

A G E N D A

Social & Economic Development Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Tuesday, 22nd March, 2005**

Time: **10.00 a.m.**

Place: ***Committee Room 1,
Shirehall,
Hereford***

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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**County of Herefordshire
District Council**

AGENDA

for the Meeting of the Social & Economic Development Scrutiny Committee

To:	Councillor	A.C.R. Chappell (Chairman)
	Councillor	J. Stone (Vice-Chairman)
	Councillors	H. Bramer, M.R. Cunningham, Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels, J.G.S. Guthrie, B. Hunt, Mrs. R.F. Lincoln, P.G. Turpin and A.L. Williams
	Co-opted Members	Ms. C. Jones (Chamber of Commerce), G. Jones (Tourism Sector), Mrs. E. Newman ((Herefordshire Association of Local Council's)) and Mr. P. Thomas (Herefordshire National Farmers Union)

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
To receive apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)	
To receive details any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST	
To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
4. MINUTES	1 - 8
To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 31st January 2005.	
5. THE COURTYARD REVIEW - UPDATE	9 - 22
To consider the response of Cabinet and the Board of the Courtyard to the report of the Courtyard Review Group.	
6. PEDESTRIANISATION - UPDATE	23 - 24
To update Members on the consultation on the proposed pedestrianisation of Widemarsh Street, Hereford.	
7. EXTERNAL FUNDING UPDATE	25 - 34
To provide Members with an update on a range of External Funding Programmes which are currently benefiting Herefordshire.	
8. PARISH COUNCIL LIASON UPDATE	35 - 36
To provide Members with an update on the Herefordshire Council's Parish	

	Council Liaison activity.	
9.	POLICY AND COMMUNITY DIRECTORATE 2004/05 FIRST TEN MONTHS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS	37 - 46
	To inform Members of the performance of the non-corporate functions of the Policy and Community Directorate against their national and local performance indicators for the first ten months of 2004/05. To outline the key service issues arising during the period and detail the main areas of activity undertaken by those services during the four months since the last report.	
10.	ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING - RESULT OF REINSPECTION	47 - 48
	To advise Members of the outcome of the reinspection of the Council's Adult and Community Learning provision.	
11.	SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2005/06	49 - 50
	To consider a new work programme.	

PUBLIC INFORMATION

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Education, Environment, Health, Social Care and Housing and Social and Economic Development. A Strategic Monitoring Committee scrutinises Policy and Finance matters and co-ordinates the work of these Committees.

The purpose of the Committees is to ensure the accountability and transparency of the Council's decision making process.

The principal roles of Scrutiny Committees are to

- Help in developing Council policy
- Probe, investigate, test the options and ask the difficult questions before and after decisions are taken
- Look in more detail at areas of concern which may have been raised by the Cabinet itself, by other Councillors or by members of the public
- "call in" decisions - this is a statutory power which gives Scrutiny Committees the right to place a decision on hold pending further scrutiny.
- Review performance of the Council
- Conduct Best Value reviews
- Undertake external scrutiny work engaging partners and the public

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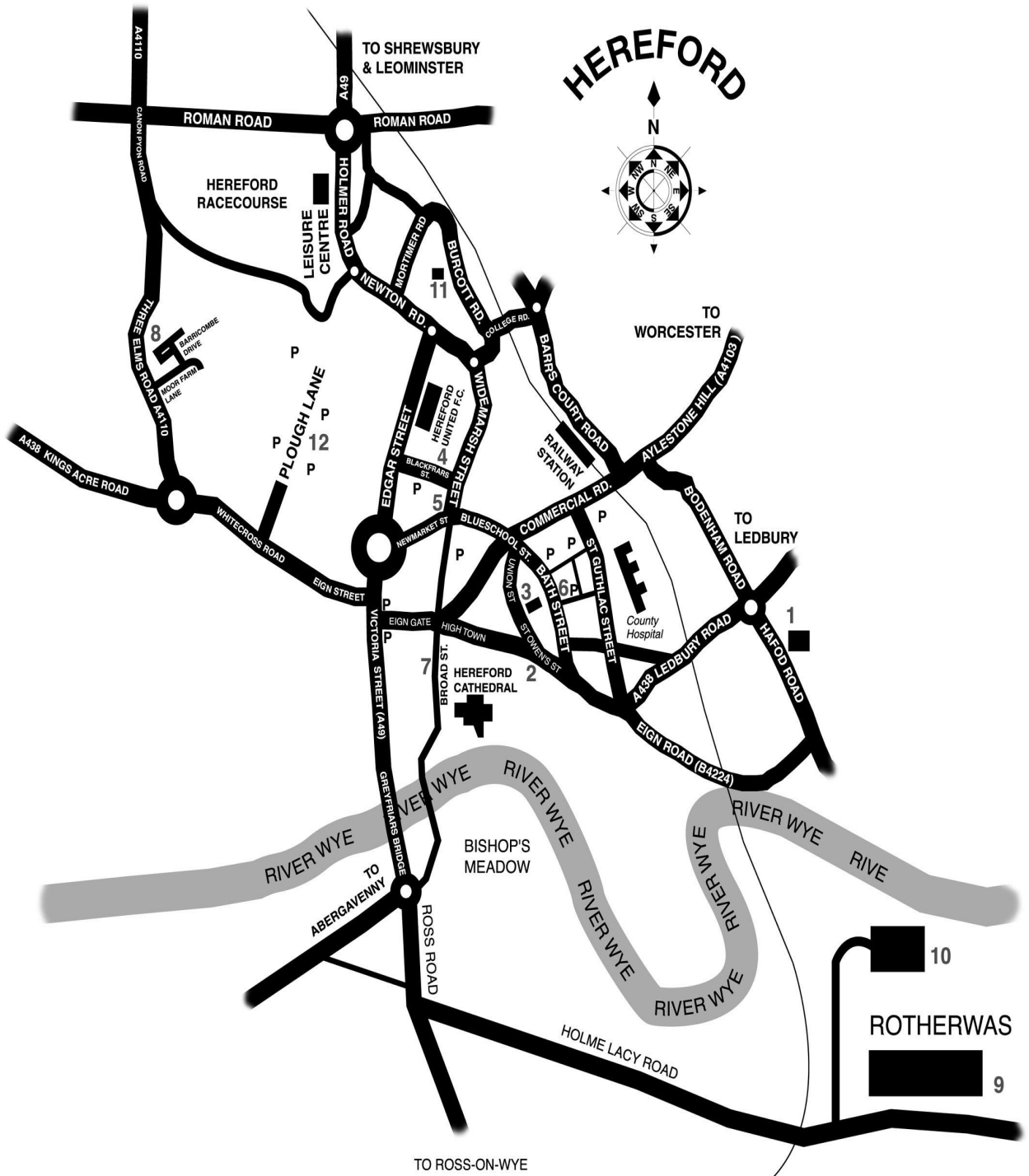
1. Sound the Alarm
2. Call the Fire Brigade
3. Fire party - attack the fire with appliances available.

ON HEARING THE ALARM

Leave the building by the nearest exit and proceed to assembly area on:

GAOL STREET CAR PARK

Section Heads will call the roll at the place of assembly.



- | | | | |
|---|------------------|----|-------------------------------|
| 1 | Brockington | 7 | Kemble House |
| 2 | Town Hall | 8 | Trinity House |
| 3 | Shire Hall | 9 | Thorn Office Centre |
| 4 | Education Centre | 10 | Herefordshire Jarvis Services |
| 5 | Garrick House | 11 | Merchant House |
| 6 | Bath Street | 12 | Plough Lane |

COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Social & Economic Development Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday, 31st January, 2005 at 2.00 p.m.

Present:	Councillor	A.C.R. Chappell (Chairman)
	Councillor	J. Stone (Vice Chairman)
	Councillors	H. Bramer, M.R. Cunningham, Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels, J.G.S. Guthrie, D.C. Taylor and P.G. Turpin
	Co-opted Members	Mrs. E. Newman (HALC), Ms. B. Heavens (Tourism)

In attendance: Councillors W.L.S. Bowen, Mrs. J.P. French (Cabinet Member – Human Resources and Corporate Support Services), T.J. James, R.V. Stockton (Cabinet Member – Community and Social Development), R.M. Wilson (Cabinet Member – Highways and Transportation).

40. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillors G.V. Hyde, Councillor A.L. Williams, Mr. P. Collins, Mr. A. Curless, Ms. C. Jones and Mr. G. Jones.

41. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY)

Ms. B. Heavens substituted for Mr. G. Jones (Tourism Sector).

42. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor A.C.R. Chappell declared a personal interest in item 5 as a Friend of the Courtyard and in item 7 as a Director of Community First. Councillors Mrs. J.P. French and R.V. Stockton declared personal interests in item 5 as Trustees of the Courtyard appointed by the Council. Councillor R.M. Wilson declared a personal interest as a Friend of the Courtyard. Mrs. E. Newman declared a prejudicial interest in item 7 as Vice-Chairman of Herefordshire Association of Local Councils and left the meeting during discussion on that item.

43. MINUTES

In relation to minute number 32 – Youth Service Key Performance Indicators – the Director of Policy and Community clarified that the Government Green Paper concerning the Youth Service and arrangements for Connexions centres, including their future development, was now expected to be published on 12th February 2005.

RESOLVED: THAT the minutes for the meeting held on 3rd December 2004, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

44. THE COURTYARD REVIEW

The Committee considered the findings of the Courtyard Review Group following their review of The Courtyard Centre for the Arts.

The Chairman reminded Members that the Review Group had been established, and its Scoping Statement including terms of reference, had been approved at the Committee's meeting on 24th September 2004. He thanked the Review Group and its lead officer Gareth Jones, Principal Economic Investment and Development Officer for undertaking the Review.

The Chairman explained to Members that after the Review Group presented its report and its recommendations, if approved, the report would then be passed onto Cabinet for consideration.

Councillor J. Stone, Chairman of the Courtyard Review Group, began by thanking all Members and officers involved in the review. Councillor Stone also thanked all the people who had provided comments, completed questionnaires and attended the Review Group's public meeting. Finally, he thanked Mr. Martyn Green, Chief Executive of The Courtyard, and his staff for the hospitality and openness provided to the Review Group during the course of the review.

Councillor Stone opened his presentation of the Review Group's report by informing the Committee that the review's recommendations were to be seen as a useful step in the development of the Courtyard. He commented that the general public perception was that the Courtyard was solely a theatre when in fact it fulfilled a much broader role as a centre for the arts.

Councillor Stone informed the Committee that there had been a significant improvement in the financial situation at the Courtyard since the new board had been appointed circa 2003. The Review Group applauded this achievement and their final report suggested several ways in which it could generate additional income. He highlighted the commitment the Courtyard had made in engaging young and older people to take part in activities which in turn contributed to the Council's Lifelong Learning objectives.

Councillor Stone referred to the Commissioning Agreement. The Review Group welcomed the proposal for a new agreement which would incorporate specific targets and monitoring provisions.

