

## HEREFORDSHIRE PLAN AMBITION GROUPS

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

1. To consider recent progress in relation to the Herefordshire Plan Ambitions relevant to the Policy and Community Directorate.

### Considerations

2. The Policy and Community Directorate has overall responsibility for the development and delivery of the Herefordshire Plan for the Council. In addition the Directorate is involved in supporting the delivery of a number of the 10 Ambitions in the Plan. Progress in delivering each of these ambitions is set out in turn below.
3. **Business, Economic Development and Tourism Ambition Group**

“Ambition: To support Business Growth and create more and better paid work in Herefordshire”

The Group has met four times since January 2003.

### Membership

The Ambition Group includes representatives of Herefordshire Council, Economic Development Service, Herefordshire and Worcestershire Learning and Skills Council, Chamber of Commerce and Business Link for Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Herefordshire Council, Tourism Service, Advantage West Midlands, Herefordshire Council, Forward Planning Service, Jobcentreplus, Federation of Small Business and the Voluntary Sector Assembly. The Cabinet Members (Economic Development, Markets and Property) and (Rural Regeneration and Smallholdings) attend the Ambition Group.

There are also two sub groups looking at Food and Agriculture and Tourism issues.

William Lyons from the Chamber of Commerce is acting Chair and Adrian Marshall, Economic Investment and Development Manager, and Val Pike, Economic Investment and Development Support Officer, from Herefordshire Council facilitate the Group.

### General

### Presentations

So far this year the Ambition Group has received presentations from:

- The Chamber of Commerce and Business Link on their performance in the County;
- West Midlands Employment and Low Pay Unit on the services they provide and the issue of quality employment;

- ❑ The role of Leominster Market Towns Officer;
- ❑ The role of the Technology Co-ordinator from Malvern Hills Science Park
- ❑ Proposals for Edgar Street Grid
- ❑ Hereford City Partnership and the City of Living Crafts Scheme
- ❑ The Role of the Business ICT Broker and the e-gateway

### **Economic Development Strategy**

Work has progressed on revising the Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy with a view to developing more focussed priorities for the County.

Grant assistance from AWM has been obtained and Consultants EDAW Ltd employed to undertake Phase 1 scoping and visioning work. This will involve a workshop with Council Members.

The strategy will be completed by the end of March 2004. The task will then be to co-ordinate an action plan to take it forward on the ground.

### **Rural Inward Investment Study**

This has been completed but the action plan has not been progressed owing to restructuring within AWM. It is expected that a start on implementing the action plan will be made before the end of the year.

### **Business Advice Fairs**

Following a proposal from the Group, Business Advice Fairs will take place in Bromyard, Leominster, Kington and Ledbury in November.

### **Sub-Groups**

The Tourism Sub-group has been converted into the management role for Herefordshire Tourism. The Group's main task has been to review and work on the new Tourism strategy for the County.

The Food, Drink and Agriculture sub-group has merged with a sub-group from the Environment Ambition Group to form the Sustainable Land Use Group. The group will address issues of farming, forestry and food and drink production across the County. The new group has developed a set of Terms of Reference and identified Priorities and a draft Action Plan for the next year, which, when finalised will feed into the Action Plans for the two 'parent' Ambition Groups.

### **Benefits**

The main benefits to the County from the partnership working engendered by the Group include:

- ❑ A stretching of resources due to avoidance of duplication and competition amongst the providers of economic development services;
- ❑ Leverage of external funding through co-ordinated support for projects;
- ❑ Building capacity and awareness of activities within different organisations and thus increasing the dynamism of staff;
- ❑ Being flexible and innovative in the way partners work together.

## **4. Community Development and Local Services Ambition Group**

"Ambition: Encourage communities to shape the future of Herefordshire"

### **Membership**

The Ambition Group includes representatives from a variety of statutory, voluntary and community organisations from across Herefordshire. The membership now includes two representatives from the Voluntary Sector Assembly, and two representatives from the Community Development Workers Forum (Practitioners Group). The group has recently carried out a review of its working practices and membership and has moved to a structure of one core group and four sub-groups, to enable more people to become involved in supporting and delivering the Community Development Strategy for Herefordshire.

