

A G E N D A

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Wednesday, 8th November, 2006**

Time: **5.00 p.m.**

Place: **WRVS Riverside Community
Centre, Vicarage Road, Hereford**

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

For any further information please contact:

*Craig Goodall, Members' Services,
Tel/Fax:01432 260445*

email - cgoodall@herefordshire.gov.uk

**County of Herefordshire
District Council**

AGENDA

for the Meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee

To:	Councillor	A.C.R. Chappell (Chairman)
	Councillor	H. Bramer (Vice-Chairman)
	Councillors	R.B.A. Burke, M.R. Cunningham, Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels, J.G.S. Guthrie, B. Hunt, J.G. Jarvis, D.C. Taylor, P.G. Turpin and A.L. Williams
	Co-opted Members	Ms. C. Jones (Chamber of Commerce), G. Jones (Tourism Sector), Mrs. E. Newman (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils) and Mr. P. Thomas (Herefordshire NFU)

	Pages
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
To receive apologies for absence.	
2. NAMED SUBSTITUTES	
To receive 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	1 - 14
To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 18th October 2006 and reconvened on 20th October 2006.	
5. SUGGESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC ON ISSUES FOR FUTURE SCRUTINY	
To consider suggestions from members of the public on issues the Committee could scrutinise in the future.	
6. CCTV IN HEREFORDSHIRE	15 - 18
To inform Members of the current financial and operational position of the Herefordshire CCTV system.	
7. REFURBISHMENT OF HEREFORD CITY CENTRE	19 - 22
To consider the process that was undertaken in respect of the refurbishments to Hereford City Centre.	

8. THE BRIAN HATTON COLLECTION	23 - 24
To update Members on the position in respect of the Brian Hatton Collection	
9. MONITORING OF 2005-06 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET TO PERIOD 6	25 - 28
To advise Members of the actual net revenue expenditure against budget for Economic and Community Services to period 6 of the financial year 2006-07.	
10. WORK PROGRAMME	29 - 32
To consider the Committee work programme for the remainder of 2006/07.	

PUBLIC INFORMATION

HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL'S SCRUTINY COMMITTEES

The Council has established Scrutiny Committees for Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing, Childrens' Services, Community Services, Environment, and Health. A Strategic Monitoring Committee scrutinises corporate 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

PUBLIC INFORMATION

Public Involvement at Scrutiny Committee Meetings

You can contact Councillors and Officers at any time about Scrutiny Committee matters and issues which you would like the Scrutiny Committees to investigate.

There are also two other ways in which you can directly contribute at Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committee meetings.

1. Identifying Areas for Scrutiny

At the meeting the Chairman will ask the members of the public present if they have any issues which they would like the Scrutiny Committee to investigate, however, there will be no discussion of the issue at the time when the matter is raised. Councillors will research the issue and consider whether it should form part of the Committee's work programme when compared with other competing priorities.

Please note that the Committees can only scrutinise items which fall within their specific remit (see below). If a matter is raised which falls within the remit of another Scrutiny Committee then it will be noted and passed on to the relevant Chairman for their consideration.

2. Questions from Members of the Public for Consideration at Scrutiny Committee Meetings and Participation at Meetings

You can submit a question for consideration at a Scrutiny Committee meeting so long as the question you are asking is directly related to an item listed on the agenda. If you have a question you would like to ask then please submit it **no later than two working days before the meeting** to the Committee Officer. This will help to ensure that an answer can be provided at the meeting. Contact details for the Committee Officer can be found on the front page of this agenda.

Generally, members of the public will also be able to contribute to the discussion at the meeting. This will be at the Chairman's discretion.

(Please note that the Scrutiny Committees are not able to discuss questions relating to personal or confidential issues.)

Remits of Herefordshire Council's Scrutiny Committees

Adult Social Care and Strategic Housing

*Statutory functions for adult social services including:
Learning Disabilities
Strategic Housing
Supporting People
Public Health*

Children's Services

Provision of services relating to the well-being of children including education, health and social care.

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

*Libraries
Cultural Services including heritage and tourism
Leisure Services
Parks and Countryside
Community Safety
Economic Development
Youth Services*

Health

*Planning, provision and operation of health services affecting the area
Health Improvement
Services provided by the NHS*

Environment

*Environmental Issues
Highways and Transportation*

Strategic Monitoring Committee

*Corporate Strategy and Finance
Resources
Corporate and Customer Services
Human Resources*

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 five 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 Cabinet and 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, Cabinet, 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 (20p per sheet subject to a maximum of £5.00 per agenda plus a nominal fee of £1.50 for postage).
- Access to this summary of your rights as members of the public to attend meetings of the Council, Cabinet, Committees and Sub-Committees and to inspect and copy documents.

Please Note:

Agenda and individual reports can be made available in large print. Please contact the officer named on the front cover of this agenda **in advance** of the meeting who will be pleased to deal with your request.

The Venue where the meeting will be held is accessible for visitors in wheelchairs, for whom toilets are also available.

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 the officer named on the front cover of this agenda 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.



Where possible this agenda is printed on paper made from 100% Post-Consumer waste. De-inked without bleaching and free from optical brightening agents (OBA). Awarded the Nordic Swan for low emissions during production and the Blue Angel environmental label.

WRVS – RIVERSIDE COMMUNITY CENTRE



**WRVS
Riverside
Community
Centre**

FIRE AND EMERGENCY EVACUATION PROCEDURE

In the event of a fire or emergency the alarm bell will ring continuously.

You should vacate the building in an orderly manner through the nearest available fire exit and congregate in the car park and follow the instructions of the fire warden.

COUNTY OF HEREFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Community Services Scrutiny Committee held at St Katherine's Hall, Ledbury. Committee Members only. on Wednesday, 18th October, 2006 at 7.00 p.m. and reconvened at 12.45 p.m. at the Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Friday, 20th October 2006

Present on 18th October:

Councillor A.C.R. Chappell (Chairman)
Councillor H. Bramer (Vice Chairman)

Councillors B.F. Ashton, Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels, B. Hunt, J.G. Jarvis, G. Lucas and D.C. Taylor

Co-opted Members Mr A. Blackshaw (Tourism), Mrs. E. Newman (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils) and Mr G. Woodman (Chamber of Commerce)

Present on 20th October

Councillor A.C.R. Chappell (Chairman)
Councillor H. Bramer (Vice Chairman)

Councillors B.F. Ashton, B. Hunt, J.G. Jarvis, G. Lucas and D.C. Taylor

Co-opted Members Mrs. E. Newman (Herefordshire Association of Local Councils) and Mr G. Woodman (Chamber of Commerce)

In attendance on 18th October: Councillors D.W. Rule MBE (Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member – Children and Young People), R.V. Stockton (Cabinet Member – Community Services) and R.M. Wilson (Cabinet Member – Resources)

In attendance on 20th October: Councillor R.V. Stockton (Cabinet Member – Community Services)

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor R.B.A. Burke, Councillor M.R. Cunningham, Councillor J.G.S. Guthrie, Councillor P.G. Turpin, Councillor A.L. Williams, Mr. G. Jones and Ms. C. Jones for the meeting on 18th October 2006.

