

ANNUAL REPORT BY CABINET MEMBER - COMMUNITY AND SOCIAL DEVELOPMENT

Wards Affected

County Wide

Purpose

1. The Cabinet Member reported as follows on the progress and achievements within the area of Community and Social Development and the challenges of the forthcoming year.

Achievements & Challenges

Adult and Community Learning

The Lifelong Learning Development Unit (LLDU) restructure is now implemented. This was initiated following the Adult Learning Inspection (ALI) of January 2003. A Quality Assurance framework will now apply to all courses and provision from the start of the autumn term.

The ALI will be reinspecting the Council's Adult and Community Learning service in the week commencing December 6th 2004. LLDU has been working to address the weaknesses identified in the previous inspection and has received a number of monitoring visits from the designated lead inspector. The indications are that the LLDU is making satisfactory progress in addressing these weaknesses and is hopeful of a satisfactory outcome in December.

During the previous academic year a total of 550 learners were enrolled on a variety of courses. The LLDU has recently accessed £415,818 of European Social Funds, which is available to spend over the period September 2004 to December 2006. This more than doubles the amount of money to support courses and activities and will be spent in bring learning opportunities to disadvantaged communities within the county.

Herefordshire Learning Partnership

The Herefordshire Learning Partnership acts as the ambition group for the Herefordshire Partnership. During the past year it has implemented a review and has been relaunched to make it a more effective forum for bringing together organisations representing learning across all age groups and sectors.

It has developed a three-year development, and one-year business plan and has received funding from the LSC to support staff involved in implementing these plans.

Key activities this year have been the management of a mapping exercise to identify what adult and community provision exist, and where; the production of 'Learning Link' the Learning partnership newsletter; a Rural Learning Conference and a

successful 1st stage submission to European Social Funding for the 'Teddy Bear' transnational project.

The Learning Partnership is currently being consulted by Learning and Skills Council's as part of its Strategic Area Review (StAR). The implementation of the proposals arising out of this process will present the biggest challenge over the next year for the Learning Partnership and its constituent organisations.

Voluntary Sector Review

Over 30 structured interviews have been held with Council officers and representatives of the voluntary sector infrastructure organisations. The programme of interviews should be concluded by the end of the month. The review has involved a major benchmarking exercise, and is expected to be completed towards the end of October.

Community Buildings Grant Scheme

Under the scheme grants of up to £15,000 are available for Community Buildings across Herefordshire to assist with:

- Work that is needed in order to comply with legal requirements (such as disability access or for Public Entertainment Licences)
- Extensions that allow additional activity
- Extensions that aid the expansion of an existing activity.

Grants of up to £500 are available to assist towards the cost of feasibility studies.

A total of £56,751 was distributed among eight community facilities across the county through last years Community Buildings grant scheme. A further £14,858 was awarded from the 04/05 due to the quality of applications received: See Appendix 1 for details

The closing date for applications for 04/05 Community Building's scheme is Friday 26th November 2004. Applicants will be informed of Herefordshire Council's decision by Friday 4th February 2005.

Voluntary Sector Grant Scheme 2004

The budget for voluntary sector grants for 2004/2005 was £165,000

The closing date for the 1st round of applications was the 9th January 2004 and 30 applications were received. The funding requested in this round amounted to £415,840.00. A total of £143,971 was allocated during the 1st round.

An unclaimed grant of £3,075.00 has been returned to the pot, leaving a total of £24,164 to be distributed in the 2nd round.

The closing date for the 2nd round of applications was the 31st March 2004 and 26 applications were received. These funding requests amounted to £109,898.25. A total of £24,655 was allocated during the 2nd round. See appendix 2 for details.

