

## COMMUNITY FIRST FUNDING SUPPORT

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

1. To propose a means of reviewing the funding support for Community First within the context of an overall review of the support to the voluntary sector in Herefordshire.

### Considerations

2. At its last meeting the Strategic Monitoring Committee proposed reviewing the funding support for Community First. Community First is an "infrastructure body" spanning both Herefordshire and Worcestershire. It has worked closely with the former development agency network and continues to work with Herefordshire Voluntary Action and Ledbury Voluntary Action.
3. In March of 2003 the Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee agreed terms of reference for a review of the support to the Voluntary Sector provided by Herefordshire Council (copy of report attached at Appendix 1). It was understood that this was a cross-cutting review, going beyond the administration of grants, and would therefore need to report back in to Strategic Monitoring Committee.
4. A large amount of data including face-to-face interviews with many of the bodies was conducted during 2003. Since the original review team was nominated there have been significant staff changes and it is now proposed that the review is undertaken by graduate placements located in the Policy Team working to the original review team as a steering group. This model is similar to that adopted for the cross-cutting transport review. It significantly reduced the administrative burden and simplified the process and shortened the timescale. The review will contain all the elements of the Best Value Review Guidelines.
5. Opportunities will be provided for those bodies, particularly the infrastructure bodies to be questioned and challenged on the value and impact of their work. It would be appropriate to deal with Community First through this mechanism along with like bodies.
6. A detailed timetable was being prepared. This will cover the period February to the end of June. Further reports would be made to the Strategic Monitoring Committee at critical stages in the Review.

## RECOMMENDATION

**THAT the Committee agrees:**

- (a) that the change in approach to the structure of the Review is agreed;
- and
- (b) that the Community First be included in the Review along with other infrastructure bodies.

## BACKGROUND PAPERS

None identified.