Additional apologies were received from Councillor Mrs. S.P.A. Daniels, Councillor R.M. Wilson (Cabinet Member – Resources) and Mr. A. Blackshaw for the reconvened meeting on the 20th October 2006.

19. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor B.F. Ashton, Councillor G. Lucas and Mr G. Woodman substituted for Councillor M.R. Cunningham, Councillor J.G.S. Guthrie and Ms C. Jones respectively on 18th October 2006 and at the reconvened meeting on 20th October 2006.

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2006

Mr. A. Blackshaw substituted for Mr. G. Jones on 18th October 2006 only.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor J.G. Jarvis declared a personal interest in Item 7.

21. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the minutes for the meeting held on 16th June 2006 be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

No suggestions from members of the public were received.

23. PERFORMANCE MONITORING

Members were informed about the available performance indicators position and provided with information about current performance management work within the economic and community services division of the Community Services directorate.

The following are the principle points from the ensuing discussion:

- In relation to BVPI 178 'the percentage of total length of footpaths and public rights of way which were easy to use by members of the public' a view was expressed that many of the county's footpaths were in a poor condition and that this should be addressed due to the high number of visitors that they attracted to the county. The Head of Economic and Community Services agreed that footpaths were an important feature of the County's tourism attraction and highlighted that £25,000 had been awarded from the Local Transport Plan funding for footpaths and public rights of way. It was also noted that footpaths were now under the management of the Parks, Countryside and Leisure Development Manager.
- It was stated that the target for 'number of working days/shifts lost annually to sickness absence per full time equivalent employee' needed consideration and that a private sector business would strive for a target much lower than the current target of 9 days per employee per annum.
- It was noted that the Chamber of Commerce and Advantage West Midlands had assisted with 45 business start up grants which had been awarded.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

24. CALL-IN OF JOINT CABINET MEMBER (COMMUNITY SERVICES AND RESOURCES) DECISION TO RELOCATE LEDBURY TOURIST INFORMATION CENTRE

The Committee considered the joint decision of the Cabinet Members for Community Services and Resources to relocate Ledbury Tourist Information Centre (TIC) which had been called in by three Members of the Committee.

The stated reason for the call-in was: 'in view of public concern to seek confirmation that appropriate consultation had been carried out about the proposed relocation of the TIC and that the proposal was feasible, financially viable, value for money and the best solution.'

The report to the Cabinet Members setting out the basis for the decision to relocate the TIC from the Homend to the Masters House at St Katherine's was appended to the report together

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2006

with the associated decision notice.

The Chairman explained the Scrutiny Committee's role for the benefit of the public present, emphasising in particular that the Committee did not have the power to take decisions. Having listened to the evidence presented to it the Committee would decide whether or not to make recommendations to the Cabinet Members, who it would expect to take account of the Committee's comments in revisiting their decision. He explained that, as indicated in the report, having heard the evidence presented to it, it was proposed that the Committee would adjourn and reconvene at 12.45 pm on Friday, 20th October, 2006 at the Council's offices at Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford. He made clear that that meeting too would be open to the public.

He outlined the order in which he proposed to invite speakers. He added that having received a number of questions, covering a range of aspects, from members of the public he did not intend to invite further questions at the meeting. An answer would be given during the meeting to the principal points raised in the questions which had been received and each person who had submitted a response would receive a written reply in due course. The principal comments made by each of those invited to speak is set out below.

Natalia Silver, Head of Economic and Community Services

The Head of Economic and Community Services reported that the Council wanted to be in a position to act when the lease of the current TIC premises expired on 31st August, 2007. The plan was to start work in December/January so that the TIC would be closed during a quieter period. The importance of the TIC to Herefordshire and to Ledbury was recognised and the Council's proposals were intended to enhance it.

She said that there were three main reasons for the proposed relocation:

- The Council rented the current property but owned the Masters House to which it was proposed the TIC should relocate. The saving on rent and reduced rates amounted to £24,000 pa.
- The relocation would bring part of the Masters House back into use. There had been criticism of it in its current, boarded up state. By using part of it the building would be brought back to life. Vandalism would also be reduced as a consequence, resulting in a cost saving.
- The nature of tourism was changing. The use of the internet for tourism was increasing as evidenced by the increase in useage of the Visit Herefordshire website year on year. Powys and Welsh authorities generally had reduced the number of TICs considerably and Devon County Council only operated one strategic TIC. She still believed there was value in a TIC in Ledbury and the personal contact that this could offer, noting the age profile of visitors to Herefordshire. However, market forces would require the Council to address its investment in TICs. The need to consider the position in Ledbury now had become pressing because of the expiry date of the lease on its current premises.

She then replied to the principal points made in the questions received from members of the public. Copies of letters received had been provided to Members of the Committee and the Public. The questions and responses minuted below have been summarised.

Mr Barnes, Ledbury Resident, asked:

Will the Committee please provide details of the investment appraisals of all the options considered for the future of Ledbury Tourist Information Centre and indicate the savings that it expects to achieve from its preferred option?

again?

The reason the TIC was relocating in January when the existing lease on the current site still had time to run was to move the TIC before the start of the new tourist season. The new address of the TIC could then be included in all relevant publications. The Council would not be sub-letting the current premises to another tenant but would continue to use the building in order to redirect people to the Master's House and promote businesses in the windows. No confirmation had been received from the current TIC's landlord that the rent would not rise when it was reviewed in the summer of 2007. It was also not possible to guarantee a full refurbishment of the Master's House as the full costs were likely to be in the region of £2-4m as it was a Grade II* listed building.

Mr Eager, Ledbury Resident and Retailer, asked:

Have any other locations other than the Master's House been investigated as possible locations for the TIC, particularly the Barrett Browning Institute or the site of the former Jobcentre?

The Master's House has been empty for four years and Herefordshire Council has not put any funds aside for major refurbishment or change of use. It seems that Herefordshire Council has no intention of investing in this building to bring it back into community use. Why has Herefordshire Council abandoned this building and fed the local public with misinformation?

At a Town Council meeting, Natalia Silver, Head of Economic & Community Services, made two comments that I would like explaining. Firstly, how is the Master's House an 'Historical Asset' and secondly, what is meant by the building could be used for 'Community Heritage'? The loss of the Master's House would be insignificant and it should be replaced in the form of a new library with community services.

Will the Committee admit that there has never been any intention to restore the Master's House or to act in the wishes of local bodies opposed to the TIC relocation?