External Liaison – Achievements

- The Herefordshire Youth Games, organised by the Sports Development Team and held in July 2004, involved 23 schools and over 500 children in a hectic day of competition. Sports included football, rounders, tennis, tag rugby, orienteering, cricket and new age curling. This is the fourth annual Games organised for local schools.
- The Sports Development Team has been successful in attracting a grant in excess of £100,000 from Sport England and Big Lottery Fund's joint Active England Programme. The South Herefordshire Activity Promotion and Education Scheme (SHAPES) will provide a diverse range of activity sessions over the next three years, and will also provide training and mentoring opportunities for people who wish to know more about health, fitness and exercise. There will be opportunities for Herefordshire residents to gain recognised qualifications, and the Coordinator will work with community groups to identify what activities people would like to see in their local area.
- The Herefordshire Community Safety & Drugs Partnership carried out their three-year audit and public consultation in August 2004. Attendance by the public was very high and some excellent feedback received. The Partnership will be holding their conference, as part of this audit process, in November.
- Three Race Equality awareness sessions have been organised for the end of September, and all places taken up, from both Council staff and partner organisations.
- The Sports Referral Project which commenced in June is gaining momentum, with initial uptake very positive. The target group are those who are at risk of problematic drug use, as evidence suggests that participation in sport can make a positive contribution towards reduction in crime, disorder and anti-social behaviour. Many clients are already becoming engaged with local clubs, and taking part in activities from fishing to karate.
- In April 2004, the Leisure Development Group, facilitated by External Liaison, successfully negotiated a reduced pricing policy for carers accompanying an individual to an activity at Halo leisure facilities. Through discussion and partnership working, the group agreed with Halo a definition for a carer. They impressed upon Halo the benefits to numerous individuals and to their own business of offering a concession to those supporting someone who would not be able to access that activity without their support.

Challenges

- Funding for the Children's Rights & Advocacy Services continues to be a challenge. The service currently extends only to children in the looked-after system, with virtually no funding available for development or project work. Minimal funding is secured until 2006 through an SLA with Connexions, Social Services and Education, however External Liaison is currently appealing to the Corporate Parent Group for support in finding core funding to put the service on a secure footing.
- As the team continues to expand, there may be issues around accommodation. Despite new, externally funded posts allowing for accommodation, IT and

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telephone charges in their budgets, allocation of desk space within Plough Lane is uncertain. Such uncertainty in itself may delay the recruitment process.

- A Criminal Justice Intervention Programme (CJIP) Coordinator has been successfully recruited to the External Liaison team. The challenges facing him in the next twelve months include recruiting two members of staff, sourcing suitable office accommodation and establishing inter-agency working protocols.
- The part-time Girls' & Women's Football Development Coordinator is currently contracted only until the end of March 2005. Without someone in post, opportunities for Herefordshire women in football are scarce, as are the benefits that accompany participation in a team sport and physical activity. Funding applications are currently being developed to enable the post to continue on a full-time basis.

Parks, Countryside and Leisure Development - Achievements

- The refurbishment of nine fitness suites with major financial benefits accruing from a robust procurement process.
- The award of Woodland Grant Schemes and Certification for Council Managed Woodlands.
- 10 year Management Plan approved for Queenswood.
- Significant progress with Aylestone Park project including £100k commuted sum secured via Planning Policy.
- Very good Lottery Inspection Reports for Ledbury Leisure facilities.
- Improved Quest Assessment scores for all inspected leisure sites.
- Updated for best ever results on Britain in Bloom entrants across the County.

Challenges

- Continuing deficit budget position on Grounds Maintenance.
- Resourcing CPO of Belmont land.
- Resourcing future obligations under Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000.
- Continuing pressure to provide incremental support to In Bloom Initiative.
- Restructuring of Halo asset base.

Cultural Services - Achievements

H.Art week taking place between 11-19 September. A showcase of visual arts and crafts produced throughout the county. Includes 34 exhibitions and special events; 47 open studios; 11 gallery shows.

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Herefordshire Walking Festival – June, with over 60 different walks, and over 1300 walkers. Compared to last year there was a significant increase in the number of booked places despite the weather not being favourable. 31% of walkers were from a non-Herefordshire postcode, with the visitor from furthest away coming from Barbados.

