

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HITCHIN COMMITTEE

Meeting held at the Benslow Music Trust, Benslow Lane, Hitchin,
on 24 May 2005 at 7.30 p.m.

PRESENT: *Councillors; Judi Billing (Chairman), Derek Sheard (Vice-Chairman)
Allison Ashley, David Billing, Paul Clark, Joan Kirby, Sandra Lunn,
Lawrence Oliver, Deepak Sangha, R. Shakespeare-Smith,
Martin Stears, R.A.C. Thake and Sarah Wren.*

*Note: Councillor Sandra Lunn left the meeting at 8.45 p.m.
Councillor Martin Stears joined the meeting at 9.30 p.m.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Strategic Director of Regulatory and Financial Services,
Principal Planning Officers, Service Manager – Grounds
Maintenance, Community Development Officer and Committee
Administrator.*

4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

- (1) The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting;
- (2) The Chairman welcomed Councillor Deepak Sangha the newly elected Member for the Bearton Ward;
- (3) The Chairman welcomed the speakers at Agenda Item 9 - Planning Applications;
- (4) The Chairman referred the Committee to Minute 142.b of the meeting held on 12 April and advised that the report on Markets would be presented at the meeting to be held on 12 July 2005;
- (5) The Chairman advised that the item from Hertfordshire Highways on Asset Management System had once again been deferred, to the next meeting of this Committee to be held on 12 July 2005 and that consequently the report at Agenda Item 13 from the Joint Topic Group (Highways) would also be deferred to the meeting to be held on 12 July 2005;
- (6) The Chairman advised that the representatives from Hertfordshire Constabulary were unable to attend and would make their presentation on Community Policing at the meeting to be held on 12 July 2005;
- (7) The Chairman advised that John Goldsmith a long standing Member for Hitchin Urban District Council and NHDC from 1973 to 1976 had recently died and at the Chairman's request all present stood in silence for one minute in remembrance of his service to the community in Hitchin.

5. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

No apologies for absence had been received.

6. MINUTES – 12 April 2005

RESOLVED that the Minutes of the meeting held on 12 April 2005 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

7. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was tabled.

8. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Agenda Item 9 – Planning Application, Ref. 05/00516/1

Councillor Deepak Sangha declared a prejudicial interest as a resident of Common Rise, Hitchin and that he would leave the room for the duration of this item.

Councillor R.A.C. Thake declared a prejudicial interest in that his family firm had recently taken a financial interest in property in Common Rise and that he would leave the room for the duration of this item.

Agenda Item 12 – Grant Application – 3rd Hitchin Scouts

Councillor P.Clark declared a prejudicial interest in that he had a close family association with 3rd Hitchin Scouts and would leave the room for the duration of this item.

Agenda Item 12 – Grant application – The Caldicott Centre

Councillors P. Clark and S.Wren both declared a prejudicial interest as Directors of the Caldicott Centre and would leave the room for the duration of this item.

9. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public presentation at this meeting.

10. CHURCHGATE DEVELOPMENT AREA PLANNING BRIEF – REVISED DRAFT FOR PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The representative from John Thompson and Partners thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and members of the public with an update on findings and proposals for public consultation concerning Churchgate. During the PowerPoint presentation a review was made of the Community Planning event with a cross-reference to a Hitchin Visioning event held on 4 May. The presentation concentrated in the main on key urban design principles, character area guidance for future development and enhancement of the Churchgate development areas outlined in the revised planning brief presented at Appendix 2 to the report with the agenda for this meeting.

The Principal Planning officer referred the Committee to Appendix 2 which included descriptions of the two Options and the five sites with confirmation that the options were essentially the same for sites A2 and A3 but differed for site A1, the Churchgate Centre. The Committee noted that Site A1 had a Redevelopment option and a Refurbishment option and reviewed the positive and negative points for each option as presented at Appendix 3 to the report.

The Committee discussed at length the two development options and sites as presented in the revised Planning Brief and although consideration was given to several amendments made by a Member it was agreed that the next step should be Public Consultation on Options A and B put forward by the Consultants. The consultants had recommended Option A as the preferred option as having the potential for improvement of the eastern edge of the town centre and provision of a more 'fitting' aspect to the Market Place. There would also be a better setting for St. Mary's Church and the market and enhancement of the River Hiz.

RESOLVED

- (1) That John Thompson and Partners be thanked for their very informative presentation;
- (2) That officers be requested to provide an update on the Public Consultation for the Churchgate Development Area Planning Brief and outcomes from Hitchin Visioning at the next meeting of the Hitchin Committee to be held on 12 July;
- (3) That officers be requested to provide the Committee with regular updates on details and issues arising from the public consultation period and from meetings of the Hitchin Town Centre Working Party.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

- (1) That the revised Churchgate Area Planning Brief for Option A and Option B as presented at Appendix 2 to the report be agreed for Public Consultation in the period 6 June 2005 to 22 July 2005;
- (2) That the Public Consultation process as detailed in the Churchgate Project Plan presented at Appendix 4 to the report be agreed.

