

## HEREFORDSHIRE PLAN AMBITION GROUPS

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

### Wards Affected

County-wide

### Purpose

1. To consider recent progress in relation to the Herefordshire Plan Ambitions relevant to the Policy and Community Directorate.

### Considerations

2. The Policy and Community Directorate has overall responsibility for the development and delivery of the Herefordshire Plan for the Council. In addition the Directorate is involved in supporting the delivery of a number of the 10 Ambitions in the Plan. Progress in delivering each of these ambitions is set out in turn below.

### Business, Economic Development and Tourism Ambition Group

4. "Ambition: To support Business Growth and create more and better paid work in Herefordshire"

### Membership

The Ambition Group includes representatives of Herefordshire Council, Chamber of Commerce & Business Link Herefordshire & Worcestershire, Advantage West Midlands, Jobcentre Plus, Learning & Skills Council, Federation of Small Businesses, and VSA Representation.

### Work Being Undertaken by the Group

The work of the group remains focused on the development of the new Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy. Information on existing projects and activities has been obtained from all organisations represented on BETAG and other Ambition Groups to inform the Action Plan and identify gaps. BETAG will lead on the delivery and monitoring of the strategy once it is completed and the structure of the Group has been the subject of discussion to ensure that the correct level of representation and resource commitment can be obtained. Group members have taken part in a survey to establish the current levels of representation and resource availability.

The group fed back to the Rural Regeneration Zone Economic Development Pillar Group on economic development objectives and associated existing activities in Herefordshire, to contribute to the economic development themes being developed for the Zone. BETAG is represented on the Pillar Group, which has been undertaking a review of key objectives and activities for the Zone Implementation Plan. This is an important piece of work, because it can influence future spending decisions on regeneration funding.

#### 4. **Community Development and Local Services Ambition Group**

"Ambition: Encourage communities to shape the future of Herefordshire"

##### **Membership**

The ambition group membership comprises of a mixture of voluntary, statutory and Community sector representatives from Herefordshire. There are also a number of associate members from regional and sub-regional organizations. The group is currently in the process of its annual election of officers.

##### **Work being undertaken by the Group**

Ambition Group members recently voted to support Money Box Credit Union by awarding them £12,000 that was being held by the Herefordshire Partnership Support Team to implement the recommendations of the report 'Bridging the Financial Divide'. This will enable the group to:

- Make additional loans
- Provide match funding for other European funding
- Provide services and undertake marketing in areas not covered by European or Single Regeneration Bid (SRB) funding

The Group has been working in partnership with the Social Inclusion and Anti-Poverty Ambition Group to produce the Autumn/Winter edition of the Herefordshire Partnership Newsletter.

Work is underway to update the 'Who's Who Guide', a partnership document containing contact details and a brief description of the role of each development worker in Herefordshire and the support that they can offer.

#### 5. **Community Safety and Drugs Partnership**

"Ambition: Reduce crime and disorder and make Herefordshire safer."

##### **Membership**

Herefordshire Council, West Mercia Constabulary, Herefordshire Primary Care Trust, National Probation Service, Hereford & Worcester Fire & Rescue Service, West Mercia Police Authority, Worcestershire and Herefordshire Youth Offending Service, Voluntary Sector Assembly, Registered Social Landlords Forum.

Supported by themed implementation groups; membership includes, public, private, voluntary and charitable agencies.

##### **Work being undertaken by the Group**

Currently, the **main focus** for the Partnership is developing its next strategy for April 2005. A conference was held on Wednesday, 30 November to which all key stakeholders across the county were invited. The key findings from the audit and consultation process will be fed back and priorities for our next three-year strategy will be proposed. After this event, our strategy and detailed action plans will be written.

### **Drug Intervention Programme (DIP – formerly known as CJIP):**

DIP aims to engage drug-using offenders into treatment and provide them with the holistic support they need to ensure they do not drop out of services. This programme has just successfully recruited two Care co-ordinators who will be responsible for case managing clients. The project will be going live in January.

### **Prolific and Other Priority Offenders Scheme:**

The Partnership is in the early stages of establishing a scheme which targets the most prolific offenders across the County and will work with them to reduce their offending behaviour. Any drug using offenders will be linked into the DIP scheme.