Will the Committee also agree that the consultation process being held is merely a 'democratic exercise' to pacify objectors?

It was explained that the reason other buildings had not been considered was because the Master's House was owned by the Council and if one of the suggested buildings was used then no saving would be made with regard to rent. The Council was committed to the Master's House and had housed the Info Shop in there for many years. In addition a Heritage Lottery Fund application to improve the Master's House was in progress but this was a phased approach and would take time to deliver. The Master's House was a 'historical asset' as evidenced by the fact it was a Grade II* Listed building by English Heritage. 'Community Heritage' was one of the many activities which could take place in the Master's House in the future but this would be part of the consultation process with local people and interested parties. It was not possible to replace the Master's House as it was a listed building.

Sue and Barry Sharples, Ledbury Residents, submitted the following question:

It makes sense to sell the Master's House to a developer and for the Council to purchase another building in the heart of Ledbury.

Pat Strauss, Ledbury Resident, submitted the following similar question:

To what extent has the Council investigated the financial viability of selling the Master's House?

It was anticipated that it would be difficult to sell the Masters House to a developer due to the

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2006

many restrictions placed on its development by English Heritage. Some walls in the Master's House were not even allowed to have nails in them.

Susan Stone, Ledbury Resident, asked the following question:

Do not relocate the TIC until the Master's House has been renovated. If the long term plan is not to relocate the TIC to the Master's House then what is in store for it?

Market forces have dictated that the TIC should relocate. It is the long term plan to relocate the TIC to the Master's House and any future development could include a tourism provision that attracts both visitors and local people.

Elizabeth Wreford, Ledbury Resident, asked:

What informal and formal surveys of visitors have been carried out? Have parking, routes for pedestrians including the disabled and access been considered?

No formal surveys have been carried out on where people would like the TIC located. A wider visitor survey was currently on going covering the whole of the County. There are 12.5m visitors to the County each year and only 300,000 use TIC's therefore the majority of visitors don't use TIC's. Parking, including disabled parking would be greatly improved if the TIC relocated to the Master's House as there is on site parking for disabled people in the St Katherine's car park.

Tony Bradford, Ledbury Resident, asked the following question:

Why was Ledbury Jobcentre closed and not provided the promised facilities in the Master's House? The only promised facility provided, a telephone, is presently not working.

The closure of the Jobcentre+ was not a local authority decision but one that was made at Jobcentre+ regional offices who decided not to take up the offer of a space for face to face interviews in the Master's House. Sympathy was expressed about the situation.

In response to requests to comment on the replies given the Chairman advised that as he had indicated at the outset he did not intend to invite further question or comment from the public. Some dissatisfaction was expressed by Members of the public at this approach.

Mr Clive Jupp - Mayor of Ledbury Town Council

Mr Jupp explained to the Committee that the TIC was vital to the economic future of Ledbury. He understood that the internet was an increasingly used source of tourist information but commented that in his personal experience TIC's delivered local knowledge that could not be communicated on-line.

He commented that the Master's House had been empty for too long. The Council had promised a new library in the Master's House but this had not come to fruition.

He regarded that this meeting was the first time the people of Ledbury had been consulted about the relocation of the TIC into the Master's House.

Mr Roger Payne – Ledbury Development Trust

Mr Payne explained that the Trust was a Company Limited by Guarantee, incorporated in January 2005, with the aim of benefiting the people of Ledbury. An example of its work was the successful plan to develop the redundant Cottage Hospital building for affordable housing and working space.

He did not consider that the approach to the development of the Masters House and the

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2006

relocation of the TIC had been handled as well. However, his intention was to offer a constructive way forward in the belief that the development of the Masters House represented a great opportunity. He outlined a four point approach:

1. To request the Council to do nothing for three – four months. This meant neither relocating the TIC nor doing anything else to the Masters House during this time.
2. The Development Trust would use this time to take the lead and work with other key organisations to develop a Business Plan for the TIC and the Masters House. There were 385 Development Trusts across the Country and several good examples to draw from in preparing a business plan for the Masters House. The business plan would examine how to fund the £3-4 million needed to develop the Masters House and what income generating activities it could develop. It would be a practical document into which the community as a whole would have an input.
3. That the Council should indicate that if the business plan was successful it would be willing to transfer the asset to a formally constituted community organisation. Such an approach would be consistent with the Government's indication of support for transferring assets to local communities, expected to be set out formally in a White Paper in the Spring of 2007.
4. That the Council should make a significant contribution to the estimated £30,000 it would cost to fund the Business Plan.

He added that the TIC was very successful in its current location with some 80,000 visitors. He was concerned at the prospect of the TIC moving on a temporary basis. The best approach was to look at its future as part of the business plan. He had an office in the Masters House and believed that the cost of the refurbishment necessary to facilitate a relocation would be considerable. It would also only be a partial refurbishment and it would be unlikely to be sufficient to make the building attractive to visitors.

Mr A Ward – Ledbury Tourist Association

Mr Ward commented on the important role played by the TIC positioned in the heart of the Town. He said that the window displays in the TIC had been a lifeline/of great benefit to a lot of small businesses. The TIC had been visited by 80,000 in the previous year and many more drew information from the window displays.

He was concerned that a move to the Masters House in a partially renovated state would give the wrong impression and diminish something which, had to date, worked well.

He had contacted Salisbury TIC as winner of the Centre for Excellence South West Tourism awards. That building was situated just off the market square in a pedestrianised area with a stopping off point for coaches and he thought there were a number of ideas they had that could be applied in Ledbury. However, that TIC had only received 156,000 visitors which he suggested was drawn from a far bigger base than Ledbury.

If it were concluded that a move was necessary, rather than move in haste, he said the relocation should take place when it was confirmed that it would be feasible for it to be a permanent rather than a temporary move and when the Masters House had been properly renovated.

Mr K Francis – Ledbury and District Civic Society (LDCS)

Mr Francis said that many of the points he would have made had already been made. The LDCS' AGM in April had attracted 120 people showing the strength of feeling against the relocation of the TIC. This was supported by a petition opposing the move signed by 3,000 people.

The TIC had had 80,000 visitors last year and 70,000 this year to date, which was 10,000 visits higher than the same time last year.

He reiterated the importance of the display windows to local craftsmen and businesses.

The development of the Market House as a Community Project was an attractive option. It was noted that consideration of the building's use had been ongoing now for a number of years. The Ledbury Regeneration Partnership, operating under the Market Towns Initiative, had commissioned a Strategic Implementation Plan from Staffordshire University to inform development from 2005-2011. This was available on the website of the Development Trust and Staffordshire University.

This had identified three areas for consideration: accessing and developing future employment; developing retail and the visitor economy; and involving youth and community.

The Development Trust had pursued these ideas and the development of the redundant Cottage Hospital building for affordable housing and working space was an example.

