a high percentage in Herefordshire fit this description. We would argue that the figure of 17 is not to be taken at face value; it may be people of Indian descent strategically identifying themselves as white, it may be children of mixed heritage identifying themselves as white.

The distribution of religious allegiance in the 46 questionnaires we had returned (see research approach) was as follows. 'Catholic' and 'Greek Orthodox' are distinguished from 'Christian' because that is what respondents themselves said.



Communities

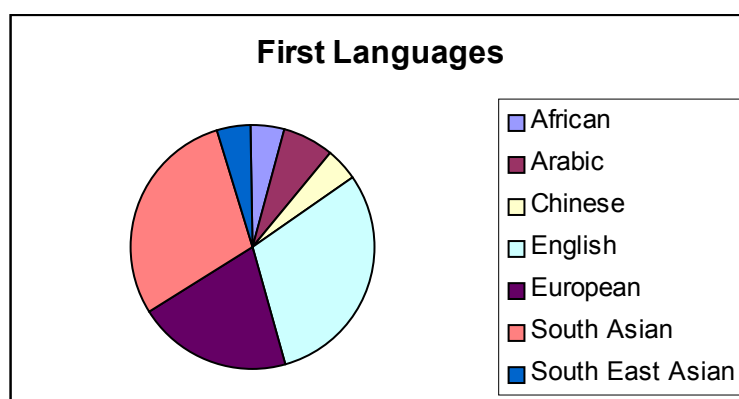
The numbers above indicate that it is unwise to speak loosely of minority ethnic 'communities' in the County. We return to this point at times, but since the word implies at least some practical connection as well as a consciousness of belonging,

we would suggest the only groups to whom the term could reasonably be applied are the three different kinds of Travellers and the Jews. The other groups are so small and so disparate that they are better thought of as individuals with different ethnicities rather than groups as such, and certainly not communities.

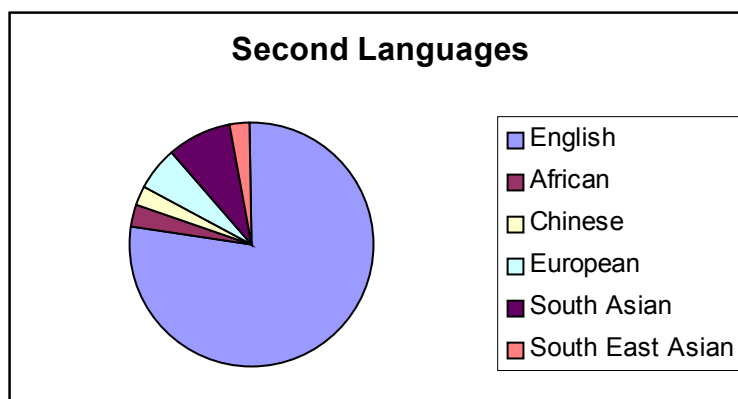
We do not have a clear overall account of people's presence in the county or their place in the economy, though some indications are given in separate sections below. The largest employers in the area who would recruit nationally for senior posts are in the public sector – the Council, the five post-16 colleges¹, and the NHS. The hospital employs about 80 minority ethnic staff, the colleges no more than six between them and the Council 29 (out of 5,600). Apart from the hospital, the largest group of minority people in one place is probably at the Royal National College for the Blind (RNCB) which, since it recruits students nationwide has about 10% from minority ethnic groups (about 24 people).

Language

One feature of community is shared language. Questionnaire returns and interview contacts indicated the spread of languages one would expect from the Census data (they are grouped geographically here to simplify the graph):



From what we found and from reasoning from circumstances elsewhere we would conclude that there is only one group of any size either routinely functioning in a language other than English or excluded because of lack of English – most of those in the graph below speak English as their second language. The group that may be the exception to this comprises temporary workers from Portugal at a local poultry producer. This is not to diminish the effect upon others who *are* excluded or the need to support them, but it is to say that there are not several specific groups that need targeting. The FE College has just two EFL courses, one intermediate and one advanced. Having said this, it was clear that Bangladeshis and Chinese people were more comfortable communicating with the researchers in Cantonese/Mandarin and Bengali and a handful of questionnaire returns indicated English as a third language.



We were also told that Romany continues to be widely spoken in the County though not usually in the hearing of non-Romanies, and that not being fluent in English seemed to evoke negative reactions and assumptions of stupidity from some. One questionnaire returned from someone of South American background argued that lack of fluency in English led to overtly or subtly insulting treatment on more than one occasion.

The agricultural seasonal workers need to be considered separately here, since although they are not fluent English speakers their contact with and needs from local provision are not the same as permanent residents. This is discussed further in the section that deals specifically with them, and we do suggest the provision for them of English tuition.

The following table summarises the spoken languages we identified in the County, generally in combination with English:

<i>Group</i>	<i>Roots/origin</i>	<i>nos</i>	<i>First language</i>	<i>Functional English?</i>
Temporary agricultural workers	Eastern European	3000	Great variety	Variable, Russian main common language
Temporary industrial workers	Portugal, Slovakia, Poland	150	Portuguese, Slovak, Polish	Not usually
Other white minorities	Irish	700	English	
	All others (Welsh, French, USA, mixed)	2000	English and several EU languages	Majority effective in English even if second language
	Jewish	130	English	
Travellers	Irish Travellers (some counted above)	100	English	
	Romany Travellers	750	English	
South Asian	Indian	168	Punjabi, Hindi, Gujerati, Malayalam, Tamil, Telegu	Yes
	Pakistani	46	Urdu, Punjabi, Pushto	Yes
	Bangladeshi	37	Bengali	Usually

	Asian 'other'	84	Burmese, Nepali, Sinhalese	No clear data
	Mixed white/Asian	260	English	
Mainly South East Asian	Chinese	210	Cantonese, Mandarin	Very varied
	Non-Chinese 'other'	163	Arabic, Malay, Thai	No clear data
Black	Caribbean	65	English	
	African	88	Ndebele, Yoruba, Shona, Afrikaans, and others	Usually
	Mixed white/African	80	English	
	Mixed white/Caribbean	195	English	
	Other black	17	No clear data	No clear data

People of South Asian descent

Usually described generically as 'Asians', Pakistanis, Indians and Bangladeshis combined make up 3.6% of the total UK population, thus making them in national terms the largest 'ethnic group' comprising not far off half of the UK's visible minorities. It is questionable to put together these three groups which are in reality quite distinct, with different (though very related) languages and variations in religion and culture, and indeed it only tends to be research done in the past that treats 'Asians' as anything like a homogenous group. We are doing so here for introductory purposes. Bearing in mind that many non-specialists will regard 'Asians' as homogenous, our purpose is to make some key distinctions within the Herefordshire population, insofar as that is possible. (In geographical terms Chinese people are of course 'Asian', but the convention in British research is to discuss them separately.)

Our guess is that some people of Sri Lankan, Thai, Vietnamese, Burmese and Malaysian descent will have described themselves as 'Asian/Asian British other' and are thus within the 84 counted in this (very disparate) group, though some of these may have placed themselves in yet another category, namely non-Chinese 'other ethnic group' (who number 166).

These numbers indicate that the South Asian population of the county has very different characteristics when compared to the UK as a whole. Of a total visible minority ethnic population of just under 1600 they are certainly not the largest group, with the usual 'big three' making up only 251 people and even if all those describing themselves as 'other Asian' and 'mixed white/Asian' are included the total is only 511, with another ten at the RNCB. Nationally Indians are the largest group and Bangladeshis the smallest, which is indeed the case in the County.

National data on the percentage of people who classified themselves as 'mixed white/Asian' are not yet available for comparison, but we know from the 1997 PSI study (Modood et al, 1997) that this group is not large nationally, so the Herefordshire population of 260 –the largest permanent minority group distinguishable by colour in the County - is not typical of the UK as a whole. School figures show 57 children in this group, making them (again very untypically) the largest visible minority in schools and also suggesting that it is a relatively young group of people. The County's post 16 education colleges have 23 mixed white/Asian students.

South Asians in full time education (plus 10 at RNCB)²

South Asians	Indians	15
	Pakistanis	0
	Bangladeshis	3
	Asian/Asian British 'other'	8
	mixed white/Asian	62

People of mixed descent

The County's ethnic minorities comprise more people who describe themselves as 'mixed' than is true of the population as a whole. Apart from the nationally unusual group of mixed Asian/white people there are about a further 400 people classified themselves this way in the Census, including about 250 mixed Black/white. These people of 'mixed ethnicity' may include some white people of mixed European backgrounds, but the wording of the Census question makes this unlikely. The schools' PLASC returns and data from the FE sector demonstrate this mixture is

present in schools at least as much as children with roots in one minority ethnic group.

People of mixed backgrounds in full time education (plus four at RNCB)

White/Asian mixed	82
White/Caribbean mixed	42
White/African mixed	22
Other group/Black mixed	3
Other mixed	67

This has implications for cultural provision. A significant group of Sikhs in the County might require some thought about a gurudwara, vegetarian food in hospitals and welfare provision, and consideration of potential exclusion through language. People of mixed descent, however, are unlikely to be unified by language, religion or culture, underlining the point we have already made warning against any assumption of minority ethnic ‘communities’. Such a varied population will not have predictable or easily quantifiable particular needs.

Black people

Although this term is disputed and has shifted in meaning over the years, we are using it here to refer to people with ancestry, however distant, in Africa. This therefore includes those who were actually African born, those born in the Caribbean and British born people of Caribbean, African and related mixed heritage. This is not, therefore, what we would call a ‘specific ethnicity’ in the same way as Pakistanis, since there are likely to be great variations amongst Black people with regard to roots, language religion and culture. The Census recorded about 450 people in this very disparate group who described themselves as Black.

Black people in the County (plus 8 at RNCB)

<i>Self classification (Black +...)</i>	<i>Census</i>	<i>Full time education</i>
Caribbean	65	3
African	88	19
Mixed white/African	80	22
Mixed white/Caribbean	195	42
Other black	17	8

Footnotes

1. The Further Education College, the College of Art and Design, the 6th Form College, the Royal National College for the Blind, and Holme Lacy College.
2. The RNCB students are not included in the tables of specific groups’ numbers in education since in some cases this would virtually identify individuals.

Identifiable communities: *Jews*

According to the 2001 Census the Jewish population of Hereford is numbered at 130, although the organiser of the Jewish community puts the number of known members at 50. The word 'community' is used deliberately here, since this group of 50 is indeed that, with a fairly active network and regular monthly meetings held in a Catholic church hall. They provided material for an exhibition in the library accompanying the Cathedral's Anne Frank Exhibition, featuring Jews in the county. Their presence in the county is explained by many individual factors rather than any single process. Some seem to have retired to the area because of its rural and peaceful attractions, some have come because of work, some are self-employed and saw opportunities in the area.

The chair of the community group ('The Council') described its members as very mixed and individual, with no clear patterns in terms of employment or background, though it is thought none could be described as 'badly off' and few if any work in manual occupations. Several originate in cities with significant Jewish populations, particularly London, and there is at least one Holocaust survivor. The ages of those attending meetings vary from 12 to 90, though these are the ends of a spectrum in which most people are nearer the middle. Many if not most are married to non-Jews, most are not religiously practising, and none are Orthodox (though one Orthodox couple fairly recently moved away). A member in one town does wear the *kipot* (skull cap), probably the only Jew in the county to visibly declare his faith in public. The group's meetings have a religious core to them, but the group functions at least as much as for social purposes and in some sense to affirm identity and heritage, however loosely. As well as religious services there is a 'rites and practices group', which actively discusses Jewish practices. The planned Passover supper for 2004 was expecting an attendance of 30. A retired rabbi lived in Ross until his death in 2000, so services are now led by one of the group.

The chair of the group is an active member of the LEA's Standing Advisory Committee on Religious Education (SACRE) on which a Christian, a Muslim and a Ba'hai also sit. He is used quite extensively as a resource for schools and provided backup educational sessions around the Anne Frank exhibition. He finds the LEA - particularly the key adviser with whom he has contact - supportive and positive about diversity in the county and willing and committed to widening school children's knowledge of Judaism.

Although the phone contact number for the group is a permanent answering machine to prevent any harassment, this is a preventative measure rather than reacting to anything that has happened. There is some slight feeling that Jews have to be careful in this respect, and indeed some feeling that when locals realise for the first time that they are Jewish there is some surprise at their 'normality': people presumably never having knowingly met and talked with a Jew before. This was described fairly lightly rather than as being offensive. It is the case that even if there were any groups interested in singling out the Jews for harassment (as has happened elsewhere) there are no obvious targets. There is no synagogue, the monthly meetings happen in various venues (sometimes in people's homes) and most regularly in a Catholic church hall in Hereford, but this would be unknown to the general public. There is a small section of the cemetery in Hereford set aside for Jewish burial and is still used, but again this is so little known and the section itself far from obvious that it does not provide a visible target.

Given the difficulty of practising as an Orthodox Jew in the locality it was felt very unlikely that any would willingly move there. This is not so much an issue for the

provision of public services as to do with the personal practicalities of keeping to dietary laws without a ready supply of Kosher meat. It was not felt that provision of a Kosher diet in hospitals or care homes would be an issue since few of the known Jews in the group practised any more strictly than avoiding pork, which would create few problems for institutional caterers. The Chair knew of one older Jewish person in sheltered accommodation who was 'careful' with her diet, but it was not thought to be a problem for her.

The overall picture therefore is of a group who are conscious of themselves as distinctive but who do not feel any marginalisation or exclusion from the majority. Contact through faith groups is well developed and the chair of the Council is well known to relevant staff in the Council. There are clear instances of strong support: the provision of the Catholic church hall (free of charge), the commitment to education including the Anne Frank Exhibition and the associated library display.

Identifiable communities: *Travellers*

The **sources** of information for this section are as follows:

- Two days spent travelling with the Health Bus, talking with the workers and meeting some users of the service;
- Interviews with the Rural Media Co. who publish *Traveller Times*;
- An interview with a County Traveller Education Advisory Teacher;
- An interview with the co-ordinator of the Traveller Support Group;
- Interviews with two Council officials concerned with Traveller issues;
- Reading the draft detailed evaluation of the Health Bus scheme produced by the centre for Urban and Regional Studies of Birmingham University;
- Analysis of the Council's Traveller Policy
- Interviews with 13 Travellers from the three major groups present in the County:

<i>Living in</i>	<i>Romany</i>	<i>Irish</i>	<i>New</i>
Housing	13		
Official site		4	
Private site			2

Population size

Travellers have been part of the county's population for centuries, the first record being in the 1530s, largely because of the agricultural base of the economy and the seasonal nature of much farming work.

It is notoriously difficult to be confident about Traveller numbers partly because of methods of counting and partly because of definition. No question about Traveller status was asked in the 2001 Census and it is widely recognised that the biannual DETR/DTLR Count carried out by local authorities on behalf of central government is inaccurate for three main reasons (Green, 1991; Kenrick and Clark, 1999; Drakakis-Smith and Mason, 2001):

- it estimates the number of caravans rather than the number of people;
- it excludes those Travellers living in houses;
- it excludes those living on temporary sites

In any case, a very sensitive methodology would have to be employed since there is a widespread unwillingness to self-identify as a Traveller because of the historical stigma of being a 'gypsy'.

The problem of definition lies in official categories as well as people's ideas of themselves. In race relations law, a person with a Travelling heritage still counts as a member of a minority ethnic group even though they may have been settled for more than a generation, whereas a 'New' Traveller without such a heritage, even if living a nomadic lifestyle, is not regarded the same way. Under planning law, the Caravan Sites and Control of Development Act (1960) covers 'persons of nomadic habit of life regardless of racial origin' and one legal judgement defines Gypsies as those who travel with an economic purpose.

In the late 1990s while arguing the case for a travelling health facility for Travellers in the county a population of 8000 people was claimed, but this now seems to be widely acknowledged as a substantial over-estimate. Both a recent evaluation of this health bus scheme and the longest serving local worker involved with Travellers put the population at 1000 and no other sources disagreed with this. LEA records in March 2004 show 160 children of Traveller background in county schools (though this is

almost certainly an underestimate due to the unwillingness to self-identify referred to above).

Of the estimated population of 1000 perhaps 750 are 'traditional' English Travellers, or Romanies. 'New' Travellers (not an ethnic group) comprise the next largest subgroup, with Irish Travellers being the smallest. A very small group of 'barrel top' Travellers who travel between commons during the milder months were mentioned to us, these are invariably New Travellers. At around 750 in number therefore, the Traditional Travellers/Romanies are Herefordshire's largest minority ethnic group.

Housing and Traveller sites

The evidence suggests that the overall pattern of Traveller life in Herefordshire is either more residentially settled than formerly or essentially in transit through the county. Perhaps three quarters of the Romanies are permanently housed i.e. about 550 people. This is higher than the proportion nationally who are thought to be settled, put at around 50% (Morris and Clements, 1999; Kenrick and Clark, 1999). The New Travellers do not quite accord with this pattern in that many permanently reside in the county but travel to some extent within it, or to just outside its borders and some travel further afield (even abroad) where some find employment. On the other hand, a number are fairly permanently settled at the Luston site, partly for the stability of their children's schooling. The Irish Travellers are mostly passing through the county (albeit for long periods) though a small degree of permanent settling is beginning with at least one family in a house. There are also fairground winter parking grounds in Ross and one at Holme Lacy.

It was suggested to us that the neighbouring county of Shropshire provided sites under the 1968 Act before Herefordshire, with some hint that this was a cynical move to see if County provision could be avoided (though this would date back to pre-1997 when the County did not have unitary authority status). We were told it was only when a judicial review found the county in breach of its statutory duties that provision was begun. Some local Travellers obtained plots in Shropshire and moved back into Herefordshire when sites were eventually provided. In 2004 there were seven official sites in Herefordshire, (all located well away from houses) on which Travellers are licensees only of their plots, thus not having tenants' rights:

Luston (Croft Lane)	occupied solely by New Travellers; 10 pitches, each with its own brick built facility containing bathroom and toilet.
Madley	mothballed and for emergency transit use only – facilities not good and next to an industrial site. 17 pitches
Bromyard (Openfields)	badly vandalised; subject (with Grafton) to unsuccessful bid for refurbishment. 14 pitches, three of which legally occupied by Romanies in May 2004 and one without permission.
Grafton (Romany Close)	mothballed and badly vandalised. 18 pitches, subject to (failed) bid to Office Deputy Prime Minister to restore with fewer, better pitches
Bosbury (Tinkers Corner)	brick built facilities with utility rooms. 7 pitches, occupied by Romanies
Watery Lane (Hereford)	similar facilities to Bosbury. 11 pitches, occupied by Romanies
Pembridge (Turnpike)	occupied solely by one extended family of Irish Travellers, 6 pitches, each with its own brick built facility

containing bathroom and toilet. Beside an industrial estate.

This gives a theoretical total of 83 pitches, though in practice (in May 2004) the number of residential pitches is 48, with no transit places.

There are some 'unofficial' stopping places, some of them on a handful of farms that have provided stopping space for many years while the Travellers are working there, but it is thought that the farmers involved are very unwilling to consider these becoming permanent encampments. Such arrangements are inevitably insecure for the Travellers.

We were told a harrowing story by one Romany family who had lived more or less permanently for 45 years on one farm but who had to leave after becoming unable to work (though we were not able to gather others' versions of these events). Management changes at the farm have subsequently led to other Travellers seeking permanent housing elsewhere.

There are (in May 2004) seven private sites with recently acquired legal permission to act as such, with cases recently agreed for two more. One of these legal cases – a privately owned site occupied by New Travellers provided by the farmer who owns the land - has been going on for up to 12 years 'so long overdue it appears to be making a mockery of the planning process...'. It has very basic facilities with water available from standpipes and one eco-composting toilet although at least one resident has been there several years. In this case the farmer lets out the land to make extra income as a result of a downturn in other means of making a living, and the Council is seeking to close the site. A senior officer described the conditions that some of the Travellers are living in as 'terrible': basically muddy fields with no facilities, adding that especially for older people this can be very hard. The same officer argued there was a desperate need for a transit site. There is a clause in the Council's Traveller policy that states: 'The Council will not secure evictions from private land' though this is conditional upon the number and spacing of caravans.

All the official sites are currently administered by the Council, though there have been some approaches by the Gypsy Council nationally to run and provide them, possibly starting with a transit site.

Anyone actually travelling in the County is therefore subject to the law prohibiting roadside encampments and liable to have notice served upon them to move on. These illegal stops occur on average once every two weeks on County roadsides or car parks, about 15 each year resulting in a court order (which we were told 'were not generally enforced' because the people moved on before the enforcement deadline).

The pattern of site use and change is complex and subject to competing accounts and explanations. While there are in theory seven official sites where Travellers may camp, in practice two of these are closed and because of relationships within and between different types of Travellers some sites are in effect designated for one of the three main groups. Coming later than the provision in neighbouring counties the Luston site was apparently built with the intention of housing some Romanies and did so for about three years. In practice it became a New Traveller site, as was the site at Romany Close, formerly a mixed site of fixed and transit trailers, now closed because of damage done to the facilities. We were told that Romanies also left the Pembridge (Turnpike) site, giving way to Irish Travellers for whom it is in effect home, though they still travel using it as a base.

Certainly fewer Romanies than formerly occupy any of the established sites. It was suggested to us that many Romanies who were long-term residents of Herefordshire

moved into houses because they felt 'pushed out' of the sites, either by Irish Travellers or in some cases where one Romany family dominated numerically it became unattractive for other families. Other Romanies said the brick built facilities were minimal and took no account of Romany Traveller sensibilities about hygiene, siting toilets next to cooking facilities and provision generally being rather worse than they had encountered elsewhere (for instance in Shropshire). It seems something as basic as the need for more than one trailer per family – because of family size and different functions for different trailers - was little appreciated by some officials, and none had a children's play area inaccessible to horses or reversing lorries. The pitches are also rather too small for the number of people and vehicles involved – any couple likely to have two, one of them quite large.

Two couples we interviewed gave a slightly different account, being now of retirement age they were glad to be occupying housing association accommodation and seemed to have no nostalgia for damp and cold trailers in wintertime. Relatives and other Romanies were settled in houses in the same area, possibly now partaking of a life-style that would have been completely unavailable to them in the past but one which might have been acceptable to them. How much a 'push-and-pull' effect is involved here (in that good clean sites are hard to find) is impossible to say. Both couples commented upon the presence of a 'pecking order' on any site and the consequent jockeying for position and struggle for leadership – not something they ever relished. Another couple had mixed feelings about being settled, not especially disliking it but nevertheless feeling forced into it. One woman said that if conflicts between Traveller groups were adequately contained she would move from her house back to living in a trailer.

Another source identified this as predominantly an issue of effective site management, pointing out that this had been progressively reduced. The Luston site, we were informed, had a part-time warden for a decade with a good take-up of plots and good relationships between neighbours.

Becoming settled in a house was a difficult process for the farm worker referred to earlier. They were initially found a house in a local village but their neighbours took exception to the fact that they were a Traveller family and began a campaign against them. Many of the other villagers were turned against them, with a petition being organised by one of the non-teaching staff at their son's school to try to get the family moved elsewhere. Some local children made their son's his life difficult to the extent that it became impossible for him to go out of the house to play because of the local hostility towards the family. By now increasingly desperate with both parents' health being affected, it was in the end the Health Bus staff who helped them find somewhere else to live (where they are now well settled with supportive neighbours).

The housing allocation scheme *Home Point* allocates people in need of housing to priority bands on the basis of circumstances and acts as a partnering agreement between several housing associations. One New Traveller we spoke to is (she hopes) on the point of being re-housed having reached the maximum points for allocation. She is seeking settled housing for her school age daughter's sake, expecting to possibly take up travelling again when her daughter has finished school.

Various forces and pressures have led to a considerable proportion of former travelling people becoming settled. Some clearly prefer it and said so to us. There is also the influence of the Council's implicit and explicit policy about sites and stopping places, perhaps 170 of the latter having been blocked in the past 25 years. It was suggested to us more than once that for years there has been a more or less explicit policy wishing to see all Travellers settled and thus inevitably more 'socially

accountable' by councils and police alike. The fact that at one time a local Romany took the Council to the High Court for its failure to provide sites under the 1968 Act suggests a history of relative marginalisation.

This policy may be manifest in what has happened to the sites. It is hardly the role of this research to discover the origins of the vandalism and damage to some sites, but the implication seems to be it was committed by elements of the Traveller population based elsewhere not locally. Be that as it may, there is considerable feeling amongst some of those most closely involved that there is a long-term problem of minimal support and an unwillingness to creatively liaise with other agencies. Counties in other parts of the UK have more permanent wardens and liaison officers and hence more effective management of potential conflicts between groups, gaining entry to sites, liaison between agencies, the balance between transit and long-term pitches and the provision and maintenance of facilities.

A report commissioned by the Deputy Prime Minister's Office commented on the overall national background to Traveller settlement

For Gypsies/Travellers, the 'problem' of unauthorised camping is the constant threat of eviction and disruption of everyday life. For local councils the 'problem' is one of dealing with a very visible and contentious local issue where public expectations on speed of removal are unrealistic. Unauthorised encampments lead to complaints of increased crime, noise, vehicle and property damage, rubbish and obstruction of rights of way or recreational land. Complaints are not always substantiated.

Dealing with unauthorised camping is just one element within the wider context of Gypsy/ Traveller issues. These include policies on planning and site provision and site protection.

The 1994 Act repealed those parts of the Caravan Sites Act 1968 which placed a duty on local authorities to provide Gypsy sites. Authorities retain a discretionary power to make provision. Circular DoE 1/94: Gypsy Sites and Planning made clear the expectation that Gypsies should now be encouraged and supported in providing their own sites. The case studies suggested, however, that criteria-based policies in Local Plans made such provision extremely difficult, especially in areas of planning restraint.

Public Gypsy site provision varied between the case study authorities. Only one county had a programme of further development, while another had embarked on a major reinvestment programme. Elsewhere, conditions and facilities were reported to be deteriorating. Most sites were permanent sites where families lived throughout most of the year. There were very few formal transit sites, although need for such provision was widely acknowledged. There are serious problems in developing and managing transit sites. A minority of case study authorities had attempted to identify less formal 'stopping places' for Gypsies/Travellers, but nothing approaching a national network currently exists.

Site protection - that is, undertaking works to prevent access to avoid unauthorised stopping - was important, especially in some of the urban areas. Site protection was not always effective. In the absence of any planned provision, site protection may simply drive Gypsies/Travellers elsewhere.

It should be noted that the successful planning applications for small family sites, soon to number eight, puts the county ahead of others in this aspect of provision.

County and other provision and support in general

At one time (before sole authority status) one department within the Council managed sites and another dealt with roadside issues. This was later reorganised so all responsibility was within one department (Client Services) though it was suggested to us that this was not entirely welcomed by that department. A degree of in-fighting within the Council was described to us, the responsibility being seen as a 'poison chalice' and it being suggested that 'a constructive stance has never really been taken since county reorganisation'.

Managed by the Head of Client Services, the Council employs a Gypsy Officer and a Gypsy Sites Officer – the responsibility of the former being to manage the sites and to monitor illegal encampments. The appointment of a liaison officer was planned and budgeted for (through the 'Supported Peoples' initiative) but in May 2004 had still not been made. (There may be a practical difficulty with this appointment even when someone is in post, since Travellers having been designated as a disadvantaged group any funding would provide support for *individuals* from that group, rather than the group itself.) There are two full time education staff who work as advisory teachers specialising in supporting Traveller children and this Traveller Education Service (TES) is the longest established provision in the county (it is now managed and organised as part of the West Midlands Consortium for Travelling Children - WMESTC – see below). Sure Start is also involved in play facilities/schemes for young Traveller children.

The voluntary Traveller Support Group, in action since 1977, is active in supporting Travellers of all kinds, helping them with paperwork, dealing with problems with hostile neighbours when they are housed, working with them in planning applications, establishing the play scheme, promoting health needs, advocating and liaising on their behalf with the Council and other agencies, and pursuing legal cases. They felt they had good co-operative relations with agencies on the whole, but more so in the past, especially with senior Council officers.

A Traveller Liaison Group functioned at one time, consisting of: Traveller Education, Council site management and operations staff, the Traveller Support Group, some New Travellers, and Sure Start. We were told this is now defunct, though in practice contains many of the same people as the Health Bus Project's steering group meetings.

In 2002 a group was convened at County level to produce a Traveller policy, on the initiative of a councillor. This comprised Council staff employed to work with Travellers, staff from the Traveller Education Service, the Traveller Support Group, the police, the NHS, and the planning and environmental health departments of the council. We have already commented on the County's provision of Traveller sites and their management. We have formed the impression that while a policy was 'hammered out' it was soon superseded in practice, and although there has been no promised annual review we were informed that some alterations have taken place without consultation. Its vision of aiming

To create in Herefordshire an environment where different communities, the traditionally nomadic and the traditionally settled, live in harmony and where all have access to the basic needs and benefits which characterise an inclusive society

could not fairly be said to have been met and its statement that

It would seem that the current site provision is neither being used effectively nor meeting the needs of travellers. The Council believes that changes should be made to the current arrangements for site ownership, provision and management. These changes should assist in both streamlining the service and providing sites that meet residents' needs and aspirations.

Has not been acted upon in a way that has led to any obvious changes.

In practice it is now a minority of Travellers who live on sites, either official or private, and there is some feeling that the Council likes it that way. Conflict that has arisen between Traveller groups was partly put down by some sources to poor site management and inadequate provision, the issue of mobile Irish Travellers described by one source as 'bungled' by the Council and only being resolved by a firm and constructive intervention by the police (who were described to us as being considerably more sensitive and constructive in relation to Irish Travellers than the Council, with some 'excellent' officers as opposed to some Council officers at various levels who had 'an attitude problem' towards Travellers). Negative individual attitudes are given some license if Council policy amounts to inadequate statutory provision and the inevitable illegal off-road stopping.

As we suggested under site provision and housing, it would be possible substantially to improve the existing sites and to manage them more effectively, thus having a policy that responds to Traveller wishes and potentially pre-empts conflicts. The Traveller Support Group argues that many if not most of the Romanies would settle on their own small plots if they were able to buy them and obtain planning permission. As we have said, some exist already, with a good record of maintenance and harmonious relationships with non-Traveller neighbours.

A settled Romany woman spoke of quite good support from the providers of her first social housing when she experienced harassment from neighbours because of her background. She moved, and described the housing provider as 'supportive and much better than in the past.'

One of the advisory teachers mentioned above has worked for the service for 20 years. Training on the basis of this and accumulated WMCESTC experience is periodically delivered to newly qualified teachers, student teachers, parent groups, health workers, education managers, school governors, support assistants in schools and Sure Start staff. Training to raise staff awareness has more recently been sought by the Fire Brigade, which is also concerned to include Travellers in their fire prevention education programme. Social services do not avail themselves of this training and neither do the police (though some police training provided by a Romany woman was just beginning at the time of the research). It was suggested to us that there is some nervousness and uncertainty around child protection cases.

Education and youth

Background

Although often settled, there remains a family heritage of Travelling as many families keep a trailer and may well go on the road for a short time in the summer months (and this may interfere with children's school attendance). Nevertheless, there are far fewer problems with the effective education of settled Traveller children than has historically been the case when more were mobile, roadside encampments were

more common, schools were reluctant to take in temporary and stigmatised pupils, and more parents were illiterate.

Most schools in the north and east of the county will have had some experience with Traveller children, though there are clusters with more experience and, of course, where Travellers have settled permanently local schools will have larger numbers. (Agriculture having had a different historical pattern in the south of the county fewer Romanies have worked there in the hop harvest and schools will have had correspondingly less contact.)

The Irish Travellers have a strong preference for Catholic schools and tend to use particular ones, although since there are only three Catholic primary schools and one secondary Catholic school the amount of travel involved has led a family in the north of the county to use an Anglican school. Compared to the Traditional Romany Travellers, more of the Irish Traveller parents are not literate. One professional felt that Irish Travellers had 'a deep suspicion' of education, though at the time of the research there were only three Irish Traveller children of school age in the County (two of them in school).

There is a general pattern of withdrawal from sex education lessons amongst both the Irish Travellers and the larger number of settled Romany families. This is a pattern observed in other parts of the country and is rooted in deep suspicion of 'modern' or 'liberal' sexual mores. The health workers with whom we spoke told of the extreme sensitivity and confidentiality with which pregnancy is treated, a woman being unlikely to talk about it with female members of the group, let alone with males in whose presence any mention of the topic is considered completely taboo.

Provision

The Traveller Education Service currently supports many of the 160 Traveller children in schools, some in travelling families and some settled. As mentioned above, it is part of the WMESTC, a consortium established in 1973 and joined by Hereford and Worcester in 1980 well in advance of provision elsewhere. As well as the two advisory teachers the consortium has others available according to need and provides a welfare officer and some additional financial support for Traveller pupils. It has detailed data on a school-by-school basis, including the specific background of pupils, how they are housed and their degree of mobility.

When the TES was established many Travellers did not go to school at all with almost none staying as long as secondary school. Many who are parents today were first supported by the TES when they were children and the Romany community has been settled long enough for most parents to be literate although grandparents probably were not. We were told there is generally a positive attitude towards schooling for the sake of the children's future, with less suspicion of the authorities than in former times.

The TES currently offers a range of support to individuals, families and schools, being engaged in buying more loan books, videos, and resources for all phases of schooling containing a positive portrayal of Traveller culture, which it also encourages schools to buy. The guidance available to schools is particularly detailed. It has developed a culture based literacy scheme, a pack for raising awareness in schools and posters with cards depicting modern images of Travellers to counter stereotypes. It is involved in monitoring racial incidents and any exclusions involving Travellers. For families who still travel, including showmen, it provides lists of contacts elsewhere in the country (and Europe) to help maintain continuity of schooling and works with schools to develop distance-learning packs. It

has also for many years, along with the Traveller Support Group, given help with form filling and referrals to a host of other agencies.

A recent museum exhibition highlighted the history of Travellers in the county and their contribution over several centuries, and this was backed up by some materials and activities led by a museum educator working with groups of children. This was developed in conjunction with the TES and details checked with local Travellers. A travelling exhibition in 2004 celebrating cultural diversity included Traveller culture and there is a music project of which some details are given later. Multiple copies of a video made by the Traveller Support Group to counter negative stereotyping and celebrate culture were bought by the library service.

There is a play scheme established by the Traveller's Support Group and operated under a service level agreement, working with 150 children and employing six part time workers who are themselves New Travellers. A joint project involving the WMESTC, Save the Children and the Countryside Agency – the Hereford Early Years Project - was active until recently and the learning and development boxes it devised are still available to families from the TES.

Although aimed at adults, it is worth mentioning a staff member of the Primary care Trust who visits sites with the Health Bus, uses TES literacy materials to offer skills for life training.

Herefordshire can point to above average attendance compared to other LEAs, not least in secondary schools – the age at which attendance is typically prone to fall off. Some success with GCSEs is evident, with seven young people since 2000 taking 53 GCSEs between them. In 2003 a Romany girl was a student governor and winner of two prestigious awards at the College of Art and Design. Another Traveller girl who attended the FE College worked afterwards for the TES. OfSTED has praised several County schools for good practice in relation to Traveller pupils; this is unusual nationally, Traveller pupils being the UK's lowest achieving ethnic group.

Experiences

A New Traveller mother told us of initial reactions when her daughter (now six) went to school. She felt the school, and especially the head-teacher, had been very helpful and supportive. There had been some issues around the way her daughter looks ('very long and quite wild looking hair, tended to look a bit dishevelled, that was just her way of being') and some of the other girls had picked up on this and excluded her from their group. Having spoken to the teacher and to the head about this (and having encouraged her daughter to have a neater haircut to achieve her wish to fit in) the conflict had gone to the extent that on the afternoon when our interview took place she had been invited back to a friend's house.

There had been an episode where her daughter had been taking other girls' hair-slides and hair-bands from their trays in school and bringing them home. Whatever the reason for the thefts, the Head had been very understanding to the point where she had even bought some hair slides herself for the girl, giving them to the mother. She had not been offended by this, and saw it as a sign of caring and support for herself and her daughter.

Once or twice her daughter had brought a school friend back to the caravan. The friend's surprise at the way they lived, the fact that they didn't have a bathroom, toilet etc. had had some repercussions at school, with other children using the information to make the daughter feel uncomfortable. This seemed to have been addressed, not least due to the understanding and the efforts of the school. However, the Traveller

said that her daughter was sometimes left feeling isolated as a result of the content of the school curriculum, which did not tend to take alternative lifestyles into account. She gave the example of a science lesson where the children had been asked to count the number of light bulbs they thought they might have in their houses. Her daughter of course, had to explain that they had none, and only used candles.

A now settled woman of Romany heritage had a further account of difficulties experienced by her children at school. When she had been living on a site her children travelled to school with non-Traveller children by bus, where they were persistently bullied. Complaints to the bus company resulted in referrals to the school, who said it was the responsibility of the bus company. Indeed her older two children were 'put off' school by this treatment, and her youngest, now at primary school, is not known to be a Traveller by the school or the other pupils.

Health Provision

The Health Bus scheme referred to earlier is an unusual and innovative project. It grew over a period of years out of a long standing provision by the Health Authority for Travellers and the personal involvement of successive health visitors, aware of poor health amongst Travellers, who nationally have low life expectancy and high perinatal mortality. In formal terms the Project took on its present form in 2000, employing a driver and two nurses full time and having various associated staff with whom appointments can be arranged, including a GP who is involved for three days a week, and speech therapy. Its brief is to provide 'access to health care, information and support' to Travellers and hence to travel to sites county wide, though in practice because of the geographical distribution of Travellers its work is mainly in the north and north west of the county. Visits are timetabled and publicised in advance so as to make the facility available to the maximum number of people and the schedule is altered according to demand and population shifts. When our researcher was present it was noticeable that a range of support was given outside of narrowly defined 'health care'. The workers confirmed that help in dealing with form filling and dealings with officialdom (including phone calls) were a significant part of their work.

Other support is offered via the bus, so for instance on one of the days our researcher accompanied the bus the SureStart midwife was present as was a Skills for Life tutor (who offers basic literacy work with the use of a laptop and therefore also some basic IT skills). The Skills for Life tutor was there in the hope of seeing the mother of the family to arrange some literacy sessions together (most of the Irish Travellers are not literate).

We were told by more than one informant that Romanies made little use of the health bus service and preferred to have a 'normal' GP, many of whom have numbers of Romanies signed on at their practices with good and enduring relationships, an advantage perhaps of an enduring semi-rural 'traditional family doctor' pattern with trusted and known GPs. Of course since the majority of Romany families are settled in houses a mobile health centre would not necessarily address their needs, and there may be some feeling that a bus is second-class provision compared to seeing a GP with all the facilities of a surgery. A different perception was held by another informant working as a professional, viewing the Romanies as often very benefits-orientated, seeing a risk in becoming 'too healthy' in case certain health related financial benefits are withdrawn and thus being less than pro-active and preventative where their health is concerned (in contrast to New Travellers who were perceived as being concerned about their own health). Nevertheless, while a researcher accompanied the project for a couple of days the staff actually visited three settled families in the north of the county, presumably something of an exception. In fact the

Bus cannot register Travellers as patients, so it is quite possible that many of the people they see are registered elsewhere.

Despite these observations and comments, statistics provided by the Health Bus project confirmed that while New Travellers make up the majority of their patients, in terms of numbers choosing to access the GP through the bus, New Traveller numbers were almost matched by take-up from Irish Travellers. The breakdown of patient contacts with the project since it became operational is:

New Travellers	267
Traditional or Romany Travellers	176
Irish Travellers	98

While staff on the project are conscious of some feeling amongst the non-Traveller population that their funds would be better spent on the majority population, they also note the difficulty experienced in recruiting staff to work on the project, fear of Travellers amongst some fellow health professionals, with a belief that they are volatile and potentially threatening. On the other hand, the bus itself has a rule about a minimum of two staff needing to be present at all times, a mobile phone which must have a signal in any place the bus parks, and staff mentioned to us an early incident of an assault by a Traveller.

As the review commissioned by the project indicates, it adopts a social model of health. This is clearly the case, since in our time with the project we observed the work of someone from SureStart, a Skills for Life tutor, and the 'medical' staff involved in helping with form-filling, validating identity in paperwork and liaison in relation to benefits and rent arrears. Travellers we met felt they could get such help about any aspect of their lives. While the commissioned review sought to assess the project's impact upon Traveller health, it commented

...the overall assessment of whether the Project is worthwhile and should be continued will probably depend on judgements of the value (sometimes symbolic) of assisting extremely marginalised and socially excluded groups in the population (Niner and Freeman, 2003: 2).

It was suggested to us that the Health Bus project had been seriously undermined by being unable to acquire a central base, this being turned down on planning grounds (arguably because of local businesses' objections). Alternatives were proposed, but were deemed so unsuitable by those involved as to be 'insulting'. Some perceive this as a highly unhelpful decision on behalf of the Council, providing further evidence of an uncoordinated or unconcerned approach to Traveller issues. This may be further evidenced by the puzzling inability of the bus to enter the Pembridge site because the barrier is locked and they have been provided with no means of opening it (according to one official source for 'health and safety reasons'). Nevertheless it is worth repeating that all those we spoke to felt very positive about the Bus Project, feeling it made significant contributions in terms of trust and informing various agencies about Traveller needs.

Irish Travellers made regular use of the walk-in dentistry clinics in the county. These clinics do not take on NHS patients in the sense of arranging regular check-ups and making future appointments, but since they are known about within the Traveller population they seem a very effective way of meeting the dentistry needs of a mobile population.

Relations with the police

As was indicated above, some Travellers and those seeking to support them have many positive things to say about the police and their positive engagement with issues around site use and the devising of Council policy. It has also been suggested that the recent appointment of community support officers has been a positive development. In the past the police have inevitably been the agents of enforcement for decisions about stopping places unpopular with Travellers (though note the positive relationships described under '*Culture clash, prejudice and exclusion*'). They have also been necessarily involved when the common assumptions about Traveller dishonesty have been manifest in concrete accusations. The dependence upon vehicles for those actually engaged in travelling also provides a potential point of conflict in respect of roadworthiness, insurance and the like.

In some parts of the country (though not especially, according to our various informants in Herefordshire) the issue of drug use amongst New Travellers is another obvious potential point of friction. We were made aware of specific cases of children taken into care or put onto the child protection register because of parental drug abuse, but it would be going beyond the evidence to say whether this is more or less common than amongst non Travellers, amongst whom there is a 'major problem'.

Although the police can be involved in conflict situations about moving on, we did not receive particularly negative comments about this. One Traveller told of an occasion when some New Travellers were being moved from a site and word had got round (by mobile phone) that there was to be a party before they left. Apparently many more Travellers than had been expected turned up, with the result that over a period of a week road blocks were set up to stop more Travellers getting through. Nevertheless, the police presence stationed at the site to keep order were supplied with hot drinks and a bonfire to keep warm, being regarded (by one informant at least) as friendly and as 'just doing their job'.

A different New Traveller recounted an incident detailed below under 'culture clash' which was more to do with a shop's reaction to her than that of the police, but she received no apology for her wrongful treatment and commented that her small daughter had had enough negative experiences of the police to make her afraid of them.

We received less positive comments from a settled Traveller who had on occasion received racist abuse and harassment from neighbours (causing her to move house). Despite having been invited to provide training for Community Safety Officers and having developing contact with the police service, she expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to deal effectively with such incidents should they happen again. On the other hand, she felt progress was being made.

The draft report contained a passage relating to a specific incident involving members of a 'settled' Romany family. As this matter had been the subject of a criminal conviction and having taken legal advice, this passage has been removed from the report. It is nevertheless appropriate to report that the perception of this family is that they are suspicious of and have negative expectations of both the community at large and the Police.

Employment

The agricultural base for Travellers' livelihood is no longer anything like as significant as it was in previous decades: the kinds of crops grown have changed considerably

requiring a longer harvesting season and more intensive labour. A small number of Romany Travellers still move for seasonal work, some are engaged in hop tying and apple harvesting where this is not mechanised and there are large (perhaps misleading) gatherings at an annual horse fair in a neighbouring county.

Largely because of these long-term changes in agriculture, employment has become more varied. Some settled families (it is assumed) are merged into the general workforce and we know recent school leavers have gone into a variety of jobs (hairdressing, supermarket cashier, waitress, mechanic, factory worker) while others have gone into further education. Others are involved in a 'traditional' occupation of collecting and recycling scrap metal; others find niches in the economy related in some way to seasonal and rural work: dealing in horses, dog breeding, hedge trimming, tree management, barn maintenance, fencing, laying tarmac, sales of items like garden gates, repairing/sharpening lawnmowers and shears, and seasonal selling of holly and mistletoe. Irish and Romany Travellers are also part of informal networks that feed the antiques trade. In Leominster there are numerous settled Traveller families and historical evidence of yards that used to be foci for a Traveller economy. It should be remembered that traditional Travellers have always had to fight for survival in providing for their families, on the margins of society and seldom having regular work they could rely upon. The experience of marginality would be compounded by the insecurity of their lack of tenure on any stopping place.

General community involvement

Religious involvement is slight, although as mentioned already Irish Travellers preferred their children to attend Catholic schools. Funerals and marriages are generally carried out in Christian churches (except in the case of New Travellers) and there are known to be some Traveller family plots in county churchyards. Funerals are major events in Traveller culture with up to 40 trailers expected at times. The Trailer of the deceased is sometimes still burnt, though for the person burial is invariably used rather than cremation.

