

# **RESPONSE TO THE REVIEW OF HOW TO RETAIN 18-35 YEAR OLDS IN HEREFORDSHIRE AND ATTRACT THEM TO IT**

## **PORTFOLIO RESPONSIBILITY: ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES**

**CABINET**

**6TH SEPTEMBER, 2007**

---

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

To respond to the “Review of how to retain 18-35 year olds in Herefordshire and attract them to it” (referred to as the 18-35 Review) outlining acceptance or otherwise of the recommendations made.

### **Key Decision**

This is not a key decision.

### **Recommendations**

**THAT the response to the Review and Action Plan set out in the report be endorsed.**

### **Reasons**

The Community Services Scrutiny Committee considered the 18-35 Review on the 26th March, 2007. The purpose of the review was to establish the reasons why 18-35 year olds leave the County and to focus on measures the Council could put in place to retain the age group and attract them to live in the County. The review focused on key themes concerned with employment; housing; leisure; education and skills; transport and image. A copy of the Review and covering Scrutiny report is attached for Members attention.

The review was able to utilise data on demographic changes, which demonstrated that even with predicted increases in the number 12 to 24 year olds, in the County, the County would still be under represented in the age range when compared to population figures for England and Wales as a whole. Based on current trends in 2011, the 15-24 age range will represent 11% of the County’s population, compared with 12.9% of the population for England and Wales. Using NHS re-registration data the report also showed a net loss of the 15 to 24 age range of approximately 450. This is compared to a net gain in other, older, age ranges, including a “gain” of 200 people between the ages of 35 and 39 years each year from inward migration. The net loss of young people is not unusual for mainly rural areas, whereas more urban areas are seeing a net increase in young people population.

The report also showed that despite schools performing well at GCSE level, businesses reported a shortage of skills, with 31% of employers feeling that there was a significant gap between school leaver’s qualifications and the qualifications that were required for work. Research also showed that housing affordability was a significant issue.

The research was supported by a small focus group of young people. The interviews supported the findings that the reasons why young people leave or do not locate to the county are many, varied and usually a combination of factors. However, primarily focus was on overall negative perception of the County by young people mainly regarding low wages, high cost of housing, limited career progression and lack of leisure and entertainment facilities. The report also found that some small scale change, both physically and in people's attitude could make a significant difference. This included new businesses relocating to the county and more choice in terms of leisure could create positive images about the County in terms of meeting the requires of young people.

## Considerations

1. This report considers each recommendation in the review in turn as highlighted below:

- **(6a) Recommendation** - That young people are involved in the shaping of major regeneration schemes and developments, specifically looking at how these can incorporate their recreation, 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.

**Response** – That this recommendation is accepted and incorporated into the inward investment strategy for the County. Young people should be involved in major regeneration schemes such as Edgar Street Grid.

- **(6b) Recommendation** - 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.

**Response** – That this recommendation is accepted and will be addressed in connection with the development of the learning village.

- **(6c) Recommendation** - 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.

**Response** – That this recommendation is accepted in line with recommendation 6a.

- **(6d) Recommendation** - That the business start-up programme is promoted to young people to support entrepreneurship.

**Response** – That this recommendation is accepted in connection with the current business start up programme.

- **(6e) Recommendation** – That the Council continues a programme of affordable housing linked to major developments.

**Response** – That this recommendation is accepted in line with the County's Housing Strategy.

## **Risk Management**

None identified

## **Alternative Options**

Recommendations reviewed.

## **Consultees**

None identified.

## **Background Papers**

Scrutiny Review of "how to retain 18-35 year olds in Herefordshire and attract them to it" of 26th March, 2007.