A Civic Society Working Group had met Mr Payne and fully supported a major renovation scheme.

An integrated and overarching vision for development was required rather than the piecemeal approach to moving the TIC, whose current location had contributed significantly to its success.

The Chairman congratulated the Development Trust on its success in the development of the former cottage hospital site.

Councillor R.V. Stockton (Cabinet Member – Community Services)

Councillor Stockton said that his aim was to improve Ledbury. Circumstances did change. He welcomed the ideas advanced by Mr Payne and was happy to discuss a way forward with the relevant associations.

He noted that funding from national level, for example, the National Heritage Lottery Fund would be required if a major scheme were to be undertaken. However, he believed that the complex of buildings, of which the Masters House formed a part, was unique in England.

Councillor R.M. Wilson - Cabinet Member (Resources)

Councillor Wilson explained that expenditure on Education, Social Care and Highways accounted for some 80% of the Council's expenditure. This left 20% to finance all the other services the Council provided. A number of these other services had statutorily to be provided. This meant that expenditure on non-statutory services was looked at particularly closely. Government funding did not favour rural areas and Herefordshire Council was funded at 21% below the average of other unitary authorities. There were therefore pressures on the Council's finances

He added that a commitment had been given not to sell any of the County's iconic buildings which would include the Masters House.

He was willing to listen to ideas put forward but had to be mindful of the financial constraints within which the Council was operating.

In the ensuing discussion the following principal points were made:

Asked whether the Council would be prepared to let another organisation take over the TIC Councillor Stockton replied that he would be prepared to ask Cabinet to consider any such proposal.

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2006

Asked whether the Town Council and the Tourist Association would be prepared to take over the lease of the current TIC site the Mayor said that the Town Council would consider the position but no formal decision had been taken and this would need time.

The question of the lease on the current TIC premises was discussed. It had been suggested that the landlord would be prepared to freeze any rent increase.

The Property Services Manager reported that no freeze had been offered during negotiations. In the current market a rent increase of between 5-8% might be expected to be discussed. He added that the current lease was for 12 years.

It was asked why the Council had not come up with a Business Plan itself. In reply the Head of Economic and Community Services referred to the three-stage process for securing funding from the National Heritage Lottery Fund. The next stage of that process was what was called an Audience Development Plan, which is similar to a business plan, and would explore potential usage of the building.

On the question of whether the TIC were relocated to the Masters House now would this be temporary, the Property Services Manager said this would not be known until the renovation plan was produced whether the TIC would have to move out of the Masters House during these works.

It was suggested that since the Masters House had been boarded up for 4 years there now appeared to be a panic to bring it back into use with an interim solution which would not serve the TIC well.

The Head of Economic and Community Services commented that it would take up to 2 years to undertake a complete refurbishment. There was a question as to whether bringing the building back into partial use was preferable to leaving it boarded up during this time.

The Cultural Services Manager was asked whether any alternative locations for the TIC had been considered. She said that none had been because for the last four years the intention had been to locate the TIC in the Masters House as part of a cultural package.

Asked about the location of other TICs she noted that in 1996 a purpose built TIC for Brecon had been constructed in the Town's main car park, not on the main street, which contained both long-term and short-term car parking.

In relation to the provision of TICs in Devon she clarified that a decision had been taken to create one strategic TIC for the County. A number of the TICs which were to close had been taken over by Development Associations.

It was suggested that there had been a lack of consultation about the proposed relocation. The Head of Economic and Community Services referred to a number of meetings at which the proposed relocation had been discussed and correspondence on the matter including:

- Presentation to Civic Society AGM on 21 April 2006 – attended by 120 people
- Community Services Scrutiny Committee meetings on 5 October and 20 December 2005
- Tourism Association meeting attended by 40 people on 16 November 2004
- Open day at the TIC for approximately 30 operators in the Ledbury area on 26 February 2004.

However, whilst noting that the issue had been in the public domain for a number of years, representatives present maintained that this had not been in the form of a proper consultation exercise.

The Chairman of the Ledbury and District Tourism Association noted that the Association had been presented with a scheme involving the full scale £3-4 million redevelopment of the Masters House of which the relocation of the TIC formed part. It had agreed with the complete

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2006

scheme in principle. What was now being proposed was something entirely different.

The Mayor of the Town Council said that whilst the matter had been discussed many times it had never been presented with plans and options. Only one option was now being proposed, and this was at the last minute.

The meeting was advised that the revenue saving generated by the relocation would be retained within the relevant service budget but that budget as a whole would be subject to review in preparing the Council's budget for 2007/08.

A question was asked about the implications for the Council's balance sheet of transferring the Market House to a Community Organisation. In reply Mr Payne said he did not have the precise practical details of how such transfers were arranged. However, as he had stated earlier the principle was one which the Government was advocating. He also gave the example of Galleria, at Caernarfon as a thriving example of where an asset had been transferred to a Development Trust, and where the success of that project had led to redevelopment of other buildings.

Further concern was expressed that the Council was in danger of taking a short term view.

Ledbury TIC was congratulated on the fact that its visitors accounted for 30% of all visits to TICs in the County.

Mr Payne was asked to elaborate on his proposal. He reiterated that his intention was to propose a way forward which would generate community involvement and leadership in developing a firm Plan which would also set out how funding would be secured and future income generated. He added that he would envisage part of the funding for the Plan's preparation being raised locally, with contributions from the Development Trust Association and Advantage West Midlands. However, he would look to a significant contribution, say 50%, from Herefordshire Council.

In relation to funding for the Plan, a suggestion was made that Ledbury Town Council might wish to consider increasing its precept to fund a Plan designed to benefit Ledbury. The Mayor replied that the Town already made a significant contribution to the County Council's finances as a whole.

Mr Payne was pressed on the suggested 3-4 month timescale for producing a business plan and for an indication as to what it might contain.

He replied that he considered the timescale realistic and reasonable. The Plan was far more complex than that for the redevelopment of the Cottage Hospital which had involved far fewer partners and had taken about 1 month to complete. He had not started work to date because funding was not in place to support the Plan's preparation. He did have some thoughts as to what the Plan might contain but considered that the proper approach was to produce the Plan. There would be reports at interim stages during the 3-4 month period to enable the proposed direction to be checked with partners.

He confirmed that the Plan would address all aspects of the use of the Masters House and the TIC including taking over the lease of the TIC. He repeated that he thought any relocation should be put on hold pending the completion of the Business Plan.

He added that Development Trusts were well aware of the potential for transferred assets to become a liability which would be why proposals for income generation would be such an important part of any Business Plan.

The Head of Economic and Community Services observed that if a Business Plan were to be produced and completed in March 2007 the implication was that the TIC could potentially face a move in the middle of the Tourist Season given the expiry of the current lease in August 2007.

