

# Service News

## ***Incorporating Performance Indicator Outputs where 'Exceptional'***



Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is one of the development opportunities the Youth Service aims to encourage young people to participate in.

### **Youth Service Re-group**

The restructuring of the Community Youth Service was finalised in January with Cabinet Member approval and agreement from Unison on the proposed structure and job descriptions. Preparation is underway for the changes which will come into effect in April. New posts and vacant posts were advertised in January and, although this generated a high level of interest from people wanting packs and information about the service, there was only a small return rate of completed applications. It is therefore likely that a second round of recruitment attempts will be necessary during March.

In December, new planning guidance was received from the Department for Educational Services. This will be incorporated into the 2004/05 business plan. Included in the guidance are new performance targets and clarification of some existing ones. The result of this is that some of the KPI's reported for the service will change for next year.

The Service continues to under-achieve

on the accredited learning target and it is unlikely that this can be rectified by the end of the year.

A partnership with the Rural Media Company has been set up as an alternative approach to addressing staffing issues, whereby the cost of employing two full-time trainee youth workers (located in Kington and Ross-on-Wye) is shared.

#### **Exceptional P.I. Performance**

**The percentage of the youth population in contact with the Youth Service continues to run at levels well above those planned. To date, 3,394 individuals have been seen against the target of 2,291 which reduces the Service's ability to deliver accredited targets.**

**The percentage of contact target who undergo development opportunities that result in a recorded or accredited learning outcome—the development of the Herefordshire Award will allow easy access for staff and young people into a range of accreditation routes. However the extreme staff shortages combined with young people's low take up of accreditation this year, means that the Service is unlikely to be able to achieve its target. The figures: 346 young people achieving accreditation against the target of 572.**

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### **Directorate Support on the Wagon**

Most of this time was spent by the Directorate Support Unit on managing and overseeing the office moves to the new location at Plough Lane in Hereford. The Directorate Support Manager and Directorate Support Officer, as members of the Project Team, were directly involved in the organisation of the moves from the other sites - Hinton Youth Centre, Shire Hall, 17 St Owen Street, 50/51 Broad Street, Brockington, Victoria House. Other members of the Unit

assisted in organising the moves from Grange Court and Grange House in Leominster.

Time was also spent on establishing new administrative systems for the new offices.



## Sports Developments



Girls football Kick Start session at Weobley

Interviews and research were undertaken by Health Expertise Ltd regarding the LIFT service review and the preliminary findings are due shortly.

The Football Development Officer set up taster sessions and is working with Primary Schools, Weobley Football Club and a group in Peterchurch to encourage the development of girls' football.

Production work on the Disability Sports Guide, which is to be made available in multiple formats such as braille, audio and via web-page as well as in paper format, is ongoing. The Guide is planned to be completed during the Summer.

Work on the joint project of targeting people at risk of problematic drug use and attracting them to sports as a diversionary activity got underway. The Sports Referral Co-ordinator sent referral packs for approval to the steering group and is on target to be able to offer places to clients starting in April.

The vacant post of Sports Development Officer is due to be recruited in the next month. Unfortunately, the vacant position of Assistant Sports Development Officer will not be refilled due to the withdrawal of the funding stream that supported this post.

## Community Regeneration in the Market Towns

The Market towns of Leominster and Ross-on-Wye are in the process of submitting their strategic action plans to enable them to access £500,000 over the next three years to fund regeneration projects.

Ledbury is entering its final year of Market Towns Initiative funding. A steering group has been set up to investigate what will happen once the funding ceases. Ledbury also hosted the

Market Towns Initiative Forum, which attracts Market Towns Officers from all over the region.

Two major and exciting regeneration projects in Kington are about to start; the Skate Park and the Playground Area, which are likely to be completed by the end of March. A Community Transport Project is also being developed involving Hereford Voluntary Action, Countryside Agency and Kington Youth Service.

## Cultural Services are MADE over

There have been physical improvements to the Hereford Record Office, with new automatic doors, parking for disabled people, new lockers, new displays, upgrade of the toilets and general decoration in the entrance hall. Still to be installed is a lift to the Search Room which will complete the majority of the improvements. Advertised in January were the posts of Senior Archivist and Archivist which will help with the workload and the demand for enquiries.

