

MINUTES of the meeting of Community Services Scrutiny Committee held at Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday, 26th March, 2007 at 10.00 a.m.

Present:	Councillor	ACR Chappell (Chairman)
	Councillor	H Bramer (Vice-Chairman)
	Councillors	Mrs. P.A. Andrews, J.G.S. Guthrie, B. Hunt, J.G. Jarvis and D.C. Taylor
	Co-opted Members	Mr. A. Blackshaw (Tourism), Mrs. E. Newman (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils) and Mr. G. Woodman (Chamber of Commerce)

In attendance: Councillor P.J. Edwards (Cabinet Member – Environment) and Councillor R.V. Stockton (Cabinet Member – Community Services)

49. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels and Mrs J. Evans (National Farmers Union Representative).

50. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Mrs. P.A. Andrews substituted for Councillor Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels and Mr. G. Woodman substituted for Ms. C. Jones (Chamber of Commerce Representative).

51. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Mrs. E. Newman declared a personal interest with respect to agenda item 6 'Herefordshire Community Safety and Drugs Partnership'.

Mr. G. Woodman and Mr. A. Blackshaw both declared a personal interest with respect to agenda item 9 'Review of Hereford City Partnership'.

52. MINUTES

It was noted that a change had been made to the published minutes for the meeting on 20th December 2007. Item 42 'Performance Monitoring Report' 9th paragraph, second sentence, where the word 'with' had been deleted and replaced with 'of all'.

It was noted that Councillor Mrs. P.A. Andrews was not in attendance at the Committee's meeting on 15th January 2007.

RESOLVED: That the minutes for the meetings, as amended, held on 20th December 2006 and 8th January 2007 reconvened on 15th January 2007, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

53. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY

No suggestions were received.

54. HEREFORDSHIRE COMMUNITY SAFETY AND DRUGS PARTNERSHIP

The Committee received a presentation from Sue Fiennes, Chair of the Herefordshire Community and Safety Drugs Partnership (HCSDP) and Jane Rose, Partnership Manager. Superintendent Shane Hancock, West Mercia Police, was also present to answer any questions that may arise under the remit of the Police.

Sue Fiennes explained that she was soon to be replaced as Chair of the Partnership by Geoff Hughes, Director of Adult and Community Services. Chief Superintendent Mark Turner would be the Partnership's new Vice-Chairman.

The Partnership Manager explained that the Partnership took a multi-agency approach and was formulated by public, private and voluntary organisations. Its remit was to secure sustainable reductions in crime and the perception of crime in local communities through community based measures.

The Partnership was governed by the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 which states that the Police are not the sole crime prevention agency. The Partnership was made up of Strategy and Implementation Groups which had 3-year audit and strategy cycles. The Partnership's strategy was formulated through consultation work. Some of the Partnership's targets were enshrined in the Council's Local Area Agreement.

The Partnership had many strategic priorities during the period 2005-2008 which included areas such as anti-social behaviour, domestic violence and drugs. These problems were to be tackled through education, prevention, treatments and enforcement with a focus on victims, offenders and locations.

Examples of work which had been carried out by the Partnership included the following schemes:

- Community clear ups to help reduce anti-social behaviour and increase community ownership of the local environment.
- Sports Referral works with drug users to encourage healthier lifestyles and occupy people's time.
- Drug Intervention Programme worked with drug users recently released from prison to help prevent further crime occurring.
- Domestic violence conferences to increase awareness of the issue and the strategies which people can use to get help or prevent it taking place.
- Needle bins

The Chairman thanked the Partnership Manager for her presentation and opened the meeting to questions.

In response to a question on the perceived lack of action against crimes committed by the Police Superintendent Hancock stated that people's perception of crime was not always focussed on their own locality but was often influenced by national events. However he accepted that a person's perception was their reality. He felt that outcomes of investigations were not always promoted as well as they should be and the Police's Media Liaison unit were trying to address this. It was difficult for Police Officers to do reassurance patrolling over and above their regular duties. Community Support Officers (CFO's) were now appointed throughout the County

and their patrols were set to increase visible patrols and the gathering of local intelligence. If a CSO was off sick then it would be necessary to reassign a CSO from another area to cover the absent CSO. He was aware that long-term sickness of CSO's could cause difficulties.