Mr Payne commented that on the basis of a meeting with the Landlord he believed that there would be some flexibility. The Property Services Manager indicated that he had had no indication to that effect. The Committee requested that clarification be requested from the landlord before the Committee reconvened on 20th October.

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2006

It was noted that the Council was being presented with a request for £15,000 which would also entail the loss of the saving it was intended to achieve by the proposed relocation. In total therefore some £40,000 was involved. The Committee needed some assurance that if it were to recommend that a business plan were to be produced it had sound reasons for doing so and it therefore required some information from Mr Payne on his proposals.

Mr Payne agreed to provide some proposals to the Committee in time for its meeting on Friday.

It was noted that the cost of the conservation report on the Masters House which the Council had commissioned had been just under £10,000.

Asked about staffing matters the Head of Economic and Community Services said that it would be envisaged that current staff would move to work at the Masters House. Customer feedback on the current TIC was very good and the intention would be to maintain that quality of service. She noted also that it was important not to overlook the fact that the Council's Info shop was located in the Masters House.

Invited to sum up the Mayor thanked the Committee for the opportunity to debate the issues. He suggested that if the Council did not support the development of a business plan as proposed it would have to commit money to a plan of its own in any event.

He commented that the TIC service was excellent but the recent decision that rather than continue to have its own dedicated supervisor, a supervisor should be appointed to cover both Ledbury and Ross-on-Wye TICs, already represented a diminution in service.

He supported the views expressed by Mr Payne about the comparative scale of the projects to develop the former Cottage Hospital and the Masters House.

He would be happy to raise the option of the Town Council taking over the running of the TIC but would expect the Council's current level of committed expenditure on running the TIC, aside from the lease and rent to be maintained were that option to be pursued.

He thanked those Associations who had already voluntarily given a lot of time to finding alternatives.

Mr Payne referred to his earlier four proposals which he had intended to offer as a constructive way forward and confirmed that he would submit further information to the Committee by Friday.

The meeting adjourned at 9.02 p.m.

The meeting reconvened at 12.45 p.m. on 20th October 2006 in the Council Chamber, Brockington 35 Hafod Road, Hereford.

The Chairman referred Members to the pack of papers which had been circulated to them which contained:

1. Additional proposals from Ledbury and Area Development Trust
2. Information from Colin Birks, Property Services Manager, with regard to extending the lease on the current location of Ledbury TIC and details from Mick Morris, Parking Manager on the level of income raised from St. Katherine's car park.
3. Minutes of Tourist Association Meeting from 14 June 2006 as referred to earlier in the meeting.
4. Executive Summary of the *Strategic Implementation Plan for Ledbury Market town Area 2005-2011* also referred to earlier in the meeting.
5. Letter from Mr. Peter Onions.

The Chairman referred to paragraph 7 of the new proposals from Ledbury and Area Development Trust where the proposal was made that the Development Trust take over responsibility for the barn, car park area and walkways in St. Katherine's as well as consider taking over the building which had once occupied the Jobcentre. It was explained that the car

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2006

park had been added to the proposal as a possible source of income generation.

The Committee noted that it was right that the Development Trust included the car park in their proposal but felt that there was little chance that it would be handed over to the development trust as it contributed £50,000 a year towards the Council's budget.

Mr Payne, took the Committee through his additional proposals document highlighting his breakdown of the estimated costs of developing a business plan which totalled £30,815. He explained that as well as the Council he would be approaching Ledbury Town Council, Ledbury District Civic Society, the Development Trust Association and Advantage West Midlands for help with raising the necessary funds to pay for the production of the business plan. If funding was granted he anticipated working with Council Officers to ensure that the plan was suitable to be submitted to the Heritage Lottery Fund as a formal bid for funding.

He explained that he anticipated putting together a small team to progress the proposal which would include the Chairmen of Ledbury and Area Civic Society and Ledbury Tourist Association.

Mr Francis, Chairman of Ledbury and Area Civic Society, stated that he would be pleased to be involved with the production of the business plan and that whilst he could not speak for all his Society's Members he hoped that the Society would be able to make a substantial contribution to the production of the Plan. He stated that his organisation had a record of making donations to other organisations.

Mr Ward, Chairman of Ledbury Tourist Association, informed Members that he would also be pleased to be involved with the production of the business plan and that he had been involved with the production of Mr Payne's report that was currently before the Committee.

After clarification from a Member of the Committee Mr Payne confirmed that if Council budgets were not flexible enough this financial year to grant the £15,000 requested then as the business plan was to a multi funded piece of work the Development Trust would be prepared to wait until the start of the next financial year to receive the Council's contribution.

In response to a comment that the Masters House was becoming dilapidated and prone to vandalism the Property Services Manager informed the Committee that £13,000 had recently been spent on repairs to the Masters House and that CCTV cameras has been added to prevent vandalism. The Committee was informed that 3 people were currently being prosecuted for committing vandalism to the Masters House.

It was proposed and seconded that the Committee recommend that the relocation of the TIC to the Masters House be deferred for 12 months and that the lease on the current TIC premises at the Homend be extended until 28 February 2008. It was also proposed that the Committee recommend that the £15,000 being requested by the Ledbury and Area Development Trust to formulate a business plan be granted.

It was suggested that the second part of the recommendation be altered. It was suggested that the Committee should recommend that the Council pay 50% of the cost of the formulation of a business plan by Ledbury and Area Development Trust up to a maximum of £15,000. This way if the cost of the business plan was less than the £30,000 predicted then the Council would not have to spend as much money.

This proposed recommendation and subsequent amendment was accepted by the Committee. The Committee noted the hard work which had gone into the proposal but felt the proposals put forward by the Ledbury and Area Development Trust were worthy of further investigation and this investigation would be completed by the business planning process and reviewed once it was complete.

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WEDNESDAY, 18TH OCTOBER, 2006

Mr Payne thanked the Committee for hearing his presentations and for the making their recommendations in favour of his proposals.

RESOLVED:

THAT it be recommended that the Cabinet Member (Community Services) and the Cabinet Member (Resources) consider:

(a) the relocation of Ledbury Tourist Information Centre to the Masters House be deferred for twelve months and the lease on the Centre's current premises in the Homend be extended until 28th February 2008;

and;

(b) that 50% of the cost towards the development of a business plan, up to a maximum of £15,000, be granted to the Ledbury and Area Development Trust.

The meeting ended at 1.25 p.m.

