



November

● **Concerned business owners claim that large numbers of drug users attending clinics in the city centre have been having an adverse impact on the local economy.**

The issue had been raised by Southside TD, Kevin Humphreys (Lab), after he was contacted by a number of prominent business groups in the city centre who feel that the drug clinics, particularly those that provide methadone, are deterring people from shopping in areas where they are located.

Richard Guiney, the spokesman for the Business Improvement District (BID), claimed that locating large clinics in the city centre was not the best way of dealing with the problem.

"We would be looking abroad at a system whereby people with drug problems are treated by their local GP," he says. "People could be stabilised on methadone in a local pharmacy, which would be a much more cost effective way of approaching the problem."

Tony Geoghegan, the chief executive of the Merchant's Quay drug clinic, which is based in the city centre, suggested the issue was a lot more complex than people realised.

"Drug users being drawn to cities is a natural phenomena that happens throughout the world," he says. "I understand the argument that the high volume of drug users in an area could impact tourism and businesses, but the main solution would be to localise services."