The County's tourism website has received a re-vamp, reflecting the new branding for Tourism, and improved design for ease of use.

production which lists both crafts and food specifically produced in the County and not found anywhere else.

Training courses continued to be offered to arts and tourism businesses as part of the two EU and regionally funded programmes – Tourism Enterprise and Creative Industries. Both programmes also continue to offer a range of support to businesses.

Consultation for the revised Cultural Strategy continued in December and January. All of the responses are now collated and the final document is in production for a March launch.



New directory currently in production

A new directory called MADE is in

## Herefordshire Partnership Confer on Agriculture

A Conference on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy and what it means for Herefordshire was jointly organised and held with the Bulmer Foundation on 27<sup>th</sup> January. The conference was attended by over 150 people from farming, Government bodies and the voluntary sector, with Tim Bennet (vice President and now President of the NFU) as the key speaker.

After an extensive consultation exercise during the summer, the first meeting of the new Herefordshire Learning Partnership was held in December 2003. The revitalised Partnership will play a key part in the Strategic Area Review of learning across Herefordshire, due to be undertaken in 2004 and 2005.

The Action for Regenerating Communities programme has been re-

profiled to protect and maximise the amount of money allocated to Herefordshire under the programme. An application was also made by the programme to the European Social Fund for approximately £1,400,000 to increase skills in communities

A bid for £700,000 has been jointly made with Shropshire for funding to support community projects in Herefordshire. The application is named GOLD, and was submitted to the Rural Regeneration Zone programme.



The future of the Common Agricultural Policy and what it means for Herefordshire discussions are held

## A Quiet Time for Heritage Services

Traditionally the quietest period of the year for Heritage Services, Ledbury and Bromyard closed as usual for both months.

The refurbishment of Ledbury Heritage Centre was completed in early February in time for half-term week opening.

The Alfred Watkins Project exhibition at Broad Street did not attract as many visitors as was hoped. It was therefore moved and adapted to the layout at Ross-on-Wye Heritage Centre, where it proved more popular. 'Creating a Splash', the current exhibition at Broad Street is proving a good draw. It opened mid January.

Staffing shortages have meant that the Old House had to be closed over lunch periods with some frequency. The virtual tour continues to interest and assist visitors.

Ross-on-Wye Heritage Centre is doing very well and broke several records with visitor figures and sales over the festive season.

'Museum on the Move' was closed for refurbishment and its new exhibition was launched at the beginning of February.

The service predicts that it looks to be on target to achieve, or better all of this year's targets.



Creating a Splash—successful exhibition at Broad Street

### Exceptional Performance

**Best Value Indicator—Number of pupils visiting in organised school groups:** Performance against this indicator remains pleasingly high. To date 4,818 pupils have made educational visits to the Service, against a target of 3,100. This is particularly impressive when compared to the output for 2002/03, which was a total of 2,976 pupils during the whole year.

**Local Indicators—Satisfaction with sites/museum staff:** Satisfaction levels have remained consistently high throughout the year:

- The current average for customers rating sites good/excellent is 92% compared to the 2002/03 average of 53%.
- The average rating Heritage Staff as good/excellent this year is 88% compared to the average of 61% during last year.



## Economic Investment and Development go to Press

Before .....



The new Redundant Building Grant Scheme provides grants for the conversion or refurbishment of redundant buildings to bring them back into productive business use. One of the key aims of the scheme is the creation or safeguarding of jobs in the areas most in need in our rural communities.



and after

A press release and radio interview were made to promote the new £1.3m Redundant Building Grant Scheme. The Economic Development Team is leading the Sub-Regional Steering Group overseeing the delivery of the Scheme. The first tranche of grants totalling £75,000 have now been awarded to applicants. Further applications are currently being processed and are under consideration. A leaflet outlining the Scheme is in production and will be distributed to Members as soon as it is available.

Additional funding has been secured for further work to enhance the area around the newly finished Twyford Court Industrial Units. Work has also been completed on the construction of two internal service roads on the estate. The £500,000 schemes will open up additional employment land for development. These schemes are the first capital projects to be delivered within the Rural Regeneration Zone and Advantage West Midlands have requested a formal launch in June.

