

**MINUTES OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP BOARD**

**21<sup>st</sup> July 2010**

**9.30 am, Kindle Centre, Asda, Hereford**

**List of Attendees:**

Cllr. Roger Phillips – Leader, Herefordshire Council (Chair)  
Chris Bull – Herefordshire Council & NHS Herefordshire  
Alan Curless – Health and Wellbeing Policy and Delivery Group  
Richard Gething – Herefordshire Association of Local Councils  
Will Lindesay – Voluntary Sector (Vice Chair)  
David Sanders – Children and Young People Policy and Delivery Group  
Rob Garner – Environment Policy and Delivery Group  
Gabrielle Wright – West Mercia Police  
Joanna Newton – NHS Herefordshire  
Phil Weaver – Job Centre Plus  
Gary Woodman - Economic Development and Enterprise Policy and Delivery Group  
Cllr John Jarvis – Safer Herefordshire Policy and Delivery Group  
Cllr June French - Cabinet Member  
Peter Brown – Stronger Communities Policy and Delivery Group  
Mark Preece – Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service

**Apologies:**

Philip Talbot  
Geoff Hughes (Peter Brown representing)  
Helen Braithwaite  
Angela Smith (Gary Woodman representing)  
Cllr Brig Peter Jones  
Kevin Purcell (Gabrielle Wright representing)  
Ian Edwards

**In attendance:**

Julie Gethin - Head of Partnership Support  
Chris Bucknell - Herefordshire Partnership  
Jane Jones - Herefordshire Partnership  
Philippa Lydford – Herefordshire Partnership  
Clare Wichbold (for Agenda Item 5.)

## **1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions**

Cllr Phillips welcomed everyone to the meeting.

## **2. Minutes of the last meeting - 24<sup>th</sup> May 2010**

Rob Garner wished to amend item 3.a) Climate Change

The meeting of the 11<sup>th</sup> May had already taken place.

Otherwise, the minutes of the last meeting were agreed as a true record.

## **3. Matters arising not on the agenda**

### **Pride of Herefordshire Awards**

Phillipa Lydford reported that the closing date for nominations had been postponed until 28<sup>th</sup> July to enable inclusion into Herefordshire Matters which was going out later than originally planned. There continued to be good local support from local sponsors and in every other respect all the plans were on target for the event to be held on October 20<sup>th</sup>.

The Chair requested that Item 5 be considered next on the Agenda

## **5. External Funding Strategy**

Clare Wichbold presented the paper in the absence of Hannah Mc Sherry. Clare explained that Herefordshire Council had recognised the need for a strategy to ensure avoidance of duplicate bids and resultant confusion. It had now been agreed that a Partnership approach to this work would be appropriate to ensure maximum use of available funds through a co-ordinated approach, and to avoid the confusion of various organisations applying to what will be a dwindling pot.

There will be changes regarding Lottery, AWM and European funding, so it is important that Herefordshire is best placed to access any other external funding. As some statutory bodies are not able to bid, working with other agencies which are able to access funds will be essential. With the advent of reduced public funding it is important that we know which bids are being submitted for what, and these will all be recorded centrally.

Clare requested that Board members agree a way forward through which the LSP can form a clear strategy and enable maximum access to any funding for which it can potentially bid.

The following comments were noted:

Changes to Lottery funding will almost certainly adjust the balance of distribution.

There are considerable questions to be addressed in respect of funding the Government's Big Society agenda. This is causing some anxiety amongst parish and town councils.

There may be excellent staff already in Partner organisations familiar with funding applications, and it would be prudent to share this expertise and best practice.

The LSP is the right place to co-ordinate this work. Clarity was requested on the nature of an external funding champion – it was agreed that Herefordshire bids should be supported by representation at Herefordshire Partnership Board level.

An event was suggested to which interested parties could participate. This would enable people to share information about which funding stream they might have an interest in bidding for and would enable others not to waste time on duplicate bids. Clarity of aims should also be an essential consequence of such an event.

The aims and objectives of the established Annual Funding Fair were explained, including the Workshops on funding applications, which might meet that need.

The need for funding bids based on agreed outcomes was noted. There was a need to ensure this work is undertaken through existing resources and there may be concern over the establishment of an additional group. (It was noted that the work to date had been done with very little meeting time as most had been resolved through “virtual” communication).

(NB Funding Fair 2010 – 27<sup>th</sup> October at Whitecross High School, details from Project Development Team 01432 383061)

### **Action**

#### **The Board agreed to support the Recommendations of the External Funding Strategy paper.**

It was agreed that the Strategy would be presented to the Board at a future meeting.

#### **4. Economic Recovery Plan**

Julie Gethin talked through the paper which had been tabled, and spoke about some of the key areas. The Chair commented on the good achievements, although pointed out that the possible impact of future spending cuts had yet to be established.

The following comments were noted:

It is preferable that the paper is sent out in advance of the meeting.

There is a need to be able to quantify what has been achieved, e.g. how many jobs and businesses, how much profit?

The need to be more focused, rather than a scattergun approach, and to identify what can realistically be achieved and concentrate our energy in those (limited) directions.

Support was requested in respect of planning applications for change of use, particularly when applicants were looking to set up a new business.

In respect of Broadband, it was noted that it would be useful if information regarding the current position in Herefordshire could be collated in one place.

Whilst noting the achievement of apprenticeship placements locally, it was suggested that best practice in other authorities regarding such placements should be considered. In addition, the NEET population experiences increasing difficulty. Work done in other areas with Connexions to keep people on basic skills programmes has proved worthwhile.