Superintendent Hancock explained that he would expect any Police Officer to challenge a cyclist using the pavement. A prosecution would not always be made as it was important for the Police to prioritise their workload. He stated that if incidents were taking place then they should be reported so that patterns could be picked up and issues dealt with.

The Partnership Manager explained in response to a question that the majority of HCSDP's funding came directly from the Home Office. Other funding was received through the Local Area Agreement, drug support agencies, health service and the organisations Partners.

The Council's Representative on the West Mercia Police Authority commented that the Police had changed their patrolling methods due to changes in criminal behaviour. There were more advantages to a Police Officer being mobile as they could respond to calls from a wider area more readily than they could if they were patrolling on foot. He finished by encouraging anyone who wanted more information on the Police and the way they worked to attend their local PACT meeting.

55. HEREFORDSHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY

Members were informed of the focus of the Economic Development Strategy for the county with specific reference made to the intervention work taking place in Ross-on-Wye.

The Head of Economic and Community Services noted that a summary document of the Economic Development Strategy had been produced to be distributed to various partners. It was important to note that the Council was not the only influencing factor in driving the economy forward. It was important for organisations to work together so that businesses, communities and individuals could grow.

Herefordshire faced a number of principle challenges which needed to be addressed:

- A smaller share of the workforce hold degree level qualifications compared to the national average.
- A lower share of individuals are employed in higher-level occupations than nationally.
- Average gross weekly pay significantly lower than the national average.
- 60% of local businesses employ less than 4 people.
- Employment declined by 4.1% between 1999-2002 despite a 2.9% increase nationally.
- 13,000 Herefordshire based higher-level qualified people work outside the County compared to 9,000 similarly qualified people coming to work in the County.

In order to address these issues strategies had been developed in the following areas:

- Sustainable developments.
- Business and enterprise.
- Skills and workforce development.

- Communications and infrastructure.
- Inclusion and community cohesion.

The following key projects were also being pursued:

- Edgar Street Grid development.
- Rotherwas Futures.
- Herefordshire Learning Village.
- Enterprise Centres.

It was also recognised that the County had different needs throughout its large area. Therefore the Economic Development Strategy recognised the different needs between Hereford City and its hinterland, the Market Towns, Rural Heartland and the Eastern corridor with its motorway access.

The Market Towns Officer (Ross and Ledbury) explained that there were many projects on going in Ross-on-Wye at the current time. A full list of schemes underway was included in the report but the principle schemes were as follows:

- Model Farm – development of an enterprise park with Advantage West Midlands (AWM). This should create additional employment and locations for local business. Model Farm was scheduled to be operational by Spring 2009.
- Live/work development to support the growing integration of family and work life by creating premises for business and residential uses. This project was expected to encourage the development of 'home-grown' micro businesses. It was anticipated that the scheme may be of significant interest nationally as a pathfinder project.

Members asked that the need to develop the County's economy and maintain the local environment was recognised.

A Member of the Committee urged planners to be more creative with the type of plans they approved as part of the Redundant Buildings Scheme.

56. REVIEW OF HEREFORD CITY PARTNERSHIP

The Committee considered the findings of the Hereford City Partnership Review Group following the Review of Hereford City Partnership (HCP).

Clare Wichbold, the Review Group's Lead Officer, began by explaining the rationale for the Review and how the Review Group gathered its evidence which led them to draw a number of conclusions. A copy of the Review Group's final report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report. A summary of HCP's accounts for 2006/07 and budget for 2007/08 was circulated at the meeting.

