

A G E N D A

Social & Economic Development Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Wednesday, 14th January, 2004**

Time: **6.00 p.m.**

Place: **Maylord Orchards Meeting Room,
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, M.R. Cunningham, Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels, J.G.S. Guthrie,
B. Hunt, Mrs. R.F. Lincoln, P. G. Turpin and A.L. Williams

	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. CONSIDERATION OF THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF HEREFORD	1 - 2
The Committee will consider the economic impact of recent events in Hereford City and invite comment on possible ways forward.	
(a) the Chairman will outline the context to the meeting.	
(b) The Committee have invited a number of representatives of the business community to give evidence to the Committee on the economic impacts of recent events.	
(c) The Chairman will invite contributions from the floor of the meeting.	

PUBLIC INFORMATION

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Education, Environment, 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

The Public's Rights to Information and Attendance at Meetings

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.
- Copy any of the documents mentioned above to which you have a right of access, subject to a reasonable charge (10p per sheet).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, its Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.

Please Note:

Agenda and individual reports can be made available in large print, Braille or on tape. Please contact the officer named below in advance of the meeting who will be pleased to deal with your request.

A public telephone is available in the reception area.

If you have any questions about this Agenda, how the Council works or would like more information or wish to exercise your rights to access the information described above, you may do so either by telephoning Mr Paul James on 01432 260460 or by visiting in person during office hours (8.45 a.m. - 5.00 p.m. Monday - Thursday and 8.45 a.m. - 4.45 p.m. Friday) at the Council Offices, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford.

CONSIDERATION OF THE ECONOMIC POSITION OF HEREFORD

Report By: Director of Policy and Community

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

1. The Committee will consider the economic impact of recent events in Hereford City and invite comment on possible ways forward.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Considerations

3. Hereford City continues to perform the role as a major sub regional service and employment centre serving Herefordshire and beyond into mid Wales. The City has a catchment of approximately 200,000 people, who regularly use the City as a place to visit, shop, work, go to hospital, attend college etc.
4. The County has maintained relatively low levels of claimant unemployment with the latest figure of 1.5% at November 2003 being below both the regional (2.8%) and national (2.4%) averages. This however masks an underlying problem of low wage rates with wage levels being 13.2% below the regional average.
5. 2003 was a difficult year for the local economy of the City. 2003 saw the takeover of Bulmers by Scottish and Newcastle with the resultant loss of some 250 head office jobs from the company. Other well established businesses in the manufacturing sector also saw reductions in their labour force. At the end of the year the outbreak of Legionnaires disease also had significant economic impacts on the City, with in particular the retail sector being hit by a downturn in trade at the very time of the year when businesses most rely on increased turnover. This is against a background of national media reports, which indicated some changes in some shopping patterns generally.
6. A number of significant regeneration projects are proceeding/being developed in the City including
 - the successful South Wye Single Regeneration Budget (SRB) Programme,
 - a package of projects at Rotherwas,
 - the Hereford Learning Village,
 - the Edgar Street Grid proposals and

- the City of Living Craft.
7. However recent applications for funding have not all been successful. The Rotherwas Access Road and City of Living Craft schemes in particular now being in a position where they have to reapply and/or seek alternative sources of funding in order to proceed.
7. Within this context this special meeting of the Council's Social and Economic Development Scrutiny Committee has been organised. This meeting will provide an opportunity for representatives of the business community in the City centre to give evidence to the Council on the economic impacts of recent events and to make suggestions about initiatives which could be undertaken to improve the situation. The meeting will also be open to the public and contributions will be invited from the floor after nominated business representatives have given evidence. The results of the meeting will be referred to the appropriate Cabinet Member of the Council for their consideration.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT Members note the content of the report and consider any appropriate actions to aid the economic position of Hereford for referral to the appropriate Cabinet Member(s).

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- Not applicable.