

A G E N D A

Social & Economic Development Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Thursday, 15th April, 2004**

Time: **10.30 a.m.**

Place: **Council Chamber, Brockington, 35
Hafod Rd. Hereford.**

Notes: Please note the **time, date** and **venue** of
the meeting.

For any further information please contact:

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**County of Herefordshire
District Council**

AGENDA

for the Meeting of the Social & Economic Development Scrutiny Committee

To: Councillor A.C.R. Chappell (Chairman)
Councillor J. Stone (Vice-Chairman)

Councillors H. Bramer, R.B.A. Burke, M.R. Cunningham, Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels,
B. Hunt, Mrs. R.F. Lincoln, P.G. Turpin and A.L. Williams

Co-opted Members G. Jones (Tourism Sector), Mrs E. Newman (HALC),
P. Thomas (NFU), vacancy (Chamber of Commerce).

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE To receive apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES (IF ANY) To receive details any details of Members nominated to attend the meeting in place of a Member of the Committee.	
3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive any declarations of interest by Members in respect of items on the Agenda.	
4. MINUTES To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th February, 2004.	1 - 6
5. POLICY AND COMMUNITY DIRECTORATE 2003/04 FIRST TEN MONTHS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS To inform Members of the performance of the non-corporate functions of the Policy and Community Directorate against their national and local performance indicators for the first ten months of 2003/04, and to detail the main areas of activity undertaken by those services during the two months since the last report.	7 - 14
6. MONITORING OF 2003/2004 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVENUE BUDGETS PERIOD 1-11 To advise Members of the actual net revenue expenditure against budgets for Social and Economic Development service areas to period 11 of the financial year 2003-2004.	15 - 20
7. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2004/2005 (TO FOLLOW) To consider a draft work programme for 2004/2005.	21 - 24

PUBLIC INFORMATION

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Education, Environment, Health, Social Care and Housing and Social and Economic Development. A Strategic Monitoring Committee scrutinises Policy and Finance matters and co-ordinates the work of these Committees.

The purpose of the Committees is to ensure the accountability and transparency of the Council's decision making process.

The principal roles of Scrutiny Committees are to

- Help in developing Council policy
- Probe, investigate, test the options and ask the difficult questions before and after decisions are taken
- Look in more detail at areas of concern which may have been raised by the Cabinet itself, by other Councillors or by members of the public
- "call in" decisions - this is a statutory power which gives Scrutiny Committees the right to place a decision on hold pending further scrutiny.
- Review performance of the Council
- Conduct Best Value reviews
- Undertake external scrutiny work engaging partners and the public

Formal meetings of the Committees are held in public and information on your rights to attend meetings and access to information are set out overleaf

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YOU HAVE A RIGHT TO:-

- Attend all Council, Cabinet, Committee and Sub-Committee meetings unless the business to be transacted would disclose 'confidential' or 'exempt' information.
- Inspect agenda and public reports at least three clear days before the date of the meeting.
- Inspect minutes of the Council and all Committees and Sub-Committees and written statements of decisions taken by the Cabinet or individual Cabinet Members for up to six years following a meeting.
- Inspect background papers used in the preparation of public reports for a period of up to four years from the date of the meeting. (A list of the background papers to a report is given at the end of each report). A background paper is a document on which the officer has relied in writing the report and which otherwise is not available to the public.
- Access to a public Register stating the names, addresses and wards of all Councillors with details of the membership of the Cabinet, of all Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have a reasonable number of copies of agenda and reports (relating to items to be considered in public) made available to the public attending meetings of the Council, Committees and Sub-Committees.
- Have access to a list specifying those powers on which the Council have delegated decision making to their officers identifying the officers concerned by title.
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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Social & Economic Development Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, Leominster on Thursday, 5th February, 2004 at 10.30 a.m.

Present: Councillor A.C.R. Chappell (Chairman)
Councillor J. Stone (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: Mrs. P.A. Andrews, J.G.S. Guthrie, B. Hunt, G. Lucas, P.G. Turpin and A.L. Williams

Co-opted Members G. Jones (Tourism), Mrs E. Newman (HALC), Mr. D. Stevens (Chamber of Commerce)

In attendance: Councillor Mrs M. Lloyd-Hayes, J. P. Thomas.

48. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor H. Bramer and Councillor Mrs S. P. A. Daniels. Apologies were also recorded for Cabinet Members Councillors G.V. Hyde, J.C. Mayson and R. V. Stockton.

49. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor Mrs P. A. Andrews substituted for Councillor Mrs S.P.A. Daniels and Councillor G. Lucas substituted for Councillor H. Bramer.

50. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

51. MINUTES

RESOLVED:

That the minutes of the meetings held on 27th November 2003 and 14th January, 2004 be approved and signed by the Chairman.

52. UPDATE ON THE PROGRESS OF THE COMMUNITY YOUTH SERVICE TOWARDS NEW STANDARDS

The Committee were advised of the restructuring of the Community Youth Service and progress towards the revised planning guidance introduced December 2003, and the national standards and performance indicators in youth work.

The Community Youth Service Manager gave a presentation on the work and restructuring of the Service and he highlighted the following issues:

- The National Picture – it was a statutory service funded through the Education FSS. New DfES targets and planning guidance had been issued. Work had started to prepare for the Ofsted Inspection in Autumn 2004, results of which may be included as part of the CPA assessment. The Green Paper – Every Child Matters – contained ramifications for the service.

- The Role of the Service – the Service had to be educational, participative and inclusive. It worked to 22 Youth Standards and focused on 4 key targets for 2004-5 namely: the number of young people participating; the level of participation; the number of recorded and accredited outcomes.
- Local Picture – the service currently had a 25% staff vacancy rate, a situation that was reflected nationally. The accredited outcome target of 572 was unlikely to be met, mainly due to limited staff resources to run programmes. The predicted budget underspend was due in the main to staff vacancies. The need to meet targets had further enhanced partnership working through Service Level Agreements (SLAs).
- Restructuring – in line with the national agenda, the service was restructuring to increase face-to-face working. Where possible more qualified full-time staff were being employed, rather than part-time, to help meet the delivery of accredited training. A new Senior Youth Worker role had been established. An increased training and development activity of both staff and youth accreditation had been adopted.
- Financial Matters – While Service Standard 14 indicated £100 per head of youth population the Council's Education FSS allocation was £77.79 and the Council's budget for 2004-5 was £59.54. The predicted budget underspend of £120,000 was distorted by additional external income of £140,000 for specific work of which £70,000 had already been committed. The Cabinet Member (Community and Social Development) had been requested to carry forward £50,000 for expected recruitment costs.

The Chairman invited Councillor Mrs M.D. Lloyd-Hayes to address the Committee on youth issues.

Councillor Mrs Lloyd-Hayes outlined concerns following the closure of the two youth centres in the City. She highlighted that while the City Centre had a low resident youth population, due to the transport links and retail outlets it had a high transitory population. She reported upon the development of Close House, St. Peters Close, Hereford. The building had been provided by the Deanery and had been converted and equipped for youth activities through collaborative working. A number of agencies were interested in providing information through the Centre i.e. the Primary Care Trust and the Learning and Skills Council. She further commented that youth workers would be able to provide accredited training. There would be facilities for students to "drop-in" particularly to do homework while waiting for transport after school or college. She also indicated the fundraising undertaken.

Councillor Mrs Lloyd-Hayes also highlighted the need for increased youth worker provision in the County, particularly in the City.

The Committee congratulated all concerned with the youth centre project.

The Head of Culture, Leisure and Education for Life reported that meetings had taken place between the Council and the Youth Worker for the project regarding funding and a detailed Business Plan was awaited. Responding to a question regarding the involvement of Parish and Youth Councils in youth work, he confirmed that a number of Council's had been contacted or involved, however, the staffing levels in the service had restricted this area of development

The Chairman suggested that he and the Vice-Chairman informally meet youth representatives from around the County to discuss issues of concern.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and the Chairman and Vice-Chairman meet youth representatives to discuss issues of concern and report on their findings in due course.

53. CONSIDERATION OF THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF HEREFORD

The Committee considered the issues that had emerged from the special meeting of the Committee held in Maylord Orchards Meeting Room, Hereford, on 14th January, 2004.

The Head of Community and Economic Development reported that the meeting on the 14th January, 2004, the minutes of which had been approved earlier in the meeting, had provided an opportunity for nominated business representatives to give evidence and contribute to debate on the economic impacts of recent events and to make suggestions about initiatives to improve the situation.

A useful and constructive debate had taken place at the meeting where the following key issues had emerged:

- The importance of local management in addressing recent crises such as Foot and Mouth and the Legionnella outbreak was noted. The special meeting agreed that such local management was essential if such outbreaks were to be effectively tackled.
- The need for the public, private and voluntary sectors in the City to work in a more co-ordinated fashion to promote the County and City as a shopping and visitor location.
- The need to provide additional capacity/resource to the Hereford City Partnership to enable it to properly fulfil such a co-ordination role in the City Centre.
- The need to review the range/impact of activity in and around High Town such as Street Trading, Farmers Markets and Fair rides.
- The importance of the success of the wider economy of the City in driving up income levels, which would support expenditure in the City Centre. In particular the essential requirement for a Rotherwas Access Road to ensure the competitiveness of the large number of businesses on Rotherwas Industrial Estate.

