

LOCAL AREA FORUMS

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: CORPORATE STRATEGY AND FINANCE

CABINET

6TH MAY, 2004

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To receive feedback on the first round of the Local Area Forums, and to note any issues raised by the community.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendation

THAT the report be noted and the recommendations set out in paragraph 4 be approved.

Reasons

Cabinet agreed the principles for new arrangements for LAFs in October 2003. Since then the first round of meetings has taken place. An important principle was that issues raised at the meetings would be fed back in to Cabinet after every round of Local Area Forums.

Considerations

1. Background – This round of LAFs ran over a three-week period in March 2004. This initial round was arranged through the Policy Team prior to responsibility moving to County Secretary and Solicitors. All the meetings commenced at 7.30 pm and lasted approximately two hours at a variety of venues – village halls, schools, leisure centres. The agendas which for this round were set by the Council included a presentation on the budget and priorities of the Council, as well as background on the LAF review. Additional local items were included with the opportunity for attendees to ask questions. All questions were dealt with at the meeting or followed up directly afterwards. Numbers attending ranged from twenty to sixty. Problems highlighted included pre-LAF publicity and the accessibility of agendas.
2. General issues with the new arrangements:
 - i. Accessibility of agendas – Agendas were only available on the website and a week before the meeting. For the next round agendas will be available in libraries, info shops, and on the website;

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Jane Jones, Director of Policy and Community on (01432) 260042

ii. Advertising of the meetings to be improved – include Parish Councils in the process. The implication of the removal of membership of meetings and direct mailings of agendas requires further consideration.

iii. The public wanted clarity on the Council's key contact for LAFs

3. Issues raised at meetings:

i. **Ross on Wye**

- Herefordshire Jarvis Services (HJS) are not providing a good service
- Older People's Services
- The proposed location of a mobile phone mast in Brookmead, Ross on Wye

Round 2 Agenda items:

- Herefordshire Jarvis Services
- Changes in delivering home care in Herefordshire

ii. **North Herefordshire**

- Council tax consultation (not enough notice was given)
- What happened to the monies available from the transfer of housing stock? What was available for new capital projects?
- Attendees would like more information on the Brierley village application
- Agendas for the Council budget meeting were not available in the library

Round 2 Agenda items:

- Wesleyan Chapel;
- Waste Disposal at Kington

iii. **Golden Valley**

- School transport catchment areas – this was raised at a previous LAF meeting and has been passed on to the relevant officer;
- Leisure & Tourism are not statutory services and should not be provided by the Council. Roads should be seen as a priority;
- People are unhappy with the services provided by HJS;
- Is the Council monitoring use of the new bridge at Bridge Sollars;
- Parish Councils and the radio should be used to advertise future meetings.

Round 2 agenda items:

- Herefordshire Jarvis Services
- One off LAF meeting to be held on the weight limit of Bridge Sollars Bridge

iv. **Central Herefordshire**

- Agendas need to be more widely distributed through Parish Council magazines;
- No updates were given between the last round of LAFs and the reintroduction;
- Meetings should be for the public to ask questions, not for officers to give presentations. No more than one presentation should be given at each meeting and they should be kept short;
- Should be advertised in advance who the Cabinet member is going to be;
- Dates should be advertised up to a year in advance of meetings;
- Council Tax consultation results should be presented to the public at LAFs;

Round 2 Agenda Items:

- Hereford Crematorium

v. **East Herefordshire**

- Recycling programmes should be extended across all villages;
- Opening hours of Colwall library should be extended.

vi. **Hereford City**

- Disability Access
- Paving in the city
- May Fair
- Public Toilets

Round 2 Agenda Items:

- Disability Discrimination Act

4. In view of the problems highlighted above it is recommended that the following actions are taken:

- Set out a timetable of meetings for the whole year. This does not preclude organising 'one off' LAFs for specific topics, (Appendix 1)
- Public Relations has been asked to undertake a publicity campaign targeting Parish Councils, the media, Public Libraries, community groups etc.

- The UDP Consultation will dominate the next round of LAFs. Dates have been set to accommodate this. Local items requested by community members at previous meetings will also be included.
- Cabinet Members attend each meeting and a member of Chief Executive's Management Team should also attend each LAF.

Alternative Options

There are no alternative options

Risk Management

None

Consultees

Local Area Forums

Background Papers

None identified