

Draft Terms of Reference for the Rural Access Partnership

Roles of the Rural Access Partnership (RAP)

- Provide a co-ordinated strategic direction to maintaining and improving access to services in Herefordshire.
- Identify and manage strategic links between access to services and other rural initiatives across partnership groups, organisations, sectors and other networks.
- Carry out joint services strategic planning and commissioning to enable the integration of service delivery where appropriate.
- Articulate and agree a vision for the future of rural access in Herefordshire.
- Develop and agree an action plan (with assigned responsibilities) to guide the RAP's work.
- Play a key role in promoting the access to services agenda, including engaging and bringing together service providers and other stakeholders.
- Facilitate the exchange of best practice and the dissemination of information.
- Advise and update the Herefordshire Partnership's Chief Executives Group and Board on rural and access to services issues and policies as necessary.
- Oversee, monitor and evaluate the progress of key access to services projects/programmes.
- Maintain a strategic overview of, and respond to, future ICT developments which will impact on Herefordshire.

- Take forward and lead the implementation of the Herefordshire in Touch Forward Strategy including the E-gateway and Community Access Points projects.
- Provide overall strategic guidance and direction to the Herefordshire Access to Services Partnership (HASP) and approve its delivery plan.
- Provide overall strategic guidance and direction for the Multi Use Facilities programme, including reviewing and approving recommendations from the Multi Use Facilities working group on: communities to be supported in developing their project proposals; indicative funding levels for projects; projects to go forward for funding applications, etc.
- Take forward and lead the implementation of the final elements of Herefordshire Thinks Rural.
- Take forward and lead on the strengthening of cross border collaboration, including identifying and developing opportunities for better cross border collaboration to improve access to services for border communities.
- Establish various working groups (in addition to HASP and the Multi Use Facilities working group) to carry out the operational day-to-day activity (and nominate representatives for these groups).
- Advise, lead and delegate to the working groups as necessary.
- Receive updates and reports from the working groups.

Operating Procedures and Administration

- The RAP will meet at least four times a year. The Chair is able to call additional meetings as and when required.
- It is expected that the RAP will achieve consensus by focusing on clear, objective actions through full and open discussion. Any differences of opinion

potentially leading to conflict should be resolved at an early stage, via the Chair if required.

- If a consensus cannot be reached within a meeting, voting may be used through a show of hands. Each member has one equal vote, with a majority decision. In the event of a tied vote, the Chair has the casting vote. Observers and guests may not vote.
- A representative or substitute who attends a RAP meeting on behalf of a member, is entitled to vote on any matter that the member was entitled to vote on.
- A Chair and vice Chair will be appointed from within the membership and will serve for 2 years.
- Agendas and papers will be circulated approximately one week prior to the meeting. Minutes will be kept to record all decisions made by the RAP.
- Members and any representatives or substitutes with a personal or financial interest in a matter being discussed, must declare that interest and will not be entitled to vote on that item.

Relationships with other groups

- The RAP will report directly to the Chief Executives Group.
- Herefordshire Access to Services Partnership, the Multi Use Facilities working group, and any other working groups established will report to the RAP.

Membership

- Membership of the RAP will mirror that of the Chief Executives Group with a few additions to represent those also with an involvement in access to services and rural issues.

- Members will bring the ability to make decisions on behalf of the group/organisation/sector they represent.

- The membership of the RAP is:

Herefordshire Council

Herefordshire Primary Care Trust

Learning & Skills Council Herefordshire & Worcestershire

West Mercia Constabulary

Chamber of Commerce Herefordshire & Worcestershire

Herefordshire Association of Local Councils

Voluntary Sector Assembly

Herefordshire Infrastructure Consortium

Hereford & Worcester Fire and Rescue Service

Jobcentre Plus

Herefordshire Citizens Advice Bureaux

Chairs from the working groups that report to the RAP (e.g. HASP)

Community Development Partnership representative

Herefordshire Parish Plans Steering Group representative

- Observers:

Government Office West Midlands

Advantage West Midlands

- If there is a request by an organisation/group to join the RAP, the RAP should consider the request at their next meeting and agree a decision.
- If a representative leaves their represented organisation or group, the organisation or group shall appoint a new representative.
- The RAP may invite Observers to attend RAP meetings and to input into discussions.

- All members have equal standing and ability to input into the discussion. All members are expected to fully participate in the RAP meetings.
- The RAP may develop its membership to respond to any new initiatives or issues that are relevant to its role.
- The RAP will formally review membership every two years.
- Members who are unable to attend a particular meeting may arrange for a substitute from their group/organisation to attend in his/her place.
- If a member of the RAP is absent from two consecutive meetings, the RAP shall have the right (in default of an acceptable reason being given by such member) to declare a vacancy, whereupon the individual shall cease to be a member.
- The RAP will be quorate when 5 members are present (not including co-opted members or observers).

Changes to this document

- The Terms of Reference for the RAP shall be open to review at any time but any proposed changes shall require the agreement of the majority of the RAP members and must be clearly recorded in minutes.