

AGENDA

Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Date: **Friday 20 November 2009**

Time: **2.00 pm**

Place: **The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road,
Hereford**

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

For any further information please contact:

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Agenda for the Meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee

Membership

Chairman **Councillor TM James**
Vice-Chairman **Councillor KG Grumbley**

Councillor DJ Benjamin
Councillor GFM Dawe
Councillor BA Durkin
Councillor DW Greenow
Councillor KS Guthrie
Councillor MAF Hubbard
Councillor B Hunt
Councillor RH Smith
Councillor RV Stockton

Non Voting	Mrs Gillian Churchill	HALC
	Mrs. J. Evans	National Farmers Union
	Mr P Hands	Visit Herefordshire
	Mr Gary Woodman	Hereford and Worcester Chamber of Commerce

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The Council's Members' Code of Conduct requires Councillors to declare against an Agenda item(s) the nature of an interest and whether the interest is personal or prejudicial. Councillors have to decide first whether or not they have a personal interest in the matter under discussion. They will then have to decide whether that personal interest is also prejudicial.

A personal interest is an interest that affects the Councillor more than most other people in the area. People in the area include those who live, work or have property in the area of the Council. Councillors will also have a personal interest if their partner, relative or a close friend, or an organisation that they or the member works for, is affected more than other people in the area. If they do have a personal interest, they must declare it but can stay and take part and vote in the meeting.

Whether an interest is prejudicial is a matter of judgement for each Councillor. What Councillors have to do is ask themselves whether a member of the public – if he or she knew all the facts – would think that the Councillor's interest was so important that their decision would be affected by it. If a Councillor has a prejudicial interest then they must declare what that interest is. A Councillor who has declared a prejudicial interest at a meeting may nevertheless be able to address that meeting, but only in circumstances where an ordinary member of the public would be also allowed to speak. In such circumstances, the Councillor concerned will have the same opportunity to address the meeting and on the same terms. However, a Councillor exercising their ability to speak in these circumstances must leave the meeting immediately after they have spoken.

AGENDA

		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 To approve and sign the Minutes of the meeting held on 5th October 2009.	1 - 6
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.	SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED EDGAR STREET GRID LINK ROAD To report on the economic support that the Council has made available to businesses that will have to relocate from the Edgar Street Grid as a result of the construction of a Link Road by ESG Herefordshire Ltd from Aylestone Hill to Edgar Street.	7 - 8

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

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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.

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(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*

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- 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.
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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

BROCKINGTON, 35 HAFOD ROAD, HEREFORD.

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HEREFORDSHIRE COUNCIL

MINUTES of the meeting of Community Services Scrutiny Committee held at The Council Chamber, Brockington, 35 Hafod Road, Hereford on Monday 5 October 2009 at 10.00 am

Present: Councillor TM James (Chairman)
Councillor KG Grumbley (Vice Chairman)

Councillors: DJ Benjamin, PGH Cutter, GFM Dawe, JHR Goodwin, KS Guthrie and MAF Hubbard

In attendance: Councillors AJM Blackshaw (Cabinet Member, Economic Development and Community Services), WLS Bowen and PJ Edwards

18. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Councillor DW Greenow, Mr P Hands, Councillor RH Smith and Mr G Woodman.

19. NAMED SUBSTITUTES

Councillor PGH Cutter was present as a substitute for Councillor DW Greenow, and Councillor JHR Goodwin for Councillor RH Smith.

20. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

21. MINUTES

Councillor GFM Dawe registered his objections to the Minutes as Members comments were not attributed.

RESOLVED: That the minutes for the meeting held on 29 June 2009 and 13 July 2009, be approved as a correct record and signed by the Chairman.

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

A member of the public suggested the Committee should scrutinise the potential impact of the proposed new Link Road in Hereford. It was important that the Committee considered and addressed the economic implications for existing business.

The Committee agreed that a meeting would be held to consider the subject.

23. REVENUE BUDGET MONITORING REPORT 2009/10

The Principal Accountant (Environment & Regeneration) presented the Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for the period to 31 July 2009. In her presentation, she highlighted the following points:

- That the total Community Services budget had decreased from £10,184k to £9,680k as a result of transfer of Services between Directorates.

- That Parks & Countryside and Public Rights of Way budgets had been reduced by £244k in relation to the transfer of staff on 1st September 2009 to Amey Wye Valley Limited, following the service delivery review. This budget had transferred to the Management Services budget along with Highways staff budgets and would be managed within the Environment & Culture Directorate as a whole in order to track the £1million savings.
- That there was an addition of £117k in relation to Community Safety which was included in the Community Services Portfolio.
- That the Libraries budget was expected to overspend by £120k as a result of employee costs and the Broad Street Library building running costs and the Self-service booking system ICT Project costs.
- There was also a risk that there would be further overspend on the Bromyard Library and Heritage Centre in relation to the previous year premises costs payable to HALO which have recently come to light. This was currently being discussed with HALO in conjunction with future management fees.
- Tourism was currently expected to overspend by £70k. This was following the disaggregation from Cultural services and due to staffing levels and premises costs – a recovery plan was in place in order to address this overspend in the current year.