The project has three phases:

- catch and convict
- resettlement
- prevent and deter

## **6. Herefordshire Cultural Consortium**

“Ambition: Develop Herefordshire as an active, vibrant and enjoyable place to be”

### **Membership**

Representatives of the areas of libraries, arts, heritage, tourism, recreational countryside from the voluntary, private, education and public sectors (not representatives from organisations as such).

### **Work being undertaken by the group**

On 29 September 2004, the Cultural Consortium held its Annual Away Day, which looked specifically at establishing a Cultural Ambassadors Scheme. There were two key note speakers - one local and one regional - that stimulated debate regarding the establishment of a network of people in the community that could promote and advocate involvement in cultural activities. Ideas coming out of the Away Day will now be progressed by a small working group.

Work is taking place to provide a cross-ambition group to the opportunities presented by the potential of the UK hosting the 2012 Olympics and Herefordshire's involvement. This has resulted in press coverage and presentation at the Herefordshire Partnership Conference.

The Consortium in collaboration with the Council has produced a response to the Government released consultation document "Culture at the Heart of Regeneration". The document looks at ways of using culture as a tool for community and economic regeneration, with the Herefordshire response specifically highlighting on the impacts and good practice in rural areas.

## **7. Herefordshire Learning Partnership**

"Ambition: Provide excellent education, training and learning opportunities in Herefordshire for all ages"

### **Membership**

The Board now has its full complement of members with the appointment of Mary Simpson, Chair of the Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services, to take up the second Voluntary Sector position.

Most of the six second-tier groups have met now with the first "Skills for Employment" meeting scheduled for Monday 29<sup>th</sup> November at Sun Valley. This group will allow a clear strategic direction to be adopted in the field of work-based learning provision in the County.

### **Work being undertaken by the Group**

The Board has been fully involved in the production of the Learning and Skills Council's (LSC) Strategic Area Review of current post-16 learning & skills provision in Herefordshire.

Two meetings, in September and October, in which detailed discussions on the strategic options were a major item on the agenda, have been an important phase in the preparation of the consultation document. The closing date for comments is 7<sup>th</sup> January 2005.

A second issue (Autumn 2004) of the newsletter 'Learning Link' is in production and should be distributed in late November/early December to a wide range of provider organisations, learners, community & voluntary groups, schools and parents. The last issue was also sent to all County Councillors and to all parish clerks in the country.

The Adult and Community Learning Mapping project is now in its final phase and the full analysis of Herefordshire's Adult & Community Learning provision, its potential and actual learning venues, and the areas of learning/qualification levels has been prepared. The data will be made visual by a series of maps that will be presented for the first time at the Learning Partnership Board meeting on Friday 10<sup>th</sup> December 2004, together with the key findings and recommendations of the survey.

The Learning Mentors project has had its Higher Education funding from the Aim Higher Initiative confirmed and the Learning Partnership is now engaged in detailed negotiations with partners to provide some additional funding and support to the nine part-time mentors who will be working both in geographical and thematically-defined areas.

Funding has also been secured from Aim Higher to appoint a 0.5 Full Time equivalent Project Officer in January 2005 to lead on the development of this project.

## **8. Social Inclusion and Anti Poverty Ambition Group (SIAPAG)**

"Ambition: To Reduce Poverty and Isolation in Herefordshire"

### **Membership**

The membership of the Ambition Group consists of representatives of service providers, service users and advocacy groups. A number of Council departments are represented. The membership is currently under review to ensure that it is appropriate; SIAPAG is represented on sub-regional and regional groups including the Rural Regeneration Zone Pillar Group.

### **Work being undertaken by the Group**

The Group has worked, with the Community Development and Local Services Ambition Group to produce the Autumn/Winter edition of the Herefordshire Partnership Newsletter, which will be published shortly.

Representatives of the Group met with the Housing Ambition Group to identify potential areas for co-operation. An area that was identified for possible future joint work was rural housing.

The group has held a series of Workshops on Involvement of Rural Communities, supported by Angela Downing of Community First and Helen Lee of the Supporting People team at the PCT. Members of Parish Councils and community organisations and community workers attended the workshops and feedback has been very positive. Demand was such that an extra workshop was necessary to accommodate the number who wished to attend.

Strategic work by the group has included responding to consultation on the Herefordshire Economic Development strategy and on Performance Indicators.

### **RECOMMENDATION:**

**THAT subject to any comments by the Committee the report be noted.**

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS**

- None identified.