The principle conclusions arising from the Review were as follows:

- HCP lacked major retail representation on its Board of Directors;
- A Cabinet Member Portfolio for Economic Development should be reinstated as the role was currently appended to the role of the Leader;
- HCP lacked funding and Herefordshire Council should increase its level of funding to match that provided by Hereford City Council as well as continuing to provide office accommodation;
- Herefordshire Council should provide an office for the Hereford City Manager in Hereford City Centre not at Plough Lane;
- The Hereford City Manager needs additional office support.

Mr Jackson, Co-opted Private Sector Representative on the Review Group, commented that he was surprised at lack of funding available to the City of Hereford. It was the minimum requirement that Herefordshire Council increased its funding to HCCP to the same level as that provided by the City Council. The Hereford City Manager did an excellent job but was limited to dealing with day-today issues that, amongst other things, prevented her from sourcing additional funding.

Mr Jones, Co-opted Retail Sector Representative on the Review Group, reiterated the need for Herefordshire Council to increase its level of funding to HCP. He added that HCP needed to address its long-term direction and increase its involvement with key projects developing in the City such as the Edgar Street Grid.

A Member of the Review Group stated that it had been extremely valuable co-opting non-Councillor Members to the Review Group. It was added that whilst the Hereford City Manager made regular reports to the City Council none were received by Herefordshire Council.

Juliette Coard, previous Chair of HCP, commented that she was pleased the Review had taken place as it had highlighted a number of important areas. She noted that the Review Group had considered the issue of Street Trading Consents but had discovered that HCP could not administer a part of scheme as a method of income generation. She therefore asked why Maylord Orchards Shopping Centre were able to issue their own consents?

The Trading Standards Manager explained that only local authorities could issue Street Trading Consents as specified by the Miscellaneous Provisions Act 1982. However this was only for areas on the public highway and as the Maylord Orchards Shopping Centre was indoors it had the ability to issue its own consents for those traders inside the centre.

A Member added that they were worried about the proliferation of street traders in Hereford. Concerns were also expressed about the cost of street trading consents which were considered to be cheap compared to the returns they offered.

Bobbie Heavens, Chair of HCP, responded to a comment in the report by explaining that steps had been undertaken by HCP to increase its communications. She added that the Review had delayed the finalisation of their business plan and welcomed the Review Group's proposal that Herefordshire Council provided the strategic vision for Hereford City.

The Cabinet Member (Resources) expressed concern about the Review Group's request for more funding to be provided to HCP. He stated that in order to provide additional funding to HCP it would be necessary to reallocate resources from elsewhere. He welcomed the Review Group's recommendation that Hereford City Council considered increasing its Parish Precept. He also commented that the Leader worked hard on the Economic Development Portfolio.

The Chairman thanked the Review Group for their report and thanked the representatives of HCP for attending the meeting. He asked HCP to prepare a response to report to Cabinet alongside the Review Group's report. Finally, the Chairman expressed his thanks to the two co-opted Members on the Review Group.

RESOLVED:**That:**

- (a) Herefordshire Council reinstates the Cabinet Member Portfolio with responsibility for Economic Development This Cabinet Member should take the lead on a strategic vision for Hereford City with support from partner organisations such as HCP and ESG, and ensure links with the wider County;**
- (b) Herefordshire Council representation on the HCP Board is revisited and a member representative with potentially more time to support the work of HCP is appointed. If the recommendation for the reinstatement of the Cabinet Member for Economic Development is accepted then that Portfolio Holder should assume this appointment;**
- (c) reporting mechanisms are put in place to enable the Hereford City Partnership manager to report to the Cabinet Member (Economic Development) on a regular basis;**
- (d) Herefordshire Council relocates the Hereford City Manager to one of its City Centre Office spaces, rather than being based at Plough Lane;**
- (e) the Hereford City Manager's job particulars have a person specification prepared to go with the job description;**
- (f) the Hereford City Manager be provided with administrative support;**
- (g) the Membership of Hereford City Partnership be reviewed to ensure that all areas of the City are represented including the addition of major retailers as Members;**
- (h) additional funding is put into HCP to support the Hereford City Manager and administrative support be provided in the short term prior to the emergence of a whole city vision and the development of the Edgar Street Grid;**
- (i) the annual funding of £16,000 which is put into HCP by Hereford City Council is matched by Herefordshire Council over the next three years, plus HCP maintains its existing funding and infrastructure support commitments to continue and develop its activities and events;**
- (j) Hereford City Council investigate the possibility of increased support for HCP through the level of precept levied in the City;**
- (k) Hereford City Partnership commence regular budgeting procedures and produce income and expenditure accounts;**
- (l) That Hereford City Partnership concentrate their main activities on the City Centre's economic and environmental well-being;**
- (m) Hereford City Partnership liaise with other key partners with an interest in the City, including Hereford City Council, Herefordshire Council, Edgar Street Grid, South Wye Development Trust, and Rotherwas Futures;**
- (n) mechanisms are put in place by Herefordshire Council enable the Hereford City Manager to report to Officers at Head of Service level;**

