

AGENDA

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Monday 8 February 2010**

Time: **9.30 am**

Place: **The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road,
Hereford**

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

For any further information please contact:

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If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please call Tim Brown, Committee Manager (Scrutiny) on 01432 260239 or e-mail tbrown@herefordshire.gov.uk in advance of the meeting.

Agenda for the Meeting of the Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chairman	Councillor PJ Edwards
Vice-Chairman	Councillor WLS Bowen
	Councillor PA Andrews
	Councillor ME Cooper
	Councillor AE Gray
	Councillor KG Grumbley
	Councillor TM James
	Councillor RI Matthews
	Councillor PM Morgan
	Councillor AT Oliver
	Councillor PJ Watts

GUIDANCE ON DECLARING PERSONAL AND PREJUDICIAL INTERESTS AT MEETINGS

The Council's Members' Code of Conduct requires Councillors to declare against an Agenda item(s) the nature of an interest and whether the interest is personal or prejudicial. Councillors have to decide first whether or not they have a personal interest in the matter under discussion. They will then have to decide whether that personal interest is also prejudicial.

A personal interest is an interest that affects the Councillor more than most other people in the area. People in the area include those who live, work or have property in the area of the Council. Councillors will also have a personal interest if their partner, relative or a close friend, or an organisation that they or the member works for, is affected more than other people in the area. If they do have a personal interest, they must declare it but can stay and take part and vote in the meeting.

Whether an interest is prejudicial is a matter of judgement for each Councillor. What Councillors have to do is ask themselves whether a member of the public – if he or she knew all the facts – would think that the Councillor's interest was so important that their decision would be affected by it. If a Councillor has a prejudicial interest then they must declare what that interest is. A Councillor who has declared a prejudicial interest at a meeting may nevertheless be able to address that meeting, but only in circumstances where an ordinary member of the public would be also allowed to speak. In such circumstances, the Councillor concerned will have the same opportunity to address the meeting and on the same terms. However, a Councillor exercising their ability to speak in these circumstances must leave the meeting immediately after they have spoken.

AGENDA

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
3. MINUTES To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 18 January 2010.	1 - 6
4. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY To consider suggestions from members of the public on issues the Committee could scrutinise in the future.	
5. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY (REFRESH) To consider whether to make any comments to Cabinet on the refresh of Herefordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy covering the period 2010 – 2013.	7 - 54
6. WORK PROGRAMME To consider the Committee's work programme including a request from the Executive to review the impact of the severe winter weather as part of that programme.	55 - 58

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Overview and Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday 18 January 2010 at 9.30 am

Present: Councillor PJ Edwards (Chairman)
Councillor WLS Bowen (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: PA Andrews, ME Cooper, AE Gray, KG Grumbley, TM James, RI Matthews, PM Morgan, AT Oliver and PJ Watts

In attendance: Councillors H Bramer (Cabinet Member - Resources) and JP French (Cabinet Member –Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources.)

1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor RJ Phillips, Leader of the Council.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 December 2009 be confirmed as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

4. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

There were no suggestions from members of the public.

5. MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY 2010-13

The Committee considered the draft Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) 2010-13.

The report noted that the MTFS was to be considered by Cabinet on 21 February with a view to Council approving the Strategy on 5 February.

The Director of Resources commented on the context within which the Strategy had been prepared. He noted the considerable uncertainty over the financial position of local government generally in face of the state of the economy and national finances.

The national grant settlement for local government in the final year of the Comprehensive Spending Review 2007 provided for the Council to receive a 4% increase in grant (£2.2m). However, the prospects for future years were more difficult with the Council projecting a 5% reduction year on year.

The original MTFS had originally envisaged a 4.7% Council Tax increase, reduced to 3.9% last year. The Strategy now assumed 2.9% for 2010/11 and the following two years but it was likely that there would be a need to be flexible on this point.

A 1% reduction in Council Tax meant an £830k reduction in the base budget year on year. Whilst the Government might be seeking lower Council Tax rises the Council needed to weigh the implications of any reduction in the proposed increase carefully given the range of budgetary pressures it faced. The Director was monitoring the situation and developing contingency plans with colleagues. He would present a clear statement on the latest position to Council in February.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- Noting that the Government had indicated that it expected to see Council Tax rises “substantially” below 3%, Members questioned whether a proposed rise of 2.9% was sustainable.

The Director said that the Government never set a firm limit for capping in England. He was monitoring proposed rates across the Country. The average proposed increase by unitary authorities had originally forecast 3.9% but this was reducing. The average for county councils was currently slightly lower at 3% but this was also reducing.

The Government had the power to cap the Council’s Council Tax increase. This would mean the Council incurring the substantial cost of rebilling and having other consequences that the Council would wish to avoid.

- That, whatever the future prospects, the Council expected to receive a 4% increase in Government grant for 2010/11. It was questioned how the proposal to increase Council Tax by 2.9% in this context would be perceived by the public and Government. In a year of a General Election there would be great pressure to reduce the level of Council Tax increases and it was asked what contingency plans were in place should there be a need to reduce the rate of increase.

The Director of Resources reiterated that there were a number of budgetary pressures, for example the need to respond to new legislation and increases in the costs of contracts. If the proposed level of Council Tax increase was reduced, mindful that the MTFs had originally envisaged an increase of 4.7%, consideration would need to be given to service reductions. He had advised Directors of the need to be flexible and to be prepared to revisit budgets.

- It was asked what increase would be required to support a standstill budget. The Director replied that an increase of 2.9% was required in 2010/11 to set a balanced budget as shown in appendix D to the MTFs. In the face of a Government Grant reduction in 2011/12 the projected increase of 2.9% that year would not maintain a standstill position.
- That with inflation rates at such a low level the public would question the need for a 2.9% increase. The Council needed to demonstrate that it was striving for efficiencies and this was likely to be an ongoing requirement in the light of the current financial picture. The Council would also need to demonstrate that its staffing levels were appropriate, noting reductions being made by a number of other authorities.
- That there were a number of key change programmes across the Council, some now joint with NHS Herefordshire, which had evolved over time and indeed changed names. It was essential that the envisaged savings from these programmes were rigorously tracked.

- Clarification was sought on the management change reserve of £915,000 identified as an emerging pressure in appendix D to the MTFS. The Director explained that given the projected 5% grant reduction year on year from 2011/12 it was possible that there would have to be voluntary redundancies. It was prudent to make provision for this possibility.
- The implications of voluntary redundancies on the superannuation fund were discussed, mindful also that the Council was part of a joint scheme with authorities in Worcestershire and their actions could have a bearing on the fund. The Director reported that although part of a joint scheme the Herefordshire commitments to the Fund were ring-fenced. A report was due in the Autumn following the statutory triennial review of the fund and the outcome would need to be taken into account in preparing the 2011/12 budget.
- In response to a comment about pressures on children's services, the Director noted that it was proposed that the service would receive a net budget increase of some £1m.
- That the scrutiny review of support for carers had reinforced the importance of the contribution that carers made and it was important that support to carers was maintained.
- Pressures on the Adult Social Care budget and the difficulty in achieving efficiency savings were commented on.
- The likely local government pay award and the timing of its announcement was discussed.
- The Cabinet Member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) suggested that individual scrutiny committees might want to look in more detail at service pressures that Directorates faced and efficiency savings that Directors proposed to make.
- Clarification was sought on the Capital Programme. The Cabinet Member (Resources) confirmed that funding was in place to support the development of Plough Lane, balanced by savings on running costs and the capital receipts from the disposal of surplus properties.

It was suggested that, accepting that a consultation was underway on the Local Development Framework, the MTFS did not adequately reflect the intention to complete a number of major capital schemes within the lifetime of the Strategy. It was further suggested that specific reference needed to be made in the MTFS to these major schemes, such as the Butter Market in Hereford. The Director replied that a full review of the Programme was being undertaken. Schemes already underway were being progressed. He noted that the VAT partial exemption limit needed to be reviewed before any capital funding was awarded to the Butter Market Scheme.

- Asked about the specific government grant for the supporting people scheme the Director reported that the specific ring-fenced grant would cease to be provided in 2010/11 and future funding would be subsumed within the general Area Based Grant.

- The proposal in the 2010/11 budget to transfer £2m to general reserves in 2010/11 was discussed. The Director commented that this was in accordance with the Council's decision to replenish reserves drawn on in setting the 2009/10 budget and made provision to balance the budget in future years.
- It was noted that whilst the 2009/10 Council Tax level at Band D for Herefordshire (excluding Parish Councils) was below the average for unitary authorities it was above the average once parishes, police and fire were included. It was requested clarification be provided.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet be advised

- (a) **that the Committee notes the development of the budget is ongoing, expresses concern over the projected level of Council Tax at 2.9%, and highlights also the potential pressure on the superannuation fund; and**
- (b) **following review of the Capital Programme the Committee requests that the text of the Medium Term Financial Strategy should be adjusted to make clear the major schemes it is proposed to complete.**

6. COUNCIL AND NHS HEREFORDSHIRE JOINT CORPORATE PLAN

The Committee considered the proposed joint Council and NHS Herefordshire Corporate Plan.