Mr. Jones took the Committee through the Review Groups report. The following principle points were raised during his presentation:

1. Mr. Jones thanked Dorothy Wilson, Chair of Arts Council West Midlands (ACWM) and Chief Executive of the Midlands Arts Centre, for acting as the Review Groups expert advisor.
2. Part 2, The Committee was informed that the Review Group had visited the Ludlow Assembly Rooms (LAR) to see how another arts centre functioned in a rural area. Whilst appreciating that the LAR was not a true benchmark for the Courtyard the Group had considered it desirable to visit another arts centre to provide some basis for comparison.
3. Part 2, Public consultation had been highly successful with 70% of invited consultees responding. Most of the comments received were positive comments on the benefits the Courtyard provided. Examples of comments received had been included at Annex 3 to the report.
4. Part 2, Members were told of the highly successful interview day. Seven

interviews had taken place at a well-attended public meeting. This was in addition to interviewing key witnesses.

5. Part 3, The Committee were informed about how the Courtyard had been built in partnership by the former Hereford City Council, the Arts Council and the National Lottery. Mr. Jones explained that a number of features had been trimmed from the initial design to keep the project within its intended budget.
6. Part 4, The location of the Courtyard had been dictated by the availability of the land (the site of the former Nell Gwynne Theatre). The Review Group considered that its linkages with the City centre should improve if the proposed Edgar Street grid redevelopment went ahead. There was also scope to improve signage to the Courtyard from Edgar Street.
7. Part 6, The Courtyard undertook a lot of education and outreach work throughout the County and hosted training events for teachers. The Education Directorate had a Service Level Agreement (SLA) with the Courtyard to fund an Education and Outreach Officer. The Review Group also noted the extensive use of the arts centre by students and the high number of young people taking part in weekly dance classes.
8. Part 7, Members were informed that the Courtyard was recognised regionally and increasingly nationally and regularly attracted performers with a national reputation.
9. Part 8, The Courtyard is a non-profit making organisation with a turnover of approximately £1.5m per annum.
 - o Herefordshire City Council had negotiated a 7-year funding agreement with The Courtyard Trust which had been inherited by Herefordshire Council. The Council is the highest grant-funding source for The Courtyard. A breakdown of Herefordshire Council's funding was provided at Annex 6 to the report. The Council's grant provided confidence to other organisations, such as the Arts Council, to invest in the Courtyard.
 - o ACWM is the other major grant contributor to the Courtyard. The Arts Council currently had a two-year funding agreement with the Courtyard and provided it with approximately £160,000 per annum. Since April 2003 the Courtyard has been a designated a Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO) by ACWM and received funding in excess of other similar size arts centre in the Country.
10. Part 9, The Courtyard currently had a deficit of £277,000, which had accumulated for a number of reasons. This included the repayment, to the Council, of £100,000 to cover the cost of essential equipment omitted from the original build due to the initial overspend. The Review Group had noted that in the past the Courtyard management had been more focused on the arts than business and financial management.

Budget monitoring had significantly improved in recent years and measures had been put in place to address its budget deficit. The organisation made a small surplus in 2003/04.

11. Part 10, The Review Group acknowledged that the Board of the Courtyard was relatively new and that relations with staff were improving.

The Review Group noted that staff numbers and costs had risen over the last five years and suggested that they be closely monitored in any new agreement between the Council and the Courtyard. The Review Group also noted the appointment of a Business Development Manager, funded by Arts & Business, to develop existing revenue streams and create new ones such as advertising, sponsorship and corporate membership. Improvements suggested in the report should be capable of being investigated from within the current staffing levels.

12. Part 11, The Review Group acknowledged that significant improvements had been made and acknowledged that this had been due to the current board. However, it was vital for the Courtyard to continue to maximise its opportunities for income generation, therefore the Review Group suggested that the Courtyard management investigate the following options:
 - o Retail Shop – in-house or franchised.
 - o Franchise out catering to a private company.
 - o Converting the studio theatre into a dedicated cinema.
 - o Hosting one-day conferences.
 - o Hosting live music events.
 - o Expanding its sale of art.
 - o The Trust to maximise fundraising opportunities via The Friends of the Courtyard.
13. Part 12, Space at the Courtyard is limited particularly office and dressing room space. The Review Group suggested that footfall and usage data should be analysed to maximise efficiency and that consideration be given to redesigning the main entrance to create more space for new initiatives. In the long term consideration should be given to extending the Courtyard, however the Review Group acknowledged that, additional funding would need to be secured to finance such projects.
14. Part 13, The Review Group were pleased that ticket sales were significantly higher in the current financial year as a result of improvements in marketing.
15. Part 14, signposting to the venue and the location of the gallery needed to be reviewed.
16. Part 15, The Review Group suggested that the Courtyard undertake an Economic Impact study using the formula devised by Prof. Dominic Shellard that would enable it to assess its impact and contribution to the local economy.
17. Part 16, The Review Group wish to commend the hard work of the Friends of the Courtyard in raising money to support the Courtyard and for all the voluntary work they contributed which was crucial to the everyday operation of the Courtyard.
18. Part 17, Members were informed of the long-standing problems of water ingress and lift malfunctions which were currently being resolved.
19. Part 18 i), The Review Group had concluded that the Courtyard was central to cultural provision in Herefordshire. As Herefordshire was a rural County it was particularly important that there was a recognised centre for the arts catering for a broad range of activity that would otherwise not exist. The Courtyard acted as a catalyst for the arts in the County.
20. Part 18 ii), The Review Group concluded that as Council budgets remained under considerable strain the Courtyard needed to demonstrate that it represented value for money. The Review Group recognised a reduction in the level of Council funding could impact on the level of funding provided by the Arts Council. However, the Review Group concluded that the Courtyard's funding should not be exempt from the Council's need for efficiency savings.
21. Part 18 iii), The Review Group concluded that the Courtyard had made substantial progress in improving its financial position and bringing about positive change in the operation of the facility. It was in a position to develop further and show increased value of return on the Council's investment. The earlier recommendations for additional income generation were suggestions for how the Courtyard could improve its own viability.
22. Part 18 iv), The Review Group welcomed the new Commissioning Agreement and the monitoring procedures it would put in place and concluded that the Courtyard should be encouraged to consider and implement proposals for additional income generation before a 5-year Commissioning Agreement was finalised.

1. Part 20, Members were informed of the Review Group's recommendations as outlined in page 15 of their final report.

The Chairman thanked Mr. Jones for presenting the Review Group's final report and invited questions from the Committee. The following principle points were raised:

- A. Councillor Stone acknowledged that the Review Group had not specifically investigated the problems associated with evening travel to and from the Courtyard for people in rural areas. He felt that this could be dealt with as part of the consideration of the wider transport issues currently facing the County. It was suggested that the Courtyard may wish to discuss with bus operators the provision of transport to the Market Towns on specified nights to coincide with major performances. He commented that £10,000 had been made available to assist with the transportation of school children to and from the Courtyard and understood that this was already having an impact on the number of visits to the Courtyard from school children.
- B. The Head of Culture, Leisure and Education for Life, informed the Committee that a contractor was currently in the process of installing a new lift and that a date was being finalised to address the water ingress problems. He acknowledged that this work was only taking place after extensive legal work and financial contributions from the Courtyard.
- C. Councillor Stone recognised that there could be some cost to the Courtyard in establishing a retail shop and dedicated cinema, however, if managed correctly, it was thought this could well provide the Courtyard with a significant proportion of additional income.
- D. Whilst debating the possible provision of a retail shop and franchising out of the catering facility the Committee expressed an opinion in these matters that the Courtyard may benefit from the regular income generated from a franchise agreement. This would then enable the Courtyard to concentrate on its core arts provision strengths.
- E. Members believed that a dedicated cinema had the potential to make a significant contribution to the Courtyard's annual turnover.
- F. Members recognised the hard work undertaken by the Board of the Courtyard in addressing its financial problems and the efforts currently being made to address its budget deficit.
- G. Some Members were concerned about recommending a one-year funding agreement due to the impact this could have on Arts Council funding, especially as the Arts Council itself was facing future problems with funding.

Mr. Martyn Green, Chief Executive of the Courtyard, thanked the Review Group for their report and its positive content. Mr. Green requested that he be able to present a formal response to the report after the board had had a chance to consider it. He informed the Committee that the formula created by Prof. Shellard, as referred to in the Review Group's report, to calculate the economic impact of an arts centre on the local economy was to be applied to the Courtyard by the Arts Council in the near future. He commented that he would have liked the Review Group to have benchmarked the Courtyard against a more comparable range of arts centres.

RESOLVED:

THAT the Recommendations outlined at page 23 of the report by the Courtyard Review Group (and contained at Appendix 1 of these minutes) be endorsed and the report be submitted to Cabinet for consideration.

45. POSSIBLE PEDESTRIANISATION OF WIDEMARSH STREET - UPDATE

The Committee were informed of the successful open meeting held on 26th January 2005 to hear the views of key organisations and individuals about the possible pedestrianisation of Widemarsh Street.

The Director of Policy and Community informed Members that a report of the meeting plus recommendations would be produced and presented to the Committee and the Environment Scrutiny Committee in due course. The meeting had been well attended by members of the public and a full and frank discussion of the issues involved in and the implications of pedestrianisation had taken place. She highlighted the following principle points had been raised at the public meeting:

- There had been support for some form of pedestrianisation along Widemarsh Street into Eign Gate. However, there were concerns about how this would impact on traders and traffic in Broad Street, King Street and Berrington Street.
- Pedestrianisation would be good for shoppers visiting Hereford especially those with small children.
- Taxi drivers were concerned about disadvantaged shoppers not being able to access shops and the location of a new rank should be in close proximity to the city centre.
- There were concerns about the impact of pedestrianisation on the overall road network in Hereford.
- Disability Access Groups were supportive of pedestrianisation but were concerned about the installation of inappropriate street furniture.
- Proposals that cyclists be provision for cyclists be incorporated into the wider plans.
- Pay-on-exit meters were discussed and the cost implications noted.
- Park and Ride schemes were discussed.

The Committee voiced their concerns about the impact of pedestrianisation on the overall road network around Hereford and suggested that improvements should be made to the existing road network before pedestrianisation went ahead. This would avoid exacerbating the already congested network.

Councillor R.M. Wilson (Cabinet Member – Highways and Transportation) commented that as the expected problems with congestion during the Transco works had not materialised the Council was proposing to experiment with a pedestrianised scheme during the redevelopment of Eign Gate during the summer. This would ensure that relevant data was collected and analysed to inform any decision on the proposal to implement a permanent pedestrianised scheme.

RESOLVED: THAT the report on the open meeting concerning the possible pedestrianisation of Widemarsh Street be noted.

46. REVIEW OF SUPPORT TO THE VOLUNTARY SECTOR - POSITION REPORT

The Committee were informed of the recommendations of the Strategic Monitoring Committee, on 12th January 2005, after the review of support to the voluntary sector, details of which can be found in Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED: THAT the position be noted.

