

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

HITCHIN COMMITTEE

**Meeting held at The Benslow Music Centre, Benslow Lane, Hitchin,
on 18 November 2008 at 7.30p.m.**

MINUTES

PRESENT: *Councillors: Judi Billing(Chairman),Deepak Sangha (Vice-Chairman),
Mrs A.G. Ashley, David Billing, Paul Clark, Joan Kirby,
Alan Millard, Lawrence Oliver, Martin Stears – Handscomb
and R.A.C. Thake.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Norma Atlay, Strategic Director of Financial and Regulatory Services
Barrie Jones, Head of Financial Services
Mary Caldwell, Planning Control and Conservation Manager
Keith Hoskins, Hitchin Town Centre Manager
Margaret Bracey, Community Development Officer
Nigel Schofield, Committee Administrator*

55. APOLOGY FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillors: Clare Body, Bernard Lovewell and Ray Shakespeare – Smith.

56. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting and thanked all those who attended the Town Talk.

57. MINUTES – 22 JULY 2008

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the Meeting held on 23 September 2008 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman.

58. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS – CHURCHGATE DEVELOPMENT

The Chairman accepted with the Committee's agreement a request from Moulton Walker, Project Managers to Hammersmatch to address the Committee under Public Participation. The Chairman confirmed that the presentation must only address the recently approved planning application for the refurbishment of the Churchgate Centre.

The Chairman also accepted with the Committee's agreement a request from the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning to address the Committee at Agenda Item 14 – Grants and Development Budgets concerning free car parking in Hitchin for Christmas Shoppers.

59. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

The Chairman read out the following:

Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either prejudicial or personal interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the item on the agenda. Members declaring a prejudicial interest should leave the room and not seek to influence the decision during that particular item.

60. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – RHYTHMS OF THE WORLD

The representative from the Rhythms of the World 2008 thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and his first comment was to thank the Hitchin Committee for the grant of £10,000 that was a major contribution to the costs of the 2008 Festival. The Committee noted that the new venue of The Priory had proved to be a great success with approximately 23,000 visitors over the two days and were pleased to be advised that the festival had received an environmental award for the 2008 Festival. The representative advised the Committee that there had been a good feedback from visitors, initial scepticism had been assuaged, and without the many volunteers the event as in recent years could not take place. Planning for the 2009 event which would again be at the Priory on 4th and 5th July and the booking of acts had commenced, and there would be a lot of pressure on individuals and some working practices would have to be changed. The ROTW 2009 Committee would be pleased to receive a continued grant of £10,000 for 2009 and would be furnish when ready the final audited accounts for 2008 in support of another grant award for 2009.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the information presented by the representative of Rhythms of the World Festival 2008 be noted;
- (2) That the representative be requested to furnish the Hitchin Committee with a copy of the Festival 2008 audited accounts as soon as possible.

REASON FOR DECISION

To provide the Hitchin Committee with the relevant information that would assist in the decision to make an award to the ROTW 2009 Festival Committee.

61. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – CONSERVATION MANAGEMENT PLAN AT ST. MARY'S CHURCH, HITCHIN

Mr Joseph Elders of the Church Buildings Council, Church of England thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee. Mr Elders confirmed that records showed that Hitchin and its 'Minster' were recorded in the Domesday Book and the records of Waltham Abbey with the earliest known reference dating back to AD 985. Recent and previous archaeological discoveries included the site of Christian burials in the 5th and 6th Centuries with the 'golden age of the Minster being the 7th and 8th Centuries. Surveys in 2007 had revealed a deep ditch and palisade that surrounded Hitchin confirming the status of a Burh (borough). Mr Elders clarified the aims of a Conservation Management Plan (CMP) and Community Archaeology Project (CAP) and the possible effect of any future development in Churchgate and Hitchin Town Centre and as part of the CMP/CAP a ground penetrating radar survey had taken place in the west end of the church. Although the Parish Church of St Mary's had pledged £5,000, additional grants were being sought from English Heritage, Herts County Council and NHDC to allow further survey: such as Carbon – 14 dating, community dig in the Church Nave, record the results of recent excavations in the Church, its immediate vicinity and possibly extending into the town centre which would constitute Volume 2 of the CMP following the production of Volume 1 (Initial Results) by the Church Buildings Council.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the representative of the Church Buildings Council be thanked for the informative presentation;
- (2) That the Hitchin Committee be kept informed of progress with any future archaeological surveys in Hitchin Minster.

REASON FOR DECISION

To continue with the support of the Hitchin Committee for Community Projects in Hitchin.

62. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION – REFURBISHMENT OF CHURCHGATE CENTRE

Declarations of Interest:

Councillors David Billing and Alan Millard as full members of the NHDC Planning Control Committee and Councillors Deepak Sangha and Paul Clark as substitute members of the NHDC Planning Control Committee declared a prejudicial interest and advised the Chairman that it would be inappropriate to ask any questions or make any comments on this item in order to avoid any possibility of pre – determination concerning any future planning applications for the Churchgate Centre and Surrounding Area.

Councillor Richard Thake in his role as NHDC Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport confirmed that it would not be appropriate for him to comment on any matters concerning planning applications for the Churchgate Centre and Surrounding Area.