We are always wary of using the term 'community' for a minority ethnic group that is scattered and small in number. However, our interviews suggest there is some sense of community within each of the main three Traveller groups, with effective networks of families and other connections.

Culture, culture clash, prejudice and exclusion

It is not always easy to pin down what is distinctive about Traveller culture, not least when we are discussing three different groups one of which has largely stopped travelling (though not of its own volition). It is even more difficult to explain to house-dwellers what it is about a travelling lifestyle that people seem to feel is 'in their blood' and important to their identity, and such a task is beyond the scope of this study – except to state that is powerfully still true that Travellers regard themselves as different in ways they are proud of and which they want to retain. It is also the case that the lifestyles of Travellers are vulnerable and fragile. Some Travellers feel too little effort is made to consider what might be valuable in their heritage or lifestyle, in terms of values and attitudes that might provide a broader perspective on a diverse world, and perhaps any such appreciation will be celebrated eventually, perhaps posthumously, when their lifestyle no longer exists.

As regards the artistic and creative aspect of culture, the Traveller Support Group facilitated the visit of a Hungarian Gypsy band to all the sites a few years ago, and there is a music project that works with all Traveller groups.

The matriarch of the Irish Traveller family we visited has lamented to the health workers that her children do not speak the Irish Traveller language/dialect, and that she and her husband seem to be part of a dying generation that are familiar with it. She clearly has concerns for the sustainability of their cultural heritage as an ethnic group. There are other obvious aspects of their distinctiveness, such as attitudes about gender and sexuality, which we have already mentioned. Several informants wanted to discuss the difficulties between Irish Travellers and the majority population (and indeed other Travellers) feeling they were particular marginal to 'mainstream' society with a culture and way of life in many ways anathema to the settled majority. Indeed the word 'feral' was used by an informant on one occasion, and while Irish Travellers may not welcome such a word the speaker claimed to be using it in a descriptive rather than an insulting way with reference to the need to make a life where possible outside the conventions and rules administered and documented by the state, in respect of house dwelling, employment, health care, benefits and taxation.

We were told that their behaviour is considered anti-social in the extreme by many in the county, being held responsible for theft of caravans, leaving large quantities of rubbish, untrue declarations in benefit claims and criminal damage to Traveller sites. Some of those who work with Travellers and respect their choice of lifestyle nevertheless drew our attention to large discrepancies between admitted savings in benefit claims and later expensive weddings or substantial purchases of land and caravans. It is not known whether extensive lending and borrowing exists within the Irish Traveller community that may account for this.

New Traveller culture is subject to much negative mythologizing and strictly speaking (since they are not an ethnic group) not of particular relevance here. It is worth pointing out, however, that in relation to the stereotype of considerable drug use a 'clean' policy was strictly enforced at the private site we visited. It was very clear that this was not something that the site community would tolerate and there were severe penalties (expulsion from the site) for those who failed to follow this code. This did not save them from unwelcome assumptions from, for instance, GPs. It is also worth saying that the group 'New Travellers' contains many different motives for being on the road. Some have a principled preference for the countryside, mobility, a greener lifestyle etc. Others are 'contained' by the group and might be a much greater strain on public resources if this were not so. The Health Bus workers observed that there were some quite damaged people, one living quite alone in very basic accommodation, a very silent and withdraw man who sometimes simply came and sat in their Bus.

While at least one local pub has banned New Travellers from drinking there –quite legally since they are not an ethnic group - one interviewee who has been a Traveller for over ten years said that apart from the inevitable occasional run-ins with the police (over moving on) she had experienced hardly any directly negative reactions at all from the settled population (although others she knew had had different experiences). The exception to this in her own experience had happened only two or three weeks previously when she had taken her small daughter into a shop in Hereford to buy new trainers. They had then stayed in the store to browse, and her daughter had been looking at some books. When they left the store, they went outside and sat on a bench, but after a short time the police approached her and said that they were arresting her on suspicion of theft. She denied this and a WPC was called to search her. Upon arrival, this WPC took the Traveller and her daughter into an alley by the side of the shops, frisked her clothing and checked her bags for stolen goods, finding nothing. Because of negative experiences with the police in the past,

the daughter is very frightened of them and became very upset, and was crying. The woman was not offered any apology, only a reason for the treatment, which was apparently that a member of the public had seen her waiting while her daughter was reading, and had assumed that she was loitering with the intent to steal goods from the store. She did not lodge any formal complaint (later regretting this) but she did go into the store and complained to the manager about calling the police, though she was not offered any apology by the store either. She said she feels the episode happened because of the way she was dressed – quite flamboyantly, and wearing a large hat – and that this drew attention to her as somehow ‘different’ from the rest of the shoppers in the store.

Romany culture is subject to some benign stereotypes (barrel top caravans with people selling wooden clothes pegs) as well as some negative ones (dirt, and in the past stealing babies). An extended conversation we had with a now-settled Romany woman revealed the importance of her cultural heritage to her identity and sense of herself. She had informed herself of various practices of which her own family was uncertain and clearly saw value in maintaining these despite the settled life she now leads. She told us of several practices long established around birth and death, for instance, and naming, as well as the declining role of arranged marriages – and the slightly increasing incidence of intermarriage between Romanies and Irish Travellers. As it happens, the décor of her house showed none of the features common in settled Romany houses and usually reminiscent of a style common in trailers: plates on display, glassware, polished brass items.

Like other informants, she stressed that the Romany language is alive and well in the county, though covertly. It is impossible to say how many people use it and in which spheres of their lives, but it remains covert because of the persisting stigma of ‘being a Gypsy’. She described the constant dilemma of what very light skinned black people call ‘passing’: not acknowledging her heritage with anyone other than those she trusted, not with neighbours, nor her child’s school. In her own case this is coupled in a complex way with becoming more assertive and proud of her roots and a greater unwillingness to tolerate harassment and abuse, but she was convinced that most Romanies would continue to keep their identity secret until racism against them was substantially diminished. She is in the very early stages of convening an anti-racist group in her locality, recognising what she has experienced as similar to things visited upon visible minorities. One subtle but persistent effect of negative stereotyping she suggested was the frequency with which she observed obsessional cleaning and hand-washing amongst Romany women. She was convinced this came about because they had internalised the majority population’s view of them as ‘dirty Gyppos’, and while this may be disputed (indeed it has been by other informants) it is worth reporting as a perception.

Summary of key issues

Male youths. While secondary school attendance in the county is higher than the national average for Travellers, some concerns were voiced about a small number of disaffected adolescent Traveller boys with behavioural problems, who on nearing the end of their compulsory schooling start to get into trouble with the law. Long periods of detention tend to fatally damage such boys’ education: they are likely to be taken off their school roll and there is long waiting list for the only specialist provision. The minimal amount of home tuition then available leaves a lot of time and opportunity for further trouble.

Others found that opportunities for short-term jobs in the kinds of marginal occupations followed by their fathers were perceived to be more attractive than school or other potential jobs or careers.

Youth provision. A general lack of provision for youth in some of the county towns affected Traveller youth. Youth club provision is patchy, with some clubs (allegedly) being known for drug abuse and hence considered off-limits by Traveller parents, a view reinforced by their fears of mainstream sexual mores. There is a need for more outreach work to these young people.

Confident handling of child protection cases was suggested as a 'potential' problem. With negative, suspicious or cautious attitudes both from and to various agencies, and varying degrees of ignorance, it is at least possible that some children's needs are not met.

A coherent and supportive policy about sites. The Council's policy contains many reasonable and accommodating sentiments (not surprisingly, since several people concerned with Traveller welfare contributed to it) but it seems to have made little progress in its goals. In practice there appears to be an at least implicit policy of neglect towards official sites and a perception by some (but not all) of those involved that planning permission for private sites is only granted after a battle. One site on which some Travellers are legally living is in a state described to us as 'dangerous and appalling', apparently being left this way while an illegally camped family are removed. Romanies have had no option but to move into housing as no pitches in the County have been available. A young Traveller couple marrying have to either go elsewhere to pursue a travelling lifestyle or face a continual series of evictions. All the former roadside stopping places have been blocked or ditched to prevent access, the 'official' transit site built for the purpose because of a recognised need is closed, and Travellers stopped illegally are moved on.

Any proposal from outsiders to administer a private site on behalf of the Council should not diminish its responsibility to Travellers, and should have clear and agreed criteria in relation to selecting tenants, tenancy rights, rent control and rights of access by TES and health services.

Relationships between the different groups of Travellers. This is related to a coherent and informed management of site provision. If one has become by default an Irish site more smaller sites with no transit places and perhaps one main family in residence may be a partial solution. There is certainly continuing potential for conflict between different Traveller communities (and indeed we were told by one Romany between different sub-groups of Romanies, whose feuds may last many years). We were told of one Irish family who are the subject of an injunction forbidding them to stop within the county boundary, partly because of their aggressive behaviour towards other Travellers.

Contact and liaison with 'officialdom'. Some officials are clearly well respected and trusted by Travellers and some less so. It was both our finding and that of the Review Team from Birmingham University that the Health Bus staff was regarded very highly, enjoyed a high degree of trust and provided an effective link to other services. This was due to considerable empathy and involvement on their part. Some Travellers told us that before this project no-one really seemed to be 'on their side' and able to be effective in helping them, one describing the Health Bus as one of the best things that had happened for Irish Travellers. Others perceived the TES at least as highly, it having gained trust from having been closely involved with more than a generation of Traveller families.

There is an urgent need for the proposed post of Gypsy liaison officer to be filled, with careful thought as to which Council department he or she should be managed by. The post is unlikely to be effective if seen as an addition to the staff of an eviction department.

Economic vulnerability. Those who still travel are a vulnerable group in terms of their financial status and their lack of tenure.

Negative perceptions. Many Travellers experience negativity towards them from the population at large, a negativity that is partly generic but sometimes specific towards a particular Traveller group. The negative image of the Irish is about dishonesty, stealing and leaving sites damaged or rubbish-strewn and they may face double discrimination for being Travellers *and* Irish. The New Travellers are viewed with some distrust because their lifestyle is elective (and they are perhaps seen as equally undesirable whatever the reason they found it difficult or impossible to fit into a regular 'settled' lifestyle). They are also viewed with some suspicion regarding an assumed use of drugs, and a propensity for 'rave' gatherings, although there seems to be either little inclination or opportunity for the latter in Herefordshire. On the whole, there is little in the way of positive and pro-active attempts to celebrate or give approval to the lifestyle of any of these three groups by the community they live on the fringes of (although positive examples exist). There appears to be suspicion of their lifestyles, partly founded on a lack of knowledge and understanding, and partly founded on experiences of or rumours of socially unacceptable behaviour by some Travellers. Schools do not appear to be hostile to Traveller children's presence (which is not always the case in other parts of country) and we have positive accounts from some parents and observers.

Groups identified by their employment:
Seasonal Foreign Agricultural Workers

Background

For some years Herefordshire has had relatively large numbers of temporary seasonal agricultural workers resident here for up to six months, from around April/May to September/October. They have been mainly present in Britain under the Seasonal Agricultural Workers Scheme (SAWS) – in existence since the late 1940s - of which more details are given below. The national scale of this scheme has been increased considerably recently, with quotas growing from 15,200 in 2001 to 20,200 in 2003. In terms of length of stay, the legal boundary of the SAWS has been May 1 to November 30.

Some may also be present under the Sectors Based Scheme, which allows a 12 month stay and is restricted to a range of work for which British resident workers cannot be found: specifically hotel and catering work, mushroom production and meat and fish processing. Hotels in the county may account for a small number of the 20,000 permits expected to be issued for the UK in 2003/4, and insofar as there are vacancies for animal gut removers, bone breakers, bone extractors, meat cold store workers, meat cutters, packers and processors and people to work in slaughterhouses there will be foreign workers. Their numbers are not significant compared to those working in crop growing and production and they have not been part of the county's workforce for long, but a local poultry producer employed up to 50 Eastern European workers under the Sector based Scheme in 2003.

Employers explained the changes in agriculture that have created a need for temporary summer labour. Some were formerly engaged in cattle or arable farming and have now turned to producing fruit, soft fruit and potatoes, although others stressed such produce had been produced in the county for many years. Hops, a traditional product of the county, are now a less profitable crop than strawberries.

There are pressures on everyone in growing. It is a marginal occupation. We do a lot of packing and storing, so that makes a bit extra besides growing and picking.

One of the employing agencies told us that the 'season' now extends almost throughout the year, with work on turkey farms later in the season. Farmers were therefore keen to have the migrant workers as long as the work was available and some new regulations, which came into force in January 2004, will facilitate this (see below).

In any case, such produce is highly labour-intensive to grow and to harvest, and the 'traditional' temporary labour force – women who would bring their children with them while they worked – would have been insufficient even if it were available. It was not available, it was suggested because of the availability of other work, people's preference for less physically demanding work, and the greater strictness of health and safety law relating to children on farms. According to DEFRA, as well as receiving lower wages, workers in Herefordshire work longer basic hours and Herefordshire has the highest part time employment rate in the region with 32.3%. The area is experiencing significant out-migration of young people of the same age as the migrant workers. All the employers also regaled us with stories of the unavailability and unreliability of local British workers.

A Home Office review of the SAWS (2002) remarked

5.1.3 Many farmers and growers advertise their seasonal vacancies with the Jobcentre network but in general are disappointed at the low numbers of referrals and the motivation of those that do apply. From this source resident workers can also be discouraged from undertaking seasonal work by the distances they are required to travel to their place of work.

5.1.4 The disruption to workers' incomes as a result of moving off and on the benefits system in order to take up seasonal work is also perceived to be significant in discouraging resident workers.

Speaking from experience, they asserted that their operations would be entirely impossible without workers from elsewhere, who one described as '*By and large ... a decent intelligent hard-working bunch*'. Not surprisingly, the farmers claimed to all know each other, so this mutual contact is likely to have an impact upon wage rates, expectations about facilities, shared problems etc. One sought to emphasise that the workers were paid the standard minimum wage, more in some cases with piecework, and had no 'contributions' to pay, adding that if he had any English workers he would have to increase their rate of pay to compete with this. While he did not categorically say that he did have any British workers, his comment was '*we can't be fair to "our own" workers*'. The attitude towards the workers of only one of the owners might be described as seeing their presence as necessary but regrettable, preferring if only it were economically/practically possible to employ local workers.

Needs of the local economy

The migrant workers are a clearly key element in the economy of Herefordshire, since 'figures show the agriculture/fishing sector to dominate the economic landscape of the county' (*Herefordshire Partnership*; 2004: 80) and a good deal of Herefordshire having agricultural employment rates far higher than the national average: in significant parts of the county it is more than 25%, in at least half it is more than 10% (DEFRA). According to a report in the *Hereford Times* in August 2003 Herefordshire leads the whole of Northern Europe in organic soft fruit production. The numbers of seasonal workers are increasing: in 2002 DEFRA put the figure at 1,689, almost exactly the same as for 2001, but our best estimate is that in 2003 there were at least 3,000 temporary agricultural workers in the county¹. This compares with a local workforce in their age-group (20-24) of only 7,000 and a total adult full time workforce of 79,000. According to DEFRA they make up close to half of the seasonal workers in the entire West Midlands area (www.defra.gov.uk/erdp/docs/wmchapter). Nationally, the Home Office estimates that about 34% of all agricultural workers are seasonal (not all of them foreigners).

Their contribution is partly in the fact that they make certain kinds of farming possible at all, and partly in their spending power when they are present in the county. Apart from this, agriculture provides other benefits to the county in terms of some year-round farm employment for locals as well as employment in transport, machinery supply and maintenance etc. A farm that employs 100 foreign seasonal workers is likely to employ 15 locals all the year round. With the closure over recent years of some large employers the economic significance of the farms is underlined. A Home Office report observed

The employment of resident workers in agriculture, many of whom are full-time, relies on the existence of casual workers to meet seasonal peaks in the industry. Recent research has indicated that migrants do not harm the

employment prospects of the existing population (Home Office, 2002, para 3.7).

Of course most of the migrant workers' earnings are repatriated to their home countries – that is after all why they come – but the addition to food supermarket sales must be considerable. Some supermarkets have up to one thousand extra customers a week for the best part of six months, all of them buying what they need to sustain them in a 60 hour week of manual work. A large employer claimed this amounted to £300,000 a week in the height of the season.

Gathering information

In investigating this aspect of Herefordshire's workforce and economy we met with five employers, speaking with them for 45 minutes each. Having established some key issues we spoke with four others by telephone. The size of their enterprises varied from one with over 600 workers, one with 500, one with several concerns employing between one hundred and two hundred workers and several with much smaller numbers. In general (though see below) the workers are employed for the best part of six months. We also interviewed two of the large recruiting agencies on several occasions – the workers have to go through these agencies in order to obtain a visa and have been described by the Home Office as 'a cost effective means by which small and medium sized farmers in particular can access labour from a legitimate source'. The two we spoke with are the largest of only seven licensed to recruit workers, and they are both registered charities rather solely run-for-profit commercial agencies. One is run under the auspices of the National Federation of Young Farmers Clubs.

80% of the workers are employed by only 20% of the farms, so they are mostly working in fairly large concerns with many other workers. The average workforce is 40 but this is misleading since some have fewer than ten and some have hundreds.

Countries of origin

The workers come from a wide range of countries, mainly in former communist countries in Eastern Europe: Moldova, Lithuania, Bulgaria, Belarus, Poland, Ukraine, Russia, Latvia and Estonia (we were told there were also smaller numbers from China, Hungary, the Czech Republic and Macedonia). One agency has tried bringing temporary workers from India, but it was not successful and not continued after the first year: the Indian workers 'were not happy in Herefordshire', many of them (the agency said) being young people from wealthy backgrounds who wanted to improve their English but were unused to physical work. Nevertheless, this agency was resolved to continue to try to find Indian workers in the future, presumably young people with different backgrounds and a different agency said it currently had a handful of Indian workers and was looking to recruit more (see further comments below). On all the farms with which we had contact there seems to be roughly equal numbers of men and women, some coming as couples and many in small friendship groups. The Eastern Europeans have always been students in their home countries, this having been a condition of getting a SAWS visa, as was a maximum stay of six months (although we came across one or two who had had their visas extended, their employers seemingly instrumental in helping with this). They have not been allowed to bring dependents, nor change to any other kind of visa while here, nor to change employer (though in this sense the employer is the recruiting agency, who can for various reasons – including a workers' request – move them to another farm). New regulations on managed work permits from January 2004 suit the farmers very well, as they incorporate the longer (year-round) season

referred to earlier (although the maximum continuous stay will still be six months). In the changeover between different visa regulations some workers and employers benefited from workers being here for more than six months but this was exceptional.²

Many of the countries currently sending summer workers to Herefordshire joined the EU in 2004 and their citizens no longer require visas, or the special access they currently provide to the British economy and its wage rates. It is highly likely that fewer young people will come from those countries and if they come at all they will not be restricted to working in agriculture, a fact that the supplying agencies are only too aware of. One said that Chinese workers were *'proving to be very popular on the farms, both because of their excellent work ethic, and their willingness to be friendly and communicative insofar as language allows'*. Russians and Ukrainians will presumably still come. In the past, this agency has had workers from Kazakhstan, India, and Pakistan and they are always seeking to widen their recruitment base, though not surprisingly recruitment from places further away has not been so successful because of the travel costs incurred. About 50 students from the Indian sub-continent are being 'piloted' in 2004, and South Africa and hitherto unused eastern European countries are being considered. We mentioned some Portuguese workers earlier, but it should be noted that within most of the 'old' EU there is little economic incentive to be a seasonal worker except where there is a marked contrast between wage rates.

It was suggested to us by one source in the Council that some of the workers were not in the UK legally, and the Home Office Review commented that in the height of the season extra demand for workers may be taken up this way. Undoubtedly some of the workers are illegal and there have been occasional cases of illegal workers being found and deported (though in fact from businesses which might seem less seasonally affected). We have no way of knowing the numbers here, but it is likely that any illegal workers would make up a small proportion. The expansion of labour-intensive agriculture has coincided with the availability of a ready and legal supply of cheap, controllable and well educated labour in Eastern Europe, so the ease of recruitment, regulation and quality of the SAWS workers must leave little incentive for large employers to recruit illegally, not least because it would be difficult to pay them significantly less than their SAWS workers. To cut wage costs by paying below the minimum wage and perhaps to evade housing costs, smaller employers may recruit all their workers through 'gangmasters', or networks not registered as one of the Home Office's licensed Operators (though in the cases reported in the press the employers were not prosecuted for employing the illegal workers, indeed they helped the Immigration Service catch them). By its very nature, such recruitment and employment is not as accessible to this kind of research and rumours about it are hard to prove or disprove.

What's in it for the workers?

As stated above, currently they are always students, usually paying for their own degree studies at home, though one farm owner said they could buy a flat for little more than one summer's wages in Lithuania, something partially confirmed by a couple on another farm who had indeed bought a flat outright in Lithuania from their joint summer wages. In terms of the spending power of the money they earned, in Romania for example, three months' pay was said to equal three days here. In the Ukraine, one month's pay might equal about five days in the UK.

Most workers stay the full six months if the work is there, though some appear to be present for a shorter time, perhaps four months. The typical working week is around 60 hours, starting early to try to beat the summer heat (in the very hot weather of 2003 this meant starting work at 5.00 am and finishing at about 3.00pm, though some workers mentioned the hours of 7.00am to 5pm as more usual). Pay in 2003 was at the national agricultural minimum wage (around £4.50 per hour, £5.15 for non-harvesting tasks if over 19 years old) with a piecework element on top of this. Under the Agricultural Wages Order (DEFRA, October 1 2002) overtime must be paid at £6.75 for over 39 hrs per week, or over 8 hours in any one day. One farmer said that the workers have to be paid 'holiday pay' but we were unable to clarify this.

Two employers told us that the workers' visas require them to be employed as daily casuals, so no contracts exist, they receive no pay if they are ill and anyone can be laid off permanently with no notice. This was partially but not entirely confirmed by the Home Office staff administering the scheme. Workers are employed by the farms, not the agencies, and must be employed for a minimum of five weeks to get a visa at all, so a daily casual contract would not be possible. It is certainly true that if the harvest finishes early, or is very poor, so does the job, but this is subject to a minimum period of 5 weeks and does not apply to most of the workers most of the time. The Home Office official confirmed that SAWS workers are not entitled to sick pay.

Their visas allow for no tax to be deducted up to a threshold of £4,615, which is close to what they earn in six months after the typical deduction at source of around £25 per week for a quarter share of a mobile home provided by the farm, the cost price of coaches for any tourist trips and the (apparently rare) final deductions for damages. It was not clear to us how aware the workers were of this limit, or whether there was any tendency to leave once the threshold was reached (when they have to apply for a tax code). Any temporary residents specifically employed in either agriculture, horticulture, or in improving their English with the specific intent of becoming an English Language are exempt from National Insurance contributions for the length of their stay, whatever their total earnings.

One owner said '*A good many of them feel hard done by*' in relation to both their wages and possibly in relation to the facilities they are offered once they arrive:

...when the students come here, they have no idea. Their expectations are so high. They see the UK as all new cars, new homes, they think everyone lives like that. They don't realise that none of this is paid for by cash, that people have loans and mortgages. They imagine that most English workers are on £50 an hour. .

We referred above to the changing political geography of Europe and hence the potential sources of workers. It seems unlikely to us that workers from the accession countries will continue to make up such a large proportion of the workforce, and

indeed very few may come. As the quote above indicates (and it was echoed by others) the students' image of their time in Britain was somewhat different from the reality of a mobile home in a very rural area. Though they may not be successful, it is highly likely that they will seek different kinds of work in towns and cities. Should accession country students still come, employers will have far less power over them, and they will of course have access to other work outside of the former regulations. If they find such work in the County they will obviously not continue to live on the farms. The probability is, however, that Herefordshire is very unlikely to see much of an influx from the accession countries since there is little work to attract them other than the work they have been doing for years. What is more likely to change is the makeup of nationalities amongst the seasonal workers.

Interviewing workers

We met with six groups of workers, in groups varying in size from two to eight people. On one occasion the employer preferred to be present. In one group one of those present was designated as the liaison officer between the workers and the owners, and had been working in Herefordshire for three seasons. In another the group facilitator was from one of the EU accession countries and now works in the UK full time for the company, which employs 500 seasonal workers. She originally came as a seasonal worker, and now does all seasonal worker administration. We have no way of demonstrating that the individuals present were representative of all the workers. All those who spoke with us were volunteers, but were inevitably those whose English was good enough for a group discussion. Some interviews took place during the working day, two were at the end of a day (and the workers were visibly tired). Comments and findings from these interviews are integrated within subsequent sections.

Relationships with employers

The circumstances of the workers have elements of the feudal about them, with employers assuming a range of responsibilities beyond simply exchanging pay for work – a range of responsibilities that we suspect surprised some as the practice of employing foreign workers developed. One of the interviewed staff in a recruiting agency was very aware of some relevant cultural differences and has visited the workers' own countries to foster good relationships. She stated her concern that they feel comfortable about their experience working in the UK. The employers we spoke with were undoubtedly genuinely concerned about the welfare and experiences of their workers: they knew a lot about them, one on a larger farm had visited several of their home countries, others had received very genuine invitations from departing workers. All those with whom we spoke seemed to emphasise the good relationships they had built up with their workers. Where the business was run by a husband and wife team it tended to be wives who were most centrally involved with all aspects of their workers' lives – health, contact with home, housing (including details of who shared with whom), pay, banking and international financial transfers, mass transport to shops, tourist coach trips, the provision of leisure facilities like TV, some free bicycles, a football pitch, basketball, volleyball and table tennis. Employers also have had the power to enable a worker to return, since the recruiting agencies tend to check their approval for subsequent visas.

An example of the unusual power held by farm managements is in relation to pay. Each worker has a separate pay account held by their employer from which they can draw cash at will. Their closing balance is generally paid direct to home country banks when they leave for a fee of about £15, which some employers described as complex and bureaucratic while others seemed to think it straightforward (one said it

was a big problem and was meeting with banks to resolve it, another simply did not describe it this way at all). Employers identified a problem with the workers taking out UK bank accounts, some in the past leaving with overdrafts and being untraceable. But having identified this as a potential issue, employers have and use the power to prevent it by simply refusing to sign the initial reference needed to open an account. (One farm at least was an exception to this and did not have an 'internal banking system', but opened accounts for all their students at one of the high street banks. The students then just used their cash cards in the town like anyone else.)

We have absolutely no evidence that this degree of power held by the owners was ever exercised other than benignly, though it is evident that exploitative employers with anything to hide would hardly volunteer to talk with us with the ready willingness displayed by those we interviewed, or be so helpful in organising group interviews for us. The recruiting agencies were particularly helpful in facilitating access and contact with farms, one sending a letter out to all the farmers on their books explaining that research was being conducted and that they might expect to be contacted.

Whether a farm has a resident workforce of hundreds, a few dozen, or a handful it is clearly in employers' interests to have good relationships and a harmonious working environment, with enough knowledge of their staff to be able to anticipate problems and difficulties before they interfere with production. For some farmers it is difficult to draw a line between 'home' and 'work', living in the centre of their job makes the two facets wholly enmeshed. This, together with the fact that some workers ask to return to the same farms in subsequent years, suggest it is fair to assume that genuinely supportive relationships do exist between employers and employees as the set-up, even on the large farms, has the feeling of being familial, even if institutional. This does set up certain obligations on the part of the employers. They are not *in loco parentis*, but for most of the young people this is the first time they have been abroad alone, or at all, and inevitably some need support.

The large farms we visited seemed to have appointed a 'student liaison officer' to take care of the pastoral needs of the students, and to feed these needs back to the attention of management for further support if necessary. This person was usually someone who had been to the farm two or three times before. At the largest farm, the management said they were so concerned that they were providing for the workers in terms of national and international standards of human rights legislation, that they have appointed a consultant specialising in human rights issues to advise them and update them on legislative changes. The managing director showed an extensive questionnaire provided by the consultant and subsequently completed by the farm. This same farm has invited, on at least one occasion, a race equality worker based in the county to talk with the workers.

Thus while it is inevitable that the employers are in the more powerful position, this does not necessarily mean that they are deliberately exploitative. More than one owner felt aggrieved by the feeling that there was a general impression by 'the public' or 'the media' in some cases, that these workers were being taken advantage of. On the other hand, another farmer said 'some employers are pretty mean' and as we suggested earlier it is possible that for short-term crises some employ illegal workers outside of any rules about pay and conditions.

Facilities and accommodation

The farm facilities consisted mainly of second hand mobile homes and caravans, some with bathroom facilities and kitchens, while others shared communal ones. Some 'portacabin' type accommodation also exists. We saw a barn conversion at a

large farm, downstairs housing social facilities – bar, TVs Playstation and so on - while the upstairs containing a room couples could book for the night for some 'personal time' when they wanted to be away from more communal facilities. Smaller employers do not provide the range of other facilities, though we were told that 'basic' items like TVs and access to machine machines were 'naturally' available. As indicated below, the recruiting agencies have a legal responsibility to ensure there is 'decent accommodation' but the workers are not legally obliged to live in it. In practice almost all do because there is little practical alternative: public transport does not serve many of the farms, working days are long, it is far cheaper than anything else they will find. A typical daily rent seems to be about £3 per head including electricity and water, and there was some outside lighting such as one might see on a campsite. The accommodation was not luxurious but we have no evidence that the workers were dissatisfied. The Home Office Report of 2002 argued for a continuing obligation on the part of farmers and growers to provide accommodation of an appropriate standard as a condition of participating in the scheme' but while it notes various issues of concern it gave no indication that accommodation standards were an area of dissatisfaction. However, One farmer observed

The agencies are imposing ridiculously high standards of accommodation. All rooms have to have curtains now. After 1st September, all rooms have to have heating. The standards are unrealistically high.

This farmer may have been used to workers only being present during the warmer summer months, but considering the length of stay that is increasingly common we were surprised that he thought it unreasonable to expect heating to be available. Whatever the temperature, the privacy afforded by curtains seems a reasonable expectation. In fact, the employing agencies are given certain responsibilities by the Home Office, and their website aimed at prospective foreign workers states:

The Operators regularly inspect the farms to ensure they are:

- offering appropriate work;
- looking after your health and safety; and
- providing decent accommodation.

Before you leave for the UK, the Operator will provide you with an information pack describing your placement and terms and conditions.

The information pack will include these details:

- the sort of work, starting date and how to get there;
- pay and deductions;
- how much work is available, including overtime;
- your hours of work and breaks;
- your holiday pay, sick pay and bad weather pay entitlements;
- your employment rights, including rights to written terms and pay details;
- your rights and responsibilities under health and safety law;
- the minimum standards of accommodation you can expect.

The Home Office's 2002 Review of the scheme recommended

All Operators to be required to provide clear, consistent information to SAWS participants prior to their entry to the UK. The information should be in a language the recipient will understand and includes their rights and responsibilities on the scheme; a clear, transparent and consistent appeals

and complaints procedure; health and safety matters; and the costs they can expect to incur while on the SAWS.

Which suggests this did not always happen in the past.

Some students said that the agencies in their home countries sometimes build up unrealistic expectations of working in the UK, and this can cause some initial disappointment when they first arrive. (This might concur to some extent with the comments cited earlier where the farmer described expectations as sometimes unrealistic – although this does not seem to be a general feature of the workers' experience).

On one farm at least one of the sectional plastic greenhouses was in use for drying clothes. On another farm we saw a licensed bar and disco area, facilities for showing films, video games, a football and volleyball pitch, and a swimming pool is planned for next year with the site already decided. Although in general the summer working season is outside the student-workers' academic year, if they stay on until November there is some overlap. We found one large farm with a 'quiet room' where students could work and some certainly get sent work from home - it was unclear whether this was from fellow students or from tutors – usually over the Internet. The most valued facility we found was the provision of fourteen computers with Internet access on-site for their personal use. At another farm the worker facilitating the group particularly wanted to say that the company have been trying to organise an Internet room for the workers, but have had obstruction with planning permission. On another farm the farmer had concerns about high phone charges for Internet access, on another there was unwillingness to provide Internet access because of the potential use of pornographic websites. It is hard to ascertain if these were genuine concerns, lack of knowledge (for instance about declining connection charges) or rationalisations for avoiding the expense of providing the facilities. TVs seemed to be available on most farms, which the workers said they watched though their employers thought they did not. One farmer spoke of weekly trips arranged over the summer to various places around Britain, charged simply at cost, her husband referred to a smaller number, the workers said 'sometimes' there were trips.

All the workers we spoke with thought that the 'student village' life was very amenable in terms of a sense of community, the opportunity to meet people from other countries, the social life, the support, the fact that they were all young people together and could therefore speak a common language of 'youth culture'. One farm said that they had had two weddings as a result of people meeting on the farm.

It is important to state that we saw such facilities on the larger farms, and the best facilities by far were at the farm with the largest workforce. The unit cost of such provision for smaller employers would of course be much higher and their workers do not have the range of facilities described here, or of course the contact with other workers.

As regards facilities off the farms, as we have mentioned the larger farmers tended to arrange free or at-cost buses weekly to the nearest large supermarket (though one farm was 20 minutes walk so there were no buses). Some workers felt this weekly trip was not enough and there may well be issues about adequate storage space for fresh or chilled food. An employer felt that access to Hereford was 'not too bad' since the 20 minutes to the bus route would be 'nothing exceptional' in the home countries and the hourly bus service was adequate. Not all the workers agreed.

Several workers mentioned the proximity of lakes and rivers to their homes and the fact that they missed easy access to somewhere to swim. With shopping and Internet access (see below) appearing to fill much of their Saturdays, not many found the time to get to the swimming pool in Hereford, which closed at 5.00. The cinema in Hereford was rarely used and there is no cinema in Ledbury.

One owner complained about the strictness of planning law, preventing them from building anything more permanent that would not be prohibitively expensive. An application to convert a former nursing home in Hereford into accommodation for up to 60 workers was turned down in 2002, presumably through the objections of neighbours. In 2004 planning permission for a new dedicated housing centre (with tarmac roads, swimming pool, cinema, sauna, shop, bar, internet room, library, disco and medical rooms) for around 1000 seasonal workers was turned down by the Council by an 18-1 vote, a decision that featured on national news broadcasts. It had national resonances because of widespread sensitivity about 'floods' of foreigners coming to Britain, an anxiety that confused refugees, accession country workers, illegal workers exploited by 'gangmasters', criminally inclined foreigners, and terrorists. Some of this confusion appeared to feature in the Council debate that rejected the scheme (and there is more evidence of it in the housing survey quotes later and in the comments of a neighbouring farmer who wanted a three-metre fence around the camp and all 'delinquent employees to be disciplined and expatriated').

This is a climate that makes it difficult to square the market demand for cheap food with the most basic housing needs of the workers that grow it, with the economic pressures upon farmers. The application –supported by the County's Chamber of Commerce, the NFU and many businesses who would presumably feel some benefit from it - was refused 'because of the impact it would have on the countryside' according to the Council leader, but the national coverage was less about the unattractiveness of associated extra cultivation under polytunnels and the additional three lorry movements per day during the season than the presence of the foreign workers. Knowing the volatility of the issue, it could make easy copy for the media, but the *Hereford Times* reports did not in any simplistic way stoke up hostility towards the foreign workers. At a public meeting called in Leominster by the local MP, an attempt by the BNP to make the issue explicitly about 'race' was apparently unsuccessful.

Contact and relationships with local people

Contact with the local population may vary in different localities but seems to be limited to encounters in public places: the street, the big supermarkets, village shops and pubs, occasionally on buses and in public libraries. On the whole the foreign workers tend not to use pubs, which are very expensive compared to their home countries, preferring to buy alcohol in supermarkets and consume it at the camp (mostly apparently at the end of the working week). This may vary slightly with area and perhaps proximity to particular pubs, since three groups did speak of using local pubs in Ross-on-Wye, particularly a disco pub, apparently very popular on a Friday night. Another other local pub used was close to Ledbury. The locals were all described as very friendly and the workers felt they were made to feel very welcome. In Ross-on-Wye, only one girl said that she sometimes felt some lack of friendliness from the local youth in that she felt they were unwilling to mix, rather than any outright hostility. However, a male worker in the same interview group said that he had a good rapport with the local young men, who often wanted information about particular girls from the farm whom they wanted to get to know. We wondered, for instance, if local youths had ever turned up at the workers' accommodation in any threatening way, but no one knew of this happening.

No-one amongst the workers made any suggestion of any conflict with local people, indeed several workers readily agreed when one commented how friendly people were, greeting them in the street in the knowledge that they were foreign workers. Local people were generally said to seem not to care about the workers speaking their own languages out and about on the street and in the town and they didn't feel inhibited or disapproved of in this context. On the whole, the workers said that local people, and British people in general, were very friendly and very helpful. Locals would take the time to give directions and to help them in any way that they could.

One farm (the largest) said that in the high season they banned workers from going to the local village, as they did not want it to be overwhelmed with their workers. However, he then said that local people had got a petition together (signed by 300 people) to say that the students *should* be allowed to visit the village. It was unclear whether this was because of the local trade implications. This is in stark contrast to another village referred to below, under the heading of 'friction' and of course the planning application referred to above.

A farm that used Hereford for shopping said that there had been accusations made against the foreign workers regarding shoplifting, but these had been unsubstantiated, and the managing director of the farm had himself gone to the supermarket to intervene on the one or two occasions that this had happened. Two farms (one near Hereford, the other near Ross) said there had been some complaints about litter, but any accusations against the foreign workers had been unsubstantiated. Another farm near Ledbury told us that locals had accused them of littering during the 'Ledbury in Bloom' week, but that the local vicar had written to the local paper to defend the workers and to praise their behaviour.

One farm (near Ledbury) said that as the farm facilitated discos every weekend, some of the local people had complained of the noise at night. The workers said that they sympathised with the local people, but for them it was the one chance in the week that they were able to really relax and enjoy themselves.

Friction

On the other hand, there is presumably at least a little irritation associated with the (apparently) local conventional wisdom that it is best to avoid one town's big supermarket on a Friday night, since the combined shopping of up to 800 workers from the three local farms always takes place.

This kind of reaction was expressed much more strongly elsewhere. We referred in the previous section to an employer perhaps misguidedly forbidding workers to go into the local village. Some incidental findings from a Housing Needs Study carried out by HCC around a village of perhaps 1200 people suggested that villagers were 'upset' by the numbers of foreign workers

The topic receiving the highest number of comments (35 comments, 13% of all 272 respondents) was the fruit picking enterprise adjacent to the village, employing large numbers of seasonal workers. Those commenting felt uncomfortable with the large influx, and/or felt that the caravan accommodation used for these workers was unsightly.[....].... Three people felt that it was unfortunate that some properties had been bought up for renting to seasonal workers.

The employer had told his workers not to go into the village and some confirmation about feeling in the village may be indicated by these residents' comments. While there is some concern about unsightly poly-tunnels and heavy lorry traffic, there is also considerable hostility to the foreign workers on the basis of numbers:

...I think (the fruit farm) are virtually taking over...

...We have been informed 918 foreign workers will be arriving this summer. How can a village like cope with this number.

... their workers should be housed where their huge numbers can be absorbed without a detrimental effect on the quality of life of the people of

[farm company] ... getting too big and starting to over run the village - in summer there are more casual workers than village residents.

an increase in population that is almost double the inhabitants of the parish during summer months...

... many many foreigners and using local properties and unkempt caravans to house them.

... Serious concern about the increasing number of caravans/mobile homes

.... flooded it with foreign workers. These are not objectionable in themselves but the number are far too great for a small village

... a large influx of immigrant population has been allowed to develop. This is changing the character of this once peaceful village.

... too many foreign workers, who at the peak period outnumber residents.

...We think ...[the].. parish has developed enough in some respects too much ie the influx (annually) of strawberry farm workers. [we]... do not need this peripatetic population.

Others are specific about overloading local provision:

... The rampant expansion of the fruit growing business has had a detrimental effect on the village as the local infrastructure is unable to cope with the demands of 100's of seasonal workers...

...We are concerned with the development of temporary accommodation for seasonal workers at [farm company] - we are told in excess of 1,000 workers at peak season - periodically overloads parish amenities.

...[they]... block the very few local facilities, we have eg tennis courts, playing fields (large scale football matches)....

... A further social problem the "toing and froing" of their eastern European work force to shop/phone...

...Too many foreign workers brought in for the summer months. There is no adequate facilities for them, they have nothing to do in their free time, except

hang around the village "a recipe for disaster". We need facilities or teenagers, pool table etc.

...More leisure facilities required...

Although one resident, while worrying about this also seems to resent the alternative:

There are no amenities or facilities for the seasonal workers...[...]... The village shops stocking items to suit the spending power of these workers.

As regards accommodation, while many dislike the caravans and their appearance

Too many rented "mobile homes" catering for temporary overseas people rather than for [...] parishioners.

The village now suffers an unsightly caravan park...

Development has in my view been influenced by the presence of foreign workers... [...]...with the sprawl of temporary accommodation for them. This is a blot on the environment...

others resent the purchasing of local houses to accommodate the workers:

The recent tendency for certain individuals to buy up vacant houses etc for letting to seasonal agricultural workers, mostly foreign is an unpopular development.

... If they have permanent accommodation then what??

But others seem either to resent the fact that these workers are *foreign* and to invoke sometimes a vague sense of threat:

...I feel that if (the fruit farm) paid more for the hard labour, more locals and not foreigners could be employed

We are already under siege from seasonal workers...

There is one large farm within the parish which [...]... employs large numbers of transient workers. These leave a feeling of insecurity within the village populace.

... Also installing numerous caravans on his land for immigrant workers for cheap labour, regardless of the villagers [...]... Many people have lived [here] for a number of years and do not deserve this treatment.

Others are more specific about the threat:

... villagers suffer, noise, nuisance [...]... unlicensed or taxed/insured vehicles....

700 workers commute in every year to pick strawberries, they ruin the village. Cars broken into and stolen there is always a stabbing every year, police out all the time, rubbish everywhere...

...gangs of pickers monopolising the local pub, playing field and telephone box at the expense of the locals.

...large transient population in the summer i.e. foreign agricultural workers. This influx of people can be quite intimidating for the younger and older members of the village.

The gangs of foreign workers wandering the village area is a cause for concern for parents, particularly with small children. Damage to vehicles and property has also increased over recent years too.

...the village can do without the annual influx of foreigners particularly those of suspect integrity or criminality.

I am concerned about the numbers of migrant workers because they are threatening in (large) groups in the street....

We have for most of the year an influx of wondrous foreign workers, subsequently people are needing to fence off what was once pretty open planned gardens to keep these people off them. Some people have difficulty selling properties because of this, others are not happy to move here because of [farm company] and its foreign out of control workforce.

Groups of strangers wondering round the village and using local facilities park area etc. is detrimental to the village atmosphere - children in particular feel intimidated.

This makes a striking contrast to what everyone, employers, recruiting agencies and the workers themselves told us about their local impact. It is referred to again in the conclusion to this section of the report.

The *Hereford Times* carried an article in December 2003 about Russian-speaking shoplifters. It is worth quoting this article at length to consider its possible impact upon local perceptions of the foreign workers:

... the PCs of Hereford's High Town beat [...] are thinking of having cards printed in Russian explaining rights when under arrest to shoplifting seasonal workers from the former Soviet bloc.

It is often at the moment of arrest that such light-fingered visitors forget any understanding of English, said team leader

[...] Russian remains a language common to the hundreds of Eastern European nationals that arrive in the county each summer.

This year, 25 of them were sent back home for stealing - admittedly a small minority of their normally law-abiding number, but enough to consider bringing in the cards next summer ...[...].

There has even been a proposal for Shoplifters will be Prosecuted signs in Russian on the doors of their favourite stores.

Those few that do steal run a big risk. Employers take a firm line that usually sees thieves - or any others involved in illegal activity - sacked and sent home.

But [...] does admit to a certain sympathy for those Eastern Europeans that his team catches. Often, he says, they steal towards the end of their stay - tempted by what they see in High Town compared to shops back home - and they take presents for family and friends.

Most get a caution if caught doing so. The cards would explain exactly what is happening at the moment of arrest [...].

Once they reach custody, a translator from Herefordshire Technical College is rarely more than 10 minutes away and there is access to a 24-hour language line telephone link.

Shoplifting in Hereford city centre has dropped this year, with the High Town team making arrests in 80% of reported offences.

The reporter responsible said this item was not run in a particularly serious vein and that he was conscious of not inflaming feelings in what referred to as 'the current climate' regarding anyone foreign as a potential asylum seeker. It is a matter of judgment whether it might do so or not. On the one hand it makes clear that shoplifting generally has been effectively reduced by 80%, that a very small proportion of foreign workers may be involved, that in a sense the temptation is understandable, that the consequences are serious for them when caught, and that employers take a very dim view of it. On the other hand it talks about 'light-fingered visitors', suggests that the problem is serious enough to warrant the cards (though interpreting is described as easily available) and that 'suggestions have been made' to have warning notices in Russian on shop doorways (in fact the proposal was unattributed and certainly did not come from the police). As is often the case, the article will be read and interpreted partly through the ideas and assumptions readers already have: those who know anything of them will recognise there is really no issue here at all; those already predisposed against them will take it as confirming and validating the sense of threat expressed by the villagers quoted earlier, or these 'quoted' earlier in the year in relation to the expansion of a farm:

... permission to expand its seasonal worker accommodation to around 900 people despite complaints of violence, theft and vandalism linked to the site... (*Hereford Times* 17 April 2003).