Capital improvements at the Record Office, specifically catering for visitors with disabilities. The final stage of the work is the disabled toilet which is due to be in place for the launch of the improvements on the 30th September - the eve of the implementation of the Disability Discrimination Act.

Herefordshire Cultural Strategy – produced and well received as an easy to follow and attractive document. To accompany this document is advice to organisations and groups running cultural projects on how to measure the difference initiatives make.

Friar Street – building work started with the support of Heritage Lottery money to create a “state of the art” store for objects and to increase access to the artifices. 3rd Phase lottery application submitted for education resource and final development.

Village Art Markers – Arts Team received Lottery funding for a project in villages to work with an archivist and artist to create distinctive sign / public art for the area.

Youth Arts Charter – working with a number of partner organisations to develop a charter for working with young people. Nearing final completion.

Archaeology Week – Heritage Services run a series of events throughout the week which were very well received.

Public Art – consultation to the public on Rotherwas public art project.

Coming up – Hereford Contemporary Crafts Fair, Open Day at the Record Office; User Group Consultation at the Record Office; Flavours Awards Ceremony; Establishment of a Cultural Ambassador Scheme; Winter Walking Festival; Autumn Tourism Forum.

Challenges

Uncertainty over external funding for Creative Industries, Tourism Enterprise and the final phase of Friar Street. Applications or proposals currently submitted.

Income from TIC centres facing challenges e.g. reduction of commission on bus passes.

As non-statutory service vulnerable to budget reduction.

Not enough space at the Record Office to hold new archives.

Customer Services, Libraries and Information – achievements

- Opened Bromyard Centre (Jan 04)
- Extended opening hours at libraries
- New INFO point at Garrick House

- Training and Development Programme
- Long – Service presentation and recognition
- Agreement on future for Kington Library and INFO point
- Conservation plan for St Katherines, Ledbury
- On-line reservation system set up
- Free reservations policy being implemented.

Challenges

- Vision and funds for Hereford
- Re-structure and organisational change for 150 staff
- Implementing career programme
- Efficiency savings to meet budget target
- Delivery of multi access to services at Libraries and INFO
- Diversity impact requirements
- Meeting compliance with DD Act
- Improvement corporately in call handling
- Rural service, Revised mobile services, community Access Points

Community Youth Service – Achievements

- Move from Bromyard Youth Centre in to new premises in Bromyard Centre
- Refurbishment and re opening of Ledbury Youth Centre
- Busiest ever summer programme at Bodenham Sailing Centre, with new fully accessible boats and facilities for young people with disabilities.
- Expansion of Duke of Edinburgh Award scheme to all High Schools
- Achieved full funding programme for Ross Creative Learning Centre (we now have to deliver it)
- New Roots programme – wide range of music activities and development across Herefordshire delivered in part through the youth service
- Successful partnership with Rural Media to deliver the Youth Times programme and Insite on line magazine (youth portal / gateway)

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- 3 new trainee youth workers appointed (to address skills and workforce shortage)
- Hinton Youth Centre refurbishment funding has been achieved in partnership with local residents association.
- Dinedor Youth Camp has been successfully passed to the newly established Herefordshire Outdoor Trust (HOT) who have received their major grant from the Lottery.

Not so well

- Not currently on track to achieve 4 Key targets set by DfES
- Recruitment

Future challenges

- Recruitment, Recruitment, Recruitment (still on 12% vacancy rate)
- Achieving new quality standards and targets as set by DfES (we are not currently on track)
- Ofsted / JAR (Joint Area Review - pilot inspection for all Children's Services) inspection probably due in 2005
- Children's Services / Children's Bill changes to structure of organisations delivering to young people.

Directorate Support Unit

Achievements

- DSU co-ordination of Directorate office re-locations to Plough Lane.
- Appointment of new Directorate Facilities Officer to manage Modern Records Unit and to lead on GEM, Health & Safety, Data Protection, Freedom of Information, etc. across the Directorate.
- Revised newsletter format for Performance Reports to Scrutiny.

Challenges

- FOI implementation
- P&C Support Services review outcome/implementation, etc.