

# HEREFORDSHIRE PLAN AND PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS REPORT

Report By: HEAD OF POLICY AND RESOURCES

## Wards Affected

County-wide

## Purpose

1. To consider progress in implementing the Herefordshire Plan, particularly that of the Learning Education and Training Ambition Group.

## Financial Implications

2. None.

## Considerations

### Background

3. The Herefordshire Plan, published in June 2000, was one of the first wave of community plans in England. The Plan sets out a vision, guiding principles and ten ambitions, which together form a ten year strategy for Herefordshire. The Plan is entering its fourth year.

## Partnership Arrangements

4. Implementation of the Plan is supported by a comprehensive partnership including over 100 organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Core partners with the Council include the Chamber of Commerce and Business Link, Herefordshire Association of Local Councils, Herefordshire Primary Care Trust, Learning and Skills Council, Voluntary Organisations, and West Mercia Constabulary.
5. The Partnership is led through ten ambition groups which take responsibility for delivering each ambition in the Plan. The Ambition Groups are supported by a Management Group and Board of senior officers from the core partner organisations. In addition there are common themes running through the activity of all Ambition Groups. For example there is an Information Communications Technology (ICT) Group responsible for the ICT development within the Plan.
6. The Ambitions are listed in the table below, showing the Cabinet Member within whose remit the ambition falls and the Scrutiny Committee responsible for monitoring progress towards achieving the ambitions.

Ambition	Cabinet Member	Scrutiny Committee
Improve the health and wellbeing of Herefordshire People	Social Care and Strategic Housing	Health Social Care and Housing
Reduce crime and disorder and make Herefordshire safer	Leader	Strategic Committee      Monitoring
Tackle poverty and isolation in Herefordshire	Leader	Strategic Committee      Monitoring
Encourage communities to shape the future of Herefordshire	Community and Social Development	Social and Economic Development
Develop Herefordshire as an active, vibrant and enjoyable place to be	Community and Social Development	Social and Economic Development
Protect and improve Herefordshire's distinctive environment	Environment	Environment
Provide excellent education, training and learning opportunities in Herefordshire for all ages	Education Community and Social Development	Education Social and Economic Development
Meet Herefordshire's accommodation needs	Social Care and Strategic Housing	Social Care and Housing
Support business growth and create more and better paid work in Herefordshire.	Economic Development, Markets and Property Rural Regeneration	Social and Economic Development
Develop an integrated transport system for Herefordshire	Highways and Transport	Environment

7. Although the responsibility for the scrutiny function for each ambition group is clearly defined, in service terms the Education Directorate supports to varying extent all but one of the 10 ambitions.
8. In September 2001, the Strategic Monitoring Committee agreed that individual Scrutiny Committees should receive six monthly reports setting out progress to date, work in hand and future timetables.

**Progress to date**

9. The Audit Commission's Corporate Assessment of the Council in December 2002 commented that:

*"the Plan has provided the focus for partnership working and has contributed significantly to the Council being able to attract significant external funding to deliver projects tackling local priorities, such as rural access and pockets of deprivation in Hereford City. In this respect the Plan has enabled the Council to punch above its weight as a small low-funded authority".*

10. A similar conclusion was reached in the Ofsted Inspection of the LEA. In practice, the Herefordshire Plan has been helpful in framing successful bids to the DfES and gaining approval to policy documents.
11. The Education Service supports many of the ambitions listed. Details of some of the specific achievements involving the Education Directorate are listed below under the golden thread and ambition group headings:

12. **A) Overall Themes**

**(i) Geographic Communities**

- Parish plans have been completed on a number of villages in the County and more are underway. In particular the Education Directorate has been involved in the plan for Sutton St Nicholas and the proposals for community use of the new school.

**(ii) Communities of Interest**

- The Early Years Development Childcare Partnership is viewed by the DfES as being one of the most successful in the West Midlands in terms of effective working. This has resulted in the designation of the Early Excellence Centre and the Sure Start Rural Pilot, and the establishment one of the first Neighbourhood Nurseries in the country.

**(iii) Information and Communications Technology**

- All high schools are on broadband.
- There are 3 community learning centres on school sites as part of a network of LearnDirect centres in Herefordshire's towns and villages.
- ICT provision in schools exceeds NGFL targets.

**B) Ambition Groups**

**(i) Improve The Health And Well Being Of Herefordshire People**

- Healthy Schools Programme.
- Sports Development Programme in Schools.
- Children's Rights Officer Appointed.

**(ii) Reduce Crime and disorder and make Herefordshire Safer**

- Involved in a specialist young persons' substance misuse team to meet the treatment needs of young people and work on early intervention and prevention.

**(iii) Reduce poverty and isolation in Herefordshire**

- Sure Start in Leominster and Kington and a 'mini' Sure Start in Bromyard.
- Children Centre's strategy

**(iv) Encourage communities to shape the future of Herefordshire**

- Working partnership to draw down money to fund community development and community economic regeneration- for example, Community facilities at Hunderton Junior School and in former Marlbrook Primary School premises.

**(v) Develop Herefordshire as an active, vibrant and enjoyable place to be**

- John Masefield High School, Arts College
- 8 schools have Artsmark award
- 12 schools have Sportsmark award.
- Appointment of Education and Outreach Officer at Courtyard Theatre.

**(vi) Protect and enhance Herefordshire's distinctive environment**

- Development of Environmentally Sustainable School Buildings
- 29 schools gained eco-school award

**(vii) Develop an integrated transport system for Herefordshire**

- New Safer Routes to Schools introduced
- X School Travel Plans completed.
- Integral member of cross-cutting Best Value Review

**(viii) Meet Herefordshire's accommodation needs**

This is one area in which the Education Directorate has little direct input. However, advice on housing issues is given for High school pupils as part of the citizenship programme

**(ix) Support business growth and create more and better paid work in Herefordshire****(x) Provide excellent education, training and learning opportunities in Herefordshire for all ages**

The Learning Education and Training Ambition Group produced an action plan which is set out in Appendix 1. Progress in pursuing the targets of the action plan are listed in the final column of Appendix 1.

There has been substantial progress because of good partnership working. However, the number of different partnership arrangements within the field of Education prompted a review of the organisation of the Learning Education and Training Ambition Group. Following a consultants report it is now proposed to combine the Learning Partnership (which essentially oversaw community education) with the ambition group to create one group at which strategic issues could be considered.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**The Committee asked to note the content of the report and identify any areas of significant concern.**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- Herefordshire Plan
- Herefordshire Plan Progress Review 2001/2002