

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT STRATEGY

PROGRAMME AREA RESPONSIBILITY: RURAL REGENERATION AND STRATEGY

CABINET

29TH SEPTEMBER, 2005

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

To agree the updated Community Involvement Strategy and related long term action plan.

Key Decision

This is not a Key Decision

Recommendation

THAT Members note the contents of the report and confirm the action plan.

Reasons

The current Community Involvement Strategy, agreed by Herefordshire Council Cabinet in the spring of 2004 outlined the Council's commitment to involving residents of Herefordshire in decisions affecting their lives through a variety of means. This strategy identified a number of key issues and mechanisms, which needed resolution updating, due to changes in government requirements of local authorities' engagement processes. These are highlighted in the Key Lines of Enquiry (KEO) of the Corporate Assessment 2005.

In line with the updated Strategy and new requirements mentioned above, an action plan has been drawn up to accompany this strategy, enabling officers to implement the Council's ambitions for community involvement and consultation as outlined in the Corporate Plan and the Annual Operating Plan.

Considerations

1. Local Authorities are increasingly required to inform decisions about changes in policy and service delivery through community involvement activities, such as Parish Plans, Community Forums and various means of consultation.
2. Whilst Herefordshire Council has a tradition of involving residents in decision making, Best Practice requirements and expectations about coordination, feedback to consultees and appropriate mechanisms for consultation have changed significantly in the recent past.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Martin Heuter-Russell, Community Involvement Coordinator on 01432 383032

3. In order to respond to these changes, a number of changes in our approach to community involvement and consultation are required, to ensure that the council's commitments in the Corporate Plan can be achieved.
4. The Community Involvement Strategy therefore makes commitments to agreed standards of consultation; the requirement of all Council departments to log planned consultation with the Community Involvement Coordinator and/or the Principal Research Officer of Herefordshire Council, who will offer advice and assistance to create high quality consultations; the implementation of electronic logging mechanisms for consultation.
5. Responsibility for implementation of this strategy lies with the Director of Corporate and Customer Services
6. A noticeable change to the previous strategy is an embedded list of measurable outcomes, which in return are supported by a long term action plan, to be updated annually, in line with the agreed outcomes within the annual operating plan.

Alternative Options

None

Risk Management

The existing Community Involvement Strategy falls short of current Best Practice and does not relate adequately to the Council's Corporate Plan and Annual Operating Plan. The Strategy and Action Plan outline responsibilities for implementation.

Consultees

This Strategy and the Action Plan have been discussed with Chief Executive's Management Team.

Background Papers

None identified.