

PARISH PLANS PROTOCOL

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: RURAL REGENERATION AND SMALL HOLDINGS AND ENVIRONMENT

CABINET

17TH JUNE, 2004

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To consider and approve the Parish Plans Protocol, a document that outlines the relationship between Herefordshire Council and Parishes working on their Parish Plans and the procedures that should be followed.

Key Decision

This is a non-key decision

Recommendation

THAT the Parish Plans Protocol be adopted.

Reasons

1. The Parish Plans steering group first developed a Protocol agreement between Herefordshire Council and local communities in July 2003. The Protocol was not formally adopted at this time and has now been updated to reflect the current situation. The Protocol was developed in order to establish a process of communication between Herefordshire Council and local communities. Herefordshire Council provides a large number of services to local communities and collecting information about these services and liaising with service providers is a key aspect of the Parish Planning process.
2. The Protocol aims to:
 - Provide clear guidance on how to link best with Herefordshire Council and other agencies that serve the local community.
 - Set out the arrangements through which Herefordshire Council and other agencies will respond to parish plan enquiries from local community groups.
 - Set out core standards intended to maximise the impact of the Parish Plan.
3. It is intended that all parish plans will be considered, in some form, by the 10 Ambition Groups of the Herefordshire Partnership in order to ensure that the information that the plans contain can be fed into the wider strategic plans for the county e.g. the 'Herefordshire Plan'.

4. A list of Herefordshire Council key contacts has been developed to enable groups working on their Parish Plans to receive support in developing their plans. Once a parish plan has reached its final draft, it is circulated to the key contacts in order to ensure that Herefordshire Council is aware of emerging issues and to advise on links to strategic plans and Councils lead initiatives that may be relevant to the Parish. This process is particularly important for Parishes wishing to get their plans adopted as supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG).

Considerations

5. Up until the 31st March 2004, Parish Councils in Herefordshire were able to apply for grant funding to assist them with their Parish Plans through the Vital Villages Scheme, run by the Countryside Agency. Unfortunately due to lack of resources no new awards will be made through this scheme, but previously awarded grants that have not yet been claimed will be honoured. Although funding is no longer available, parishes are still encouraged to develop parish plans and will require support to do so.
6. Initially resources were secured from Herefordshire Council through its Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) with Central Government to employ a Herefordshire Partnership development worker to provide hands on assistance and guidance to local communities in developing their plans. Funding for this post ran out on the 31st March 2004. Herefordshire Council are unable to provide any further financial support for the Parish Plans in the County. In the absence of any financial support it is essential that Herefordshire Council continues to give assistance and advice to groups working on their parish plans. The adoption of this protocol will endorse the view that the parish planning process is a worthwhile process for both the Parishes of Herefordshire and for Herefordshire Council alike.
7. Groups working on their Parish Plans are not required to consult Herefordshire Council. By outlining the process in the form of a protocol it is hoped that more community groups will be encouraged to engage with the Authority.

Risk Management

Operating without these guidelines in place may lead to inconsistency.

Consultees

The protocol has been developed through wide consultation to enable communities and the groups and agencies that serve them to get maximum benefit from the process. It is intended to give Parish Plans and other community led action plans a genuine influence over service delivery and policy development and to provide members, agencies and groups with clear and robust priorities developed out of inclusive community planning approaches.

Background Papers

Revised Parish Plans Protocol, dated 26th May 2004

Report to Herefordshire Partnership Board regarding the Parish Plans Protocol written by Patrick Clark, former Community Development Co-ordinator.