Taking a holistic approach can sometimes make it difficult to quantify the outputs behind activity. We are in a period of transition and this paper creates a foundation to take forward as funding starts to disappear.

The position regarding Area Based Grant (ABG) was outlined. Herefordshire has taken a prudent stance, and will not spend what it might not yet be given. A review of all ABG projects is being undertaken and from this decisions will be made on priorities and achievable outcomes. This situation will be in limbo for several months, but there is potential for some projects to come back on stream, should finance allow.

Phil Weaver presented the Job Centre Plus update:  
The number of people claiming Job Seekers Allowance in Herefordshire is down:  
Hereford 1747, Ross 320, Leominster / Ludlow 808  
The Figures for Hereford and Leominster/Ludlow are the lowest since January 2009. The figure for Ross is 7% down on the month, and these are all positive signs.  
New claims are down, although there has been a recent rise. This could be as a result of student claims.  
There are 1000 vacancies in the County with particular numbers in the care and catering sectors. There are fewer vacancies in the manufacturing and construction industries.  
Since January 2009 the average length of time on benefits is 27 weeks.

Job Centre Plus has been working with Dunelm in respect of recruitment for its new store. There has been particular success in recruiting people who have been out of work for a longer than average term.

Nationally, there is still a lack of clarity regarding the Single Work Programme and the role of JCP. Six months support for those becoming self employed might be available, alongside particular support for those aged 25+ who have been out of work for more than six months.

## **6. Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS)**

Phillippa Lydford presented proposals for the 2011 Herefordshire Sustainable Community Strategy. There were three parts to this:

- a) The role of the SCS and its "family" of documents. The SCS should be aspirational but also offer clarity and focus about key local priorities. In recognition of a changing world, the document should be around for as long as it is relevant, and not necessarily reviewed at a set time. We need to consider other influences, e.g. Big Society and the Comprehensive Spending Review and take on board the uncertainty of the Local Area Agreement and Area Based Grant.
- b) In terms of a timetable there are two options, the first to utilise the existing evidence base and not undertake further public consultation. The alternative option is to go out to public consultation but this will necessarily have a knock-on effect on the timetable for publication.
- c) The content of the SCS. The Vision needs to be agreed and included, but anything too detailed (e.g. Targets/Action Plans) need to be omitted as they may be susceptible to change. The need for Guiding Principles should be evaluated.

The Chair spoke about huge decisions which will face public sector bodies in the light of forthcoming financial reductions. How we account for and evidence our activities to the local population will be even more important. The SCS requires clarity and focus, with explicit priorities.

The Chief Executive commented on the shift of power from being currently central, to a more local base. The document will need to reflect a focus on Place, and this will bring a significant change from how the SCS has previously been presented. We need to plan what we want to do ourselves towards achieving agreed priorities for the County.

A number of other comments were submitted:

A meaningful delivery plan is required to ensure that it works.

Rather than asking for negative input (e.g. what's wrong in the County?) should we approach this from a perspective of what is working and how do we make this even better?

The guiding principles should be overtly included, to ensure a balance economically, socially and environmentally.

The way in which budget cuts are decided and their subsequent impact should be communicated very carefully with the public. Joint communication skills will be paramount and HP must engineer the headlines.

There was some concern voiced over the proposal not to go out to full public consultation, recognising this as a risk if things change. However it was pointed out that there is a considerable wealth of consultation evidence already in existence and consultation needs to be balanced with leadership.

Concern was expressed over the need to not produce a glossy document, particularly in times of austerity. It was pointed out that printing costs would be kept to a minimum and as far as possible people would be encouraged to access the SCS document on the Herefordshire Partnership website: [www.herefordshirepartnership.com](http://www.herefordshirepartnership.com)

A discussion took place regarding the need to consult on the priorities and not the SCS in itself. Honesty and clarity will be required over the need for difficult choices, although there must be recognition that some services are statutory.

#### **Action**

**Herefordshire Partnership Support Team to continue with the development of the Sustainable Community Strategy, within a framework of Place and Priorities for Herefordshire. Progress to date to be reported at the next Board meeting.**

#### **7. Local Performance Framework**

Julie Gethin talked through the Local Performance Framework report and explained that work was being undertaken with Policy and Delivery group Chairs and Facilitators to ensure that work undertaken was making a positive difference, and the achievements are being made for local communities. The role of peer challenge should be noted, and there are proposals to involve the Management Group.

A question was raised over who was undertaking the Peer challenge, to which Julie replied that it was members of Policy and Delivery groups. It was explained that this was not additional work, but connecting what was already happening. It was commented that it presented a huge opportunity.

#### **8. Community Engagement Framework**

There will be a Partnership event in October to which a range of agencies will be invited to develop different ways of working. We will be aiming to understand what works at present and the opportunities on offer. It will be based on a locality approach.

Comments were made about how we deliver an event which best serves to plan for a reduction in services. West Mercia Police currently awaits clarification on its own requirements which will be required to fit in with the other Divisions as consistency will be expected across the force.

The Chair stated that bad news had to be expected, and that the Board should agree on how it wishes to go out to, and communicate with, local communities.

Julie stated the need not to place too much emphasis on the proposed Strategy, but on the resultant way of working which emerges and the need to prepare for Autumn "bad news".

#### **Action**

**The Board agreed with the principles set out for the Autumn event.**

**Any Other Business**

Jo Newton raised the fact that the government NHS White Paper will impose structural change, but that Herefordshire is well placed for future arrangements.

**Date and time of next Meeting**

2pm 18<sup>th</sup> October 2010, Room Q, Kindle Centre, Asda, Hereford