In the ensuing discussion the following points were made:

A Member pointed out that cost savings could be made in Ross-on-Wye by moving the Tourist Information Centre, and asked whether these savings could be used to enhance the tourism offer in the town. The Cabinet Member (Economic Development and Community Services) added that the Tourism service was currently being restructured in order to help address the overspend.

In answer to a question from a Member, it was noted that the total budget for the Library Service was £1,852k. Work was currently being carried out to address the budget pressures within Libraries and progress will be reported to the next meeting. The Cabinet Member said that the condition of the library building in Broad Street, Hereford, was proving problematic. Consideration was being given to regenerating the building as either a stand alone museum or a library.

RESOLVED: That the report be noted.

24. ENVIRONMENT & CULTURE AND REGENERATION DIRECTORATES: PERFORMANCE FOR THE THREE-MONTH PERIOD TO JUNE 2009

The Committee considered the report on the performance indicator position and other performance management information for the Economic and Community Services Division within the Regeneration Directorate and Cultural Services functions within the Environment and Culture Directorate for the three month period to June 2009

The Improvement Manager reported that the format of the performance indicators had been changed in order to bring them into line with the report that went to Cabinet. Only one Local Area Agreement (LAA) indicator was showing red, whilst more than half were showing green. A number of the amber indicators related to targets that had not been reported on by the Council's partners, and discussions would be held with these organisations in order to rectify the situation wherever possible. In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- That the LAA targets were agreed with central Government and shared with all partners in the County. Where an amber target was shown, these were targets that the partners did not regard as priority areas and had not indicated a target. Whilst the data was available by Division, what had not been agreed was what the local targets were.
- That 2008 was the first year of reporting against the national indicators. The Council was reporting against the same indicators in 2009, but now had baseline data to report. The only ones awaiting an out-turn were those where Government Departments provided the data.

In reply to a question from a Member, the Director of Regeneration said that road fatality data was being closely analysed. The Council would be taking up issues relating to the road directly with the Highways Agency. It was possible to directly address issues on other roads under the Council's management, however, and take measures such as changing the road surface and improving visibility.

RESOLVED:

- That: (a) the report on performance be noted,
and;
(b) areas of concern and exception continue to be monitored.**

25. IMPACT OF THE ECONOMIC DOWNTURN

The Committee noted a paper which outlined the way the Council was alleviating the impact of the economic downturn in the County. The Head of Economic and Community Services reported that an action plan had been produced by the Council's Economic and Community Services working with the Economic Development Partnership Group. This action plan had been adopted by the Herefordshire Partnership Board and Area Based Grant (ABG) had been allocated to it. A dedicated website had been set up in order to promulgate information. A number of initiatives had been put together such as the Business Booster Grant, which offered small to medium size businesses grants of between £500 and £5k to provide 50% of match funding for new schemes to diversify product base to enter new markets. The Council had been able to set up a very straightforward application form to facilitate applications. There was also a Training Voucher scheme, which was a new fund offering grants of up to £750 for businesses to upskill their workforce to prepare for future markets. A boost to tourism had been provided, in order to capitalise on the home market, including a new Fishing and Angling package.

She went on to say that additional measures had been taken by the Council itself, such as a change to Supplementary Planning rules which had provided for a reduction in the planning obligation for 106 for developments with fewer than five properties. The Council was also committed to achieving a 20 day payment on undisputed invoices, and was working towards a ten day time scale. In the ensuing discussion, the following points were made:

- A Member pointed out that the green recycling bins that would be introduced across the County in November had been sourced in Cornwall, and asked that more should be done to help local businesses by sourcing contracts locally.
- A Member concurred, and pointed out that Amey staff were now undertaking all tree surgery for the Council where this had previously been undertaken by local contractors. Training and support for local firms would have allowed them to compete for these contracts. It was noted that Amey had a performance target

within their contract to ensure that they spent more than 50% of the contract on local firms.

- In reply to a question from a Member regarding levels of business rates, the Head of Economic and Community Services said that work was being undertaken to look at ways of providing relief to small businesses, but that there were a lot of restrictions regarding what the Council was able to do in this area.
- In reply to a further question, the Head of Economic and Community Services said that the Future Job Fund had been set up in order to help young people into work who had been unemployed for at least 11 months. Local unemployment levels stood at 2.9%.

RESOLVED:

That : (a) the report be noted.

and;

(b) regular reports should be provided to the Committee.

26. REVIEW OF THE HEREFORDSHIRE ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY 2005-25

The Committee received the Review of the Herefordshire Economic Development Strategy 2005- 25. The Chairman of the Review Group reported that the Review had highlighted the different elements of the strategy, and had sought to bring these together.

