

MINUTES OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

18th October 2010

2.00 pm Kindle Centre, Asda, Hereford

Attendees:

Cllr Roger Phillips – Leader, Herefordshire Council (Chair)
Chris Bull – Herefordshire Council & NHS Herefordshire
Angela Smith – Economic Development and Enterprise Policy and Delivery Group
Cllr Brig Peter Jones – Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority
Cllr John Jarvis – Safer Herefordshire Policy and Delivery Group
Chris Baird – Children and Young People Policy and Delivery Group
Rob Garner – Environment Policy and Delivery Group
Mark Yates – Hereford and Worcester Fire and Rescue Service
Philip Talbot – Voluntary Sector
Geoff Hughes – Stronger Communities Policy and Delivery Group
Gabrielle Wright – West Mercia Police
Phil Weaver – Job Centre Plus
Joanna Newton – NHS Herefordshire
Mike Ashton – Chamber of Commerce
Cllr Anna Toon - Herefordshire Association of Local Councils

Apologies:

Ian Edwards
Alan Curless
Sarah Aitken
Cllr June French
Will Lindesay

In attendance:

Julie Gethin - Head of Partnership Support
Chris Bucknell - Herefordshire Partnership
Jane Jones - Herefordshire Partnership
Philippa Lydford - Herefordshire Partnership (Agenda Item 6.)
Max Bassett - Herefordshire Partnership (Agenda Item 5.)
Clem Attwood – Herefordshire Partnership (Agenda Item 5.)
Oliver Goode – Links Consulting (Agenda Item 7.)
Peter Yates – Herefordshire Council – (Agenda item 4.)

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

Cllr Phillips welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting – 21st July 2010

These were agreed as an accurate record.

3. Matters arising not on the agenda

There were none.

4. Local Development Framework (LDF)

Peter Yates presented a verbal update. He urged interested parties, particularly Hereford businesses, to get involved and express their views. This was now the final phase of the consultation exercise, terminating in November, after which the results would go through a process of analysis, moving towards consensus, with recommendations being considered by full Council on 4th February 2011. Thereafter a highly regulated phase would ensue, after which the LDF would become a legal planning document.

The Chair explained the need to grasp the “bigger Agenda”, and reiterated the need for local businesses to become engaged. Now was the time to speak out, as it would be too late once the document has been ratified.

Of the proposed number of new houses for Hereford City (8,500) some had already been built / planning permission acquired, so the actual figure for new homes is estimated to be nearer 5,500. As there is no longer a requirement to adhere to the proposals contained in the Regional Spatial Strategy, some flexibility over housing allocation may be possible. This might mean that a proportion of the City allocation could move to some rural parishes, particularly as parishes will be able to make directly influence the decisions on new house building development.

Jo Newton commented on the need to consider the type, not just the number, of new housing.

Action:

To urge all interested parties to participate in this final stage of consultation if they have not already done so, and to forward comments to:

Peter Yates pyates@herefordshire.gov.uk 01432 261952 by 5th November 2010.

5. State of Herefordshire Report – key findings

Clem Attwood explained that the State of Herefordshire Report is one of the key documents produced by the Herefordshire Partnership Researchers. The document sets out performance data and other contextual information. It reflects and informs the work of Herefordshire Partnership as a whole. The main differences this year are:

- It is produced to coincide with Herefordshire Council's service planning cycle
- There are six themes (to reflect the current Sustainable Community Strategy)
- Only a few copies will be printed, the remainder to be available on-line
- Each Policy and Delivery Group has had the opportunity to comment about their data
- There are links to other statutory and non-statutory documents, e.g. the Local Economic Assessment.

Max Bassett explained that it is a draft document, and the Research team would welcome feedback from the Board. In particular, they would appreciate challenges to the SWOT analysis. Should there be minor comments, these could be incorporated on an individual basis. However, should there be more significant challenges, these would need to come to the Board for ratification.

In addition, the team would appreciate comments on how useful Board members find the document. How could it be made better?

The Chair commented on the prospect of less funding being available and therefore the need for robust evidence and intelligence.

Cllr Jarvis commented on the use of outdated information. This was acknowledged, although it is sometimes the only verified data available. However the inclusion of latest data, where appropriate, would be welcome. Cllr Toon commented similarly on data being known “on the ground” but its frequent late availability to be of use.

Jo Newton thanked the team for the document, and asked for information regarding the methodology used to complete the SWOT analysis. Organisational reputation may be at stake if there is a perceived weakness or threat around something out of service area bounds. Mike Ashton reiterated this point as there may be a distortion on how the data is reflected and it may need to be put into context.

Max responded that to a certain extent the interpretation for this came from the research team, but that they would particularly welcome challenges to these, where they were felt to be inappropriate.

Philip Talbot commented that it was a good document, but as nothing much appears to have changed, what has been achieved?