The report added '... there are fears students may [...] move on to look for work in other parts of the county ...'.though it does not say whose these fears are, nor explain the practical difficulties of a worker taking such a step, nor that there is no evidence of this happening, nor that there would be little economic incentive to do so. The Home Office suggests that perhaps 5% of SAWS workers overstay illegally.

The police told us they did *not* regard shoplifting as particularly related to the migrant worker population. It might be speculated that workers from a poorer society, where such things as electric consumer goods are more expensive and less common, would be very tempted to shoplift. Whether the temptation exists or not, the police have little evidence that the workers are any more involved in shoplifting than others of the same age from the 'host' population. Some local reports suggest the worst

shoplifting is motivated by drug use and may have moved to the suburbs, areas not frequented by foreign workers.

Almost the only other explicit point of friction anyone told us about was in relation to Internet access in the public libraries. There is heavy demand for this from the workers to stay in touch with home, no computers usually being available in their camps, and the demand is almost all funnelled into Saturdays, that in general being the only free day of their week³. One of the recruiting agencies confirmed the extent of parental anxiety to stay in touch, as did one of the employers, heightening student concern about email. None of the employers we spoke to provided this facility so there was huge pressure on the libraries. It was not widely known that 'Information Shops' in Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster and Ross also had computers available to the public. An Internet café in Hereford (seemingly thought of by one employer as a partial solution, despite its expense) closed during 2003. The terminals available in the libraries are limited, Hereford itself having 18, Leominster and Ross 10 and the other smaller branches fewer than this⁴ so both locals and the foreign workers competed for them. Not surprisingly informal queuing and keeping places arrangements arise, with consequent resentment from anyone kept waiting. The foreign workers also at times found the terminals booked out by locals for most of the day, though officially we were told by the library service that booking is not supposed to take place on Saturdays. On the one hand some workers wait a whole day to get access and to send a few emails, on the other hand a librarian reported some hostility expressed in the comments book along the lines of '*we pay our local taxes and these people don't*'.

The police appear to have had no particular involvement with these large numbers of young foreign workers. There has been an occasional issue to do with cars, workers buying them but not knowing (or being concerned about) insurance and MOT cover. Employers told us this now tended to be dealt with pro-actively, with police officers visiting larger farms at the beginning of the season and pointing out potential pitfalls and legal responsibilities with car ownership. In the nature of things this would only arise as a problem if there was an accident, and although there was apparently a fatal accident in around 2000 when two Polish occupants of a car were killed, the police have given no indications that they regard uninsured/untaxed car use as an issue of serious or ongoing concern – indeed they stated the opposite. It is obvious in visiting any of the farms that few of the workers choose to spend their summer earnings on buying cars in any case.

Use of other local services

It seemed to be accepted that it would be impossible to communicate using the all the languages spoken amongst the workers, and Russian is often in effect the *lingua franca*. English lessons were generally thought to be good idea in principle, but in reality, students were often just too tired to do lessons at the end of a day's work. Farm management said that they had tried to set up English lessons and one owner felt if teachers were available the workers could do the organising themselves internally, but in most cases previous initiatives had foundered due to progressive lack of attendance by students, and the difficulties of catering for different levels of ability.

Indirectly (in the sense that they do not pay for it themselves) the foreign workers make extra demands upon waste disposal services for their considerable quantities of domestic refuse their numbers generate. Their employers are charged for this directly as commercial waste collection rather than the costs being borne by local council tax payers. This aside, and apart from shops, libraries and very occasionally

a rush for dollar exchange at the end of the summer season, the local service most often in demand was health care, though not really to any great extent. By definition the workers are young, fit and healthy, though there are some common complaints resulting from the nature of their work, such as painful knees. Surprisingly, one farmer displayed some ambivalence about his workers' access to medical services:

They use the National Health Service, They should be making a contribution to it. They don't abuse the service, but they do make use of it.

A larger farm had an equipped medical room and an appointment system with a weekly visiting doctor (the doctor and nurse being the same ones who run the Traveller Health Bus, which has expanded its brief to include some seasonal workers). Pregnancy has been an issue in one or two cases. One farm said they signed up all their workers with the GP, another said they this happened according to need. According to employers local health provision has adjusted to the specific demands of the workers to the extent that in Ledbury, for instance, the two GP practices have devised a duty rota for foreign workers so there is always one available and a patient stays with the doctor they first meet.

On the other hand, some workers in the Ledbury area said that the doctors 'never take the time to look at you, never mind examine you' and that the standard treatment seemed to be Paracetamol. They told of one case who went twice to a doctor with pain and was prescribed Paracetamol. He became very ill in the middle of the night with 'stones' (whether kidney or another kind was unclear) and had to be rushed to the A & E department of a hospital. The waiting at A & E was described as 'terrible', with waiting for up to 4-5 hours before being seen (although this was perceived by the workers to be normal for anyone and not specific to them).

Dentistry was an aspect of health care allegedly abused in the past. With poorer provision in the home countries it was suggested to us that the blanket insurance once provided by the recruiting agencies was used to get comprehensive dental treatment. The recruiting agencies told us such insurance is no longer offered, but it was unclear to us how this 'abuse' took place, since a distinctive feature of Herefordshire's health care is the free walk-in dental clinics in several towns. An interview at the Hereford clinic confirmed that the overseas workers did indeed on occasion use the clinics, but by no means often and certainly not excessively. No particular difficulty with their use was identified. While an employer had the impression that forms were best completed in advance and that it was better for someone not fluent be accompanied by someone who was, the clinic pointed out that medical details such as allergic reactions had to be ascertained with certainty, and that if in any doubt at all they would use Language Line for authoritative interpreting. The workers' experience of dental treatment varied. One group said that it was prompt and efficient with same or next day treatment; another (in the Ledbury area) said that sometimes there was a wait of days for treatment. While one worker said he had had to wait for a month to get a dental appointment it was unclear whether this involved immediate necessary treatment – which would certainly have been available at one of the clinics.

In the past some workers attended Church but currently this seems to be less prevalent. We were told that the Catholic church in Ledbury at one time had special services in Polish and that some Orthodox worshippers met together, but we were unable to find out where.

Footnotes

1. One of the employing agencies told us they had 580 on their books, the other had 1,938. Not all the workers may be accounted for this way, since some seem to be recruited through other, smaller agencies. The limit on the number of visas granted for the whole UK is set for 2003-4 by the Home Office at 25,000.
2. From 1st January 2004 the workers will come under the scheme of (managed) Work Permits UK (a branch of the Home Office). Under the new scheme, all the seasonal workers must be over 18 and in full time education. Workers will be able to stay for six months. However, if they wish to work for three months, return home for three months, and then return for a further six months work, they will be able to effectively work nine months of the year in the UK. This new scheme will bring the UK in line with EC directives.
3. An alternative to contacting home via email was of course telephone, and it seemed the vast majority used mobile phones. We wondered how aware they were initially of the costs, and the practicalities of using public call boxes, although this was the subject of complaints by villagers in at least one location.
4. Internet terminals in libraries: Ledbury 7; Belmont 3; Colwall 8; Kington 2; Leintwardine 2; Weobley 2; Bromyard 4

Groups identified by their employment: *EU workers*

While there are undoubtedly EU nationals in the county for a variety of personal employment reasons, there is an identifiable group who come for specific work mainly from Portugal. This has only been the case on any scale since late 2002. They work at a large poultry producer with a large demand for manual labour which cannot be met locally when the unemployment rate is well under 2%. They are paid £5 per hour. Their English is generally not fluent, and the company employs interpreters, partly because of stringent health and safety requirements.

We were not able to interview anyone from amongst this group of workers, but were told by the company that there were 97 employed in May 2004 out of a total hourly paid work force of 1366. 75% are male, and the pattern so far has been for the majority of the workers (perhaps 70%) to come for periods of six months or so and then return to Portugal. In this respect they are migrant workers with many similarities with the agricultural workers already discussed, except that their stay is not time limited. The reason they come to work in Britain is because of differentials in wages and the availability of work, the reason they return is that they do not wish, for a variety of reasons, to settle in the UK.

These workers may shed some light upon future trends of migration from the accession countries of Eastern Europe. The same business in the past employed a small number of Eastern Europeans under the Sector Based Permit Scheme, but they now have 54 workers from Slovakia and Poland who as new EU citizens have no need of such visas. Coming from lower wage economies it is as yet unclear whether they will conform to the pattern set by the Portuguese, but it is clear that as long there is work and insufficient local labour to do it then foreign workers will continue to come from somewhere.

There are clearly local implications. At the level of local economics and demand on local services migrant workers are always a benefit, since they arrive with none of their educational costs having been borne by the employing country, they tend not to bring children and so place no demands on local schools, they are usually at their peak working fitness so are unlikely to make many demands on health care, and when they have made enough money to establish themselves 'back home' they leave, having in the meantime spent some of their wages in the local economy and contributed to the viability of a local company. The local impact is therefore temporary and most obviously limited to housing needs, lack of fluent English and the presence of identifiable numbers of (usually) young men (some of which we know from the police became involved with a hostile group of local youths).

The workers are recruited through two international agencies with branches in the UK. One states on its website

The Food Division specialises in supplying general operative and skilled workers to many of the largest food companies throughout Europe. Whether to satisfy ongoing production requirements or to provide manpower to meet short term needs, our Food Division has the scope and flexibility to be able to respond to virtually every scenario. Our European network of companies gives us access to significant numbers of experienced workers and allows us to specialise in supplying bulk workforces of over 50 workers. We supply a contracted workforce, for a specified time, accommodate them locally, organise transport to and from work, and pay all social insurance and related costs. The benefits of this fully managed solution make tremendous commercial sense, absenteeism is minimal, retention of workers is very good,

and having a contracted portion to your workforce allows complete flexibility against costly and stressful redundancies.

Both companies confirmed to us that they provide accommodation:

We do not receive any contract workers unless we have adequate facilities for their arrival. [We] have an ongoing support network for them to help register to doctors and Banks etc.

Being mostly employed in Hereford it is likely that this is a more visible group of people than those employed on the farms, not least because there is no obligation on the part of the local employer to provide accommodation. As a German informant said 'A lot of people see European countries from a political point of view, for example; European Union - fear of losing jobs, money or people might be streaming into GB'. In our view this issue needs an informed airing in the County, to prevent a climate of half-truths and suspicion about foreign workers developing.

Groups identified by their employment: *Chinese*

We know from Census figures that 0.2% of the Herefordshire population – about 350 people - are either Chinese or from 'other ethnic groups' (these were presumably combined because the numbers involved were very small). The national figure for England is 0.4%. Other more detailed Census data separates Chinese people from 'other' within this category, giving a total population of 210. School data lists 20 Chinese pupils in county schools, more than half in Hereford itself, with six in one secondary school and six in post-16 colleges (one of whom was interviewed).

Census evidence on religion gives 0.2% (again) of the Herefordshire population self-identified as Buddhist in the Census, but nationally only about a quarter of Chinese people describe themselves thus, with at least as many being Christian and half describing themselves as having no religion.

Extrapolating from other areas of Britain (especially rural areas) as well as national research (Modood et al, 1997), we are confident that the vast majority of Chinese people in the county owe their presence there to the restaurant trade. The 20 Chinese students at the College of Technology are all registered on part-time courses, suggesting they are in employment, though no large employer reports having numbers of Chinese workers (the city's largest employer employs one Chinese person). A search through phone directories and various trade websites, as well as actual observation, suggests that Hereford, for instance, has up to 20 Chinese restaurants and take-aways, Leominster has three, Ledbury three, Kington two, Ross two and Bromyard one. A *Hereford Times* survey of a three month period in 2003 suggested that 46% of readers had eaten takeaway fish in the chips (mainly from Chinese-run premises) and a further 42% had eaten a takeaway Chinese meal. This gives some impression of one kind of local impact the Chinese population have. These are very commonly family businesses, with couples working together. If on average each of these catering outlets has either five workers or family members associated with it the Census figures are accounted for. We were told that some catering outlets in the south of the county employed workers who came in from outside, even as far as Bristol.

Two researchers, one of whom was a fluent speaker of the potentially relevant Chinese dialects, toured Chinese restaurants and take-aways over the course of 24 hours, spending about 30 minutes in each. Nine were visited in all, comprising almost half of those we could identify in Hereford, and involving in all 21 interviewees. The visits took place mainly on two November evenings, a slack time for the catering trade, and were timed to avoid the busy times of mid and late evening. Identification and contact details were shown.

Our intention was to access people's experiences and perceptions as much as possible, and as a research technique this approach may be questioned. It has however, been employed before, and we believe it gives acceptable and valid data. On the one hand the interviewees are at work and potentially distracted, and they are being questioned 'cold' by two strangers whose provenance may be uncertain. The approach depends heavily upon having a Chinese speaker familiar with more than one dialect, who believes in the value of the research and who is able swiftly to allay anxieties and answer introductory questions. Although initial responses from interviewees were sometimes reticent these soon warmed and became more informative, with discussion becoming more and more spontaneous. In every case questionnaires were left with stamped addressed envelopes, of which two were later returned. In practice almost none of the interviews were interrupted by customers, though on the two occasions where this occurred we immediately stood aside. All

the interviews bar one continued as they had begun in Chinese, though in one restaurant simultaneous interviews were carried out by the bilingual researcher and the English speaker, one with a parent and the other with an English speaking adult daughter. Several interviewees could clearly have carried out the interviews in English, (indeed some family members without direct roots in Hong Kong only spoke English) but we left the choice of language to them.

The overwhelming majority of British Chinese people have roots in Hong Kong and speak either Cantonese Chinese or Hakka. This was in the main the pattern we found in Herefordshire, with most interviewees speaking Cantonese and informing us this was the norm locally. One couple originated in mainland China and spoke Mandarin and in two other premises there were people who originated in Malaysia and in one someone had roots in Vietnam.

We were surprised at the length of settlement of those we spoke with. Most were second generation and had parents who either brought them to the West Midlands or to Hereford itself up to 20 years ago. Two couples had been Hereford residents for 26 years, another for 20 years, and several had many years' familiarity with, for instance, local schools and health services. We also formed the impression that it would be inaccurate to speak of a Chinese community. The largest Chinese population in the county is, as one would expect, in Hereford itself, comprising perhaps 100 people, but no-one mentioned community activity or meetings, and there are no voluntary arrangements for Chinese language tuition for children, something that tends to develop with larger populations or in the proximity of large towns.

In each interview a list of our main areas of interest was given, in effect a spoken version of the questionnaire and its accompanying letter:

There was a consensus that Hereford was on the whole an amenable place to live, with no pattern of hostility or harassment. Some felt the fact that it was a small town, without the larger conflicts of bigger conurbations along ethnic lines, made for a safer environment. It was generally described as a friendly environment where they did not feel isolated, but *'there are still a lot of people in Hereford who are still very narrow minded'*. Examples of name-calling – for instance by fellow customers at a local burger chain – seemed to be regarded as the exception rather than the rule. In some contrast to these spoken accounts, the returned questionnaire stated

... we sometimes get a lot of discrimination from some small shops as well as in our own business!!... but considering Hereford has quite a small ethnic minority it's understandable....

And another said 'yes' they had experienced discrimination but did not want to comment further. No one specifically mentioned harassment or troubles at catering premises that they perceived as racist in intent. Some were aware of such harassment elsewhere, Cheltenham being mentioned as being relatively near and somewhere where a Chinese take-away had been targeted in December 2002. People were clearly well aware of this case, not least because reports suggest that the owners in seeking to defend themselves had been arrested (*Min Quan News*, October 2003).

Some disquiet about police response time was expressed by those who had experienced violence or damage to their premises. One owner, describing his local area as 'rough', said that even with a fight in the street and some of their window glass broken the police said they were too busy to come at once. Although they

attended the scene eventually, the man was not content with the follow up, and indeed expressed the opinion (not as far as we could discover shared by others) that the police did not come as quickly in response to his complaints as they would for an English person's. Of course he would have little means of knowing this, but the perception is an index of not feeling satisfied with the service he received. On the other hand, another interviewee simply stated she would not expect an instant response and that the police had competing demands late at night. Whilst recounting this story and his dissatisfaction with the police response, the former interviewee nevertheless held that Hereford was a good place to have his business. Another interviewee found the police very slow, including an occasion where they had been burgled. The interchange he reported was as follows:

Police: 'Are the burglars still there?'

Owner: 'No, they've gone'.

Police: 'We'll come tomorrow then'.

At a different business the police were again described as unresponsive and taking a long time to attend incidents, with one clearly planned and repeated incident described, to which the police responses had been along the lines of 'we can't do anything'. Although we cannot state with any conviction either that Chinese premises are particularly prone to any kind of harassment or that owners have such a perception, we have one caveat. Some work in another rural county (reported in Gaine & Stevens, 2002) involving gradual community work over a period of months, culminated in focus groups of Chinese women in the restaurant trade expressing concern about persistent racial attacks on their premises and police responses they regarded as inadequate. This came as a surprise to all the relevant authorities, and clearly needed considerable groundwork and 'teasing out' before people felt willing to talk about it.

One interviewee described his doctor as 'great', another said local health provision was very good' and others expressed their satisfaction with local health services rating them as 'good'. We are aware that some provision in the local NHS uses Language Line when they have patients who don't speak English, though one restaurant owner whose kitchen staff speaks little English, finds it necessary to accompany them when they need medical treatment.

As regards other services, the two returned questionnaires rated the Council, welfare services, housing and support for culture and religion as only 'average' with the police and education rated 'good'. A student questionnaire was more positive, rating all those used as 'good' and education as 'very good'. The only spoken comments about people's experience of their children's schooling were positive, but in spite of generally rating education well one returned questionnaire said (with reference to a few years ago)

When my children were at school they did experience some bullying and I don't believe that the school takes it seriously, due to the fact that the deputy headmaster made ~~racist~~ [crossed out] comments to suggest that my son would eat the school guinea pig.

No one made any comments about relationships with the Council's environmental health department, and when prompted said they had no problems in that area. We are not completely sure of the robustness of this finding, since it may be the area in which restaurant owners may have felt the most vulnerable and least secure in talking to strangers. Council staff in the department reported no significant communication problems with kitchen staff that could not be managed effectively.

The working lives of Herefordshire's Chinese people limit the possibilities of social interaction with the majority population. For some so does English fluency, and indeed there is likely to be a relationship between the two. The extent to which this maintains an unwanted separation between Chinese people and the majority is hard to say, especially in comparison with other workers who work unsocial hours with their spouses (some publicans, for example).

We would conclude from our findings that there is no strong feeling of exclusion from public services on the part of Chinese people nor a perception that they are badly served by them. It might nevertheless be a sound investment of time for the police service to do some positive outreach, perhaps persuading Chinese people to report with the reassuring use of mobile hidden cameras (a strategy that has been used elsewhere).

Groups identified by their employment: *Bangladeshis*

An exception to our uncertainty about Asians' economic role in the county is the small Bangladeshi population. In almost all parts of the UK outside London this ethnic group occupy a particular occupational niche: the 'Indian' restaurant trade, and this was found to be true in the county, though not quite as much as expected. An easy method of checking the Census figures is to note the number of 'Indian' restaurants and extrapolate from them to confirm population numbers.

Hereford has seven such establishments

Leominster two

Ledbury, Ross and Bromyard one each.

Our approaches revealed that, very untypically of other parts of the country, two of Hereford's Indian restaurants *really are* Indian, being run by Punjabis, and a third is Kashmiri. This left ten restaurants in the county likely to be Bangladeshi, more than accounting for the Census total of 34. One might expect a larger number, but school PLASC figures revealed apparently only one Bangladeshi child in any county school and only five students from this group in the post 16 colleges. This suggests the group are either relatively old and hence without school age children, or mainly male (though we know of a pre-school child from one of the restaurant questionnaires).

Our only other available source of numerical data relates to the county's largest employer and the employer of the largest number of minority ethnic people: the hospital in Hereford. No Bangladeshis are employed there.

The 34 Bangladeshis are virtually certain to be Muslims.

A letter was translated into Bengali and sent with an accompanying questionnaire (Appendix 2) to all the Indian restaurants in the county. The letter explained the purpose of the survey and invited either a questionnaire response or a face-to-face or telephone interview with a Bengali speaker. Three questionnaires were returned and one phone call was received. Services used were rated from very good to good.

Two of the three questionnaires returned felt highly positive about health care and the police, two thought that the Council itself was 'good' though the third thought 'poor', and where housing, welfare services or support for culture and religion had been sought they were rated 'good', except again for one respondent who rated the last 'poor'. Two respondents had lived in the County for twenty years the other for two, but none felt they or their family had ever experienced discrimination.

Specific Ethnicities: *Pakistanis*

Compared to Bangladeshis, no such simple account of Pakistani national employment patterns is possible so no real clues exist to whether or not the 46 Pakistanis in the county occupy any particular occupational niche. Here is no reason to believe that do, the likelihood being that they are distributed in a very individual way in the county's workforce. Fewer than ten work at the hospital, three of whom returned questionnaires (one further questionnaire was returned from those sent to schools). Of this small number, none had lived in the County more than two years unless they were RNCB students. Presumably because of low numbers, the 2003 school PLASC returns did not count Pakistanis separately (this has changed in the 2004 returns which were not available at the time of writing) but in the 2003 returns even 'Asian other' (which would have included Pakistanis) number only seven. A tiny number are listed as attending the FE college in Hereford and none attend either of the other two colleges, though there is a small group at the RNCB. It is likely that the Kashmiris running an 'Indian' restaurant identify themselves as Pakistani.

The vast majority of British Pakistanis being Muslims we could normally be confident that most if not all the 46 counted by the Census are part of the approximately 170 Muslims the Census indicates are resident in the county, though we know from a questionnaire that one is a Christian.

As for comments about life in the County, one felt that support for his culture and religion was 'poor' while another felt it was 'average'. Two interviewees commented on the difficulty of obtaining halal food but seemed to accept the inevitability of this because of the practicalities of supply and demand. Prayers and other religious practices were carried out 'privately'. Two questionnaires had positive comments about local education. Health care was rated as average by one, good by one and very good by a third respondent. Two felt that Council services were good.

Specific Ethnicities: *Indians*

Again, there is such variation in Indian employment patterns in the UK as a whole that no worthwhile extrapolations can be made about the employment of the 168 counted by the census. 44 work at the hospital, mostly as doctors, a handful work in Hereford in other jobs, some commute out of the County, some are associated with two Punjabi restaurants, some are in retailing. 25 post-16 college students are of Indian background (including some at the RNCB) and there are only eleven in the county's schools (five at one Hereford primary school). Of the nine who returned our questionnaire and those interviewed, their length of residence in the County varied between ten years and two months, with most having been in the County less than two years.

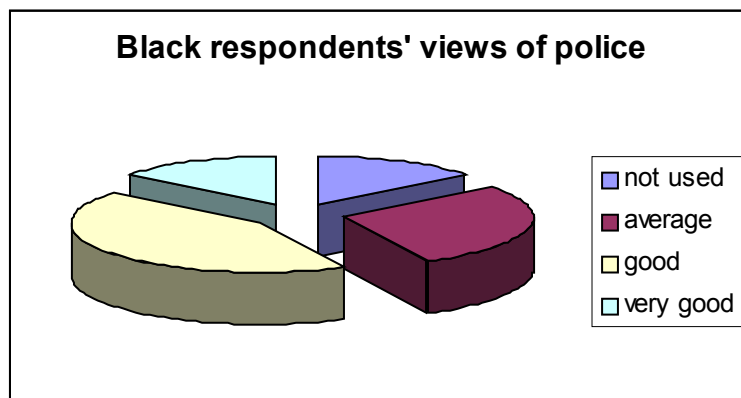
Of those who commented on the local services they had used, one rated every service 'very good', four rated education, housing and general Council provision as 'good' (one said 'average' for the latter). Five rated health care as 'good' (one as 'average') and two found support in getting a job to be 'very good'. Most had not used welfare services or the police. Experience of support received for culture and religion seemed to vary widely, two (one Christian, one Sikh) finding it 'very good', and of five Hindus two finding it 'good', two 'poor' and two 'very poor'. One interviewee felt rather ambivalent about the police, unsure of whether he had been treated fairly or not. He was not confident about asking them for help if he needed it.

British Indians are religiously diverse, but the Census figure of 63 Sikhs will certainly all be Indian with most of the remainder making up a large part of the county's 105 Hindus. Three questionnaires were returned from Indian Christians.

Black people: *British, African and African-Caribbean*

As we said earlier, this is a disparate group of approximately 450 people about which we really know very little. It includes everyone with ancestry, however distant, in Africa: British born people of Caribbean, African and related mixed heritage as well as those actually born in the Caribbean and Africa, so we have not called it a 'specific ethnicity'. Almost half of this group are mixed white/Caribbean. About 15 work in the main hospital, a few others in the health service locally.

In the questionnaire the seven black people who replied all rated health care as good or very good except for one who thought it 'average'. Of the other services, all thought education good or very good and the Council generally 'average' or 'good' (with one 'very poor') but the remainder showed no clear pattern (or were used very little). All but two had never used welfare services, those that had thinking they were either average or good. Most had no involvement with public housing, the three who had thought it good or very good. Three people had not used any support in getting work and the remaining four varied in their opinions of provision between very good and very poor. No-one rated support for culture and religion highly, with one 'very poor', though three said 'not used'. Opinions of the police probably showed the most even distribution:

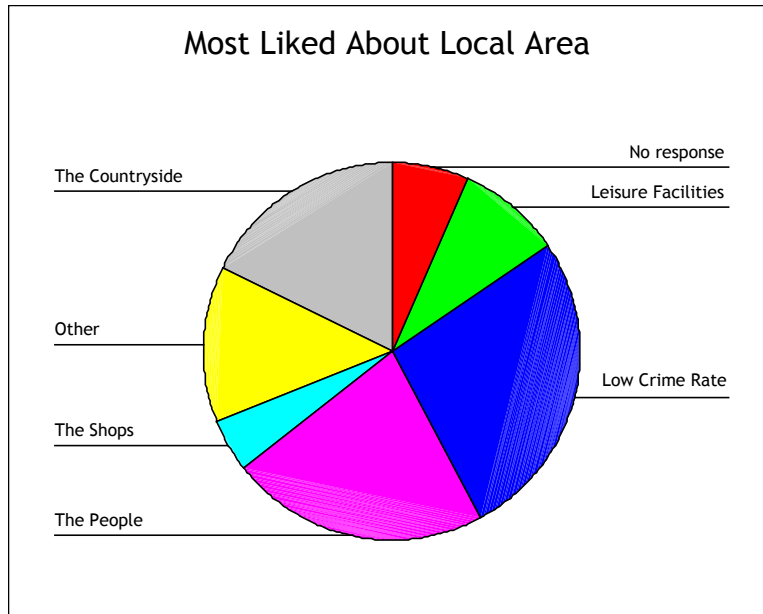


As we have found elsewhere, some black informants felt particularly targeted by suspicious staff in shops, not least security guards who seemed to expect them to be thieves.

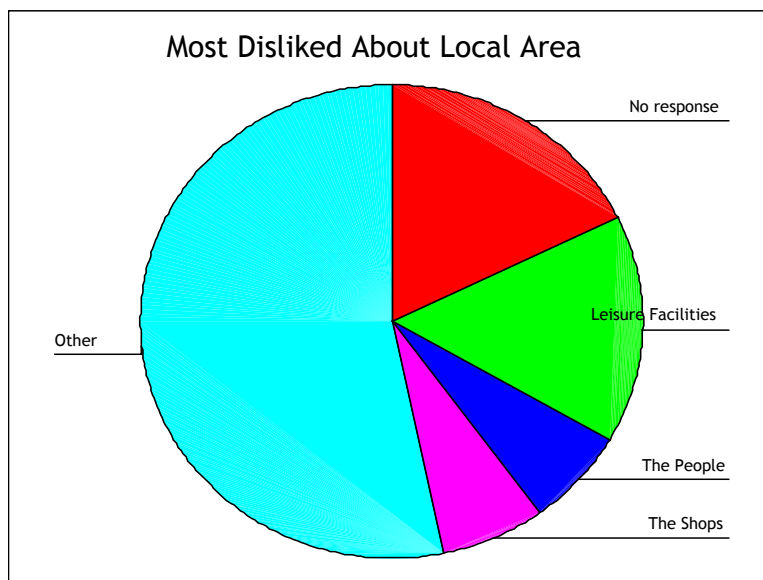
Findings about the general experience of minorities

Likes and dislikes

The questionnaire asked respondents specific questions about local services as well as any experience of discrimination they may have had, but it also asked what they liked and disliked about living in the area. Their answers suggest they like Herefordshire for the same sorts of reasons as the majority population:

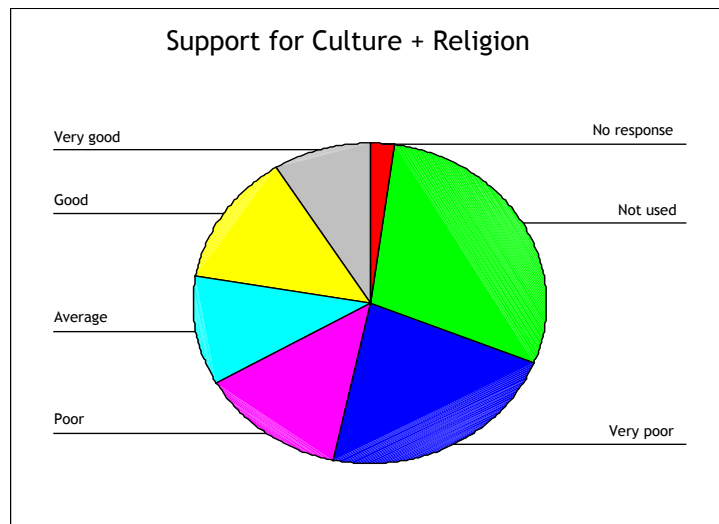


Dislikes similarly did not have any marked ethnic dimension, many of the 'other' category including remarks about traffic and distance from motorways.



Support for culture and religion

We asked about this to see what people's perceptions were, though as we have mentioned already, the absence of specific communities of any size make such provision problematic. We have commented upon how disparate the Black population are likely to be and indeed it would amount to rather a sweeping racist assumption to expect common *cultural* bonds between, say, Zimbabweans, Jamaicans and the British born children of a Black/white marriage. The same must be true of the significant percentage of the County's minorities who are mixed Asian/white. Informants did make comments about the difficulties about getting specific foods, keeping to strict vegetarian diets, their suspicions that institutions used animal fats in cooking, the absence of any place for Muslim prayer, any books or magazines in minority languages in the local libraries, or any Hindi films on show, but it is likely these observations were made by way of comparison with other areas rather than in the expectation of increased provision. There are fewer than 200 Muslims in the whole county and at the very most perhaps 300 people who would understand spoken Hindi.



One respondent had a different emphasis, not on provision for minorities directly but suggesting '*cultural programmes welcoming other nationalities*', in other words something offered to the majority. This is touched upon again in the section on education but it should be mentioned that during the time of the survey there was a substantial county library exhibition on the history and contribution of both Travellers and Jews to Herefordshire.

In the case of the Jews, the small community said they experienced no significant problems of marginalisation or prejudice, indeed rather the opposite as regards the provision of a meeting place and a welcome in many schools. The same is not so easily said of Travellers, who by all accounts (and despite support from the TES) still feel culturally as well as personally stigmatised.

Language support

We noticed that Social Services leaflets covering a range of concerns stated their availability in other languages. Given the range of languages listed on p9 and the small numbers of speakers we were curious about this promise would be met so we made several phone calls to different offices asking what would happen if a service user needed something translated in order to access it. We were informed that a company in a neighbouring county was able to translate most texts within 24 hours, with rarer languages taking up to five working days. This facility has not been used to any extent, but it was clear that the department knew what to do should the need arise.

A similar provision exists within the primary care trust, which uses the Language Line telephone interpreting service. Again it was noticeable that several staff knew this immediately, in the PCT offices, in GP surgeries, and at a dental clinic. Given that the number of referrals amounts to less than ten per year (through dentists, GPs and opticians) it would not have been surprising if such a little used service was also a little known service, and it is impressive that this was not the case.

The education service meets few pupils who have English as an additional language needs and is currently supporting no more than ten pupils, with one full time peripatetic teacher.

Experience of discrimination

With regard to our specific question about discrimination:

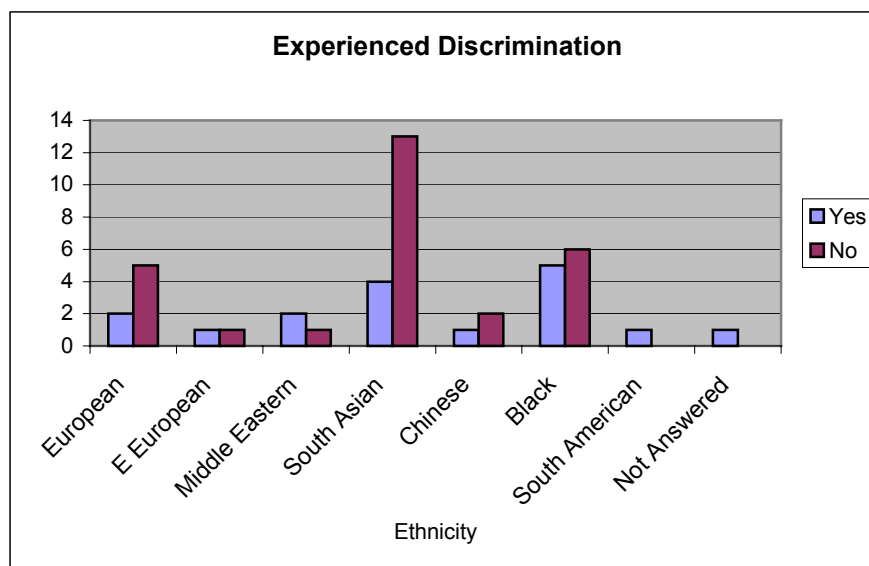
Have you or any member of your family ever experienced discrimination whilst living in the Hereford area?

YES NO

If YES, do you think you experienced discrimination or harassment because of:

*Colour
Culture?
Religion?
Other?*

the answers do not reveal any conclusive patterns:



It is certainly noteworthy that most of those of South Asian descent did not feel they had experienced discrimination, most of these are hospital staff, a position which by no means necessarily protects them from insults from the public. We tried analysing the data for any correlation between views of the police and experience of discrimination and none was found. Only three questionnaires were received from Indian restaurants, none said they had experienced any discrimination, nor commented in any way about it.

Several respondents wrote something of negative experiences they had had. Many of these involve children as perpetrators:

I have two daughters at school who have experienced racism, being called 'brownie' and excluded because of colour. (South East Asian male).

My daughter was verbally abused from the age of nine, called nigger etc. I know from experience that there are a number of very unenlightened individuals with racist views... (White mother).

Children calling names whilst playing. Was dealt with straight away by explaining to offender why it is not acceptable and then told parents no further problems children now firm friends (Asian female).

Just walking along the street I heard some boys telling a racist joke using the word 'nigger'. They didn't know I was there and ran off when they saw me (Black African female).

I had a problem re colour in high school, other students calling me packy (South American female).

We always experience it everywhere especially where I have worked before! Neighbours do not talk to us (Black African female).

And this is clearly about 'difference' as well as colour:

... the attitudes of some locals [...] need to change more (New Zealander female).

...some people just feel that because you are in their country you should change everything to fit in (South African female)

Small problem with children in our area, nothing very serious (Ukrainian female).

My youngest child goes to a different school from the elder ones, because of the prejudice they got there... (Romany Traveller)

My son has been bullied for quite a while at the playground. Several boys were calling at him, 'hey Hitler, how are you Hitler?' etc. He became more and more upset. We talked about it and advised him to ignore them. But it didn't stop. (German female).

Some relate to everyday life and social interaction. A young Chinese woman commented upon hostile graffiti, an Indian of the same age would hear herself referred to as a 'Paki', a black woman was told by a barman 'I know your type', Muslims reported some suspicion and hostility towards them. A South East Asian male said:

[I was] mistaken for another country's national where English people kidnapped, high media profile – a lady approached me to ask me why my people could do such things.

Though the same man added

I have felt and do feel once people got used to me the general public and services pleasant and friendly although I realised I was one of a very few of my look and colour.

Others had a less positive view:

I do not feel free while shopping you always have some security people watching you as if you want to steal from the shops. They always pretend not to be there. People always avoid coming in contact with me on the street or at work (Black African male).

I was in [supermarket name] with another friend who is black, and we have a security guard that is always looking out on us ... it's so true, every time I go in there (young African female)....

Yes, yes! I get that, I got used to it in London (Caribbean male) But in Hereford... it's like... it was just so blatant... And I had a friend who came down to see me here once, and she just jumped with fright in the shop 'cos he was so close to her.... (young African female).

I was in a petrol station and the lady serving just ignored everyone while she was just staring at this black guy filling up his car, she didn't take her eyes off him til he came in and paid... (mixed white/Asian male).

I said to another student I thought I'd been over-charged at an Indian restaurant and he said 'yeah well, he's a Paki' (Asian male).

People call me a Paki, sometimes they are really hostile (Indian female).

This is a known national problem, talked about always in the media (Arabic male).

I daren't say my Dad's from Afghanistan, people think he's Bin Laden or something... (mixed white/Afghani male).

I was told I was not Herefordian and no matter how long I have lived or will live in Hereford I will always be a stranger (Irish female).

They would probably agree with this plea about how minorities should be treated:

Treat them with respect, build confidence in them ... (Black African female).

A few respondents commented about discrimination at work (or in getting work)

My background in work was in administration. I went to numerous interviews; my voice sounds very middle English over the telephone. However, whenever I turned up for an interview, I would be stared at and treated like an alien. A common question very often asked of me was how I think I would fit in with other people I'd have to work with (Caribbean female).

People do come in the shop and refer to it as a Paki shop....

Sometimes the people make discrimination about where can me from because we don't speak very well English. Sometimes because we work hard, try do the best we can. My son, sometimes they kick his genitals, but him say for him go away you are not our friend you no like us. One factory [.....] the team leader and another woman did one situation false [and I lost the job] (S American female).

Professionals employed into senior role are unable to aspire to executing their full potential as they are undermined, overlooked publicly humiliated, not listened to, seemingly only clusters of local people can and do make decisions. Many have not moved out of Hereford all their life. [...] they are very pleasant and welcoming socially (Black female).

People like me professionally were discriminated against for career progression and subsequent refusal to admit to specialist register (Middle Eastern male)

A paradoxical incident occurred in one workplace owned and managed by Asians with some white employees. A delivery driver (from a much more multicultural area) said to a white employee that 'he shouldn't work for Asians' because he would be badly treated. The white employee reported it to his firm's owners, who passed it on to the driver's employer who sacked him.

One black woman elsewhere clearly felt undervalued, feeling the need for

Diversity awareness training and application in principle. Benefits of a diverse workforce in any business organisation. Value for money staff experienced, skilled and academically astute (Black female).

Minorities always have the dilemma of how to respond to perceived insults and unfair treatment, not least when they are unsure of being listened to:

The racism is subtle. So when one complains about it to people, they say I'm over-reacting (Caribbean female).

I realised there was no point because it would be my word against hers and it would be difficult to prove. People tend to take each other's side so it would be a waste of time (Black African female).

If we had trouble in the shop... like a shoplifter ... they'd often call me a Paki bastard, and I used to go upstairs and just sit... it used to really upset me. Now when I see them out the shop I say 'Before you say it, yeah I know, I'm a Paki bastard...'

We tell them, especially my brother... if he hears a word like Paki he says 'look mate, I won't... but if some people hear you saying that you might get smacked in the mouth, you want to be careful'. We won't stand for it in the shop. If people want to come in here they've got to treat us with respect.... (Indian male)

The police tried to find him as he ran off but gave up after a few minutes as no one was hurt, it was not a problem to the police (Mixed Caribbean female).

This applies equally to the decision about when an incident is serious enough to involve the police. One South East Asian man observed that he had not told the police about his experiences because they were '*...not serious, as no physical threat*' and others took a similar view:

I didn't feel it was something that should be reported. I think it is just ignorance on the part of the people (Black African male).

I consider it beneath my dignity to respond to insults like the ones I experienced. It would be impossible to identify the person involved. It would be wasting police time, reporting incidents like these (Indian male).

There was some evidence of more serious incidents that were reported to the police:

My husband is white he was called a nigger lover by a racist drunk who was sent to prison for other offences. This was the only incident during the years we have lived here (Caribbean female).

The incident with perhaps the most serious implications mentioned in the questionnaires was that of a South Asian woman who said '*When my car got broken into, a group called Combat 18 put stickers on my car*'. Combat 18 is one of the most covert and explicitly racist organisations in the UK, with an openly Nazi website, described by the BBC as '*associated with acts of terrorism and violence including arson attacks throughout the 1990s*'. Another informant expressed concern about the rise in BNP activity not far away in the urban West Midlands and another stopped wearing a religious symbol because of property damage incurred just over the border in Wales after September 11 2001 (although he is not a Muslim!)

It is very hard to draw these findings together summarising people's accounts without over-generalising on the one hand or denying people's experience on the other. Clearly some minority ethnic people experience being marginalised, treated differently and at times openly insulted; often this is related to colour but not always. Others do not, or at least chose not to communicate with us about it. In one detailed interview an Indian man who had been in the area some years felt he was generally

accepted and respected, yet was aware of occasional comments and also thought it had taken him longer to gain locals' trust than if he had been white. He also said there was no pattern of incidents which said to him 'you are not wanted'. About half of those who returned questionnaires reported negative experiences, as did more than half of those we spoke with. The numbers involved are too small to suggest any patterns to do with specific groups or particular parts of the County. While we can say that children are often implicated in this, not just in school but out in the street, we cannot say that the issue is confined to children since several mention racism towards them at work. In our judgment the following account from a 20-year-old mixed Asian/white woman may well speak for many:

Having lived before in a mixed race environment I find it hard to fit in, I'm unusual and it's hard standing out...[...] ... On average once a fortnight (but at most three times in a week) people call racist things after I have walked past them. Aged 15-50 but mainly male. This is quite upsetting yet they only say it once I have walked past. I work in a pub and have been shouted at in this way a few times, this upsets me quite a lot. Also if an ethnic minority family walks into any pub/restaurant around here everyone turns and stares at them...

Most informants who reported negative experiences indicated that they dealt with this either with a personal response (which they generally report as being effective) or by ignoring it, 'rising above it' as one put it. We believe that these are the preferred strategies of many who did not reply to the questionnaire or declined to be interviewed. The young woman cited above observed '*I think the families [being stared at] are very tolerant*' but believed they had little choice but to put up with the stares: '*I find that drawing attention to the matter only makes it worse*'. She also said that because of this issue, despite liking the area and the countryside '*...if I had the choice again I would not have moved here*'.

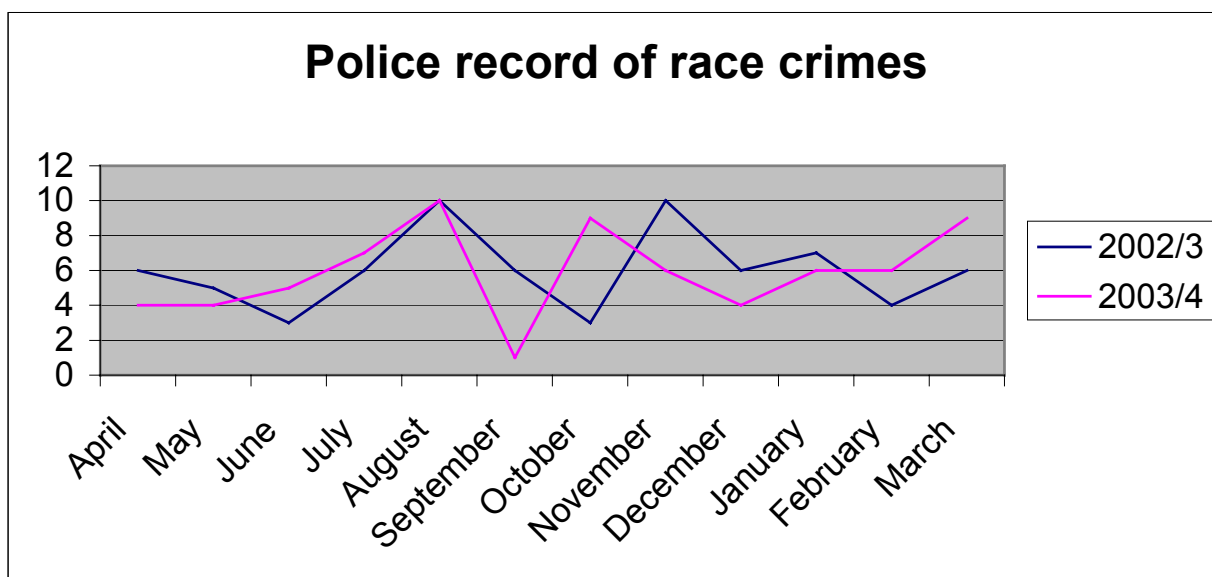
There is good reason to suggest that these negative experiences are a routine part of minorities' lives: we know from other rural areas that this is the case (Gaine & Lamley, 2003; de Lima 2000); we know there is consistent under-reporting of racial incidents by minorities subjected to them (Gaine & Stevens, 2002). Their unwillingness to spend the time and trouble reliving and dwelling upon unpleasant events perhaps does not need explaining – there have to be compelling reasons to do so, compelling reasons to believe that reporting an incident would do any good. Although the Police in the County are aiming at reports truly reflecting the actual number of incidents, commonly held reasons against reporting can be summarised as:

- wanting to forget it
- being used to it
- a fear of revenge
- knowing the offenders had gone, or would have gone before help arrived
- relevant authorities would not understand, mistrust of the police.

