

MINUTES OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE PARTNERSHIP BOARD

24th May 2010

2.30 pm, Hereford Room, Plough Lane, Hereford

List of Attendees:

Cllr. Roger Phillips – Leader, Herefordshire Council (Chair)
Chris Bull – Herefordshire Council & NHS Herefordshire
Cllr Brig Peter Jones – Hereford and Worcester Fire Authority
Alan Curless – Health and Wellbeing Policy and Delivery Group
Richard Gething – Herefordshire Association of Local Councils
Angela Smith – Economic Development and Enterprise Policy and Delivery Group
Helen Braithwaite – Government Office West Midlands
Will Lindesay – Voluntary Sector (Vice Chair)
Chris Baird – Children and Young People Policy and Delivery Group
Rob Garner – Environment Policy and Delivery Group
Jim McLaughlin – West Mercia Police
Dean Taylor – Herefordshire Council & NHS Herefordshire
Geoff Hughes – Stronger Communities Policy and Delivery Group
Lucy Philips – Herefordshire and Worcestershire Fire and Rescue Service
Joanna Newton – NHS Herefordshire
Mike Dzioba – Job Centre Plus
Philip Talbot – Voluntary Sector

Apologies:

Kevin Purcell (J McGlaughlin representing)
Dr Akeem Ali (Alan Curless representing)
Dr Sarah Aitken (Alan Curless representing)
David Sanders (Chris Baird representing)
Mike Ashton
Gary Woodman
Phil Weaver (Mike Dzioba representing)

In attendance:

Julie Gethin - Head of Partnership Support
Chris Bucknell - Herefordshire Partnership
Jane Jones - Herefordshire Partnership
Chris Gooding – Herefordshire Partnership (for agenda item 6)
Rachel Jones – Chief Executive's Office (for Agenda item 5)

1. Welcome, Apologies and Introductions

Cllr Phillips welcomed everyone to the meeting.

2. Minutes of the last meeting

The minutes of the last meeting, held on 8th February 2010, were agreed as a true record.

3. Matters arising not on the agenda

a) Climate Change

Rob Garner thanked everyone who had attended the Climate Change event held on 16th March and reported that the feedback indicated it had generally been well received.

A further meeting had taken place on 11th May.

Action

The Chair requested that those groups who had not yet responded with nominations should do so.

b) Pride of Herefordshire Awards

It was noted that nominations were now being requested and posters and application forms were distributed to those present. The Awards night is a high profile event and it is hoped that a good number of nominations will be forthcoming. The closing date for this is 16th July with the event itself in October.

Action

It was requested that Partners distribute posters and application forms, and promote the Awards scheme through their organisations.

4. Economic Recovery Plan

In Natalia's absence, Angela Smith went through the latest update of the Economic Recovery Plan. The latest (April) local unemployment rate was 2.7% which was a decrease on the March figure. A number of training schemes had proved successful, including the Future Jobs Fund (18-24 year olds) which had assisted 36 people into jobs. 92 apprentices were employed through the NHS Herefordshire, and there was particular support being targeted at NEETs.

In Hereford there had been a campaign to ensure displays were being placed in empty shop windows, and a website campaign had been undertaken to encourage shopping in Hereford. Procurement events would be held later in the year, particularly to encourage smaller businesses to tender for redevelopment work. Additional support would be for:

- ◆ volunteering,
- ◆ young people and those returning to work
- ◆ businesses striving to export
- ◆ the shop front grant scheme
- ◆ the new economic development strategy
- ◆ expansion of the Jobs Fair.

Mike Dzioba (Job Centre Plus) reported the following:

There is a local upward trend in respect of vacancies, the County recorded 799 vacancies in April 2010 which was 53% higher than April 2009. The Care sector appears particularly buoyant with a 100% increase in vacancies. This growth in demand resulted in an event being held specifically for this sector, attended by 12 local employers and 70 jobseekers. Feedback was good.

A Recruitment Fair will take place on 16th September.

A number of High Street “names” are currently planning to move to or increase capacity in Hereford, with the resultant increase in jobs being created, in addition to expansion of existing businesses in the County.

A Small Business Recruitment Service had recently been established to support appropriate local businesses which may have no formal HR resource. Assistance can be given in respect of compiling job adverts, general recruitment procedures, Job Centre Plus facilities etc. This initiative was being run in conjunction with the Federation of Small Businesses.

