

North Hertfordshire District Council
LOCAL ECONOMIC DEVELOPMENT & TOWN CENTRES
Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

SCOPE

Terms of reference

To identify organisations which exist to support small businesses and to establish the level of support North Hertfordshire District Council can offer.

The key areas of focus will be:

- securing funding for businesses;
- attracting and retaining more investment locally;
- obtaining a higher business birth and survival rate;
- the effect of Council Policies on business and employment;
- the importance of ensuring the vibrancy of town centres;
- looking at best practice with neighbouring authorities, and;
- capturing opportunities from the 2012 Olympic Games.

Expected Outcome

To present an evidence based report with recommendations that will support and promote economic development in North Herts.

Timeframe

This will be confirmed once a full timetable of work to be undertaken has been agreed by the group.

Link with Council Priority

This review falls within the Council's *Equal, Prosperous and Healthier Communities* strategic objective. Specifically under **Prosperous Communities** where our Corporate Plan states "creating opportunity for all by promoting sustainable local economic development". This includes:

- economic development;
- town centre issues;
- business development;
- sustainable growth and
- tourism.

Potential witnesses

David Scholes (Head of Planning & Building Control), Andy Beavan (Local Development Framework Manager), Patrick Candler (Head of Community Development & Cultural Services), North Herts Town Centre Managers, The Heritage Foundation, East Herts Economic Development Officer, Herts Prosperity Forum, a representative from one of the large employers in the district, a representative from a large bank who has links with small businesses.

Other witnesses will be confirmed as the group develops, but may include: the Chamber of Commerce, Business Link, Federation of Small Businesses, Job centre Plus and Stevenage Business Initiative.

Key Questions

- What are the connections with the LAA targets?
- Links with Community Development?
- Are there any working groups that promote/support local businesses such as the Business rate payers group. What is the membership and format of this group, what support does the Council provide them with?
- Links with Tourism?
- How effective are our relevant partnerships?
- Is there a co-ordinated approach to supporting business across the County?

Information documents – Strategies for Letchworth, Hitchin, Baldock & Royston, Local Development Framework

Membership - Cllrs: Martin Stears, David Kearns, Marilyn Kirkland, Lawrence Oliver, Peter Burt, Michael Weeks, Allison Ashley, Simon Bloxham

The group will invite representatives that have an interest in this topic to be co-opted members of the group.

Portfolio Holder - Cllr Tricia Gibbs (Community Engagement & Rural Affairs)

Shadow Members - Cllr Judi Billing, Cllr Robert Inwood

Lead Officer - Liz Green (Head of Policy, Partnerships & Performance) / Jim Brown (Policy Manager)

Support Officer - Grace Crawford (Scrutiny Officer)

Key Tasks:

Areas to cover - aim & objectives	Date
Pre-scoping meeting with the Chair	06.02.08
First meeting with the group to discuss & agree the scope	12.03.08
Meeting with NHDC Officers & Town Centre Managers	08.04.08
Meeting with external witnesses (part 1)	12.06.08
Meeting with external witnesses (part 2)	03.07.08
Develop recommendations	July
Review & agree final report	Sept
Submit final report to Scrutiny Committee	02.09.08