The report noted that the joint Plan was to be considered by Cabinet on 21 February with a view to Council approving the Plan on 5 February. The NHS Herefordshire Board was to be invited to approve the Plan on 28 February.

A revised report to Cabinet had been circulated to Members. The Corporate Policy and Research Manager (CPRM) noted that this now contained two appendices. Appendix 1 comprised the vision, priority themes, strategic objectives and long-term outcomes, and was proposed to be recommended to NHS Herefordshire and the Council. Appendix 2 was the present working draft of the performance indicators and associated targets, key projects and milestones that would be used to achieve these, as well as providing the basis for strategic performance management. Appendix 2 was work in progress.

He added that the format of the Corporate Plan was a departure from previous years, with considerably fewer words, and a clear focus on delivery.

The intention was to align the plans of the Council and NHS Herefordshire by setting out what they were seeking to achieve through their close partnership, within the overarching framework of the refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy.

It was essential that the Plan was affordable. He reported that it had accordingly been prepared with regard to the assumptions about future funding in the medium term financial strategies of the Council and NHS Herefordshire. However, as noted in the risk management section of the report to Cabinet, the Plan could need to be reviewed were those assumptions to prove significantly wide of the mark, for instance in the light of a dramatic change in the Government's funding regime for local authorities.

In discussion the following principal points were made:

- The CPRM confirmed that the intention was to produce a version of the Plan that was readily accessible to the public.
- The CPRM provided background on the identification of the major challenges highlighted in Appendix 1 in relation to the joint vision for the Council and NHS Herefordshire. He confirmed that these were intended to be of equal priority.
- Members emphasised the importance of the provision of sufficient affordable housing, noting that this had a number of beneficial impacts, for example on people's health, and expressed concern that the currently proposed targets seemed unlikely to meet the probable level of need.
- It was observed that Appendix 2 contained targets for the completion of capital schemes such as the Butter Market for which there was as yet no provision in the Medium Term Financial Strategy. The CPRM reiterated that appendix 2 was a work in progress. He also confirmed that further drafts of Appendix 2 would set out clearly the basis of measurement to be used for each of the proposed performance indicators.
- Members noted that the Plan was being recommended to Cabinet as affordable and deliverable. However, they wished to emphasise the need to be vigilant in ensuring that this was and remained the case. It was noted, for example, that in delivering the long-term outcome of reduced CO2 emissions and successful adaptation to unavoidable impacts of climate change, Members had a concern that the service may be under-resourced, with the post of climate change officer having been vacant for some time.
- Members were also concerned to ensure that the targets were realistic and achievable. It was also noted that a number of targets were dependent on the commitment of partners, such as the Police. The CPRM commented that action plans would be in place to deliver the targets and key projects and that scrutiny committees would be able to monitor delivery against those plans. It was recognised that negotiations with partners would have to take place to finalise some of the targets.
- It was proposed that consideration be given to the following specific points:
 - That a better basis for measuring the delivery of long term outcome 1.3 – 'more and higher spending visitors to the county' would be the STEAM report.
 - The targets for the processing of planning applications against long-term outcome 1.4 – 'improved quality and availability of business accommodation and employment land' did not contain any basis for measuring the quality of decisions, although it was accepted that this could be difficult to devise;
 - The targets for recycling waste at 6.1 of the Plan should be made more ambitious; and
 - That the key project of producing planning policy documentation did not seem sufficient in itself in relation to delivering the targets for long term objective 6.2 – 'reduced CO2 emissions and successful adaptation to unavoidable impacts of climate change'.

RESOLVED:

That Cabinet be advised

- (a) That the format of the Joint Corporate Plan be welcomed;**
- (b) That while acknowledging that Appendix 2 was a work in progress for the Executive to complete the importance of ensuring that targets are realistic and achievable and that resources are in place to deliver them be emphasised, noting for example the concern expressed over the resourcing of climate change work; and**
- (c) That consideration be given to the specific points relating to long term outcomes 1.3, 1.4, 6.1 and 6.2 highlighted above.**

7. SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY (REFRESH)

The Committee was informed that further revisions were being made to the Sustainable Community Strategy and it was intended to present an updated document to the Committee in February.

RESOLVED: That consideration of the Strategy be deferred.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered the work programmes of the scrutiny committees.

The Committee's responsibility under the Council's new Constitution for overseeing, coordinating and approving the work programmes of the scrutiny committees was noted. It was reported that expressions of interest had been received to fill the remaining place on the External Communication Review Group appointed by the Strategic Monitoring Committee in December 2009.

RESOLVED:

- That**
- (a) the current work programmes be approved as a basis for further development; and**
 - (b) Councillor PGH Cutter be invited to serve on the External Communication Review Group.**

The meeting ended at 11.55 am

CHAIRMAN



MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	8 FEBRUARY 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY (REFRESH)
REPORT BY:	HEAD OF PARTNERSHIP SUPPORT

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide.

Purpose

To consider whether to make any comments to Cabinet on the refresh of Herefordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy covering the period 2010 – 2013.

Recommendation

THAT the Committee considers whether it wishes to make any comments to Cabinet.

Introduction and Background

1. The Sustainable Community Strategy forms part of the Council's Budget and Policy Framework. The Committee deferred consideration of this item at its meeting on 18 January and is now invited to submit comments to Cabinet for its consideration on 18 February. Cabinet will then make recommendations on the Strategy to Council on 5 March.
2. The report to be submitted to Cabinet on 18 February is appended.

Background Papers

- None identified.

MEETING:	CABINET
DATE:	18 FEBRUARY 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	SUSTAINABLE COMMUNITY STRATEGY (REFRESH)
PORTFOLIO AREA:	LEADER

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To approve the refresh of Herefordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy covering the period 2010 – 2013.

Key Decision

Recommendation

THAT Cabinet approves the refreshed Sustainable Community Strategy.

Key Points Summary

- The Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy is a key long-term planning document for improving the quality of life and services in Herefordshire.
- Every Local Authority is required to have a Sustainable Community Strategy which has been developed and agreed with its Local Strategic Partnership. Herefordshire Partnership is the Local Strategic Partnership for Herefordshire, representing local public services, businesses, and voluntary and community sector organisations.
- The current strategy covers the period up to March 2010 and is now due to be refreshed in light of achievements to date and new challenges that Herefordshire is currently facing.

Alternative Options

- 1 There are no Alternative Options every Local Authority is required to produce a Sustainable Community Strategy agreed by its Local Strategic Partnership.

Reasons for Recommendations

- 2 To ensure the Sustainable Community Strategy is refreshed and the priorities

identified for 2010-2013 are approved by Cabinet prior to adoption by the Herefordshire Partnership.

Introduction and Background

- 3 The original Community Strategy for Herefordshire was formulated and adopted four years ago. The priorities of the refreshed Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy need to be incorporated into organisational plans and activities in order to achieve Herefordshire's Vision – "Herefordshire will be a place where people, organisations and businesses working together within an outstanding natural environment will bring about sustainable prosperity and well being for all".
- 4 The Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy sets the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Herefordshire in a way that contributes to sustainable development. It sets Herefordshire in context and offers the distinctive Vision and ambition of the area, backed by clear evidence and analysis (for example the State of Herefordshire Report).
- 5 The 2000 Local Government Act charged local authorities with preparing a local Community Strategy with their partners through a Local Strategic Partnership, and Herefordshire's first version was known as the Herefordshire Plan. The Community Strategy for Herefordshire was subsequently published in 2006 and in recognition of emphasising the importance of sustainability, this refreshed version has been renamed the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy.
- 6 The Strategy published in 2006 highlighted a number of key local issues which led to the formulation of desired outcomes for the County. These were identified as a result of a comprehensive consultation process undertaken during 2005. The Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy has been developed from the last Community Strategy and refreshed by looking at the wealth of information gathered since 2005, detailed in background papers, and through consultation with partners.