The Committee recorded their appreciation to Mr Tector, Head of Environmental Health and Trading Standards, and his staff for their work during the outbreak of Legionnaires disease.

The Committee discussed the need to attract customers, particularly young professionals, to shop in the City. The need for a City Centre Manager to co-ordinate ideas and initiatives, particularly from the small retailer, was noted.

In response to comments regarding the need for improvements to the parking and transport infrastructure, the Head of Community and Economic Development reported that the Cabinet Member (Economic Development, Markets and Property) would be meeting with the City Centre Partnership to explore possible improvements.

The Committee questioned the links between Advantage West Midlands (AWM) and the Council and were informed that, depending on the project, regular meetings took

place at various senior officer levels.

The Chairman suggested that the Committee revisit this issue at an appropriate time (6 to 9 months) to review any improvements or developments.

The Director of Policy and Community reported that the issues raised related to the portfolios of a number of Cabinet Members and she therefore recommended that the report, which had been previously circulated to the Committee, be referred to them for consideration.

RESOLVED: That

(a) the report be noted and that it be referred for consideration by the Cabinet Members for:

- **Economic Development, Markets and Property;**
- **Community and Social Development;**
- **Environment;**
- **Highways and Transportation; and**
- **Rural Regeneration and Smallholdings.**

(b) this issue be reviewed at an appropriate future meeting.

54. ADULT LEARNING INSPECTORATE REINSPECTION

The Committee were informed of the Adult Learning Inspectorate's proposals for the reinspection of the Council's Learning and Skills Council (LSC) funded Adult and Community Learning (ACL) provision.

The Head of Community and Economic Development reported that the Adult Learning Inspectorate (ALI) had inspected the Council's adult learning provision for the first time in January 2003. A number of significant strengths were identified, principally within the areas of learning. However, a number of key weaknesses were identified which resulted in the ALI considering that the quality of provision was not adequate to meet the reasonable needs of those receiving it. Under these circumstances the Council had been advised that its service would be subject to a re-inspection. The reinspection would take the format of quarterly monitoring visits, (starting March 2004) culminating in a full reinspection of the whole of the LSC funded ACL provision, involving 4 days between September to December 2004. The report outlined the reinspection team membership and the Council's support and preparation for the reinspection. It was proposed that findings from a stakeholder meeting together with supporting information from the local LSC on the current situation regarding funding, be reported to a future meeting.

The Committee noted that if the reinspection decided that the service did not come up to expected standards it could ultimately be put into 'special measures'. The Director of Policy and Community responded to a question about the level of investment needed in the service. She commented that there was no simple answer. The principal issue seemed to be the provision of a consistent level of access to the service, which was extremely difficult to provide in a rural area.

The Committee noted the wider benefits of the service to the local community and the increased employment prospects of those who had undertaken training.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted and a further report be made to a future meeting.

**55. POLICY AND COMMUNITY DIRECTORATE 2003/04 FIRST EIGHT MONTHS
PERFORMANCE INDICATORS**

Members were informed of performance of the non-corporate functions of the Policy and Community Directorate against their national and local performance indicators for the first eight months of 2003/04, and received details of the main areas of activity undertaken by those services during the two months since the last report.

Variances from key indicators and national best value indicators were detailed, together with an overview of the wider performance of the individual service area, at appendix 1 to the report.

During discussion the following principal points were noted:

- The Director of Policy and Community highlighted that a number of Directorate staff had moved to offices in Plough Lane, Hereford and that issues were being learned about working in the different office environment. In relation to the now vacant offices, it was reported that a number of staff in Leominster were consolidating into one building. Where appropriate, buildings were being handed back under their lease agreements or being offered on the open market.
- Since the opening of the multifunctional service facility at The Bromyard Centre, there had been over 300 new library users. This facility was considered an excellent example of multifunctional working.
- Responding to a question regarding public knowledge of the Herefordshire Plan, the Head of Community and Economic Development reported that the Plan was principally a guide for the participating organisations. The Director of Policy and Community reported that over the following year, a fundamental review of the Plan would be undertaken, which would lead to future considerations around the level of input from Herefordshire Council and other Partners. It was anticipated that a report on the Plan would be considered by Strategic Monitoring Committee at its next meeting.
- Comment was made that a number of Parish Councils were unaware of the purpose of the Market Towns Initiative. The Director of Policy and Community responded that an information sheet would be sent to all Town and Parish Councils, including the Committee for information, concerning the initiative.

