

Herefordshire Partnership
Executive group meeting held Friday 10th June 2011

Present:

Chris Bull – Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire (Chair)
Will Lindesay – Third Sector Board
Charlie Hill - West Mercia Police
Lucy Phillips – Hereford and Worcester Fire Service
Ray Stone – Herefordshire Business Board
Lynda Wilcox – Herefordshire Association of Local Councils
David Throup – DEFRA group

In attendance:

Nina Bridges – Herefordshire Council
Philippa Lydford – Partnership support
Jane Jones – Partnership Support
Dean Taylor - Herefordshire Council and NHS Herefordshire

Apologies:

Andy Watts – GP Consortium
Liz Smith – West Mercia Probation Service

1. Welcome, apologies and introductions

The Chair welcomed everyone to the meeting and requested they introduce themselves for the benefit of anyone who hadn't previously attended.

2. Minutes of the previous meeting and Matters arising

The Minutes of the previous meeting were agreed.

Nina Bridges informed the group that the wording of the Road Safety priority was being re-drafted, in conjunction with the Fire and Rescue Service.

Charlie Hill advised the group of amendments to the Crime and Disorder Act, including the fact that there is no longer a requirement to publish a 3-year strategy, but an annual assessment and action plan.

3. Nomination for Vice-Chair

Following the receipt of nominations, it was agreed that Charlie Hill be Vice Chair of the group.

4. Herefordshire Community Strategy

Jane Jones gave the background to the current Community Strategy (2010-2011) and new suggested priorities, highlighting the different approaches. The options (on page 5 of the report) for taking the Community Strategy forward were explained. The Chair referred to the changing national perspective through the Localism Bill and the need to decide what needs to be done locally and is useful in planning for our communities.

There was support from the group for keeping with the current Community Strategy and in the meantime, focusing on just a few key priorities that give the opportunity to work together in true partnership. The group should look further than statutory responsibilities and at better outcomes for local people. Links can be made with the development of localities and those

teams already working to smaller areas within the county (based on locality boundaries). At a time of reducing resources, the Partnership can look to integrate services to reduce costs.

There are six, evidence based priority areas, which could be used to develop a focus and avoid additional work. A pause would help evaluate the right approach for going forward, with in the meantime, action to deliver fewer priorities that are practical and reasonable.

The group agreed not to produce a new Community Strategy at this time. In the future, the focus will be on places which make up Herefordshire, alongside interconnected county wide themes. Changing local and national perspectives will inform streamlined strategic policy and partnership working in Herefordshire and priorities will be explored as this year progresses, in preparation for a new Strategy. A single page statement will be appended to the existing Community Strategy. In the meantime, the group will agree a work plan for this year, focusing on key challenges and where they can best make a difference.

5. Herefordshire Business Board

As Vice Chair of Herefordshire Business Board, Ray Stone explained the background, remit and plans of the Board.

The recent Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP) launch in London offered a good opportunity to promote Herefordshire. The focus for Herefordshire is now to secure Enterprise Zone status for the further development of Rotherwas.

Of the remaining Enterprise Zones to be awarded nationally, it has been confirmed that one will be from a rural area. The first hurdle that Herefordshire needs to overcome is to be the Zone put forward by the Marches LEP, and a decision on this will be made shortly. A fundamental principle of the Zone will be the creation of new, higher paid jobs, and in this respect Ray explained the proposals for growth and enhancement of land at Rotherwas to encourage the development of security / defence based industries, benefiting from the expertise emanating from the existing local military establishment.

The development and promotion of this industry will lead to an expansion of the high tech jobs needed locally to raise wage levels and attract / retain young people to the County who currently may not view Herefordshire as an attractive career choice.

Although the County is renowned for its agricultural industry, the County has a higher than average percentage of employment in manufacturing, a statistic sometimes overlooked.

NB: For up-to-date information on local employment and other statistics, please visit <http://www.herefordshire.gov.uk/factsandfigures/1211.aspx>

Funding requirements had been noted, and Ray explained the contact network through which some of the financial requirements might be developed.

A discussion ensued around the need to ensure that any barriers to progress are identified, and to ensure a joined up approach to investment in other areas, such as housing. It was agreed that the Executive Group would play a role in bringing key organisations together to address issues as effectively as possible and through their respective organisation, support in any way.

Lynda Wilcox offered assistance with local public engagement, and how messages about proposals and developments are communicated.

Ray Stone also touched on other initiatives underway, such as the upgrading of the Three Elms Trading Estate and proposals to encourage local businesses to tender for public service contracts. Balancing good value with local need is paramount, and whilst the public sector needs to be aware of the importance of local procurement, businesses may need support to ensure that they are able to fulfill the requirements for tender submission and service delivery.

Ray Stone also spoke about the proposed Academy for Construction skills which is in development, initially centred around Hereford Futures development opportunities. There is also potential for a further Academy to promote retail skills. The overall aim of these academies is to support employment and training opportunities for local people, which requires a joined up approach between funders, developers and training providers and will support a programme for apprenticeships.

The Chair reiterated the need for the Business Board to be able to get on with its job, and emphasized to partners the importance of supporting the goal of economic development wherever possible.

David Throup asked if there was a "Plan B" in case the Enterprise Zone status is not achieved. It was felt that development of Rotherwas would still proceed, but with assistance this would be at an accelerated rate.

6. Any Other Business

6a)

On behalf of Liz Smith, Charlie Hill raised two issues:

Concern over the reported withdrawal of Supporting People funding for Bridge House hostel and domestic abuse support.

Concern over potential gaps in service with the change of Mental Health provider.

The Chair acknowledged reductions in budgets, due to significant reductions in Supporting People external funding, which had to be managed.

In respect of mental health services, 2Gther is the chosen provider, and was chosen on the basis of a redesign of the services provided, which he anticipated would lead to overall improvements to service delivery.

He would ask officers to respond specifically on the points Liz had raised.

6b)

David Throup reported that the situation in respect of local water levels is becoming of concern. There will be serious issues for farming businesses if river levels fall much further and farmers no longer have permission to extract. The need for close liaison with the Emergency Planning and Communications Teams will be vital.

However David also commented that the forecast was indicating changeable weather which might well alleviate the position.

7. Date and time of next meeting:

Friday 22nd July, 10am, Kington Room, Plough Lane, Hereford