11. COMMUNITY POLICING - UPDATE

RESOLVED: That this item be withdrawn as Hertfordshire Constabulary were unable to attend this meeting and an invitation be extended to the next meeting of this Committee to be held on 12 July 2005.

12. MAINTENANCE OF THE DELL - HITCHIN

The Service Manager for Grounds Maintenance advised the Committee that Councillor Judi Billing had requested an updating report on The Dell and the future maintenance plans.

The Committee noted that the site had been closed in 1994 for the reasons of public safety and following an intensive programme of works was re-opened in October 1995. Subsequent improvements included repairs to perimeter fencing, replacement of entry gates, tree planting and the erection of bat and tawny owl boxes.

Although BMX riders had recently used The Dell for a short period the maintenance programme had continued without reduction following the riders departure and the Service Manager proposed that it was now appropriate to consider a draft management plan as presented at Appendix A to the report.

The Committee were in agreement for the implementation of the management plan, but had concerns about consultation with neighbouring parties to The Dell as in the Queen Mother Theatre and Hitchin Girls School. The Service Manager confirmed that consultation had and would take place with both parties and he noted that an open air play performance was planned in July.

The Committee also expressed concern about the sources of funding and noted that grant aid would be the main source and that voluntary work would also play its part. The Committee agreed to consider an application for funding if there was a shortfall from other sources.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information provided be noted;
- (2) That the proposal for the implementation of the Management Plan as presented at Appendix A to the report be agreed;
- (3) That officers be requested to provide feedback on consultation with the Queen Mother Theatre and Hitchin Girls School concerning works at the Dell to a future meeting of the Hitchin Committee;
- (4) That at a future meeting of the Hitchin Committee Members would give due consideration of any request for additional financial support to the implementation of the Management Plan;
- (5) That officers be requested to advise the Hitchin Committee should the time scale for the implementation of the Management Plan need to be extended;
- (6) That the current regime of maintenance of the Dell be continued to allow public access.

13. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee heard oral representations regarding the following:

05/00516/1 Land at A & B Glassworks, Cooks Way, Hitchin.

Mr Rataj spoke as an objector to the application.

A representative from Redrow Homes spoke for the applicant.

05/00330/1 Land rear of 26 and 28 Wymondley Road, and adjacent to 24 The Chilterns, Hitchin.

Mr N. Heffron spoke as an objector to the application.

RESOLVED to determine the planning applications as set out in the report of the Planning Control and Conservation Manager and as indicated in the following schedule:

SCHEDULE		
Reference Number	Description of Development and Location	Decision
05/00516/1	Land at A & B Glassworks, Cookes Way, Hitchin. Two 2/3 storey and 3 four storey buildings to provide 23 one bedroom flats, parking spaces, amenity space, play area and bin stores. Access via Cooks Way to include new pavement and traffic calming (as amplified by applicant's letter dated 14.04.05, noise report and adjoining land uses report received 18.04.05 and plan No. 03-0415-018 received 23.05.05).	Conditional Permission (see (a) below)

- (a) That with regard to planning application reference 05/00516/1 it be **RESOLVED** that this planning application be **GRANTED** as per the recommendations set out in the report of the Planning Control and Conservation Manager with a revised paragraph at 6.1, an amendment to Condition 12 and an advisory note as follows:

6.1 That, in the event of the applicants first entering into an agreement under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 with the District Council and any other relevant parties 1) to achieve the provision of affordable housing in accordance with Policy 29A of the adopted District Local Plans or such other arrangements as may be agreed under Circular 6/98 – Planning and Affordable Housing and to secure their permanent occupation for local people in need, b) to make a financial contribution of £600 per dwelling towards highways improvement and sustainable transport measures within the area, c) to make appropriate financial contributions towards secondary education, childcare, and youth facilities, library facilities and the provision of fire hydrants, d) to make a financial contribution of £25,000 towards improvements to the existing play area and the provision of a new wheeled facility on Walsworth Common.

- (12) Visibility splays of 4.5m by 70m shall be permanently provided for the junction of Cooks Way with Cambridge Road as shown on plan No. 03-0415-018 and this area is to remain free from obstruction.

Advisory Note: That the applicants be advised of a) the intention by the Council to include in the planning agreement a minimum period of 5 years for the repayment of the highway contribution and b) for the applicants to consider in conjunction with the highway authority a proposal to prevent traffic leaving Cooks Way from turning right into Cambridge Road.