RESOLVED: That subject to information being sent to Town and Parish Councils on the Market Towns Initiative the report be noted.

56. HUMAN RESOURCES

The Committee received a report on the sickness absence and other matters for the Policy and Community Directorate.

The Director of Policy and Community reported upon the sickness absence statistics for the Directorate, which covered the period 1st January 2003 to 31st December, 2003. The report indicated the number of people in each division and the full time equivalent (FTE) together with the FTE days lost for each division and the average days lost per FTE. The report also contained reasons for sickness absence and a

breakdown of accidents by division. She reported that the Directorate was performing well but there were still areas for improvement.

The Committee scrutinised the statistics and noted that exceptional circumstances i.e. long-term sickness, may distort the position.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

The meeting ended at 11.57 a.m.

CHAIRMAN

POLICY AND COMMUNITY DIRECTORATE 2003/04 FIRST TEN MONTHS PERFORMANCE INDICATORS

Report By: Directorate Support Manager

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To inform Members of the performance of the non-corporate functions of the Policy and Community Directorate against their national and local performance indicators for the first ten months of 2003/04, and to detail the main areas of activity undertaken by those services during the two months since the last report.

Financial Implications

2. All expenditure in respect of performance indicators/targets is from approved budgets.

Considerations

3. As reported previously, Service Managers across Policy and Community (with the exception of Economic Investment and Development) are providing information on sets of key local indicators for their services. Information on those key local indicators, and any national Best Value indicators, where actual performance varies from the target significantly (more than plus or minus 10%) is detailed in Appendix 1.
4. As previously, Members also have an overview of the wider performance of individual service areas, as each Service Manager has provided a brief narrative that summarises the key activities/achievements of their service during the months of December 2003 and January 2004.
5. It is proposed that the report be read in conjunction with the 2003/04 Guide to Performance Indicators which has been published under pilot status as an attempt to provide Members with meaningful background information to this report and its appendix. The guide has been issued separately to Members of the Committee.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the Directorate's first ten months 2003/04 performance indicator information be noted, subject to any comments which Members may wish to make.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified

Service News

Incorporating Performance Indicator Outputs where 'Exceptional'



Duke of Edinburgh Award Scheme is one of the development opportunities the Youth Service aims to encourage young people to participate in.

Youth Service Re-group

The restructuring of the Community Youth Service was finalised in January with Cabinet Member approval and agreement from Unison on the proposed structure and job descriptions. Preparation is underway for the changes which will come into effect in April. New posts and vacant posts were advertised in January and, although this generated a high level of interest from people wanting packs and information about the service, there was only a small return rate of completed applications. It is therefore likely that a second round of recruitment attempts will be necessary during March.

In December, new planning guidance was received from the Department for Educational Services. This will be incorporated into the 2004/05 business plan. Included in the guidance are new performance targets and clarification of some existing ones. The result of this is that some of the KPI's reported for the service will change for next year.

The Service continues to under-achieve

on the accredited learning target and it is unlikely that this can be rectified by the end of the year.

A partnership with the Rural Media Company has been set up as an alternative approach to addressing staffing issues, whereby the cost of employing two full-time trainee youth workers (located in Kington and Ross-on-Wye) is shared.

Exceptional P.I. Performance

The percentage of the youth population in contact with the Youth Service continues to run at levels well above those planned. To date, 3,394 individuals have been seen against the target of 2,291 which reduces the Service's ability to deliver accredited targets.

The percentage of contact target who undergo development opportunities that result in a recorded or accredited learning outcome—the development of the Herefordshire Award will allow easy access for staff and young people into a range of accreditation routes. However the extreme staff shortages combined with young people's low take up of accreditation this year, means that the Service is unlikely to be able to achieve its target. The figures: 346 young people achieving accreditation against the target of 572.

Quick Guide to this issue:

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Directorate Support on the Wagon

Most of this time was spent by the Directorate Support Unit on managing and overseeing the office moves to the new location at Plough Lane in Hereford. The Directorate Support Manager and Directorate Support Officer, as members of the Project Team, were directly involved in the organisation of the moves from the other sites - Hinton Youth Centre, Shire Hall, 17 St Owen Street, 50/51 Broad Street, Brockington, Victoria House. Other members of the Unit

assisted in organising the moves from Grange Court and Grange House in Leominster.

Time was also spent on establishing new administrative systems for the new offices.



Sports Developments



Girls football Kick Start session at Weobley

Interviews and research were undertaken by Health Expertise Ltd regarding the LIFT service review and the preliminary findings are due shortly.

The Football Development Officer set up taster sessions and is working with Primary Schools, Weobley Football Club and a group in Peterchurch to encourage the development of girls' football.