CHAIRMAN

CCTV IN HEREFORDSHIRE**Report By: CCTV OFFICER****Wards Affected**

Countywide

Purpose

1. To inform Members of the current financial and operational position of the Herefordshire CCTV system.

Financial Implications

2. There are no direct financial implications from this report.

Background

3. The Herefordshire CCTV Control Room was opened in June 2003 and Remploy Managed Services were commissioned to proactively monitor 28 CCTV cameras covering Hereford, Leominster and Ross-on-Wye.
4. In March 2005, after a successful Market Towns Initiative funding bid, 5 cameras in Ledbury were connected to the Control Room and in December 2005 2 additional cameras in Hereford were installed, paid for from West Mercia Constabulary Basic Command Unit fund. This brought the total cameras being monitored to 35.
5. The Control Room has radio links with the retailers in Hereford City and City Beat Officers, through the Hereford Retail Security network, and acts as "Control" for the Hereford City HAND (Herefordshire Against Nighttime Disorder) scheme, pub / club radio. The service also monitors the Parking Attendants radios, for staff safety, and provides traffic updates for BBC Hereford and Worcester Radio.
6. There have been 7902 incidents noted between 1st November 2003 until 31st August 2006.

	Total Incidents Noted
Hereford	6714
Leominster	589
Ross-on-Wye	493
Ledbury	106

Operational Hours	Total Incidents Noted
08:00 – 12:00	849
12:01 – 16:00	1342
16:01 – 20:00	1605
20:01 – 00:00	2648
00:01 – 03:00	1458

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Debbie Stringer, CCTV Officer on 01432 261713

Incident	Total Incidents Noted	Incident	Total Incidents Noted
Alarm Activation	55	Assault	169
Autocrime	30	Begging	57
Burglary	41	Concern for Welfare	554
Confirm Target	237	Criminal Damage	361
Disturbance	1055	Public Drinking	436
Drug offence	163	Drunkeness	377
Fighting	602	Graffiti / Flytipping	22
Missing Person	176	Road Traffic Collision	59
Theft from Person	61	Theft from Retailer	478
Traffic Offence	322	Traffic Problems	62
Suspicious Behaviour	1644	Anti-Social Behaviour	823
Locate Wanted Persons	118		

In August 2006 out of the 331 incidents noted in the occurrence records 174 incidents were picked up and reported by CCTV, resulting in 24 arrests.

7. The original contract with Remploy was for 123 hours per week, 08:00 am – 01:00 am Monday to Thursday and 08:00 am – 03:00 am Friday and Saturday, single staffed operations. Since the introduction of the new licensing act in November 2005, until the end of July this year the Alcohol Implimentation Group of the Community Safety and Drugs Partnership have funded an extra hour of monitoring on a Friday and Saturday from 3:00 am until 04:00 am to assist with the dispersal of people from the City and the 3 market towns. During August 2006 West Mercia Constabulary, funded the additional hour from their Tackling Violent Crime fund. Funding ceased on 28th August.
8. The CCTV Officer has successfully secured Section 106 planning gain from 2 major developments in Hereford City. Nearly £25,000 has been secured to provide a new camera in the Union Street / Gaol Street area and to renew the failed microwave link to the camera located in Commercial Street from the development of the Commercial Street / Union Street area. In May 2006 upto £35,000 was secured to provide 1 or 2 cameras by the Pomona Place development to cover a small proportion of the Great Western Way.
9. The CCTV Officer has been actively investigating alternative revenue funding streams. Meetings have been held with the Chair of the HAND scheme to discuss contributions from licencees; a meeting has been held with officers of Property Services to investigate whether the Council's building alarm call out facility could be transferred into the Control Room as a cheaper alternative to a national call centre; a questionnaire is being sent out Council wide to ascertain whether CCTV and the Control Room could provide services rather than using outside contractors.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Debbie Stringer, CCTV Officer on 01432 261713

Additionally, a local security firm has been in contact with the CCTV Officer to identify whether the Control Room could operate as emergency contact for the lift security that they are installing (a service that could be provided if the Control Room was staffed full time).

RECOMMENDATION

THAT, subject to any comments that Members may wish to make, the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None Identified

REFURBISHMENT OF HEREFORD CITY CENTRE

Report By: Director of Adult and Community Services

Wards Affected

Central.

Purpose

1. To consider the process that was undertaken in respect of the refurbishments to Hereford City Centre.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Background

3. The Council is committed to the upgrading and refurbishment of the Hereford City Centre and allocated a budget of £2,000,000 for this work in April 2005. The current phase of work is the refurbishment of High Town, and this follows on from the completion of work in Eign Gate and High Street. Completion of High Town will be followed by other areas of the city centre depending on the balance of the budget available, priorities assigned, and the estimated refurbishment costs.
4. Officers started work on the project with the Council's consultants, Owen Williams, in May 2005. Work started with a definition of the requirements for the city centre, based largely upon the work done for the City of Living Crafts report. The authors of this report had consulted widely to obtain public views on what was required from the centre and what changes they would like to see. The underlying message was that the public wanted to see less clutter around the city centre and more use made of the space available, for events and entertainment. Based on this requirement, Owen Williams, and their sub-consultants at the time, RAA Architects, developed detailed designs and costings for the refurbishment.
5. Extensive consultation on the purpose of the refurbishment took place in parallel with the development of designs, leading to the first public consultation exercise from 22nd to 29th October 2005. This initial consultation with the public concentrated on the features in the design rather than full details. This was due to the complexity of presenting multiple options to the public covering different areas of the city centre using different paving patterns, lighting, street furniture, planting etc. This approach recognised that a second round of consultation on detailed issues would be required once the more general layouts had been agreed.
6. The October consultation resulted in 259 written responses. There was a preference for one option, which was also supported by other consultees including Hereford City Council, and this was taken forward to check its practicality and produce detailed designs in readiness for tendering the work in February 2006. The tender documents left open the details of street furniture and lamp columns to be provided so that these aspects could be subject to a further round of consultation in February. The need for

the contractor to stop work for the duration of the Three Choirs Festival was included in the contract. The start date for refurbishment work in High Town was chosen to follow the May Fair, to make maximum use of the summer months when the weather could be expected to be favourable.