Some of these are reflected in the quotations above, others come out in comments made by take-away owners, two different Asian men in service industries experienced repeated harassment before any effective help was given, one interviewee commented strongly that she knew of nowhere to go with her reactions and feelings to the things that happened to her. Against this background it is worth noting national evidence that visible minorities are proportionately more likely to be harassed in rural areas than urban ones. The *Observer* in 2001 reported:

The most dangerous areas for ethnic minorities are those where there are the smallest communities. Northumbria tops the list, but it is closely followed by Devon and Cornwall and South Wales, where racial crimes affect one in 15 and one in 16 respectively. Other race crime hot spots are Norfolk, Somerset, Durham and Cumbria. Between them, the top 10 worst constabularies in England and Wales for racist incidents are home to just five percent of the total ethnic minority population.

The County is not in the worst group, averaging recently at most ten such crimes per month. If targeted at visible minorities this would give such people a one in 18 chance of being subjected to an incident per year, however we know from the police who monitor these crimes that they are not solely visited upon visible minorities (one involved Portuguese workers, for instance).

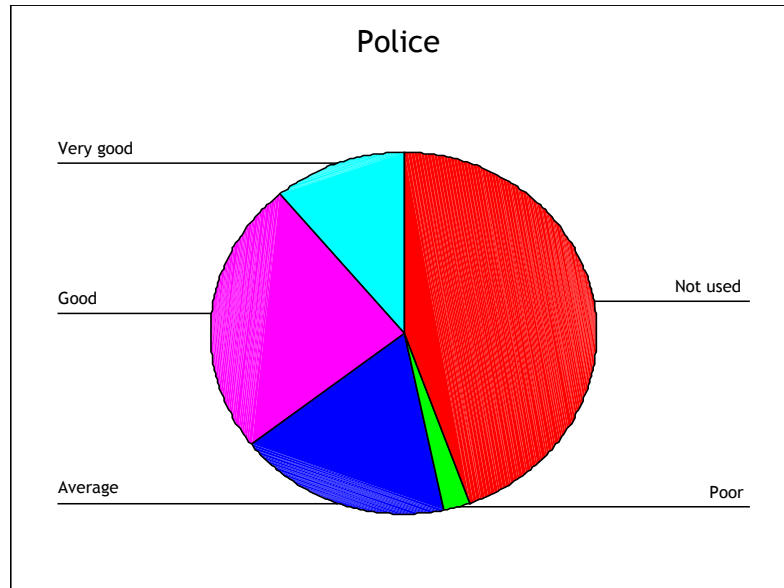


We argued above that negative racist experiences are likely to be a routine part of minorities' lives, but this is *not* to argue that the County is overwhelmingly hostile. One young woman quoted wants to leave, others regard the prejudice they meet as essentially low-level and not worth reacting to, others believe personal interaction rather than institutional responses will make the future better, others seldom encounter it at all. And all of this is not to diminish the many reasons people liked the area. Less than ten percent *disliked* the area because of its people, more than a quarter *liked* it for the same reason, including one family who received exceptional support from some white people who stood by them during some difficult months. An Indian (Hindu) college student said she found many fellow students really interested in her background and culture, Muslim students were much more reticent about even acknowledging they were Muslims. While another young Asian woman says '*people seem very narrow minded... not open to change*' she does not mean *all* local people, but she does mean those who insult her in the street and (presumably) bring up their children to do the same. There is, therefore, an undercurrent of insidious racism that many of our informants comment upon, doubtless from a minority, but from a minority who diminish the quality of life of minority ethnic people in the area.

Findings about specific services

The Police

In seeking to determine minority perceptions and experiences of the police we asked all informants for their views of and contact with the service, we carried out interviews with police officers, and considered data on racial crime. The collated views from all the questionnaires (to parents, NHS staff, restaurants and students) are shown here:



It is evident that around 45% of respondents have never had any specific contact with the police; so forming any judgement from those who have is hazardous. We are also wary of drawing too many conclusions from interview material.

From the point of view of 'race' and ethnicity, there are two distinct issues for the police: people's ideas and beliefs about fair treatment when suspected of criminal activity and people's faith in the service when they have been targeted by crime, especially race-related crime. Elsewhere in the country both facets of potential contact with the police have been subject to mistrust and poor relationships and they are interrelated: no-one who feels victimised by the police is likely to turn to them if victimised by someone else. Thus we commented earlier on the feelings of an Indian man who was uncertain about the police's response to him and his considerable ambivalence about whether he would approach them if they were needed (the need to maintain anonymity prevents going into further detail). We also cited the negative comments from a settled Traveller who had on occasion received racist abuse and harassment from neighbours to the extent that she moved. Despite having been invited to provide training for Community Safety Officers and having developing contact with the police service, she expressed a lack of confidence in their ability to deal effectively with such incidents should they happen again. On the other hand, she felt progress was being made. We mention these to stress that given events in other parts of the country and indeed in the past in the County, the Police cannot assume that minority ethnic people will trust them.

We also commented earlier on reasons why people do not report such things, some of them to do with trust:

1. wanting to forget it

2. being used to it
3. a fear of revenge
4. knowing the offenders had gone, or would have gone before help arrived
5. relevant authorities would not understand, mistrust of the police.

The fourth of these can be interpreted two ways, the first is sympathetic to the many demands upon the police and accepting that they cannot provide a truly instant response to *any* kinds of crime, the second believing that race crime has a low priority for the police, that they do not understand its impact or care.

An officer himself acknowledged that former attitudes towards racist incidents and crimes needed to change while claiming that they had, and quite significantly. It was the Police who told us of a particular case involving an Asian man working in a service industry, repeatedly experiencing racist incidents in his work. For some time ('too long') he received no adequate support from the police but we were told it eventually 'focused the service's mind considerably' (though we were also informed from a different source that some issues involving the original critical incident remain unresolved). In principle any such reports now receive a 'platinum response' and, as we noted above, the service's aim is to increase people's faith in the reporting process to the extent that their records match the real incidence of race crime. They aim to convince people like an African-Caribbean respondent who said 'What's the point?' when asked about reporting, and to convince otherwise the young Asian woman who felt no one would empathise sufficiently with her feelings. The current procedure is that an inspector reviews the handling of all such reports and all cases are reviewed regarding potential re-victimisation. This is further backed up with training, so that officers should both recognise the priorities involved in responding to race crime but also know their response will be monitored. There is no doubt this is a potentially effective institutional strategy and the responsible officers claim it has produced considerable change, indeed a 'culture shift' (while recognising that deep rooted culture shifts in organisations do not happen quickly). We know from other informants that training is indeed being developed.

Overall, therefore, as regards reporting race crime we cannot say with any conviction to what extent not reported incidents give a 'true vision' of actual incidents, but we can say that the police service at a senior level is aware of the issues that need to be tackled and constantly reviewed.

The potentially related issue of minorities' perceptions of how they are treated by the police arises mainly in relation to Travellers. In the past the police have inevitably been the agents of enforcement for decisions about stopping places unpopular with Travellers, though we did not receive particularly or uniformly negative comments about this. They have also been necessarily involved when the common assumptions about Traveller dishonesty have been manifest in concrete accusations. The dependence upon vehicles for those actually engaged in travelling also provides a potential point of conflict in respect of roadworthiness, insurance and the like.

We mentioned earlier in the report the comment by a new Traveller woman that that her small daughter had had enough negative experiences of the police to make her afraid of them. We also relayed the feelings of one family who felt harassed by the police's frequent vehicle stops and document checking, and we described an incident involving their nephews being arrested for assaulting the Police, yet the CCTV footage they showed us which they claimed showed the incident did not seem to show an assault. There is no sound on the film, but it was clear that at least one officer was saying something very hostile to the boys from (and later out of) the squad car, alleged by the boys to be racist abuse. For some time the film shows the older boy restraining his 15 year old brother, who became more and more angry. We

can make no further comment about this specific incident (except to say that with the Traveller family's permission their account was passed on and we believe is being looked into by the police).

At the same time, some Travellers and those seeking to support them have many positive things to say about the police and their positive engagement with issues around site use and the devising of Council policy. But it is clear that relationships are poor between at least some Travellers and the police and this is an area that needs further focussed work.

Education

It has already been noted that the minorities who said they had met abusive or offensive treatment had often experienced it from the young, those of school age. On the other hand, there were few specific complaints about what happened at school. Some had suggestions that may have been born from specific events or experiences:

I think schools should be made aware of different cultures, and treat the ethnic minority the same as others (Black female).

The white majority just don't seem to know enough about history to understand why black people sometimes feel bad about things... (Black female).

More awareness of major ethnic groups living in the County and information about their religion and culture. This can be achieved by educating school teachers, information in local papers and opportunities for ethnic group involvement in local activities (Pakistani male).

Just stop bullying (Arabic male).

I anticipate some issues arising in the future when less culturally aware people realise my daughters are mixed race. We have no problems in primary school. However, they are both very pretty, intelligent and have strong family relationships so I hope we can support them (white mother).

I know he's going to get harassment at some stage; he's bound to, even if it's just from one or two (Indian father)

A black woman used to living in Birmingham found great anxiety about terminology born of unfamiliarity with established debates in other parts of the country: so, for instance, fellow FE students were nervous and uncertain about whether being called 'black' would offend her.

We had several accounts of Traveller pupils being treated badly by others and not always being supported well by the school, but there were others who gave a different account and we are aware that the County provision compares very well with others and that there are examples of good practice validated by OfSTED (detailed on pages 24-5).

The German mother who earlier described her son being called 'Hitler' etc was very positive about the way the school dealt with it

When he came out of school (about 2 months) crying, I decided to tell the teacher of the school... [...] ...“The teacher listened and was very sympathetic solving the problem. She approached the boys from year 6 and explained her concern and let my son and him play together. After that it didn't happen anymore.

There were other positive comments too:

I'm pleasantly surprised at how much schools, social groups etc incorporate different cultures/religions into the curriculum. (New Zealander female).

Level of coverage of ethnic issues is satisfactory (Indian male).

Another Indian father had anxieties about problems his young children might face in the future, but on the whole greatly preferred the County's schools to the large urban one he went to himself. The South American woman called a 'Paki' at high school who we quoted earlier was satisfied that the school 'sorted it out' after her mother complained by giving a lesson indicating the distance and distance between Brazil and Pakistan. The white mother of a black child wondered

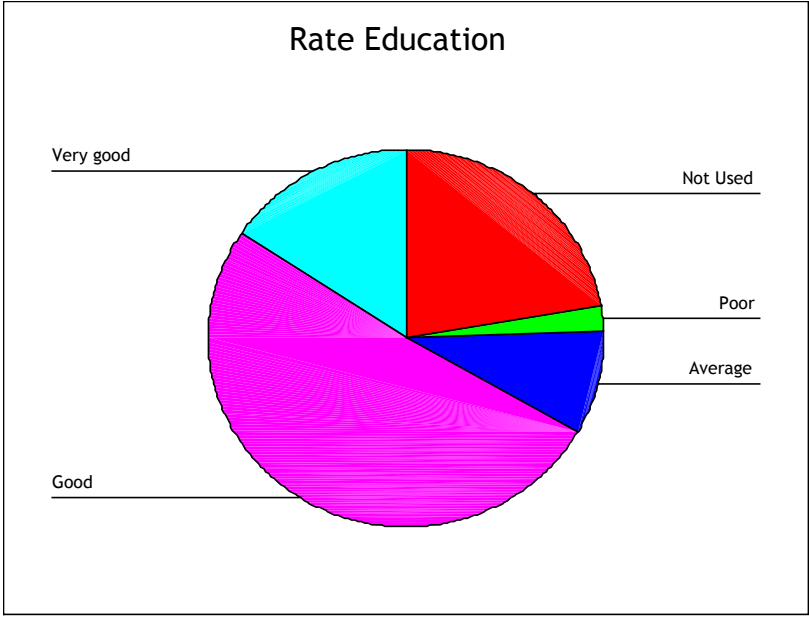
Apart from the initiatives such as visiting schools in the Birmingham area, (a two way initiative) the primary school also invites in people from different backgrounds e.g. African drummers and has links into a community overseas. There could be more of this style of initiative. I've no idea how much cross-cultural education happens at the high schools as we've not reached that stage. I trust it has improved since I was in school here.

Although this initially positive comment signals the difference between covering something about other cultures and nevertheless retaining deep seated racist assumptions about some ethnic groups:

No improvement necessary, there are too many minority ethnic people from different cultures it would be hard to meet individual differences. Although the secondary school I have used was not particularly sympathetic to my son's needs. They stereotyped him, thought he should concentrate on sports instead of academic, he is black but he is not sporty, none of us are

From much work elsewhere in the country we do not underestimate the difficulty facing schools. Young people grow up influenced and socialised about 'race' and difference from their families, from local 'common sense' and 'accepted wisdom' amongst adults and their own peer groups, from the media in all its forms (local newspapers, soaps, pop music, TV news) and from school. They (and many of their teachers) have little or no experience of the diversity that is common in some urban areas and yet they are expected with little curriculum time to immunise their pupils against simplistic stereotyping and educate them adequately to be the neighbours, colleagues, work subordinates or managers of minority ethnic people. Nevertheless, there is evidence in our findings that there is no room for the 'no problem here' complacency that has been observed elsewhere in non-metropolitan areas.

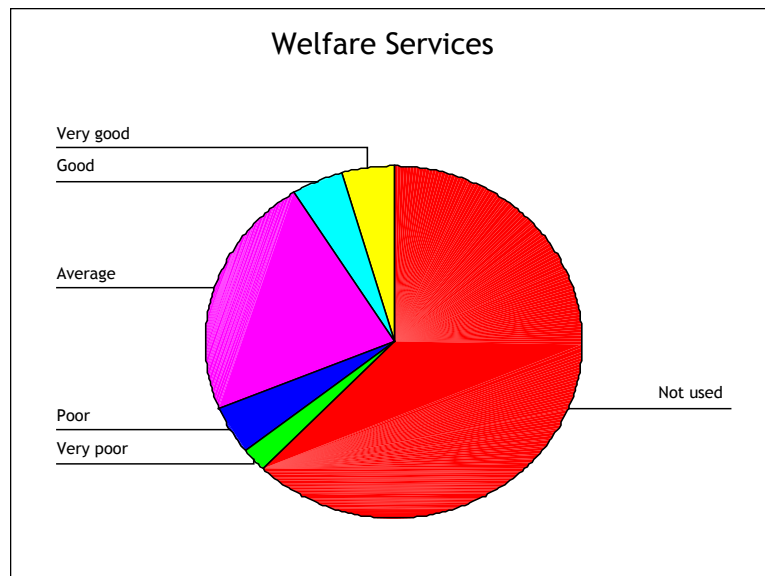
Finally, the following graph shows the overall responses from all our questionnaires, many of them from parents. As with comments about the police, it is important to say that although the questionnaire clearly focussed upon race we cannot guarantee respondents solely answered it with that in mind (as in the case of an Indian interviewee who had concerns about harassment but also thought the local schooling excellent).



Other public services: *Social Services, Health, Council general provision, Housing*

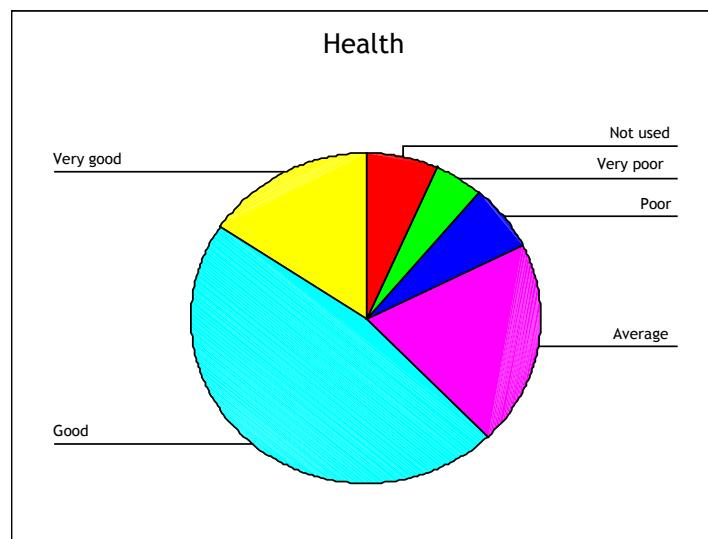
We have too little specific data to enable us to say very much about these. In all cases most respondents had not used the services and of those who had almost none made any further comment.

As with the majority population, most people have no contact with **Social Services** and this is reduced further if there are fewer older people (a characteristic of migrant groups).



The only specific comment we received about social services was from a Chinese man who had had a family member in hospital *'They are accessible but the service they provide is very slow, that is people are waiting in the hospital to be sorted out'*.

Health care was something most informants had had experience of and rated highly:



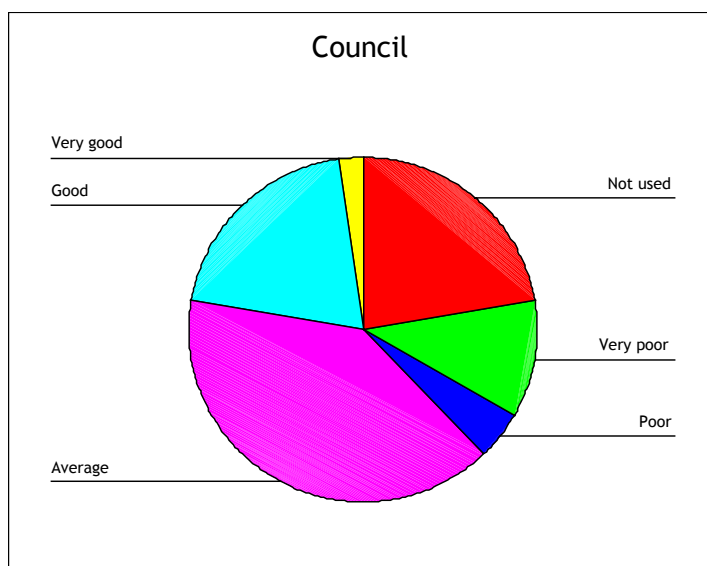
In response to specific questions about provision for dietary and religious practices, no one raised any issues in relation to health (though we did find anxiety about understanding of dietary rules in relation to other institutions)

Asking about **Council general provision** is subject to the bias that many citizens of all backgrounds are not always sure of which agency is responsible for what. We had only two specific comments about the Council

Not [helpful] initially, but after an argument with my husband he became more helpful (Black Caribbean female).

Council tax and information staff efficient and helpful. Library staff (Leominster) brilliant and well informed.

Bearing this in mind, returns were as follows:



Environmental Health was an area where communication problems might exist between minority ethnic restaurant staff and Council officers, but we received no comment indicating any problem with this from any of the restaurateurs we contacted. It is always possible that given the power of the Environmental Health department over them they were unwilling to take any risks in saying anything negative to researchers, although this has not been our experience elsewhere. Formal action has been taken against two catering establishments in recent years, both of them Chinese, but in neither of these was effective communication with food hygiene staff an issue.

Staff in the department agreed that there have not been significant communication difficulties about food hygiene from their point of view. It certainly happens on occasion that their unannounced visits take place when no-one fluent in English is present, but there seems to be an established practice of then doing their usual tests of temperatures etc and making a later appointment with the owner (who 'almost always' has sufficient competence in English). Leaflets about food hygiene are available in a variety of languages if needed, though it would appear that if needed, interpreting would not be readily available. Language Line is not used. Courses for kitchen staff are available in Birmingham in appropriate languages and have been taken up in the past.

Housing was regarded generally positively. While about a third of our informants had used nothing other than the private sector (acknowledged to be cheaper than many areas of the UK) a further third found support in obtaining housing to be good or very good. Two respondents commented on private rents being unduly high, but this might be interpreted in comparison with their previous experience in Africa rather than other parts of the UK.

Conclusions and recommendations

1. It should be recognised that since the composition and pattern of settlement of the minority population of the County is not typical of the UK as a whole, assumptions cannot be 'imported' from more 'typical' areas nor are useful generalisations easily made
2. With the exception of Travellers and Jews, it is misleading to speak of minority 'communities'. This means representative consultation is problematic and any specific needs related to culture are not easily predicted
3. As regards seasonal workers, in the light of some hostility evident in the County, the tensions between the economic pressures on employing farmers and the strain (or perceived strain) on local facilities needs the involvement and understanding of local permanent residents. The wider impact on and benefit to the local economy from the foreign workers could clearly do with more publicity. This might include the argument that foreign workers – especially when temporary - involve no costs to the area or the UK for prior education, very little for health and by definition none for old age
4. The provision of English lessons for seasonal workers, though difficult to arrange, would significantly enhance their experience in the UK
5. Accessible email provision for seasonal workers should be prioritised by whoever is in a position to provide it
6. Relevant findings from this report should be made available on a website so as to make it accessible to the county's seasonal workers
7. Better understanding and support at a high level within the Council could lead to coherent provision for Travellers that would make the County a model for other areas
8. While health provision for Travellers is prioritised to an unusual degree it could be better supported by the Council
9. There are some persisting issues about Council provision for Traveller sites and stopping places which seem to be 'on hold' but which could be resolved.
10. Any proposal from outsiders to administer a private site on behalf of the County should not diminish its responsibility to Travellers, and should have clear and agreed criteria in relation to selecting tenants, tenancy rights, rent control and rights of access by TES and health services
11. There is a need for continued development of County services for Travellers in relation to: provision of places for boys with behavioural difficulties; youth provision; confident handling of child protection; relationships between different groups of Travellers, appointment of planned Gypsy liaison officer, awareness raising training for staff
12. The police service should examine as a matter of some urgency its relationships with all Traveller groups
13. The response to claims of unlawful discrimination under the Race Relations Acts should be pursued as actively on Travellers' behalf as for any other group
14. In relation to its enforcement activities on Travellers stopping places, the Council might consider the risk of being in breach of its duties under the Race Relations Amendment Act
15. While the police were generally regarded positively; continued work needs to be done towards achieving a 'true vision' of racial crime. Some of this work probably involves tackling *perceptions* about response time
16. The police should consider involving Chinese, Indian and other ethnic minority restaurants in the radio network currently operating for pubs and clubs. They might also consider establishing regular meetings with restaurateurs in relation to community safety. This may be especially relevant as new licensing laws come into operation, allowing longer opening hours
17. As the largest employers of minority ethnic staff, public sector agencies need to be aware that while there is no clear evidence of visible minorities facing high levels of discrimination or prejudice expressed towards them, individuals report significant, persisting and distressing incidents. Many mention children as perpetrators

18. Good practice in dealing with racist incidents in schools should be celebrated and shared widely in the County to increase teachers' and parents' confidence. At the same time the prevalence of children's involvement in racial incidents outside school should be made known to all high schools
19. The positive climate of concern in public institutions in the County to promote acceptance of diversity should be affirmed by senior management to help ensure its continuation

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SURVEY OF THE MINORITY ETHNIC POPULATION
OF THE HEREFORD AREA

It would be very helpful if you would provide the following details:
(but feel free **not** to include details that might identify you)

1	What is your ethnic origin?	
2	What, if any, is your religion?	
3	What language(s) do you speak?	First language Other languages
4	Are you male or female?	male female
5	What is your age?	
6	Are you	single living with a partner/married separated/ divorced widowed?
7	Do you have children living with you? If 'yes', what age(s) are your children?	Yes No
8	How long have you lived in Herefordshire?	years months
9	Roughly speaking, where in the county do you live?	
10	If you do, where in the county do you work?	
11	How do you rate local services? (please tick box)	
	<u>Education</u>	V good Good Average Poor V poor Not used
	<u>Health</u>	V good Good Average Poor V poor Not used
	<u>Council</u>	V good Good Average Poor V poor Not used
	<u>Welfare services</u>	V good Good Average Poor V poor Not used
	<u>Police</u>	V good Good Average Poor V poor Not used
	<u>Housing</u>	V good Good Average Poor V poor Not used
	<u>Support for culture and religion</u>	V good Good Average Poor V poor Not used
	<u>Support with getting a job</u>	V good Good Average Poor V poor Not used
12	What do you most like about living in the local area? (Please tick one box))	leisure facilities low crime rate the people the shops other ←

THIS PAGE IS ABOUT HEREFORDSHIRE COUNTY COUNCIL IN GENERAL. *Later pages deal with specific services like education*

23	Have you ever contacted Herefordshire County Council about their services (for example: libraries, housing, environmental health?)	Yes no (if no, skip this page)
24	Please tell me briefly why	
25	How did you find out about the service(s) offered (e.g. from the phone book, a friend, a family member, a poster, local radio ...)	
26	Did you find members of staff helpful?	Yes no
27	If NO, please tell me about this	
28	Did you experience any problems in trying to obtain the service(s) you needed	Yes no
29	If YES, please tell me about this (I would particularly like to know if the problem(s) you experienced were caused by differences in language or by members of staff not understanding or not caring about your religious or cultural needs, or if you experienced any racist hostility)	
30	As regards anything to do with minority ethnic people, how could the way in which Herefordshire County Council provide their services be improved?	

THIS PAGE IS SOLELY ABOUT SOCIAL SERVICES

47	Have you ever contacted Herefordshire Social Services about their services?	Yes no (if no, skip this page)
48	Please tell me briefly why	
49	How did you find out about the service(s) offered (e.g. from a friend, a family member, a leaflet, Citizen's Advice Bureau...)	
50	Did you find members of staff helpful?	Yes no
51	If NO, please tell me about this	
52	Did you experience any problems in trying to obtain the service(s) you needed	Yes no
53	If YES, please tell me about this (I would particularly like to know if the problem(s) you experienced were caused by differences in language or by members of staff not understanding or not caring about your religious or cultural needs, or if you experienced any racist hostility)	
54	As regards anything to do with minority ethnic people, how could the way in which Herefordshire Social Services provide their services be improved?	

55	<p>If you have never used any of the services on the previous pages, why is this?</p> <p style="text-align: right;">never needed to used similar services elsewhere other (please specify)</p>	
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Many thanks for your time. Your views are important to those funding this survey. Please now return this form to me in the reply paid envelope provided.

If you want to make any additional comments relevant to ethnic minorities in the area please do so.

Please be assured that the information you have provided will remain anonymous and confidential.

If you want to know the outcomes of the survey and its recommendations, they will be given to the Council in June 2004.

*Dr Chris Gaine
University College Chichester, College Lane, Sussex, PO19 6PE*

c.gaine@ucc.ac.uk

01243 812134

January 2004

Dear Madam or Sir

I am writing to see if you can help me with some research I have been asked to undertake on behalf of the County Council, it is about the experiences of minority ethnic people in Herefordshire. The hospital's Human Resources Department is forwarding this letter to you based on their records of how you have described your own ethnic group. You are completely anonymous to me and will remain so. You may have recorded your ethnicity as 'not stated'; if you belong to a minority ethnic group and are willing to respond it would greatly help the research. If you are not, then please accept my apologies for taking up your time.

Clearly there are not large numbers of minorities in the County (the Census puts the figure at less than 1%) so the County Council is concerned that it knows too little about the perception of minority ethnic people of the services it provides and indeed about their experiences generally. One of the consequences of minority numbers being very small is that there are no community associations or religious meetings through which I can contact individuals. For this reason I am trying to reach individuals through large employers such as the hospital.

I would be very interested in and grateful for any help and information you are able to give me. I am enclosing a questionnaire that indicates the kind of things I would like to know but I would be equally happy to talk with you either in person or on the telephone. Myself and/or a colleague travel to Hereford regularly and could meet at a time to suit you. (The questionnaire looks quite long but please don't be put off - you will find many questions will not apply to you.)

Chichester is some distance from Hereford, but I have done this kind of work elsewhere which is why I have been commissioned. You can see something of my previous work on <http://www.ucc.ac.uk/socialstudies/html/chrisgaine.html>

Yours faithfully

Dr Chris Gaine
Reader in Applied Social Policy

All research at UCC is scrutinised by the research ethics committee and subject to national guidelines such as those of the British Sociological Association. All respondents will be guaranteed anonymity and confidentiality, and are given an assurance that all taped material will be wiped after transcription. From the point of view of validity as well as ethics, it is general practice to give interviewees the opportunity to comment on transcripts.

February 2004

Dear

I have been commissioned by the County Council to research the experiences of minority ethnic people in the county. The work is under the auspices of Alan Blundell, Head of Policy and Community, but it has the active support of all Department Heads.

Clearly there are not large numbers of minorities in Herefordshire (the Census puts the figure at less than 1%) so the County Council is concerned that it knows too little about the perception of minority ethnic people of the services it provides and indeed about their experiences generally. One of the consequences of minority numbers being very small is that there are no community associations or religious meetings through which I can contact individuals. For this reason I am trying to reach individuals through large employers such as the hospital but also through schools via their pupils.

I know from the LEA's PLASC returns that there is at least one minority ethnic pupil in your school and would like to ask you to pass on the enclosed correspondence to their parents. This method ensures the anonymity of parents and families unless they chose to get in personal contact with me. I have included the right number of letters according to the PLASC figures plus one extra; this one is left unsealed so you can read it.

One of my work roles is to run a large MA course for teachers, so I am well aware of the demands upon your time, but since you are one of the very few means of potentially accessing this part of the population HCC would really appreciate your help. Perhaps you would be good enough to return the reply slip below so that I know the final response rate from parents.

Ours sincerely

Dr Chris Gaine
Reader in Applied Social Policy

.....
I have/have not sent the letter/s to the minority ethnic parents

February 2004

Dear Parent,

The headteacher of your child's school has agreed to forward this letter to you on my behalf so that your name and address remain private.

Though I am based at University College Chichester I am doing some work at the moment for Herefordshire County Council about the experiences of minority ethnic people. I am trying to get in touch with people who have roots or origins outside Britain, whether or not they are British born. This includes people who have backgrounds in other places in Europe as well as India, Pakistan, Bangladesh, the Caribbean, Africa, the Far East etc.

The kinds of things I would like to know are whether (or not) you have had problems getting or using some local services and if there are ways you think services could be improved. The County Council needs to find this out about all the services they have some responsibility for, such as schools, social care, housing and environmental health, but I am also interested in people's good and bad experiences of colleges, the police and health. This is important in helping to improve services for everyone.

If you would like to help with this survey, please telephone me on 01243 812134. I can phone you back at once to save your costs, and if you leave your name and a contact number I will try to return your call the same day. Let me assure you that your name and details will NOT be given to anyone else and no-one will be able to identify you from what is written in my final report.

If it is easier to write something of your experiences, I have enclosed a questionnaire and there is an envelope which does not need a stamp. If you find it easier to write in a language other than English please do, and if you would like an interpreter for our meeting we will try to find one.

I hope I will hear from you soon.

Yours faithfully,

Dr Chris Gaine
Reader in Applied Social Policy

DEVELOPING THE CHILDREN'S AGENDA IN HEREFORDSHIRE CHANGE FOR CHILDREN

PROGRAMME AREA OF RESPONSIBILITY: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CABINET

17TH FEBRUARY, 2005

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To note progress in the local change programme.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendation

- THAT (a) the report be noted;**
- (b) the proposed response to the consultation on the Joint Area Review inspection (in Appendix 1) be agreed; and**
- (c) the revised priorities for the 1st March priorities conversation (as in paragraph 3) be agreed.**

Reasons

To keep Cabinet informed of the Change for Children Programme locally.

Considerations

1. The initial priorities were outlined to Cabinet on 13th January, 2005. Given current inspections and the self-assessment of both the current improvement plan and the direction towards Children's Trust arrangements, it is important that improvement plans on key areas are seen to be delivering.
2. The priority list also forms part of the Change Advisor priority conversation now set for 1st March in Herefordshire.
3. The focus of this meeting is to:
 - discuss our assessment of available data, and the views of children and their families, on how well all children and young people in your area, and specific groups of more vulnerable children and young people, are doing against the five outcomes for children and young people;

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Sue Fiennes, Director of Children's Services on 01432 260039

- agree local priorities for improving outcomes, in the light of this analysis and of key national priorities as set out in PSA targets;
- discuss your evaluation of current services against these demands, and your assessment of the priorities for change in local practice, workforce and organisation in order to meet those needs;
- agree priorities for our local change programme;
- agree the broad shape of support which will be required from DfES, CSCI and DH, and from Government Offices, to support implementation; and
- If you are a pilot Local Area Agreement authority, the meeting will discuss and seek to agree LAA proposals for outcomes, funding streams and freedoms and flexibilities for the Children and Young People's Block.

4. The priorities have, therefore, been revisited and can now be described as:

- setting up a Children and Young People Partnership Board;
- creating a shadow Local Safeguarding Board (ahead of national requirement);
- continue current developments in integrating front-line services:-
 - children's centres
 - extended schools
 - children with disabilities
 - child protection - co-location;
- explore the feasibility of different integration models:-
 - South Wye
 - other rural localities;
- continue the implementation of the Child Concern Model, strengthening the "consultant" roles in each agency/sector and building confidence in the criminal justice and schools sector;
- further develop the information sharing and information management approaches;
- examine performance in the key areas:
 - re-registrations on the child protection register
 - life chances of children looked after, particularly school absence/attendance
 - special needs - statements done within the required timescales
 - attendance/achievement of vulnerable children and young people, in both education and employment;

- check if improvement plans have delivered or whether new effort and resources needs to be applied both in terms of data quality and service delivery.
5. The Joint Area Review 42 key judgements also have attached a list of key indicators. The consultation document states:

Rules will apply when making the children's services judgements for the local authority. For the social care judgement, key thresholds (formerly known as key performance indicators) will be used to provide a consistency check. A Council cannot be judged to be performing well (grade 4 - delivering well above minimum requirements) if it fails to reach the specified level of performance for any of these indicators. It is also proposed that, for the overall children's services judgement, if either one of the education or the social care judgements is judged inadequate (grade 1 - not delivering minimum requirements) then the overall judgement will be inadequate, regardless of the rating of the other function.
 6. This highlights the requirement to be focusing attention on those indicators where improvement is needed and locally concentrates the action into the broader vulnerable children, disadvantage and diversity areas.
 7. The consultations covering the children's area currently inviting responses are:-
 - Audit Commission – CPA From 2005
 - Annual Performance Assessment of Council Children's Services
 - Joint Area Review of Children's Services
 - The Framework for Inspection of Children's Services
 - The Common Framework for Inspecting Education and Training
 - CSCI – Inspecting for Better Lives
 - BFI – CPA 2005
 - Draft Statutory Guidance on the Roles and Responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member
 - Draft Statutory Guidance on Inter-Agency Co-Operation to Improve the Well-Being of Children: Children's Trusts
 8. The circular related to the inspection arrangements is attached (CSCI-CI(2004)6) (Appendix 1).
 9. The significance for Herefordshire is how the JAR is going to impact in Autumn 2005. In order to place concerns and comments before OFSTED the attached response is proposed (Appendix 2).
 10. It seems important in this context to revisit the roles and responsibilities of the Director of Children's Services and the lead member for Children's Services. These are outlined in the extracts from the Draft Guidance shown in the Executive Summary and paragraphs 3.1 to 3.3.2 (Appendix 3). The local leadership, therefore, to achieve this agenda has to be taking the right priority steps to achieve the infrastructure and key improvements outlined in the revised priorities in paragraph 4.

11. The support needed to secure the change has been endorsed by Cabinet and the change team is in the process of being set up.
12. The communication of this new Children's Services direction requires a concerted effort for the leadership to be visible and clear information to be available to all stakeholders.
13. The Communication Strategy has already begun with the first newssheet going out week commencing 17th January. The Director of Children's Services will have a planned programme of visits to schools and governing bodies over the next period.
14. The next step is the set up of the Children's and Young People's Partnership Board locally. A date has been set to launch this on 15th March.

Alternative Options

There are no alternative options

Risk Management

The Council needs to demonstrate leadership and engagement in this new Children's Services endeavour. The planned approach described in this report and the report to Cabinet of 13th January, 2005 gives a clear start to that ambition.

Financial Implications

There are no financial implications associated with this report.

Consultees

Staff and Stakeholders

Background Papers

None identified



**CSCI – CI(2004) 6
November 2004**

**To: Directors of Social Services in England
Copy to Chief Executives of Local Councils**

Dear Director

**Children Act 2004 – Consultation on the Framework for
Inspection of Children’s Services and new arrangements for
inspection, review and assessment of children’s services**

Please find attached a copy of the Framework of the Inspection of Children’s Services, which is circulated for a twelve-week period of consultation starting on 6th December 2004. The covering letter attached to the Framework summarises the new arrangements for the inspection, review and assessment of children’s service which are explained in detail in the Framework and in three papers which are also circulated for consultation and available on OfSTED’s website (www.everychildconsultation.gov.uk). This letter draws to your attention some specific implications of the new arrangements relating to children’s services for Directors of Social Services. The implications of the new Framework for councils with social services responsibilities are set out below.

The Annual Performance Assessment

From next year (2005) there will be a new annual performance assessment process for children’s social services in councils with social services responsibilities.

There will continue to be an adult services process as well and further detail will be circulated later if any changes are to be made to that process

For children’s services one overall judgement and two separate service judgements (one for education and one for children’s social services) will be made. This assessment will be based on the same standards and criteria set out for the Joint Area Review (JAR – see below) but using a more restricted evidence base focussing on social

services and education only. It is proposed that all local councils will have a performance assessment on this basis in 2005.

The assessment will take place in June or July 2005 and will be conducted jointly by CSCI (BRMs) and OFSTED. The results will provide the judgement for children's services for CPA. It will also provide evidence that will inform the Joint Area Review process.

A key part of the annual performance assessment will be the self-assessment. This will replace the children's elements of the delivery and improvement statement (DIS). It will be issued early in the New Year and is likely to have similar timescales to the Spring Delivery and Improvement Statement. It will be constructed around the five outcomes for children rather than the existing performance assessment framework. The self-assessment for the annual performance assessment and for the joint annual review will use the same structure in order to reduce any risk of duplication.

The Single Conversation.

Business Relationship Managers will continue to support councils with their monitoring and improvement programme through their ongoing relationship and regular visits.

As part of the associated Change for Children Programme being led by the Department for Education and Skills, the ongoing monitoring and improvement processes that have been an integral part of that relationship will change as regards children's services.

Initial introductory conversations setting out how this will work are taking place currently with yourselves and the Regional DfES Change Advisors, with local Business Relationship Managers, and DfES Children's Services Improvement Advisers for Education.

As set out in the letter sent to you jointly by Sheila Scales of DfES and me on the 31st August 2004 the intention is to build on this conversation and to develop progressively a dialogue which will lead to an annual "single conversation" with local authorities about their services for children. The Annual Performance Assessment process and the integrated inspection framework and JAR process will support these annual "conversations" and will also inform and support the associated ongoing monitoring and improvement processes that underpin this.

The Joint Area Review

The purpose of the Joint Area Review (JAR) is to evaluate the extent to which, taken together, local services contribute to improvement in the well being of children and young people in a children's services

authority area. This process will replace a range of current inspections including the current CSCI inspection of children's social services and OfSTED's inspection of LEA's. It will include contributions from the Health Care Commission and other Inspectorates.

JARs will replace the current children's services inspection methodology from September 2005, for a small group of councils and will begin in full in January 2006. The intention is that every local council area with responsibility for children's services will have a JAR within three years from that date. They will be wide ranging, considering the contribution of ALL local publicly funded services to improving outcomes for children, and addressing in particular how agencies work together to deliver improved outcomes.

They will include evaluation of aspects of the work of other partner agencies, (the police, NHS, Sure Start etc) and in particular child and adolescent mental health services, and local Safeguarding Children Boards.

At the same time, inspectorates are charged with reducing the burden of inspection on local councils, and to meet this requirement fieldwork for JARs will be proportionate to risk and based on self assessment and annual performance assessment. The exception to this is that, because of the high levels of concern, some fieldwork will always be conducted in relation to Staying Safe.

Where possible the programme of reviews will be co-ordinated with the Audit Commission's corporate assessment and HMI (probation) inspection of youth offending teams.

The criteria to be used for making judgements reflect the 25 "aims" in the National Accountability Framework for the Change for Children Programme and the National Service Framework for children, young people and maternity services. The JAR will judge the contribution made by the council's services overall to improved outcomes for children and young people and in addition will make specific judgements about the quality of its education and social care services. Judgements will be made on a four-point scale, and will take into account the outcomes being achieved for children and young people.

The indicative annual programme will be established using evidence about current performance and JARs will take place earlier in the cycle of reviews where the evidence gives rise to concerns about the effectiveness of services.

The inspection of regulated social care services

The inspection of regulated children's social care services will continue to take place on a regular basis in accordance with the regulations governing those specific services. This will also include the regulatory inspection of adoption and fostering and efforts will be made to rationalise and co-ordinate these inspections with the JAR where possible.

Some changes to methodology for those inspections of children's regulated services will be made to ensure that the contribution made by the commissioner and placing local authority to the quality of care provided is assessed and judged as well as the quality of the actual provider.

Information about the outcome of these regulatory inspections (covering all regulated children's services provided locally by the voluntary and community sector, and the independent and private sector as well as by the local authority) will be used as contributory evidence for the JAR.

A detailed formal consultation on CSCI's proposed changes in relation to modernising regulation will begin in November 2004

Other associated inspections.

Separate inspections of youth offending teams will continue to take place conducted by a multi-disciplinary inspection led by HMI Probation. Similarly inspections of multi-agency children's health care such as inspections of Child and Adolescent Mental Health Services will take place led by the Health Care Commission as part of its programme of inspection against the NSF for children.

When possible, those inspections will be programmed to take place at the same time as the JAR. This will enable the areas of potential overlap and duplication to be reduced and rationalised and ensure that shared areas of inspection are only inspected once.

Yours sincerely,



David Behan
Chief Inspector
Commission for Social Care Inspection

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

Response to:-

- (1) Framework for Inspection of Children's Services**
- (2) New Arrangements for Inspection, Review and Assessment of Children's Services**

- (1) The framework focuses on improvement and outcomes. This is welcomed as an approach which will enable an evaluation of the extent of improvement in the well-being of children and young people, locally.

It will be important to demonstrate in practice the "proportionate to risk" analysis and how this is translated into a clear focus for both specialist inspections and joint area reviews.

It would be in the spirit of the fair and consistent standard to include local authorities and their partners in the review of the application of the framework.

The responsiveness to local circumstances in the methodology needs to be carefully approached with the local authority, children's services authority and partners/stakeholders locally in the preparation for joint area reviews. This engagement would enable a joint ownership of the focus of the review and the improvement journey.

- (2) The key judgements are seen as relevant to the outcomes for children and young people.

It is not yet clear how the decisions will be made on the "new inspection enquiry". There will be new fieldwork and enquiry on safeguarding children and young people, so how will that factor in to the "no more than 10" most significant key judgements for the local area? Does this mean the safeguarding enquiry is above the figure of "up to 10"?

It would be helpful if the key judgements of local significance could be agreed in advance and, as much as is appropriate, have synergy with the local self-assessment.

The co-ordination of separate inspections does need to be further developed. Locally, inspections of Adult Learning, Youth Offending Teams, 14-19 provision and fostering have all come at the same time and possibly only 7/8 months before a joint area review. While this will form an evidence basis for proportionate fieldwork, it has had an impact on capacity locally and does create a challenge in delivering in timely fashion an improvement plan.

The "Choosing Health" White Paper does create key healthy targets for children and young people. The evidence basis in NSF performance would need to be connected to progress on delivering the White Paper locally.

The consultation indicates that there will be key thresholds for the social care judgement. It is of considerable importance to know how the "specified level of performance" is set if this is to be a threshold for performing well. Further dialogue on this would be essential for transparency.

It is anticipated that the pilot areas for joint area reviews will test the implications of the information from regulatory inspections in the geographical area of the joint area review. The educational/achievement outcomes of children living locally but placed by another authority will also need to be carefully considered.

The specified level of performance expected will need to be transparent, especially in the context of the framework being focused on improvement. The baseline benchmark, linked to local circumstances, needs to be understood and hopefully agreed. The Council will be keen to see how this can be achieved.

**SUE FIENNES
DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES**

**on behalf of
HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL**



3. THE ROLE OF THE DIRECTOR OF CHILDREN'S SERVICES AND THE LEAD MEMBER FOR CHILDREN'S SERVICES

3.1 Introductory

3.1.1 The Director of Children's Services and the Lead Member provide respectively, a professional and political focus for children's services, ensuring that a clear strategy for improving outcomes for all children and young people within the area is developed. In doing so they will listen to and involve children in determining their needs and champion their interests both across functional boundaries within the local authority and across local partnerships, ensuring that the needs of children, young people and their families or carers are addressed.

3.2 Role of the Director of Children's Services

3.2.1 The Director of Children's Services will have three key roles:

- a. professional responsibility and accountability for the effectiveness, availability and value for money of all local authority children's services;
- b. leadership both within the local authority to secure and sustain the necessary changes to culture and practice, and beyond it so that services improve outcomes for all and are organised around children and young people's needs; and
- c. building effective partnerships with and between those local bodies, including the voluntary and community sectors, who also provide children's services in order to focus resources⁴ jointly on improving outcomes for children and young people.