The meeting ended at 3.38 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

Appendix 1

Recommendations of the Courtyard Review Group**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 - UPDATE

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

1. To consider the response of Cabinet and the Board of the Courtyard to the report of the Courtyard Review Group.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Background

3. At its meeting on the 31st January 2005 the Committee approved the report of the Courtyard Review Group on the future funding arrangements with the Council.
4. The Review Group's report was considered by Cabinet on 17th February 2005. One of the recommendations had been that the Courtyard should receive an interim one-year funding agreement from the Council. Cabinet concluded that a three-year funding agreement would be more appropriate and provide more stability for the organisation as there were concerns that a one-year funding agreement could undermine the Courtyard's position with the Arts Council. Officers have also been asked to investigate whether it would be possible to provide some funding from the Children's Services Budget.
5. Cabinet has also requested that the Review Group be reconvened at an appropriate time to monitor the situation at the Courtyard and provide a further report.
6. At its meeting on the 31st January the Committee agreed to invite the Board of the Courtyard to respond to the report of the Courtyard Review Group at its next meeting.
7. The response of the Courtyard Board is attached at Appendix 1 to this report.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT: (a) the response of Cabinet to the report of the Courtyard Review Group be noted;

and

(b) the response of the Board of the Courtyard to the report by the Courtyard Review Group be noted.

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

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Report of the Courtyard Review Group 31 January 2005.
- Cabinet Report to Council 11 March 2005.

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

7 March 2005

Mrs Jane Jones
Director Policy and Community
Herefordshire Council
Brockington
35 Hafod Road
Hereford
HR1 1SH

Dear Mrs Jones

Scrutiny Committee Report on The Courtyard

Further to the meeting of the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee on 31 January 2005 where the Committee discussed the findings of the Scrutiny Panel's report on The Courtyard, it was agreed that The Courtyard's Board would formally respond to the report in writing before our Chief Executive and I attend the next meeting on March 22.

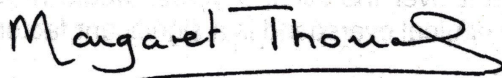
The Board has now met and discussed the report in detail and we submit our comments in the attached document in the order in which they appear in the report.

The Board would like to take this opportunity to thank the Panel for the scrutiny report about The Courtyard and the very positive responses they have made. The Board is also immensely encouraged by the extremely positive feedback the Scrutiny Panel received from the public consultation exercise that was undertaken, and at some point we feel it would be very valuable for us to receive copies of the responses that are not marked confidential to help us further with our continuous monitoring and evaluation processes.

On behalf of the Board I would like to request that this response is treated as non confidential and would appreciate the full text being included in the public part of the agenda.

I should be grateful if you could let us know the format of the meeting on 22 March together with any other arrangements we need to be made aware of.

Yours sincerely



Margaret Thomas
Chairman

Response from The Courtyard Trust Board to the Review of The Courtyard Centre for the Arts by The Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee - Courtyard Review Group – January 2005

The response by The Courtyard Trust will follow the section and paragraph numbers of the report to avoid any confusion as to which elements are being responded to.

Section 2 Method of Gathering Information

2.2 The Board is concerned that the Review Group chose to visit Ludlow Assembly Rooms in order to gain further insight into the operation of an arts centre in a rural area. While the Board does not dispute the fact that the Assembly Rooms is a very credible arts centre based in a rural area, it is a very different type of organisation from The Courtyard, a significant difference being that it is not a producing house. At the initial Review briefing session the Chief Executive highlighted two organisations that would have been appropriate comparators which would have given a better insight into running and managing an arts centre in a rural area on a scale similar to The Courtyard. These were The Castle in Wellingborough, which was in fact used as a model when The Courtyard was being developed, and The Brewery Arts Centre in Kendal, which is serving a very rural community with a high number of tourists visiting the area.

As a result, the Board is concerned about the level of appropriate benchmarking that has taken place in helping to inform the scrutiny of The Courtyard.

Section 3 Background to The Courtyard

3.3 Whilst the overspend on the original build, and the fact that the scheme was “trimmed to keep within the available budget” by the Council, are alluded to in this section, the document does not really highlight the impact of these factors on the Trust. Hereford City Council had overseen much of the planning and construction work up to the point on April 1 1998 when Herefordshire Council came into being and took over the remainder of the project. As the build neared completion, it became apparent that the project was going to be overspent. In order to prevent this Herefordshire Council arranged that £280,000 was top sliced from the capital fund, referred to as *The Sinking Fund*, over the first 7 years of the life of the organisation in the form of a loan to the Trust from them. This reduction, to cover the overspend on the build, was never planned for in the Trust’s original business plan. Had this unexpected reduction not occurred, the Trust’s capital fund, after the expenses that have been drawn from it over the initial 7 years, would now stand at approximately £330,000. The original overspend is a significant factor in the Trust’s current financial position.

The other factor that is not highlighted is the £223,000 of equipment, budgeted for in the approved lottery bid, that was cut from the original approved lottery specification, also to help meet the overspend. Some of this

equipment has since been purchased directly by the Trust over the past 7 years, but much of it has remained beyond the Trust's means.

Moreover, a further £100,000 of equipment had to be leased by the Trust to be able to open the doors in September 1998. This lease again had never been budgeted for in the original business plan and has been paid back to Herefordshire Council out of our revenue grant over the last 5 years. An additional £16,000 also had to be paid back at the end of the lease because a buy-out lease had not been set up at the outset to retain the equipment at the end of the 5-year period.

These figures in total amount to some £619,000, which has been deducted from the Trust's income. When the Trust was established the impact of this was not conceived and would, it is felt, have placed the Trust in a very different position at this time.

3.4 The Board wishes it to be recorded that the vision of a 7-year funding agreement by the Council is a significant factor in establishing The Courtyard as the credible organisation that it has become. The funding agreement enabled the organisation to plan and also gain the confidence of other funders particularly the Arts Council.

Section 4 The Building

4.1 The definition of The Courtyard as a "small arts centre" is inaccurate and it is requested that this should be amended to read "middle-scale arts centre".

This section also does not really make reference to the significant problems that both the Council and the Trust have experienced in relation to the roof and other major issues including the lift etc.

4.3 The Board agrees with the Review Panel that signage to the venue is woefully inadequate; this is something that is constantly fed back to us by visitors to the area. The report alludes to the need for improved directional signage but does not state where the funding or responsibility lies in this respect. The Board would therefore like to seek clarity on this, as it does not consider this a part of its remit.

Section 6 Education & Outreach

The Board is grateful for the recognition of what it considers to be an extremely important area of development in The Courtyard's work. The Board is pleased with the way this partnership approach has developed with the education directorate over the last 12 months and recognises this as an area of growth in our work. The Service Level Agreement and the funding commitment this brings enable us to secure additional funding from outside bodies using the £33,000 provided by the service area as a match.

Section 8 Funding

8.2 The Board recognises the significant investment that the Council provides to The Courtyard and hopes that the Council recognises the considerable benefits that it now receives in return. While the reduction in the percentage of total income represented by the Council's funding is alluded to in the report, the Board feels that it is important for this to be highlighted more explicitly. The Board wish to emphasise that while in 1998 the Council's funding support equated to 50% of The Courtyard's income, by 2004 the figure had fallen to 20%, demonstrating how effective The Courtyard has become in raising income and securing funding from other sources. It is felt that this is a significant demonstration of how the organisation is providing both the Council and Council Tax payers with very good value for money.

8.3 The report does not make any reference to the fact that the Council have 14 days free use of the building which allows for activities such as the Contemporary Craft Fair and Young Musicians Showcase to take place at no additional charge to the Council. These 14 days are equivalent to a value of £8,500 in kind support to the Council from the Trust.

8.5 The Board is reassured by the understanding that the Council's investment in The Courtyard gives confidence to other funding organisations to invest in the facility. A short-term funding agreement would severely disadvantage the organisation at a time when it is making strong headway in stabilising its future.

8.6 The Board wishes to correct an inaccuracy in this section, which relates to the funding received from the Arts Council. The Trust currently has a 3-year funding agreement with the Arts Council and not a 2-year agreement as stated in the report. The confusion has probably arisen from the fact that we are currently in the second year of that agreement with one more year to run. We will be renegotiating our next 3-year agreement with them during 2005/06 to run from April 2006 to March 2009.

Section 10 Financial Improvements

10.1 The vacancy of a Staff Representative is due to be filled in April; however, it must be stressed that this is not a Board appointment and the Staff Representative is there in the capacity of an observer, as are the other Officers of the organisation. The Officers of the Trust contribute to the debate but do not have voting rights.

10.3 It is strongly felt that it is the role of the Board to monitor staffing levels of the organisation. As part of its review of the organisation, the Board has considered the current and future needs of the organisation in respect of its staffing levels and has restructured certain areas with a view to improving the quality of productivity and efficiency. While it is recognised that staffing levels have risen over the last 6½ years, it needs to be recognised that this is in proportion to the overall growth of the organisation over the same period. The

Courtyard could not possibly be run with the 12 members of staff it opened with in 1998 and even now at times the organisation is stretched in certain areas. The report also does not seem to give sufficient consideration to the fact that several staff posts are externally funded.

Section 11 New Income Generation

11.1 The Board is grateful that the Scrutiny Panel has recognised the The Courtyard's success in raising additional funding and increasing its income streams. The Board recognises it is often project work which brings in the most substantial amounts of funding allowing it to develop new initiatives and periodic schemes of work. However, where project funding is secured it is not often revenue that can be utilised towards core costs. Most funders will only allow for up to a maximum of 20% of a project budget towards the core cost element of the organisation.

11.2 The idea of introducing a shop in the foyer at The Courtyard has been considered several times, most recently during 2004 when discussions were undertaken with the Leominster-based Lion Gallery. Regarding their possible relocation here. (The shop would have been based in the foyer and the Lion Gallery would have been resident in The Courtyard on a similar basis to the other resident organisations e.g. The Music Pool). However this would only have generated an estimated income for The Courtyard in the region of £8,000 p.a. maximum, but would have involved major capital outlay in setting up the shop area and for making the space secure. It would have taken some time to recoup the initial capital outlay. If, as the report suggests, The Courtyard does expand, then this area of the building could be reconsidered and a retail outlet incorporated, which we would be pleased to house, giving us another dimension that adds to the work we currently do. The Board is unclear as to the Scrutiny Panel's comment that a shop would assist the Friends in generating income and further clarification is sought regarding this.

11.3 The Board was not aware that The Courtyard Trading Company Ltd was under scrutiny as this is a legally separate commercial operation and with it carries commercial sensitivity. However, the Board offers the following comment on this aspect of our business. Having previously franchised out the catering operation with, it must be said, disastrous consequences, the Company has no plans to repeat this exercise. There are a number of issues that do not make catering in this building easy to operate, which again relate back to the design and layout of the building. In addition, the opening times of the building dictate when the catering department has to be operational, i.e. from the moment the building is opened to the public to the point at which it closes. This is something that may be possible to address at a future date when the building is extended. It is also important to note that the catering operation functions best when it is working as a cohesive part of the organisation, unlike when it was franchised and working to its own independent agenda.

11.4 The Courtyard currently has a customer suggestions box placed at Box Office and invites customers to offer both positive feedback about aspects of their visit they have enjoyed and draw to our attention areas of concern. We respond to the latter and have our own in-house performance indicator, which we monitor.

11.5 The Courtyard has recognised the significant part that film plays in its overall programme of work. It also acknowledges that it is an arts centre and needs to offer a broad programme of work. We have been looking for some time at potential funding sources to develop the aspirations of the organisation and we recognise that the current Studio Theatre is somewhat on the small side for live performance and also falls short in terms of being a dedicated cinema. Screen West Midlands has indicated that if we extend the building and create a new performance studio, there is the possibility that funding would be forthcoming towards converting the existing Studio space into a dedicated cinema, which we welcome. This would give a more consistent approach to our film programming together with an opportunity for patrons to have the benefit of an all-year-round programme rather than the *ad hoc* schedule that currently exists. This initiative is obviously not a quick fix and once more relies on a substantial capital investment.