- (o) the Street Trading Panel procedures are reviewed to enable direct reporting to the Cabinet Member (Economic Development);
- (p) Hereford City Partnership fully instigates the proposed retail membership scheme with varying levels of membership to generate income;
- (q) Hereford City Partnership be asked to comment on the Review and its comments be considered by the Executive in developing its response.
- (r) the Executive's response to the Review including an action plan be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive has approved its response;

and;

- (s) a further report on progress with respect to the Review be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.

57. REVIEW OF HOW TO RETAIN 18-35 YEAR OLDS IN HEREFORDSHIRE AND ATTRACT THEM TO IT

The Committee considered the findings of the 18-35 Review Group following the Review of 'How to retain 18-35 year olds in the County and attract them to it?'

Nick Webster, Lead Officer for the Review, summarised the main findings of the Review to the Committee. A copy of the Review Group's final report was attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

He explained that the Review Group had divided its work into six themes which it thought most significant on the 18-35 year old age range. These themes were: Employment, Housing, Leisure, Education and Skills, Transport and Image.

Statistics from the Council's Research Department informed the Review Group that Herefordshire was underrepresented in 15-24 year olds and over represented in the 50+ age ranges. Each year the County suffered a net loss of 450 15-24 year olds who left the County. This represented 3% of the 15-24 year old population. However, this problem was not unique to Herefordshire. For example Rutland, Malvern Hills, West Dorset and Kennet District Council's all experienced a higher percentage of outward migration within the 15-24 year old range than Herefordshire. In contrast to the overall loss of young people between 15-24, the County gained 200 people in the 35-39 year old age range.

One of the suspected main reasons for young people leaving the County was to take up a University place. In order to investigate this suspicion further the Review Group gathered data from the Higher Education Statistics Agency (HESA). This revealed that the most popular Universities for Hereford residents were those nearby, for example Worcester, Gloucester, Newport and Bristol. The statistics revealed that those students studying at a University close to Hereford were more likely to return to the County once they had finished their studies. For example 61% of Herefordshire residents studying in Worcester returned to the County whereas only 14% returned from those who had studied in Cardiff.

The Review Group hosted a focus group of Herefordshire Council staff within the 18-35 age range which provided a further indication of the reasons young people decided to leave the County.

The factors encouraging young people to leave the County were many and varied with many of the issues raised during the Review related to central government policies or determined by national economic factors. The Review Group concluded that there was no overall push factor but that a number of small changes could be made to improve the situation locally which would probably help to attract and retain more young people.

The Chairman supported the Review Group's proposal that a number of small changes could make the difference to the County and commented on how similar the majority of the County's pubs and clubs were and now there were no cafes open after 6.00 pm in Hereford City Centre. He also commented how young people during the Review had stated that the County had an 'old' feel to it. He drew Members attention to the sections of the report which highlighted the lack of graduate employment opportunities and the lower wages available in the County.

