

HEREFORDSHIRE PLAN AND PARTNERSHIP PROGRESS REPORT

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To advise on progress in implementing the Herefordshire Plan.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Considerations

Background

3. Following wide ranging consultation on the original draft a revised edition of the Herefordshire Plan was published in June 2000. The Herefordshire Plan was one of the first wave of community plans published in England. The Plan sets out a vision, guiding principles, ten ambitions and a number of golden threads which together form a strategy for Herefordshire.

Partnership Arrangements

4. The implementation of the Plan is supported by a comprehensive partnership including over 100 organisations from the public, private and voluntary sectors. Core partners with the Council include the Chamber of Commerce and Business Link Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Herefordshire Association of Local Councils, Herefordshire Primary Care Trust, Learning and Skills Council Herefordshire and Worcestershire, Voluntary Organisations, and West Mercia Constabulary.
5. The Partnership is led through ten ambition groups which take responsibility for delivering each ambition in the Plan. The Ambition Groups are supported by a Management Group and Board of senior officers from the core partner organisations. In addition there are golden threads running through the activity of all Ambition Groups. For example there is an Information Communications Technology (ICT) Group responsible for the ICT Golden Thread of the Plan, and an emerging group around the Young Peoples Golden Thread.
6. The Ambitions are as follows indicating the Cabinet Member within whose remit the ambition falls and the Scrutiny Committee responsible for scrutinising progress towards achieving the ambitions.

Ambition	Cabinet Member	Scrutiny Committee
Improve the health and well-being of Herefordshire People	Social Care and Strategic Housing	Health Social Care and Housing
Reduce crime and disorder and make Herefordshire safer	Leader	Strategic Monitoring Committee
Tackle poverty and isolation in Herefordshire	Leader	Strategic Monitoring Committee
Encourage communities to shape the future of Herefordshire	Community and Social Development	Social and Economic Development
Develop Herefordshire as an active, vibrant and enjoyable place to be	Community and Social Development	Social and Economic Development
Protect and improve Herefordshire's distinctive environment	Environment	Environment
Provide excellent education, training and learning opportunities in Herefordshire for all ages	Education Community and Social Development	Education Social and Economic Development
Meet Herefordshire's accommodation needs	Social Care and Strategic Housing	Social Care and Housing
Support business growth and create more and better paid work in Herefordshire	Economic Development, Markets and Property Rural Regeneration	Social and Economic Development
Develop an integrated transport system for Herefordshire	Highways and Transport	Environment

7. Underpinning the Ambition Groups there are a plethora of local partnerships throughout Herefordshire based on geographic communities ranging from town centres to housing estates and individual villages. There is ongoing work to improve communications and linkages between the Ambition Groups and these key geographic communities.

Member Involvement

8. Member support and involvement in delivering the Herefordshire Plan is an essential element of success and therefore the Plan has been developed using a number of dedicated events with Herefordshire Council Members.
9. Members of the Executive are charged with receiving regular reports on the progress of the Herefordshire Plan generally and the contribution of the different parts of Herefordshire Council to the achievement of individual Ambitions. Wherever possible Executive Members should be integrated into the work of the Ambition Groups.
10. In September 2001 the Strategic Monitoring Committee agreed that individual Scrutiny Committees should receive six monthly reports setting out progress to date, work in hand and future timetables. Where Cabinet Members are responsible for more than one ambition Scrutiny Committees should examine composite reports. In order not to lose sight of the breadth of the Plan the Strategic Monitoring Committee should receive, at least on an annual basis, a report bringing together key activities/themes which are being progressed or emerging.
11. The last report to the Strategic Monitoring Committee was in October 2003, which included achievements and progress made by each of the Ambition Groups over the previous year.

Progress and activities

12. The Audit Commission's Corporate Assessment of the Council in December 2002 commented that "the Plan has provided the focus for partnership working and has contributed significantly to the Council being able to attract significant external funding to deliver projects tackling local priorities, such as rural access and pockets of deprivation in Hereford City. In this respect the Plan has enabled the Council to punch above its weight as a small low-funded authority."
13. The examples below give a flavour of the work led by the 10 Ambition Groups since the October 2003 report:
 - Revisions have been made to the Herefordshire Plan which makes it easier to read and understand, including clearer information on the Ambitions and their achievements as reported in October 2003. The revised Plan has now been circulated to all Councillors, Parish Councils, local and regional organisations, voluntary and community groups, receptions and libraries etc.
 - The Business, Economic Development and Tourism Ambition Group are leading the development of the Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy, supported by grant assistance from Advantage West Midlands. The Group has worked closely with consultants EDAW on the preparation of the Stage 1 baseline, identifying key issues and a vision for the County. This work included a series of briefing and consultation events. Stage 2 of the work will be focused around the development of action plans and will continue over the next few months.
 - The Health and Care Partnership has developed a Child Concern Model, which involves 23 statutory and voluntary sector partners. This includes a shared definition of needs and priorities, and models for effective consultation and transition. The model also includes a communication framework for access and

