

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**BALDOCK & DISTRICT COMMITTEE  
(Baldock, Arbury and Weston and Sandon Wards)**

**Meeting held at The Community Centre, Simpson Drive, Baldock.  
on 15 August 2005 at 7.30 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** *Councillors: I.J. Knighton (Chairman), M.E. Weeks (Vice-Chairman),  
G.C. Hollands, S.K. Jarvis and M.R.M. Muir.*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *Principal Planning Officer, Area Planning Officer, Community  
Development Officer (Baldock Area and Youth) and Committee and  
Member Services Officer.*

**26. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

An apology for absence was received from Councillor A.D. Young.

**27. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 July 2005 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

**28. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman of the Baldock & District Committee advised the Committee that he would be seeking planning clarification regarding Manor House car parking spaces following a previous permitted planning application, at Agenda Item 10 - Planning Applications - as an emergency item.

No other business was submitted for consideration by the Committee.

**29. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

Councillor M.E. Weeks declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8 – Public Participation - as he was a member of the Licensing & Appeals Committee but explained that he did not sit on licensing applications for Baldock. He added that he had given guidance regarding the appeals procedure and reserved his right to remain in the meeting to hear the presentation.

Councillor M.R.M. Muir declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8 – Public Participation - as he was a member of the Licensing & Appeals Committee and reserved his right to remain in the meeting to hear the presentation.

**30. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Mr Alex Shafarenko had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding pub licensing hours in Baldock.

Prior to Mr Shafarenko's presentation, the Chairman of the Baldock and District Committee advised Mr Shafarenko that the members of the Committee could not make any comments about this item but assured him that his comments would be passed onto the Licensing & Appeals Committee for their consideration.

During his presentation, Mr Shafarenko expressed his concerns about:

- The host of licensing applications that had been made in Baldock;
- The strategy to allow longer opening hours was to avoid a stampede of people all leaving at the same time, i.e. closing time at 11.00, not just to extend opening hours an extra hour or two;

- Longer opening hours were not wanted by residents of Baldock but by people who came to Baldock from out of town, e.g. Letchworth and Stevenage and added that troublemakers tended to cluster in groups, which meant that longer hours would mean more trouble at a later time;
- Residents had grave concerns about longer opening hours, especially about the Victoria public house extended hours to 1.00 a.m.;
- There were several pubs squeezed into a small area – this should be taken into account when looking at the Strategy;
- Many residents were commuters and were already experiencing sleepless nights;
- The response from North Hertfordshire District Council was not satisfactory - there was a need to find a balance between local residents and 'special areas';
- Residents did not want longer opening hours - damage to property, cars etc would rise;
- Cumulative impact issue - this item would be on the Council's agenda for next year;
- Longer opening hours meant that residents would no longer enjoy life in Baldock.

The Chairman of the Baldock & District Committee thanked Mr Shafarenko for his presentation and ***it was agreed*** that the Committee and Member Services Officer would feed Mr Shafarenko's comments back to the Licensing & Appeals Committee.

### 31. DRAFT BALDOCK TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY FOR CONSULTATION

The Principal Planning Officer presented a report of the Head of Planning and Building Control which sought the Committee's approval of the draft Baldock Town Centre Strategy for public consultation in September 2005. The draft Strategy had been circulated with the Agenda for the meeting.

The members of the Committee welcomed the draft consultation document and during a discussion that followed, the following issues were raised by members:

- At 3.5.2 of the draft consultation document, the criteria for the Management Horizons UK Shopping Index 2003/2004 was the level of types of shops in the centre, i.e. Baldock has small, specialised businesses as opposed to larger shopping outlets;
- At 3.5.7 of the draft consultation document, the North Herts District Council Economic Strategy Officer was looking at setting up a Town Centre Partnership for Baldock. Once this was up and running, the appointment of a Town Centre Manager would be looked at. It was suggested that perhaps at some time in the future, this position could be shared with the Town Centre Manager at Royston;
- At 3.5.9 of the draft consultation document, a 'pavement' culture should be actively encouraged and developed;
- Need to consider carefully what the Town Centre would look like in fifty years time by developing the right strategy. The Town Centre could become a mainly residential area, or contain small, specialist shops and offer high quality entertainment facilities;
- Great concern was expressed about the future development of the Town Hall. The premises were used on a regular basis by the people of Baldock and it was agreed that if this was disposed of, any resulting money should be ring-fenced for the people of Baldock and used to enhance the leisure and commercial facilities of the town. It was further agreed that if there was any shortfall, extra funds should be made available from the Council.

#### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control be noted;

(2) That the following amendments to the Baldock Town Centre Strategy Consultation Draft be made:

- Section 2: Context and A Vision for Baldock, paragraph 2.2.4, bullet point one, the word 'economic' be deleted and the following words be included after '...centre'; 'by respecting trends towards residential usage and building on the strengths of the town as a leisure centre and promoting the use of the town centre for specialist shops.'
- Section 3: Themes and Policy Guidance, paragraph 3.6.4, the paragraph be subdivided as follows and the additional words at the start of the second paragraph in relation to the town hall be added. All subsequent paragraphs in this section to be re-numbered:

'The Council, through its Asset Management review and review of Public Halls and Public Conveniences, has undertaken an assessment of all its public assets, i.e. buildings and facilities, to find out if they meet the needs of the local community, the Disability Discrimination Act 1995 access requirements, and whether they require improvement, refurbishment or replacement.

The Council by virtue of its ownership and through the planning process will seek to promote the town hall for appropriate use, be it for community or use that will contribute to the viability of the town centre. The Council is in the process of preparing an action plan, which will identify and prioritise which buildings in Baldock will be retained and what adaptations will be needed to satisfy future uses and activities.

- The Town Hall may be sold or redeveloped for other purposes. This could release funds, which should be channelled into improvements or refurbishment of existing facilities or provision of new facilities in partnership with other organisations and potential developers. Funding for improvements, refurbishment or replacement of community facilities could come from a combination of receipts, such as from the disposal of Council assets, S106 agreements and partnership funding.

(3) That the public consultation process for the draft Baldock Town Centre Strategy, as set out in section 5 of the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control, be agreed.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) To ensure that Cabinet were made aware of the views of the Baldock & District Committee when it considered the Baldock Town Centre Strategy Consultation Draft;
- (2) To seek public comment on the draft Baldock Town Centre Strategy. This will enable the Council to adopt the Strategy following "public" involvement that provides an overall framework for guiding development and enhancement opportunities within the town centre over the next 10 years, and in doing so contributes towards achieving the Council's strategic objectives.

**RECOMMENDATION TO CABINET:** That the draft Baldock Town Centre Strategy be agreed for public consultation subject to the amendments made by the Baldock & District Committee as follows:

- (1) Section 2: Context and A Vision for Baldock, paragraph 2.2.4, bullet point one, the word 'economic' be deleted and the following words be included after '...centre'; 'by respecting trends towards residential usage and building on the strengths of the town as a leisure centre and promoting the use of the town centre for specialist shops.'

- (2) Section 3: Themes and Policy Guidance, paragraph 3.6.4, the paragraph be subdivided as follows and the additional words at the start of the second paragraph in relation to the town hall be added. All subsequent paragraphs in this section to be re-numbered:

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**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS:** To ensure that Cabinet were made aware of the views of the Baldock & District Committee when it considered the Baldock Town Centre Strategy Consultation Draft.

### **32. CHAMPION NEWS**

The Community Development Officer for Baldock presented a report of the Strategic Director of Customer Services to the Committee, that advised the Committee of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for Baldock since the meeting of the Committee held on 4 July 2005, and brought to their attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

The Community Development Officer for Baldock reminded members of the Committee that the date for the Baldock Bypass site visit was 24 August 2005 at 2pm and agreed to arrange another date for those Councillors who were unable to attend on that date.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report of the Strategic Director of Customer Services be noted;
- (2) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer for Baldock to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Baldock communities be endorsed;
- (3) That the continuing development and financial commitments associated with the development of the Town Centre Strategy be endorsed.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To keep members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in Baldock.

### **33. ANNUAL GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT DISCRETIONARY BUDGET 2004/05**

The Community Development Officer for Baldock presented a report of the Strategic Director of Customer Services to the Committee, that set out the budgetary situation

for the Committee, together with one additional grant application that had been received.

The Community Development Officer for Baldock updated Members on the funding of a bench seat to be installed on Weston Way, Baldock. The Town Members agreed to add a further £150 from the Baldock Town Discretionary Budget to the existing £250 previously committed, making a total of £400 to enable the installation to be undertaken.