### **Strategic work**

The Community Development Strategy 2003-2006 has been adopted and work on the 2004/5 Bi-annual Action Plan will be completed by the end of November 2003. The strategy now contains four strategic aims to include community regeneration and partnership working issues.

The Ambition Group and its members contribute to wider strategic work through representation on other groups, such as the ARCH, Parish Plans and Herefordshire Voice steering groups. The Ambition Group has also contributed to the development of strategies including the Council's "Involving Communities" strategy. The Ambition Group is currently engaged in prioritising areas of work for 2004/5 including local priorities, and this will feed directly into influencing external funding programmes in the county.

### **Community Team**

The community team, who support the work of the ambition group, has expanded through recruitment of two Local Public Service Agreement funded Community Involvement workers. Along with the existing Herefordshire Partnership Community Involvement Co-ordinator, the community team has been delivering a wide range of projects in support of the Community Development Strategy and the Council's "Strategy for Community Involvement". This work has included strategy development, provision of advice and guidance, delivering training and producing best practice guidance, leading on the Parish Plans initiative and assisting Parish Councils and local communities in the production of Parish/Community Plans across the County and the co-ordination of community involvement activity. The team also plays a key role in supporting partnership working in community development and community involvement across the County.

### **Who's Who 2003 Guide**

A guide to over 180 community workers working in the County was produced at the end of February 2003. Work is going on in preparation for a web-based Who's Who Guide for 2004.

### **Community Workers Training**

The Ambition Group has been working in partnership with Community First and University College Worcester in piloting a Community Skills training programme leading to Open College Network (OCN) credits. The first intake of workers is nearing completion of the first stage and the project is being evaluated with a view to seeking continuation funding.

### **Network links**

The Ambition Group continues to develop communication and partnerships to deliver the Ambition. The Community Development and Local Services Ambition Group (CDLSAG) continues to support the Herefordshire Rivers Leader+ project, Social Inclusion Ambition Group, Herefordshire In Touch Content Group, Herefordshire

Information and Research Network, Rural Regeneration Zone Management Group and various national steering groups, such as the Countryside Agency/ODPM funded "Bridges project". This networking with other groups ensures that the Ambition Group is making effective linkages across the county in support of its aims.

## **5. Community Safety Partnership**

"Ambition: Reduce crime and disorder and make Herefordshire safer."

### **Membership**

Since the merger of the Herefordshire Community Safety Partnership and Drug Action Team, we have continuously evaluated membership to ensure all relevant partners attend. This has resulted in streamlining of PCT membership and the engagement of the Police Authority.

### **Partnership activities**

This period has been particularly busy for the partnership, now 18 months into its second three-year strategy. Work has progressed around:

- Two strong areas of work on anti-social behaviour: around young people and targeted work in identified hotspots
- The Noise project is growing – further events been held in South Wye – also nominated for national community safety award
- Currently have 8 ASBO's and 2 breaches have resulted in prison sentences
- 10 Community Support Officers have been well received – two more due to start early next year
- Partnership is using arts as a means of engagement, close working relationship developing with The Courtyard
- Domestic violence awareness raising leaflets produced and distributed
- Domestic violence service provision mapping carried out. Some gaps, these will be filled with floating support, funded by Supporting People.
- Alcohol Arrest Referral Scheme Pilot Project currently being developed with Bulmers, received Cabinet Office interest
- Merged Alcohol Implementation group (licensing and enforcement biased) with PCT's Alcohol Group
- Closer working relationship between Road Safety Implementation Group and LPSA Road Safety Working Group
- The Institute of Advanced Motorists (IAM) have completed 38 x 1hour talks at colleges; 750 young people were educated
- 3 HeARTS courses held this year (advanced motorcyclists course)
- Successful Sport England bid – recruiting Sports Referral Co-ordinator to work with ex and stabilised drugs misusers
- Young Persons Substance Misuse Team established
- Further development of local community Drug Forums (local people tackling local drugs issues)
- Many of our Implementation Groups carried out sets at Crucial Crew – estimated that 18,000 children have participated in Crucial Crew in the 10 years it has been running
- 18 month pilot being developed with GOWM utilising a Community Safety Community Development worker – they will be used to assist in the setting up of the Rural Safety Groups