Production work on the Disability Sports Guide, which is to be made available in multiple formats such as braille, audio and via web-page as well as in paper format, is ongoing. The Guide is planned to be completed during the Summer.

Work on the joint project of targeting people at risk of problematic drug use and attracting them to sports as a diversionary activity got underway. The Sports Referral Co-ordinator sent referral packs for approval to the steering group and is on target to be able to offer places to clients starting in April.

The vacant post of Sports Development Officer is due to be recruited in the next month. Unfortunately, the vacant position of Assistant Sports Development Officer will not be refilled due to the withdrawal of the funding stream that supported this post.

Community Regeneration in the Market Towns

The Market towns of Leominster and Ross-on-Wye are in the process of submitting their strategic action plans to enable them to access £500,000 over the next three years to fund regeneration projects.

Ledbury is entering its final year of Market Towns Initiative funding. A steering group has been set up to investigate what will happen once the funding ceases. Ledbury also hosted the

Market Towns Initiative Forum, which attracts Market Towns Officers from all over the region.

Two major and exciting regeneration projects in Kington are about to start; the Skate Park and the Playground Area, which are likely to be completed by the end of March. A Community Transport Project is also being developed involving Hereford Voluntary Action, Countryside Agency and Kington Youth Service.

Cultural Services are MADE over

There have been physical improvements to the Hereford Record Office, with new automatic doors, parking for disabled people, new lockers, new displays, upgrade of the toilets and general decoration in the entrance hall. Still to be installed is a lift to the Search Room which will complete the majority of the improvements. Advertised in January were the posts of Senior Archivist and Archivist which will help with the workload and the demand for enquiries.

The County's tourism website has received a re-vamp, reflecting the new branding for Tourism, and improved design for ease of use.

production which lists both crafts and food specifically produced in the County and not found anywhere else.

Training courses continued to be offered to arts and tourism businesses as part of the two EU and regionally funded programmes – Tourism Enterprise and Creative Industries. Both programmes also continue to offer a range of support to businesses.

Consultation for the revised Cultural Strategy continued in December and January. All of the responses are now collated and the final document is in production for a March launch.



New directory currently in production

A new directory called MADE is in

Herefordshire Partnership Confer on Agriculture

A Conference on the future of the Common Agricultural Policy and what it means for Herefordshire was jointly organised and held with the Bulmer Foundation on 27th January. The conference was attended by over 150 people from farming, Government bodies and the voluntary sector, with Tim Bennet (vice President and now President of the NFU) as the key speaker.

After an extensive consultation exercise during the summer, the first meeting of the new Herefordshire Learning Partnership was held in December 2003. The revitalised Partnership will play a key part in the Strategic Area Review of learning across Herefordshire, due to be undertaken in 2004 and 2005.

The Action for Regenerating Communities programme has been re-

profiled to protect and maximise the amount of money allocated to Herefordshire under the programme. An application was also made by the programme to the European Social Fund for approximately £1,400,000 to increase skills in communities

A bid for £700,000 has been jointly made with Shropshire for funding to support community projects in Herefordshire. The application is named GOLD, and was submitted to the Rural Regeneration Zone programme.



The future of the Common Agricultural Policy and what it means for Herefordshire discussions are held

A Quiet Time for Heritage Services

Traditionally the quietest period of the year for Heritage Services, Ledbury and Bromyard closed as usual for both months.

The refurbishment of Ledbury Heritage Centre was completed in early February in time for half-term week opening.

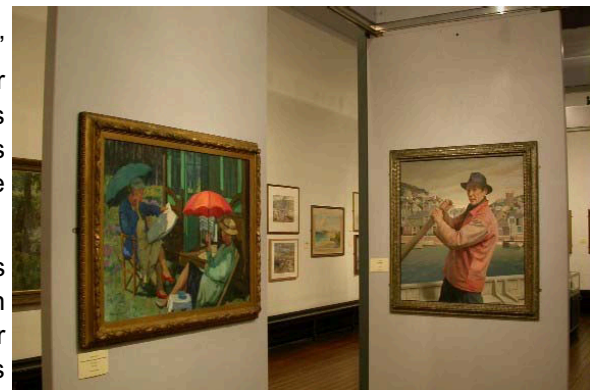
The Alfred Watkins Project exhibition at Broad Street did not attract as many visitors as was hoped. It was therefore moved and adapted to the layout at Ross-on-Wye Heritage Centre, where it proved more popular. 'Creating a Splash', the current exhibition at Broad Street is proving a good draw. It opened mid January.

Staffing shortages have meant that the Old House had to be closed over lunch periods with some frequency. The virtual tour continues to interest and assist visitors.