In respect of potential changes introduced by a new government, the future was unclear, but it was noted that the various Welfare to Work schemes would be streamlined into one.

It was noted that the increase in vacancies in the care sector was a reflection of the situation across the West Midlands region.

A discussion took place as to how much information was available regarding the breakdown of vacancies – e.g. whether they were generally in lower paid jobs. It was reported that data was available, although the breakdown between full and part-time was not always so easy to identify.

Although the rise in vacancies was to be welcomed, it was noted that the County would need to attract employers with higher paid opportunities if we are to retain more local, better qualified young people in Herefordshire. Work will be done with local large and medium sized employers to assess their training needs, ascertain these are matched to local young people, and assess the provision of training needs for the future.

5. Hearts of Herefordshire

Rachel Jones introduced the Hearts of Herefordshire scheme and showed Board members a 10 minute promotional DVD which had been produced.

In addition to the existing pilot projects, the scheme would be rolled out to include Belmont, and it would be interesting to compare what has been done in rural areas with an urban setting.

A note of caution was raised in respect of community expectation, and the need for a “continuation” strategy.

6. Community Led Planning

Chris Gooding gave a presentation which outlined the background of Community Led Planning in Herefordshire and how the current staffing and organisational structure had evolved. The impact of the 2008 review was discussed and the development and strength of current resources was emphasised. Three new field workers had recently been recruited (based at Community First, Herefordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Services and Herefordshire Association for Local Councils). There is very good support for Community Led Planning in Herefordshire. The main risks to continued success were explained, and the uncertainty over changing government priorities was highlighted.

The Chair reiterated the need for the identification of suitable sites for housing development, and associated infrastructure requirements. This will result in the growth of some small hamlets and settlements, and the engagement of local people, particularly local businesses, will be paramount.

The Chief Executive noted that, under the new government’s funding proposals, Grant funding may not be available in the way that it has been and therefore the power of

Parish Council's to raise funds through the Parish Precept would be come more significant.

7. Connecting Communities

Chris Bucknell reported on the success of the local Connecting Communities initiative. £50,000 had been awarded to specific areas in South Wye. The fact that the South Wye Partnership was well established, and the continuing commitment by Herefordshire Council to fund a development worker, had resulted in an excellent response rate in respect of submitting the grant application, setting up the proposed activity and ensuring a good outcome. Herefordshire Council, West Mercia Police and Herefordshire Housing had all been key partners. "Women at Number 14" had enabled a number of 1-2-1 and small group sessions to take place with a particularly vulnerable group. The proposed Community Garden project, on what had previously been unclaimed ground, would ultimately lead to the establishment of allotments for the local community. The impact on addressing certain mental health issue was particularly noted.

Will Lindesay noted the investment in partnership which had led to such a worthwhile project, and the ethos of partners working to develop communities - not just their own specific areas - had undoubtedly contributed substantially to the successful end result.

8. LAA End of Year Performance

Chris Bucknell briefed the Board on the paper which had been previously circulate and discussed at the Management Group. Red Indicators were noted, and there was assurance from the Health and Well-being Policy and Delivery Group that these would show improvement very quickly. Concern was raised about conflicting information being presented at different groups eg Childhood Obesity rates had been reported as showing an opposite trend at a recent Members' Briefing.

9. Partnership Engagement Framework

Julie Gethin presented the paper which had previously been circulated. The Task and Finish group had been established which comprise a varied membership. The significance of aligning the developing work on Localities was emphasised, as well as the importance of local Members knowing their communities.

10. Herefordshire Partnership Management Group

Julie Gethin reported on recent activity undertaken by the Management Group. Consideration will be given to how this structure has worked and how best it can undertake its future role, particularly in respect of the Sustainable Community Strategy, Locality working and Supporting People.

The Chair commented that a careful eye is required to note the changes likely to be introduced by the new Government. We need to be clear about the impact of any reductions we make, particularly if Grant funding is curtailed, and GOWM are lobbying for clarity about this.

11. Any Other Business

There having been no other business declared, the Chair closed the meeting

12. Date of next Meeting

9.30 am Wednesday 21st July 2010 at the **Kindle Centre, ASDA, Hereford** (please note change of venue)