The Team is working on funding proposals to regenerate Hereford city centre. Areas to be addressed include Eign Gate, Cathedral Close and Castle Green. Funding sources are being investigated following the unsuccessful Rural Regeneration Zone bid.

Earthworks have now been completed on the Leominster Access Road and construction of the road is progressing either side of the A49(T). A new layby has been constructed on the A49(T) and will be opened in March. The scheme is scheduled for completion in early August 2004.

Officers have been working with Advantage West Midlands on the

development and marketing of Leominster Enterprise Park, the new 14ha site south of the existing industrial estate which will be serviced by the new Leominster Access Road. Marketing material has now been produced for the site and it is anticipated that it will be formally launched in the Spring.

The first series of seminars and training courses have been held for businesses in the County under the Herefordshire 'Bridge-It' Environmental Business Advice Programme. In addition, a number of visits have been made by advisors into companies. 40 businesses have been assisted through the programme to date which is being delivered by a local partnership led by the Economic Development Team.

37 commercial property enquiries were received in December and January, including 15 from outside the County, eight of which were via Advantage West Midlands. Three enquirers reported that they were successful in finding a property in the County. There were in the region of 30 general enquiries for economic statistics, Business Directories, information, grants etc.

Under the heading of supporting businesses; eight people have been awarded Start-Up grants during December and January. As part of the Aftercare and Investor Development Programme sponsored by the team, three visits were made by Business Link to companies to discuss their various issues.

## Parks & Countryside Get Playful

Refurbishment work to the play area at The Grange, Leominster, undertaken in partnership with Surestart was completed. The improvements include installation of new safety surfacing which meets European Safety Standards, new play equipment, a perimeter of galvanised fencing with self-closing pedestrian gates and dog-grates.

A new play area at Withington (Withies Close) was opened. This project was funded by Doorstep Green Countryside Agency money and was undertaken jointly with the local community group. Another new project using Countryside Agency Doorstep Green funding was initiated to enhance Luard Walk play area, South Wye.

The halo 5 year development plan was produced as a consultative draft.

Two members of the Parks Team completed ILAM training in Playground Inspection to EU Safety Standards. A further two completed PRINCE 2 Project Management Course.

North Herefordshire Replacement

Swimming Pool tenders were issued.

Work commenced on site at Aylestone Park, Hereford. The new park, situated on Aylestone Hill, will provide an excellent new facility for residents of the City. It is hoped that the completed site will include various sports pitches, space for informal recreation along with a wildlife area and the restoration of the adjoining stretch of canal. The Aylestone Park Association have secured a grant of £100,000 from the Living Spaces Fund, administered by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister towards the restoration work. The Council have allocated some funding to begin the development this year, which will cover the cost of laying underground the existing overhead cables and creating a new, safer entrance to the Park.

Preparation work commenced on the transfer of North Herefordshire Grounds Maintenance to Herefordshire Jarvis Services in April 2004.



Works started at Aylestone Park

## Libraries Going Out with the Old and In with the New



New stock purchased for The Bromyard Centre included new media such as videos, DVDs and Playstation® games and has proved very popular.

Final arrangements for the 5th January opening of The Bromyard Centre included closing the old library, and relocating both newly purchased and all existing stock to the new multipurpose building. The facility was created by the ambitious re-development of the Bromyard Leisure Centre.

Consultation continued on the strategic document "An Eye on the Future", with the consultation period extended until February.

Work continued on the integration of Customer Service, Libraries & Information, with project teams drawn from staff examining key issues and reporting back by the end of March 2004.

Training began on new library management system interface to go live

in The Bromyard Centre and then rolled out across all sites by end March 2004.

Major building works were underway at Weobley Library which will, amongst other things, allow full disabled access to the facilities.

### *The Bromyard Centre—Two Months On ....*

**The Centre has seen significant increases in customer demand.**

**Library Stock:** comparison of item-lending statistics for January and February 2004 with same period 2003 shows a 70% increase over all categories of stock. The total number of items issued in January and February 2004 was 10,362.

**Membership:** 842 new members have joined the library between 5th January and 8th March.