7. A public consultation on street furniture took place from 10th to 18th February 2006. This consultation produced a good response, with 611 written responses received. These responses provided a very clear steer that some general design points which had been taken forward from Eign Gate were not wanted in High Town. The use of stainless steel was considered too cold, and the dual column lamp column design was particularly disliked. The Project Board and Cabinet Members involved agreed that in the face of such clear views the furniture designs should be revisited. A landscape architect firm, Camlin Lonsdale, was employed to take the results of consultation into account while ensuring that the overall look of High Town would be coherent and not a combination of differing styles.
8. The contract for High Town refurbishment was awarded to Wrekin Construction in April 2006, and work started in High Town on 8th May 2006. On 4th May the architects made a presentation to Cabinet Members on design principles for street furniture and lamp columns. At this point specific street furniture and lamp columns were not identified but the principles of wooden slatted benches with arms and backs, and multi-purpose lamp columns was agreed.
9. Since May the work in High Town has generally proceeded on schedule. Retailers have been kept informed of progress by regular bulletins, and all shops affected by the work have been visited by the construction team to agree the fine details for completing work outside shop windows and doorways. No shops have lost any trading time as a result of the work, and in a number of cases the construction team has gone to extra efforts to help retailers, for example in speeding up work at the top of Bewell Street to minimise the impact on local traders. The size of individual phases was adjusted to enable construction to cease at the end of Phase 2 so that High Town could be left in a good state for the Three Choirs Festival, with no contractors materials on view. The organisers of the Festival were kind enough to write to the Hereford Times expressing their gratitude for this. The project team also liaised with the Parks Department regarding the planters provided by Hereford in Bloom to avoid compromising Hereford's chances of winning an award. It is pleasing to note that Hereford did indeed secure a gold award for Britain in Bloom.
10. The design, commissioning, production and delivery of street furniture has been proceeding in parallel with the paving work. These items will be installed as a work package before the end of the scheme in mid-November, and will require some small areas in High Town to be fenced off as the work progresses. This last phase of work around the Old House will also introduce improvements to the original design that have been suggested by the new architects, to simplify the build process, provide a more coherent design throughout the city centre, and enable the scheme to be more easily extended to other areas. "Heritage pathways" are planned as an enhancement to the High Town street scape with the path, highlighting the entrance to Capuchin Lane and identifying areas of Hereford that can be found beyond the entrance, should be delivered and installed during the current phase. The remaining paths will be installed in the New Year, probably when the contractors return for the next phase of work.
11. The opening ceremony for the refurbishment of High Town will take place on 21st November 2006, and be carried out by the Chairman of the Council. By that time the

detailed design and costing exercise for Widemarsh Street and Bewell Street will be complete and the next area to be refurbished in 2007 will be confirmed. Every effort will be made to coordinate work in the city to minimise the impact on traders and the public.

Recommendation

THAT, subject to any comments that Members may wish to make, the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

THE BRIAN HATTON COLLECTION**Report By: HEAD OF ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICES****Wards Affected**

Countywide

Purpose

1. To update Members on the position in respect of the Brian Hatton Collection.

Financial Implications

2. None.

Background

3. The Brian Hatton Collection is a collection of paintings and drawings and associated material. He is a Herefordshire artist who was born in 1897 and died whilst on active service in the first World War. A selection of his work was on display in the Hatton Gallery at Churchill House until 2002. The collection was moved to the Museum and Art Gallery in Broad Street, Hereford with the closure of Churchill House Museum and items from the collection are now displayed in the main gallery.

Considerations

4. Churchill House is currently leased to Herefordshire College of Art and Design with the majority of the income covering maintenance and repair of the house and its surroundings. However, 27% of the rent attributed to the Gallery space, which represents the contribution the Hatton family made towards the construction costs of the Gallery, is set-aside in a separate account (£972 p.a). The current fund is accrued at £33,087, which will be used partly towards a Brian Hatton exhibition in 2007. The fund is also retained to purchase additional items for the collection and to conserve and maintain the existing collection, with the majority being used as match funding towards a Heritage Lottery Fund application currently being drawn up to achieve the following:
 - To create a full electronic reference to the Hatton Collection with high quality images and detailed background information that will be available to any member of the public via the Internet. This will increase access, knowledge and understanding of the collection to a potential worldwide audience.
 - To form a solo exhibition of the paintings in the Art Gallery at Broad Street in Hereford for November and December 2007. This exhibition will raise awareness of the work of Brian Hatton with a local and regional audience.
5. In addition Herefordshire College of Art and Design presents an award to a successful student (separate from that of the building and collections) at an annual ceremony as part of a bequeath by Marjorie Hatton.

6. The paintings are currently stored at the Museum and Art Gallery at Broad Street, Hereford. However, all the paintings will be relocated in the Museum Resource and Learning Centre in Friar Street, Hereford when works are completed in the summer of 2007. This is the 3rd stage of the development of the centre which will provide one of the best museum collection facilities in the West Midlands, if not the country. Between the phases of capital works the Museum Resource and Learning Centre has held 4 open days with the opportunity for the public to see much of the collection, including the Gipsy Caravan and Judge's Coach. 73 groups have also visited on pre-booked tours. This 3rd phase of the project is costing £1.83 million with a contribution from Heritage Lottery of £1.23 million and the balance from Herefordshire Council's capital programme. Once complete the centre will offer easy access to all the collections, dedicated space for learning and lectures and facilities for volunteers and researchers.
7. The final phase of the scheme will be the development of the Broad Street site dedicated to our heritage collection. This is dependent on the relocation of the Library to the Edgar Street Grid site.
8. There are currently 14 Brian Hatton paintings/drawings on display at the Museum and Art Gallery linked to other parts of the collection, the selection on display is changed regularly.
9. A Trust called The Brian Hatton Gallery has been established to have responsibility for Brian Hatton works donated by the Hatton family, registered with the Charity Commission (no.1097738) for which the Council corporately is the sole trustee.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT, subject to any comments that Members may wish to make, the report be noted

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None Identified

MONITORING OF 2005-06 ECONOMIC AND COMMUNITY SERVICES REVENUE BUDGET TO PERIOD 6**Report By: Principal Accountancy Manager****Wards Affected**

Countywide

Purpose

To advise Members of the actual net revenue expenditure against budget for Economic and Community Services to period 6 of the financial year 2006-07.

Financial Implications

None.

Background

1. The monitoring report for period 6 is attached as appendix 1. The report shows the revised budget including agreed carried forward overspends and underspends from 2005-06, actual expenditure against profiled budget and out-turn estimates for the main service areas within the Economic and Community Services Division.
2. At period 6 total expenditure to date is £4,498,179 against a predicted budget of £5,297,919, resulting in an underspend to date of just under £800,000. Detailed explanations of specific variances are outlined in the notes to the appendix. The main reason for the underspend is the payment of the second half of Halo's management fee (£542,000) slightly later than anticipated. In addition several areas within Social and Economic Regeneration are underspent to date through a combination of external funding received in advance of expenditure and staff vacancies experienced in the first part half of the year.
3. There are no significant areas of concern at present and the majority of services are predicted to come in close to budget at year-end.
4. The only area where an in-year overspend is forecast at this time is Public Rights of Way, where a commitment to cover work on a footpath at Adforton has been agreed on the basis that the costs will partly be met by capacity within the PROW budget, with the remaining £10,000 being met by underspends across other service heads.
5. The carried forward leisure deficit of £134,000 will be reduced over the medium-term through annual payments from Halo due to commence in 2007-08.
6. In previous years the Parks and Countryside Service have experienced significant overspends on grounds maintenance. A management plan is now in place to ensure that the service comes in on budget by setting aside sufficient capacity to cover contractual commitments to HJS, and restricting all other expenditure to emergency health and safety work.