Key Considerations

- 7 Taking into account the County's key characteristics and all other sources of information a draft list of priorities for Herefordshire has emerged. These have been grouped under the following six priority themes:
 - Children and Young People
 - Economic Development and Enterprise
 - Environment
 - Healthier Communities and Older People
 - Safer Communities
 - Stronger Communities
- 8 During the process of refreshing the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy three guiding principles for partnership working emerged. These will be embedded into the way Herefordshire Partnership works to ensure a co-ordinated long term approach is taken to delivering the priorities of the six themes. The guiding principles are:

Everyone is Someone

- Value everyone's contribution
- Challenge prejudice and discrimination
- Support people and promote an equitable County

Safeguard our Future

- Value our environment and the future of our young people enough to act now
- Think creatively about the bigger picture, and assess how issues will affect us, the resources and the assets at our disposal
- Develop solutions that build sustainability into our economy, our communities, our cultural life and in the infrastructure and natural environment on which we all depend

Work across Boundaries

- Think, plan, act and share responsibility
- Seek solutions which have mutually positive benefits
- Make new alliances and look beyond the obvious

9. The strategy highlights the key issues and challenges facing the place of Herefordshire and its communities and articulates the County's ambition to achieve better outcomes over the next 3 years. The strategy also talks about people and place, setting out the intention to improve the approach to locality working and the way this will inform and shape partnership priorities and ways of working in the future.
10. An important principle in delivering services across Herefordshire is that they should meet the needs of the local community, with people being able to access services in a flexible way, not determined by where they live. The strategy captures the context of the Government's Total Place agenda and recognises there are opportunities to improve access to services and service delivery by agreeing a common approach to localities in Herefordshire. An approach will be further developed over the coming years; ensuring that those living and working in Herefordshire have equality of access to services, brought about by increasingly delivering services on a locality basis in a way that fully benefits the local community.
11. The Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy will be delivered through many organisations, networks, sectors and groups working together as part of Herefordshire Partnership's three tier structure:

Herefordshire Partnership Board - sets the vision for Herefordshire based on a sound understanding of the County, local issues and a responsibility to ensure delivery of efficient, high quality services.

Herefordshire Partnership Management Group – responsible for delivering the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy by ensuring resources are utilised to address the identified priorities.

Herefordshire Partnership Policy and Delivery Groups – six groups (one for each of the six themes) who formulate and commission work to address the priorities in the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy, based on comprehensive information of local need. They report progress on their work to the Management Group.

Community Impact

- 12 The vision and priorities of the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy aim to improve the quality of life and service delivery in all areas of the County. Community engagement is at the heart of the work of Herefordshire Partnership in informing these priorities and driving service improvement in the locality.

Financial Implications

- 13 None. Priorities identified will be delivered from within existing sources of funding.

Legal Implications

- 14 None.

Risk Management

- 15 Delivery of the priorities within the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy through the Herefordshire Partnership will be a key area of assessment for the Comprehensive Area Assessment and as such forms part of the corporate performance management system. The risks associated with delivery of the priorities detailed in the strategy will be managed through the individual performance and delivery groups of the Herefordshire Partnership.

Consultees

- 16 The six Policy and Delivery Groups have been consulted and wider input through their networks has been encouraged. In addition, consultation of the third sector via Herefordshire Voluntary Action and Herefordshire Alliance. Their comments are reflected in the current draft.

Appendices

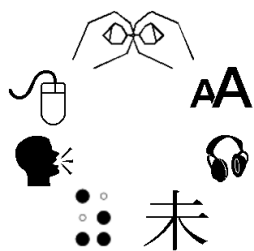
- 17 Draft Sustainable Community Strategy 2011-2013.

Background Papers

- The State of Herefordshire Report
- Local Development Framework
- The Herefordshire Quality of Life Survey

The Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy 2010 - 2013

Text only, images to be added when text is finalised



If you would like help to understand this document, or would like it in another format or language, please telephone Herefordshire Partnership Support Team 01432 261792 or e-mail hfdpartnership@herefordshire.gov.uk.

Draft for comments

The Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy

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Published 2010

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Draft for comments

Foreword

It is five years since the original Community Strategy for Herefordshire was formulated and adopted. To achieve Herefordshire's Vision for 2020 our refreshed strategy reflects and encompasses the changing conditions and circumstances facing Herefordshire.

Our recent Comprehensive Area Assessment concludes that Herefordshire people enjoy relatively low unemployment, good health and education standards. It also reports how well local public services are tackling the major issues in the County and indicated that 87% of people are satisfied with their immediate local area as a place to live.

We realise that the full impact of the current economic downturn and climate change are still to be felt and will undoubtedly challenge us all. This refresh of the Strategy emphasises the importance of sustainability, hence the inclusion in the title.

The three basic elements of people, place and action remain at the heart of the Strategy. Our move towards a focus on locality and recent initiatives such as the Hearts of Herefordshire are helping us to weave the social, environmental and economic strands through the Strategy in a way that binds it all together and will make a difference to our communities.

This Strategy reflects and brings together the organisational priorities of all of our partners – the partnership priorities are incorporated into individual organisation's plans – reflecting Herefordshire's ambitions as a place and recognising the importance of locality and what it means for our communities.

Our emerging engagement strategy reflects that at the heart of our ambition and in order to realise our vision, is the involvement of the people of Herefordshire. They are our key drivers for change for delivering improved services that better meet their needs and taking Herefordshire forward into the next Century.

Councillor Roger Phillips
Chair
Herefordshire Partnership Board

Draft for comments

Our vision, priorities and guiding principles

By 2020:

Herefordshire will be a place where people, organisations and businesses working together within an outstanding natural environment will bring about sustainable prosperity and well being for all

Our priority themes for action:

- Children and young people
- Economic development and enterprise
- Environment
- Healthier communities and older people
- Safer communities
- Stronger communities

Our guiding principles for partnership working:

During the process of refreshing the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy three guiding principles emerged which will underpin everything we do. We will strive to incorporate these into the way we work. This will ensure we take a co-ordinated, long term approach to plans and services which impact on local people, the environment and the economy.

1. Everyone is Someone

- Value everyone's contribution
- Challenge prejudice and discrimination
- Support people and promote an equitable County

2. Safeguard our Future

- Value our environment and the future of our young people enough to act now
- Think creatively about the bigger picture, and assess how issues will affect us, the resources and the assets at our disposal
- Develop solutions that build sustainability into our economy, our communities, our cultural life and in the infrastructure and natural environment on which we all depend

3. Work across Boundaries

- Think, plan, act and share responsibility
- Seek solutions which have mutually positive benefits
- Make new alliances and look beyond the obvious

Draft for comments

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Draft for comments

About Herefordshire

Introduction

This strategy is designed to highlight the key issues and challenges facing the place of Herefordshire and its communities and our ambition to achieve better outcomes over the next 3 years. The key local issues are drawn out from the State of Herefordshire Report and the thematic strategies underpinning delivery against our priorities. It also sets out our intention to improve our approach to locality working and the way this will inform and shape partnership priorities and ways of working in the future.

Key Characteristics of the County of Herefordshire

Herefordshire has a great deal to offer those who live here, work or visit, including a rich heritage, a beautiful natural environment and a wide range of cultural and leisure opportunities. Herefordshire is ambitious for its employment sector, and the education of young people is of a high standard. It is a safe place to live and work, with low levels of crime. There are, however, challenges for the county that are identified within this strategy.

Herefordshire and its Distinctive Environment

Herefordshire is a predominantly rural country of 842 square miles situated in the south west corner of the West Midlands region bordering Wales. The city of Hereford is the major location in the County for employment, health services, education facilities and shopping. The five market towns of Leominster, Ross-on-Wye, Ledbury, Bromyard and Kington are the other principal centres. The rural nature of the area often creates a barrier to providing equal services to all, and businesses find the infrastructure in the county a challenge. It's widely dispersed and often sparsely populated communities need support if they are to have a sustainable and successful future.

Herefordshire has beautiful unspoilt countryside, distinctive heritage, remote valleys and rivers, including the River Wye which flows east through Hereford City, the Malvern Hills on the border with Worcestershire and the Black Mountains in the south west. Parts of two Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONBs) fall into Herefordshire, covering the Malvern Hills and the lower section of the Wye Valley. Parts of the rivers Wye and Lugg are Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC).

Herefordshire has limited access to the motorway network via the M50, which starts near Ross-on Wye and joins the M5 north of Tewkesbury in Gloucestershire. The other main road links, include the A49 running north to south, the A465 north-east to south-west, and the A4103 east to west, all of which pass through Hereford City.

Within Herefordshire, Hereford, Ledbury, Leominster and Colwall have railway stations, connected by two lines: the Cardiff – Manchester line passes through Hereford and Leominster, while the line from Hereford to Birmingham, passing through Ledbury and Colwall, is single track for much of the journey. This line has a direct link to London.

The nearest major international airport is at Birmingham, about 60 miles (99 km) from Hereford. Herefordshire has no ports; deep water facilities are available at Newport docks, or the Bristol Channel, about 35 miles (56 km) from Hereford.

The Country has the 4th lowest population density in England (0.9 persons per hectare). A particular challenge for service delivery is how scattered the population is. A quarter of the population live in areas which are defined as 'very sparse' and over half (54%) of the County's residents live in areas defined as 'rural'. About one-third of the population lives in Hereford City, a little more than a fifth in the market towns and almost half elsewhere.