## **6. Herefordshire Cultural Consortium**

“Ambition: Develop Herefordshire as an active, vibrant and enjoyable place to be”

The Ambition group has met four times since January 2003, to include three meetings and one planning session.

### **Membership**

Members of the Herefordshire Cultural Consortium come from a range of backgrounds and organisations to include; Hereford College of Art and Design, The Courtyard Theatre of the Arts, Halo Leisure, Herefordshire Sports Council, Business Link, The Voluntary Sector Assembly, Herefordshire Council and the voluntary sector. The areas covered by the representatives of the Ambition Group are; the arts, sport, libraries, heritage, tourism and recreational countryside. The associate membership continues to increase in numbers with more voluntary organisations and individuals becoming involved. The Chair and Vice-Chair posts have recently been re-elected, with the Chairman providing wider links through his membership of the Regional Cultural Consortium – West Midlands Life. Recently introduced were role descriptions and role specifications for each member to clarify member's role and what is expected. The Cabinet Member (Community and Social Development) attends this Ambition Group.

### **Strategic work and research**

In April 2003 the Herefordshire Cultural Consortium produced and disseminated it's third annual Action Plan, and in May 2003 the Ambition Group produced a Final Report on their Action Plan for 2002/3.

This year the Herefordshire Cultural Strategy will be reviewed. This update will go beyond the current strategy and incorporate emerging local, regional and national policy for culture. As part of the public consultation, a Citizens Panel Questionnaire was circulated during April 2003, with the results analysed in August. This Survey is the first major consultation covering culture and leisure in the County, in recent history and has produced some surprising results. In addition, during September the Cultural Consortium arranged 'visioning events', one with Council Members and Heads of Service, the other with Ambition Group members, Associate members, Ambition Group Facilitators and Herefordshire Council Officers. At these events, participants described their vision for Herefordshire in the next ten years, identified and prioritised culture and leisure projects that could enable the visions and looked at ways to measure the results. The next step in the review of the Cultural Strategy will be to bring all this information together, culminating in the production of a concise revised Herefordshire Cultural Strategy by the beginning of 2004.

### **Communication and disseminating information**

In order to promote effective communication both into the Herefordshire Cultural Consortium and out to organisations and the public, since January 2003 the Ambition Group has produced seasonal newsletters, distributed in hard copy through; partner organisations, public buildings and on the Herefordshire Partnership web site. All publications of the Ambition Group, to include the Annual Action Plan, Final Report, and supporting documents and strategies are published on the Herefordshire Partnership web-site.

In addition, the group organised the second Herefordshire Culture and Leisure Funding Fair on 3rd April, 2003, which provided information to local culture and leisure organisations, particularly in the voluntary sector on funding opportunities.

Over 100 people attended the talks and information stands and following continued positive feed back another Fair is being organised for April 2004.

### **Network links**

The Herefordshire Cultural Consortium continues to support the Herefordshire Rivers Leader+ project, with members on the Local Action Group and one of the members chairing the Project Appraisal Committee. A member of the Ambition Group Chairs the Objective 2 ARCH (Action for Regenerating Communities in Herefordshire) Steering Group help to identify and prioritise projects in line with the County's Cultural Strategy and Cultural Consortium Action Plan. Members of the Ambition Group support the Ross Creative Learning Centre project, aimed at development of the current Youth Centre, through the Steering Group and co-ordination support. A member of the Herefordshire Cultural Consortium is on the Parish Plans contact group, with the remit to support the community in compiling their plans, respond to requests for services and make note of trends and needs to re-assess the Cultural Consortium's priorities.