Further information on the subject of this report is available from
Greg Evans, Principal Accountancy Manager, (01432) 261848

7. At present expenditure is being managed in line with the plan, however there is a risk that unplanned work could be required in the winter months should adverse weather conditions be experienced. Any savings identified across the rest of the Division would have to be re-directed to mitigate significant unplanned work.
8. Underspends are forecast within Social and Economic Regeneration due to staff vacancies in the first 6 months of the year, however the service is now close to filling all vacancies, so further savings are unlikely. There may be a requirement for underspends generated to date to be used to fund unbudgeted costs for the Edgar Street Grid.
9. Community Safety receives a significant amount of grant funding from the Home Office. A £200,000 underspend in respect of these grants was carried forward from 2005-06. At this point of the year it is difficult to forecast the outturn position, however there is a possibility that an element of the up-front grant funding will not be fully spent within the year. Should this be the case a bid to carry forward unspent grant funding will have to be made in line with the Council's revised financial regulations and MTFMS.
10. The Cultural Services heading includes premises costs for Libraries, Tourist Information Centres, Museums and Heritage Centres. These premises are likely to incur significant increases in utility costs in line with market conditions. Any increases over budget will be mitigated by pulling back expenditure on discretionary headings.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT, subject to any comments that Members may wish to make, the report be noted.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

Appendix 1. Community Services Budget Monitoring Period 6

	Full Year Budget	Actual to period 6	Budget to period 6	(Underspend) / overspend	Estimated Outturn variance
Arts	587,723	407,010	436,162	(29,152)	0
Cultural Services Staff	134,498	83,243	67,249	15,994.	0
Heritage	550,650	294,880	275,325	19,555.	0
Leisure Services	180,545	82,123	90,273	(8,150)	0
Library Service	1,949,441	839,553	876,506	(36,953)	0
Tourism	499,782	190,465	249,890	(59,425)	0
Total for Cultural Services	3,902,639	1,897,274	1,995,405	(98,131)	0
Community Leisure	21,546	22,101	10,773	11,328	0
Leisure Client	1,245,893	691,492	1,165,447	(473,955)	134,000
Total for Community Leisure + Halo	1,267,439	713,593	1,176,220	(462,627)	134,000.
Parks & Countryside	1,345,830	667,539	605,543	61,996	0
Public rights of way	560,130	284,930	303,012	(18,082)	10,000
Total for Parks Countryside & Prow	1,905,960	952,469	908,555	43,914	10,000
Economic Regeneration	816,865	261,181	391,484	(130,303)	(20,000)
Community Safety	336,249	-17,935	132,880	(150,815)	0.0
Community Regeneration	1,018,083	312,210	395,899	(83,689)	(45,000)
Life Long Learning	43,480	21,629	22,727	(1,098)	0
Total for Social & Economic Regeneration	2,214,677	577,085	942,990	(365,905)	(65,000)
Total for Management	549,497	357,758	274,749	83,009	0
	9,840,212	4,498,179	5,297,919	(799,740)	79,000

Notes: Carried forward underspends from 2005-06 have been agreed and allocated:

£200,000 one-off budget has been allocated to Community Safety, whilst the accumulated budget deficit for Leisure Contracts has been brought forward and allocated within Leisure Client.

Analysis of overspends:

Cultural Services - variances as a result of restructure. Budgets to be re-aligned accordingly.

Heritage Services - Includes maintenance costs to be re-imbursed from property pool.

Community Leisure - Full annual SLA payment to Wigmore Leisure Centre made in period 5.

Parks and Countryside - expenditure within budget, income from Hereford City not all received yet, a 'grant application' has to be submitted. £25,000 income target for Queenswood to be re-instated in budget.

Management - bearing full cost of Director / PA pending establishment of allocation methodology over Directorate. Budget will be transferred over from Adult Social Care in due course.

Analysis of underspends:

Arts - payment to Courtyard behind profile, they have just submitted an invoice for an interim payment.

Tourism - includes external income from grants and for promotions in advance of expenditure

Leisure Client - Halo invoice for 2nd instalment of management fee not yet paid, invoice is pending.

PROW - payments for works to HJS behind budget profile

Economic Regeneration - savings on staffing, payments for grants and ESG Ltd behind budget profile.

Community Regeneration - grant income received ahead of profile. Some staff savings

Community safety - grant income received in advance of expenditure, plus carried forward underspend.

Appendix 1. Community Services Budget Monitoring Period 6

Estimated Outturn

An overspend of £10,000 is predicted in Public Rights of Way relating to work on a footpath in Adforton. It is planned to recover this amount through managed underspends across the Division.

A management plan is in place to ensure that Parks and Countryside comes in on budget. Costs are being controlled wherever possible, however there is a risk of unplanned expenditure in the winter months due to adverse weather conditions.

The accumulated Leisure deficit will remain at the current level. As set out in the Division's budget plan it will be carried forward in the medium-term and reduced by payments from Halo commencing in 2007-08.

There are likely to be overspends on premises utility costs within Cultural Services headings. These will have to be mitigated by underspends in discretionary budget headings to achieve an overall break-even.

Underspends on staffing within Social and Economic Regeneration are likely due to the vacancy savings achieved to date. There may be a requirement to cover unbudgeted costs related to ESG however the extent of these commitments are still being scoped.

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

**Report By: Chairman, Community Services Scrutiny
Committee**

Wards Affected

County-wide

Purpose

- 1 To consider the Committee work programme for the remainder of 2006/07.

Financial Implications

- 2 None

Background

- 3 In accordance with the Scrutiny Improvement Plan a report on the Committee's current Work Programme will be made to each of the scheduled quarterly meetings of this Scrutiny Committee. A copy of the current Work Programme is attached at appendix 1.
- 4 While the programme was based on the programme agreed by Committee in December 2005, much of which was left open so that current issues could be explored at the time of each meeting. Members are reminded that guidance for developing an effective work programme is contained in the Scrutiny Handbook previously issued to Members.
- 5 As you will see from the attached appendix final reports from two of the Committee's Review Groups are scheduled to present their final reports. In addition to this the Hereford City Partnership Review Group is still on going and will need to report to the Committee at a future meeting.
- 6 Should any urgent, prominent or high profile issue arise, as Chairman I may consider calling an additional meeting to consider that issue.
- 7 Should Members become aware of any issues they consider may be added to the scrutiny programme they should contact either myself as Chairman or the Vice-Chairman to log the issue so that it may be taken in to consideration when planning future agendas or when revising the work programme.

RECOMMENDATION

THAT subject to any comment or issues raised by the Committee the Committee work programme be approved and reported to Strategic Monitoring Committee.

BACKGROUND PAPERS

- None identified.

COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 2006/7

December 2006	
Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Final Report of 18-35 Review Group • Final Report of Museum Review Group
March 2007	
Items	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • No Items Identified