11.6 It must be recognised that The Courtyard is first and foremost an Arts Centre and not a conference centre. The Courtyard hosts regular conference bookings where and when it can include them practically in its programme of work. We have only limited break-out spaces, which is sometimes a problem for conference organisers, and, as stated in the report, the lack of major hotel bed spaces in the city is a contributing factor to the size and duration of conferences. On occasions, major businesses have approached us to host large-scale events in pleasant surroundings (in terms of both the venue and the county as a good place to bring delegates) and then found the infrastructure lacking and had to look elsewhere.

11.7 The Board is pleased that the Scrutiny Panel has recognised the success that we have made in the area of sponsorship and corporate giving. This has been recognised as an important area of financial improvement; this is new money and can be brought into core costs for the organisation. When successful it can be very positive, but it is far less predictable. It is also a fact that very few trusts will fund organisations' core costs and are more likely to fund projects; it is for this reason that as an organisation we have been concentrating on developing corporate giving first before turning our attention to trusts and foundations in a big way.

11.8 We are very grateful to the members of the Friends scheme, many of whom are very active in helping us through volunteering in a number of ways. Some act as Stewards for events, some distribute publicity for us, and others are happy to come in to help by stuffing envelopes for mail-outs and for fundraising too. All of this provides valuable support to the organisation, but it must be recognised that the Friends scheme takes quite a lot of administering and the volunteers are already giving, in the majority of cases, as much time as they can, as often as they can.

11.9 The Board and management are unclear as to what is meant by this recommendation. Music is already an integral part of The Courtyard's overall programme of work for which it achieves large audiences. During the current year we have 39 music events in the programme.

If it is being suggested that The Courtyard should be programming up-and-coming 'pop music' bands, with a 400-seat space this is impractical, as we could not generate the ticket revenue to be able to attract these types of bands. The ability to flat floor the auditorium is also hampered by the fact that the hydraulic lift was one of cuts made from the original specification due to the overspend and, as a result, this now takes 4 staff 8 hours to turn the space around each time.

11.10 The sale of art-related goods has been discussed since the publication of the report: but with an art supplies shop at the Art College and the presence of a commercial art supplier in Widemarsh Street, it would not appear to be commercially viable for us to consider such an operation.

The Courtyard does already generate income from commission on the sale of artist's work exhibited in the gallery spaces. It must be realised though that this is never going to generate large sums of revenue for the organisation and, if anything, is an area of our work that is very important to us. It must also be noted that this area of our work is subsidised by the organisation and thus has a cost implication to us. The costs of mounting an event such as the Herefordshire Contemporary Craft Fair are enormous and it would be impossible for The Courtyard to bear the cost of hosting events of this nature even on a much smaller scale, and without the skills of a Visual Arts Officer.

Section 12 Additional Space Requirements

The Board is grateful that the Scrutiny Panel has identified the need for additional space at the venue. This is a major issue in terms of how the organisation can continue to function in the building and just how successful the organisation has become in such a comparatively short period of time.

The Board would welcome the Council's support in helping to move forward as a priority the need to expand the building and address many of the capital issues that their report has identified. This is not a request from the Board that the Council should indeed fund this development but a request for it to be identified as a priority and supported in funding applications to other funders. The revenue implications for an expanded building are comparatively small compared to the income generating potential that the additional facilities could provide. This would give the county an even more impressive Centre for the Arts able to deliver and respond to the demand that has been identified. The Board and management of The Courtyard would welcome support from the Council to help realise the aspirations of the report outlined in paragraph 12.5.

Section 13 Ticket Pricing

13.2 With regards to socially inclusive ticket pricing The Courtyard considers that it has always been mindful of the fact that Herefordshire has a comparatively low wage earning economy and always strives to ensure that its ticket pricing is socially inclusive. It operates a number of offers whereby people who are disadvantaged for what ever reason can purchase reduced price tickets at various times. All in-house productions have 'pay what you like' nights (which are to encourage people who have never been before to attend at little financial risk to themselves), and an evening when all seats are priced at £5.00. Children's and family shows have, more often than not, a family ticket offer available open to either one adult and 3 children or 2 adults and 2 children to attend at a discounted rate. Special offers exist for students through our Student Advantage Card scheme where students receive an SMS text message on the day of the event offering last-minute deals on available seats. We also offer a comprehensive range of concessions to senior citizens, students, unwaged, registered disabled patrons and children under 16. We consider our pricing policies to be in line if not better than the national provision.

Section 14 Visual Arts

14.1 The Courtyard is pleased that the Scrutiny Panel has identified the current water damage to the Gallery space as unsightly and detrimental to the display of work. The Board whole-heartedly concurs with their comments on a situation, which has been on going now for nearly 7 years!

14.2 The Courtyard accepts that the location of the Gallery on the top floor is not ideal being rather tucked away in the overall layout of the building. This can perhaps be addressed with the extension to the building with consideration being given to a dedicated gallery space on the ground floor. In the short term, we will consider improving the public signage to the Gallery spaces.

Section 15 Economic Impact

15.1 The Board is very pleased that recognition has been given by the Panel to the fact that the organisation makes a "significant contribution to the local economy". Cultural facilities are only just being recognised for this valuable role that they play in the local economy and work has been done recently by Sheffield University, funded by the Arts Council, to develop a national formula to measure this economic impact.

15.3 The Arts Council West Midlands has recently commissioned the same research team to undertake a similar exercise for all the theatres and arts centres in the region including The Courtyard. The results of this are expected shortly and will be fed back to the Scrutiny Panel once they are known.

Section 17 Building Maintenance

17.1 As a point of clarification, the Board wishes it to be noted that The Courtyard Trust has a full repairing lease on the building. The Sinking Fund is not for the day-to-day maintenance of the building as the Council has often been at pains to point out to the organisation. The Sinking Fund is primarily for the replacement of major plant and significant refurbishment. £13,000 is included in the revenue element of the grant to assist The Courtyard with the day-to-day maintenance of the building.

17.2 The Board feels it is unfair to state that the original agreement has been revised on several occasions with the net effect resulting in a reduction in the funds deposited in the Sinking Fund for essential repairs renovations and renewals. The only reduction in funds deposited is the direct result of the top slicing of the original agreed grant in order to enable the Council to meet the original overspend by the Trust taking on a significant loan. It is also misleading to state that the original agreement has been revised on several occasions because of financial problems; The Courtyard has never received any extra funding over and above its original Funding Agreement until 2004 when it received a one-off payment towards debt mitigation.

Section 18 Conclusions

18.1 – 18.4 The Courtyard is in full agreement with the Scrutiny Panel in respect of the benefits The Courtyard brings to the County of Herefordshire. The only area prompting concern in this section is the suggestion that “the level of (in-house work) could be reviewed in the future as a way of potentially reducing costs”. This area of our work is funded directly by the Arts Council and is a core aspect which resulted in the uplift of funding by the Arts Council from 2003 as a direct outcome of the Boyden Report - The National Theatre Review. If there were any discussion of a reduction in this area of our work, it would result in a direct reduction, if not a withdrawal, of funding by the Arts Council and the likely loss of our Regularly Funded Organisation (RFO) status. This would be extremely detrimental to the future of The Courtyard, and to arts funding in Herefordshire as a county.

18.5 – 18.6 The Board recognises the significant level of funding contributed by the Council but firmly believes that it truly offers value for money in return as outlined in point 8.2 of our response. The Courtyard has come a tremendously long way since it opened in 1998; if it were not carrying the accumulated deficit, which has arisen from a variety of reasons, The Courtyard would be a significantly more robust organisation than it is currently. The last 2 years have seen the organisation returning a surplus, something that is rare in many arts organisations nationally. The Board welcome the Panel’s recognition that a significant reduction in funding would destabilise the organisation and the positive work that it has achieved to date.

18.7 The Board acknowledges that the Council has to make some difficult decisions in terms of its budget priorities, but we urge the Council to consider the implications of reducing the level of funding to The Courtyard at a time when it is still fragile and has only just stabilised its financial position. The Courtyard has only just last year negotiated a deficit reduction plan in

partnership with the Council, which could be destabilised by any reduction, including not receiving an index-linked settlement in the new financial year. Having received a one off investment from the Council in 2004 towards reducing the deficit it seems contradictory to then take some of this back in 2005 through a potential reduction. We firmly believe that through the Scrutiny report The Courtyard has more than demonstrated the value for money that it provides, particularly through the fact that the Council's investment now equates to 20% of The Courtyard's income where before it was 50%; however this is a very important 20%, as it acts as a lever for considerable amounts of additional funding from other sources. The other aspect demonstrating value for money is the extremely positive public response that the Scrutiny Panel received in both written and verbal presentations from users, stakeholders and members of the public.

18.8 The Board recognises the valuable work that is happening through its partnership with the Education Department and wishes to highlight that this has given additonality to our work and was not previously core to the service we were able to provide. It may be prudent to suggest that other departments such as Social Services for example could consider contributing towards the work we undertake with older people, vulnerable adults or people with disabilities etc. There is also the possibility of positively promoting the work of The Courtyard through the Herefordshire Partnership to member organisations such as the Primary Care Trust and the Community Safety Partnership, both of which could potentially be working more closely with The Courtyard in helping to meet their own objectives such as healthy living or crime reduction etc.

18.11 – 18.14 The Courtyard welcomes the move to a Commissioning Agreement as this will give a clear focus as to what the Council expects to be provided and what The Courtyard is focusing on in terms of its own priorities; Performance Indicators are clearly set out as an outcome of the Agreement. The Board requests the specific wording in paragraph 18.11 “to be clear on what services it (the Council) is purchasing”; should be changed, the reason for this is that it would make the ‘grant’ liable to VAT which would result in a considerable overall reduction in our funding (£53,600 in real terms). The funding needs to be given as a grant as is currently the case with a clear agreement simply on the areas the Council wish us to deliver.

The proposed Commissioning Agreement has been drawn up with close involvement of The Courtyard's Chief Executive and the Cultural Services Manager and reflects the aspirations for the next 3 years of both parties.

The Board welcomes the recognition of the Scrutiny Panel that a minimum 3-year funding agreement needs to be in place in order to give stability to the organisation and give confidence to our other funders.

As a voluntary, arms-length body the Board is somewhat concerned about the level of monitoring the Scrutiny Panel is suggesting in the report. The Courtyard already holds Quarterly Monitoring Meetings with the Council, which include representation from the Arts Council West Midlands Office, a

planned annual presentation to the Council Executive, and it is now suggested that we should also be making regular presentations to the Scrutiny Panel. The Board is keen to avoid the situation prevalent in other organisations, in which the efficiency of operation is reduced by an imposed necessity for multiple, often duplicated, reporting. The costs, both financial and in terms of time for the staff and Board of the Trust may in fact negate the very improvements sought.

Section 20 Recommendations

20.1 The Board welcomes the findings of the Scrutiny Panel and the positive outcomes of their report, in particular the valuable contribution we make to the local community and to arts provision within the County.