Provision of services to all members of the community is a particular challenge in sparsely populated rural areas and a robust multi-agency approach is needed if these difficulties are to be overcome. The developing public services arrangements, which bring together key areas of planning, commissioning and delivery under one Chief Executive for Herefordshire Council and the Primary Care Trust present a unique opportunity for partnership working that will bring immense benefit to the local community.

Herefordshire's resident population grew by 2% between 2001 and 2007 to 179,300. This was due entirely to net in-migration. Nearly a quarter (24%) of Herefordshire's population is of state retirement age. Numbers of older people have grown more rapidly than nationally and the growth is expected to continue. In particular the number of people aged 85+ is expected to more than double from 5,000 in 2007 to 10,200 in 2026. One of the main challenges faced in supporting those growing older in Herefordshire is how to help people to live safely and independently in their own homes. Many older and disabled people are supported by informal carers (normally family) who often require support in their own right if they are to continue to undertake this very valuable work.

Our community is not as ethnically diverse as other parts of the region or England and Wales as a whole. The Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic population makes up only about 4%. However, this increased by 64% between 2001 and 2006 compared to a 2% growth in its total population. This increase is due to the higher number of migrant workers coming to Herefordshire since the expansion of the European Union in 2004.

Within Herefordshire there are two areas that have particularly high levels of income deprivation; in the Leominster Ridgemoor areas 41% of individuals live in income deprived households and Golden Post – Newton Farm in Hereford City 37%. These two areas are both within the 10% most deprived areas in England and pose a particular challenge in terms of reducing inequalities and improving the quality of life for those living there.

Our key characteristics of place:

- Herefordshire is a sparsely populated county
- The population is increasing
- Herefordshire's population has a relatively old age structure, with the proportion of older residents expected to increase
- Numbers of children in Herefordshire are decreasing
- The County has a relatively small, but growing, black and minority ethnic population
- There has been a dramatic increase in the numbers of migrant workers coming to the area
- The rateable value of commercial property is low
- Residents use different modes of travel for work
- Access to broadband is low in the more rural areas
- Emissions of CO² have increased

Draft for comments

Places and People

Introduction

There is currently no single approach to delivering services on a locality basis although it is well recognised that this needs to be addressed over the coming years if services are to continue to benefit the community as a whole.

An important principle in delivering services across Herefordshire is that they should meet the needs of the local community, with people being able to access services in a flexible way, not determined by where they live.

Within the context of the Government's Total Place agenda and requirements to deliver improved outcomes for the local population within ever-increasing financial constraints, there are clearly opportunities to improve access to services and service delivery by agreeing a common approach to localities in Herefordshire.

Having reviewed a range of possible approaches, Civil Parish Boundaries have been identified as the building block having the clearest linkage to local communities and are already being widely used across public services in Herefordshire.

In relation to physical assets, it is proposed that public sector services in the county should wherever possible be accessed in a joined up way. This involves ensuring that buildings are shared and that there are joined up service delivery arrangements in agreed key locations, supported by a range of community and service delivery arrangements as appropriate.

Services are already being brought together to benefit the local community in some market towns. The Bromyard Centre is an example, housing the Info Shop, library and HALO integrated front desk. In addition, there are also public access computers, tourist information, Job Centre Plus information, client rooms and a group room all within one building. This joined-up approach is also reflective in community led schemes and other public sector schemes in the second tier settlements based on multi-use centres, for example at Peterchurch.

This approach will be further developed over the coming years; ensuring that those living and working in Herefordshire have equality of access to services, brought about by increasingly delivering services on a locality basis in a way that fully benefits the local community.

What we've achieved so far

Children and Young People

Educational standards are high, with good A level results and GCSE rates improving. Results in primary schools could be better. Children are generally healthier in this county than other parts of the country. They eat more fruit and vegetables and do more sports than elsewhere. Young people generally do well in getting employment, further education or training once they leave school but most of those who need higher education or university provision have to leave the county for this

Image

(image)

Environment

The county is clean and well kept. The amount of waste going to landfill is reducing but at a much slower rate than other authorities, placing Herefordshire within the bottom quartile of all English authorities. Recycling should improve further with the introduction of the new wheelie bin system in November 2009. CO2 emissions are high mainly due to the reliance on cars and the limited public transport available. There has been a slight reduction in the total amount of carbon emissions between 2005 and 2007. There are many special geological and sites of special scientific interest. The number of these being properly managed is increasing.

Economic Development and Enterprise

The need for good employment opportunities and the attraction of investment and new business into the county is well recognised. There are many people with a high level of skill who move to settle in the county and set up small businesses but young people often leave the county to go onto higher education and don't return; the need for a University Centre is well recognised and funding is currently being sought for this.

Image

Image

Safer Communities

Herefordshire is a safe place to live with already low levels of crime which are reducing further. A main concern for residents in Herefordshire is the number of people dying on Herefordshire's rural roads; multi agency work to address this is starting to show some good results.

The police force in Herefordshire is particularly good at talking to and working with small communities to help them with local problems. Safer Herefordshire plays a major role in reminding local people that crime in the county is low. It does this through community events, publicity and through the use of national campaigns. As a result fewer people fear being a victim of crime than in most parts of the country.

Image

Healthier Communities and Older People

People are healthy in the county. Many people live longer than elsewhere. There are more people over the age of 65 and most consider themselves to be in good health. Deaths from cancer and circulatory disease for people under 75 are lower than nationally and decreasing. There are particular concerns though about the number of people who die or are seriously injured in road traffic accidents.

Image

Stronger Communities

The Area Assessment reported that the majority of people were satisfied with where they lived. More people volunteer to help in their communities than in many parts of the country. Housing in Herefordshire is generally expensive and many people find it hard to afford to rent or buy a home. Herefordshire Housing Ltd - the main provider of social housing - has recently made enormous improvements in the way it runs its business. Tenants are happier and their living environment has improved. Working with the police, council and community services means anti social behaviour is dealt with quickly.

OUR PRIORITIES

Children and Young People

We aim to improve the lives of children and their families, and enable all children and young people to develop the knowledge, skills and judgement they need to lead a fulfilling life

We will ensure that every child grows up to reach his or her full potential within a happy, healthy and secure environment, both at home and during their learning. There should be opportunities for children and young people to explore their environment through stimulating play, outdoor adventure and social and cultural experiences. Children and young people need to develop their own skills so they are better prepared for adulthood, able to manage their own affairs and inter-relate with others effectively.

Successful delivery will need co-operative working of all the partnership agencies concerned with commissioning and delivering services for children and young people in the County. This will be based on the delivery of integrated services, around the needs of the child, young person and their family. This will be taken forward through the implementation of the “No Wrong Door” approach to locality working.

Local Context

Of the total population, 27% are aged between 0 and 24 years (48,600 children and young people). The number of under 16s has decreased by 7% since 2001 and now account for 17.7% of the population. The numbers of under 16s in the county is expected to continue to fall over the next few years, stabilising at around 29,000 in 2016 (15% of the population). This change in the demographic make up of the county brings with it specific challenges in terms of maintaining high quality educational provision, particularly in the more rural areas. It also poses challenges in terms of ensuring equality of opportunity for all our young people.

Educational standards in Herefordshire remain high with 52% of pupils achieving 5 or more GCSEs at grades A* - C (including English and Maths). This compares well with all other areas of the country. However, there are still 13 areas in Herefordshire that fall within the 25% most deprived in terms of engagement with and achievement in education and skills.

The proportion of children living in income deprived households in the most deprived areas of Herefordshire has increased relative to the county as a whole, (62% in Leominster-Ridgemoor and 49% in Golden Post–Newton Farm). This impacts in many ways on the lives of our children and young people and brings significant challenges in terms of making sure they lead safe, healthy and fulfilling lives

Our issues and challenges:

- Greater proportion of 11-15 year olds reported they were drinking alcohol
- Rates of teenage conception are beginning to rise
- Nearly a quarter of Reception age children and over a quarter of Year 6 children are either obese or overweight
- The proportion of mothers breast feeding has decreased
- Numbers of sexually transmitted diseases amongst young people rising sharply
- Proportion of children living in deprived households in most deprived areas increased
- Increasing numbers of children are victims of crime
- Areas within Leominster and Hereford City have high levels of deprivation in terms of engagement with and achievement in education and skills

We are working towards the following outcomes:

- ☺ Children and young people are healthy and have healthy lifestyles
- ☺ Children and young people are safe, secure and have stability
- ☺ All young people enjoy and attend local facilities, including schools, developing personally, socially and emotionally and achieving high standards of educational attainment
- ☺ Children and young people engage in positive behaviour inside and out of school
- ☺ Children and young people engage in further education, employment and training on leaving school

Strategies and other documents linked to these priorities:

The Children and Young People's Plan 2008-2011

(images)

◆ Everyone is someone ◆ Work across boundaries ◆ Safeguard our future

Draft for comments

OUR PRIORITIES

Economic Development and Enterprise

We aim to create an environment for enterprise to thrive and enable business growth and prosperity for all

A flourishing and diverse local economy is vital to the development of the County and local residents. A healthy economy can also make a vital contribution towards improving quality of life in the community and reducing health inequalities.