3.3 Role of the Lead Member for Children's Services

3.3.1 The Lead Member's role mirrors the DCS's role at the local political level. He/she will have:

- a. political accountability for the effectiveness, availability and value for money of all local authority children's services;
- b. leadership to engage and encourage local communities in order to improve children's services and to ensure that services, both within the local authority and across partner organisations, improve outcomes for all and are organised around children and young people's needs; and
- c. a particular focus on safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children across all agencies.

⁴ Financial, human, physical or any other resources.

3.3.2 The DCS and LM will work with partners to establish a framework of accountabilities for the effective discharge of functions, and the delivery of services within this framework. They will work with partners to ensure that robust management, reporting, governance, partnership and audit procedures exist to enable services to be delivered effectively, and outcomes for children and young people to be improved. In exercising their functions and responsibilities the DCS and LM must have due regard to the CSA's responsibilities to promote equality of opportunity and eliminate discrimination, for example under the Race Relations Act 1976 and the Disability Discrimination Act 1995.

DEVELOPING A COMMISSIONING STRATEGY FOR CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE IN HEREFORDSHIRE

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: CHILDREN'S SERVICES

CABINET

17TH FEBRUARY, 2005

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To note the requirement to develop a commissioning strategy for children and young people in Herefordshire.

To receive an outline of the initial elements for such a strategy.

To consider the immediate priorities and responses to the challenges on resources and performance 2004-05.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendation

THAT it be agreed that:-

- (a) the Children's Partnership Board (once established) ensures that there is a commissioning strategy for vulnerable children (social care) and that is reflected in the broader Children and Young People's Plan for April 2006;**
- (b) the key elements for a commissioning strategy for children's services focuses on a needs assessment for county children; family support and the overall needs of looked after children;**
- (c) a three year commissioning strategy for children and young people be produced by December 2005 to identify efficiencies and potential investment options; and**
- (d) immediate commissioning priority service attention be put into further developing fostering services and targeted family support services.**

Reasons

To inform Cabinet on the key elements and priorities for a commissioning strategy for children (social care service).

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Henry Lewis, Head of Social Care (Children) on (01432) 261603

Considerations

1. The Joint Review of Herefordshire Social Services in 2002 drew attention to the key relationship between established formal processes of strategic commissioning and the overall performance assessment for Herefordshire. This message was reinforced in the Annual Review conducted by the Commission of Social Care Inspection (CSCI) in Autumn 2004 with particular attention being drawn to our looked after children's educational attainment as well as our fostering services capacity to respond to the demands made upon it. The suggestion is that the lack of a clear commissioning process contributed to the down rating of children's services.
2. Strategic commissioning of services can be understood in several ways. The Audit Commissioning has described it "*as the process of specifying, securing and monitoring services to meet individual needs at a strategic level.*" This is to apply to all services whether provided by the local authority or by other providers, independent or voluntary sector.
3. This strategic approach to commissioning is seen as essential to improve outcomes for children, young people and their families and occupies a central position in the government's agenda for change for children.
4. A successful approach to strategic commissioning will incorporate all of the following:
 - A focus on safeguarding children and promoting their welfare
 - Involve children, young people and their families in its development
 - Developed through a multi-agency approach
 - It is based on a comprehensive needs assessment, taking into account current and future needs
 - A strategy based on robust information both in quality and cost effectiveness of services.
 - Joint strategies across local and regional boundaries to deliver local needs
 - Commissioning aims to represent medium to longer term investment priorities and require an appropriate financial framework to ensure sustainability.
5. In order to achieve the five outcomes for children as seen in the government's document Every Child Matters (stay safe; be healthy; enjoy and achieve; make a positive contribution; achieve economic well-being) there is a clear need to develop such a strategy supported through a multi-agency approach.
6. The establishment of a Children and Young People Partnership Board in Herefordshire (Cabinet, January 2005) will form the background to creating a children's trust arrangement. The overall aim is the integrating of services to children between the agencies. One of the signs of this working is that of an integrated strategy between the agencies showing joint planning, commissioning and, as appropriate, the pooling of resources.
7. The Children Act 2004 has clearly required each local authority, through the Partnership Board to produce a Children and Young Person's Plan (CYPP) by April 2006. This first Plan will contain the overall commissioning strategy for children's

services for the next three years.

8. The intention of the Director of Children's Services is to establish the Board by April 2005. The following actions will form the backdrop to the creation of the CYPP in 2006:-
 - An analysis of the needs of children locally. This forms the basis of developing a more comprehensive commissioning strategy.
 - Begin to show more explicitly how services are to be aligned and integrated with those contained within the strategic plans of key partners such as health.
9. The approach taken to service development will need to show clear linkages to the five outcomes for children as expressed in Every Child Matters and the outcomes framework, Change for Children.
10. Children's Social Services, within the Council, has faced significant budgetary pressures in the last two years. Any strategy therefore has to derive from an understanding of needs and future trends. The intention of such a strategy has to take account of the vulnerabilities of the current services and how investment decisions can maximise performance gains for the Children's directorate.
11. The need for a commissioning approach is emphasised by some preliminary analysis of the demographic change and potential future patterns of demand.
12. Herefordshire's population overall is expected to increase by 2.5% to 182,475 by 2011, the population aged 0-19 is projected to fall by 9% to 37731 by 2011 (*ONS 2003*). The projected fall is not uniform either by socio-economic group or age band and both have implications for the future commissioning of services. In respect of the former, rates of decrease are expected to be less for lower socio-economic groups. For the latter, the significant fall is within the age bandings 0-9 (at around 14%) while the older cohorts show only a modest decline.
13. These changes may already be being evidenced within the Looked After population where the trend towards a younger population has reversed since 2003. Looked After children who are ten years and over now represent nearly three-quarters of the Looked After population as a whole and are projected to do so over the medium- to longer-term.
14. At any one time approximately 16 per thousand children and young people (of whom 2 per thousand will be children with special needs arising from a disability) will be receiving a service directly from Herefordshire Children's social services. (Children in Need census 2003). Of these 28% will be children Looked After and 72% children supported within their own families. These groups represent 65% and 35% approximately of total current expenditure by social services.
15. Analysis of the Children in Need census data at a national level reveals significant differences in the distribution of spend for each group across the age spectrum. For children supported at home the distribution of costs 0-19 years is relatively uniform save for a peak at ages 2-4 years. For children Looked After the distribution of costs is noticeably skewed towards the higher age groups with highest per capita costs incurred for the group 10-15 years. There is nothing to suggest that Herefordshire's pattern of spend differs in any essential way from this profile.

16. In summary, the central implication for Herefordshire of the demographic changes outlined above is the relative growth of the age cohort (10+ years) who consume the greatest level of resources per capita within Children's Social Services. At the same time the absolute reductions projected for the younger cohort (0-9 years) will not be fully realised in respect of business activity for children's social services given the association between patterns of deprivation and referral activity in identified areas in the County.

17. *The commissioning strategy for children's social services, as a consequence of this preliminary analysis, in the first phase requires development around the following:-*

- **Clear Needs Assessment and develop strategic objectives**

The Children and Young People Partnership Board has a key task to ensure that a Needs assessment is produced which will bring together the emerging needs assessments contained for example in health plans and early years plans. This work should aim for completion by the end of 2005. This will give Herefordshire the "across the board" assessment needed to make a county wide commissioning strategy.

18. The current imperatives are to further develop:-

- **Family Support**

Three significant initiatives during the period 2001-2004 have been seen in the Child Concern Model, the family support project with NCH and the move towards integration of services with children with disabilities. Other work through children's fund, the developments in early years (sure start, children's centres) and the work in extended schools shows this is an important area for further evaluation, and potential investment and development. Shared commissioning objectives are needed to shape these services further.

- **Looked After Children (managing the demand for placements)**

This comparatively small group of children (January 2005, 176 children) consume a large proportion of children's services financial and human resources. Taking into account a range of elements this will be in the region of 70% of available resources. The performance measures of our services around education, placement stability and outcomes for looked after children are key in the judgements made on the authority's performance. This will be a key area of inspection in the forthcoming Joint Area Review (JAR) in Autumn 2005.

A report to Social Care and Housing Scrutiny Committee (4th October, 2004) *The Future Shape of Adoption and Fostering Services in Herefordshire* emphasised the significance of considering opportunities for collaborative commissioning. This aims to ensure a flexible and creative approach to meeting the needs of looked after children.

The challenge is controlling rising costs and having placements which suits the needs of a small number of children who will have a range of complex and demanding requirements. The aim is to commission services which combine both appropriate fostering services and residential placements. This is a group of services users which is coming down in number but rising in cost. An example of this is that Herefordshire's Children's Services Directorate and the Primary Care Trust are in the early stages of developing with agency

colleagues in Shropshire and Worcestershire a residentially based service for twelve children with complex needs. Such a service would be run by an independent provider but would not be operative before September 2006.

- **Human resources**

The Children Change agenda demands that all services consider how services are delivered in the future, in what way, and by whom. The implications for the children's workforce will become clearer as the agenda becomes shaped. The development of integrated services will require an assessment of the skills and roles needed in any newly configured services.

19. The future commissioning of services will require that they are undertaken with other partners. The areas that are highlighted as an initial focus appropriately falls into this approach and will be part of the wider Children and Young Person's Plan. A detailed strategy in the identified areas to be reported to the Children's Partnership Board and to Cabinet by December 2005.

Alternative Options

None identified.

Risk Management

The children's agenda is a high priority and there are increased financial and reputational risks to the Council unless a more structured strategy is developed particularly for family support and fostering and more local specialist placements.

Financial Assessment

Detailed investment options including invest to save would be part of any future commissioning strategy and associated business case.

Consultees

Not applicable.

Background Papers

None identified.

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL SUPPORT TO THE COMMUNITY AND VOLUNTARY SECTOR

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CABINET

17TH FEBRUARY, 2005

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To receive a report on the review of Herefordshire Council support to the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS), and to consider approving the report's recommendations.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision.

Recommendation

THAT Cabinet approves the review recommendations taking into account the amendments proposed by Strategic Monitoring Committee.

Reasons

To seek to ensure that the Council is securing best value for money from its support to the voluntary sector and that its arrangements for funding support represent best practice.

Considerations

1. On 9th February, 2004 the Strategic Monitoring Committee requested that a review be undertaken of Herefordshire Council support to the CVS. Terms of reference were subsequently agreed for the cross-cutting review, and a team was pulled together to undertake the work. In summary the Review Team looked at:
 - The services provided by the key Infrastructure Organisations
 - The use of Grants and a comparison with Service Level Agreements (SLAs)
 - The operation of the Voluntary Sector Grants scheme.
2. This took the form of a Service Improvement Review, which covered most of the elements of a Best Value exercise in terms of Consultation, Comparison and Challenge, but did not undertake Competitive tendering activities.
3. The work took place over an eight month period and involved a large benchmarking exercise, the use of questionnaires and a series of semi-structured interviews. The Review Team report was considered by the Strategic Monitoring Committee on 12th January, 2005. The Strategic Monitoring Committee subsequently approved the majority of the report's 32 recommendations. The executive summary from the report is attached at Appendix 1 and the recommendations of the Strategic

Monitoring Committee at Appendix 2. The full report is available in the Members' Room, on the Council's website and on request.

4. The Review Team was able to demonstrate that Herefordshire Council was fairly generous in its support to the CVS, but was not securing best value for money from current arrangements. Amongst the key issues identified were:
 - The need to draw up a Council CVS Support Strategy
 - Existing Grants Review and Monitoring systems were inadequate
 - The need for a radical overhaul of the Voluntary Sector Grants scheme
 - SLAs were inconsistent and not robust.

Risk Management

When the Review began it was not in the context of the funding challenges that Herefordshire Council is currently facing. The Review Team undertook its work on the assumption that the current levels of CVS funding would probably continue to be available in the future. The recommendations in the report would lead to the more effective and efficient use of this funding.

There is considerable scope for improving and revising the Council's SLAs. Within the Review report a Council's Legal Adviser drew up a suggested template on which future SLAs could be based. Further work will be needed to develop this.

The Review Team went beyond its Terms of Reference and outlined areas where funding might be reduced if the Council decided the CVS should not be exempt from the cost reduction exercise. The key proposal was that funding cuts should be targeted at specific areas, rather than imposed on an across-the-board basis. It was suggested the first area for making savings could be achieved by suspending the Voluntary Sector Grants scheme. This could in theory produce savings of around £160,000 per annum. The situation is however more complicated. Closer historical examination of the grants awarded over the last three years shows that the same organisations by and large receive on-going grant support year on year. In the current financial year only £27,500 was allocated in the form of one off grants, which could be saved in 2005/2006 without the need to give notice to recipient organisations.

The Review Team report was completed in November 2004. At that stage there would have been enough time to give notice of the intention to suspend funding, to take effect from 1st April 2005. This is no longer practical. Some CVS organisations have compiled their business plans and identified match funding on the assumption of receiving Herefordshire Council grant support for 2005/2006. The Council will need to provide some on-going support over the next 12 months. The funding requirement could amount to something between £100,000 to £150,000, which would be subject to more detailed analysis. Cabinet has already proposed that the reduction required could be managed over the forthcoming financial year.

There should be some scope for staff savings should the Voluntary Sector Grants scheme be suspended. This can be properly assessed during 2005/2006.

The Policy & Community Directorate is shortly to be restructured and for immediate purposes it is proposed that a small team be formed to address actions arising from the review of the CVS. It could take up to a year to work through the review's recommendations and to fully implement them.

The coming financial year should be used to fully engage with the CVS to agree the most appropriate means of fully implementing the recommendations of the review. It provides time to undertake key actions such as drawing up and implementing a Council voluntary sector support strategy, to introduce revised SLAs, and to clarify arrangements that will make designated Council managers accountable for performance monitoring of grant support.

The detailed evidence in terms of financial costings and benchmarking data in the report has not been challenged, but some CVS organisations have since commented on aspects of the review. As an example, Herefordshire Association of Local Councils has indicated they do not accept all the views expressed by a Council Officer over SLA compliance. It will be possible to explore these concerns over the coming twelve months and to take up specific queries with the individual organisations.

Alternative Options

The alternative option would be to do nothing.

Consultees

The Review undertook a very significant amount of consultation. This included 42 semi-structured interviews with Council Directors, Heads of Service, managers and officers. Infrastructure organisation representatives were also interviewed, and key stakeholders from other bodies which were identified during the review process.

The three elected members on the Review Team (Councillors Mrs. Sylvia Daniels, Rees Mills and John Stone) were actively involved and provided a regular input.

Background Papers

None identified.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommendations

General

1. That support to the Community and Voluntary sector should be properly recorded where officers complete individual work programmes and time recording sheets.
2. That market testing of service options be considered or takes place in appropriate service areas.
3. That a Council Community and Voluntary Sector support strategy be drawn up and adopted as soon as possible.
4. That individual Council Departments examine the scope for including the Community and Voluntary Sector in achieving their strategies' objectives.

Voluntary Sector Grants

5. That the current funding by percentage guideline allocations be discontinued.
6. That the current two annual bidding rounds be replaced by a single bidding round. Alternatively, that voluntary sector grant applications be made on a rolling basis and considered at quarterly intervals.
7. That funding for more than one year should not be provided by grants but through Service Level Agreements where appropriate.
8. That grant applications be considered on merit against criteria, which have been revisited, strengthened and made more transparent.
9. That once the grant criteria have been revised the allocation of grants be delegated to officers, with the relevant Cabinet Member being consulted, along with the local Member where appropriate, in line with best practice of similar grant schemes operated by Herefordshire Council.
10. That the Voluntary Grants Scheme monitoring system be made more robust to facilitate a detailed evaluation of the effective use of grant funding, and its impact on Herefordshire and its residents.
11. That individual managers be made responsible for monitoring the satisfactory performance of grants relating to their service areas. That grants be conditional and only given in return for agreeing to meet a range of responsibilities.
12. That a limited amount of funding, to be agreed by the Cabinet Member, be ringfenced for the areas of greatest need within Herefordshire as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation Super Output Areas.

13. That funding be conditional upon the organisation in receipt of a grant having diversity and equal opportunities policies in place, which are acceptable to Herefordshire Council.
14. That an appraisal panel replace the practice of single officer appraisal of grant applications.

Service Level Agreements

15. It is recommended that SLAs be established with organisations that receive significant support (such as Age Concern), but that this be reviewed once the CVS support strategy has been approved.
16. That Service Level Agreements be made more specific and linked to required and measurable outputs and outcomes.
17. That clear and robust criteria be introduced against which Service Level Agreements should be monitored.
18. That any new or renewed Service Level Agreements be drawn up using the checklist of headings and guidance as outlined in this report.
19. That rolling Service Level Agreements should not routinely be entered into, but be used where this is appropriate.

Infrastructure Organisations

20. That the Council endorses Community and Voluntary services continuing to be provided locally.
21. That funding for Community Voluntary Action Ledbury & District be withdrawn at the conclusion of the existing Service Level Agreement on the 31st March 2005, as there is no economic justification for supporting Community Voluntary Action Ledbury & District as a separate organisation.
22. That such notice to Community Voluntary Action Ledbury & District be given as early as possible.
23. That no more projects be awarded to Community First without a competitive tendering exercise taking place, and that this should apply to existing projects where the appropriate notice can be given.
24. That Herefordshire Association of Local Councils be warned of the implications of not meeting their Service Level Agreement monitoring requirements. In the event that Herefordshire Association of Local Councils fails to provide the monitoring information as outlined in the Service Level Agreement action be taken to terminate the Service Level Agreement.
25. That the Compact agreement between the PCT, the Social Care and Strategic Housing Directorate (the Council) and the Alliance should be reviewed according to the terms in the COMPACT and by the Joint Health and Social Care Commissioning Group.

26. That collaborative working arrangements be pursued with Citizens Advice Bureaux, ABLE and Welfare Rights Team, but if this is not achievable that the Welfare Rights Team service be market tested,
27. That the Council continues to fund Citizens Advice Bureaux at least at existing levels whilst the option of partnership working with ABLE and the Welfare Rights Team are explored in more detail.
28. That suitable parcels of work involving community activity be tendered, such as community surveys or activities along the lines of Planning for Real exercises.
29. That the Race Equality Partnership be asked to consider the transfer of the service to the Community and Voluntary Sector. This can probably be best achieved by commissioning the activity with an individual Infrastructure organisation, or undertaking a market testing exercise.
30. That the Strategic Housing Department places more of a rural focus into the job description of one of its current Housing Officers.
31. That the Herefordshire Council Lifelong Learning Development Unit considers the scope for using the Community and Voluntary Sector to deliver a larger proportion of adult learning activity.
32. That some services be considered for market testing either for provision by the Community and Voluntary Sector or to be retained in-house. These are:
 - Work that involves going out into the community.
 - Parish plans consultation.
 - Community Development Co-ordinator.

Extract from the minutes of Strategic Monitoring Committee held on 12th January, 2005.

RESOLVED:

That (a) recommendations as set out in the Executive Summary of the review of Council support to the community and voluntary sector, as set out in appendix 1 to these Minutes be approved, forwarded to Cabinet for consideration and also made available to the Budget Panel **WITH THE EXCEPTION OF RECOMMENDATIONS 21 and 22 and SUBJECT TO:**

- (i) in relation to recommendations 9 and 14, Cabinet being requested to give careful consideration to the role of Local Members and ways in which the relevant Scrutiny Committee Chairman could be involved in the consideration of grant applications prior to a decision being made;
 - (ii) in relation to recommendations 15-19 relating to use of service level agreements it being emphasised that arrangements should be made to ensure that such agreements should be proportionate and as simple and flexible as possible taking care to avoid overburdening and hindering voluntary organisations;
 - (iii) it being noted that periods of notice referred to in recommendations set out in the review would require adjustment if it was decided to proceed in issuing such notices.
- (b) Cabinet be recommended to seek further evidence to inform its decision in relation to recommendation 21 and the associated recommendation 22 noting the Committee's rejection of these recommendations on the grounds that there was insufficient evidence in the review report to support the recommendations;
- (c) that if consideration is to be given to reducing funding to the Community and Voluntary Sector in preparing the Council's 2005/2006 budget regard be had to the recommendation that this be done in stages as set out in section 8 of the review report, as reflected in appendix 2 to these Minutes.

Review of Herefordshire Council Support to the Community and Voluntary Sector

**As presented to the
Strategic Monitoring
Committee on 12th
January 2005**

...**Putting** people first
...**Preserving** our heritage
...**Promoting** our county
...**Providing** for our communities
...**Protecting** our future

Quality life in a quality county

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Recommendations

General

1. That support to the Community and Voluntary sector should be properly recorded where officers complete individual work programmes and time recording sheets.
2. That market testing of service options be considered or takes place in appropriate service areas.
3. That a Council Community and Voluntary Sector support strategy be drawn up and adopted as soon as possible.
4. That individual Council Departments examine the scope for including the Community and Voluntary Sector in achieving their strategies' objectives.

Voluntary Sector Grants

5. That the current funding by percentage guideline allocations be discontinued.
6. That the current two annual bidding rounds be replaced by a single bidding round. Alternatively, that voluntary sector grant applications be made on a rolling basis and considered at quarterly intervals.
7. That funding for more than one year should not be provided by grants but through Service Level Agreements where appropriate.
8. That grant applications be considered on merit against criteria, which have been revisited, strengthened and made more transparent.
9. That once the grant criteria have been revised the allocation of grants be delegated to officers, with the relevant Cabinet Member being consulted, along with the local Member where appropriate, in line with best practice of similar grant schemes operated by Herefordshire Council.
10. That the Voluntary Grants Scheme monitoring system be made more robust to facilitate a detailed evaluation of the effective use of grant funding, and its impact on Herefordshire and its residents.
11. That individual managers be made responsible for monitoring the satisfactory performance of grants relating to their service areas. That grants be conditional and only given in return for agreeing to meet a range of responsibilities.
12. That a limited amount of funding, to be agreed by the Cabinet Member, be ringfenced for the areas of greatest need within Herefordshire as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation Super Output Areas.
13. That funding be conditional upon the organisation in receipt of a grant having diversity and equal opportunities policies in place, which are acceptable to Herefordshire Council.

14. That an appraisal panel replace the practice of single officer appraisal of grant applications.

Service Level Agreements

15. It is recommended that SLAs be established with organisations that receive significant support (such as Age Concern), but that this be reviewed once the CVS support strategy has been approved.
16. That Service Level Agreements be made more specific and linked to required and measurable outputs and outcomes.
17. That clear and robust criteria be introduced against which Service Level Agreements should be monitored.
18. That any new or renewed Service Level Agreements be drawn up using the checklist of headings and guidance as outlined in this report.
19. That rolling Service Level Agreements should not routinely be entered into, but be used where this is appropriate.

Infrastructure Organisations

20. That the Council endorses Community and Voluntary services continuing to be provided locally.
21. That funding for Community Voluntary Action Ledbury & District be withdrawn at the conclusion of the existing Service Level Agreement on the 31st March 2005, as there is no economic justification for supporting Community Voluntary Action Ledbury & District as a separate organisation.
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 - Work that involves going out into the community.
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 - Community Development Co-ordinator.

3. INTRODUCTION

3.1 Background to the review

- 3.1.1 In March 2003 Herefordshire Council's Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee agreed terms of reference for a review of support to the Community and Voluntary Sector (CVS) provided by Herefordshire Council. Some data collection work was subsequently undertaken, but the review work was not progressed. This was largely because of other work pressures as a result of unavoidable staff changes.
- 3.1.2 On 9th February 2004 the Strategic Monitoring Committee agreed that a review of CVS support be undertaken, using graduate placements. (See Appendix 1). A subsequent detailed scoping exercise highlighted that the work required was much more demanding than originally envisaged and beyond the experience of the graduate placements. It was also unlikely to be completed in the time available to them. Consequently in early April 2004 the task was assigned to a Review Team comprising Members and Council officers. (The membership of the Review Team is detailed in Appendix 2).
- 3.1.3 Three officers from the Review Team (led by Glyn West, with support from Catherine Winsor and Ed Hughes) undertook much of the detailed work, with support from Annie Brookes as the Community Regeneration contact. Other Review Team members made significant contributions in specific areas.

3.2 Scope of the Review

The scope of the review is detailed in Appendix 3. From the outset it was necessary to limit the areas to be reviewed, e.g. by excluding personal social care, as some of the areas are to be examined by separate Best Value reviews. In addition the review excluded funding for the CVS from third party sources such as European funding or Single Regeneration Budgets. During the course of the review we excluded recycling and community transport, as these areas provide a contractual benefit to the Council and not the CVS; the Courtyard, as it is the subject of a separate review; and Halo Leisure Trust, as it is not considered strictly a Voluntary or Community organisation within the scope of this review.

3.3 Conduct of the Review

- 3.3.1 The Review Team gathered large amounts of data to establish a baseline position, which included an extensive benchmarking exercise. The term benchmarking has many definitions. At its widest it is concerned with making informal comparisons and borrowing good practice. However, benchmarking can also be a specific performance improvement tool and a way of measuring services against the best in the field.
- 3.3.2 It was clear from the outset that it would not be possible to make exact like for like comparisons between Local Authorities. This was because some Local Authorities provide services directly rather than using the CVS, or in some cases do not fund a particular activity at all. A number of Local Authorities were unable to provide the complete data required, and in some cases they were unable to

break down figures in the way we required them. The information obtained was however robust enough to allow us to reach some general conclusions as to the extent of CVS support provided by Herefordshire Council in comparison to other Local Authorities. This suggests that the Council is relatively generous in its support of the CVS when compared to a number of similar rural Local Authorities. Fuller benchmarking details can be found in Appendices 4 and 5.

3.3.3 The Review Team initially sent a questionnaire to the New Unitaries Benchmarking Group, to enable the Council's support of the CVS to be compared against other Authorities.

3.3.4 Herefordshire Council is a member of the New Unitaries Benchmarking Group, which comprises 10 Unitary Authorities that share similar characteristics. It was hoped this group would give the best comparable data.

3.3.5 In April 2004, a questionnaire and a copy of the scope of the review was sent to named contacts at the 9 other Councils that are members of the group: These were:

Bath & North East Somerset	North Somerset
Darlington	South Gloucestershire
East Riding of Yorkshire	Telford & Wrekin
Isle of Wight	West Berkshire
North Lincolnshire	

Follow up emails were sent in May, but only four replies were received from the group.

3.3.6 In June the Review Team decided to widen the survey to the following rural Council areas:

Cornwall	Northumberland
Cumbria	Powys
Devon	Shropshire
Dorset	Worcestershire
Monmouthshire	

A total of 50 County, Local, District & Borough Councils, and Unitary Authorities were subsequently sent a copy of the questionnaire. Disappointingly only a further 8 responses were received. A table showing the results received can be found in Appendix 4.

The Review Team recognised from the outset that it would be difficult to produce like for like comparable data. The reasons for this include:

- Some Authorities were only able to provide partial questionnaire returns.
- Authorities do not have the same pattern of services, with more services provided in-house than Herefordshire Council.
- Some of the information could not be broken down to separate grant support to the voluntary sector from other grant support to the Business sector.
- The definition of what constitutes in-kind support has been the subject of on-going debate and interpretation.

- 3.3.7 Nevertheless the Review Team was able to reach general conclusions. We consider that Herefordshire Council is generous in the support it gives to the CVS. We recognise that these sectors are less developed elsewhere and this has an impact on the level of support given. Based on this limited comparative data we have concluded there is no overwhelming case for Herefordshire Council to provide extra resources to the CVS.
- 3.3.8 As the review progressed the Review Team then drew up a simple questionnaire to specifically look at levels of funding for infrastructure organisations, in an attempt to benchmark Herefordshire Council's performance in this area. This was sent to all of the 59 Councils, who were questioned previously. The simpler type of questionnaire produced a greater response rate. A table showing the results received can be found in Appendix 5.
- 3.3.9 Heads of Service and Service Managers across the Authority were asked whether they provided any support to the VCS from their Council budgets, within the scope of the review. Support was defined as specific grants, Service Level Agreements (SLAs) (not including statutory provision) and any in-kind assistance (such as free or subsidised use of accommodation). Estimates of Council officer time spent monitoring and supporting the CVS have been included in the table of support (Appendix 6). However, Infrastructure organisations felt the total funding figure was not wholly support given to them, but included the administration cost of monitoring their Service Level Agreements. They argued that time spent meeting the Council's monitoring requirements gave them less time to deliver services. There was empathy for this view from a number of Council officers interviewed.
- 3.3.10 The Review Team has based Council officer support costs on their existing grades and salaries. These will of course be subject to change as a result of the job evaluation exercise, but for the purposes of the Review existing salaries have been used.
- 3.3.11 Smaller amounts are not shown in detail in this table (except business rate relief), and usually relate to support including reduced room hire rates, photocopying, expenses, officer advice and free publicity. The sum total of this support amounted to £2,244, and is included, but listed as a de minimis item.
- 3.3.12 The wider Review Team met on five occasions to consider progress, to agree the further work required and to approve recommendations for the final report. Three meetings were also held with the elected Members on the Review Team to report on activities, to seek views on provisional findings and to secure support for the report's recommendations. Records were kept of all these discussions.
- 3.3.13 The review itself was crosscutting in nature, and involved holding semi-structured interviews with appropriate Council officers, Managers, Heads of Service and Directors. In addition semi-structured interviews were held with representatives of most of the Infrastructure Bodies, along with key CVS organisations that receive substantial Council funding. In total some 42 interviews took place over a 7-month period (see Appendices 7 and 8). Standard

questionnaires were sent in advance to obtain specific information and to allow Infrastructure organisations an opportunity to consider their responses.

3.3.14 Officers identified as providing CVS support had a monetary estimate calculated for their time involved. They were sent a standard questionnaire to gather detailed information on the support they provided. They were challenged over the effectiveness of their monitoring activities, and questioned over policies and procedures surrounding the Council's support to the CVS. A copy of the standard questionnaire is shown at Appendix 9. On receipt of their responses, the Review Team decided if a one-to-one interview with the officer was required to discuss their answers in more detail. It was not necessary to interview some officers, as their support was minimal or their answers were straightforward. When a structured interview was held with an officer, a further individual list of questions was drawn up based on the officer's original response to the questionnaire. During the discussions further standard questions were raised to ensure a degree of consistency in approach. Once again records were kept of all these discussions.

3.3.15 A meeting was held at the outset with infrastructure organisation representatives to outline the scope of the review and to set out how the review would be conducted. It allowed us to hear their initial concerns and in some cases to modify our approach to address those issues. It was initially hoped to hold a further meeting with the infrastructure organisation representatives to share our draft findings. Unfortunately there was insufficient time to do this. Infrastructure organisations were therefore asked to confirm the accuracy of our factual data.

3.4 General issues

3.4.1 The CVS plays a vital role in Herefordshire. The Review Team literature survey identified a number of Government initiatives to encourage the expansion the role of the CVS. As an example Futurebuilders is a new £125 million Government investment fund for England, backed by the Home Office which aims to increase the role that the CVS plays in the delivery of public services. The Review Team agrees that everyone has a role to play in building strong, active communities. The National Council for Voluntary Organisations has pointed to a change in the relationship between Government and the CVS, which is particularly evident in the Government's approach to public service delivery, and the role that the CVS can play in delivering services. The Government has identified the sector as having a vital link to socially excluded communities because they have developed trust by filling the gaps between mainstream services. A number of trends are emerging, such as:

- Increasing demand for services and rising expectations
- Importance of choice and quality
- The emphasis on local public service delivery and user involvement
- Prevalence of performance management and improved accountability
- Strengthened competition amongst service providers
- Polarisation of the sector between those that deliver public services and those that do not, and between large charities and smaller organisations

The Review Team acknowledges these pressures, and welcomes the opportunity for the CVS to play a greater role in service delivery in

Herefordshire. That said, we do not consider Herefordshire Council can continue to be the first port of call for additional funding for the CVS. We believe the majority of CVS organisations will need to diversify their income streams so as not to depend so extensively on Herefordshire Council funding.

- 3.4.2 The Government has set a target to improve public service efficiency by 2.5% a year from April 2005 to March 2008. This is to be done in accord with the findings of the Gershon review into public service delivery. Set against these increased expectations the Review Team recognises that the provision of increased Central Government resources is highly unlikely. The Review has been undertaken on the working assumption that there will be no growth in Council support for the CVS for the foreseeable future.
- 3.4.3 During the course of Council officer interviews the Review Team identified a failure by almost every Council Department to be able to identify time spent by officers working on support for the CVS. We were generally unable to access time recording information, and there was an absence of individual work programme data to help us assess the amount of staff time spent on this activity. This is a significant weakness, not least in terms of performance management. There are also considerable variations between and within Directorates as to how work is recorded, which range from minimal data to reasonable levels of detail. This may be a wider issue for Herefordshire Council than in relation to this review alone.
- 3.4.4 As a result the Review Team has been unable to properly calculate how much officer time is involved in supporting the CVS. We have had to use estimates of time, to some extent based on a best guess by officers. Whilst recognising there is a cost of recording such activity the Review Team considers the lack of this information is unsatisfactory.
- 3.4.5 Most of the organisations interviewed requested that their responses be kept confidential and not disclosed to third parties. After consideration this was reluctantly agreed, because it led to more openness in the semi-structured interviews and there was a willingness to comment critically on the activities of other organisations. It does mean however that in order to maintain this confidentiality we are not usually able to indicate within this report where specific criticisms of organisations have come from.
- 3.4.6 The Review is most appropriately described as a Service Improvement Review, which contains the elements of the Best Value review guidelines, (comparison, consultation and challenge) with the exception of addressing competitive testing of service options. Nevertheless the Review did identify that market testing may be appropriate in some service areas. If agreed this would require an additional piece of work that is outside the scope of the Review.
- 3.4.7 More significantly, there is no overall Council strategy in place for CVS support. During the interview process we discovered that there is no common view as to why the Council supports the CVS. Some responses were that we provide support because we have always done so. Others believed that support was needed because volunteers would always be able to provide services more cheaply than direct Council provision. There was a comment that such support was helping to meet the ambitions of the Herefordshire Plan.

- 3.4.8 The Review Team suggests the Council cannot demonstrate it is achieving best value if it is not clear why the sector needs support and what objectives that support should fund. The interview process identified there is no clarity amongst Council staff as to the purpose of funding the CVS. As a result virtually every grant application claims to be eligible as CVS activities. The absence of a CVS support strategy against which we can measure activity has presented us with fundamental difficulties.
- 3.4.9 It is difficult to map the full extent of Council CVS support in Herefordshire. The Review Team struggled to make accurate like for like comparisons with Infrastructure organisations within and outside the County. Earlier this year Worcestershire County Council began a Best Value review of the CVS, which is still ongoing. They state that there is a considerably more complex degree of comparison required than a straightforward review of other Council services. They have concluded that there are limits to the amount of comparative data that can be used to make judgements on the value for money obtained from the Community and Voluntary Sector.

4. VOLUNTARY SECTOR GRANTS SCHEME

- 4.1 Herefordshire Council has operated a Voluntary Sector Grants scheme since it came into existence in 1998. £500,000 a year has been allocated by the Policy & Community Directorate, in addition to substantial in-kind support. Of this sum approximately £160,000 is allocated each year to voluntary sector organisations as grants and the remainder is used to fund Service Level Agreements with Infrastructure organisations.
- 4.2 A list of grant awards from 2002 to 2004 is detailed in Appendix 10.
- 4.3 The Voluntary Sector Grants scheme has largely followed the historical funding arrangements of the former District Councils. Grants have been allocated against service areas using the following budget percentage allocations as guidelines:

CATEGORY	Guideline Percentage Allocation
Arts	23.96%
Environment/Countryside	2.27%
Play	1.22%
Youth	12.43%
Community	55.40%
Heritage	2.05%
Sport	2.66%
TOTAL	100% (Rounded)

There is no strong case for retaining these percentage allocations, and there was particular criticism from a number of people interviewed that the percentage allocation guidelines could not be justified. There were cases made for keeping, and indeed increasing the proportions for individual service areas.

- 4.4 The Review Team considers grant applications should be considered on merit against agreed criteria. It should be recognised from time to time there are likely to be advantages in funding particular service areas disproportionately. The Review Team recommends the current funding by percentage guideline allocations should be discontinued.
- 4.5 There are two annual bidding rounds, which aim to allocate 80% of funds in the first round. Applications have to be submitted by early January each year for the first round of funding. Successful applicants receive offer letters each April. The remaining 20% is allocated in the second round. Applications have to be submitted by the end of March for second round funding. Successful applicants receive offer letters in early June. Bids are always heavily oversubscribed in relation to funding available. There is no justification for two annual bidding rounds with the associated duplication of time spent administering the scheme.
- 4.6 The Community Regeneration Team (CRT) administers the scheme, which takes up a small amount of staff time (representing up to 7 hours per week). The CRT provides much more support to the CVS, and keeps acceptable work programme and timekeeping records.

- 4.7 A number of CVS organisations continue to receive grants year on year and have come to rely on this funding to continue their operations. The grants are often used as evidence of match funding for other project applications. This is an undesirable situation, and far removed from the original aim of grant support, which was to provide one-off funding for CVS activities. The Review Team was told that other organisations did not apply for funding, as they believed the grants would continue to be fully allocated to existing organisations. There appears to be some truth to this, as the Review Team noted there were few applications for new projects.
- 4.8 Grants should only be approved on condition that future funding will not be available from the Voluntary Sector Grants scheme. A argument was made that in some instances where new services had been set up there could be a case for providing funding over two years with a smaller amount of funding (tapering) being offered in the second year. It is considered that in this exceptional event funding should be agreed using a Service Level Agreement. In this way normal grant funding will continue to be for one year only with no funding in the second year. Funding for more than one year should not be provided by grants.
- 4.9 It was also noted that a number of individual Council strategies fail to consider the role of the CVS and its potential contribution in delivering strategy objectives. This situation reflects poorly on the Council. A suitable CVS support strategy should be drawn up and adopted as soon as possible, and individual Council strategies should examine the scope for including the CVS.
- 4.10 There is no robust Voluntary Sector Grants monitoring system or evaluation of the impact of grant funding, which means the Council cannot demonstrate these funds are being used effectively. Monitoring does take place, but the Review Team considers this is weak because information is only required at the conclusion of the scheme. This means the Council is often unaware when problems arise during the course of projects. The Review Team also identified a lack of clear criteria and expectation against which grants are being monitored.
- 4.11 We are therefore unable to find evidence that either agreeing a substantial increase or decrease in Voluntary Sector Grants funding is making a significant difference to Herefordshire residents. In addition there is very limited evaluation information available when further grant applications are received in the following year's bidding rounds.
- 4.12 The eligibility criteria for the Voluntary Sector Grants scheme are included in Appendix 11. The criteria used to approve applications are inadequate, and there are no clear explanations given to justify the individual sums approved for each grant application. We were advised by one Infrastructure organisation of their discontent with funding decisions and of their concern the Council could not objectively justify the funding allocations using the grant criteria. We were also asked to recommend putting an appeals system in place to challenge decisions made. The Review Team does not however accept that an appeals process is justified. There will always be some debate over grant approvals, particularly from unsuccessful applicants. There are however practical problems. If Herefordshire Council allocated all the funding available at the outset where would additional funds come from if an appeal were upheld?

- 4.13 No criteria exist to target a proportion of grant funding activity in the areas of greatest need, as measured by the Index of Multiple Deprivation. A case has been made for ring-fencing some Voluntary Sector Grant funding. There is also no requirement within the criteria for the grant recipient organisations to have equal opportunities and diversity policies in place. The grant application form does ask if the organisation has an equal opportunities policy, but no procedures exist to check if these are actually observed. It was noted that organisations without such policies might still be awarded a grant, subject to a grant condition that such a policy be implemented.
- 4.14 All grant funding should be conditional upon the organisation in receipt of a grant having diversity and equal opportunities policies, which are acceptable to Herefordshire Council.
- 4.15 The Review Team looked at the Voluntary Grants applications appraisal arrangements, and learned that applications are forwarded to officers with expertise in the area concerned. For example, the Community Youth Service Manager appraises young peoples' projects. We observed that applications for this area of service require the beneficiary organisation to have child protection policies in place. However the Review Team does not consider a single appraiser will always have the expertise to confirm the adequacy of such policies. The Review Team recommends that the practice of single appraisal be replaced by consideration from an appraisal panel, and commends the good practice example of panel appraisal currently used by the area based programmes.
- 4.16 Herefordshire Council should ensure the existing criteria is revisited, strengthened and made more transparent. If this is implemented the allocation of grants should be delegated to officers. However to ensure Members are still involved with individual applications the Review Team recommends that the relevant Cabinet Member be consulted over each application along with the local Member where appropriate. This arrangement for Member involvement works well with the Community Buildings Grant scheme. The CVS should be involved in helping to determine the grants criteria, but not the grants decision-making process.
- 4.17 Once funding is awarded individual managers should be made responsible for grant performance relating to their service areas. Grants should be conditional and only given in return for agreeing to meet a range of responsibilities. For example, the Cultural Services Manager should be made responsible for any grant funding given to cultural organisations. The Cultural Services Manager should be required to agree a range of desired outputs and outcomes from the grant recipients. These activities should help to achieve the objectives set within individual strategies as well as the wider Ambitions of the Herefordshire Plan. Individual managers should also consider whether Service Level Agreements might be more appropriate in some circumstances. This would be subject to funding being available.

5. SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS

- 5.1 There are at least 12 Herefordshire Council Service Level Agreements (SLAs) currently in use that set out our support to the CVS. Christine Wright, Principal Lawyer, was the legal representative on the Review Team, who examined each of them. It was apparent that as contractual documents most SLAs are unlikely to stand up to any legal challenge. The Review Team believes that Herefordshire Council's SLAs are not adequate.
- 5.2 The Review Team did not conduct interviews with every CVS organisation that has an SLA with Herefordshire Council. It was not felt appropriate to undertake this work until the Council had agreed its CVS support strategy. It is recommended that SLAs with organisations that receive significant support (such as Age Concern) be revisited once the CVS support strategy has been approved.
- 5.3 The Review Team undertook a literature survey as part of the review and identified a judicial review outcome that quashed a recent Leicester City Council decision to cut CVS funding. This ruled that the Authority had failed to properly consult with CVS organisations prior to taking the decision to cut funding. The Review Team is concerned that provision within SLAs to terminate agreements are not robust in all cases.
- 5.4 The SLAs contain very different wording, paragraph headings and are of varying lengths. Some SLAs do not even contain basic information such as payment arrangements, or targets. The Review Team found that there was no standard SLA document in existence for use across the Council. There is in most cases an absence of information within the SLA which clearly sets out each of the parties' responsibilities or which specifies the consequences of non-performance.
- 5.5 During their interviews the Review Team asked Council officers about these variances in their SLAs. Some agreements date back several years, often before the 1998 Local Government Reorganisation. A few SLA documents are based on those terms proposed by the beneficiary organisations; other agreements were prepared in an ad hoc manner and contain only what was thought necessary at that time to meet the services' particular needs. It should be noted that some officers have been aware of these shortcomings. We were advised that because a review of the voluntary sector had been expected for some time officers were awaiting the outcome of the review before revisiting their SLAs. Officers would be looking for SLA guidance from the review's outcome.
- 5.6 Infrastructure organisations also find difficulties working with a majority of our SLAs. One organisation interviewed was unhappy with different requirements from the same Council Directorate. One organisation wanted a more demanding SLA, on the grounds that it would be easier for them to evidence good performance if the SLA requirements were more explicit. We also listened to an opposing view, which suggested less specific SLAs gave organisations much more flexibility to deliver services as needs changed. The Review Team challenged this approach, and considered SLAs should be more specific. We

recommend funding via SLAs should be more closely linked to required and measurable outputs and outcomes.

- 5.7 The CRT monitors a number of SLAs with key Infrastructure organisations. It undertakes a limited amount of monitoring, but the Review Team found this was weak, partly because there was a lack of clear criteria against which SLAs should be monitored. The Review Team feels this situation is unsatisfactory. Our concerns are with the current Council SLA monitoring systems, as it has not been possible to form comprehensive judgements about infrastructure organisation value for money and beneficiaries' satisfaction using the existing monitoring information alone as set out in the SLAs.
- 5.8 The Review Team looked at developing a comprehensive model SLA, initially to be drawn up by the Council's Legal Section. However, during the course of our Council officers interviews it became apparent there was a danger the comprehensive model SLA would become too onerous and complicated, and could divert disproportionate resources away from service provision into SLA monitoring activities. It could also deter CVS organisations from entering into SLAs with the Council.
- 5.9 As an alternative the Review Team proposes the adoption of a checklist of standard headings, accompanied by some brief text. Council officers and Infrastructure organisations welcomed this approach. These could be used flexibly by services, depending on what is required, but still be robust. (See Appendix 12). The Review Team recommends that the SLA checklist be adopted for all SLAs and introduced as they become due for renewal.
- 5.10 Further SLA information can be found in Appendices 13, 14 and 15.
- 5.11 There was also enthusiasm for introducing rolling SLAs, from Infrastructure organisations and a number of Council officers. These would be agreed for an initial period, usually three years, and reviewed after year one. If performance were satisfactory the SLA would be rolled over for a further year, leaving the SLA, in this example, with still another three years to run. Such arrangements offer more security to Infrastructure organisations, particularly in terms of budget planning and employee job security. Council staff are also relieved of the task of negotiating SLAs as frequently. The rolling SLA would still allow for discontinuation of funding in the event of non-performance. There are however some drawbacks to rolling SLAs. It requires Herefordshire Council to effectively guarantee funding for longer periods, which may not be desirable if service changes are planned. There is also a risk that such arrangements may lead to a degree of complacency over service provision.
- 5.12 The Review Team recommends that rolling SLAs should not routinely be entered into, but that they should be used where this is appropriate.
- 5.13 Questions were asked during interviews to seek views on the minimum and maximum values for SLAs as well as the maximum length of time SLAs should be entered into. There was no consensus amongst Council officers and Infrastructure organisations. At one extreme it was suggested an SLA was needed regardless of value if it was for a service lasting more than one year. At the other extreme one officer did not believe the cost of negotiating, drawing up

and monitoring an SLA was justified at a value below £25,000 per annum. Most of those interviewed suggested an SLA should last at least one year. The maximum length of time for a proposed SLA was five years, but the majority considered three years was about right. The Review Team does not offer a recommended optimum monetary value or timescale for SLAs. We consider it is best left to those with responsibility for SLAs to determine according to the needs of their service.

