

MINUTES of the meeting of Community Services Scrutiny Committee held at WRVS Riverside Community Centre, Vicarage Road, Hereford on Wednesday, 8th November, 2006 at 5.00 p.m.

Present:	Councillor	A.C.R. Chappell (Chairman)
	Councillor	H. Bramer (Vice Chairman)
	Councillors	B. Hunt and A.L. Williams
	Co-opted Members	Ms. B. Heavens (Tourism)

In attendance: Councillor J.C. Mayson (Cabinet Member – Rural Regeneration and Strategy) and Councillor R.M. Wilson (Cabinet Member – Resources)

25. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels, Councillor J.G.S. Guthrie, Councillor J.G. Jarvis, Councillor P.G. Turpin, Ms. C. Jones, Mr. G. Jones and Mrs. E. Newman.

26. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Ms. B. Heavens substituted for Mr. G. Jones.

27. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

28. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes for the meeting held on 18th October 2006 and reconvened on 20th October 2006, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

29. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY

No suggestions for future scrutiny were received.

30. CCTV IN HEREFORDSHIRE

Members were informed of the current financial and operational position of the Herefordshire Closed Circuit Television (CCTV) system.

The Chairman welcomed Debbie Stringer, CCTV Officer and Inspector Peter Gebbie, West Mercia Police, to the meeting.

Before the meeting Members of the Committee had visited the Herefordshire CCTV Control Room based at the Shirehall. The Control Room opened in June 2003 and it is operated by Remploy Managed Services who monitor 35 cameras in Hereford,

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Leominster, Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye.

The CCTV operation costs a total of £187,000 a year to run. Funding is provided from Herefordshire Council and appropriate Town Councils, including Hereford City Council, and the Police. This funding allows the CCTV Control Room to be staffed from 8.00a.m. - 1.00a.m. Monday-Thursday and 8.00a.m.-3.00a.m. Friday and Saturday. The CCTV Officer was currently investigating additional revenue streams which could increase the number of hours for when the Control Room was staffed. It was noted that revenue opportunities could be increased if the CCTV Control Room was staffed 24 hours a day 7 days a week.

The following are the principal points from the ensuing discussion:

- Known shoplifters were identified on entering the City each day and designated a number which was then used to communicate with shops and Police as it was illegal to give names over the radio.
- Only traffic problems above the normally expected levels were recorded.
- It was difficult to compare incidence figures nationally as each control room had its own individual way of recording incidents. The Public CCTV Managers Association was beginning to develop a national framework. The categories used in Herefordshire had been drawn up with the help of the Police.
- CCTV funding and provision was considered to be piecemeal.
- It was acknowledged that Control Room operation could be improved by increasing the number of hours it was open and by employing additional staff at known peak times.
- Herefordshire were the only division in the force which contributed financially to the cost of operating a CCTV monitoring system.
- The Police asked the CCTV Control Room to alert them to incidents as and when they happened. The Police would either then deploy officers to the scene or ask the incident to be monitored and to be up dated on the situation when it changed.
- The Police also use the CCTV Control Room to carry out checks on incidents to provide evidence to Officers on the scene.
- New Police Officers were not made aware of CCTV Camera locations as a part of their induction but it was something that they soon picked up whilst on duty.
- Enquire's to the Crown Prosecution Service had revealed that there was no qualitative data available to evaluate the success of CCTV images in gaining successful prosecutions. Although Inspector Gebbie was able to add that CCTV images did help secure prosecutions and admissions of guilt.
- Additional funding had recently been secured through Section 106 agreements through the planning process which had seen recent city centre developments in Hereford approved with a condition that one off funding is provided towards CCTV provision.
- It was suggested that funding may also be forthcoming from businesses at Rotherwas and Belmont Road, Hereford and through licensees operating under the Herefordshire Against Night time Disorder (HAND) Scheme as well as through the various departments at Herefordshire Council.

The Chairman thanked the CCTV Officer and Inspector Gebbie for attending the meeting and invited them back to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

31. REFURBISHMENT OF HEREFORD CITY CENTRE

The Committee considered the process undertaken in respect of the refurbishments

to Hereford City Centre.

The Head of Economic and Community Services gave a presentation to the Committee on the key points that had taken place with regard to the refurbishment of Hereford City Centre. The following are the principal points from her presentation:

- Work on the refurbishment commenced on 8 May 2006 and the current phase of the work was to be completed by 24 November 2006.
- The last phase of the work currently being completed was around the Old House where a small seating area was being constructed. Quality wooden slated benches with arms and backs were chosen following criticism of the stainless steel backless benches installed during the Eign Gate refurbishment.
- Features already added in the High Town area included: lights depicting the location of the old Market Hall; tall, black lighting columns which light up surrounding buildings as well as hold Christmas lights; marquee and power points; and a dedicated fitting for the City's Christmas tree.
- Features to be added in January after the Christmas season were Heritage Pathways, whereby brass wording would be inlaid into the paving containing historical information or directions to another area of the City. Work was also set to take place to extend the works into Widemarsh Street and the potential of extending the work into Commercial Road was being investigated. Traffic signs were also to be installed to allow prosecutions to take place against vehicles stopping in partially pedestrianised area.
- It was acknowledged that the new flush paving and road surfaces had caused some difficulties for those people with visual impairments. The Committee were pleased to note that steps were being taken to remedy this problem.
- Disappointment was expressed about the colour of the new stones as they were already becoming stained and difficult to clean. It was asserted that this problem could be overcome by amending the approach to street cleaning in the refurbished area and that this problem was currently being addressed with the Council's contractors.
- It was suggested that the responsibilities of all people in maintaining the cleanliness of the City Centre be emphasised. This included educating people how to dispose of chewing gum correctly with offenders being prosecuted for simply throwing it onto the floor.
- The lighting columns in High Town had been applied with a greasy surface to make climbing difficult.
- A Member called for the street cleaner in High Town to be retained as he completed an essential and excellent job in maintaining standards in the City Centre.
- Once the works were completed management of the area would be bestowed on the Environment Directorate who would be responsible for any operations taking place in the City Centre, including ensuring that all surfaces were restored after any required underground work by utilities organisations.

Finally, the Committee wished it to be noted that the contractor completing the works, Wrekin Construction, had been excellent.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

32. THE BRIAN HATTON COLLECTION

The Committee was updated on the position in respect of the Brian Hatton Collection.

Mrs. Jean O'Donnell asked the following questions which had been submitted in

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advance of the meeting:

1. What reason does the Herefordshire Council have for refusing to have a member of the Hatton family as a trustee of the Hatton Charity when a family member donated the collection and money to the then City Council?

2. When will the terms of the will of Marjorie Hatton be kept? This stated that a gallery was to be built to show her brothers' pictures on three walls this has been closed and not replaced after five years.

3. What is the long term future of Churchill House? When will it be restored to the City that purchased it in 1965 as an amenity for the local citizens to enjoy?

The Head of Economic and Community Services explained that the Council was the sole trustee of the Hatton Collection which was agreed by the Charity Commission. The Trust was set up to display and care for the collection with the Council being the only organisation to be able to do this considering the resources needed and the staff capability.

The paintings by Brian Hatton are displayed on the walls at the Hereford Museum and Art Gallery. There will be a dedicated exhibition of the Hatton Collection, funding permitting. The Collection will also be made available on the internet providing access to the Collection on a global scale.

Churchill House is currently leased to Hereford College of Art and Design to support the artistic and creative talent of future generations.

The Cabinet Member (Resources) added that Churchill House would be included in the Council's strategic property review but for the time being it was leased by the Herefordshire College of Art and Design so any review would have to wait until the lease on the premises had lapsed.

Mrs O'Donnell continued by explaining that she thought that the use of the building for performing arts was a potentially detrimental use of the premises. She added that the appearance of exterior of the building had deteriorated substantially since the building had been externally leased. Examples of problems were graffiti on the City Coat of Arms and the building's foundation stone as well as overgrown foliage.

Mr James, Hereford Resident, added that he felt that the Council was morally obliged to keep to the terms set out in Marjorie Hatton's will and that he thought it inconceivable that a member of the Hatton family should be refused a place as a Trustee of the Hatton Collection.

It was explained that as only the Local Authority had the resources to care for the Hatton Collection then the Charity Commission had been agreeable to current membership of the Trust.

Mr James added that the Hatton Family wanted a voice on the Trust and the future of the Hatton Collection. He stated that the Collection did not have to remain at Churchill House but a Hatton Gallery could be opened elsewhere in Hereford.

The Committee expressed the view that they saw no harm in the Hatton Family being granted membership of the Hatton Collection Trust. Moreover, they felt it would be a positive factor as the family member would be able to drive the Trust forward as well as potentially opening the door to external funding streams.

RESOLVED:

That the Cabinet Member (Community Services) review the role of the Hatton Family as Trustees of the Hatton Collection and their future involvement with the Trust and management of the Hatton Collection.

33. MONITORING OF 2005-06 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET TO PERIOD 6

The Committee was advised of the actual net revenue expenditure against budget for Economic and Community Services to period 6 of the financial year 2006-07.

The Director of Adult and Community Services reported that there were no significant areas of concern to note and that the majority of services were on budget. He explained to the Committee that the Council was still carrying forward a deficit of £134,000 in respect of the Council's former Leisure Services which it had taken on to enable Halo Leisure Services Ltd to begin trading with a healthy balance sheet. This deficit was to be reduced in the future through savings made within the overall budgets.

The Committee noted that a management plan was underway to prevent an overspend on grounds maintenance.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

34. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee considered its work programme for the remainder of 2006/07.

In addition to the items already listed in its work programme the Committee agreed to the following additional items:

- December: Annual Report from the Cabinet Member for Rural Regeneration and Strategy.
- March: round up of all the issues that the Committee has dealt with since May 2003.

It was noted that the Hereford City Partnership Review Group was still ongoing and set for completion in the New Year. The Committee also anticipated a response to its follow up Review of the Courtyard Centre for the Arts.

RESOLVED: That the additions to the work programme be approved and reported to the Strategic Monitoring Committee.

The meeting ended at 6.35 p.m.

CHAIRMAN