20.2 Whilst accepting that The Courtyard should not be exempt from any efficiency savings within the Policy and Community Directorate, the Board urges that careful consideration be given to this in the light of points raised in the report by the Scrutiny Panel itself and in the light of further comments made in our response. Any cut, whether in the form of standstill or further reduction, will affect the ability to deliver the deficit reduction strategy and necessitate reconsideration to areas of the Commissioning Agreement.

20.3 The Board accepts this is a matter for internal debate within the Council

20.4 The majority of these suggestions are discussed within the body of our response.

20.5 The Courtyard Board made strong representation to the Cabinet as to the reasons why an interim 1-year Funding Agreement would be detrimental to the organisation as did the Arts Council. A copy of the letter is attached as Appendix A. The Board also felt strongly that the recommendation contradicted the evidence and findings in the main body of the report where the Scrutiny Panel realised the agreement needed to be for a minimum of 3 years (paragraph 18.3)

20.6 The Courtyard is happy to report back in November 2005; however 6 months is a comparatively short space of time for many of the suggested actions to have been effective, particularly where many of them carry considerable capital outlay to enable them to take place.

20.7 – 20.8 The Board considers that these two recommendations have been addressed during the Cabinet meeting on the 17 February 2005.

PEDESTRIANISATION - UPDATE

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

1. To update Members on the consultation on the proposed pedestrianisation of Widemarsh Street, Hereford.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Background

3. At its meeting on 3rd December 2005 a small group of Members was appointed by this Committee to hear the views of key organisations and individuals about the possible pedestrianisation of Widemarsh Street.
4. The meeting went ahead on the 26th January 2005 and this Committee was informed of the outcome on 31st January 2005.
5. The consultation period ended on 18th February 2005 and an update will be given at the meeting.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified

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

EXTERNAL FUNDING UPDATE

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

1. To provide Members with an update on a range of External Funding Programmes which are currently benefiting Herefordshire.

Financial Implications

2. The report sets out, for information, activity already underway and the report therefore has no specific financial implications.

Considerations

3. In recent years the emphasis placed on regeneration activity and funding has amplified at a national level, with regeneration being increasingly used as a mechanism to support economic, community and environmental development. This role is now led at a regional level by the Regional Development Agencies (Advantage West Midlands in our region) who are responsible for co-ordinating, overseeing and delivering regeneration activity across their respective region. Similarly, the number of funding streams to support regeneration has also increased, and greater financial resources are available. Many of these funding streams cover the whole Country (such as National Lottery funding) and some are geographically targeted (such as Objective 2 European funding). Nearly all funding streams are time limited, and have strict rules about when the project activity can be undertaken.
4. Each funding stream has its own criteria and focus, with clear rules about the type and scale of regeneration activity or project it will support. However, there are a number of general criteria that regeneration funding works to. For example; regeneration funding will not support statutory services and cannot be used to replace existing government funding, such as education, housing or social services; funding streams are unlikely to support a project which is already underway; the project must show "added value" to any linked activity; very few funding streams provide all the funding for the project with most only giving a certain percentage (usually 50%); and, each project must produce outputs and benefits, such as number of people entering employment or number of people trained.
5. A breakdown of the main funding streams available and an update on their current position is attached at Appendix 1.
6. Over the past decade the availability of these funding streams has increased in Herefordshire, starting with many parts of the County being designated as Objective 5b European funding status in 1994, and then Objective 2 European funding status in 2000. The majority of Herefordshire is also now included in the Rural Regeneration Zone area (funded through Advantage West Midlands). Herefordshire has also been

successful in bidding for Leader+ funding to support the local natural and historic environment and Market Towns Initiative funding.

7. Herefordshire Council has made extensive use of these funding streams to support regeneration and development activity, for example Objective 2 funding and Rural Regeneration Zone funding was gained to support the current Tourism and Creative Industries development programmes; Objective 2 and Rural Regeneration Zone funding has been gained to enable workspace development in Rotherwas, and a number of geographical based regeneration schemes have been successfully established such as the South Wye regeneration programme and the Market Town development programme. This has enabled a wide range of activities to be undertaken that would otherwise not be possible.
8. The Audit Commission's Corporate Assessment of the Council in December 2002 commented that the Herefordshire Plan had provided the focus for partnership working and has contributed significantly to the Council being able to attract significant external funding to deliver projects tackling local priorities, such as rural access and pockets of deprivation. In this respect the Council has been able to punch above its weight as a small low-funded authority.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified

UPDATE ON EXTERNAL FUNDING PROGRAMMES IN HEREFORDSHIRE

1. Herefordshire In Touch (HIT) Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Programme

The HIT Programme is a 7-year SRB programme for the Herefordshire Partnership, which is due to run until 2006/07.

The total value of the programme including all match funding is just under £14.5million.

Currently the programme has funding approved of:

- £3.7 million SRB (£2.2million capital and £1.5million revenue),
- £330k European Regional Development Fund (ERDF) for Virtual Herefordshire
- £2million ERDF for Broadband (although this is under review and subject to project scope negotiations with Government Office for the West Midlands (GOWM)).

Total funding drawn down to end December 2004:

- Total SRB £1.8million (SRB Revenue £1million; Capital £800k)
- ERDF for Virtual Herefordshire £152K
- ERDF for broadband £165K
- £68k RRZ

Key projects achieved to date:

HIT Core Team – to put in place the ICT Programme Manager, eGateway co-ordinator, Security Officer, Web development and programme office to support the other HIT Projects. Project now completed.

Smart Cards pilot – actioned in Colwall Library as a Library card and allowing out of hours access to IT suite. Project completed.

Business Study – first HIT study in the business sector to set a baseline of IT usage, attitudes and capabilities. Project completed.

Three projects to work in specific sectors increasing IT capacity and promoting use of the eGateway and broadband. These projects are the Youth Times (young people), Business Network Broker (business sector) and the Community and Voluntary Sector ICT project (community and voluntary sector).

EGateway - a platform is now available and both the Council and Partnership websites have been migrated across. A timetable of further migration of partner websites is planned over the next year, as is further developments on the eGateway e.g. search engine functionality.

Broadband – after funding initially agreed by GOWM and Advantage West Midlands (AWM), a marketing campaign was launched to raise awareness and encourage people to register their interest in broadband. The announcement that BT would enable most of the local telephone exchanges meant the scope of the project could be scaled down. This revised project is still being negotiated with GOWM although AWM have declared their support and approved funding accordingly.

2. South Wye Single Regeneration Budget Programme

The South Wye Regeneration Programme is a 7-year SRB programme for the South Wye area of Hereford City, which is due to run until March 2006.

The total value of the programme including all match funding is just under £14.3 million.

Currently the programme has funding approved of:

- £4,358,768 SRB funding
- £7,620,686 Public funding
- £1,086,542 Private funding
-

Total funding drawn down to end of quarter 3 in year 6:

- Total SRB £2,905,900 (SRB Revenue £1,867,400 Capital £1,038,500)
- Public match funding £5,247,910
- Private match funding £714,732

Key projects achieved to date:

Newton Farm Information Centre: Community information centre that serves not just the Newton Farm estate but the whole of South Wye. The Centre was started with SRB funding but is now totally run by volunteers who also raise the funds to ensure that it can continue. It is often used as a model for other such centres and they have won awards for this very valuable service. They also act as a paying point for the credit union and assist with the work of the Drugs Outreach Worker by providing a place for needle exchange.

South Wye Learning Centre: built with SRB funding it provides a facility for courses and training to take place. It specifically targets South Wye Residents but inevitably draws people from all over Hereford. It has been very successful and has managed to secure funding that will see it operating for at least two years after the SRB funding finishes.

Better reading partnership: operates a scheme whereby parents are encouraged to listen to their child read. It offers training and support and is now operating in the three primary schools in the area. They are also looking at taking on more volunteers to assist with the programme.

South Wye Community Development Team: operate solely in the South Wye area and have been instrumental in pushing through the community facilities project. They work with local resident associations and community associations ensuring that the committees have the support and assistance to allow them to run a community centre. They also support many community groups within the area and have also run the Community Pride project very successfully.

Healthy Living Community: Working within the area they are responsible for publishing the five a day scheme and have worked locally with people who have allotments to assist with the growing of organic food. They also work closely with Haywood High School on youth health issues. They have been at the forefront of promoting healthy living within the area and have a fitness co-ordinator and a healthy meals advisor who work with all age ranges and types of groups from the area.

3. LEADER + Programme

The Herefordshire Rivers LEADER+ Programme is a grant programme funded through the European Union and DEFRA with support for the management side of the Programme coming from the Rural Regeneration Zone. The Programme was awarded £1,682,000 from the EU and DEFRA for allocating funding towards projects that supported rural regeneration, environmental enhancement and cultural improvements. Grants have been awarded to a variety of community and voluntary organisations such as Age Concern, Herefordshire Nature Trust, Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), and Pembridge Amenity Trust, in addition a number of Herefordshire Council departments have also been awarded grants for projects.

To date the Programme has claimed £572,190 from European Agricultural Guidance Guarantee Funding and DEFRA and the next two years will probably see the bulk of future activity on the Programme to its close at the end of 2007. The money claimed has been allocated to approximately 25 projects covering a wide variety of subjects. Among the most successful are -

- The Houghton Project - a care farm which provides vocational employment and care/learning opportunities, for adults with learning difficulties, people with learning disabilities, New Deal participants and others. LEADER+ has supported the infrastructure improvements to the farm including the kitting out of buildings for learning, basic improvements to the farm environment including the refurbishment of a dairy. The farm is negotiating with Social Services to take on their clients and is now virtually self sustaining, among the successes for this particular project have been the integration of people with learning disabilities with other sectors of the community, and the entry into employment of 3 New Deal participants who once worked at the farm.
- The Old Midsummer Festival - a 2-day Festival in Pembridge and Eardisland focusing on the celebration of local country life and traditions. Operated by the Leominster Morris this project was put together by a group without the aid of a computer or previous experience. Several hundred participants were involved in the festival which saw traditional arts and crafts mix with local food producers and music. The festival closed with a lantern procession down the River Arrow in Eardisland.

Each LEADER+ group is required to run joint projects with other LEADER+ groups, one in this Country and one with another LEADER+ group from another European Union Country. We are exploring the ideas of rebranding the Wye Valley walk with Monmouthshire LEADER+, running a joint Orchard conservation project with Somerset, Kent, and Cumbria, and operating joint marketing and promotion of a walking festival with a group from central Ireland.

4. Activities In The Market Towns

The Market Towns Initiative (MTI) is a funding programme administered by the regional development agency – Advantage West Midlands and originally targeted at sustaining market towns as a service centre for their surrounding parishes. In each town eligible for MTI funding local cross sector Partnerships carry out comprehensive health checks to establish the social, economic and environmental health of the town and its hinterland parishes. A strategy/action plan is then drawn up with a view to addressing the issues arising from the check and to secure the MTI funding. All 5 of Herefordshire's Market Towns have active cross sector partnerships and all are eligible for MTI Funding. To date there has been three tiers of towns eligible = Kington was identified in tier 1, Ledbury and Bromyard in

tier 2 and more recently Leominster and Ross-on-Wye have been identified as being eligible for tier 3 funding. We are advised that no further tiers will be announced under this initiative.