6. INFRASTRUCTURE ORGANISATIONS

- 6.1 The Review Team was asked to examine the services provided by the main Infrastructure organisations. The Review Team also looked at the SLA with the Citizens Advice Bureaux, as the Council provides substantial support to this organisation. In addition the Review Team was asked to look at support to the Voluntary Sector Assembly. Summary comments are detailed later, but more general issues are raised here.
- 6.2 During the structured interviews the Review Team was provided with draft guidelines for joint working with Community First, Community & Voluntary Action Ledbury and District, and Herefordshire Voluntary Action. We were told that these guidelines had been drawn up to establish joint planning and service delivery protocols between these three Development Agencies in the County. They were provided in confidence and are not therefore attached as an appendix. We do however refer to a limited number of areas in the guidelines.
- 6.3 Some Council officers have serious reservations over the value of the guidelines. They do not believe the proposed arrangements will lead to better support for the CVS in Herefordshire. The Review Team has studied the proposed guidelines and has concluded they are not robust. We consider that the relationship between some of the potentially competing Infrastructure organisations has been too comfortable. As an example we note that where conflicts arise external mediation may be appropriate. However this is subject to all parties voluntarily agreeing to participate, and there is no reference to any mediation outcome being binding. It is not clear what happens if two of the three organisations agree but the other organisation does not. Council officers feel any party can in theory refuse to accept the outcome. In our view the guidelines appear to focus on protection of the organisations concerned rather than the benefit of end users.
- 6.4 The development of a Local Compact will help to further explore the relationships of organisations within the CVS, and we recommend it should go further than the draft guidelines to produce clearer accountability.
- 6.5 The Review Team was later advised that the draft guidelines are not acceptable to one of the Infrastructure organisations, not least because they now consider them too complicated. A separate Infrastructure organisation was also unhappy they had been excluded from the opportunity to help develop the guidelines. This might not have been possible as the funding for this work was only related to the three Development Agencies, but it does point to some unease felt by other organisations over the draft guidelines.
- 6.6 All the Infrastructure organisations were given a list of questions to consider in advance of the structured interviews. They were then asked standard questions during the interview process itself. The comments below are not a comprehensive summary of the interviews, as this has confidentiality considerations, but they do identify key issues that arose during the discussions.

6.7 Community & Voluntary Action Ledbury and District

- a) Community & Voluntary Action Ledbury and District (CVALD) is a Local Development Agency which delivers the combined services of a Council for Voluntary Services and a Voluntary Bureau. In addition, they also deliver a number of volunteer based community projects for the Ledbury area.
- b) CVALD covers Ledbury Town and 23 surrounding parishes. To some extent they provide similar services to Herefordshire Voluntary Action. The Review Team was advised both CVALD and Herefordshire Voluntary Action seek to minimise duplication by operating within their defined wards. There are however some key differences, as CVALD does not provide outreach services.
- c) In our interviews a standard question was to challenge organisations to consider the option of running a unified Voluntary Action service across the County with a single administrative headquarters. CVALD expressed concern such an approach was contrary to a previous assurance from Herefordshire Council that it would not seek to influence the future structure of service delivery of CVS infrastructure functions by use of the funding mechanism. The Review Team believes that although this position may have been justified in the past, it is no longer tenable, and that the scope of the review required it to consider merger options. CVALD argue such a merger is not desirable, and that it would have an adverse effect locally on their non-support staff, as well creating communications difficulties.
- d) CVALD were willing to consider co-location, as a means of delivering a better service, However, CVALD stated this would depend on factors such as which Council departments or other organisations were to be located in the same building.
- e) The Review Team also wished to obtain evidence of the effectiveness of the services provided. We were advised CVALD had undertaken its own satisfaction survey, and findings from the survey were being used to improve services. The Review Team was not given access to the survey results on the grounds of confidentiality. The Community Development Officer had previously been supplied with details of beneficiaries. Using this and the limited monitoring information available to us from the SLA the Review Team conducted a small satisfaction survey. Most responses indicated people were generally satisfied with the services provided by CVALD, with comments expressing satisfaction with the quality of CVALD advice, and with the community transport project. There were rather fewer criticisms, but these related to poor physical access to the building and the environment being less than businesslike.
- f) The Review Team is concerned there is no consistent service provision across the County, as Herefordshire Council has to deal with two separate Development Agencies, which duplicates the costs of monitoring these services. We also find that the Infrastructure organisations can compete for the same limited external funding opportunities. The Review Team believes this is wasteful, and may indicate to external funders the lack of joined up collaborative working in Herefordshire. Interviews with Council officers and

other organisations showed a large majority believed the existence of a separate Ledbury Infrastructure organisation was not in the best interests of Herefordshire.

- g) A standard interview challenge was to ask if there were any services provided by Herefordshire Council which could be better provided by the CVS. (We also challenged Council officers to identify services provided by CVALD that could be better provided in-house). CVALD did not identify any additional Council services that they wished to provide. The Review Team interviews with Council officers did not identify any CVALD services that would be better provided in-house. The Review Team stresses it is important to have CVS services provided locally.
- h) The Review Team does not believe there is any economic justification for supporting CVALD as a separate organisation. There is a strong case for having one single Voluntary Action organisation for Herefordshire. If achieved it will secure economies of scale, secure consistency of provision, and result in less monitoring and administration for Herefordshire Council. The Review Team recommends that funding for CVALD be withdrawn at the conclusion of the existing SLA on the 31st March 2005. The Review Team recommends that such notice be given as early as possible.
- i) CVALD was asked what would be the impact of a major reduction in funding. We were advised CVALD would seek funding from other sources. They stated the Council would thus have a reduced influence on the services provided by CVALD. It should be noted that the withdrawal of Council funding by itself would not mean the demise of CVALD. The Review Team nevertheless recommends that Herefordshire Council makes clear that the current pattern of provision is not in the best interests of the County as a whole.

6.8 Herefordshire Voluntary Action

- a) Herefordshire Voluntary Action (HVA) is a Local Development Agency which offers advice, information and support to CVS organisations. It also provides information on and co-ordinates volunteering.
- b) HVA covers the whole of the County with the exception of Ledbury Town and its 23 surrounding parishes, which is covered by CVALD.
- c) HVA came into existence by effectively amalgamating all the County's local Voluntary Action organisations with the exception of CVALD. The Review Team welcomes this change, which has resulted in economies of scale and a more consistent service provision for most of the County.
- d) HVA was asked a range of standard questions including a challenge that services seemed to be duplicated between Infrastructure organisations. We were advised HVA avoid duplication of activity with CVALD by observing strict geographical ward boundaries for their service provision. This seems to be happening, although some services such as community transport activities naturally cross ward boundaries. The Review Team identified duplication of activity with Community First services. In response we were

advised regular meetings take place between HVA and Community First to ensure duplication is minimised. The Review Team noted an instance of service overlap provision in the Golden Valley, but this was subsequently resolved by a meeting between the two organisations. The Review Team welcome this outcome, but it does provide evidence that some duplication can occur.

- e) The Review Team did not have the resources to examine HVA's cost recovery and financial systems in great detail, but from the work done and from interviews with Council officers we are generally satisfied HVA charges are not unreasonable for the services provided.
- f) HVA was challenged to justify the continued existence of two Voluntary Action Agencies in the County. The Review Team did not feel HVA were opposed to the option to create a single unified Voluntary Action service across the County with a single administrative headquarters.
- g) HVA was asked what would be the impact of a major reduction in funding. We were advised the Volunteer Bureau and the core Community Voluntary Sector functions would be lost. Management would exist solely for projects; there would be no scope for development. We asked about seeking alternative funding. HVA stated that time would be needed to look elsewhere. A one-year period of notice would not be long enough to put together alternative funding applications and have the new arrangements in place. The Review Team were advised it would be necessary for HVA to cut staff, reduce costs and withdraw services.
- h) A standard interview challenge was to ask if there were any services provided by Herefordshire Council which could be better provided by the Voluntary Sector. HVA provided a number of suggestions, which are included in the list in section 6.9.
- i) The Review Team again wished to obtain evidence of the effectiveness of the services provided, and conducted a limited beneficiary survey. Fewer responses were received from the HVA questionnaire than any other Infrastructure organisation. However all the responses received indicated people were satisfied with the services provided by HVA. Comments included references to high quality staff and a good personal advice service.

6.9 Community First

- a) Community First is a Local Development Agency and Rural Community Council. It is an independent charity working across Herefordshire and Worcestershire supporting the work of local communities and Voluntary organisations.
- b) Community First was asked a range of standard questions including a challenge that services seemed to be duplicated between Infrastructure organisations. Community First replied that they offered some similar services, but they were actually complementary, such as transport schemes. In their view Community First had a more strategic role than the

other Herefordshire Infrastructure organisations and stated they employed specialist workers who were able to offer more in-depth advice. The Review Team structured interviews did not entirely support these Community First statements. There were concerns that the distinction between the strategic and delivery roles were blurred, and that there was a continuing service overlap between Community First and HVA.

- c) We indicated that during earlier structured interviews a number of comments had been made to the Review Team that Community First did not always operate collaboratively in the best interests of the CVS. We sought their comments, but this suggestion was strongly refuted.
- d) We outlined to Community First a statement made to us during our earlier interviews that the draft guidelines were not challenging in terms of joint working, and were the product of too comfortable organisational relationships. Community First also refuted this, and claimed the organisations involved worked hard to produce a very robust document, which had been facilitated by consultants.
- e) We challenged Community First with our view that joint guidelines might not be needed at all if the three organisations in Herefordshire were merged.
- f) Community First stated it was not possible to merge a Community Council with Voluntary Action organisations. Their solution was to have more effective joint working, and so achieve economies of scale. Community First argued they covered two counties and therefore had already secured economies of scale. Community First were however willing to discuss sharing back office functions as a means of cutting costs and improving services. The Review Team literature search was not able to confirm if a merger of Community Council with a Voluntary action organisation was actually impossible.
- g) We sought Community First's views on their SLA with the Council. We were advised that the SLA was not detailed but gave Community First flexibility, which had allowed them to obtain substantial match funding from Herefordshire Council's SLA. The flexibility was said to give more added value to Herefordshire Council. The Review Team does not accept this view, and more detailed comments can be found elsewhere in the report in Section 5 on SLAs.
- h) We asked for information on how Community First distinguished between core and management costs in their SLAs. We were advised Community First are no longer approaching core costs in this way. They have moved to the Full Cost Recovery Model, where individual project costs include an element of core costs. Community First is fully signed up to this change, as they consider it will enable their finances to become more transparent.
- i) The Review Team tested the value for money implications of this model in their structured interviews with Council officers and other Infrastructure organisations. The Full Cost Recovery Model approach has some merit and the Review Team understands why there is support for this approach.

- j) Community First was asked to identify services currently provided by the Council which they considered could be better provided by themselves. Their responses are included in the larger list detailed in Section 6.9.
- k) Community First were asked what would be the impact of a major reduction in funding. We were advised there would be a serious adverse impact on directly provided services to people on the ground. The organisation would survive, but there would be a withdrawal of provision to organisations in Herefordshire, such as the removal of signposting and funding advice, and village hall community building advice.
- l) From our Council officer interviews it emerged there was almost unanimous agreement that Community First management charges are thought to be excessive, and do not provide value for money. Our concern is that Community First charges are thought to be high in comparison to other Infrastructure organisations, and some posts may be better placed with other Infrastructure organisations or within the Council, rather than remain with Community First. The Review Team recommends that no more projects be awarded to Community First without a competitive tendering exercise taking place. We recommend this should also apply to existing projects where the appropriate notice can be given.
- m) The Review Team wished to obtain evidence of the effectiveness of the services provided, and conducted a limited beneficiary survey. Over 80% of respondents had a good impression of the services offered by Community First. There was however a small percentage of replies, which claimed Community First had problems with duplication of services, showed a lack of enthusiasm and were slow to respond.

6.10 Herefordshire Association of Local Councils

- a) Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) is a body which provides training, support and advice to Parish and Local Councils and their clerks.
- b) HALC was asked a range of standard questions including a challenge that services seemed to be duplicated between Infrastructure organisations. We were advised that HALC provided a more specialist service to a clearly defined group, (Parish and Town Councils) but there was some overlap with one other Infrastructure organisation in terms of giving advice. The same organisation had also offered training provision, which was in competition with HALC provided services. HALC considered this was not a desirable situation. We suggested this be resolved by dialogue but it might be possible to use stricter SLA terms to eliminate such overlaps.
- c) We challenged HALC to consider if there was scope for them to be co-located with other Infrastructure organisations in a single building, to achieve economies of scale. HALC were not opposed to this in principle, but they required assurances that any building identified would be accessible and secure, with a suitable area for meeting confidentiality needs.

- d) The Review Team wished to obtain evidence of the effectiveness of the services provided, and conducted a limited beneficiary survey. HALC suggested this could be measured indirectly, by looking to the high levels of HALC membership in the County. (95% of Herefordshire's Parish and Local Councils are members of HALC, which is much above the national average). Responses received were generally favourable, with comments on the quality of their training courses and helpfulness in providing advice on a wide range of topics. There was one repeated criticism, which related to staff being unavailable at the HALC building during office hours.
- e) HALC was asked what would be the impact of a major reduction in funding. We were advised HALC would have to increase membership fees, and this could lead to a loss of members. Even if fees were increased HALC indicated their services would also be reduced in the short-term. Herefordshire Council's Parish Council Officer would have to deal with more enquiries, and HALC doubted if there was sufficient expertise to respond adequately. HALC indicated that increased fees would lead to a higher precept and therefore a higher Council Tax charge.
- f) HALC was asked for views on their SLA with the Council. They welcomed the possibility of a checklist approach to drawing up SLAs. They felt that for the £10,000 they receive from Herefordshire Council too much monitoring and additional work was required. There had been meetings with Council officers and we were told it was had been agreed the monthly monitoring meetings would be reduced to quarterly. HALC had also drawn up a simpler work programme. We followed this up with Council officers and were advised HALC had consistently failed to meet the monitoring requirements of the SLA. The revised, monitoring requirements were the minimum needed for the Council to satisfy itself that HALC was providing services in accordance with the SLA. Unfortunately HALC were still not complying with the SLA. The Review Team recommends that HALC be warned of the implications of not meeting the SLA monitoring requirements. In the event that HALC fails to provide the monitoring information on time action should be taken to terminate the SLA.

6.11 Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services

- a) Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services (HCVYS) are a specialist Local Development Agency, dealing with services for young people in the County. They receive modest Council funding support.
- b) HCVYS was asked a range of standard questions including a challenge that services seemed to be duplicated between Infrastructure organisations. We were advised that HCVYS was involved with the Infrastructure Consortium Investment Plan to identify gaps and overlaps of service provision within the County. HCVYS did not accept there was any measurable overlap between the services it provided and other Infrastructure organisations. HCVYS acted as a broker to youth organisations and had procedures in place to signpost to HVA or Community First for more specialist services.

- c) HCVYS noted that within the next 12 months over 40 parish plans should have been completed. HCVYS was concerned that single Infrastructure organisations would be unable to meet the resulting requests for support. To avoid duplication and maximise the use of resources HCVYS supported the suggestion that HVA, HALC and HCVYS should work together and decide which areas each organisation should cover.
- d) HCVYS was challenged to consider what scope existed within the County for achieving economies of scale, for example, by merging Infrastructure Bodies into a smaller number of organisations or sharing support services. HCVYS accepted this was possible, but some HCVYS members were worried about services being centralised, as this could lead to a loss of local service in rural areas. HCVYS argued Herefordshire Council had a part to play in reducing costs, by providing support to the CVS in areas such as Information Technology, Procurement and Human Resources training. We asked if there was scope to review appropriate training provision in the County. HCVYS supported this idea and suggested a single point of contact for specific training would be helpful. However, HCVYS stated that room for cooperation was limited, as existing Voluntary Sector and Infrastructure organisations would compete with each other to secure funding from whatever sources were available.
- e) HCVYS had established joint working arrangements with several other organisations, and had clear procedures for collaboration. The Review Team welcomed this approach.
- f) HCVYS were asked for views on the Youth Consortium SLA with the Council. We were advised the SLA was seen as a Partnership Agreement, which had worked quite well, partly because it was flexible. The Review Team does not accept this view, and more detailed comments can be found elsewhere in the report in Section 5 on SLAs. HCVYS found the monitoring arrangements were satisfactory. There had been opportunities to work with the Council's Community Youth Services (CYS) to amend the SLA to meet changed circumstances. HCVYS saw no need to change the current SLA, other than to support the introduction of rolling SLAs. However HCVYS felt that communication in CYS could be improved, as in their view information did not seem to filter down. HCVYS also believed there was, what they described as, "inadequate strategic local planning" by CYS.
- g) All organisations interviewed were challenged to move towards becoming social enterprises, which could be financially self-sustaining. HCVYS did not consider this was an option for this sector, as small youth groups would never be able to pass on the full cost of service provision. The Review Team understood this difficulty.
- h) HCVYS were asked a standard question regarding the merit of targeting some resources to the most deprived areas of the County. Some youth organisations target specific groups of young people, and part of the Transforming Youth Service funding goes towards the Development Worker post. Unusually, HCVYS did not support the targeting approach in terms of Voluntary Sector grants. Targeting, in their view, left reduced or little funding for ordinary service users elsewhere. HCVYS claimed it was

more expensive to continually put in and take out targeted support than to provide core funding, which provided preventative services. The Review Team recognised this possibility, but did not accept the HCVYS argument. Service targeting recommendations are listed in the Executive Summary.

- i) HCVYS were asked what would be the impact of a major reduction in funding. We were advised that HCVYS could not operate and the Consortium work would have to be taken on by Council CYS staff. The HCVYS delegated grant fund would either cease or have to be run by CYS staff. (This funding is part of the Voluntary Sector Grants scheme). The strategic overview would disappear, as no other agency looked specifically at youth within the county. HCVYS stated CYS did not have the capacity to identify needs in communities as set out in Government targets. We asked what would happen to individual youth groups in the County. HCVYS thought that the larger groups would probably survive, but many smaller groups would probably have to cut services or close.
- j) The Review Team wished to obtain evidence of the effectiveness of the services provided, and conducted a limited beneficiary survey. There were many positive responses and virtually no criticisms. HCVYS was especially valued for the quality of advice offered and for its administration of the small delegated grant fund. The Review Team believes Herefordshire Council achieves value for money from its agreements with HCVYS.

6.12 ALLIANCE

- a) ALLIANCE (The Alliance of Voluntary Sector Organisations in Health and Social Care – formerly known as Herefordshire Community Care Alliance) is also a Forum Support Organisation (FSO) supporting 8 Patient and Public Involvement (PPI) Forums in Herefordshire and Worcestershire. FSOs are not-for-profit organisations that have been contracted through a competitive tendering process to support PPI Forums.
- b) In April 2004 a five year compact was signed with the ALLIANCE and the Primary Care Trust and Social Care and Strategic Housing Directorate,
- c) The Review Team has studied the compact, which appears to be comprehensive, but it is too early to establish the effectiveness of these arrangements. Health Service managers were advised about the review, and expressed concern that ALLIANCE might be affected by possible changes to the compact. The Review Team agrees it would be inappropriate to suggest changes to the compact at this stage. The Review Team recommends that the COMPACT be reviewed in accordance with the review provision set out in the terms of the COMPACT.
- d) For the reasons outlined above the Review Team did not carry out a beneficiary survey.

6.13 Citizens Advice Bureaux

- a) Citizens Advice Bureaux (CAB) provide free information and advice on legal, money and other matters to the general public. They are a registered charity and the majority of advisers are volunteers. Herefordshire CAB was formed in 1999 following the amalgamation of the three bureaux based in Hereford, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye.
- b) Collecting useful and reliable information about the performance of the CAB Service is difficult, because of the large number and diversity of bureaux and the services they provide. An earlier exercise by Council officers suggested there was some debate as to the performance criteria that should be measured. For example, if high throughput is a priority, or the most important measure of efficiency, it would be easy for a CAB to increase this by reducing face to face contact with clients, by taking on simple cases only, or by introducing an automated telephone response service. Throughput needs to be judged against a quality of outcome.
- c) Measuring the outcome of advice is very difficult; there are no agreed ways in which to evaluate and compare the different outcomes of advice, and these are affected by many factors, of which the advice given is but one.
- d) Although CAB is not strictly speaking an Infrastructure organisation, they were nevertheless asked a range of standard questions including a challenge that services seemed to be duplicated between Infrastructure organisations. CAB claims they are the only organisation of its kind able to offer high quality advice in Herefordshire. The CAB recognised that other CVS Agencies gave advice, but saw that as secondary to their main tasks. CAB did sometimes, when appropriate, signpost people to other services.
- e) CAB accepted that competition for funding sometimes deterred organisations from working in partnership as that could mean having to share the funding, whereas if they applied individually and were successful they would get all the funding.
- f) CAB was asked what scope existed for economies of scale, for example, by merging into a single advice organisation or sharing support services. Suggestions from interviews with Council officers included using the Council's insurance cover for buildings, and providing IT services. CAB was not enthusiastic about merging, but was interested in sharing support services. CAB in Herefordshire sourced its IT systems from the national CAB network, which did not provide support "on the ground". CAB was interested in Herefordshire Council IT support, but not if that took away funding, as it would be of no net benefit to the CAB.
- g) CAB was asked what would be the advantages of CAB operating from a building where other CVS organisations and Council Departments were based. CAB replied that this was happening and the Leominster CAB office based within INFO in Herefordshire demonstrates their willingness to co-locate with other organisations. However CAB premises in Hereford continued to be a problem. It had a good location and was rent-free, but was cramped and had very poor access. CAB had refused disabled volunteers because they could not properly accommodate them. The lack of space restricted how many volunteers could be recruited, as there was

no room to train them. The Review Team also noted the poor accommodation restricted the ability of the CAB to bid for Legal Service contracts.

- h) CAB was asked for views on their SLA with the Council. CAB was unhappy with their SLA, describing it as very poor. We suggested the possibility of a checklist approach to drawing up SLAs. CAB expressed a preference for adopting the National CAB pro forma SLA as it was felt to be a better model.
- i) We challenged CAB to demonstrate it provided value for money. CAB stated that the funding they received from Herefordshire Council allowed CAB to secure an additional 50% on top of the Herefordshire Council funding
- j) CAB was able to supply details on numbers of clients seen, and numbers of advisers. CAB had comparative national statistics to demonstrate the Herefordshire Bureaux scored well against other CABs. Added value was demonstrated by its representation on groups such as Race Equality, and Community Support Network. CAB was part of the Community Legal Services Partnership, as well as the Voluntary Sector Assembly, and the Social Inclusion Ambition Group of the Herefordshire Partnership. CAB had feedback and complaint systems in place, and conducted a bi-annual survey of clients. The Review Team contrasted this with its benchmarking exercise (see Appendix 4). This indicated that Herefordshire Council support for its local CAB service is not generous.
- k) It was not possible to carry out a beneficiary survey as the CAB deals with individuals and confidentiality is paramount. However the Review Team is satisfied from the monitoring available that the CAB provides a good service to the 20,000 plus clients it sees each year. This number is increasing.
- l) CAB was asked if there were any directly provided Council services that CAB was better placed to deliver. One area is specifically highlighted here, the Welfare Rights Team. CAB argued they could carry out much of the work of the Welfare Rights team, which in their view was set up without consultation. CAB tried to engage them through the Welfare Rights Forum, but this was not successful.
- m) CAB was asked what would be the impact of a major reduction in funding to CAB. We were advised this would be really damaging. CAB did not receive enough funding from Herefordshire Council to cover the cost of their core service. CAB ran at a deficit in the previous year and any funding reduction would probably require CAB to reduce their numbers of paid staff. We noted their four staff were employed using SLA funding, but three of those were part time. It was likely that, at the very least, one of the main offices would have to be closed. The Review Team accepts the impact of reducing funding would be considerable. Herefordshire Council's INFO shops would probably have to deal with many thousands of individuals and families who would no longer have access to CAB support.

- n) The Review Team also interviewed ABLE, which was formerly Herefordshire DIAL, an advisory service for disabled people, their families and carers. ABLE advises on benefits available, facilities people may need and where to obtain them to assist in maintaining people's independence. They confirmed there was some duplication of service with the Welfare Rights Team, and also informed us that ABLE had clients coming to them who had not been satisfied with the quality of services from the Welfare Rights Team.
- o) The Review Team interviewed the Director of Social Care and Strategic Housing, and was pleased to receive confirmation of her full support for the work of the Welfare Rights Team being covered by this Review. We included the option of looking at partnership working with CAB, ABLE and the Welfare Rights Team. A Welfare Rights Team interview took place, but the team failed to justify a number of statements made to us. It has not produced evidence to clarify its statutory role, nor has it supplied a justification for the cost effectiveness of the service provided. There is also a lack of benchmarking information to compare its performance with comparable Authorities. If this service were to remain in-house, (and there is a strong case for it to be moved into the CVS), we are not convinced this work should remain within Social Care and Strategic Housing. There is an argument for placing Welfare Rights work in the Treasurer's Department under Revenue and Benefits services. The Review Team has concerns that moving the service within the Treasurer's Department may limit benefits uptake, as we were advised clients could be reluctant to discuss their personal financial situations with this section.
- p) The Welfare Rights Team as it is presently organised was unable to demonstrate it offers better value for money than if it was run by the CVS. We also consider that the majority of clients would welcome accessing an independent service rather than one operated by Herefordshire Council. Our interviews lead us to conclude there is a duplication of services. In addition some doubts have been raised over the Welfare Rights Team service quality. We have not been able from information received from the Welfare Rights Team to reach a detailed conclusion. Despite this the Review Team considers that at the least there is a case for pursuing collaborative working arrangements with CAB, ABLE and Welfare Rights. In the absence of further information we recommend consideration should be given to moving the Welfare Rights service out of the Council and commissioning the Welfare Rights service by placing it with the CAB. Alternatively a market testing exercise should be undertaken.
- q) The Review Team supports continued funding of the CAB, as it provides a good service and offers value for money. A loss of CAB services would have a detrimental effect on the County and could lead to a significant increase in the workload of the Council's INFO shops. It is recommended that funding for the CAB should remain at their current levels whilst the option of partnership working with ABLE and Welfare Rights is explored in more detail. The CAB faces a funding shortfall and there may be some justification for providing additional one-off support until the partnership-working outcome has been reviewed.

6.14 Voluntary Sector Assembly

- a) The VSA attempts to act as a voice for the CVS in Herefordshire and through the Herefordshire Partnership is a central point of contact between Herefordshire Council and the County's CVS.
- b) The VSA is not an Infrastructure organisation, but was specifically included within the review of CVS support. VSA were interviewed, but a number of standard interview questions were not appropriate. We began the interview by asking the VSA what support they were seeking from the Council.
- c) Current VSA funding from Government Office West Midlands expires at the end of March 2005. The VSA had not previously approached the Council for financial assistance, but would look to apply for Council for funding if it was available.
- d) We challenged the VSA to comment on the very low levels of awareness of the VSA amongst Herefordshire Council staff. We also advised of concerns expressed to us that the VSA had not been effective. The VSA responded that there was a requirement for Herefordshire Council Steering Group officers to publicise the VSA activities internally. (These sit on the Steering Group in a non-voting advisory capacity). The VSA believed the failure was the fault of the Council officers involved with the VSA to promote its activities within the wider Council. They suggested there was merit in arranging a seminar to raise awareness of the VSA with Council staff.
- e) We asked the VSA to explain what was the added value of the VSA, in addition to the contribution of other Infrastructure organisations. We were told the VSA was different from other CVS organisations as it had a democratic structure, which was able to reach small and diverse groups. The VSA suggested they had the ability to pull in more projects and funding for Herefordshire specifically around the subjects of democracy and participation, because of the democratic nature and mandate of the organisation. The VSA contended they were the only body that could legitimately represent the views of, and speak for the CVS in Herefordshire. We subsequently raised this issue with a number of Council officers, but it became clear they did not accept that the VSA had an exclusive voice in this regard.
- f) We fed back the criticism that the VSA was always chasing funding instead of doing the job it was supposed to do, and had to some extent lost its way. The VSA did not accept this statement. The VSA agreed it did seek funding, but to no more extent than any other CVS organisation. The VSA argued that if Herefordshire Council gave the VSA a properly funded SLA then to some extent it would alleviate the need for perceived continual fundraising.
- g) We referred to statements from interviews that the idea of a VSA was sound, but it was not working in practice. We gave the example of a lack of representatives, and remarks that some representatives tended to give their own opinions rather than consult with and give the views of the sector they represent. The VSA stated the Herefordshire Partnership must take

some responsibility for the performance of Ambition Groups. The CVS was diverse, and different groups wanted different things. It was not always possible to give a single view from the Sector. The VSA steering group would welcome a meeting with Herefordshire Council staff who perhaps have little awareness of the VSA. They wished to engage with them and explain how the VSA can contribute. The Review Team was a little surprised that the VSA was not fully aware of this situation.

- h) We challenged the VSA to explain why other Local Authorities did not see the merit of setting up VSAs. They had ongoing relationships with their CVSs, which appeared to be satisfactory and were not in danger of collapse. We were advised the VSA would not have been established in Herefordshire without funding from the Government. Herefordshire Council had not set up the VSA. It was seen as helpful that in Herefordshire there was a single tier Council, and a coterminous Partnership which should have made for better working relationships. The VSA pointed out that other areas of the country spoke well of the Herefordshire Partnership and the VSA. The VSA were leading in some ways.
- i) The Review Team cannot recommend Council support for funding the VSA in the short-term. We accept there is a need for an interface with the Council, and this can be achieved in a number of ways, such as the creation of new arrangements or by seeking to modify the VSA as it currently operates. It would be helpful if the VSA were to obtain funding from another external source in 2005/2006. The time could then be used to consider how the Council wants to connect with the CVS and if appropriate to negotiate a funding arrangement with effect from 2006/2007.

6.15 Infrastructure Organisations: Common Issues

- a) A standard interview challenge was to ask Infrastructure organisations if there were any services provided by Herefordshire Council that could be better provided by the CVS. (We also challenged Council officers to identify services provided by Infrastructure organisations, which could be better provided in-house). In summary the following areas were identified, and it was suggested services could be delivered to the same or an improved standard, but at a cheaper cost.
- Work that involves going out into the community (e.g. activities along the lines of Planning for Real exercises).
 - Parish Plans work.
 - Administering the Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme.
 - Running the Herefordshire Council Delegated Grants Scheme.
 - Administering Market Towns Community Pride Grants.
 - Project Development.
 - Running the ARCH Scheme (an objective 2 European funding programme).
 - Community Finance and Enterprise Officer.
 - Tenant Participation.
 - Rural Housing Enablement Officer.
 - Race Equality Service.
 - Community Development Coordinator.

- Community Involvement Co-ordinator.
 - Voluntary Sector Adult and Community Learning role.
- b) The Review Team does not consider that the current location of the Race Equality Service within Herefordshire Council offices is appropriate. The Review Team recommends Herefordshire Council should ask the Race Equality Partnership to consider transferring the Race Equality service to the CVS. At least two Infrastructure organisations expressed interest in providing this service. This can probably be best achieved by commissioning the activity with an individual Infrastructure organisation, or failing satisfactory agreement, by undertaking a market testing exercise.
- c) The Review Team has doubts over some of the other suggestions. These are:
- The ARCH scheme. This is a European funding project that has been run by the Herefordshire Partnership since January 2003 and has two years to run. The transfer of the responsibility to an Infrastructure organisation would disrupt the existing management arrangements. In addition an initial enquiry with Government Office West Midlands has raised doubts they would be satisfied that any of the Infrastructure organisations could meet the financial requirements of being the Accountable Body.
 - Tenant participation service. This highlighted an example of where an Infrastructure organisation may not have appreciated tenant participation work was no longer the responsibility of Herefordshire Council's Strategic Housing Team, but that of registered landlords (usually the Housing Associations). It is outside the Terms of Reference for the Review Team to consider this option.
 - The Community Finance and Enterprise Officer is employed in the CRT. Much of the responsibilities of this post include advising the private sector, particularly small businesses and social enterprises, as well as the CVS. It is unclear if Infrastructure organisations are allowed under their operating articles to undertake that part of the role. The Review Team also consider it is important to base the post within a strategic, rather than delivery organisation. In theory this post could be contracted out with the CVS, as the postholder would act as an agent of the Council. Seconding the post to the Voluntary Sector to carry out a "trial run" might be a good idea to see if the arrangements actually work in practice, before any formal transfer took place. We are advised, however, that because of the nature of the post and role any transfer of responsibilities would be subject to TUPE provision. This means that the scope for savings to the Council is virtually non-existent.
 - Delegated Grants scheme. Herefordshire Partnership badged staff, who administer a range of grants involving both Council and external funding, run this service. Grants are made to the public and private sectors as well as the CVS. The Team is located within the CRT, which underwent a Best Value review in 2002. This judged the overall service

as good, with promising prospects for improvement, and it is considered too soon to undertake a market testing exercise.

- Voluntary Sector Grants scheme. The Review Team is not opposed in principle to market testing of the scheme. The Review Team is concerned however if it is appropriate for a local infrastructure body to administer a scheme in which they themselves could be the beneficiaries of Council funding. The Review Team feels there is an inherent conflict of interest with such an arrangement.
- Project Development. The Project Development Team provides a significant proportion of its time supporting the CVS, and in principle there is no reason why this work should not be subject to market testing. However the Project Development Team also works with the private sector as well as the public sector. Infrastructure organisations may not be allowed to work to support the private sector under their articles of association. Herefordshire Council officers also work closely with Project Development staff and these links would be weakened if the work was undertaken elsewhere. It is recommended that the possible obstacles to market testing be clarified. The Review Team is however doubtful that outsourcing the work of the Project Development Team will be cost effective, and does not consider this to be a high priority.
- Shop Front Grants. This highlighted another example of where an Infrastructure organisation may not have appreciated this was the responsibility of the Market Towns Partnerships rather than the Herefordshire Council. This is paid for with external funding. It is outside the Terms of Reference for the Review Team to consider this option. The Review Team noted however that the Market Towns Partnerships have chosen to use the Delegated Grants Team to run the schemes on their behalves. This may indicate that the Market Towns believe they are getting value for money by using the Delegated Grants Team to provide this service.
- Rural Housing Enablement Officer. The Review Team raised this possibility with the Head of Strategic Housing. We established that they have investigated this with neighbouring authorities who felt that a Rural Housing Enablement Officer was a good idea in principle. For Herefordshire, however, doubts remain as to the value of the post as neighbouring authorities have not necessarily achieved any planning or development work that they would not have without the post. The Registered Social Landlords' forum has given a verbal indication that they do not see a strong need for an RHE Officer and cannot argue for funding for a post. The Review Team is not convinced that the appointment of an RHE Officer is justified. The Review Team recommends that the Strategic Housing Department places more of a rural focus into the job description of one of its current Housing Officers.
- Community Involvement Co-ordinator. The Community Involvement Co-ordinator has traditionally been placed within the Herefordshire Partnership Policy and Commissioning team, because of close working

with other Council Officers (such as Policy and Research, Social Services and Housing). The post was heavily involved in the last Comprehensive Performance Assessment of Herefordshire Council and is expected to be similarly involved in the next CPA. The Co-ordinator will lead the Councils progress towards its Community Involvement Strategy. The post is primarily concerned with advising public sector organisations on consultation and involvement. It is not a role that involves "hands on" involvement work with local communities. The postholder is currently working on advising partner organisations on appropriate consultation arrangements for the review of the Herefordshire Plan. The postholder is managed through a Community Management Team, including Herefordshire Council, HVA and Community First. The Review Team does not consider this post is best placed in the CVS.

- CVS Adult and Community Learning role. In principle there may be scope for placing part of this service with the CVS. However, the vast majority of funding comes from external sources such as European funds and the Learning and Skills Council. This funding is outside the scope of the Review. The Review Team also notes that a substantial proportion of adult learning activity is already contracted out. It is recommended that the Herefordshire Council Lifelong Learning Development Unit considers the scope for using the CVS to deliver a larger proportion of this activity.
- d) The Review Team accepts that some services could be considered for market testing. These are:
- Work that involves going out into the community, e.g. community surveys or activities along the lines of Planning for Real exercises. Where the CVS has proven skills and experience it is recommended that suitable parcels of work be tendered.
 - Parish Planning work. A Herefordshire Partnership officer, using funding from the Countryside Agency, initially carried out this work. The funding ceased some time ago and the post has since remained vacant. The Review Team support market testing of this provision if additional (possibly external) funding were to be made available. In such an event at least two infrastructure organisations have expressed an interest in providing the service.
 - Community Development Coordinator. The former Bromyard Voluntary Action once employed a previous postholder. The post was brought in-house following a budget exercise that demonstrated it was more cost effective to directly employ the member of staff. The previous postholder had also identified a conflict of interest between being based with a delivery organisation as opposed to a strategic organisation. This is presently a Herefordshire Partnership post, and agreement would have to be reached with other partners for a market testing approach.

7. Conclusions

- 7.1 The CVS plays a vital role in Herefordshire and will continue to play an increasingly important contribution in building strong and active communities in the County.
- 7.2 Herefordshire Council should examine opportunities for the CVS to work at increasing its role in public service delivery.
- 7.3 The sector is a vital link to socially excluded communities because they have developed trust by filling the gaps between mainstream services.
- 7.4 It is not realistic to expect Herefordshire Council to continue to be the first port of call for additional funding for the CVS. The majority of these organisations will need to diversify their income streams so that they do not depend as extensively on Herefordshire Council funding as they do at present.
- 7.5 Herefordshire Council is generous in the support it gives to the CVS, but the amount of activity within the County provided by the CVS is significantly greater than in other comparable Authorities.
- 7.6 Herefordshire Council officers, as individuals, rarely record in detail the amount of time spent supporting the CVS.
- 7.7 There is no overall strategy in place for CVS support. As a result Council Managers are not clear about the contribution of the CVS to meet Council objectives.
- 7.8 Individual Council Departments usually fail to examine the scope for including the CVS in delivering their strategies' objectives.
- 7.9 Herefordshire Council Voluntary Sector Grants scheme has a number of failings which suggest that the Council is not obtaining best value for money from the current arrangements.
- 7.10 Herefordshire Council's SLAs are inconsistent, not specific, have hard to measure outputs and are inadequately monitored and evaluated. In addition, there is a doubt that the SLAs would stand up to legal challenge.
- 7.11 Herefordshire is not well served by having two separate Voluntary Action organisations in the County. This leads to duplication of administrative arrangements and an inconsistent service.
- 7.12 There is scope for considering the transfer of some Council services into the CVS and for undertaking market testing exercises. In general, however, there are limited activities where this is felt to be appropriate.

8. Review of Herefordshire Council Support to the CVS: Funding Challenges

- 8.1 When this Review began it was not in the context of the funding challenges that Herefordshire Council is currently facing. The Review Team has undertaken its work on the assumption that the current levels of CVS funding would continue to be available in the future. Our recommendations in the main report would lead to the more effective and efficient use of this funding, but do not outline recommendations to make cuts to CVS support. We wish however to comment on the funding challenges for the Council and the CVS.
- 8.2 The Council could conclude that the CVS also needs to face some reduced funding. If this were to be the case the Review Team strongly recommends that this should not be done arbitrarily with, for example, an across the board reduction. To do so could risk the financial collapse of at least one key organisation.
- 8.3 If funding is reduced the Review Team recommends that this be done in stages, as follows.
- a) Suspension of the Voluntary Sector Grants scheme. This would achieve a saving of up to approximately £160,000 per annum. In theory this would have the least impact on the CVS, as grant funding was always intended to be one-off support for new projects. We stress the words “in theory”, as the review showed many organisations have become overly reliant on this funding. However Age Concern receives funding of around £29,000 per annum from the Voluntary Grants scheme. The Review Team did not specifically look at this support as Age Concern is not an infrastructure organisation nor does it have an SLA with the Council. It was therefore outside the terms of reference of the review. A number of references were made to us about the apparently disjointed structures of Age Concern in Herefordshire. Support for Age Concern needs to be separately examined.
 - b) We have already recommended the withdrawal of CVALD funding of approximately £10,000 per annum. This should be retained until a Herefordshire wide Voluntary Action body is established and a new SLA agreed using the funding currently allocated for HVA and CVALD. It should be possible to agree an overall modest reduction, by negotiating with a whole County Voluntary Action body, as there ought to be some economies of scale.
 - c) Community First costs are thought to be excessive and a reduced level of funding should be offered for the same level of service in relation to project activity. Community First should agree to cost reductions or a reduction in core funding support should be implemented. In such an event Community First services should be put out to tender wherever possible.
 - d) The Review Team recommends that there be no reductions in funding to the CAB. Indeed there is Review Team support for examining the scope for increasing CAB funding in the short-term. This position should be reviewed as part of an exercise to examine partnership working with CAB, ABLE and Welfare Rights.

- e) The Welfare Rights Team has not provided evidence of value for money from their service, and it is recommended this service be market tested if partnership working with CAB, ABLE and Welfare Rights is not successful.
- f) The Review Team recommends that there be no short-term reductions in funding to HVA but that this position be reviewed as part of the intention to support a single Countywide Voluntary Action body.
- g) The Review Team recommends that there be no reduction in funding to HCVYS. This body has demonstrated it offers value for money.
- h) The Review Team recommends that there be no reduction in funding to HALC, on the limited evidence we have that it offers a good service. The Review team stresses that this recommendation is conditional on HALC meeting the terms of its SLA. The Council should consider removal of funding if HALC fails to comply fully with its SLA.
- i) The Review Team recommends that there be no change to the SLA with ALLIANCE. This 5-year SLA has only been in existence since the 1st April 2004, and it is inappropriate to alter an agreement so soon after signing.

COMMUNITY FIRST FUNDING SUPPORT**Report By: Director of Policy and Community****Wards Affected**

County-wide

Purpose

1. To propose a means of reviewing the funding support for Community First within the context of an overall review of the support to the voluntary sector in Herefordshire.

Considerations

2. At its last meeting the Strategic Monitoring Committee proposed reviewing the funding support for Community First. Community First is an "infrastructure body" spanning both Herefordshire and Worcestershire. It has worked closely with the former development agency network and continues to work with Herefordshire Voluntary Action and Ledbury Voluntary Action.
3. In March of 2003 the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee agreed terms of reference for a review of the support to the Voluntary Sector provided by Herefordshire Council (copy of report attached at Appendix 1). It was understood that this was a cross-cutting review, going beyond the administration of grants, and would therefore need to report back in to Strategic Monitoring Committee.
4. A large amount of data including face-to-face interviews with many of the bodies was conducted during 2003. Since the original review team was nominated there have been significant staff changes and it is now proposed that the review is undertaken by graduate placements located in the Policy Team working to the original review team as a steering group. This model is similar to that adopted for the cross-cutting transport review. It significantly reduced the administrative burden and simplified the process and shortened the timescale. The review will contain all the elements of the Best Value Review Guidelines.
5. Opportunities will be provided for those bodies, particularly the infrastructure bodies to be questioned and challenged on the value and impact of their work. It would be appropriate to deal with Community First through this mechanism along with like bodies.
6. A detailed timetable was being prepared. This will cover the period February to the end of June. Further reports would be made to the Strategic Monitoring Committee at critical stages in the Review.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Committee agrees:

- (a) that the change in approach to the structure of the Review is agreed;**
- and**
- (b) that Community First be included in the Review along with other infrastructure bodies.**

BACKGROUND PAPERS

None identified.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Jane Jones, Director of Policy and Community on (01432) 260042

REVIEW OF COUNCIL SUPPORT TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To seek Members views on the scope of the review of the Voluntary Sector.

Considerations

2. Some work was undertaken at the end of 2001 to establish the extent of the Council's support to the voluntary sector; as to review just one grant scheme in isolation would be unproductive. The support given encompasses the Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme, Community Building Grants Scheme, childcare grants, a variety of Service Agreements, accommodation provision, NNDR relief, payroll facilities and occasional one-off grants from within service budgets. In addition there are opportunities to support volunteering within the county both through publicity of volunteering opportunities and support council employees in becoming active volunteers.
3. Following the Policy & Community Directorate restructuring in 2002, responsibility for management and operation of the Voluntary Sector Grants scheme has transferred to the Local Development Team, and it is now proposed to progress the review. As Voluntary Sector Grant decision for the 2003/04 financial year have to be made before the end of March to give applicants some financial planning time, it has been necessary to operate the Scheme under existing arrangements, making only a few basic amendments to the application form, and the assessment form. However, it is proposed that any recommendations arising from the review be implemented for 2004/05.