In response to a question the Committee was informed that it was not possible to establish a University of Herefordshire. There was currently a surplus of University places in the Country so a new University would be unlikely to gain any support. Therefore it was important that the Herefordshire Learning Village was fully supported and the range of Higher Education courses on offer there supported.

A Member commented that the Review Group's report should be forwarded to AWM as a background paper for the development of the Regional Economic Strategy.

RESOLVED:

That:

- (a) That young people are involved in the shaping of major regeneration schemes and developments, specifically looking at how these can incorporate their recreational, cultural, and employment needs. This should include detailed and targeted inward investment promotion and working with property agents and developers to influence private investors and brand name companies.**
- (b) Due to the over provision of University places generally within the Country, avenues exploring other methods of retaining and attracting college graduates and young people to Herefordshire are pursued.**
- (c) Given that the figures demonstrate that there is an outflow of young people aged between 18 and 24, yet a net influx of people aged 25 to 35, available resources are concentrated on improving the County's Social and Economic offer to this age group.**
- (d) That the Business Start-Up programme is promoted to young people to support entrepreneurship within the age group.**
- (e) That the Council continues a programme of affordable housing linked to major developments.**
- (f) the Executive's response to the Review including an action plan be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive has**

approved its response.

58. SUMMARY OF ACTION IN RESPONSE TO SCRUTINY COMMITTEE RECOMMENDATIONS

Members noted progress against recommendations made by the Committee since 2003.

RESOLVED:

That (a) the report be noted;

and

(b) further monitoring reports be made to the Committee on a regular basis.

59. PROGRESS REPORT FOLLOWING THE CONCLUSION OF THE REVIEW OF THE COURTYARD

The Committee considered the position on the Courtyard's response to the findings of the Committee's review of their operations and facilities.

The Director of Adult and Community Services informed the Committee that following its Review in July 2006 the Courtyard had employed a consultant to perform an independent review of the Arts Centre's entire operations.

A thorough and detailed piece of work has been completed which is supported by three-year budget proposals which, if adopted, should see the centre's financial position significantly strengthened. The Courtyard Trust Board are set to consider the report at its next meeting.

A Member of the Committee expressed concern at the manner in which the car park at the Courtyard was policed. Reports from members of the public have suggested that notices outlining the car parks policing arrangements are poorly displayed with little lighting to highlight them on dark winter nights which leads to customers being issued penalty charge notices when the attendant arrived once a performance had started. It was suggested that a fairer system to ensure appropriate parking would be for an attendant to be on duty in the car park before a performance starts to ensure people park in correct manner.

The Director of Adult and Community Services agreed to pass the Members concerns onto the Courtyard Trust Board.

RESOLVED:

That (a) the report be noted;

and;

(b) the Courtyard Trust Board be informed of the concerns expressed about policing arrangements in the car park located at the Courtyard Centre for the Arts.

60. PERFORMANCE MONITORING REPORT

Members were informed about the available Performance Indicators position and provided with information about current performance management work within the Economic and Community Services Division of the Adult and Community Services Directorate.

The Head of Economic and Community Services explained that many of the indicators have results at the end of the year, however recently received through the Resident's Survey was satisfaction with cultural services. All of the services had seen an increase apart from satisfaction with "Theatres and Concert Halls".

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

61. COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme for 2007/08.

The Committee supported the proposed work programme as attached at Appendix 1 to the report.

RESOLVED: That the Committee's work programme be approved and reported to the Strategic Monitoring Committee.

In closing the meeting the Chairman thanked the Director for Adult and Community Services, Head of Economic and Community Services and the Democratic Services Officer for their support during the life of the Committee.

He also thanked Members of the Committee for their support and the work that they had completed. He extended his thanks to the Cabinet Members who attended the Committee's meetings.

Members of the Committee thanked the Chairman for the work that he had completed and for co-opting outside representatives to the Committee.

The Cabinet Member (Community Services) congratulated the Chairman for all the work the Committee had completed and for the commitment he had made to supporting and developing the role of scrutiny.

The meeting ended at 12.14 p.m.

CHAIRMAN