Partners will work together to enable enterprise through infrastructure improvements, support for business growth, inward investment and creating employment opportunities. This will encompass the need to create a sustainable economy building on diverse business base while caring for the environment and recognising the distinctiveness of the County.

Successful delivery of this theme will require co-operation between key partners, often across boundaries, to ensure that the supply of skills, training and business support is planned, managed and delivered in a coherent, collaborative way within the framework of priorities expressed in the Regional Economic Strategy. This includes working in partnership to recover from the effects of the economic downturn.

Local Context

Herefordshire has a relatively high employment rate, compared to national or regional figures, with the number of self employed, small businesses and home working being significantly higher. Herefordshire's earnings are low with the gap between the county's earnings and those of the rest of the country (£389.40 in Hereford compared to £448.90 in the West Midlands and £483.10 in England) continuing to widen.

The manufacturing sector is important to the county accounting for 14% of employees, with successful companies using innovations to enter new markets. Agriculture continues to be a significant part of the county's economy, with the number employed in this sector having increased to 7% (compared to 1% in England and the West Midlands), highlighting the relative importance of the industry to Herefordshire's.

Herefordshire has a thriving tourism sector with approximately 4.8 million visits to Herefordshire in 2008 bringing £411 million into the county. This tourism product reflects the distinctiveness of the county, including capitalising on food and drink production and the creative industries sector.

Transportation and communication infrastructure is a key issue for the county, as it impacts on employment, health, access to services, quality of life and the county's

economic development. Herefordshire is particularly dependent on road transport because of limited public transport links within and outside the county.

Community Transport and other travel initiatives address some of the challenges of access to public transport, particularly in the north and western parts of the county..

Poor communication links across the county are a barrier to business growth with 46% of rural areas having access to no, or only low speed broadband. This compares to only 1% in urban areas and brings with it huge challenges for businesses as well as wider access to information and services

The Third Sector plays a important part in the Herefordshire economy, with around 1600 organisations delivering an essential range of services across the county. The paid workforce makes up around 3.9% of the total employed population and, according to survey results, around 18% of people volunteer on a regular basis.

There are a number of long term strategic projects that aim to stimulate and regenerate economic growth in Herefordshire. Rotherwas Futures will transform the existing Rotherwas Industrial Estate, creating new jobs and helping the Herefordshire economy to compete in the longer term. The Edgar Street Grid development will regenerate 100 acres within Hereford city centre, creating hundreds of opportunities for local people through development of leisure facilities, retail outlets and other business developments. Model Farm in Ross on Wye will create an innovative approach to providing new employment land married with Live / Work provision to cater for changing needs of businesses wanting to locate to the county. All developments are ambitious and will take time to delivery but when fully implemented will provide a huge economic boost for the whole of Herefordshire.

Our issues and challenges:

- Gross Added Value is increasing but at a lower rate than regionally and nationally
- Slightly lower proportion of high and medium-technology manufacturing jobs
- Though earnings have increased, there is a growing gap between the regional wage levels
- Forecast 6% fewer people aged 16 to 64 living in Herefordshire by 2026
- Low unemployment rate though increased due to the economic downturn
- Increase in problems associated with personal debt and other effects of the economic downturn
- High levels of income deprivation in Leominster Ridgemoor and Golden Post-Newton Farm
- 5% of working age population travel to work outside the County

- Rural areas less likely to receive decent level of broadband service

We are working towards the following outcomes:

- ☺ Sustaining existing businesses with advice and guidance to minimise job losses and work with partners to support employment
- ☺ Developing a more adaptable and higher skilled workforce
- ☺ Supporting businesses and home working through better Broadband services
- ☺ Improving business accommodation and employment land quality and availability
- ☺ Attracting high quality and better paid employment into the County and encouraging entrepreneurship and innovation
- ☺ Promoting Herefordshire as a place with a diverse business base, building on its distinctiveness and heritage.
- ☺ Reducing traffic congestion and improving health through integrated transport provision, including opportunity for maximising cycling, walking and public transport
- ☺ Encouraging businesses to consider the environment and make savings through sustainable working practices

Strategies and other documents linked to these priorities:

- Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy 2005-2025
- Herefordshire Local Transport Plan
- Learning and Skills Council Herefordshire Local Area Statement of Need 2009/10
- Access to Services in Herefordshire Report 2009
- West Midlands Economic Strategy
- West Midlands Regional Spatial Strategy
- Herefordshire Tourism Strategy

(images)

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Draft for comments

OUR PRIORITIES

Environment

We aim to protect and enhance Herefordshire's distinctive environment and address climate change

Herefordshire's environment is one of its greatest assets, underpinning the County's continuing prosperity. The interactions between natural, cultural and human influences on this asset are complex. Consequently a wide range of priorities have been defined that should be addressed in order to maintain and improve the quality of the County's environment.

Pressures from development, changes in land use and pollution are increasing. One of the biggest potential threats however, is climate change, and although this needs to be tackled globally, local action to cut emissions and adapt to change is essential.

Efforts aimed at addressing environmental priorities within the County must be addressed through partnerships. Local communities will be engaged, in particular, through increasing awareness of issues, including the case for change. The influence that quality of the environment has upon other themes within the Sustainable Community Strategy also needs to be recognised, in particular its impact on health and wellbeing.

Local Context

Herefordshire provides a unique and beautiful environment for those who live, work and visit and local biodiversity and conservation are important in making the county the place that it is.

The county has a diverse set of habitats, which support an equally diverse population of plants and animals. Although Herefordshire only occupies 17% of the West Midlands region it has 31% of the region's ancient semi-natural woodland, with the ash/lime woods of the Wye Valley of international importance.

Herefordshire has a much higher carbon dioxide level per head of population than anywhere else in the country; with emissions from transport, industry and the commercial sector increasing. This highlights a challenge for Herefordshire in terms of managing the balance between growth in the economy and the environment, be it the amount of green space or CO2 levels.

In recent years significant weather events have had a major impact on Herefordshire's emergency and public services, local businesses and the wider community.

Our issues and challenges:

- Emissions of CO2 from industry and commercial sector increased
- Amount of waste to landfill is reducing slower than in other areas
- Higher carbon dioxide levels per head of population
- Significant weather events have a major impact on the area

We are working towards the following outcomes:

- ☺ Reducing waste and increasing recycling
- ☺ Acting to mitigate Climate Change and its consequences including promoting adaptation where necessary and appropriate
- ☺ Protecting and enhancing biodiversity within the County
- ☺ Maintaining landscape character
- ☺ Encouraging investment in high quality streets, public spaces and the built and historic environment
- ☺ Assisting local communities to identify, retain and develop local distinctiveness
- ☺ Protecting and improving water resources and the quality of rivers, streams and lakes, and encouraging responsible water use
- ☺ Promoting sustainable land management

Strategies and other documents linked to these priorities:

- Herefordshire Biodiversity Action Plan
- River Basin Management Plan, Severn River Basin District
- Green Infrastructure Strategy
- Herefordshire Climate Change Strategy
- Herefordshire Environmental Strategy 2001-2011
- The Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy for Herefordshire and Worcestershire
- Herefordshire Unitary Development Plan
- Local Development Framework
- West Midlands Regional Forestry Framework
- Herefordshire Council Biodiversity Strategy

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OUR PRIORITIES

Healthier Communities and Older People

We aim to work with people and their communities to enable them to lead healthy and fulfilled lives

This priority is concerned with promoting how public health and social care objectives and actions are being developed to improve the health and well being of the people of Herefordshire. However, it should be understood that the wider actions being taken to make things happen under each of the individual themes within this document support each other and all contribute to people's health and wellbeing.

The essential foundations for a healthy and fulfilled life are good physical and mental health, public safety, good education, employment and housing. This priority therefore contributes to the identification of key issues well beyond public health and social care measures. It works towards improvement in health and wellbeing and reducing health and social inequalities in Herefordshire by ensuring that relevant organisations provide the best possible services and build and maintain long term partnerships that promote the health and wellbeing of individual Herefordshire residents, whilst also recognising the role of carers.