Ross-on-Wye Heritage Centre is doing very well and broke several records with visitor figures and sales over the festive season.

'Museum on the Move' was closed for refurbishment and its new exhibition was launched at the beginning of February.

The service predicts that it looks to be on target to achieve, or better all of this year's targets.



Creating a Splash—successful exhibition at Broad Street

Exceptional Performance

Best Value Indicator—Number of pupils visiting in organised school groups: Performance against this indicator remains pleasingly high. To date 4,818 pupils have made educational visits to the Service, against a target of 3,100. This is particularly impressive when compared to the output for 2002/03, which was a total of 2,976 pupils during the whole year.

Local Indicators—Satisfaction with sites/museum staff: Satisfaction levels have remained consistently high throughout the year:

- The current average for customers rating sites good/excellent is 92% compared to the 2002/03 average of 53%.
- The average rating Heritage Staff as good/excellent this year is 88% compared to the average of 61% during last year.

Economic Investment and Development go to Press

Before



The new Redundant Building Grant Scheme provides grants for the conversion or refurbishment of redundant buildings to bring them back into productive business use. One of the key aims of the scheme is the creation or safeguarding of jobs in the areas most in need in our rural communities.



and after

A press release and radio interview were made to promote the new £1.3m Redundant Building Grant Scheme. The Economic Development Team is leading the Sub-Regional Steering Group overseeing the delivery of the Scheme. The first tranche of grants totalling £75,000 have now been awarded to applicants. Further applications are currently being processed and are under consideration. A leaflet outlining the Scheme is in production and will be distributed to Members as soon as it is available.

Additional funding has been secured for further work to enhance the area around the newly finished Twyford Court Industrial Units. Work has also been completed on the construction of two internal service roads on the estate. The £500,000 schemes will open up additional employment land for development. These schemes are the first capital projects to be delivered within the Rural Regeneration Zone and Advantage West Midlands have requested a formal launch in June.

The Team is working on funding proposals to regenerate Hereford city centre. Areas to be addressed include Eign Gate, Cathedral Close and Castle Green. Funding sources are being investigated following the unsuccessful Rural Regeneration Zone bid.

Earthworks have now been completed on the Leominster Access Road and construction of the road is progressing either side of the A49(T). A new layby has been constructed on the A49(T) and will be opened in March. The scheme is scheduled for completion in early August 2004.

Officers have been working with Advantage West Midlands on the

development and marketing of Leominster Enterprise Park, the new 14ha site south of the existing industrial estate which will be serviced by the new Leominster Access Road. Marketing material has now been produced for the site and it is anticipated that it will be formally launched in the Spring.

The first series of seminars and training courses have been held for businesses in the County under the Herefordshire 'Bridge-It' Environmental Business Advice Programme. In addition, a number of visits have been made by advisors into companies. 40 businesses have been assisted through the programme to date which is being delivered by a local partnership led by the Economic Development Team.

37 commercial property enquiries were received in December and January, including 15 from outside the County, eight of which were via Advantage West Midlands. Three enquirers reported that they were successful in finding a property in the County. There were in the region of 30 general enquiries for economic statistics, Business Directories, information, grants etc.

Under the heading of supporting businesses; eight people have been awarded Start-Up grants during December and January. As part of the Aftercare and Investor Development Programme sponsored by the team, three visits were made by Business Link to companies to discuss their various issues.

Parks & Countryside Get Playful

Refurbishment work to the play area at The Grange, Leominster, undertaken in partnership with Surestart was completed. The improvements include installation of new safety surfacing which meets European Safety Standards, new play equipment, a perimeter of galvanised fencing with self-closing pedestrian gates and dog-grates.

A new play area at Withington (Withies Close) was opened. This project was funded by Doorstep Green Countryside Agency money and was undertaken jointly with the local community group. Another new project using Countryside Agency Doorstep Green funding was initiated to enhance Luard Walk play area, South Wye.

The halo 5 year development plan was produced as a consultative draft.

Two members of the Parks Team completed ILAM training in Playground Inspection to EU Safety Standards. A further two completed PRINCE 2 Project Management Course.

North Herefordshire Replacement

Swimming Pool tenders were issued.

Work commenced on site at Aylestone Park, Hereford. The new park, situated on Aylestone Hill, will provide an excellent new facility for residents of the City. It is hoped that the completed site will include various sports pitches, space for informal recreation along with a wildlife area and the restoration of the adjoining stretch of canal. The Aylestone Park Association have secured a grant of £100,000 from the Living Spaces Fund, administered by the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister towards the restoration work. The Council have allocated some funding to begin the development this year, which will cover the cost of laying underground the existing overhead cables and creating a new, safer entrance to the Park.