Kington

Kington, a Tier 1 town was the first to receive MTI funding and begins its 5th and final year in April 2005. £416,000 has been approved over the lifetime of the MTI programme and full spend will be achieved by April 2005. Further funding has been secured via ERDF to enable the programme to proceed until 31st December 2008 by which time total spend is likely to be in excess of £1 million.

Successful projects have included the Skateboard Park and Play area, the Business Development Managers post (IT training), Debt Redemption and the Community Pride schemes.

The key issues for the Kington Partnership over the next 12 months will be to continue developing their forward strategy, looking for alternative sources of funding and applying for Charitable Status.

Bromyard

The Bromyard Area MTI programme begins its 4th and final year in April. The total spend for the programme is likely to be in the region of £1,111,513, of which £257,107 is MTI funding. The successful projects include the shop front grant programme that has significantly contributed to the improved appearance of High Street and Broad Street, the Business Training Scheme (run in partnership with Hereford College of Technology) and the Tourist Information Staffing Scheme. The flagship project is the construction of the HOPE charity family day centre that is due for completion this summer.

The key challenges for the Bromyard Programme over the next 12 months include the necessity to develop a forward strategy for the Partnership and the need for close monitoring of this year's spend, to ensure the effective delivery in the last year of the programme.

Ledbury

Ledbury MTI ends March 31st 2005 and the Ledbury Area Regeneration Partnership has developed a Strategic Implementation Plan that prioritises key regeneration projects post-MTI. Additionally, the partnership has created a regeneration company (Ledbury and Area Development Trust) that will seek to become a self-sustaining vehicle for future regeneration development in the Ledbury. The total programme spend will be in excess of £873,064 of funding of which £306,086 from the MTI.

Key projects in the Programme include a Skateboard Park: Urchins Nursery together with an IT Training provision to help mums back into work, and a scheme to connect the CCTV system to the main Hereford control room.

Leominster

Following an extensive consultation process with key stakeholders and the successful presentation of the resultant strategy to the Market Towns Task Group, the Leominster Area MTI Programme commences in April 2005. As a tier 3 town the total funding package is anticipated to be worth £1million, of which up to £500,000 will be MTI funding.

The Implementation Plan (delivery plan) submitted to AWM includes a total spend for the forthcoming year of £74,900 (£28,000 capital £46,900 revenue). Proposed spend will be focussed on four key projects for the Leominster area; a shop front grant scheme,

Community Pride, vocational training and an indicative capital purchase. Management and administration is also funded for up to £60,000 over the three years. At this juncture the capital purchase funding is ring fenced for the purchase of a capital asset to provide revenue for a succession strategy for the Partnership whilst actively regenerating the Area.

The key issues facing the Leominster Programme are identifying a suitable capital acquisition and to achieve spend with the predominantly capital money and the economic outputs required.

Ross-on-Wye and its surrounding parishes is also eligible for tier 3 funding. Similar to Leominster, the local Ross Area Partnership has been working with the local community to finalise a Strategic Action Plan for the area. The plan will be presented to Market Towns Task Group in late March and if successful, the Partnership will need to finalise an Implementation Plan in order to secure up to £500,000 of MTI funding towards a 3 year £1 million regeneration programme for the area.

5. Rural Regeneration Zone (RRZ)

This is a fifteen year long programme administered by Advantage West Midlands covering the majority of Herefordshire, Shropshire and western Worcestershire. RRZ is a major source of match funding for Objective 2 for Economic and Community Development work. The programme has eight priority themes, called “flagships” which projects must support;

- i) Adult and Community Learning, and multi purpose Community facilities
- ii) Broadband
- iii) Business Growth and Clusters
- iv) Enterprise
- v) High quality natural and built environment and sustainable economic activity
- vi) Industrial Spaces
- vii) Young People
- viii) Catalytic Zone assets

The programme is focused towards supporting the economic growth and development of Herefordshire.

The table below sets out the budget position for the Zone over the next 3 years. The Plus 20% column represents over programming to allow for delays in implementation and potential project drop out which often occurs in these large programmes.

	Contracted/ Endorsed	Indicative Allocation	Plus 20%	Balance Available (20% plus)
2005/6	£5.9m	£8m	£9.6m	£2.1m (£3.7m)
2006/7	£1.6m	£10m	£12m	£8.4m (£10.4m)
2007/8	-	£12m	£14.4m	£12m (£14.4m)

Projects which have successfully drawn down a combined total of over £430,000 RRZ funding during 2004/5 in Herefordshire include Tourism Enterprise, Creative Industries, Herefordshire Rivers (Leader+) and Twyford Court units (completed and opened during 2004 as part of the Rotherwas Package). The South Wye (SRB) and Ledbury, Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Bromyard and Kington Market Town’s Initiatives (MTI) have collectively claimed in addition just under £800,000.

Projects currently under consideration for funding in Herefordshire include the Herefordshire Learning Village and Rotherwas Access Road.

6. Objective 2

Objective 2 is a geographically targeted programme, and almost all of Herefordshire is designated as Objective 2 status. Herefordshire has access to a substantial amount of money (part of £550 million across the whole region) to fund Economic and Community Development activity. Objective 2 money will on average support up to 35% of a projects costs.

The Objective 2 Programme is based on the four pillars of the West Midlands Economic Strategy:

- i) Creating a Diverse and Dynamic Business Base
- ii) Creating Conditions for Growth
- iii) Regenerating Communities
- iv) Creating a Learning and Skilful Region

Objective 2 also incorporates three themes that each project must address:

- i) Innovation
- ii) Environmental Sustainability
- iii) Equality of Opportunity

Herefordshire projects supported include the Creative Industries and Tourism development programmes; a strategic regeneration package incorporating capital development projects; and a community regeneration funding package.

Within the Herefordshire Strategic Regeneration Package of projects the following achievements (amongst others) have been made:

- Build and launch of Twyford Court industrial units, Rotherwas
- Development of the Leominster Bus Station and work at the Railway Station through Market Towns Sustainable Improvements
- Leominster Access Road was completed and opened
- Some development work for the Rotherwas Access Road and the Hereford Learning Village was paid through Partnership Mechanisms

Other projects within the Strategic Package include Herefordshire In Touch (HIT) and the Rural Transport Partnership. All the projects combined in the Strategic Package are profiled to claim just over £13 million pounds, during the Objective 2 Programme (between 2002 and 2008), just over £9 million pounds have been claimed so far.

In addition projects such as Creative Industries and Tourism Enterprise have successfully claimed Objective 2 funding during 2004.

There are some funds still remaining in the Programme, which have been prioritised for a few key strategic projects within the West Midlands. The Hereford Learning Village is within this group and is currently being developed through regular meetings with a task force compiled of representatives from AWM, GOWM, the Learning and Skills Council (LSC) and Herefordshire Partnership. This project is progressing well through the application processes and it is hoped that all funding will be confirmed during 2005. The current development work includes a full planning application for phase 1 currently placed with

Herefordshire Council, with building currently profiled to commence April 2006, subject to everything being in place by then. The current funding profile for the Learning Village for phases 1 & 2 are £4 million from Objective 2, £5.5 million from AWM, just over £8 million from the LSC and £2 million from Herefordshire College of Technology.

PARISH COUNCIL LIAISON UPDATE

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

1. To provide Members with an update on Herefordshire Council's Parish Council Liaison activity.

Financial Implications

2. Not applicable.

Considerations

3. Herefordshire has some 238 Parishes which are represented through 138 Parish Councils. The Council's Parish Council Liaison Service is provided by Mr. Shane Smith the Community Regeneration Support and Grants Assistant based in the Policy and Community Directorate. The main elements of the service provided are:
 - **Liaison** – to act as a first point of contact for members of the public wishing to contact their local Town or Parish Council and to liaise between Town and Parish Councils and Herefordshire Council, sending out regular correspondence and working closely with the Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC). Regular review of protocol with the town and Parish Councils.
 - **Herefordshire Association of Local Councils (HALC) Service Level Agreement Monitoring** - meeting with representatives from HALC on a three-monthly basis for the purposes of monitoring progress through an agreed work programme and to measure progress against the targets set out in that work programme. Representing Herefordshire Council on the County Training Partnership (CTP)
 - **Parish Plans** - assisting Parish Plan (PP) groups by despatching draft parish plans to key Herefordshire Council officers and development workers, and coordinating HC's response to those draft plans. Organising the attendance of Herefordshire Council officers at PP meetings and other events. Providing PP groups with advice regarding funding, the activities of other PP groups etc, and signposting PP groups to specific expert advice.
 - **Quality Parishes** - it is also proposed that officer support will be given through attendance at the Quality Parish Group and subsequent provision of advice.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Geoff Hughes, Head of Service (Policy and Community) on 01432 260695.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified

POLICY AND COMMUNITY DIRECTORATE 2004/05 FIRST TEN MONTHS' PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Report By: Performance Management Officer

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

1. To inform Members of the performance of the non-corporate functions of the Policy and Community Directorate against their national and local performance indicators for the first ten months of 2004/05. To outline the key service issues arising during the period and detail the main areas of activity undertaken by those services during the four months since the last report.

Financial Implications

2. All expenditure in respect of performance indicators / targets is from approved budgets.

Considerations

3. As reported previously, Service Managers across Policy and Community are providing information on sets of key local indicators for their services. Information on those key local indicators, and any national Best Value indicators, where actual performance varies from the target significantly (more than plus or minus 10%) is detailed in Appendix 1.
4. As previously, Members also have an overview of the wider performance of individual service areas, as each Service Manager has provided a brief narrative that summarises the key issues, activities and achievements of their service during the period of October 2004 to January 2005.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Directorate's first ten months' 2004/05 performance indicator information be noted, subject to any comments which Members may wish to make.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified

Appendix 1

Detailing: October, 2004 to January, 2005

Service News

Incorporating Performance Indicators Outputs where 'Exceptional'

Libraries

Main Activity and Key Achievements October, 2004 to January, 2005



Passers-by Hereford Library enjoying poetry readings from Brenda Read-Brown in celebration of National Poetry Day.

To celebrate National Poetry Day on Thursday 7th October, Brenda Read-Brown the Team's Reader and Literature Development Officer spent time outside Hereford Library offering to read poems to passers-by. Access and Learning Development Officer; Anne-Marie Dossett accompanied her, handing out leaflets detailing new library opening times, and telling people about the extensive range of poetry books available in Herefordshire's libraries. Spreading the word even further, Brenda and Anne-Marie were interviewed live on Radio Hereford & Worcester, and an article about Brenda's role in promoting the written and spoken word appeared on the front page of the Hereford Journal.

They both had many requests to read poems, including the poem 'Talking Turkeys', by Benjamin Zephaniah for a teenager, and in a lovely moment, a small group of people gathered to recite 'Daffodils' by William Wordsworth.

Staff at Hereford Library contributed to the Herefordshire In the Pink campaign on Friday 15th October. Signs outside the library encouraged borrowers to have their hair sprayed pink for £1 and quite a few were brave enough to try this after seeing how it looked on staff! Staff dressed in various shades of pink including bright pink glasses and sparkly pink hats. They decked the window pink, ate pink cakes and sweets and had a bring-and-buy sale in the workroom - raising a grand total of £221. All money donated was given to Breast Cancer Haven, Hereford, which offers information, advice, counseling and complementary therapies free to anyone who would like their support.