The Public Health Annual Report highlights a number of key strategic objectives to reduce health inequalities and improve health and wellbeing by providing a better understanding of local health needs. However, the Annual Report is not an end in itself. Momentum must be maintained so that the enthusiasm generated to achieve significant public health improvements is harnessed and built upon. The positive support of our local acute hospital, community and mental health sector, social care, local GP practices, schools and colleges, the voluntary sector and local business is crucial to the success of this theme.

Local Context

In general, health in the county is relatively good. People in Herefordshire live longer than the average regionally and nationally: life expectancy is 78.1 years for males and 83 for females. There are 9 areas in Herefordshire that fall within the 25% most deprived nationally in relation to the Health and Disability domain, 5 of which are also within the 20% most deprived. All of these deprived areas are in either Hereford City or Leominster. There are no areas in Herefordshire that are within the 10% most deprived nationally.

Mortality rates for cancer, circulatory diseases and chronic conditions remain lower than in other areas but are significantly affected by different patterns of risk-taking behaviour, in particular smoking, drinking too much, and being overweight or obese.

Childhood obesity is of particular concern, with 23% of reception class children and 31% of year 6 children either overweight or obese. There are links between obesity and social deprivation, and these can be shown locally as well as at national level. In Herefordshire, 19% of children from the most deprived 18 Super Output Areas were obese, compared with 12% in the areas outside this group.

The number of 18 – 64 year olds with disabilities in Herefordshire is likely to increase by 2026 which will put pressure on public services. Over the past year, there has been a sharp decline in the numbers of people with physical disabilities helped to live at home and this is a concern.

The health, well-being and independence of older people is a key priority for Herefordshire, which will only be achieved through robust multi agency-working, including an enhanced role for the third sector. The vision promoted through the Growing Older in Herefordshire Strategy is that older people will remain independent and active, continuing to live in, and contribute to, strong local communities and be included in decisions regarding the future services and activities that they want and need.

A substantial increase in the numbers of older people that will have some dependency on social care in Herefordshire is expected by 2020. With this there is also expected to be a disproportionate increase in the number of older people with dementia who will need enhanced care.

It is estimated that there are about 19,400 adult carers and 300 young carers in Herefordshire. Not all of these carers are providing regular and substantial care but the care they provide may be crucial to the person who needs it. It is essential that these carers are properly supported. Carers are more likely to be in 'not good' health than non-carers, and the disparity increases with the amount of time spent caring per week.

Our issues and challenges:

- Number of 18-64 year olds with disabilities is likely to increase by 2026
- Higher levels of income deprivation for older people in Bromyard Central, Hereford City and Leominster
- Number of people with physical disabilities helped to live at home decreased over last 10 years
- Substantial increase in numbers of older people with some dependency on social care expected by 2020, with disproportionate increase in numbers with dementia
- Dental health amongst children is poor

We are working towards the following outcomes:

- ☺ Supporting smokers to quit, particularly young, pregnant and long-term smokers
- ☺ Supporting people to maintain a healthy weight
- ☺ Reducing the level of harmful alcohol use, particularly among young people
- ☺ Working with local people to enhance emotional wellbeing and intervene to reduce suicide, accidents and injuries
- ☺ Supporting people with assessed social care needs to live independently in their own homes wherever possible, with accessible services and information they need
- ☺ Ensuring vulnerable adults are kept safe by a fast and reliable service response

Strategies and other documents linked to these priorities:

- Public Health Annual Report (April 2009)
- Joint Strategic Needs Assessment (JSNA) - October 2008 and October 2009
- Older People's Strategy (revised 2010)

(images)

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OUR PRIORITIES

Safer Communities

We will work together to make Herefordshire an even safer place to live, work and visit

Herefordshire is a safe county in which to live, work and visit. Crime levels are low and reducing year on year and this is the underlying focus for the Safer Communities theme. Key partner agencies work together to ensure priorities surrounding crime and the perception of crime, reducing anti-social behaviour, drug and alcohol-related harm and road safety are successfully addressed to reduce crime and disorder within Herefordshire.

Safer Herefordshire conduct an annual strategic assessment, including use of partner data, and public consultations. This is then used to identify strategic priorities for Herefordshire.

Local Context

Although crime is reducing in the county, (examples include house burglary, and criminal damage), the proportion of residents in Herefordshire that are fearful of certain types of crime remains fairly high despite the numbers of some of these crimes having decreased considerably over the last few years, an example being house burglary. It is therefore considered to be a priority not only to decrease the already low level of crime overall but also to address the disproportionate fear of crime felt amongst some members of the community.

The number of alcohol-related hospital admissions is of concern with 1249 per 100,000 residents during 2008/09, and predictions are that the number of alcohol related admissions will continue to rise. Please note that this definition does not include attendance at A&E.

In 2008, results from the Herefordshire Quality of Life Survey showed 21% of respondents reporting people being drunk or rowdy in public places as a problem in their local area

The proportion of residents in Herefordshire who feel that there are high levels of antisocial behaviour in their local area is small (12%) but many consider road safety and speeding traffic to be a problem (50%) (Source: 2008 Quality of life survey).

A recent report by Herefordshire Council's Accident Investigation and Prevention Team focused on road casualties in Herefordshire, including those killed and seriously injured, throughout 2008. This will be used to further identify and enhance

future community engagement, engineering, education, enforcement and evaluation activities for the Herefordshire Road Safety Group (one of Safer Herefordshire's Priority groups).

An example of Safer Herefordshire activities include

- hosting a road show throughout the county with partner agencies, to promote community safety, fire safety and policing.
- the development of a bi-annual magazine for Herefordshire's drug users and carers. This primarily contains contributions from drug users and carers, along with harm reduction information and contact details for local and national service providers.
- the promotion of road safety through events such as motorcycle rider skills assessment days and classroom based advanced driving courses.

Safer Herefordshire is working towards the following priority outcomes:

- ☺ Reducing crime through offender management and other interventions
- ☺ Reduce incidence of domestic abuse
- ☺ Reducing drug and alcohol related harm
- ☺ Increased road safety
- ☺ Reduce incidence of anti-social behaviour, including dealing with local concerns about ASB and crime issues by the council and police

In order to meet these strategic priorities, performance is measured through a range of agreed national and local targets.

Strategies and other documents linked to Safer Herefordshire priorities:

- Safer Herefordshire Strategic Plan 2008 – 2011
- Safer Herefordshire Strategic Priorities 2009 – 2010
- Children and Young People's Plan 2008 – 2011
- Harm Reduction Strategy 2008 – 2010
- Young People's Specialist Substance Misuse Treatment Plan 2009 – 2010 (Part 1)
- Adult Drug Treatment Plan 2009 – 2010 (Part 1)
- Herefordshire Local Transport Plan

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OUR PRIORITIES

Stronger Communities

We will develop stronger, vibrant, more inclusive communities in which people enjoy a good quality of life and feel they have influence over the decisions that affect them

A strong community is one that feels empowered, confident and accepted. In order to achieve this there should be respect for each other and groups, and individuals from all backgrounds need to be informed and have the opportunity to get involved in making decisions which affect their communities.

Local communities will be more sustainable if they have access to vital services and facilities which meet their needs, such as suitable housing, health facilities, leisure facilities, libraries and other cultural venues, shops and local meeting places. For Herefordshire, access to services is particularly key in rural areas, and this could be improved through innovative solutions, for instance, better use and combining of community, public and private sector buildings and facilities and mobile services.

Currently, there are challenges around tackling homelessness and being able to increase the amount of affordable housing to meet local needs and ensure the viability of neighbourhoods and communities.

Enhancing leisure opportunities for active leisure in the County is one way of contributing to thriving communities and creating opportunities for social interaction between people of different ages and backgrounds, as well as promoting understanding of cultural issues, health and wellbeing, community cohesion, activities and access to a wide range of experiences.

Volunteers give their time, skills and knowledge to enhance the contribution of the voluntary and community sector in shaping and delivering local services and building stronger, vibrant and more inclusive communities.

An already strong record of promoting equality and tackling discrimination must be built upon as the County's population becomes more diverse. Active engagement with communities needs to continue in order to understand the needs of all residents, particularly those disadvantaged or experiencing social exclusion.

Local Context

Herefordshire is seen as a good place to live and work. A significant number of adult residents (87%) are satisfied with their local area as a place to live but only

29% feel they are able to influence decisions in their locality, lower than in previous years.

There are xx areas in Herefordshire within the 25% most deprived nationally in terms of overall deprivation, one more than in 2004. These areas are within Hereford City and the market town of Leominster. The most deprived locality is within the South Wye area of Hereford City which is also within the 10% most deprived nationally.

Many areas are disadvantaged because of their rural nature. Accessibility of services is a key issue in the sparsely populated rural areas, with 76 out of the 116 super output areas in Herefordshire falling within the 25% most deprived in terms of geographical access to services.

