

Service News

Incorporating Performance Indicator Outputs where 'Exceptional'

Exceptional P.I. Performance

Percentage of Objective 2 grant claims submitted which are accepted first time—performance against this target is currently running at 100% against the target of 90%. This success rate is due to the revision of practices within the team

Herefordshire Plan receives Exciting New Look

The all new look third edition of the Herefordshire Plan was formally launched during this period. The Partnership Conference on the theme of 'Achieving the Plan Ambitions with Information and Communication Technology' took place.

On 29th October, the third annual Funding Fair was held at Aylestone School and was attended by over 120 people. There were 20 stallholders from grant giving bodies and information providers. Over 100 people attended 6 workshops.

In October, the Heritage Lottery Fund announced that as a result of a seminar hosted by the Project Development Team, four projects in the County received funding of over £100,000 through the Young Roots Programme. Several other grant applications, assisted earlier in the year were also successful; including the St. Katherine's Ledbury HLF Project Planning grant (£35k) and Longtown Village Shop (DEFRA).

The Delegated Grants Team has achieved 100% committed spend in the Small Projects Fund, which ends March, 2004. The Team has also been acting as administrators for the Community Pride Schemes for Bromyard, Ledbury and Kington during a temporary internal team restructure.

The Board for the new Learning Partnership has now been set up and the Lifelong Learning Team will shortly commence working from within the Partnership.

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New look Herefordshire Plan

LIFT Scheme Makes a Splash in Ledbury

The independent service review of the exercise referral scheme (LIFT) has now been commissioned and Health Expertise Ltd have commenced work, which is due to be completed by March 2004. Meanwhile, the development of alternative physical activities for the LIFT scheme has continued with the introduction of Aqua classes at the Ledbury sites.

Within the Sports Development Unit, appointments were made to the vacant posts of Football and Rugby Administrators and the partnership post of Sports Referral Co-ordinator has been successfully filled to enable the development of the project between Sports Development, Community Safety and the Drug Action Team.

Record Summer attendances for Parks & Countryside



New play area attracts huge numbers to Queenswood

Following the completion of the first phase of site enhancements, record attendances were recorded at Queenswood and Bodenham Lake Country Parks.

During this period, Council approval was granted to proceed with tenders for the replacement pool for North Herefordshire.

The reinstatement of King George V Playing Fields in Hereford was completed, including the demolition of the decommissioned paddling pool. Reinstatement and landscaping of Sydonia

Park in Leominster, following the demolition of the pool, decommissioned tennis courts, public toilets and youth centre has been undertaken.

Leominster Grange Play Area enhancement works were completed (in partnership with Sure Start).

During this period, a grant of £100,000 was also secured from the Living Spaces Fund which will allow work to start at Aylestone Park, Hereford.

Local Development prepare for Market Towns Initiative

Exceptional P.I. Performance

Percentage of customer's rating the service provided by the Local Development Team as 'good' or 'excellent' - the team are disappointed in the result of 80% (compared to an outturn of 91% last year) and are currently working to resolve this. However, it is not possible to make a direct comparison between the two years because as previously reported, last years result was based on 44 responses from 100 surveyed. This year's figure was obtained from 110 responses from 440 surveys sent out.

Kim Hart joined the team as the Leominster Market Towns Support Officer and is now working with the Leominster Partnership to create a strategic action plan in preparation for the Market Towns Initiative funding that Leominster will receive in 2004/05.

The Voluntary Sector Grants Panel awarded an additional £10,000 of emergency funding to an additional four voluntary sector organisations.

The five market towns were approached and reminded of the Christmas Lights in the Market Towns Grant Scheme, where funding of up to £600 is available to assist



Market towns reminded of Christmas lights grants scheme.

with the erection/dismantling of the Christmas lights and any switch-on events. All five market towns applied for this funding.