4. Scope

The review will seek to:

- Clarify the reasons for supporting the voluntary sector.
- Clarify the distinction between grants and payments for services.
- Produce a strategic funding document that clearly identifies the relative priorities of the services/strategies the council wishes to support through this service.
- Strengthen monitoring arrangements.
- Explore the scope/demand for provision of support services at marginal cost.
- Clarification of the respective roles of development support, assessment and decision-making.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Jane Jones, Director of Policy and Community on (01432) 260042

- Establish clear and accessible application, assessment, decision-making and monitoring processes.
- Ensure the involvement of the voluntary sector in decision making (i.e. the establishment of criteria, procedures, policies and priorities).
- Ensure a consistent approach towards supporting the voluntary sector across the Council.

5. The Review Team is:

Social and Economic Development Scrutiny: Cllr Guthrie, Cllr Stockton
 Voluntary Sector Grants Panel: Cllr Rees Mills
 Local Development Team: Local Development Manager, Penny Jones
 Local Development Admin Support & Grants Assist, Hannah McSherry
 Community Development Officer, Annie Brookes
 Regeneration Coordinator, Glyn West
 Parish Liaison & Local Development Officer, Dorothy Coleman
 Reps from relevant Herefordshire Plan (Ambition Groups)
 Voluntary Sector Reps: (To be advised)
 Audit/Treasurers: Principal Audit Manager, Tony Ford
 Social Services: Project Manager, Leslie Libetta

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Members' views are requested.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

Membership of the Review Team

Councillor from the Voluntary Sector Grants Panel:

Councillor Rees Mills

Councillors from the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee

Councillor Mrs Sylvia Daniels

Councillor John Stone

Core Review Team:

Glyn West, Senior Partnership Policy Officer (Lead Officer)

Ed Hughes, Regeneration Officer

Catherine Winsor, Personal Secretary to Head of Service

Officer Group:

Annie Brookes, Community Development Officer

Julie Brown, Assistant Accountant

Jean Howard, PCT

Penny Jones, Community Regeneration Manager

Hannah McSherry, previously Parish Council Liaison and Community
Regeneration Officer

Shane Smith, Community Regeneration Support and Grants Assistant

Karen Stanton, Community Development Coordinator

Christine Wright, Principal Lawyer

Scope of the Review

- Review the services provided by the main Infrastructure organisations. This will include bodies such as Community First, Herefordshire Voluntary Action, Ledbury Voluntary Action, HCCA, Citizen's Advice Bureaux, HCVYS and those not for profit organisations with whom the Council has Service Level Agreements (SLAs).
- Contrast the differences between services provided both from direct grant awards and through SLAs to help form a view on value for money from these different arrangements. Establish guidelines when it would be appropriate to use either funding mechanism. This will consider the implications for levering in additional funding, and agreeing the basis for calculating management costs.
- Examine the current management arrangements for the operation of the Voluntary Sector Grants scheme. The Review will involve the Voluntary Sector with particular reference to consistent application forms, criteria for grants, long term project sustainability without on-going grant awards, policies, priorities, and procedures including decision making arrangements.
- Establish clear and consistent monitoring arrangements of Voluntary Sector Grant awards and SLAs throughout the Council.
- Investigate the added value implications of whether services currently supported by grant awards are better provided in-house or if existing in-house services might be better provided by the Voluntary Sector.
- Detail the overall funding made available to the Voluntary Sector by the Council, and will include in kind contributions. Grants related to direct social services care will not be covered by the Review.
- Compare the extent of Voluntary Sector Grant support and the way it operates in Herefordshire against our Benchmarking Authorities.
- Undertake a literature search to identify models of Best Practice.
- Funding for the Voluntary Sector from third party sources such as Single Regeneration Budget or Objective 2 funding will not be covered by the Review.
- Funding support for Parish Councils will not be covered by the Review.
- Consider support arrangements for the Voluntary Sector Assembly.
- Recommend options for Voluntary Sector Grant support in the future.

Timescale

The review will be completed by the end of September 2004.

Data collection will take around three months, but the Review will continue in parallel with this process.

An initial session will be held with appropriate representatives of the Voluntary Sector to outline:

1. The scope of the review.
2. The conduct of the review.
3. The timetable for the review.

Around August a second larger session will be held with the voluntary sector to outline work to date and set out our findings. There will be a final session in mid September to present the draft report.

The Review Process

The Review Team will report to Geoff Cole, Head of Culture, Leisure and Education for Life, who will receive progress reports, and agree the Review Team work programme.

Whilst this is not a formal Best Value Review it will cover key elements of the Best Value review guidelines. It will establish a baseline and rigorously challenge existing patterns of service, using a series of structured interviews. The Review Team will consult with stakeholders and compare provision with that available in similar rural counties. Every stage of the review will be thoroughly documented and demonstrate that the Review has been properly conducted and that its outcomes are founded on an informed and robust process.

Face to face interviews will be conducted with representatives of key infrastructure organisations and other key stakeholders.

Review Team membership

The Review team will be small and lead by Glyn West, with support from Catherine Winsor and Ed Hughes. Annie Brookes will act as the Community Regeneration Team contact. Other officers will be co-opted as required. Directorates will identify named individual contact to help facilitate the Review.

24.03.04

Benchmarking Results Table

Local Authority Name	VS Cash Support 03/04	VS In Kind Support 03/04	Total VS Support 03/04	Population (2001 Census)	Spend per head (Cash)	Spend per head (In Kind)	Spend per head (Overall)
Unitary Authorities							
Herefordshire	£1,141,071	£225,344	£1,366,415	174,871	£6.53	£1.29	£7.81
Telford & Wrekin	£385,000	£10,500	£395,500	158,325	£2.43	£0.07	£2.50
West Berkshire	£400,000	£700,000	£1,100,000	144,483	£2.77	£4.84	£7.61
South Gloucestershire	£1,377,983	£0	£1,377,983	245,641	£5.61	£0	£5.61
North Somerset	£336,570	N/a	£336,570	188,564	£1.78	£0	£1.78
Powys	£3,423,012	* £24,000	£3,447,012	126,354	£27.09	£0.19	£27.28
County, District and Borough Councils							
Devon							
Mid Devon District	£300,000	£0	£300,000	69,774	£4.30	£0	£4.30
Exeter City	£531,160	£0	£531,160	111,076	£4.78	£0	£4.78
Dorset							
Bournemouth Borough	£220,000	£140,000	£360,000	163,444	£1.35	£0.86	£2.20
Shropshire							
Bridgnorth District	£23,000	£0	£23,000	52,497	£0.44	£0	£0.44
Cornwall							
Cornwall County	£111,000	£0	£111,000	506,182	£0.22	£0	£0.22
Penwith District	£410,000	£0	£410,000	63,012	£6.51	£0	£6.51
Cumbria							
Eden District	£480,000	£20,000	# £500,000	49,777	£9.64	£0.40	# £10.04
Blythe Valley Borough (2004/05)	£79,100	£65,950	£245,050	81,265	£2.20	£0.81	£3.02

* Office space only # Approximate total for all grants, including those given to individuals, companies and Voluntary sector.

Benchmarking Result Table (Infrastructure Organisations)

Local Authority Name	Population (2001 Census)	Citizens Advice Bureaux Support 03/04	Spend per head	Voluntary Action / CVS Support 03/04	Spend per head	Community Council Support 03/04	Spend per head	Voluntary Sector Grant Scheme Funding 2003/4	Spend per head
Unitary Authorities									
Herefordshire (HVA area)	156,587			£110,090	£0.70				
Herefordshire (CVALD area)	18,284			£11,021	£0.60				
Herefordshire (All)	174,871	£137,290	£0.79	£122,076	£0.70	£66,781	£0.38	£148,519	£0.85
Bath & North East Somerset	169,040	£303,168	£1.79						
Poole	138,288	£118,000	£0.85	£39,400	£0.28	£21,821	£0.16	£82,159	£0.59
North Somerset	188,564	£107,040	£0.57	£600	£0.00	£25,795	£0.14	£349,330	£1.85
North Lincolnshire	152,849	£112,160	£0.73	£96,135	£0.63	£20,900	£0.14	£100,000	£0.65
Darlington	97,838	£92,000	£0.94	£35,000	£0.36	£0		£144,264	£1.47
County, District and Borough Councils									
Cornwall									
Cornwall County	506,182	£83,874	£0.17	£184,227	£0.36	£0		£111,000	£0.22
Caradon District	79,649	£47,166	£0.59	£5,957	£0.07	£1,200	£0.02	£8,300	£0.10
North Cornwall District	80,509	£74,000	£0.92	£0		£0		£0	
Penwith District	63,012	£30,000	£0.48	£30,000	£0.48	£6,400	£0.10	£10,000	£0.16
Isles Of Scilly	2,153	£814	£0.38	£0		£0		£0	
Pro Rata (incl. CCC)	506,182	£235,854	£0.47	£220,184	£0.43	£7,600	£0.02	£129,300	£0.26

Cont.

Local Authority Name	Population (2001 Census)	Citizens Advice Bureaux Support 03/04	Spend per head	Voluntary Action / CVS Support 03/04	Spend per head	Community Council Support 03/04	Spend per head	Voluntary Sector Grant Scheme Funding 2003/4	Spend per head
County, District and Borough Councils Cont.									
Cumbria									
Eden District	49,777	£29,220	£0.59	£11,000	£0.22	£20,000	£0.40	£0	
Devon Pro Rata	704,493	£104,150	£0.67	£31,000	£0.20	£1,150	£0.01	£225,625	£1.44
Dorset Pro Rata	390,980	£222,290	£1.99	£40,000	£0.10	£0	£0.14	£163,524	£0.42
Northumberland Pro Rata	307,190	£146,212	£1.11	£34,640	£0.26	£2,000	£0.02	£465,640	£3.54
Shropshire Pro Rata	283,173	£102,480	£0.72	£0		£200	£0.00	£90,869	£0.64
Worcestershire Pro Rata	542,107	£61,680	£0.27	£2,000	£0.01	£750	£0.00	£40,000	£0.17

Note: It was not possible to obtain figures from all the District Councils within the selected Counties. For example we obtained 5 returns out of 7 from Northumberland. We have therefore used pro rata calculations to arrive at these figures. In the case of Cumbria we had only one District Council response and it was not felt appropriate to use a pro rata estimate.

Total Baseline Support by Organisation

Organisation	Type of Support	Detail	Year	Amount	Total
Citizens Advice Bureaux	Service Level Agreement		2004/05	£104,150	
	In-kind	Favourable IT support rates	2004/05	£974	
	Grant	# Extra support payment	2003/04	£20,000	
	Grant	# Extra support payment	2003/04	£4,000	
	In-kind	Reduced rent	2004/05	£7,500	
	Cash	Business rate relief	2003/04	£666	£137,290
Herefordshire Voluntary Action	Service Level Agreement		2004/05	£101,980	
	Service Level Agreement	Parish Plans	2004/05	£5,000	
	Grant	Extra support payment	2003/04	£2,500	
	In-kind	Reduced rent	2004/05	£965	
	Cash	Business rate relief	2003/04	£610	£111,055
				2004/05	£49,750
Community First	Service Level Agreement		2004/05	£16,630	
	Cash	Business rate relief	2003/04	£401	£66,781
			2004/05	£39,425	
Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services	Grant	Voluntary Sector Grant Scheme	2003/04	£8,000	£47,425
			2004/05	£10,620	
Community Voluntary Action Ledbury and District	Cash	Business rate relief	2003/04	£401	£11,021
			2004/05	£10,500	
Herefordshire Association of Local Councils		* Officer time	2004/05	£1,593	£12,093

#One-off support and not part of ongoing SLA and not guaranteed funding for future years.

* Infrastructure organisations felt this was administration cost of monitoring SLAs and not support to the voluntary sector

Cont.

Organisation	Type of Support	Detail	Year	Amount	Total
Voluntary & Community Sector Organisations including Not-For-Profit Organisations	Cash	Business Rate Relief	2003/04	£277,914	
	Grant	Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme	2004/05	£148,519	
	In-kind	CRT Support	2004/05	£118,252	
	Grant	Small Projects Fund	2004/05	£33,500	
	In-kind	Officer time (HP)	2004/05	£31,500	
	In-kind	Rent Reduction	2004/05	£25,846	
	In-kind	Favourable Room Hire Rates	2004/05	£4,471	
	In-kind	Reduced Council Agenda Costs	2003/04	£4,000	
	In-kind	SLA Support - Officer Time	2004/05	£2,261	
	In-kind	SLA Monitoring - Officer Time	2004/05	£2,173	
	In-kind	Research	2004/05	£2,000	
	In-kind	Favourable Room Hire (Woolhope Room)	2003/04	£2,730	
	In-kind	Free Road Closures	2003/04	£1,250	
South Wye Voluntary & Community Sector	Grant		2004/05	£97,905	£97,905
Various Arts & Culture Organisations	Service Level Agreement		2004/05	£50,000	£50,000
Various Community Buildings	Grant	Community Buildings Scheme	2004/05	£50,000	£50,000
Rural Media Company	Service Level Agreement	Host Agency Agreement	2004/05	£25,615	
	Service Level Agreement		2004/05	£14,000	£39,615
Social Enterprises - Voluntary Sector	In-kind	Officer time	2004/05	£14,629	
	Grant		2004/05	£5,000	£19,629
One to One	Service Level Agreement	Partnership Agreement	2004/05	£15,500	£15,500

Organisation	Type of Support	Detail	Year	Amount	Total
ECHO	Service Level Agreement		2004/05	£13,750	£13,750
Welcome to Our Future	Service Level Agreement	SLA not in place at present	2004/05	£10,750	£10,750
Victorian History Society	Grant		2004/05	£5,000	
	In-kind		2004/05	£4,000	£9,000
Herefordshire Sports Council	Service Level Agreement		2004/05	£4,500	£4,500
Ready Steady Win	Service Level Agreement		2004/05	£4,500	£4,500
Herefordshire Town Twinning Forum	Grant		2004/05	£4,000	£4,000
Ross Community IT Centre	Service Level Agreement		2004/05	£1,554	£1,554
MIND	In-kind	Reduced Payroll Charge	2003/04	£1,200	£1,200
Herefordshire Environmental Education Forum	Grant	Forum and Education Day	2003/04	£950	£950
			Total	£1,362,934	

Population = 2001 census 174,871

Spend per head of population £7.79*

* This table does not include support given which is less than £950 per service and represents £0.02 per head of population.

Interviews held with Council Officers

Council Officer	Date	Council Officer	Date
Stuart Gent Head of Property Services, Environment	21/06/04	Ian Hyson County Treasurer	05/08/04
Geoff Hughes Head of Community & Economic Development Policy & Community	23/06/04	Deborah Allison Arts Liaison Officer Policy & Community	02/08/04
Alan Blundell Head of Policy & Communication Policy & Community	25/06/04	Henry Lewis Head of Social Care (Children) Social Care & Strategic Housing	11/08/04
Jane Jones Director of Policy & Community	28/06/04	Mark Warren Head of Customer Services & Libraries, Policy & Community	12/08/04
Geoff Cole Head of Culture, Leisure & Education for Life, Policy & Community	30/06/04	Natalia Silver Cultural Services Manager Policy & Community	16/08/04
Jon Ralph Community Youth Service Manager Policy & Community	05/07/04	Alan Ronald Economic Investment & Development Officer (Property & Information) Policy & Community	17/08/04
Hannah McSherry Parish Council Liaison & Com Regeneration Officer Policy & Community	07/07/04	Mary Burton & Sue Lloyd Local Agenda 21 Officer Environment	19/08/04
Nina Bridges/Lyn Bright SRB Programme Manager Policy & Community	07/07/04	Kate Andrew Principal Heritage Officer Policy & Community	20/08/04
Andy Tector Head of Environmental Health & Trading Standard Environment	07/07/04	Sara Burch Community Finance & Enterprise Officer Policy & Community	24/08/04
Carol Trachonitis External Liaison Co-ordinator Policy & Community	09/07/04	Isobel Gibson Principal Research Officer Policy & Community	07/09/04
Annie Brookes Community Dev Officer Policy & Community	14/07/04	Richard Ball Transportation Manager Environment	10/09/04
Jan Perridge Senior Sports Dev Officer Policy & Community	15/07/04	Ruth Sinfield Early Years & Childcare Service Manager, Education	13/09/04
Julie Holmes/Sandra Silcox Head of ICT Policy & Community	15/07/04	Mike Fry Welfare Rights Manager Social Care & Strategic Housing	13/09/04
Stephen Oates Head of Highways & Transportation Environment	15/07/04	Colin Birks Property Services Manager Environment	15/09/04
Tracy Ricketts Regeneration Co-ordinator (Grants & Programmes), Herefordshire Partnership, Policy & Community	28/07/04	Penny Jones Community Regeneration Manager Policy & Community	20/09/04
Jonathan Riches Programme Officer (Mon) Herefordshire Partnership Policy & Community	29/07/04	Sue Fiennes Director of Social Care & Strategic Housing	22/09/04
Stephanie Canham Head of Social Care (Adults) Social Care & Strategic Housing	03/08/04	Richard Gabb Head of Strategic Housing Social Care & Strategic Housing	14/10/04

Interviews held with Infrastructure Organisations

Organisation	Date
Community Voluntary Action – Ledbury and District	04/08/04
Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services	24/08/04
*Citizens Advice Bureaux	03/09/04
Herefordshire Association of Local Councils	09/09/04
Community First	16/09/04
Herefordshire Voluntary Action	21/09/04
*ABLE	05/10/04
*Voluntary Sector Assembly	19/10/04

* *These are not technically infrastructure organisations as defined by this Review.*

Alliance provided answers to questions submitted to them by the Review Team, but the organisation was not interviewed.

Standard Council Officer Questionnaire

Review of Herefordshire Council Support to the Voluntary Sector

Questionnaire – Heads of Service

1. Voluntary Sector Support – “Cash” and “In Kind”

Attached is a table which lists the information collected from your division. Can you confirm for 2004/05:

- a) The information is correct.
- b) Any additions to the information.
- c) Any changes which will be made this financial year.

Examples of in kind support may include office space, staff time, or reduced rates for room hire.

d) Why do you give grants rather than enter into service level agreements?

e) In your opinion, what would be the effect on the organisation of the division:

- Removing all funding to the Voluntary Sector.
- Giving less funding to the Voluntary Sector.

f) How do you ensure that Voluntary Sector bodies offer value for money? *This question may be better answered by Service Manager or officer dealing.*

g) Do you have any elements of competition or tendering for the Voluntary Sector bodies?

- If yes, please give details.
- If no, please explain why.

h) In your opinion, are there any areas of work currently funded through Voluntary Sector bodies that could be carried out by staff within the division?

i) In respect of in kind support, what arrangements are in place for recording:

- Category of organisation (e.g. Council/voluntary & community sector/charity/businesses/private) for room hire, for example.
- Take up of in kind support, e.g. how many times a year a room is hired out at a favourable rate.
- Officer time spent on advising and supporting.

2. Voluntary Sector Support – Service Level Agreements

Attached is a table which lists the information collected from your division. Can you confirm for 2004/05:

- a) The information is correct.
- b) Any additions to the information.
- c) Any changes which will be made this financial year.
- d) In general, do you believe that SLAs are a better option than grants?
 - Yes or no. Please give reasons.
- e) Are you satisfied with the procedures in place for monitoring SLAs?
 - Yes or no. Please give details.
- f) What do you consider to be the key elements of an SLA?

3. Voluntary Sector Support – Infrastructure Bodies

- a) How many infrastructure bodies receive financial or in kind support?
(Community First, Herefordshire Voluntary Action, Community Voluntary Action Ledbury and District, ALLIANCE (formerly HCCA), Citizen's Advice Bureaux, HCVYS)
- b) In your opinion do you receive value for money from these organisations?
 - Yes or no. Please give details.
- c) How do you assess their management costs, generally what percentage are they?

Notes

The following types of support are not included in this questionnaire

- Grants related to direct social services care
- Funding support for Parish Councils
- Funding for the voluntary sector from third party sources such as Single Regeneration Budget or Objective 2 funding.

Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme Awards 2002-2004

Organisations	Grant Awards			Total Sum Awarded 2002 - 2004
	2002	2003	2004	
Age Concern	£26,500.00	£29,000.00	£29,000.00	£84,500.00
Basement Youth Trust		£1,000.00		£1,000.00
Caring for Gods Acre	£1,000.00	£1,500.00	£605.00	£3,105.00
Close House Project			£3,250.00	£3,250.00
Community Voluntary Action - Ledbury	£3,500.00	£3,269.00	£3,481.00	£10,250.00
Coningsby Medieval Museum	£500.00			£500.00
CRUSE Bereavement Care	£300.00	£300.00		£600.00
Deaf Direct	£6,500.00			£6,500.00
Double Take			£250.00	£250.00
ECHO		£780.00	£2,000.00	£2,780.00
Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG)	£3,000.00	£1,000.00	£500.00	£4,500.00
Friends of Dore Abbey	£500.00	£750.00		£1,250.00
Full House Furniture and Recycling Service	£7,500.00		£7,500.00	£15,000.00
Gorsley Pre-School		£1,000.00		£1,000.00
HCVYS	£10,000.00	£8,000.00	£8,000.00	£26,000.00
Hereford & District Disabled Swimming Club	£250.00	£250.00		£500.00
Hereford Access for All	£400.00			£400.00
Hereford Basketball Development Group		£200.00		£200.00
Hereford City Partnership	£1,500.00			£1,500.00
Hereford Guild of Guides	£300.00	£300.00	£300.00	£900.00
Hereford Police Male Choir	£500.00	£500.00		£1,000.00
Hereford Sub-Aqua Club	£200.00			£200.00
Hereford Three Choirs Festival Fringe		£3,000.00		£3,000.00
Herefordshire and Worcestershire RIGS Group	£350.00			£350.00
Herefordshire Association for the Blind	£5,000.00	£6,500.00	£6,600.00	£18,100.00
Herefordshire Citizens Advocacy Now	£6,000.00	£7,000.00	£6,000.00	£19,000.00
Herefordshire Community Council		£500.00	£500.00	£1,000.00
Herefordshire DIAL	£3,000.00			£3,000.00
Herefordshire Headway		£500.00		£500.00
Herefordshire Heartstart			£1,000.00	£1,000.00
Herefordshire Homestart	£3,000.00	£3,500.00	£4,000.00	£10,500.00
Herefordshire Kite Association	£500.00	£500.00	£500.00	£1,500.00
Herefordshire LORE	£700.00			£700.00
Herefordshire Music, Speech and Drama Festival	£500.00			£500.00
Herefordshire Nature Trust	£500.00			£500.00
Herefordshire Photography Festival - Exposure	£3,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£13,000.00
Herefordshire Victim Support	£1,500.00	£1,750.00	£2,000.00	£5,250.00
Jumpstart	£1,000.00	£1,200.00	£4,000.00	£6,200.00
Kids Club @ Luston			£500.00	£500.00

Organisations	Grant Awards			Total Sum Awarded 2002 - 2004
	2002	2003	2004	
Kidz First		£2,500.00	£5,640.00	£8,140.00
Kington and District Museum	£450.00	£500.00	£2,000.00	£2,950.00
Kington Festival Association	£750.00	£1,500.00		£2,250.00
Kington Multipurpose Day Centre	£450.00			£450.00
Kington Tourism Group	£1,000.00	£1,000.00		£2,000.00
Landscape Recording Association	£1,200.00	£1,500.00	£1,500.00	£4,200.00
Ledbury Day Centre	£1,500.00	£2,000.00	£2,000.00	£5,500.00
Ledbury Poetry Festival	£2,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£12,000.00
Ledbury Youth First	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	In Kind Contribution - Office Space	£10,000.00
Leominster Choral Society			£300.00	£300.00
Leominster Festival of the Arts	£4,000.00	£5,000.00	£5,000.00	£14,000.00
Leominster Folk Museum	£500.00	£550.00	£2,000.00	£3,050.00
Leominster Money Box Credit Union	£4,000.00	£4,400.00	£7,500.00	£15,900.00
Lion Ballroom	£2,500.00	£4,000.00		£6,500.00
Madley Festival	£850.00			£850.00
Marcher Apple Network	£750.00	£500.00	£300.00	£1,550.00
Marches Family Network	£4,750.00	£5,300.00	£8,000.00	£18,050.00
Music and Dance Education - MADE	£500.00	£600.00	£600.00	£1,700.00
New Theatre Works	£2,500.00	£3,000.00	£2,250.00	£7,750.00
Newton Farm Community Association	£470.00			£470.00
Nightjar Music	£1,100.00	£1,300.00	£1,500.00	£3,900.00
North Herefordshire (Leominster) Shop Mobility	£2,500.00	£3,500.00	£4,500.00	£10,500.00
Out and About Transport - Herefordshire Mind			£750.00	£750.00
Pentabus Theatre	£2,000.00	£2,000.00		£4,000.00
Presteigne Festival of Music and the Arts	£500.00	£700.00	£1,500.00	£2,700.00
Riding for the Disabled Association			£500.00	£500.00
Ross-on-Wye Choral Society	£200.00			£200.00
Samaritans	£800.00			£800.00
Shelter	£250.00			£250.00
Stapleton Heritage Group	£500.00			£500.00
Take A Break	£2,000.00	£3,000.00		£5,000.00
Teme Valley Youth Project	£5,000.00	£5,500.00	£8,000.00	£18,500.00
The Music Pool	£10,000.00	£12,000.00	£15,000.00	£37,000.00
The Nimbus Foundation	£500.00			£500.00
Tudorville Residents Association	£500.00			£500.00
Two Faced Dance Company	£750.00			£750.00
Unity Garden	£1,750.00	£1,200.00		£2,950.00
Waterworks Museum	£1,000.00	£1,000.00	£500.00	£2,500.00
Woolgatherers		£2,000.00	£1,000.00	£3,000.00
Workers Education Association		£500.00	£300.00	£800.00
WRVS	£4,000.00	£6,000.00	£4,000.00	£14,000.00
Wye Valley Chamber Music		£1,000.00	£500.00	1500
Xtreme Youth Project		£2,500.00	£3,500.00	6000
TOTAL	£154,020.00	£161,849.00	£168,626.00	£484,495.00

Eligibility Criteria for Voluntary Sector Grants Scheme 2004 – 2005

All applicant organisations must satisfy the following grant criteria - the Herefordshire Council may apply conditions on successful applications in individual categories of grant aid if it deems it appropriate.

1. Applications will only be considered for assistance towards activities/facilities operating within, or for the benefit of residents of, Herefordshire.
2. Applicants must show that the activity/facility is consistent with the Herefordshire Partnerships ambitions as set out in the Herefordshire Plan (enclosed).
3. National organisations must show either that there will be direct benefit to the County of Herefordshire or that benefit will accrue to the public at large (including, directly or indirectly, members of this community).
4. Applications will not be considered from organisations set up for profit making activities.
5. Applications for funding towards capital expenditure are not be eligible.
6. Local need for the activity/facility must be justified, and the benefit to local people demonstrated.
7. Where relevant, applicants must demonstrate the degree of local support for the proposal and that funds have been raised locally.
8. The activity must not seek to promote or oppose a political party or religious denomination.
9. Applications from individuals will not be eligible.
10. Applicants must have an appropriate constitution.
11. Proper accounts must be kept and be available for inspection by Herefordshire Council staff.
12. Applicants must show how the success/development of the activity/facility will be measured.
13. The Council will not consider applications from organisations which could be reasonably expected to fund their activities or needs from members' subscriptions or other sources or which have substantial cash balances which are not being used to fund activities.
14. 'In kind' support will be taken into account where it can be clearly audited. Herefordshire Council currently suggest a value of £8.70 per hour for volunteer time given in kind.
15. All applicants will need to include a summary setting out their management arrangements, user involvement, frequency of meetings, an outline of their equal opportunities practice and any other relevant information. A copy of the organisation's most recent bank statement, balance sheet and accounts **must** accompany applications.
16. The Council must have legal powers to fund the activity/facility you are proposing. If you submit a proposal which the Council does not have the power to fund, we will advise you of this.
17. If funding is awarded it will be released in two instalments. 75% will be released upon acceptance of the grant offer and the conditions attached to the offer. The final 25% will be released upon receipt of a complete and comprehensive final report. A final report will be enclosed with each grant offer letter.
18. Applicants that received funding in 2003/2004 will not be eligible for further funding unless they have fully complied with the conditions outlined in their offer letter.
19. All funding must be claimed by the 31st March 2005. Any funding that has not been claimed by this date will be withdrawn.

Contract Check List Suggested Clause Headings – Community and Voluntary Sector

NB: PLEASE NOTE THIS IS A LIST OF SUGGESTED CLAUSES FOR USE WITHIN CONTRACTS. ALL CONTRACTS CAN VARY AND SHOULD BE CHECKED BY LEGAL SERVICES PRIOR TO COMPLETION.

ALL CORRESPONDENCE ENTERED INTO PRIOR TO THE SIGNING OF THE CONTRACT WHICH DISCUSSES POTENTIAL TERMS SHOULD BE HEADED UP **“SUBJECT TO CONTRACT”**.

Clause Heading	Note
Date of Agreement	Formal completion date of the agreement. (NB not necessarily the commencement date – see below.) <i>FOR EXAMPLE ONLY:</i> <i>“THIS AGREEMENT is made on the 12th day of August 2004”</i>
Parties to Agreement	Names and address (the registered office) of those parties taking part in the agreement. <i>FOR EXAMPLE ONLY:</i> <i>“BETWEEN THE COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL Brockington 35 Hafod Road Hereford HR1 1SH (“the Council”) of the first part and JOE BLOGGS CHARITY Bloggs House Bloggs Street Hereford HRB BBB of the second part (“the Service Provider”).”</i>
Recitals	Explanation of the agreement (background information).
Definitions	Explanation of terms used, this saves repetition within the agreement. <i>FOR EXAMPLE ONLY:</i> <i>“In this Agreement the following words and expressions will have the following meaning: The “Community Centre” shall mean No Such Community Centre No Such Street Hereford HRB BBB”</i>
Duration of Agreement	Date of Commencement – the date the agreement shall commence. <i>FOR EXAMPLE ONLY:</i> <i>“This Agreement shall come into force on the 1st day of September 2004”</i> Date of Termination / Event which will terminate contract. <i>FOR EXAMPLE ONLY:</i> <i>“This Agreement shall terminate on the 1st day of September 2005”; or “...shall continue unless determined on notice as hereinafter provided....”</i>

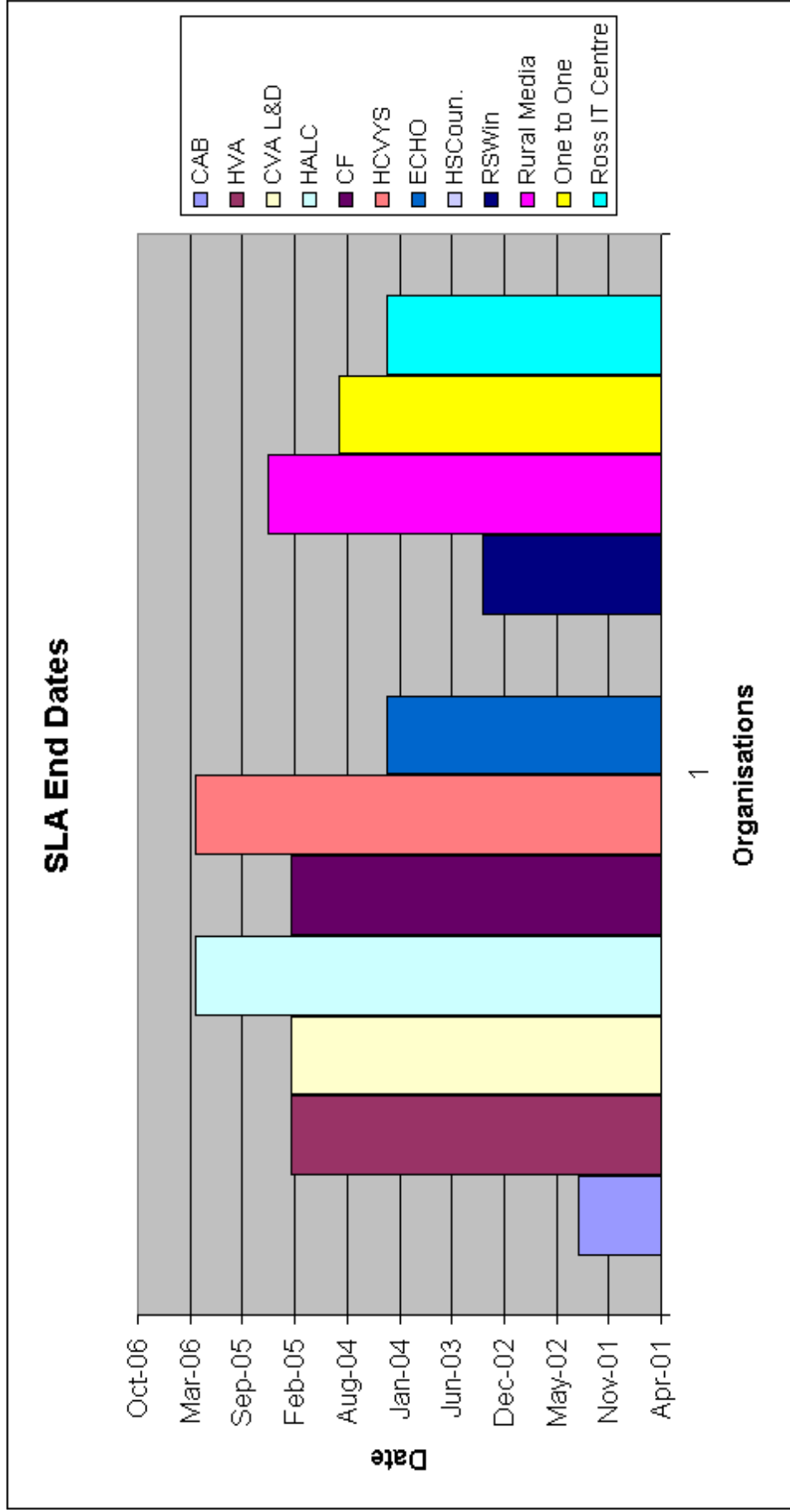
Clause Heading	Note
Purpose of Contract	Must be certain and specific. <i>FOR EXAMPLE ONLY:</i> “...to provide funds for the refurbishment of the Community Centre Kitchen” AND NOT “...to provide funds for the Community Centre”.
Services to be provided Service Aims and Objectives	What the Council and the organisation receiving the grant intend to do. <i>FOR EXAMPLE ONLY:</i> “The Council and the Service Provider are jointly committed to refurbishing the Community Centre Kitchen by September 2005 for the benefit of XYZ”.
Use of Grant	How money can be used. <i>FOR EXAMPLE ONLY:</i> “Purpose of the grant is to purchase materials and skilled labour to assist in the refurbishment...”.
Payment / Recovery of Grant	How money is to be paid (method / frequency etc). How money will be recovered and in what circumstances will it be recovered. <i>FOR EXAMPLE ONLY:</i> “The grant shall be paid to the Service Provider in 12 monthly instalment cheques of £100 (One Hundred Pounds) commencing on 1 September 2004”.
Business Plan / Project Plan	If grant is project specific the Council may require a specific plan and may require amendments from time to time.
Project Development	As above – could be used to allow Council to monitor and amend the project.
Service Standards	Levels of service provided by the other parties that are required by the Council.
Project Information	Who is project manager, contact details etc. Details of how regular updates on the project / the progress of the project should be made and to whom they should be made. Details of any monitoring reports that may be required and the frequency that they are required.
Monitoring Procedures & Records	What records should be kept by all parties and what procedures should be followed.

Clause Heading	Note
Accounts	Requirement for all parties (other than the Council) to keep accurate financial records. Date and frequency these accounts should be sent to Council for inspection. Possibly – notification to Council of other sources of funding for the project.
Termination	How agreement is terminated. Details of what grounds the agreement can be terminated early if at all eg insolvency / failure to perform within set time limit. Any remedies for early termination should also be included eg delivery up of goods, repayment etc. Amount and method of notice required to be given by all parties wishing to terminate the agreement.
Breach & Remedy	What constitutes a breach of the contract. What remedies are available for breach of the contract.
Declaration of Interest	If required.
Indemnity	Other party to indemnify the Council for legal costs and / or insurance claims.
Force Majeure	Unforeseen / uncontrollable act which prevents performance of the contract or frustrates the contract. FOR EXAMPLE ONLY: “...including but not limited to the following: riots, strikes, war, terrorism, flood [etc etc] and any other event beyond our reasonable control or due to an Act of God”.
Confidentiality	Details of the agreement to be considered confidential between the parties.
Equal Opportunities	If adherence to Council’s Equal Opportunity Policy necessary.
Dispute Resolution	What happens in event of dispute – how will the dispute be settled eg with the help of mediation from a named body / individual or arbitration or via the courts.
Variation	Allowing parties to request a variation to the terms of the agreement. This clause should state that no amendments should be made to the agreement without the agreement of all parties concerned. Amendment should be required in writing and should be executed by all parties concerned.
Acknowledgement of funding	If Council requires recognition (publicity of some description) for the funding given for the project.

Clause Heading	Note
Non Detriment	That the other parties to the contract will not work to the detriment of other organisations supported by the Council.
Data Protection	If applicable.
Service of Notices	How the service of any notices is to take place – is fax and / or e-mail transmission acceptable?
Exclusion of the Contract (Rights of Third Parties) Act 1999	FOR EXAMPLE ONLY: <i>“For the avoidance of doubt nothing in this Agreement shall confer on any third party any benefit or the right to enforce any term of this Agreement”.</i>
Assignment	A clause may be required preventing parties to the agreement assigning benefits of the agreement to any other party.
Jurisdiction	That the Agreement is subject to the Laws of England.
Entire Agreement Clause	FOR EXAMPLE ONLY: <i>“The Parties agree that these terms and conditions expressly incorporated in the Contract represent the entire agreement between the parties relating to the refurbishment of the Community Centre Kitchen and that no statement or representations by either party have been relied upon by another in agreeing to enter into the contract”.</i>
Schedules	May appended to the contract containing ancillary information.
Testimonium	Stating that the parties consent to the terms of the agreement.
Attestation Clause	The execution of the agreement under hand or as a deed.

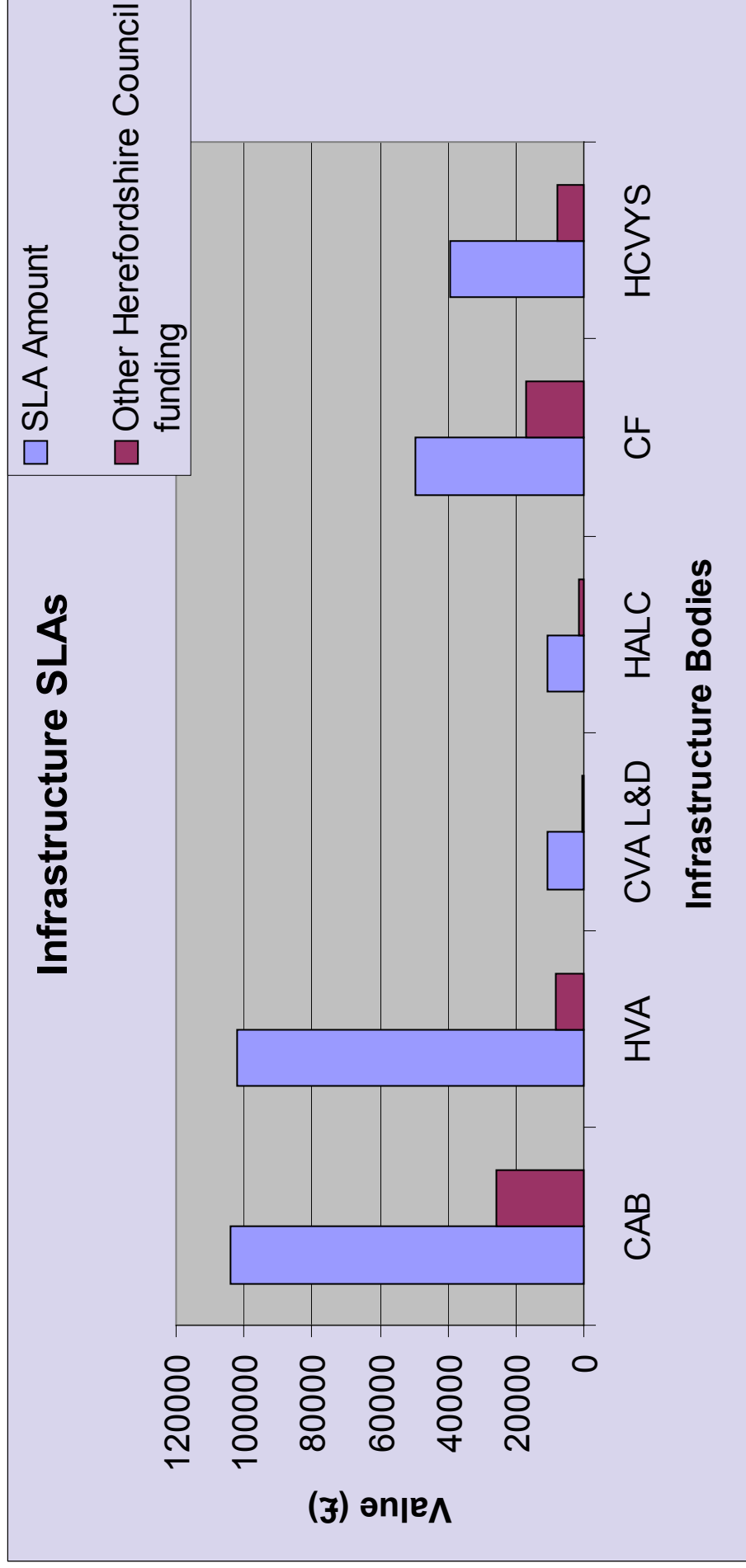
Service Level Agreements - Timescales

CAB	HVA	CVALD	HALC	Community First	HCVYS	ECHO	Hfds Sports Council	Ready Steady Win	Rural Media Company	One to One Befriending	Ross IT Centre
March 02	March 05	March 05	March 06	March 05	March 06	March 04	March 03	March 03	June 05	September 04	March 04



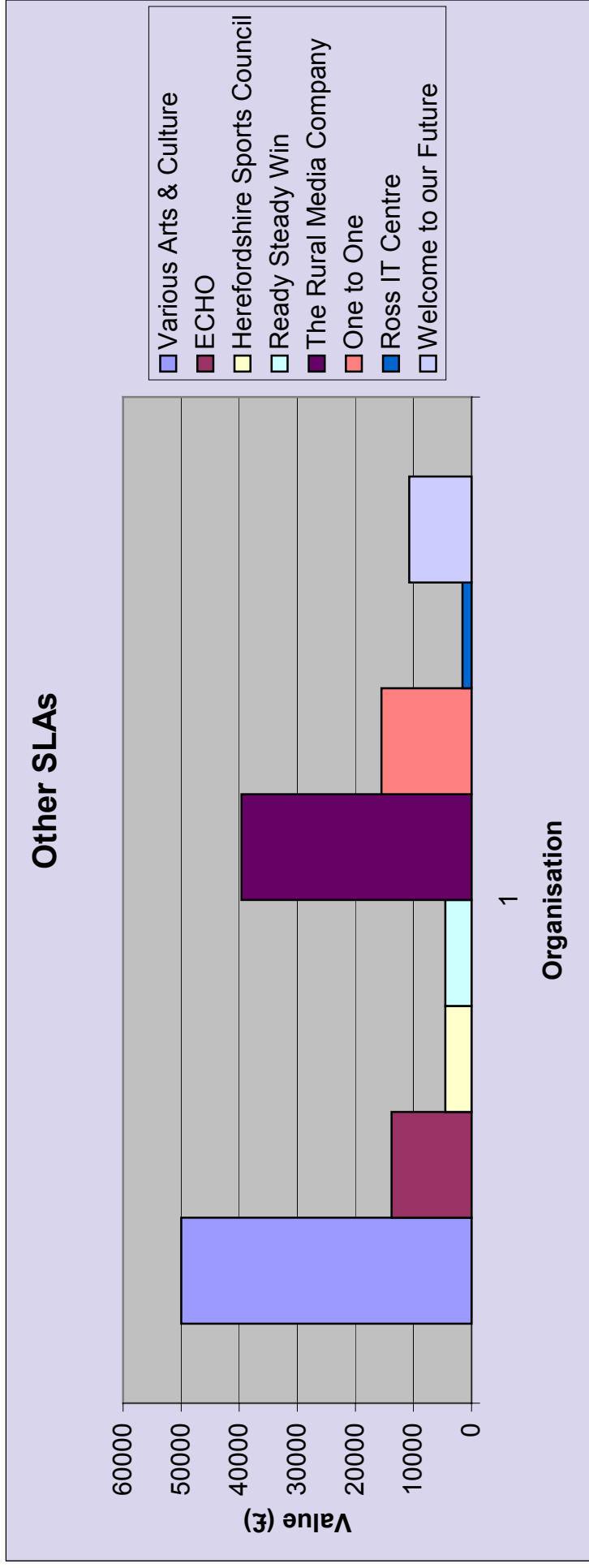
Service Level Agreements - Infrastructure Organisations

Organisation	Citizens Advice Bureaux	Herefordshire Voluntary Action	Community Voluntary Action Ledbury & District	Herefordshire Association of Local Councils	Community First	Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services
SLA Amount	£104,150	£101,980	£10,620	£10,500	£49,750	£39,425
Other HC Funding	£25,640	£8,110	£401	£1,593	£17,031	£8,000



Service Level Agreements – Other Organisations

Organisation	Various Arts & Culture Organisations	ECHO	Hfds Sports Council	Ready Steady Win	Rural Media Company	One to One Befriending	Ross IT Centre	Welcome to Our Future
Amount	£50,000	£13,750	£4,500	£4,500	£39,615	£15,500	£1,554	£10,750



COURTYARD REVIEW

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

CABINET

17TH FEBRUARY, 2005

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider the recommendations of the review of the Courtyard undertaken by the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendation

- THAT (a) the considerations in relation to the funding agreement and the position in relation to the original Capital Bid in 2004/05 be noted; and**
- (b) Cabinet directs how it wishes to deal with the Recommendations of the Review.**

Reasons

This report needs to be considered by Cabinet because Councillor Stockton, as the Cabinet Member for Community and Social Development is a Council-appointed board member of the Courtyard Centre for the Arts.