Preparation work commenced on the transfer of North Herefordshire Grounds Maintenance to Herefordshire Jarvis Services in April 2004.



Works started at Aylestone Park

Libraries Going Out with the Old and In with the New



New stock purchased for The Bromyard Centre included new media such as videos, DVDs and Playstation® games and has proved very popular.

Final arrangements for the 5th January opening of The Bromyard Centre included closing the old library, and relocating both newly purchased and all existing stock to the new multipurpose building. The facility was created by the ambitious re-development of the Bromyard Leisure Centre.

Consultation continued on the strategic document "An Eye on the Future", with the consultation period extended until February.

Work continued on the integration of Customer Service, Libraries & Information, with project teams drawn from staff examining key issues and reporting back by the end of March 2004.

Training began on new library management system interface to go live

in The Bromyard Centre and then rolled out across all sites by end March 2004.

Major building works were underway at Weobley Library which will, amongst other things, allow full disabled access to the facilities.

The Bromyard Centre—Two Months On

The Centre has seen significant increases in customer demand.

Library Stock: comparison of item-lending statistics for January and February 2004 with same period 2003 shows a 70% increase over all categories of stock. The total number of items issued in January and February 2004 was 10,362.

Membership: 842 new members have joined the library between 5th January and 8th March.

MONITORING OF 2003/2004 SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT REVENUE BUDGETS PERIOD 1-11

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

Wards Affected

Countywide

Purpose

1. To advise Members of the actual net revenue expenditure against budgets for Social and Economic Development service areas to period 11 of the financial year 2003-2004.

Financial Implications

2. All budget variances are to be noted within the context of the overall net revenue budgets for 2003-2004. Any over or underspends will be carried forward under the financial regulations of Herefordshire Council.

Considerations

3. The monitoring report for period 11 is attached as Appendix 1 for Members consideration, the report shows the revised budget, including carried forward over and underspends from 2002-03, with actual expenditure, variances and projected out-turns for the main service areas within Social and Economic Development.
4. For 2003-04 the budgets for some major items of expenditure such as grant payments to the Courtyard and the management fee to halo were profiled to closer reflect the planned payment timescales. Actual expenditure patterns have deviated from the planned profiles leading to variances against budgets. Budgets for 2004-05 will again be profiled, with the planned expenditure being informed by the actual activity for the current year. A greater focus will be placed on ensuring that expenditure follows the profile more closely in 2004-05.
5. Cultural Services shows a significant overspend for the period. This is due to the Courtyard being paid £91,000 of their 2004-05 grant in the current year. This will be adjusted for as part of the final accounts process. The current figures also include the value of the stocks held in TIC's. When these factors are taken account of, the outturn position for 2003-04 will be close to the budgeted expenditure for the year.
6. Prior to the transfer of works to Herefordshire Jarvis Services (HJS), grounds maintenance work undertaken by Herefordshire Commercial Services (HCS) was billed on a monthly basis at actual cost. Because the majority of grass cutting occurs in the summer months, a significant proportion of the total annual budget was spent during this period.

7. The payment method agreed with HJS for programmed grounds maintenance work is based on a straight-line payment of the total annual budget in equal monthly instalments. In a full financial year this would mean the total budget for the year being paid over on a monthly basis.
8. However, because the HJS contract commenced halfway through the current financial year, an adjustment is required to reflect the seasonality of the operation which will be made as part of the final accounts process. In addition, a detailed review of the allocation process for HJS costs will be undertaken prior to accounts closure to ensure all costs are correct. A further factor influencing the final outturn for Grounds Maintenance is the extent of land adopted as a consequence of planning obligations which has resulted in additional costs. Commuted sums have been received from developers.
9. It is proposed that the difference between the final outturn position and the £130,000 overspend previously identified will be met by a transfer from the commuted sums received. For 2004-05 onwards it is anticipated that charges from HJS will be constrained within the annual budget.
10. The expenditure on the Leisure Client heading has deviated from the profiled budget, resulting in a significant overspend variance at period 11. This is compounded by the property maintenance costs for which a budget will be allocated from the corporate property pool during the final accounts process. It is likely that there will be an overall underspend, however this will be used as a contribution towards the Health Spa account in the Social Development capital programme, which currently has a shortfall.
11. The Youth Service continues to underspend due to staff vacancies and the subsequent effect on operational budgets. The service has also generated income from rents and lettings well above the budget, which contributes towards the current underspend. As reported by the Youth Service Manager to this Committee on 5th February 2004, all budgets have been allocated to a programme of expenditure that will not be fully implemented until the recruitment drive is completed. An underspend of £120,000 is expected, although some of this relates to committed expenditure which may be spent early in 2004-05.
12. The premises costs of the Broad Street site in Hereford are split between the library and museum on a 50:50 basis. The recharge from Heritage to Libraries will not take place until the end of the financial year. Once this is completed it should bring overall Library expenditure close to the budget for the year, provided that budgets allocated towards meeting library standards are spent by year-end.
13. When the above transaction occurs this should result in an overall underspend for the Heritage Service, however any underspend has been committed towards the Friar Street Phase 2 project, so a revenue contribution will be made to the capital programme.
14. The accumulated deficit from the operation of Leisure Facilities prior to externalisation continues to be the subject of negotiations with halo. The deficit will be cleared in full by 2005. A number of utility bills dating from before the transfer have recently been received from West Mercia Supplies (WMS). Whilst these have been found to be a valid cost for the Council, WMS had continued to bill halo and the amounts have only recently been brought to