A Member pointed out the importance of Resolution C in the report, that there 'should be greater emphasis on ICT and particularly actively seeking ways of improving broadband speeds and coverage across the County in order to support existing businesses as well as attracting new ones'. It was important that businesses were supported with adequate broadband provision, and that there were no 'not-spot' areas in the County where small businesses were not able to receive broadband.

In reply to a question from a Member, the Head of Economic and Community Services said that a solution to the broadband issues in Rotherwas would be in place in terms of the bandwidth available to businesses in the area. A combined solution to deal with the twin issues of not spots and slow broadband speeds was required. A paper outlining the interim position would be brought to a future meeting of the Committee.

RESOLVED:

That:

(a) the report of the Economic Development Scrutiny Review Group, in particular its recommendations should be submitted to Cabinet.

(b) subject to the Review being approved, the Executive's response to the Review including an action plan be reported to the first available meeting of the Committee after the Executive has approved its response;

and;

(c) a further report on progress in response to the Review be made after six months with consideration then being given to the need for any further reports to be made.

27. COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the Work Programme.

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

The meeting ended at 12.30 pm

CHAIRMAN

MEETING:	COMMUNITY SERVICES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE
DATE:	20TH NOVEMBER 2009
TITLE OF REPORT:	SUPPORT FOR BUSINESSES AFFECTED BY THE PROPOSED EDGAR STREET GRID LINK ROAD
PORTFOLIO AREA:	ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES

CLASSIFICATION: Open

Wards Affected

Aylestone and Central Wards

Purpose

To report on the economic support that the Council has made available to businesses that will have to relocate from the Edgar Street Grid as a result of the construction of a Link Road by ESG Herefordshire Ltd from Aylestone Hill to Edgar Street.

Recommendation

THAT the Committee consider the support packages available for business relocation as a result of the Edgar Street Grid Link Road.

Reasons for Recommendations

1. To inform Members of the Committee of the efforts that the Council is making to assess the impact on businesses of the proposed Link Road, following the submission of a planning application for the Road by ESG Herefordshire Ltd. The construction of this road will require the relocation of a number of businesses who will require significant support to ensure that they can successfully relocate and maintain their operations. The Committee will be informed of the outline support packages that will be made available to those affected.

Introduction and Background

2. At the meeting of the Community Services Scrutiny Committee held on 5th October 2009, it was suggested the Committee should scrutinise the potential impact of the proposed new Link Road in Hereford. It was felt that it important that the Committee considered and addressed the economic implications for existing business. The Committee agreed that a meeting would be held to consider the subject.
3. As currently proposed, the ESG project, which the Council supports and for which it has adopted the Masterplan, includes a proposal for the Link Road. ESG Herefordshire Ltd, with the support of the Council representatives on their Board, has decided to submit a planning application for the new road.
4. The approved Unitary Development Plan and the subsequent Supplementary Planning Document for the ESG development, informed by the ESG Masterplan, provide a robust

planning policy and design framework for the overall redevelopment of the ESG site.

5. The ESG Masterplan identifies the creation of a number of different developments within the ESG area. The creation of these projects will require substantial preliminary infrastructure including the relocation of the existing Livestock Market, creation of flood mitigation works off site, and a new Link Road running from the A49 through to Commercial Road.
6. The Link Road is required from a technical transportation viewpoint and will run from a location near the current BP petrol station on Edgar Street through to a reconfigured Station Approach and accompanying junction. This preferred line runs through land and property within a number of different ownerships.
7. Businesses will be affected by the first phases of development on the line of the Link Road and the Livestock Market; there is a need, as far as reasonably practicable, for these businesses to be relocated from their current location to others within the City.

Community Impact

8. The Council is actively working with the businesses affected to assist them with their relocation. It is confident that it will be able to successfully relocate the business to a location from which they will continue to thrive. No businesses will have to close. The Council currently anticipates that 18 businesses will have to relocate as a result of the Link Road proposals, accounting for 161 full time and 29 part time jobs. It should be noted that there is a mix of both local and national companies within this list, ranging in size from one person operations to medium sized businesses. Obviously some businesses, both local and national, will have branches elsewhere that will not be affected.

Financial Implications

9. The financial implications are currently being assessed. Applications will be made to Advantage West Midlands for funding to assist with the relocations.

Legal Implications

10. The Interim Assistant Chief Executive - Legal and Democratic has advised that the Community Service Scrutiny Committee must not stray into decisions which are matters for the Planning Committee. The Planning Committee has a statutory role and the planning process is a separate process that must operate independently of the scrutiny function. Members of the Scrutiny Committee who are also Members of the Planning Committee and may be called upon to consider any future planning application, must be careful not to express a fixed view as to the merits or otherwise of such a development, while exercising their scrutiny role. Failure to do so may either preclude the Member from taking part in the consideration of the planning application or prejudice the planning decision and expose the Council to legal challenge.

Risk Management

11. If businesses are not successfully relocated this could have an impact on the local economy. To mitigate this risk, the Council is ensuring there are financial packages and independent support available for these businesses, as well as a range of sites to support the businesses in their relocation.

Background Papers

- None