At the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee on 24th September 2004, the Committee agreed to undertake a review and also agreed the Scoping Statement and the membership of the Review Group

The Group conducted a review of The Courtyard with the objective of establishing the historic background of the establishment; reviewing the contribution Herefordshire Council makes and to consider how best to strike a balance between sustaining a key arts facility and the benefits to the wider community. The aim of the review was to advise the Cabinet Member (Community and Social Development) on the best framework to put into place in respect of the future involvement of Herefordshire Council with The Courtyard.

The Review Group's report was considered by the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 31st January, 2005. It endorsed the recommendations. The report is attached.

The review was overwhelmingly supportive of the Courtyard and recognised its role as a centre for the Arts for the whole of Herefordshire not just a theatre.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Jane Jones, Director of Policy and Community on 01432 260037

Considerations

1. The recommendations endorsed by the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee are attached at Appendix 2. Cabinet is asked to consider the recommendations and advise on a way forward.
2. It is important to separate out the results of the review from the initial reason for the review which was the late bid for Capital funding during the 2004/05 financial year. The Programme of refurbishment and other related activity did not meet the criteria for the Council's Capital Programme. Many of the items detailed in that Capital Bid for example refurbishment of the lift and the bar have been undertaken as partnership activity between the Council and the Courtyard Centre for the Arts. They are not therefore pivotal to the future of the Courtyard.
3. The recommendation to offer the Courtyard a one-year funding agreement from March 2005 needs careful consideration. The Council's commitment to support for the Courtyard is a major determinant in pulling in other sources of funding particularly from the Arts Council, West Midlands. The Arts Council works on a two year funding cycle which ends in March 2006. Early indications are that if the Council were not to agree a longer-term arrangement the Arts Council would wish to reconsider its position in relation to the Courtyard. Written submissions are expected from the Arts Council and Courtyard in relation to these points. They will be presented orally at Cabinet.

Alternative Options

None

Risk Management

none

Consultees

A list of consultees is attached as page 17 of Appendix 1.

Background Papers

None identified.



Review of the Courtyard Centre for the Arts

Report by The Courtyard Review Group – January 2005

**As approved by the Social and
Economic Development Scrutiny
Committee on 31st January, 2005**

- ...Putting** people first
- ...Preserving** our heritage
- ...Promoting** our county
- ...Providing** for our communities
- ...Protecting** our future

Quality life in a quality county

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13. Ticket Pricing
14. Visual Arts
15. Economic Impact
16. Friends of the Courtyard
17. Building Maintenance
18. Conclusions
19. Next Steps
20. Recommendations

APPENDICES

- I Scoping Statement & Terms of Reference
- II List of Consultees
- III Examples of Comments Received in Consultation
- IV List of Interviewees
- V Financial Performance Since Opening
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1. Introduction

1.1 The purpose of the Review was to examine Herefordshire Council's funding contribution to The Courtyard Centre for the Arts and to consider how best to strike a balance between sustaining a key arts facility and the benefits to the wider community. The Review's aim was to provide guidance to the Cabinet Member (Community & Social Development) on the Council's future involvement with The Courtyard.

1.2 At its meeting on 24th September 2004, Cllr John Stone (Chair), Cllr Harry Bramer, Cllr Mrs Sylvia Daniels and Cllr John Guthrie were appointed by the Social & Economic Development Scrutiny Committee to serve on The Courtyard Review Group. The Scoping Statement of the Review and Terms of Reference are attached in Appendix I.

1.3 The Review was undertaken between October 2004 and January 2005. This report summarises the key findings of the Review and contains recommendations to the Cabinet Member (Community & Social Development).

1.4 The Review Group would like to express their thanks to the many witnesses, consultees and members of the public who submitted evidence during the Review. The Review Group are also very grateful for the assistance of Mrs Dorothy Wilson, Chief Executive of the Midlands Arts Centre and Chair of the Arts Council West Midlands who acted as advisor to the Review, and also to Martyn Green, Chief Executive of The Courtyard, and his staff for their co-operation and assistance.

2. Method of Gathering Information

i. Tour of The Courtyard & Ludlow Assembly Rooms

2.1 The Review Group commenced the Review at the beginning of October with a tour of The Courtyard and its facilities which was also attended by other Members of the Social & Economic Development Scrutiny Committee. Martyn Green, Chief Executive of The Courtyard gave Members a comprehensive tour of the building, providing an overview of its operation and current issues.

2.2 To gain further insight into the operation of an arts centre in a rural area, during the course of the Review, the Review Group visited the Ludlow Assembly Rooms. Members met with Paula Redway the venue's Director and discussed a range of issues.

ii. Written evidence

2.3 A considerable amount of documentation and financial information was considered by the Review Group during the course of the Review.

2.4 Written comments and views on The Courtyard were invited from members of the public at the beginning of the Review via articles in the local press and interviews, and news items on BBC Hereford & Worcester radio.

2.5 Written evidence was invited from thirty-nine individuals and organisations linked to The Courtyard. These included key stakeholders, user groups and resident organisations. The list of consultees is contained in Appendix II.

2.6 A questionnaire was prepared to help structure the consultation responses and respondents were invited to submit additional supporting information that may assist the Review. Written submissions were also invited from key officers at The Courtyard and within Herefordshire Council.

2.7 In summary, over 70% of consultees completed questionnaires or submitted written comments and supporting information for the Review. Sixteen emails and letters were received from members of the public. The vast majority of these made positive comments about The Courtyard and the wide range of entertainment and benefits it provides. Examples of comments received in the consultation are shown in Appendix III.

2.8 Letters in support of The Courtyard were also received from pupils at the Hereford Academy of Dance, Stretton Sugwas C.E. School and Burghill Primary School. Following an invitation from Burghill Primary School, Cllr Stone in his capacity as Chair of the Review visited the school to meet with pupils and receive their letters.

iii. Interviews

2.9 Following consideration of the written consultation responses and related evidence, the Review Group held interviews with fourteen key witnesses to enable specific issues to be discussed in more detail. The list of interviewees is contained in Appendix IV.

2.10 Seven interviews took place at a well attended public meeting of the Review Group held at the Shirehall on 23rd November. During the meeting the opportunity was provided for members of the public to raise questions and issues relevant to the Review for the Review Group to consider.

2.11 Key witness interviews were conducted in private where there was the possibility of breaching commercial confidentiality.

3. Background to The Courtyard

3.1 The Courtyard was built as a result of a partnership between the former Hereford City Council and the Arts Council. The facility opened in September 1998, and was one of the first projects funded by the National Lottery.

3.2 The arts centre is located on the site of what was originally Hereford's municipal swimming baths. In 1979, the public baths were converted to serve as the Nell Gwynne theatre. By the early 1990's, the site owned by the former City Council was in an extremely poor state. Plans for a major refurbishment developed into proposals for the construction of a new building, and a successful funding bid was submitted to the National Lottery to undertake the works.

3.3 Tenders for the construction of the new building came in significantly over the initial budget of £2.4M. A second lottery bid was subsequently made to meet the final build cost of approximately £4.9M and various elements of the scheme were trimmed to keep within the available budget. Match funding from Hereford City

Council included the site, adjacent car park, a 7-year funding agreement and a 99-year lease of the building.

3.4 In 1998, the building was handed over to The Courtyard Trust. The 7-year funding agreement with The Courtyard Trust was put in place by Hereford City Council which was subsequently inherited by Herefordshire Council.

4. The Building

4.1 Designed by Glenn Howells Architects, The Courtyard was a new concept in the provision of a small arts centre, which has since been copied in other areas. The building's contemporary and high quality design makes it a key landmark within the city.

4.2 The facility includes a 436 seat multi-purpose theatre, a 145 seat studio theatre, visual arts gallery, meeting and function rooms, rehearsal studio and a cafe, bar and restaurant.

4.3 The location of The Courtyard was dictated by the availability of the site of the previous Nell Gwynne theatre. While its location is not ideal, linkages with the City centre should improve as proposals for the regeneration of the Edgar Street Grid area are implemented and it is suggested that there is scope to improve the signing of the venue particularly from Edgar Street.

5. Role of The Courtyard

5.1 The Courtyard is a multi-purpose arts centre, which provides a mixed and diverse arts programme on a year round basis. It offers a wide range of entertainment and activities catering for a cross section of the community.

5.2 The arts centre hosts a wide range of theatre, music, comedy, dance, and film productions and is part of the social scene in Hereford and wider County. In addition to a programme of professional arts presentations, The Courtyard provides opportunities for the people of Herefordshire to participate in a wide range of arts activities and hosts a variety of highly successful amateur groups. The venue has a vibrant youth theatre and has developed strong links with key projects such as the Herefordshire Photography festival. The building provides accommodation for several resident arts organisations and its facilities can be hired out.

5.3 In terms of theatre productions, The Courtyard is a mixed receiving and producing venue. Over recent years the venue has developed an excellent reputation for its in-house productions and in particular its musical theatre, community theatre and Christmas pantomimes. While in-house theatre production is an expensive aspect of The Courtyard's work, it attracts extra funding from the Arts Council and provides benefits and opportunities to the community and local artists.

6. Education & Outreach

6.1 A wide range of education and outreach services are undertaken by The Courtyard working with schools, colleges and community groups throughout the

County. This work is key to enabling and encouraging arts related educational activities and increasing accessibility to the arts within the community.

6.2 Many Herefordshire schools, both primary and secondary, make extensive use of The Courtyard's facilities and attend drama productions and other related events. The Review Group understand that The Courtyard has begun to build productive relationships with individual teachers and schools across the County through a series of training events, providing professional development opportunities for teachers in visual and performing arts, teacher advisory group meetings and music, drama and dance workshops. This year The Courtyard organised a highly successful education conference that included keynote speakers of national repute which will become an annual event. It also provides a structured work experience programme for GCSE students interested in undertaking a career in the arts.

6.3 The Council's Education Directorate has a 3-year Service Level Agreement with The Courtyard which runs from 1st September 2003 to 31st August 2006. This provides funding of up to £33,000 per annum for an Education and Outreach Manager at The Courtyard and to support project development. The post's responsibilities include supporting formal education for pupils aged 5–19, early years, youth opportunities, lifelong learning (adults and older people) and outreach community work. The Review Group note that financial assistance of £10,000 has recently been made available from The Sylvia Short Education Charity towards the transport costs of schools attending workshops and performances at The Courtyard.

6.4 The venue is also used extensively by Herefordshire College of Art & Design for exhibitions of student work, student productions and performances including dance, music and drama. Over 400 local children and young people attend dance and drama classes at The Courtyard every week.

6.5 The Courtyard works in partnership with a host of other organisations which enables it to broaden the scope of its work and provide support to local groups.

7. Reputation of The Courtyard

7.1 The reputation of The Courtyard has increased steadily since it opened in 1998 helping to promote a positive image of the County. The venue is now recognised regionally and increasingly nationally, and regularly attracts performances with a national reputation.

7.2 The fact that The Courtyard is perceived as successful and vibrant by external funding bodies helps it draw in extra finance. The funding contribution made to The Courtyard by the Arts Council, for example, is proportionally in excess of other arts centres in the West Midlands.

7.3 The Courtyard helps enhance Herefordshire's growing reputation as a significant provider of arts activities and performances. This is particularly important to Herefordshire Council in the Cultural Services section of its Comprehensive Performance Assessment.

8. Funding

8.1 The Courtyard is a non-profit making organisation and currently has a turnover of approximately £1.5M. It generates income and receives funding from a range of sources. A break down of the organisation's annual financial performance between 1998-2004 is shown in Appendix V.

i. Herefordshire Council

8.2 In 1998, Hereford City Council negotiated a 7-year funding agreement with The Courtyard Trust which was subsequently inherited by Herefordshire Council. The Council is the highest grant funding source for The Courtyard, although the percentage of total income represented by the Council's funding has decreased over time.

8.3 A breakdown of Council funding contributions to The Courtyard since 1998 is shown in Appendix VI. The funding agreement was originally made up of a core grant of £278,000 which included a discretionary grant of £60,000 paid on the receipt of a business plan and a sum of £13,000 for repairs and renewals. The grant is index-linked and additional payments are deducted from the grant or paid back to the Council to cover, for example, leasing cost repayments for essential equipment omitted from the original building, and contributions towards the original building overspend.

8.4 In 2004/05, the grant which will be paid to The Courtyard by Herefordshire Council is £290,694 with a further £20,000 contribution to the joint sinking fund (for building maintenance) and £40,000 to Council Reserves in respect of the original capital scheme. A one-off additional payment of £100,000 was also made in the current financial year to assist The Courtyard address its current deficit and improve cash flow. The combined total cost to the Council in the current financial year will be £450,694.

8.5 The Courtyard currently receives by far the largest grant made to an arts organisation by Herefordshire Council. Funding is paid from the Council's Arts Service which has a total revenue budget of £522,116. This level of funding is based on the scale and scope of the services The Courtyard provides, and also its strategic significance and role within the County. The Review Group understand that the Herefordshire Council grant helps give confidence to other organisations such as the Arts Council to invest in the facility.

ii. Arts Council West Midlands

8.6 The Arts Council West Midlands is the other major grant contributor to The Courtyard. The organisation currently has a 2-year funding agreement with The Courtyard up to 31st March 2006. This offers funding of £158,909 in 2004/05 and £162,882 in 2005/6. The grant is awarded as a contribution to core operating costs and the costs of delivering a year round mixed arts programme. The Arts Council have provided funding to various degrees over the past seven years and have also made supplementary awards to support specific initiatives.

8.7 In April 2003, The Courtyard was designated a Regularly Funded Organisation and received a substantial increase in funding from the Arts Council (417%) as a result of the National Theatre Review. This increase was provided to enable The Courtyard to develop its in-house producing. The significant investment made by the Arts Council is in recognition of the key role The

Courtyard has in supporting the arts infrastructure in the region and demonstrates the Arts Council's confidence in the facility.

9. Accumulated Deficit

9.1 At the start of the 2003/04 financial year The Courtyard (together with the Trading Company) was carrying a consolidated accumulated deficit of £277,000, which has come about for a number of reasons. These include the Trust having to pay back in excess of £100,000 of leasing costs over the past five years for essential equipment that was in the original National Lottery funding agreement but which, due to the building overspend, had to be omitted. In the past, The Courtyard has also been very much focused on the arts rather than business and financial management.

9.2 It is acknowledged that monitoring of financial budgets and accounting has improved significantly in recent years. Measures have been put in place to improve The Courtyard's financial position and to address its deficit. In 2003/04, the organisation made a small surplus in its consolidated accounts, which turned around a deficit of £137,656 on the previous year.

9.3 An additional £100,000 of funding has been approved by Herefordshire Council in the current financial year to help The Courtyard address its deficit and improve the organisation's cash flow. The approval was linked to the development of a new commissioning agreement between the Council and The Courtyard to provide a more structured and focused approach to funding arrangements. By reducing and eventually eliminating its deficit, The Courtyard will be in a much stronger position to move forward.

10. Financial Improvements

10.1 Although relatively new, The Board of The Courtyard is highly committed and the Review Group understand that relations with staff have improved significantly over recent years. It is understood that the position of a staff representative on the Board is currently vacant but should be filled in the near future.

10.2 A range of cost cutting measures and ways of generating additional income have been considered by the Board to address the deficit and improve the organisation's financial standing. These measures have included the introduction of car parking charges, a review of ticket pricing policy and better negotiation of production agreements.

10.3 Staffing numbers and costs have risen over the last five years. While it is acknowledged that this has been a result of the growth of the organisation, the Review Group suggest that these should be closely monitored in the new commissioning agreement.

10.4 A Business Development Manager was appointed by The Courtyard in December 2003 which is welcomed by the Review Group. The post has been sponsored by Arts & Business for an initial period of two years after which it is intended to be self-funding. The principal aim of the role is to develop existing revenue streams and create new ones such as advertising, sponsorship, and

corporate membership. This development of alternative revenue streams is crucial for the long-term development of The Courtyard.

11. New Income Generation

11.1 Over the past two years it is recognised that The Courtyard has made significant improvements to its financial position and budget monitoring. This has been a significant achievement and it is important that The Courtyard continues to maximise opportunities for earned income, and to seek additional resources for project work. During the course of the Review a number of suggested areas for additional income generation have been identified by the Review Group:

i. Retail Shop

11.2 The feasibility of establishing a retail shop in the entrance foyer should be explored. This area provides a natural 'shop window' for the sale of arts products, books and gifts. While the cost and management arrangements would need to be investigated, this would appear to be a potential additional income stream which could be exploited and which could possibly assist The Friends of The Courtyard to generate funds.

ii. Catering

11.3 Up until Autumn 2003, the financial performance of The Courtyard Trading Company had been disappointing with the company only managing to break even. Efficiency improvements have subsequently been implemented and the results for 2003/4 showed a surplus of £36,180.

11.4 A regular review of the catering at The Courtyard is suggested to ensure that its income generating potential is being maximised. This could include surveys to monitor customer satisfaction and generate feedback on areas for improvement. The eating areas have a very pleasant atmosphere, however the economic viability of the first floor restaurant is questioned. The cost-benefit of franchising out catering to the private sector should be explored and assessed.

iii. Dedicated Cinema

11.5 Further development of film has the potential of being a lucrative activity for The Courtyard. This could help generate additional revenue for the venue and create audiences that could spend on other aspects of the facility. The screening of children's films during the school holidays is an example of a potential activity that could be developed further to increase income. The creation of a dedicated cinema within The Courtyard could potentially be a longer-term aspiration. The feasibility and possible funding for this from sources such as Screen West Midlands could be explored.

iv. Conferences / Corporate Sponsorship

11.6 It is appreciated that Hereford does not have the hotel capacity required for major conferences. The Courtyard offers a quality venue and further expansion of conference trade and corporate catering should be encouraged.

11.7 Although corporate contributions are unlikely to be significant in a rural County like Herefordshire, The Courtyard has been successful in attracting

private sector sponsorship which amounted to approximately £39,000 in 2003/04. While sponsorship should continue to be pursued, it has been suggested that the trust fund sector is likely to be a more lucrative means of income generation.

v. Friends Of The Courtyard

11.8 It is acknowledged that the Friends of The Courtyard make a significant contribution to fund raising and the running of The Courtyard through volunteers. The opportunity for further fund raising and volunteering by the Friends should continue to be explored with support from the Trust.

vi. Music Bands

11.9 It is suggested that the market for live music may be a potential area which could be further developed at The Courtyard. The Courtyard is one of the largest seated venues in the County and hosting modern music concerts could have the potential to generate significant audiences. Specific requirements for a flat floor stage and technical management to facilitate such events would need to be investigated.

vii. Sale of Art

11.10 In its capacity as an arts centre, The Courtyard could look at generating additional income from the sale of arts related goods. Opportunities could include holding arts related design and craft shows at The Courtyard to complement the Herefordshire Contemporary Crafts Fair and generating commission from expanding the sale of exhibited paintings and photographs.

12. Additional Space Requirements

12.1 The availability of space within The Courtyard is a significant constraint on its development. Limited space is particularly an issue with respect to the back stage area, changing rooms and office accommodation.

12.2 In the short term, this is unlikely to be resolved and the efficiency with which space is currently used within the building should be maximised. An analysis of footfall and usage within the building at different times is suggested as a means of assisting this process.

12.3 In the longer term, the use of space should be reviewed more comprehensively. It is suggested that consideration could be given to the location of the main entrance to The Courtyard which may be better located towards the car park end of the building in order to improve access arrangements. The feasibility of extending the building could be explored to provide additional rehearsal space and meeting rooms, and to provide a new studio theatre, enabling the current one to be converted into a dedicated cinema facility. It is appreciated that an extension could decrease the amount of car parking and associated income, however it may be possible to alter the layout to compensate for this.

12.4 Pressure on office accommodation could possibly be assisted by taking on additional premises elsewhere in the town, however, the business case for this would need evaluating. The Review Group understand that the Alloy Jewellers Group, a resident organisation at The Courtyard, contribute to lighting and

heating expenses for their workshop but do not pay rent. While recognising the arts benefits of this organisation, the potential for a rental contribution could be reviewed.

12.5 It is suggested that physical expansion could potentially enable increased provision at The Courtyard to meet growing demand and help generate additional income to improve viability. Additional funding would need to be explored from the private sector or external organisations such as Screen West Midlands or Advantage West Midlands to facilitate any expansion.

13. Ticket Pricing

13.1 As a result of improvements to marketing, over the past year The Courtyard has seen a significant increase in income from ticket sales. For 2004/5, sales up to November were £437,000, compared to £347,000 in 2003/04 and £340,000 in 2002/3. The potential for increasing ticket prices for commercial gain needs to be balanced with providing opportunities for a cross section of the community. Herefordshire has one of the lowest wage rates in the West Midlands region and people have a limited proportion of their income to spend on leisure activities. Too high a price will deter potential users.

13.2 The level at which tickets are pitched, specifically for families and children, can sometimes make a visit to see a show exclusive. The Courtyard has introduced concessionary, schools and community rates. Additional ways, however, of encouraging socially excluded groups and specific users such as students to attend performances should be explored.

14. Visual Arts

14.1 The Courtyard contains gallery space for visual art displays and holds exhibitions throughout the year. Work is chosen by an exhibition panel which includes representation from the Council and arts advisers. The position of the gallery on the second floor of the building is out of the public eye and suffers from water damage caused by a leaking roof. Clearly this is detrimental to the profile of the visual arts activities, and contributes to a situation where sales of work by contemporary Herefordshire artists cannot be maximised.

14.2 There are limited spaces in Hereford and the wider County to showcase visual arts and The Courtyard provides a valuable facility to meet this need. It is suggested that the location and signposting of visual arts at The Courtyard should be reviewed and that options for generating further income from the sale and display of work are explored.

15. Economic Impact

15.1 Hereford is a sub-regional centre for business and tourism. In common with other key arts facilities, The Courtyard makes a significant contribution to the local economy in two ways; directly and indirectly.

15.2 Its direct impact is made up of local spending. For example the amount spent on purchasing supplies locally, or the amount spent on staff wages. The indirect impact takes into account the knock on effect which is generated by the

direct impacts where money spent results in more money being spent in the local economy. An example includes purchasing supplies from a local company which results in that company spending on their staff wages or purchasing other supplies. The Courtyard also helps bring investment and visitors to the County and enhances the visitor experience.

15.3 A formula for calculating economic impact devised by Prof. Dominic Shellard of Sheffield University has been adopted by the Arts Council to calculate a theatre's economic impact. An economic impact study of the Gloucester Everyman Theatre carried out in January 2004 showed a contribution of £9.3M to the local economy. It is suggested that an economic impact calculation is undertaken by The Courtyard to help determine the extent of its benefit to the Herefordshire economy.

16. Friends of the Courtyard

16.1 The Courtyard has a growing and successful Friends scheme. The Friends were set up as a supportive and fund raising arm of The Courtyard and have around 1500 members. The Review Group have been informed that more than £37,000 has been raised over the past four years. These contributions have helped purchase items such as technical stage equipment, computers and furnishings, and provided bursaries and sponsorship to young people.

16.2 Almost all the shows, events and films including those put on by visiting societies and other organisation are stewarded by Friends. Many Friends also offer their time voluntarily to help with mailings and a variety of fund-raising activities, thereby providing a crucial level of support for The Courtyard at no cost.

17. Building Maintenance

17.1 Maintenance of The Courtyard is paid for via a sinking fund set up by the Council. A sum is deducted annually from the Council's core grant and paid into the fund which is jointly managed by the Council and The Courtyard.

17.2 Funding for The Courtyard was agreed before the venue came into use, but because of financial problems, the original agreement has been revised on several occasions. The net effect has been to reduce the amount of money deposited in the sinking fund for essential repairs, renovations and replacements.

17.3 There are long-standing problems with the building relating to the lift and to water ingress through the glazing systems. These relate to the original building construction and have been subject to on-going negotiations between Herefordshire Council and the contractors. It is understood that problems with the lift have been resolved and orders placed for refurbishment and for making the lift compliant with the Disability Discrimination Act. Potential health and safety issues were also identified by the Review Group relating to the design of windows in The Courtyard's offices. These problems, however, should be relatively easy to overcome.

18. Conclusions

i. Benefits of The Courtyard

18.1 The Courtyard plays a central role in the cultural provision for Herefordshire and is a catalyst for the arts generally within the County. It is widely considered as an essential part of the quality of life within the County by its users.

18.2 As Herefordshire is a rural County with a low population base, it is particularly important that there is a recognised centre for the arts catering for a broad range of activity. The Courtyard provides quality arts programming locally which would not otherwise exist. Without the facility the people of Herefordshire would have to travel to other Counties to have access to the arts.

18.3 The Courtyard is involved in a variety of arts activities, however public perception is focused on its role as a theatre rather than an arts centre. Many aspects of The Courtyard's activities, for example, its education and outreach work and support for other local arts organisations are not widely recognised and would benefit from further promotion. While it may be more cost effective to concentrate solely on aspects such as theatre and film, its diversity is considered one of its key strengths. It is acknowledged that in-house production is a highly successful aspect of The Courtyard's work but relatively expensive. The level of activity in this area could be reviewed again in the future as a way of potentially reducing costs while recognising the need to balance this against the delivery requirements of the Arts Council's funding agreement. The potential of working in partnership with other theatres to commission new productions could also be further explored as a way of sharing costs.

18.4 The Courtyard is integral to developing the quality of education in the County. It has been very successful in raising the profile of the arts in schools and in engaging young people in a range of arts related activities. The Courtyard is a very important focal point for pupils, schools and colleges across the County and it is seen as a valuable resource and asset.

ii. Grant Funding

18.5 Herefordshire Council is the principal grant funder of The Courtyard. The core finance provided by the Council is key to the operation of the facility and to helping The Courtyard secure funding from other sources.

18.6 A significant reduction in funding would have serious implications on the levels of service that The Courtyard could be expected to provide, and on the impact that the organisation could hope to have in the future. In particular, a significant reduction in Council funding at the current time would adversely affect the ability of The Courtyard to meet the Arts Council's requirements in their funding agreement. The Courtyard would have less disposable income leading to increased conservatism in its programme and work. This would erode the scope and impact of the deliverable arts services it provides.

18.7 Council budgets remain under considerable pressure and The Courtyard must be able to demonstrate value for money. A budget prioritisation process is currently being undertaken and efficiency savings are being identified across the Council. The funding contribution to The Courtyard should not be exempt from this process. Currently approximately 50% of the Council's arts budget is

allocated to The Courtyard. It is recognised that there is increasing budgetary pressure on this and other services in the Policy & Community Directorate.

18.8 The Courtyard provides significant benefit to education within the County. It is recommended that the Education Directorate are asked to consider evaluating the benefit of The Courtyard to their service area and alter their financial contribution accordingly in order to decrease the onus on the Policy & Community Directorate.

iii. Commercial Viability

18.9 In recent years The Courtyard has made substantial steps to improve its financial position and bring about positive change in the operation of the facility. This is primarily a result of the dedication and professionalism of its staff and Board.

18.10 The Courtyard is now in a better position to develop further and to show an increased value of return on the Council's investment. While recognising that it is a non-profit making organisation, The Courtyard needs to be financially sustainable and recommendations for additional income generation are suggested to help put the facility on a more sound commercial footing.

iv. New Commissioning Agreement

18.11 The Council's current 7-year funding agreement with The Courtyard ends in March 2005. A new commissioning agreement, negotiations for which commenced prior to the Review, will provide a more structured and focused approach to the Council's funding. The draft 5-year agreement seen by the Review Group represents a new way of working with The Courtyard and will enable the Council to be clear on what services it is purchasing as well as reflecting the priorities of The Courtyard. The inclusion of clearly defined monitoring procedure for the agreement are welcomed by the Review Group.

18.12 It is recommended that the commissioning agreement includes performance indicator targets to specifically monitor the economic and financial viability of the facility. Examples could include levels of earned income, the scale of fundraising achieved and an assessment of economic impact.

18.13 The Review Group understand that in order to enable The Courtyard to plan effectively and to give other funders confidence to invest in the facility the agreement needs to be for a minimum of 3-years.

18.14 Before the 5-year agreement is put in place, it is recommended that The Courtyard is encouraged to consider and implement proposals to further improve income generation and the viability of the facility outlined in this report.

19. Next Steps

19.1 The Review Group anticipate that, if approved by the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee, this report will be presented to Cabinet for consideration. The Review Group hope that the findings contained in this report will form the basis of a funding agreement with The Courtyard. The Review Group also anticipate that further scrutiny or review will be undertaken via reports to the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee in the future.

20. Recommendations

20.1 The Review has highlighted the wide variety and high standard of work undertaken by The Courtyard and the valuable contribution it makes to the local community and to arts provision within the County. The organisation has made significant improvements over recent years and now has the potential to move forward on a more secure commercial footing. Since opening, The Courtyard has made substantial progress and the venue has tremendous opportunity for the future. The following recommendations are made by the Review Group:

20.2 The Council's financial contribution to The Courtyard should not be exempt from any efficiency savings being made within the Policy & Community Directorate.

20.3 The Education Directorate are invited to assess the benefits provided by The Courtyard to their service area and consider contributing a higher level of funding which is more representative of the value of service received in order to reduce the current onus on the Policy & Community Directorate.

20.4 The suggestions for additional income generation measures and improving financial viability contained in this report are considered and actioned by The Courtyard where they are considered financially prudent.

20.5 The Courtyard is offered an interim 1-year funding agreement from March 2005, while proposals for additional income generation and improved financial viability are progressed.

20.6 The Courtyard be invited to report back to the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee in November 2005 to provide an update on the organisation's financial position and progress on addressing the suggestions and recommendations raised in this report.

20.7 On receipt of a satisfactory report, The Courtyard is offered a 5-year commissioning agreement in April 2006.

20.8 At the end of the 1-year agreement if the recommendations have not been satisfactorily addressed, then a further 1-year period should be considered, to give The Courtyard further time to demonstrate its proposals for improved financial viability.

**THE COURTYARD REVIEW
SCOPING STATEMENT & TERMS OF REFERENCE**

1. TERMS OF REFERENCE

- To provide a historical background on the establishment of The Courtyard to the current day.
- To review the contribution Herefordshire Council makes to The Courtyard.
- To consider how best to strike a balance between sustaining a key arts facility and the benefits to the wider community.
- Following the review to advise the Cabinet Member (Community and Social Development) on the best framework to put in place in respect of the future involvement of Herefordshire Council with The Courtyard.

2. DESIRED OUTCOMES

- For the current funding arrangements to be fully examined in an open and transparent way. (subject to confidentiality)
- For Members of the working group to consider and to formulate a range of options on the future of Herefordshire Council's involvement with The Courtyard.
- To establish the wider benefits /or otherwise of The Courtyard Centre for the Arts to the people of Herefordshire.

3. KEY QUESTIONS

- Consider what means of measurement can be used to judge the success or otherwise of The Courtyard.
- By examination of comments and complaints identify the elements of concern.
- To enquire from local user groups their views on The Courtyard and its future.
- To consider the views of the public, interested parties and other funders on the benefits or otherwise of The Courtyard now and in the future.

LIST OF CONSULTEES

Howard Evans	Chairman, Friends of the Courtyard
Colonel Peter Weeks	Treasurer, Friends of the Courtyard
Miss Jessica Robinson	Professional Performer
Ms Nicky Candy	Volunteer
Mrs Janet Williams	Volunteer
Marc Wilkes	Volunteer
Sue Lane	Resident Courtyard Organisation, Alloy Jewellers Group
Dr Ellie Parker	Resident Courtyard Organisation, New Theatre Works
Nina Gustavsson	Resident Courtyard Organisation, Exposure Photograph Festival
Robert Strawson	Resident Courtyard Organisation, Music Pool
Tamsin Fitzgerald	Resident Courtyard Organisation, 2-Faced Dance
Michelle Holder	Resident Courtyard Organisation, DanceFest
Paul Morris	Representative from Amateur Company Chairman, Hereford Amateur Operatic Society
Mrs. Sarah-Jane Price	Representative from Amateur Company Hereford Academy of Dance
Mrs. Sue Maud	Exhibition Selection Group member
Miss Stephanie Edmonds	Team Leader (Arts), Arts Council England, West Midlands
Mr Colin Walker	Regional Director, Arts and Business West Midlands
Steve Chapman	Head of Funding & Policy, Screen West Midlands
The Right Reverend Anthony Priddis	The Lord Bishop of Hereford, Regional Cultural Consortium
Matt Watkins	Professional former Youth Theatre Member
Mr Sam Meehan	User of Youth Theatre
Leoni Linton	User of Youth Theatre
Mina Nakamura	User of Youth Theatre
Ellen Body	User of Youth Theatre
Martin Moxley	John Masefield School for the Performing Arts
Julie Duckworth	Headteacher, Clehonger School
John Sheppard	Headteacher, Haywood High School
Richard Heatly	Principal, Hereford College of Art & Design
Dr Jonathan Godfrey	Principal, Hereford Sixth Form College
William Lyons	Area Manager, Chamber of Commerce Herefordshire & Worcestershire
Phil Edwards	Community Safety Unit
Linda Arnold	Hereford Concert Society
Nic Millington	Rural Media Company
Natalia Silver	Cultural Services Manager, Herefordshire Council
Greg Evans	Principal Accountancy Manager, Herefordshire Council
Stuart Gent	Head of Property Services, Herefordshire Council
Ted St. George	Head of Inspection Advice & School Performance, Herefordshire Council
Jon Ralph	Community Youth Service Manager, Herefordshire Council
Mel Bateman	Principal Arts Officer, Herefordshire Council

EXAMPLES OF COMMENTS RECEIVED IN CONSULTATION

‘Our school does a lot of things there we enjoy; being an audience to the pantomimes and musicals, activity days every year, dance clubs, drama clubs and young farmers.’ (Pupil - Stretton Sugwas C.E. School)

‘The Courtyard provides excellent unparalleled facilities and opportunities for the appreciation and performance of the arts, both participatory and non participatory’ (Hereford Concert Society)

‘It has a skilled and dedicated staff that work as a close-knit team without whom no productions would succeed’ (Friends of the Courtyard)

‘It’s an unmatched facility used by the broadest spectrum of the community’ (Arts & Business West Midlands)

‘a significant reduction in funding would have serious implications on the levels of service that The Courtyard could be expected to provide’ (Arts Council, West Midlands)

‘we really want to become brilliant actors and dancers but if we didn’t have anywhere to perform in Hereford then we would probably never ever have our dream come true’ (Student, Hereford Academy of Dance)

‘meeting rooms are poor quality, cramped and noisy, pedestrian access is poor’ (Herefordshire College of Arts & Design)

‘Hereford without The Courtyard would be like a full board hotel without breakfast, lunch or dinner.’ (Member of the public)

‘A flagship for the Arts Council and lottery funded venture that is working’ (Hereford Amateur Operatic Society)

‘Lots of pupils from our school visit the theatre every year for trips and it is very enjoyable’ (Pupil, Burghill Primary School)

‘The Anne Frank exhibition is an example of the way The Courtyard has successfully projected anti-racism and diversity amongst schools.’ (Community Safety and Drugs Partnership)

‘The contribution it makes to the economic and social fabric of the county will continue to be vital and should be maintained’ (Hereford Sixth Form College)

‘The building is a marvellous feature of Hereford and on entering the vibrant, welcoming atmosphere is apparent’ (Volunteer at The Courtyard)

‘As a family, we regularly attend productions at The Courtyard. These productions are generally of extremely high quality, and are always stimulating and enjoyable.’ (Member of the public)

LIST OF INTERVIEWEES

Margaret Thomas	Chair of Trustees, The Courtyard
Martyn Green	Chief Executive, The Courtyard
Todd Fower	Finance Manager, The Courtyard
Richard Heatley	Principal, Herefordshire College of Art & Design
Stephanie Edmonds	Team Leader, Arts Council England West Midlands
William Lyons	Area Manager, Chamber of Commerce H&W
Howard Evans	Chairman, Friends of The Courtyard
Janet Willams	Courtyard Volunteer
Paul Morris	Chairman, Hereford Amateur Operatic Society
Paul Murray	General Inspector, Education Directorate, Herefordshire Council
Greg Evans	Principal Accountancy Manager, Herefordshire Council
Geoff Cole	Head of Culture & Leisure, Herefordshire Council
Natalia Silver	Cultural Services Manager, Herefordshire Council
Stuart Gent	Head of Property Services, Herefordshire Council

Annual Financial Performance Since Opening
(Source: The Courtyard)

	Year ended 31-Mar-99	Year ended 31-Mar-00	Year ended 31-Mar-01	Year ended 31-Mar-02	Year ended 31-Mar-03	Year ended 31-Mar-04
	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000	£000
INCOME						
Turnover	274	484	523	449	509	597
Council Grant	338	282	285	290	295	300
Other Grants	16	26	82	112	77	218
Donations/sponsorship	24	19	9	37	32	39
Sundry	13	10	27	35	34	27
Trading company	132	158	16	251	361	384
	797	979	942	1,174	1,308	1,565
EXPENSES						
Production costs	280	393	430	396	422	536
Marketing costs	66	44	56	66	65	60
Other costs	344	420	420	504	593	621
Trading company	174	179	19	241	365	347
	864	1,036	925	1,207	1,445	1,564
Net deficit	-67	-57	17	-33	-137	1
Cumulative deficit	-67	-124	-107	-140	-277	-276

APPENDIX VI

Herefordshire Council Financial Assistance
(Source: Herefordshire Council)

Year	1	2	3	4	5	6	7					
Courtyard Grant Funding	1998-99	Inflation @ RPI	Inflation @ RPI	2000-2001	Inflation @ RPI	2001-2002	Inflation @ RPI	2002-03	Inflation @ RPI	2003-04	Inflation @ RPI	2004-05
Core Funding	205,000	3,280	3,749	212,029	4,453	216,482	4,546	221,028	5,084	226,112	5,653	231,765
Repairs and Renewals	13,000	208	238	13,446	282	13,728	288	14,016	322	14,338	358	14,696
Discretionary sum	60,000	960	1,097	62,057	1,303	63,360	1,331	64,691	1,488	66,179	1,654	67,833
Total grant due to Courtyard	278,000	282,448	287,532	293,570	299,735	306,629	314,294					
Less:												
Residual balance		1,000	2,000	3,500	5,000	6,500	8,000					
Loan: Principal			15,000	10,000	15,000	15,000	15,000					
Interest			4,340	3,200	2,400	1,500	600					
Total grant paid to Courtyard	278,000	281,448	266,192	276,870	277,335	283,629	290,694					
Additional payments made												
loans to assist with cashflow and trading position		75,000										100,000
Payments from sink fund	20,000		35,000									
Total payment to Courtyard	298,000	356,448	301,192	276,870	277,335	283,629	390,694					
Internal transactions												
Capital funding repayment	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000	40,000					40,000
Sinking fund contribution	0	20,000	5,000	20,000	20,000	20,000	20,000					20,000
Total cost to Council	338,000	0	346,192	336,870	337,335	343,629	450,694					

20. Recommendations

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COMMUNITY EQUIPMENT/INDEPENDENT LIVING

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: SOCIAL CARE AND STRATEGIC HOUSING

CABINET

17TH FEBRUARY, 2005

Wards Affected

County wide

Purpose

To receive a report on developments in the Community Equipment Service and to consider the future direction of the Service.

Key Decision

This is not a key decision

Recommendation

- THAT (a) the report be noted; and**
- (b) future development of the Service be supported as follows:**
- **Further integration work with the Strategic Housing Service**
 - **Investigation of the option of alternative providers for Community Equipment Services**

Reasons

At the Budget Panel meeting in November 2004, an undertaking was given to report back to Cabinet on the developments in the integrated Community Equipment service and associated services to facilitate Independent Living.

Considerations

1. Community Equipment ranges from simple care equipment, such as commodes, chair raisers and bath seats, to more sophisticated equipment such as computerised sensory equipment, automatic fall detectors and remote sensor devices. Community equipment and assistive technology can keep people out of residential care, prevent accidents such as falls, reduce hospital admissions and give a more effective and safer discharge from hospital.
2. In March 2000, the Audit Commission's published "Fully Equipped", a report on the provision of some forms of equipment to older or disabled people by the NHS or social services in England and Wales. It concluded that the organisation of equipment services was a recipe for confusion, inequality and inefficiency. The report found that service users did not always receive equipment of reasonable quality and that many services were fragmented.

3. The Commission called for action to improve standards, provide a fairer service and make equipment services an important component of strategies designed to promote independence. The Department of Health also established a national implementation team with responsibility for helping NHS trusts and social services to deliver a single integrated community equipment service by April 2004.
4. The single integrated Community Equipment Service is defined as one meeting the following criteria:
 - Pooled Health and Social Care budget contributions
 - A Single Operational Manager for the Service and a Single point of contact for services.
 - A Board to advise the manager, whose members include representatives of Local authorities and NHS organisations and professionals who assess equipment needs.
 - Unified Stock
5. The action plan to achieve integration was approved by Herefordshire's Health and Care Partnership in October 2002. At the time it was acknowledged that outsourcing the Community Equipment Service might be an option for consideration in the future, but that the immediate aim of securing a single integrated service by April 2004 should be the priority. The Section 31 partnership arrangement under the Health Act Flexibilities was formally signed on 31st March, 2004.
6. Government targets have been set for the service as follows:
 - To increase by 50% the number of people in receipt of equipment.
 - To increase the percentage of items of equipment and adaptations delivered within 7 days.
7. Cabinet will be aware that meeting these targets has been challenging. The Commission for Social Care Inspection Performance Review Report was presented to Cabinet on 23rd September, 2004, where the commentary on Adult Services included concerns on equipment services. The initial assessment of the percentage of items of equipment delivered within 7 days was 38%, but following a review of activity and data the indicator performance was validated at 63%. An action plan to further improve this indicator is being implemented. The 2004/05 target of 68% is likely to be exceeded.
8. In February 2005, the Community Equipment Service will be subject to a further Audit Commission audit carried out on behalf of the Health Care Commission.
9. Further challenges have been the securing of finance for future development. Investment from the Primary Care Trust (PCT) includes the employment of Occupational Therapists and District Nurses, who assess the need for equipment. The Council's contribution to the pooled budget has been for the operational running of the Community Equipment Store.
10. A New Manager has been in post since July 2004. Since that time the following developments have taken place:
 - Partnership Board established

- Advisory Board, with service user representation, established
 - Enhanced transport arrangements which was a barrier to delivering equipment quickly
 - Eligibility Criteria has been reviewed
 - Access to Direct Payments for service users is being explored
 - Servicing and repair arrangements reviewed
 - Improved delivery presentation and information for users
 - Incorporation of specialist seating in schools
 - Inclusion of further services is being explored
11. Although progress has been made, further development is required. The Best Value Review of Physical Disabilities which reported to Strategic Monitoring Committee in January 2005, included a number of recommendations, making the links between independent living and appropriate housing. Further integration with the work currently coordinated by the Strategic Housing division is needed.
12. The Private Sector Housing section provides the link to a number of services to encourage independent living:
- **Disabled Facilities Grants**
These are available towards the cost of providing adaptations and facilities to enable a disabled person to continue living at home. There is a financial limit on the value of grants that can be made under this scheme, the need for additional finance falls on the directorate budget.
 - **You @ Home Repairs on Prescription**
The scheme assists with carrying out essential or urgent works that have been identified and referred by Health or other key workers. This includes minor adaptations (i.e. costing less than £1000) funded by the Community Equipment Service's pooled budget.
 - **Energy Efficiency Scheme**
Assistance is aimed at elderly owner occupiers and private tenants and households on very low incomes towards certain repairs and energy efficiency measures in the home.
 - **Handyperson Scheme**
The Anchor " Staying Put" Agency operates a small scale repairs service which assists older or disabled people with maintenance and repair works.
13. The link between all areas of Independent Living has been highlighted in the Prime Minister's Strategy Unit Policy document "Improving the Life Chances of Disabled People," published on 19th January, 2005. The report recommends that a new way of supporting disabled people is needed, focussed on the goal of independent living. There should be a move towards individual budgets for disabled people, drawing together the services to which they are entitled and giving them greater choice over the mix of support they receive in the form of cash and/or direct provision of services.

This policy needs to be taken into account in any future developments.

Consultees

Social care users, carers, stakeholders and partners.

Background Papers

None identified.

Document is Restricted