Libraries joined forces with the Museums

and Archives services to bring the "BBC People's War" project to Herefordshire. They are collecting World War II memories from people around the County, and recording them on the People's War website. Staff took along a box of World War II artifacts provided by Hereford Museum to a group in Ledbury to help stimulate their wartime recollections.

On 30th November, Bill Laws, editor of the book "In the munitions: women at war in Herefordshire", gave a talk at Ross-on-Wye Library and stirred many recollections about local wartime events. Staff assisted 15 people to add their own vivid and interesting reminiscences to the BBC website.

To help all library visitors find choosing books easier, a pilot project is currently underway at Bromyard, Colwall and Leominster Libraries. New colour-coded signage has been introduced throughout each library and both public and staff are being invited to comment. It is planned to introduce this to all libraries following completion of the pilot and any amendments.

Quick Guide to this issue:

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Herefordshire Partnership Support Services

Main Activity and Key Achievements October, 2004 to January, 2005



Herefordshire Partnership 2004 Annual Conference held at the Three Counties Hotel in November.

During the Autumn term, the Lifelong Learning Development Unit (LLDU) provided courses for 314 learners. Ninety-five of these learners successfully completed Open College Network Certificates.

The LLDU's Adult and Community Learning (ACL) provision was inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate during the week of 6th December 2004. The Inspection lasted for four days, and included visits to courses, inspection of records, documents and interviews with Councillors, officers and partners.

The Inspection Report was formally published in early February. The gradings identify the Council's provision as good in five out of six of the areas inspected, and satisfactory in the sixth. These grades demonstrate that the Service has made significant progress since its first inspection.

The local Learning and Skills Council has accessed an additional £200,000 of core ACL funding for Herefordshire Council. This funding has been given to support the continuation of the Herefordshire Literacy Project (HELP), a successful voluntary organisation delivering Basic Skills and English Spoken as another Language courses both in the South Wye and across the County.

During December, the Community Involvement Co-ordinator and Parish Liaison Officer organised and ran a

briefing session for Council Officers to update on Parish Plan protocol and answer questions relating to moving Parish Plans forward. Work began on implementation of the Council's Community Involvement Strategy, and as a result Council Officers were advised on the processes, mechanisms and methods for consultation on projects such as the Widemarsh Street Pedestrianisation scheme, and the St. James and Bartonsham Community Travel Plan.

Various ARCH European funded projects either commenced or were approved during this period; including two projects giving young people the skills and confidence to enter into employment, a project helping the disabled into work and another providing community learning centres in Ross-on-Wye, Bromyard and Leominster.

The Herefordshire Partnership Annual Conference took place in November 2004. The event, entitled "Exploring the Vision", offered delegates a chance to listen to keynote speakers and to participate in associated Workshops. Feedback from the workshops will contribute to the consultation process for the Review of the Herefordshire Plan, which is being undertaken in 2005.

The newly updated Herefordshire Partnership website was launched on 1st January. The new site meets very stringent accessibility standards for use by the disabled, as well as meeting guidelines for Freedom of Information and Data Protection.

Herefordshire Partnership produced its Winter Newsletter in January. The edition was hosted by two Ambition Groups - Social Inclusion & Anti-Poverty and Community Development and Local Services. The articles submitted reflected the work undertaken by representative organisations in pursuit of their respective Ambitions; to reduce poverty and isolation in Herefordshire and encourage communities to shape the future of Herefordshire.

Exceptional P.I. Performance

Percentage of partner organisation staff who think the Herefordshire Plan/Partnership is relevant to their work

Target 53% - The 40% achieved is an increase from 38% in 2004. In order to further raise the level of awareness of Council staff of the Herefordshire Plan, the team has and will continue to issue briefing notes to all Council staff about the review of the Herefordshire Plan in 2005.

Cultural Services

ISSUES ARISING DURING THE PERIOD

Staff vacancies at the Tourist Information Centres created problems.

The application for continued funding for the Tourism Enterprise Programme was rejected, and with the budget cuts within the Council this has caused difficulty in planning beyond March 2005.

Main Activity and Key Achievements October, 2004 to January, 2005



Walkers over Bromyard Downs— part of the successful Winter Walking Festival.

The Herefordshire Winter Walking Festival took place in December; over 300 walkers participated in 11 different walks. All of the walks were fully booked and the number of people from outside Herefordshire attracted to the event increased again this year. The one major achievement for the future of the Walking Festival was that private sector sponsorship was negotiated by the Principal Tourism Officer with Exodus Travel, overseas walking holiday specialists. The sponsorship deal is worth £25,000 over 3 years.

Cultural Services' work in the field of Creative Industries was recognised when the authority received 'Cultural Pathfinder' status. The Herefordshire Council is one of just 13 local authorities that have been singled out as leading the way in demonstrating how culture and sport can help deliver Government priorities across public life. Creative Industries' work in

assisting artists and crafts people to improve their businesses was regarded as a boost to the local economy. Cultural Services will now help other local Councils to successfully use culture and sport to improve the quality of life for their residents.

In November, the Hereford Museum launched its work in partnership with the RNCB, which included audio guides, Braille and tactile images.

During January a non-visitor survey was conducted by Heritage Services and over 300 replies were collected.

The survey highlighted several misconceptions about museums — for instance, some non-users did not know where the buildings were and others believed that there was an entrance charge. The survey has provided very useful feedback which will inform Heritage Service's marketing strategy.

Exceptional P.I. Performance

BV170 (a) The number of visits to and usages of museums/heritage centres per 1,000 population: At time of writing, the outturn against this indicator was 696 against the annual target of 815. This indicator counts all visits including those made via the website. One factor in the numbers being lower than anticipated for the time of year is the fact that at time of writing the number of web hits for the month of January could not be included due to the changeover to the new website .

BV170 (b) The number of pupils visiting museums and galleries in organised school groups A figure of 3,057 had been achieved against the annual target of 7,000. The target was based on last year's outturn, but is greatly affected by the amount of time within the school term that Herefordshire is in possession of the Museum on the Move bus. A lack of formal arrangements around this (with Shropshire and Worcestershire), combined with the oversight that it was Herefordshire's turn to set up this year's display on the bus (which takes around a month to do) means that the number of weeks available to Herefordshire to tour with the bus whilst the children were at school was substantially less than last year.

Customers satisfied that the service they received at TIC was good or excellent: As this is a new indicator for this year, a target of 60% was set to establish the baseline. Pleasingly, the outturn is currently 99%

Economic Investment and Development

Main Activity and Key Achievements October, 2004 to January, 2005



The Tinsmiths in Ledbury — one of the latest projects to be completed under the Redundant Building Grant Scheme.

Public consultation on the City centre improvement project at Eign Gate was undertaken during October 2004. The consultation on the two proposed options began with an invitation to all local retailers to attend a special “Retailers Day” on Monday 11th October 2004 in All Saints Church. The event was attended by local radio and by many city retailers. A display stand was available until 29th October, and a council officer attended every lunchtime. 161 members of the public completed consultation sheets. Almost 80% of respondents agreed that Eign Gate should be refurbished. Suggestions were received on how people would like the street to look. This feedback resulted in some changes to the original proposal and a further round of consultation was held on those proposed changes in January. The project is now proceeding to tendering stage and work on removing trees will start in March.

The Team's work on the Economic Development pages of the Council website was recognised by a reported second place in the Society of Information Technology Manager's (SOCITM's) survey of local government websites at the end of 2004. With the move to a new software platform for the website in January 2005 a great deal of work was undertaken during December to migrate the economic development pages to the new software. This work will continue in 2005 to make best use of the new software facilities now available.

The Team has continued to work with

Advantage West Midlands Rural Business Connect Project, this project will help to ensure that support to rural businesses is provided more seamlessly and that the support services available is more widely known.

Work on the Economic Development Strategy for Herefordshire continued with the development of a set of high level performance indicators designed to measure the impact that the Strategy is having on the County's economy. A structure for managing the Economic Development Strategy in the future was agreed. The Strategy is due to be launched in April 2005 once the consultation exercise is complete.

John Kyrle High School in Ross-on-Wye was awarded a grant of £140,000 from EU sources, and Travellers Heritage a grant of £50,000 from the Heritage Lottery Fund, after receiving help from the Project Development Team. This Team also arranged a successful Funding Fair attended by over 120 people, and a Big Lottery Fund seminar attended by 50 people.

The Start-Up Grant Scheme has over achieved its target of awarding 50 grants this year with applications still coming in.

Two more Redundant Building Grant projects, The Tinsmiths in Ledbury and Clubsport in Kington, have come to fruition generating good publicity for the Scheme and the Council as well as helping these businesses develop.

Exceptional P.I. Performance

No. of inward investment enquiries: target 110. Only 29 enquiries have been received year to date (compared to 105 in total for last year). Actions to improve the desirability of Herefordshire for businesses are being formulated as part of the Economic Development Strategy work.

No. of hits received on Economic Development pages of Council's website: target 1,800— hits recorded until end of January 2,634. It is hoped this figure will only continue to improve.

No. of jobs created through RBG Scheme: target 60. Only five achieved to date largely due to a four month delay in the start of the scheme and delays in applications around building control issues. Many of the jobs expected to be created in the first year of this scheme will be realised in 2005/06

No. of jobs safeguarded through RBG Scheme: target 25. Twelve jobs had been safeguarded as at the end of January, many more are to come but may not be realised until 2005/06 for the same reasons stated above.

External Liaison (Sports Development)

Main Activity and Key Achievements October, 2004 to January, 2005

The Sports Development Team joined the Obesity Task Group with the PCT. The Group will develop a strategy for joint working towards national targets for reducing obesity, particularly in young people. This may open opportunities for further work with Children's Services and Health agencies in pursuit of the new Public Health agenda.



Girls' Tag Rugby Festival for the Whitecross School Sport Partnership.

Shirley Goodwin-Jones has joined the Sports Development Team as SHAPES Development Officer, driving this new physical activity project. SHAPES (funded through the Active England Fund) will not only provide a diverse range of activity sessions over the next three years for people from the south of the County, but will also provide training and mentoring opportunities for people who wish to learn more about health, fitness and exercise.

The Sports Referral Project has worked with 18 new referrals from a range of agencies including YOT (Youth Offending Team), Education, DASH and The Probation Service. The clients have been linked to a number of sports including

kickboxing, fishing, badminton and the gym with some working closely with mentors from local clubs.

The Active Sports Programme has enabled approximately 150 young girls to try out rugby. Successes of the programme to date is three of the girls being selected to attend trials at regional level. One player - from St Mary's school - has been selected to represent the region and will be training with the West Midlands squad.

Exceptional P.I. Performance

Percentage of existing LIFT Exercise Referral clients completing the Programme: The target of 45% is based on the 2003/04 outturn. Performance is currently running at 37%. It is unlikely that the target will be met because, for the purposes of this performance indicator, completion of the LIFT Programme relies on an end-of-course consultation. It is the number of these consultations which is down. Clients are still completing the practical sessions but are unable to have a final consultation due to the current level of demand for the finite number of consultation rooms at the leisure centres. Negotiations with halo are ongoing, and the possibility of holding the consultations at alternative venues is being looked at.

Number of new referrals to the LIFT Exercise Programme: Only 610 new referrals have been achieved to date against the target of 1,050. Although referrals to the Programme from G.P.'s has increased over last year, an initial consultation is necessary for clients to be accepted on to the Programme. Again it is the problem of accessing consultation rooms at the leisure centres which is hampering performance in this area.