Councillor Hollands also committed £400 from the Baldock East Discretionary Budget for a similar bench to be provided as a replacement for one that had been vandalised at Bush Springs on Clothall Common.

The Community Development Officer was requested to initiate the projects, advise Members of the ongoing progress and to report back at the Baldock & District Committee's next meeting on 26 September 2005.

It was further agreed that the grant of £200 to the Baldock Churches Holiday Club was to be funded via £150 from the Baldock Town Discretionary Budget and £50 from the Baldock East Discretionary Budget.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget be noted;
- (2) That the sum of £200 be awarded to the Baldock Churches Holiday Club as a financial contribution toward the provision of a week's activities for children of 4 to 11 years of age, to take place at Hartsfield School.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) The report was intended to apprise Members of the financial resources available to this Committee. It drew attention to the current budgetary situation, assisted in the effective financial management of the Committee's budget and ensured actions were performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance contained in the Grants procedure;
- (2) The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

**35. PROPOSED HEALTH WALKS PROGRAMME**

The Community Development Officer for Baldock presented a report of the Strategic Director of Customer Services to the Committee that sought the Committee's approval for funding in support of the initial set up of a District-wide Health Walks programme.

The members of the Committee expressed the view that the aims of the Programme were exemplary but as this was a district-wide project, they did not consider it appropriate to make an allocation of funds from the Area Ward Discretionary Budgets.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report of the Strategic Director of Customer Services be noted;
- (2) That the funding for the Health Walks Programme be provided from central resources.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To ensure that Cabinet were made aware of the views of the Baldock & District Committee when it considered the Health Walks Programme.

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:** That the funding for the Health Walks Programme be provided from central resources.

**REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION:** To ensure that Cabinet were made aware of the views of the Baldock & District Committee when it considered the Health Walks Programme.

**36. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

**RESOLVED:** To determine the applications as set out in the report of the Planning Control and Conservation Manager as submitted to the Committee in the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE**

<b>Reference Number</b>	<b>Description of Development and location</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>05/00731/1</b>	<b>Elm Paddocks, Fore Street, Weston</b> Single storey stable building extension following demolition of existing detached building and lean-to bedding shelter. New boundary fence (as amended by drgs CM.05/E/01, 02 CM.05/A/01, 02, 03)	<b>GRANTED</b> (see (a) below)

(a) That with regard to Planning Application 05/00731/1, it was **RESOLVED** that permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions set out in the Planning Control and Conservation Manager's report but with Condition 4 of the recommendation modified to read:

4. Before the building hereby permitted is first erected, details of the intended treatment of the tree and hedgerow boundary between the new building and the common boundary with Willow View, including proposed works to limit the height of that part of the vegetation closest to the building shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To safeguard natural light levels currently available to the property 'Willow View', whilst retaining reasonable levels of privacy and amenity between that property and Elm Paddocks.

**37. PLANNING APPEALS**

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following planning appeals had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee held on 4 July 2005:

Appellant	Mr B Huffer
Reference number	04/01974/1
Address	57 Ashwell Road, Bygrave
Proposal	Erection of single storey detached building in the rear garden for use as a cattery.
Method	Written representations.
Appellant	Mr J McNally
Reference number	05/00428/1
Address	Land between Rainbow End and Field Cottage, Treacle

Proposal	Lane, Rushden Erection of a 5 bedroom dwelling with detached double garage and two associated car parking spaces
Method	Written representations

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following appeal had been determined since the meeting of the Committee held on 4 July 2005:

Appellant	Mr T Moody & Mrs M Clarke
Reference number	04/01796/1
Address	Rosemary Cottage, Fore Street, Weston
Proposal	Single storey rear and side extensions and new pitched roof to garage
Decision	Appeal dismissed – 13/07/2005

**38. EMERGENCY ITEM**

The Chairman of the Baldock & District Committee asked the Area Planning Officer if there had been a breach of planning control regarding the Manor House car parking spaces.

The Area Planning Officer advised members of the Committee that this issue was presently the subject of discussions with the intended occupiers of the Manor House and that he would report back to a future meeting of the Committee as a formal agenda item.

Councillor G.C. Hollands sought clarification from the Area Planning Officer regarding the result of a planning application for 10 Royston Road as he had received conflicting information. The Area Planning Officer confirmed that the application had been withdrawn.

The meeting closed at 9.45 p.m.

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Chairman