Access to services is being addressed in a combination of ways, including bringing people to services through developing and sustaining rural transport networks, and bringing services to people through the enhanced use of shared facilities. For example, increased use of public sector buildings would help to make provision of services sustainable, as would the ability to access the increasing number of services being delivered electronically. Although the percentage of the population using broadband facilities has risen, there are still a significant number of people who are disadvantaged by not having access to high-speed communications.

Herefordshire has a particularly, diverse and independent Third Sector, with a wide range of voluntary organisations, charitable organisations, community groups, social enterprises and housing associations contributing significantly to all aspects of life in Herefordshire, including helping deliver council services and objectives in libraries, museums and the arts.. The sector has grown strongly in the past decade, benefiting from a coordinated approach to recent infrastructure investment. Although the sector is now in a strong position in terms of being able to support the needs of those who are often at the margins of society, the inevitable turnover of volunteers requires continued effort and investment so that the level of provision can be maintained.

The economic downturn has had a huge impact on the sector with a reduction in income and an increased demand for services. As many funding streams come to an end, the sector is facing a particularly challenging future to maintain its capacity. Small groups, particularly those located in sparsely populated rural areas often struggle to keep going and lack the capacity to engage with wider agendas such as the delivery of services.

The county has a distinct cultural heritage and countryside, access which can be accessed via a huge network of public rights of way. The network of cultural centres contributes to access of services, with 62% of residents satisfied with libraries and 62% with parks and open spaces. Levels of satisfaction are lower for museums, galleries, theatres and concert halls and sport/leisure facilities and this needs to be addressed, although satisfaction with museums, according to the national Active People Survey. Access to cultural facilities can play a large role in people feeling part of a community and through which services can be delivered locally.

Low average levels of earnings, coupled with the relatively high house prices, mean that housing affordability is a major issue in the county with Herefordshire having the worst housing affordability ratio for all local authorities in the West Midlands. In 2008 for those on lower quartile earnings, a house at the bottom end of the market would cost them 9.2 times their annual earnings. The mix of properties affects affordability, with Herefordshire having a much higher proportion of detached properties than regionally or nationally (22.8%).

A key priority for the county is to increase the availability of appropriate, decent and affordable housing for the community, particularly for disadvantaged groups and first-time buyers. However, the economic downturn has adversely affected the delivery targets for affordable housing.

There is a high demand for affordable 1, 2 and 3 bedroom social properties in Herefordshire and for all types of housing in Hereford City. The quality of housing is also an issue with a high level of dwellings that are categorised as being in a 'non-decent' condition.

The county has a commitment to reduce the number of people living in residential homes, which presents a particular challenge in terms of supporting people to live safely and independently in their own homes. To fulfil this commitment requires a robust multi-agency approach, with carers and the voluntary and community sector having a key role to play alongside statutory agencies.

Our issues and challenges:

- Only a minority of residents feel they can influence decisions affecting their area
- Access to key services is notably worse in rural parts compared to England and region
- Levels of satisfaction are lower for museums and galleries, theatres and concert halls and sport/leisure facilities
- Addressing declining use of libraries
- Numbers of homeless households increased following previous decline
- The potential of volunteering to have an impact across the priorities of the Partnership
- High proportion of pensioner households and ageing population may result in increasing demand for certain types of suitable accommodation
- Worst housing affordability ratio for all local authorities in the region
- High demand for affordable social properties across area and all types in City

- A third of dwellings are in a non-decent condition

We are working towards the following outcomes:

- ☺ Providing affordable housing and addressing homelessness
- ☺ Ensuring vulnerable people have access to a range of housing options, including support and the ability to live independently
- ☺ Providing accessible, high quality sporting, cultural and recreational facilities and activities
- ☺ Raising awareness and use of library services
- ☺ Ensuring fair access to the services which Herefordshire residents need
- ☺ Raising awareness and understanding of volunteering, promoting mutual benefits to the individual and the wider community
- ☺ Encouraging communities and individuals to participate and influence local decisions which affect them
- ☺ Promoting a County where people feel accepted, confident and empowered
- ☺ Ensuring communities are more resilient and recover from emergencies through effective partnership planning and co-ordination

Strategies and other documents linked to these priorities:

- The Herefordshire Compact and Codes of Practice
- Herefordshire Community Development Strategy
- Herefordshire Comprehensive Equality Policy
- Herefordshire Cultural Strategy
- Housing Strategy for Herefordshire
- Herefordshire Recovery Plan
- The Herefordshire Arts Strategy
- Herefordshire Local Transport Plan
- Disability Equality Scheme 2009-2012
- Race Equality Scheme 2008-2011
- Gender Equality Scheme 2010-2013

(images)

Draft for comments

◆ Everyone is someone ◆ Work across boundaries ◆ Safeguard our future

APPENDIX 1

The Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy – What it is and why we need it

Overview of the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy

The Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy is a key long-term planning document for improving the quality of life and services in Herefordshire. Every Local Authority is required to have a Sustainable Community Strategy which has been developed and agreed with its Local Strategic Partnership. Herefordshire Partnership is the Local Strategic Partnership for Herefordshire, representing local public services, businesses, and voluntary and community sector organisations.

Purpose of the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy

The Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy sets the overall strategic direction and long-term vision for the economic, social and environmental wellbeing of Herefordshire to achieve our Vision for 2020, in a way that contributes to sustainable development. It sets Herefordshire in context, outlines our distinctive Vision and ambition for the area, and is backed by clear evidence and analysis, for example through The State of Herefordshire Report.

Why we have the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy

The Local Government Act 2000 charged local authorities with preparing a Community Strategy with their partners through a Local Strategic Partnership, and Herefordshire's first version was known as the Herefordshire Plan. The Community Strategy for Herefordshire was subsequently published in 2006 and in recognition of emphasising the importance of sustainability, this refreshed version has been renamed the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy.

Noting the key issues previously established in the 2006 Community Strategy and testing these against current information and evidence has been vital in identifying local priorities. As processes for these have improved, so has the role of this document in understanding the changing needs of our communities. Herefordshire's Sustainable Community Strategy, to which partners are fully committed, is essential to ensure the development and delivery of our Local Area Agreement. The Local Area Agreement is explained on page 7.

How the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy can be used

The Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy can be used in a range of different ways:

- Firstly, and most importantly, local organisations will use the Community Strategy to inform the planning of their own services both now and in the future.
- Regional and national organisations will use the document to identify key issues facing the County, and direct resources accordingly.
- Local groups with innovative ideas for projects can link their funding applications to the Strategy in support of their applications.

APPENDIX 2

How the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy will be delivered

The Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy will be delivered through many organisations, networks, sectors and groups working together to co-ordinate activity, reduce duplication and provide high quality services. Herefordshire Partnership’s structure is designed to ensure the successful delivery of the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy through three tiers of management:

Herefordshire Partnership Board

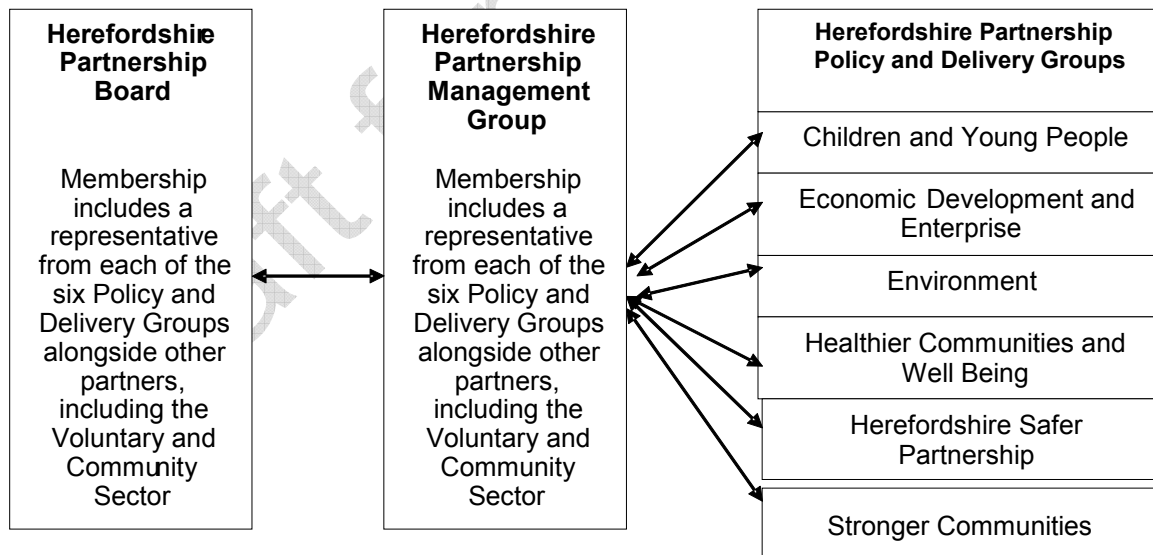
Sets a Vision for Herefordshire based on a sound understanding of the County, local issues and a responsibility to ensure delivery of efficient, high quality services. Lobbies, campaigns and champions the issues of importance to the County at regional and national levels and acts as an ambassador for the Partnership.