Participants completing community based sports leaders awards and coach education programmes: A target of 50 for the year was set against this new performance indicator. However, a shortage in tutors (who are mainly being requested to take this tutoring on as voluntary work) means that the target is unlikely to be met. A number of new tutors have now been identified and are currently being trained in order to increase the capacity available for next year.

Community Regeneration

ISSUES ARISING DURING THE PERIOD

During the period the Council made representations to Advantage West Midlands (AWM) in respect of their strict funding arrangements for towns eligible for tier 3 Market Towns Initiative money – both the Ross-on-Wye and Leominster areas are in line for this funding. AWM were proposing that only capital projects that delivered economic outputs would be eligible for inclusion in implementation plans. As a result of our approach AWM have now changed the criteria to include up to a third of the £500,000 available for each town being made up of revenue projects and that not all projects need to have economic outputs.

Main Activity and Key Achievements October, 2004 to January, 2005



Unveiling of plaque at Arrow Valley archeological site of a castle – one of the completed Leader + Projects

In the Ross-on-Wye area, work has been undertaken with the Ross Area Partnership to finalise the draft 'Ross and Area Strategic Action Plan' for presentation to the Market Towns Task Group in March. The Strategy is a plan to facilitate the social and economic regeneration of the Ross-on-Wye area. The completion and adoption of the Plan should help to secure approximately £500,000 of Market Towns Initiative funding from Advantage West Midlands towards a three year regeneration programme for the area.

With the Ledbury Market Town Initiative coming to an end on the 31st March 2005, the Ledbury Area Regeneration Partnership has developed a Strategic Implementation Plan that prioritises key future regeneration. Additionally, the partnership has created a regeneration company (Ledbury and Area Development Trust) that will seek to become a self-sustaining vehicle for future regeneration development in the Ledbury area.

The Herefordshire and Worcestershire Social Enterprise Support Partnership has developed a Social Enterprise Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire. The Partnership is co-ordinated by the two

County Councils and includes Business Link, Community First, HVA specialist agencies and regional bodies, as well as sector representation. The Strategy sets out a series of actions to support and develop the Social Enterprise Sector.

Money Box has now been expanded into a countywide Credit Union. It has secured funding for one worker, opened collection points in South Wye, commissioned a website, re-launched with new marketing materials, and is growing rapidly in membership, loans and savings.

Development of 2005-2008 Leader + Action Plan – has led to the approval from GOWM of funding for the remainder of the programme. This £1,348,788 although not additional funding, was by no means guaranteed to be awarded to the County and required the Programme Team to demonstrate that to date the Programme and its projects have delivered success and benefits to the LEADER+ area.

Exceptional P.I. Performance

Percentage of customers rating the service provided by the Community Regeneration Team as 'good' or 'excellent' - Target 77% This year's satisfaction survey was targeted at the Team's known customers and was accompanied by the Team's 'What do we do?' leaflet. The Team is therefore confident that the survey result of 90.91% of customers rating the service they offer as 'good' or 'excellent' is a true picture.

Percentage of customer's rating how accessible the services provided by the Community Regeneration Team are as 'good' or 'excellent' - Target 80% An outcome of 90.57% was achieved against this indicator for the same reasons given above.

Community Youth Service

Main Activity and Key Achievements October, 2004 to January, 2005



Members of Kington Young Film Group working on their documentary style film about food.

The Services newly recruited staff filling ten of the thirteen vacancies took up their posts during this period. This has been very beneficial to the service but resource intensive in induction and training activity. The next round of recruitment commenced in January, with interviews planned for March.

Youth work programmes continued across the County with the exception of Leominster where the Youth Centre had to close for two weeks to remove fungus from the building! Despite this, Leominster has been very active with three bands signed up to play the Ross-on-Wye Youth Centre Arts Festival in February. First Aid and Babysitting courses are about half way through their programme, and the D of E group all passed the expedition element of their Award. Leominster has experienced some problems in relation to other users and friends of users of the site. This has resulted in the police being called on one occasion. The Youth Service are working closely with the police and the landlord of the building to address this issue.

The Way2Go information service (Freephone / txt / email) is proving very popular. In September it received 91 enquiries from young people, the vast majority were about sex, sexuality and relationships, with the next most popular areas of enquiry being health and leisure.

Ross-on-Wye Youth Centre (The Y Zone) has been expanding its programme and activities and is working towards a big Arts Festival in February. Preparation work for the planned refurbishment of the building was undertaken, which will start as soon

as the final element of RRZ funding is finalised. A sponsored walk raised £800 pounds for the Centre. Ross Labels donated a minibus, and other generous support has been received from the Town Council and Ross Lions.

Sailing and canoeing activities have been developing with many new users and groups using the facilities for the first time. Particularly welcome were school groups and special schools using the new disabled access boats at Bodenham. For the first time the season has been extended through the purchase of wetsuits and cold weather kit.

Bromyard and Ledbury have had particular success with the Herefordshire Award (HA). Ninety young people achieved the first stage of the award. There are two major projects ongoing in Ledbury. The first is the Youth Arts Project which is run in conjunction with John Masefield School, The Courtyard and Rural Media. The second is the Right Direction Project (for young people at risk of exclusion from school) which is delivered in conjunction with John Masefield School and BODS (a local charity working with young people on environmental education).

Kington Young Film Group have completed a film about food which is to be shown in February. Their first film has been nominated for the First Light Film Awards (young film makers mini Oscars), they have been invited to attend the award ceremony in London in February.

The Youth Service produced a calendar and has a radio advert on Wyvern to promote the work of the Service.

Exceptional P.I. Performance

Performance against accredited learning targets has improved and the trend is up. However it is still unlikely the target will be achieved by the year end. The other factor affecting performance in this area is that 17% of the young people the Service is working with (11 - 25yrs) are not in the target group (13 - 19yrs) that the KPI's are calculated from:

Percentage of participation target that undergo personal and social development opportunities that result in a recorded learning outcome Target for year 747 individuals. 391 achieved to date.

Percentage of participation target that undergo personal and social development opportunities that result in an accredited learning outcome Target for year 373 individuals. 182 achieved to date.

Parks, Countryside and Leisure Development

Main Activity and Key Achievements October, 2004 to January, 2005

Thanks to the mild winter, the construction of the new North Herefordshire Swimming Pool is back on schedule. Although there were delays in construction in the autumn caused by the world steel supply shortages, the new pool is now back on course for completion at the end of the year.

Despite a late start, the Aylestone Park Project is now on target to deliver Stage 1A and 1B phases by the end of the financial year. This involves the completion of the new entrance to the park and the installation of the gates.

Preparatory work on the 'clean up' of the Castle Pool was carried out in late January/early February. Undisturbed core samples of the silt were taken for analysis by English Heritage. This will enable them

to look at the pollen distribution of the last 160 years and they may be able to determine other archaeological information. Following these investigations it is expected that the necessary statutory consents to undertake the work will be in place by the end of this financial year. The work to remove the silt is scheduled to be undertaken in the autumn in order to avoid disturbance to local wildlife.

Forward planning negotiations have been undertaken with Herefordshire Jarvis Services to ensure that last season's grass-cutting difficulties will not be repeated. The service has been assured that HJS will recruit and maintain a skilled team of operators to carry out grounds maintenance at sites managed by the Council.



The mild winter has allowed for time to be made up on the construction of the North Herefordshire Pool caused by the delay in the steel reaching site.

ADULT AND COMMUNITY LEARNING – RESULT OF REINSPECTION

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To advise Members of the outcome of the reinspection of the Council's Adult and Community Learning provision.

Financial Implications

2. Not applicable.

Considerations

3. Herefordshire Council's Adult and Community Learning Provision (ACL) was originally inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate in January 2003. The conclusion of the inspection was that whilst the training provided was good there were significant weaknesses in the leadership and management which meant that the service provision was deemed unsatisfactory and required reinspection.
4. Herefordshire Council's ACL provision was re-inspected by the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) week commencing 6th December 2004. The report was published on the ALI website on 4th February 2005. The Council's provision was graded as good in five out of six of the areas inspected and satisfactory in the sixth. These grades demonstrate that the service has made significant progress since its first inspection and place it within the top 28% of Council's inspected by ALI.

Grades Achieved in the Reinspection

Leadership and Management	2
Contributory grades:	
Equality of Opportunity	2
Quality assurance	3
Information and communications technology	2
Foundation programmes	2
Foundation programmes	2

Grade 1= outstanding, grade 2 = good, grade 3 = satisfactory, grade 4 = unsatisfactory, grade 5 = very weak

5. Within leadership and management notable strengths identified were the strong partnership work that exists, the good progress towards strategic development and the positive actions that the Council had taken to resolve weaknesses identified within the original report. Weaknesses in this area were primarily about the restricted capacity of the Council to meet all the ACL needs in the County. Quality assurance was given a 3, on the basis that, whilst the appropriate processes are in place, it was not possible within the short timescale since their implementation to assess the full impact on the quality of learning.
6. Within curriculum areas the standard of teaching and learning, and the achievement rates were identified as strengths along with good curriculum management. There were weaknesses in some areas regarding the lack of strategic planning and of the approach to Basic Skills assessment in curriculum areas other than basic skills.
7. The Council's Public Relations Officer together with the Learning and Skills Council are developing a series of press releases to inform the community of this result.
8. The Council will be required to develop a Post Inspection Action Plan (PIAP). This Plan will identify actions to address the weaknesses identified within the report and in addition to identify actions to ensure that strengths are maintained. This Plan is to be submitted to the local Learning and Skills Council within six weeks of the report's publication.
9. The Council will receive a quality monitoring inspection visit in a year's time. This visit normally lasts one day and is carried out by two inspectors. The focus is on the 'distance travelled' on efforts to improve provision and to measure the effectiveness of the PIAP. A short report is produced, a copy of which is provided to the local LSC. This report is not made public.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified

**SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY
 COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2005/6**

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

- 1 To consider a new work programme.

Financial Implications

- 2 None

Background

- 3 The 2005/06 work programme has now been drafted and Members of the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee are requested to consider the proposed work programme for the period to the end of March 2006. Members are reminded that guidance for developing an effective work programme is contained in the Scrutiny Handbook previously issued to Members.

17 June 2005	
Officer Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tourism progress • HALO • Hereford City Partnership • Youth Service • Herefordshire Plan • End of year monitoring reports
Scrutiny Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Possible Young Persons Review Scoping Statement (TBC)
23 September 2005	
Officer Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Voluntary Sector – Update • Festivals – Update • Reports from Cabinet Members
Scrutiny Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courtyard Review Group • Young Persons Review Group Report (TBC)

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

9 December 2005	
Officer Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrianisation – Post experiment • Single Regeneration Budget
Scrutiny Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Courtyard Review Group Report
24 March 2006	
Officer Reports	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Market Town Facilities
Scrutiny Reviews	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> •

- 4 These items are in addition to the Committees regular monitoring reports from the Policy and Community Directorate.
- 5 In addition Members may wish to consider suggesting items or reviews to add to the work programme.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the work programme be approved and recommended to Strategic Monitoring Committee.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Scrutiny Handbook “ A practical handbook for Councillors.” Dec 2003.