05/00330/1 **Land rear of 26 & 28 Wymondley Road and adjacent to 24 The Chilterns, Hitchin.** **Conditional Permission**
(see (b) below)
Detached five bedroom dwelling with integral double garage (as amended by drawings Rev. C and received on 11 April and 11 May 2005)

(b) That with regard to planning application reference 05/00330/1 it be **RESOLVED** that this application be **GRANTED** as per the conditions set out in the report of the Planning Control and Conservation Manager and the following two additional conditions:

(6) The first floor windows to the ensuite bathrooms serving bedrooms 3 and 4 in the north west elevation shall be permanently obscure glazed to a height of 1.8m above internal floor level.

Reason: To safeguard the amenities of neighbouring occupiers.

(7) The development hereby permitted shall be used solely as a dwelling in single family occupation and for no other purpose within Class C3 set out in the Schedule to the Town and Country Planning (Use Classes) Order 1987, as amended.

Reason: To safeguard the existing character of this established residential area.

05/0095/1 **Land at William Ransom site, off Whinbush Road, Hitchin.** **Deferred**
(see (c) below)
Residential development consisting of 2,3 & 4 storey buildings to provide 173 dwellings (42 one bedroom and 112 two bedroom flats, 12 two bedroom and 7 three bedroom houses); 188 parking spaces, cycle and refuse stores; new river walkway, works to River Hiz and landscaping; alterations to existing north access and relocation of south access to Whinbush Road; ancillary works; demolition of existing buildings including 4 dwellings (as amended by plans received 11 February 2005 and 4 May 2005).

(c) That with regard to planning application reference 05/0095/1 it be **RESOLVED** that a decision on this application be **DEFERRED** in order that negotiations may take place with the applicant to address the Committee's objection to the scale and dominance of Block B.

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that Planning Application 05/00228/1 – North Herts College, Willian Road, Hitchin, had been withdrawn by the applicant.

14. PLANNING APPEALS

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that one appeal had been lodged since the meeting of this Committee held on 12 April 2005.

Appellant	Mr and Mrs Duxbury
Address	41 Willian Road, Hitchin.
Description	Two storey rear extension Ref. 04/00915/1HH
Procedure	Written representations.

The Principal Planning Officer confirmed that three appeals had been determined since the meeting of this Committee held on 12 April 2005.

Appellant William Hill Organisation Ltd.
Address 95 Hermitage Road, Hitchin.
Description Change of use from retail to Class A2 (betting office)
Ref. 04/01008/1
Decision Appeal ALLOWED on 20 April 2004.

Appellant Mr and Mrs G. Munn
Address Land adjacent 66 Uplands Avenue, Hitchin.
Description Detached dwelling and detached single garage.
Ref. 04/00668/1
Decision Appeal ALLOWED on 20 April 2004.

Appellant Mr and Mrs Barnett
Address 59 Mattocke Road, Hitchin.
Description Front and rear dormer windows to facilitate loft conversion.
Ref. 04/00724/1
Decision Appeal DISMISSED on 27 April 2004.

15. CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Officer presented her report and provided an update on: multicultural event on 16 and 17 April 2005; BMX facility; Mill Media; Skatepark facility; Caldicott Centre and Groundwork Hertfordshire; Soul Town Project; Hitchin Visioning and Town Talk.

The Committee were pleased to note the progress being made by the Community Development Officer with local groups and forthcoming events.

RESOLVED

- (1) That the information provided on activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer be noted;
- (2) That the Community Development Officer be congratulated on the achievements made in community events and in particular skatepark and BMX facilities in Hitchin.

16. GRANTS TO VOLUNTARY ORGANISATIONS AND DEVELOPMENT BUDGET 2004/2005

RESOLVED that the 2005/2006 funds in the Visioning Budget of £12,230, the Town Centre Budget of £9,280, the Central Development budget of £775 and the total Ward Development Discretionary Budget of £69,509 be noted.

17. GRANT APPLICATION – THE 3RD HITCHIN SCOUT GROUP

RESOLVED that a grant of £405.85 be awarded from the Central Development Budget 2005/2006 to the 3rd Hitchin Scout Group as a contribution towards the costs of increased insurance premium for equipment and rent for storage.

18. THE CALDICOTT CENTRE

RESOLVED that a grant of £750.00 be awarded from the Central Development Budget for 2005/2006 as a contribution towards the costs of providing facilities at Hitchin Town Hall for the continuation of young peoples' clubs based at the Nightingale Day Centre.

19. HITCHIN TOWN CENTRE MANAGER

The Chairman advised the meeting that the Hitchin Town Centre Manager had confirmed that he had no updating to make to the Committee.

The meeting closed at 10.12 p.m.

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Chairman