Mark Yates commented on an excellent document, although noted the exclusion of the Fire and Rescue Service data.

Gaby Wright commented on certain idiosyncrasies contained in the Community Safety section and requested that facts be correct before they are released. In particular, Weaknesses need to be agreed.

Action:

Comments and challenges to the State of Herefordshire Key Findings to be made to: Max Bassett mbassett@herefordshire.gov.uk 01432 383634 or Clem Attwood cattwood@herefordshire.gov.uk 01432 260893 by 5th November 2010.

6. Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)

Philippa Lydford gave a verbal report on the progress of the new Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy. She explained the use of some of the available sources of evidence (State of Herefordshire, Joint Strategic Needs Assessment, Quality of Life survey, Community Led Plans, PACTs and consultation arising from the Local Development framework) in formulating the proposed document. The SCS will reflect positives and negatives across the County, and looks at trends. It will indicate priorities for the County and in localities and offer focus for action, and therefore resources. There will be a further update at a future meeting.

7. Herefordshire Partnership Development

Julie Gethin introduced the Item and explained the need to consider what future partnership working might look like in Herefordshire, and how we can best make it work. Oliver Goode had already had some discussions with key personnel and would continue to pursue this exercise.

Oliver's presentation noted the changing political and partnership landscape, particularly in the light of the deficit reduction, spending review and localism/devolution. He highlighted the need for a partnership to articulate local need, identify priorities and take responsibility for local delivery.

Chris Bull commented on the likelihood of place-based budgeting and the need for the partnership structure to be focused on places, not themes or services.

Cllr Jarvis noted the danger of achieving targets, not necessarily hitting the issues that local people consider important.

The importance of having appropriate people participating at the right level was made by several Board members, as was concern over additional bureaucracy. Effective communication/reporting would be essential.

The Chair recognised the need to identify resources to fund the proposed Big Society ideals.

Action

Oliver Goode to continue process of interviews, and to report back to the December meeting of the Board.

8. PACT – outcome of review

Julie Gethin explained that, as part of the review of Community Engagement activities, an evaluation of the PACT meetings had been undertaken. It had concluded that the number of members of the public attending had decreased and that a proportion of those who do attend are “repeat attenders”. The ratio of public sector staff to members of the public was high, and therefore the relative cost per meeting – taking into account officer time – was becoming difficult to justify. Generally the issues raised came from 4 broad areas and due to the fairly narrow cross-section of those attending it was not felt to be the wide-ranging engagement forum hoped for.

A discussion ensued during which the following points were raised:

There was support for the successful PACT meetings, and a feeling that the improvements which had been made had resulted in some good, local engagement which was making a difference to local communities.

West Mercia Police were very disappointed regarding the recommendation not to continue PACT meetings after the Autumn 2010 round. Concern was expressed over some of the calculations used to arrive at the conclusions, and the Board was urged to consider making them work better, rather than stopping them altogether. The police would continue to use PACT as one of its methods of community engagement and continue to hold PACT meetings.

Police presence at Parish Council meetings was greatly valued.

Each PACT area has its own specific requirements, and when a specific issue affects local people, they will attend in substantial numbers. If the police continue to undertake such engagement, and recognizing the considerable support PACT meetings require, maybe Herefordshire Partnership could undertake to support the meetings six-monthly.

Chris Bull noted that the Board had been talking about reviewing PACT meetings for 2 years and acknowledged the widely varying views on their effectiveness. He recognised the importance of the police working with local communities and suggested Board members seek a solution to enable an engagement process which would be fit-for-purpose and affordable for the partnership.

Whilst Recommendation 2 was accepted, there was agreement to place on hold Recommendation 1.

Action

To continue working in the pursuit of an affordable, fit-for-purpose means of public engagement for the partnership, and to report back to Board members on 6th December. In the meantime no further PACT meetings would be organised pending the outcome of the Board discussion in December.

9. Items for information

Community Engagement event – 20/10/10 “Partnership Approach to Community Engagement”.

Bringing together key people into dialogue as part of a “Whole System” or “Total Place” approach, recognising that every front line worker has a role in community engagement.

“Take Over” Day – 12th November 2010 – a national event offering children and young people the chance to work alongside adults and get involved with decision-making. Senior officers, Members, Chief Executives, Headteachers etc are asked to offer their jobs to be “taken over” for a day. For more information contact: Jon Ralph jralph@herefordshire.gov.uk 01432 383377

Abolition of the Local Area Agreement. For latest news on this item please visit www.herefordshirepartnership.com/laa The requirement to consider future, appropriate local indicators was raised.

Action

To be raised at the next Management group meeting, and reported back to the Board in December.

10. Date of next Meeting:

2 pm

6th December 2010

Withington Village Hall (for directions please contact Herefordshire Partnership Support Team 01432 261792 hfdpartnership@herefordshire.gov.uk)