

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HITCHIN COMMITTEE

**Special Meeting held at Council Offices, Letchworth Garden City
on 25 June 2007 at 6.30 p.m.**

MINUTES

PRESENT: *Councillors: Judi Billing (Chairman), Mrs A.G. Ashley, David Billing, Paul Clark, Joan Kirby, Bernard Lovewell, Alan Millard, Lawrence Oliver, Deepak Sangha, R. Shakespeare- Smith, and Martin Stears.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Patrick Candler – Head of Community Development and Cultural Services,
Nigel Schofield – Committee Administrator.*

20. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to this Special meeting of the Hitchin Committee and that there would be only one item on the agenda for discussion: ' The future management arrangements for Hitchin Town Hall'.

21. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Clare Body and R.A.C. Thake.

22. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no declarations of interest.

23. EXCLUSION OF THE PRESS AND PUBLIC

RESOLVED: That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the press and public be excluded from the meeting for the following item of business on the grounds that it involves the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

Note: The definition of Paragraph 3 referred to above is as follows:

3. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information).

24. THE FUTURE MANAGEMENT ARRANGEMENTS FOR HITCHIN TOWN HALL

The Head of Community Development and Cultural Services presented his report to the Committee and identified the key elements of market testing and the progress towards the selection of a preferred tenderer to take over Hitchin Hall as a community asset on a defined lease of 40 years.

The Chairman invited each Councillor in turn to comment on the report and question the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services.

The Chairman thanked her fellow Councillors for their inputs, questions and comments made at this special meeting and following a group discussion the following resolutions and subsequent recommendations to Cabinet for consideration at the meeting to be held on 26 June 2007 were made.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) That Cabinet should take due note of the extreme disappointment registered by the Hitchin Committee at the lack of consultation on all issues concerning the future of Hitchin Town Hall;
- (3) That the Hitchin Committee expressed their concern on the evolution of Market Testing directly into invitations to tender;

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:

- (1) That Cabinet be requested to take due notice of the questions and comments raised by the Hitchin Committee at its Special Meeting held on 25 June 2007;
- (2) That a decision to award a lease for the management of Hitchin Town Hall must be deferred:
- (3) That a decision to award a lease on 26 June 2007 would be against the interests of all NHDC Councillors and the people of Hitchin;
- (4) That any subsequent award of a lease must be in consultation with the Hitchin Committee;
- (5) That Cabinet and Hitchin Committee must maintain a veto on any new name proposed for the management of Hitchin Town Hall;

REASON FOR DECISION

To allow the Hitchin Committee participate and contribute as much as possible to the decision process concerning the future of Hitchin Town Hall as a Community Asset.

The meeting closed at 7. 26 p.m.

.....
Chairman