Herefordshire Partnership Management Group

Takes responsibility for delivering the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy by ensuring resources are utilised to address identified priorities. Accountable for the work of the six Policy and Delivery Groups through reporting their progress to the Board.

Six Herefordshire Partnership Policy and Delivery Groups

Formulate and commission and deliver work to address the priorities in the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy, based on comprehensive information of local need. They report progress on their work to the Management Group.



Membership of the Policy and Delivery Groups includes representatives from organisations who are committed to delivering high quality services which address the priorities for their group. Details of each group can be found on pages xx to xx. Contact details for people involved with each group have not been included as they change from time to time. However, should you wish to know more about the work of any of the groups please contact Herefordshire Partnership (details given on page xx). In addition, our website provides up-to-date information www.herefordshirepartnership.com

APPENDIX 3

Key work which links with the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy

The Local Area Agreement

The Local Area Agreement contains targets for improvement agreed by all the local partners, and delivery plans that fit within the longer term Vision and priorities agreed in the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy. Our Local Area Agreement is an agreement between Herefordshire Council, Herefordshire Partnership and Central Government, with the aim of improving the quality of life for local people, organisations and businesses.

The Local Development Framework

Every local planning authority must prepare a Local Development Framework to be consistent with national planning policy and the Regional Spatial Strategy. The Local Development Framework is the spatial expression of the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy and will aim to contribute to the achievement of sustainable development. The Local Development Framework is a folder of policies and plans which reinforce the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy by setting out the key spatial strategies for the area, such as house building and related infrastructure provision.

The Power of Well Being

The Power of Well Being was given to Parish and Town Councils in April 2009. This power enables them to fund anything to promote or improve the social, economic or environmental well being of their area. An eligible Council must have regard to the Sustainable Community Strategy proposed by their Local Authority i.e. Herefordshire Council.

The Sustainable Communities Act

The Sustainable Communities Act 2007 aims to promote the sustainability of local communities and begins from the principle that local people know best what needs to be done to promote sustainability of their area. The scope of the Act is very broad, covering economic, social and environmental issues. It does not limit the type of action that could be put forward, provided the action is within that broad scope. It is for local people to decide what they think needs to be done to promote the sustainability of their area. The Act is designed to strengthen the role of communities.

APPENDIX 4

Sources of information

The State of Herefordshire Report provides a wealth of statistics relating to the County - its people, environment and economy. It is a digest of information that describes the County, linked to the themes of the Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy. The aim of the report is to provide a resource for those working for organisations involved with the Herefordshire Partnership, both reflecting and informing local strategic thinking. It is used for a variety of purposes including developing and monitoring strategies, programmes and projects, funding bids and research activities.

More information about the State of Herefordshire Report, including the latest facts and figures about Herefordshire, can be viewed by visiting the Facts & Figures about Herefordshire at www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures or contacting the Herefordshire Partnership Researchers on 01432 260893.

Parish Plans harness everything different and unique about a local community and its vision for the future. They provide an opportunity for the community to express its views and provide information about how people feel about where they live. The end result is a plan that reflects these views and an idea of when these things might happen

Partners and Communities Together (PACT) meetings offer communities the chance to tell the police, local authority and other organisations about issues causing concern and how they might be addressed. It also offers the opportunity for agencies to explain how their services operate and inform people about developments.

Local Development Framework consultation and engagement continues throughout the preparation of key local development documents. Major consultations on the Core Strategy were undertaken in 2007 and 2008, with further consultation planned for 2010. The results of these consultations will inform the final Core Strategy Vision and Objectives and strategic “place shaping” setting out how the County as a whole is expected to develop up to 2026. More information on the Local development Framework is on page 7.

E-consult draws together details of all the consultations Herefordshire Council and its partners are engaged in. It allows residents to take part in many of the consultations online. In addition partner organisations also employ a number of other means of consulting with local people and businesses, for example face-to face contacts and postal questionnaires.

The Herefordshire Quality of Life Survey is part of the new national **Place Survey**, which every Council in England is required to carry out every two years. The survey gathers residents' views on a range of issues which influence what Herefordshire is like as a place to live, as well as satisfaction with local public services. The results of the survey provide a valuable record of local opinions and priorities.

Local, regional and national partners

The Local Area Agreement was developed in 2007/08 through discussion and agreement with local and regional partners. A list of priorities were identified which aided the choice of Performance Indicators from the National Indicator set.

Local, regional and national strategic documents developed by organisations around specific areas of work were analysed for the priorities for Herefordshire that they highlighted. Key local and regional documents have been listed under the relevant Priorities on pages 12 to 23.

APPENDIX 5

Glossary of terms used in this document
(to be completed when final wording has been agreed)

Draft for comments

Inside back page

Draft for comments

Back page

Draft for comments

**For further information please contact the Herefordshire Partnership Support Team
or visit the Herefordshire Partnership website at www.herefordshirepartnership.com**

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MEETING:	OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	8 FEBRUARY 2010
TITLE OF REPORT:	WORK PROGRAMME
REPORT BY:	COMMITTEE MANAGER (SCRUTINY)

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider the Committee's work programme including a request from the Executive to review the impact of the severe winter weather as part of that programme.

Recommendation

- THAT (a) the Committee considers whether it wishes to include a review of the impact of the severe winter weather within its work programme; and**
- (b) subject to (a) above the current work programme be approved as a basis for further development, subject to any comment the Committee wishes to make.**

Introduction and Background

1. This Committee is responsible for overseeing, co-ordinating and approving the work programmes of the scrutiny committees and approving its own annual work programme. It is also required to periodically review its and the scrutiny committees work programmes to ensure that overview and scrutiny is effective, that there is an efficient use of scrutiny resources and that potential duplication of effort by scrutiny members is minimised.
2. A report on the work programmes of all Scrutiny Committees' will be made to this Committee quarterly. A copy of this Committee's own work programme will be made to each of its scheduled meetings. A copy of this Committee's work programme is appended.
3. The Committee's programme may be modified by the Chairman following consultation with the Vice-Chairman and the Directors in response to changing circumstances.
4. Should any urgent, prominent or high profile issue arise, the Chairman may consider calling an additional meeting to consider that issue.
5. Should Members become aware of any issues they consider may be added to the scrutiny programme they should contact the Chairman or Democratic Services to log

the issue so that it may be taken into consideration when planning future agendas or when revising the work programme.

Request from the Executive to carry out a review

6. The Functions Scheme, part 3 of the Constitution, provides for the Overview and Scrutiny Committee to receive requests from Cabinet and/or Council for overview and scrutiny reviews. The Committee is required to determine whether any such review should be carried out and to allocate the review work accordingly.
7. The Leader of the Council has invited the Committee to conduct a review of the impact of the recent severe winter weather on communities in the County and across the public services including partners in Health, Schools, Police and the Voluntary Sector. The Executive wishes to establish what lessons can be learnt, what was done right and what can be improved. Are there any bureaucratic barriers which should be removed at times of communities under stress? What recommendations are there for partners locally and nationally? It is requested that this review is completed and the report submitted to Cabinet before the end of July in order to give sufficient time to build on any recommendations into future winter planning.

Progress in response to recommendations made and issues raised by the Committee

8. One issue is outstanding from the Committee's last meeting.

Medium Term Financial Strategy	
Additional Actions	
Clarification on why the 2009/10 Council Tax level at Band D for Herefordshire (excluding Parish Councils) was below the average for unitary authorities but above the average once parishes, police and fire were included. It was requested clarification be provided	Briefing note in preparation.

Background Papers

- None identified.

Overview and Scrutiny Committee – work programme 2009/10

	15 March 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Scrutiny Review of ICT Services – Progress report • Integrated Corporate Performance Report • Budget Monitoring Report •
	26 April 2010
	2 July 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Presentations by Leader of the Council, Cabinet member (Corporate and Customer Services and Human Resources) and Cabinet Member (Resources) • Report on Scrutiny Review of External Communication • Monitoring of operation of new Customer Insight Unit •
	27 September 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Corporate Performance Report • Cabinet response to Scrutiny Review of External Communication •
	18 October 2010
	29 November 2010
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Corporate Performance Report • Budget Monitoring Report
	14 January 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Medium Term Financial Strategy
	21 February 2011
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Integrated Corporate Performance Report • Budget Monitoring Report
	25 March 2011
Other issues	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Herefordshire Public Services – possible consideration of effectiveness of working arrangements • Herefordshire Partnership 	

Further additions to the work programme will be made as required