the Council's attention. The impact of these bills increases the deficit by £45,000.

15. Economic Development continues to demonstrate a significant underspend. Only a small proportion of the £150,000 carried forward from 2002-03 has been allocated and the relevant expenditure may not be incurred before the end of the financial year.
16. The Community Regeneration and Herefordshire Plan Support headings all include budget provision for contributions towards grant-funded schemes. To fit in with grant claiming procedures some contributions are not made until year-end, consequently expenditure appears below the budget.
17. There have been a number of staff vacancies during the year causing an overall underspend in employee budgets, which could total up to £50,000.
18. Taking all of the above into consideration there is likely to be an underspend of at least £140,000 to be carried forward, although the final figure is dependent on the level of contribution needed towards grant-funded schemes and the extent to which committed expenditure will be incurred in period 12.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the position be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- **None identified**

Appendix 1

Social & Economic Development Budget Monitoring Report for Period 11 2003-04

<u>Economic Development</u>	Total Budget £	Carry Forwards £	Revised Budget £	Actual to date £	budget to date £	variance £	%	Estimated Outturn £	variance £	%
Management and Administration	201,178	121,960	323,138	139,739	296,209	156,470	53	233,138	90,000	28
Herefordshire Plan and Support	508,055		508,055	405,553	465,717	60,164	13	473,055	35,000	7
Economic Investment and Development	404,837	28,040	432,877	340,716	396,804	56,088	14	432,877	0	0
Community Regeneration	965,375		965,375	650,632	884,927	234,295	26	950,375	15,000	2
Total	2,079,445	150,000	2,229,445	1,536,640	2,043,657	507,017	25	2,089,445	140,000	6

Analysis of Variances

Management and Admin: Part of the carry forward has now been allocated to specific one-off costs, although these may not all be incurred in the current financial year.
Herefordshire Plan: There is an underspend on employee costs due to short-term vacancies and staff turnover.

Economic Investment and Development: Budget includes provision for a number of feasibility studies not yet completed. Budget may have to be carried forward for these items.

Community Regeneration: Budget includes grants and partnership contributions yet to be paid. There is likely to be an underspend on employee costs.

Outturn Estimates

There has been a significant amount of staff turnover during the year which may result in an underspend on the employee budgets, although any savings generated through vacancies will be reduced by the cost of recruitment advertising to fill vacant posts.

The carried forward underspend from 2002-03 not yet allocated will again be carried forward. This is a prudent approach in anticipation of external funding reducing in future years.

7 WORK PROGRAMME

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. To consider and approve a work programme for the Committee

Financial Implications

2. None arising

Considerations

3. A draft work programme for 2004 and the beginning of 2005 is appended.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT the framework of the 2004/5 work programme, as set out at Appendix 1, be considered and adopted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None

SOCIAL AND ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – WORK PROGRAMME 2004/5

June 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance monitoring (outturns) • Budget outturns • Adult Learning Inspection progress • Staffing Report • Update on Festivals • South Wye • Herefordshire Plan – ambitions monitoring
September 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sickness figures • Performance monitoring (4/5 months) • Leisure Trust • Parks and open spaces • Implementation of Countryside Rights of Way Act • Hereford City – update on progress
December 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Internal Audit report • Performance monitoring (6months) • Staffing report • Herefordshire Plan Monitoring
January 2005	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Objective 2/RRZ/SRB/Leader + projects • Performance monitoring (8/9 months) • Parish Council Liaison • Levering of external funding – achievements • Adult Learning – results of re-inspection
April 2004	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Performance Monitoring (10 months) • Town Centre management

NB: Special joint seminar with Education Directorate and Connexions to be agreed.

