

<b>MEETING:</b>	<b>CABINET</b>
<b>DATE:</b>	<b>17 MARCH 2011</b>
<b>TITLE OF REPORT:</b>	<b>HEREFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP ENGAGEMENT FRAMEWORK</b>
<b>PORTFOLIO AREA:</b>	<b>CORPORATE &amp; CUSTOMER SERVICES AND HUMAN RESOURCES</b>

**CLASSIFICATION:** Open

### **Wards Affected**

County-wide

### **Purpose**

To present a draft engagement framework for Herefordshire for comment, consideration and approval, following its development through Herefordshire Partnership

### **Key Decision**

This is not a key decision

### **Recommendation**

**THAT Cabinet approves the draft engagement framework.**

### **Introduction and Background**

- Herefordshire Partnership agreed to develop an engagement framework in 2010 as part of its wider development plan.
- The framework proposed will deliver local outcomes for Herefordshire and achieve efficiency savings across the partnership.
- A joint approach to working with communities will support the delivery of the emerging locality strategy as well as implementing the streamlined Herefordshire Partnership structures.
- Organisational and management arrangements for implementing and monitoring the new framework will need to be developed as part of the work on organisational development, and transformational change programmes
- The framework will facilitate and enable a major shift towards community action and control and a move away from public sector dependency.

## Key Considerations

- 1 There are a number of key strategic developments and reviews currently underway through Herefordshire Public Services and Herefordshire Partnership in relation to improving the methods of community engagement and making better use of resources.
- 2 Herefordshire Partnership commissioned a Local Improvement Adviser via the West Midlands Improvement and Efficiency Partnership in April 2010 to develop a partnership wide engagement framework that would offer platforms for sharing and aligning resources in localities.
- 3 The Interim Third Sector Strategic Board has recently completed a review of support services for the third sector in partnership with Herefordshire Public Services. This will lead to improved coverage of this support through greater collaboration between existing organisations and cutting out duplication.
- 4 Herefordshire Council is currently working with Parish and Town councils on the process for developing and implementing a charter setting out how the Councils in Herefordshire will work together to improve the system of local democracy, increase public participation and deliver improved services. This will include the devolution of functions reflecting the Budget Principle of Local Delivery.
- 5 The Communities First workstream of Herefordshire Public Services transformation programme “Rising to the Challenge” is developing a Locality Strategy to bring together it’s objectives of:
  - Better engagement
  - Localised services
  - Empowered communities
- 6 The recently published Localism Bill seeks to decentralise power to local communities. It aims to create a Big Society by giving new rights and powers to communities and introducing reforms to enable decisions to be taken locally. Work is taking place to develop Herefordshire’s “localism” plan through the new Locality Strategy. Community engagement is one of the key objectives within this.
- 7 The local vision for Herefordshire through the implementation of this framework is to work closely with Herefordshire people as partners to build empowered communities across the County who are able to take responsibility for their own well being and develop sustainable communities.
- 8 The draft framework details the organisational and policy implications in relation to current and future workforce, devolution of decisions, services and budgets, the role of elected Members and the shape of future partnership arrangements.
- 9 It is proposed to develop Reaching the Hearts of Herefordshire across the County and introduce 9 locality based partnerships. This will support the streamlined Herefordshire Partnership structures and also the emerging locality strategy. For this to work there will need to be:
  - An identified senior manager for each locality to act as a strategic lead and build relationships with key partners.

- Virtual teams to work in partnership with communities, develop local capacity (in individuals and groups) and support the delivery of local action (part of the developing locality teams).
  - A review of the Member development programme to ensure it is able to support the strengthened role of elected Members.
  - A consolidation of existing consultation and engagement resources through the newly integrated customer and communications service.
- 10 An approach tailored to each locality will be implemented, reflecting the different needs of each locality, building on what currently works in that area and connecting to existing mechanisms that reach the more vulnerable or hard to reach members of the community.
- 11 Commitment to the use of and support for community led planning as a key means to engaging and working with communities is a fundamental part of the engagement framework. Devolved budgets and/or extending participatory budgeting may be considered as a future development to empower local communities.
- 12 The proposed partnership approach assumes that current separate consultation and engagement processes will align to this framework to ensure consistency of approach and reduced duplication. The introduction of a shared intelligence and information function will assist in ensuring this happens. Consequently, delivery of the new framework will need to be one of the outcomes of the Organisational Design project.

## **Community Impact**

- 13 A collaborative approach to engagement will have a significant and positive impact on Herefordshire's communities – offering a range of local solutions relevant to the different identified communities for local people to have their say about what happens in their area.

## **Financial Implications**

- 14 There are efficiency savings that can be identified through the collaboration and joining up of approaches and resources both within HPS and with other partners. These will be identified and agreed utilising the processes available through the Rising to the Challenge transformation programmes.
- 15 The proposed identified senior managers and virtual teams will need to be drawn from existing resources in HPS and the wider partnership.

## **Risk Management**

- 16 Knowing and understanding our communities is a key to delivering services that our communities need in a timely and efficient way and relies on effective, reliable and continuous dialogue.

## **Legal Implications**

- 17 None at this stage. The development of a policy framework for devolution will require appropriate legal input and advice.

## **Alternative Options**

- 18 To continue with the present arrangements of unco-ordinated and unconnected approaches would not realise the efficiency savings needed, and also not achieve the aspirations and aims of the emerging locality strategy.

## **Consultees**

Herefordshire Partnership engagement task group  
HPS Joint Management Team,  
Herefordshire Partnership Board

## **Appendices**

- (a) Draft engagement framework

## **Background Papers**

None identified