## **7. Herefordshire Learning Partnership**

"Ambition: Provide excellent education, training and learning opportunities in Herefordshire for all ages"

The Council is the lead body for the Herefordshire Learning Partnership. The Herefordshire Learning Partnership is a newly formed group, arising from a merger between the Herefordshire Partnership Education Ambition Group and the Herefordshire Lifelong Learning Partnership. There is a requirement for Learning Partnerships to be in place across the Country. The Learning Partnership is represented regularly at quarterly regional meetings facilitated by the Birmingham Learning Partnership where all twelve West Midlands-based LPs are present. This forum encourages regional networking and supports LPs working together on regional projects (eg Rural Regeneration Zone projects).

During July/August 2003, the Learning Partnership has engaged in a wide-ranging consultation with partners on its future structure, its overall roles and responsibilities, and designated sub-groups. Proposals have now been drawn up and are being circulated to all partners. There is an opportunity to make further comments and it is then proposed to hold a half-day event to launch the newly re-structured Learning Partnership.

The present proposal, which incorporates the findings of the consultation, involves the inauguration of a single Partnership Board of seventeen members representing defined educational sectors and major stakeholders. Representatives are thus drawn from Further Education, Higher Education, Schools, The Early Years Development and Childcare Partnership, Private Training providers, Voluntary and Community Sectors, Herefordshire Council Policy and Community Directorate, Education Directorate, Job Centre Plus, the Chamber of Commerce, Advantage West Midlands and the local Learning and Skills Council.

The present sub-group structure of thematic and geographically based community groups is largely retained in the new structure. However, three new thematic groups are proposed namely a Skills Strategy Thematic Group (covering training/ACL for 19 – 50 age group), a Learner Support Group (covering transport/childcare/Information, Advice and Guidance/Mentors/Special Needs) and a Facilities Group looking at all accommodation issues (eg ACL Centres).

The Learning Partnership draws down through the local Learning and Skills Council an annual grant presently set at £62,145. These funds support the administration of the Partnership, and the employment of Community Learning Officers who provide a link between local communities and the partnership providers.

The Learning Partnership is actively supporting the development of a network of Adult and Community Learning Centres across the County, a process that will now be greatly aided by the setting up of a specific Facilities sub-group. The Partnership has also recently participated in a series of consultations with the local LSC, the Post-16 Federation and the Herefordshire Association of Colleges and Schools (HACS) to explore the possibility of enhancing linkages between the various Groups and avoiding any wasteful duplication.

## **8. Social Inclusion and Anti Poverty Ambition Group (SIAPAG)**

“Ambition: To Reduce Poverty and Isolation in Herefordshire”

The membership of this Ambition Group includes representatives from service provider and user groups across the voluntary sector and statutory bodies. Facilitation for the group is provided from within the Herefordshire Partnership Support Team and administrative support comes from this team and from the Community Legal Partnership. The Ambition Group has formed a number of task groups which are addressing specific priority areas.

### **Involving excluded groups in decision making and consultations**

This group is developing a list of accessible meeting rooms and venues. The Group is also working with the Involving Communities team on an ‘Imagine’ Project examining the aspirations of local people for their County.

### **Raising Awareness**

This group will be involved with the CAB in an advice column in a local newspaper to raise awareness of inclusion issues and rights.

### **Standards and Best Practice**

This group has developed a set of communications standards to ensure that publications are as accessible as possible to readers. These standards have been trialed with the revision of the Herefordshire Plan.

### **Identifying and Addressing issues which are particular to Rural People**

This group is working to produce baseline data on rural areas and issues and to provide this in a useful format to decision makers and workers.

### **Anti Poverty**

This group has launched a Welfare Rights Forum for Herefordshire. The forum will initially focus on the ‘Quids for Kids’ campaign and later in the year on the Age Concern ‘Winter Warmth’ campaign. It is envisaged that the members of the forum will be more involved at some times than others, as the campaigns reflect the interests of their groups.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**THAT the report be noted.**

## **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

None identified.