referrals. The Health and Care Partnership has also been evaluating its Local Public Service Agreement (LPSA) target 1. One element of this target is a project around developing and improving the quality of signposting older people to services and benefits they may be entitled to. The project initially included 4 partners but has now grown to 13, with the number of signpostings being in excess of 1,225 since its start. It is also estimated that the signposting project has enabled local people to draw down an extra £3.5 million in benefits that they are entitled to receive.

- The Community Safety Partnership merged with the Drug Action Team, creating a more co-ordinated approach to community safety and drugs across the County, and ensuring that there are closer links between the agencies involved. A joint staff team is now in place, which will support and facilitate the main Strategic Group and the implementation groups (these include alcohol, domestic violence, drugs, anti-social behaviour and road safety).
 - A conference was held in January 2004 on the reform of the Common Agricultural Policy and its implications for Herefordshire. The conference was held in association with the Bulmers Foundation, NFU, Countryside Agency and Wye Valley AONB. Over 140 people attended the day, including formers, local producers, interested local groups and other organisations. The day proved to be successful, and a full conference report has been produced. A follow up seminar was suggested by the participants, when the regulations on the Common Agricultural Policy are clearer.
 - The Social Inclusion and Anti Poverty Group has identified baseline data on rural areas and produced this in a useful format for local organisations and community based workers. A leaflet on Social Inclusion in Herefordshire has been printed, including these and other statistics and giving information on rural isolation, access to information and services, transport, jobs and money, housing and health. Over 700 copies have already been distributed and the Group has received very positive feedback from these users.
 - The Environment Ambition Group has raised the profile of the environment in Herefordshire by highlighting the impact of our daily actions in the "Daily Planet" (the Spring Herefordshire Partnership newsletter) to inform the public of current environmental projects in Herefordshire as well as global environmental issues which we all face. The newsletter also advertised "Herefordshire Environment Day". Each year the United Nations Environment Programme (UNEP) holds a "World Environment Day" and this year Herefordshire Partnership and Herefordshire Council decided to celebrate the County's very own "Herefordshire Environment Day" in High Town on Wednesday, June 9. More than 26 environmental organisations and groups set up stalls in High Town creating an interesting and interactive environmental stage under a huge marquee, which was visited by over 5,000 members of the public.
14. Some of the actions being undertaken by Ambition Groups over the next year are set out below:
- The Herefordshire Learning Partnership has been requested to oversee the Strategic Area Review of Learning (STAR), by the Learning and Skills Council. These reviews are being undertaken across the Country and are formal in nature, needing to adhere to Nationally set timetables and standards. They are wide

ranging in nature, and effectively review levels of need alongside current learning provision across the County. The review will continue until Spring 2005, with formal consultation periods. It is expected that a set of recommendations and actions will emerge. The Learning Partnership will then use the STAR findings and recommendations as the basis for their Learning Strategy and annual action plan.

- A guide to over 180 community workers working in the County was produced at the end of February 2003, and has been well used by community groups and a whole range of organisations. This guide is available in paper version and is on the Herefordshire Partnership website. Work is currently underway through the Community Development and Local Services Ambition Group to update the guide and improve the layout and content based on users feedback. The updated version will be available by the end of the year.
 - The Community Safety Partnership has started the process of developing the Crime and Disorder Reduction Strategy 2005-2008. A researcher has been appointed to assist in the baselining and research work, and there will be a considerable amount of community consultation undertaken during July and August. The final strategy will be ready by April 2005.
 - The Social Inclusion and Anti Poverty Group is in the final stages of developing a list of accessible meeting rooms and venues across Herefordshire. This piece of work has used a lot of volunteer time and effort over the last few months, and its findings will be widely available to statutory organisations, voluntary and community groups.
15. The Herefordshire Partnership will also be focusing on the fundamental review of the Herefordshire Plan over the remainder of the year. When the Herefordshire Plan was developed, the year 2005 was identified as the mid-point, with a proposal that a review should be undertaken to ensure that the Plan is still correct in its structure, vision and Ambitions.
16. The way in which the Plan is to be reviewed is currently being developed, and it is already clear that it will need to ensure a high level of involvement and consultation with a wide range of local people, businesses and organisations. The final Plan should be in place by Spring 2005, and will be reported back to Strategic Monitoring Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.