Location, Location, Location

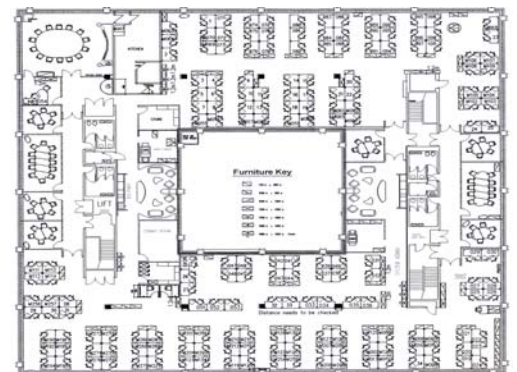


Plough Lane—Policy & Community's new home

During this period, the staff from the Directorate Support Unit concentrated upon the work required in order to prepare the Directorate for its relocation to the offices in Plough Lane, Hereford. As previously mentioned in Service News, the project plan for the move required the completion of over 600 tasks.

Exceptional P.I. Performance

The percentage of customers who rate the administration service they receive as excellent is currently running at 89% - against the target of 80%.



Floor plan of second floor

Designer Label for Herefordshire Tourism

October and November were a mixture of planning and project work for Cultural Services.

During the period, the Contemporary Crafts Fair took place, which is one of the Service's key annual events. The Festivals Forum was held to advise and support the festivals in the County and Cultural Services supported the Festivals Review.

A mid-term evaluation of the Creative Industries Programme was commissioned to assess the work of this externally funded project which supports arts-based businesses in the County. Meanwhile, Creative Industries work continued with training events, business advice, community based projects and grants to arts businesses. In addition, the Arts Service was successful in negotiating funding for the HEARTS Partnership to develop arts projects in schools.

A major initiative for Tourism was the development of a new brand for Herefordshire. This was officially launched

at the Tourism Forum in November. This links to the production of the 2004 Visitor Guide, which although produced by Association for the Promotion of Herefordshire (APH), the local authority is involved in its concept and design. The Winter Walking Festival was launched in November and a new design for the Visitor Links web-site was being formatted and tested. Officers were involved in the consultation of the Regional Tourism Strategy which has implications for the delivery and funding of Tourism in Herefordshire for the foreseeable future.

The Records Office closed for two weeks for stock taking, which allowed the opportunity to undertake some physical improvements, upgrading the toilets, fitting new automatic doors and decorating the entrance hall. A new Principal Archives Officer was appointed from within the Service, which means that additional recruitment is now needed to cover staff shortages.



New logo for Herefordshire Tourism

Libraries go Multifunctional in Bromyard

Preparation for the opening of the new multifunctional service facility at The Bromyard Centre continued and included the procurement of new stock and equipment, staff training and service planning. A new library management system interface was installed and tested for live implementation at the new site.

Another ever popular book sale was held at the Shirehall to dispose of old discarded stock.

A public meeting was held in Kington to consult on the proposals for developing the Wesleyan Chapel into a multifunctional service site.

Consultation also commenced on the draft strategic framework for libraries in Herefordshire, named 'An eye on the future'.

Also during this period, a new and improved public online library catalogue

went live on the internet, allowing greater online interactivity for customers.

Work also continued on the integration of Customer Service, Libraries and Information services and the divisional restructure.



SNEAK PREVIEW OF PERFORMANCE *The results so far after just two weeks opening:*

321 new borrowers. Which is almost as many as the total number of new borrowers for the whole of the last two years put together!

Number of issues for January so far 3856. In the first two weeks of opening we have issued more items than the whole of January last year.

Opening hours- Last year 18 hours, now 80 hours, some of the longest in the country.

Well done to all concerned, more updates will follow.
Statistics on all areas will be available at end of month.

Economic Investment and Development have New Scheme



Improving the County's infrastructure, employment land and workspace provision

Work was taking place to set up a new scheme to provide financial assistance towards the conversion or upgrading of buildings for business use. When established, the team will administer the scheme on behalf of the RRZ Partnership within the eligible areas of Herefordshire, Shropshire and Worcestershire. The scheme will operate with an initial budget of £1.3M over the first three years. A manager and monitoring officer for this redundant building grant scheme have been appointed and the formal launch is planned for early this year.

In December, work was completed on the construction of Twyford Court on Rotherwas Industrial Estate. The £1.3M scheme has created six high quality industrial units with a total floor space of 2000 sq metres. Funding for the scheme was secured from the European Objective 2 Programme and Advantage West Midlands. The site will be formally launched in early February.

During this period, WM Enterprise Consultants were contracted to produce the business plan for the Rotherwas Business Centre, which will be completed this month. A planning application for the scheme is also due to be submitted this month.

Officers have been working with AWM on the development and marketing of the new 14ha site south of the existing Leominster Industrial Estate. Leominster Enterprise Park will be serviced by the Leominster Access Road. At the time of writing, 20 or so companies had expressed an interest in plots. Planning has been given for a major business centre and managed workspace units to help pump-prime the site.

A study was commissioned to look at potential alternative employment sites in Kington to assist the UDP process. The current allocation to extend Hatton Gardens Industrial Estate has been affected by objections from the Environmental Agency and high development costs.

The new Herefordshire 'Bridge-It' Environmental Business Programme was set up. Funded through the West Midlands Objective 2 Environmental Action Programme and working in conjunction with Groundwork Birmingham and local partners including Business Link, the Environment Agency and Business in the Community, the scheme will provide environmental advice and support to businesses in the County.

65 business property enquiries were received during October and November, these included 18 from outside the County, 14 of which were via AWM. 3 enquirers reported that they were successful in finding a property in the County.

A series of Herefordshire Business Roadshows took place during November, visiting market towns and Rotherwas. These generated a pleasing number of enquiries regarding the availability of grants as well as broadband—as being publicised by the Herefordshire In Touch project. A newsletter was also produced and sent to all businesses in the Business Directory in October, updating them on broadband, Pro-Grata grants and other services.



One of the broadband campaign's promotional pictures

Exceptional P.I. Performance

Percentage of the total youth population in contact with the youth service—target for year of 2,291 has already been over achieved by 280, reducing the ability to deliver accredited targets.

Percentage of contact target who achieve accredited learning— currently 316 individuals or 12% against the target of 25%. In order to address this, additional training has been provided for staff and new systems have been introduced to help staff and young people access accreditation routes. This will be piloted in some areas next period.

Percentage of total work that actively involves young people in Youth Forums and the management or delivery of a Youth Project—currently running at 33% against the target of 25%, this area continued to show development over the period with a steady increase of young people becoming engaged in the development and management of projects and activity.

Youth Service Address Difficulties

During this period, the Youth Service focussed on restructuring its service in order to address the recruitment difficulties it has been experiencing, as well as addressing weaknesses in some areas of its organisation, as identified in its improvement plan. All staff were involved in the development of a new structure and a consultation period for key stakeholders remained open until December. Implementation will take place early this year.

Music programmes and activities continued well during this period.

Draft results of the Youth Survey showed some high satisfaction levels with the youth service provision, but many stated that they wanted to know more about what is going on in their area. Full results of the survey will be published in the next issue.

Under the Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme, youth workers, teachers and volunteers commenced training programmes to become expedition supervisors (BETA), and began preparing for their expedition camp outs during



Music programme has been well received

January and February. Bromyard Youth Centre remained busy preparing for its move into the new Bromyard Centre in January.

In October the Youth Service had its first joint staff meeting with the Connexions service to look at joint working. This event was very successful and a follow-up is planned for early this year.

Mixed bag for Heritage Services

October's visitors figures were good. This was assisted by hArt week and the Photographic Festival, staged at Broad Street. Ross-on-Wye enjoyed a record breaking month. However, November figures for the Hereford sites were down, seriously affected by the Legionella outbreak. Ross-on-Wye remained unaffected and again performed well.

The staffing difficulties at Bromyard, which were reported last time, continued. There are no longer sufficient volunteer staff to run the Centre, which meant that there were days during the period that the facility was unable to open. Heritage Services are addressing this issue by targeting more volunteers for the new season.

Staff shortage and sickness amongst Museum on the Move staff resulted in

disappointing figures for November. Vacancies have now been filled and this should not happen again.

Project planning for the redisplay of Ledbury, Bromyard and Museum on the Move commenced.

It should be noted that 20% of Kington Museum's figures are now being counted (as required under the definition of the P.I where a premises is provided for a 'peppercorn rent').

As Heritage Services enters its quietest part of the year, it remains confident that in spite of recent difficulties it will meet its target figures and is planning ahead to deal with staffing issues at Bromyard and stepping up the marketing of sites whose figures are dropping.

Exceptional P.I. Performance

Heritage/museum sites rated as good or excellent—satisfaction rates against this indicator are currently running at 98% against the target of 60%

Heritage /museum staff rated as good or excellent—again high satisfaction rate of 87% against the target of 70%



Ross Heritage Centre receives high numbers of visitors