Mr Moulton thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee at such short notice this evening. Mr Moulton on behalf of his client expressed surprise that following approval by the Local Planning Authority for refurbishment of the Churchgate Centre there had been an NHDC Press Release confirming that two bidders would proceed with plans for the development/regeneration of the Churchgate Centre and Surrounding Area. At the moment the refurbishment by Hammersmatch was expected to commence in mid 2009 and if the Council wished to proceed with the development of the surrounding area to Churchgate it would be appropriate to regard the Hammersmatch works as Phase 1 and other works authorised by the Council to be regarded as Phase 2. Mr Moulton advised the Committee that any attempt to acquire the Churchgate Centre by a Compulsory Purchase Order (CPO) would be resisted by Hammersmatch and that a CPO (to acquire the NHDC interest) might well fail due to the refurbishment being in line with NHDC policies. Mr Moulton also expressed an opinion that a CPO would probably delay development by NHDC and would continue to blight the existing shopping centre and possibly the Town Centre as well.

Mr Moulton asked the Committee to support the refurbishment as Phase 1 and confirmed that an application for landlords approval for the works had been made in June 2009 and a decision was expected soon.

There followed a short debate which concluded that it would be appropriate for the Hitchin Town Centre Working Party to consider the Churchgate Centre Refurbishment as part of the overall scheme for Churchgate and the Surrounding Area.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the representative from Moulton Walker be thanked for the presentation;
- (2) That the Hitchin Town Centre Working Party be requested to enter into dialogue with Moulton Walker (Project Managers to Hammersmatch) to ensure that North Herts District Council would be able to properly consider the proposal made by Hammersmatch for the refurbishment of Churchgate Centre to be part of the overall development of the Churchgate Centre and Surrounding area.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

To ensure that all parties have the opportunity to discuss the proposals for the redevelopment of the Churchgate Centre and Surrounding Area.

63. HITCHIN TOWN COUNCIL - UPDATE

The Chairman Councillor Judi Billing provided a resume of the meeting concerning Hitchin Town Council held on 22 October where a large majority of those present voted against proceeding towards a Town Council for Hitchin which over a 12 month period indicated a shift in support away from the prospect of a Hitchin Town Council. The meeting considered that there was no need for another tier of local government, that events during the tenure of the current Letchworth Garden City Town Council had raised scepticism on the value of such parish councils. The meeting agreed that there were sufficient interfaces in Hitchin such as NHDC, the HTCI, Community Groups, which combined with the BIDS process could be a suitable alternative

Subsequent to the meeting in October the Chairman provided a resume of the meeting held on 17 November 2008 by 'Investigation into a Town Council for Hitchin' (ITCH) which was attended *inter alia* by the NHDC Strategic Director for Customer Services (SDCS) and the NHDC Portfolio Holder for Policy (PHP), Hitchin Town Centre Manager and Morag Norgan (Director of HTCI) which discussed the way forward and those attending were encouraged by the comments made by the SDCS for greater community engagement, including the potential for an increased Town Talk where local community groups would be invited to attend and contribute to Hitchin 'matters'. Also for example where local groups such as ITCH could have an annual meeting with the NHDC Cabinet. However, the Chairman advised the Committee that the NHDC Portfolio Holder for Policy indicated that Hitchin Committee was unable to represent Hitchin to the Administration other than by referrals to Cabinet which was entirely unexpected and the meeting considered that this was counter productive to the well being and development of Hitchin and its Community.

In response the NHDC Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning advised the Committee that the attributed comments from the PHP were most unfortunate and that he as a Cabinet Member could not support this view and the whole process of Community Engagement was diminished by this statement.

The Committee were also very disappointed to be advised of the attributed comments made by the PHP and it was suggested that this was a 'slight' against the Hitchin Committee and Hitchin residents and it was agreed that clarification be sought from the PHP. The Committee also agreed to increased and improved public participation. The Committee also considered that the development of community surgeries and Hitchin Town Talk had led the way for community engagement within North Hertfordshire followed by the other four Area Committees.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That Councillor Judi Billing be thanked for the update on Hitchin Town Council following the meetings held on 22 October 2008 and 17 November 2008;
- (2) That the Strategic Director of Customer Services be thanked for the advice and suggestions provided at the meetings held on 22 October 2008 and 17 November 2008 and other meetings concerning ITCH (Investigation into a Town Council for Hitchin);
- (3) That the Hitchin Committee expressed its concerns at the comments attributed to the NHDC Portfolio Holder for Policy concerning Hitchin Community Engagement;
- (3) That clarification be requested of comments made by the NHDC Portfolio Holder for Policy at the meeting of ITCH held on 17 November 2008 concerning the involvement of Hitchin Committee and Hitchin Councillors in Hitchin Community Engagement;
- (4) That the NHDC Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning be thanked for the support given to the Hitchin Committee concerning Community Engagement.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

To ensure that the Hitchin Committee participate at all levels of Community Engagement and engage wherever possible with the NHDC Administration.

64. CHURCHGATE CENTRE AND SURROUNDING AREA PROCUREMENT PROCESS

The Strategic Director for Finance and Regulatory Services (SDFS) reminded Members that at the last meeting of the Hitchin Committee held on 23 September 2008 (Minute 44 refers) a request had been made for the provision of information concerning the tender process for the development of the Churchgate Centre and Surrounding Area.

The SDFS clarified the need for commercial confidentiality and was pleased to advise the Committee that legal advisers to the Council had agreed the previous day that information regarding the criteria for the selection of bidders under the Competitive Dialogue process and that this could be added to these Minutes as Appendix A if the Committee so wished. The SDFS accepted that not everyone who were interested in the Churchgate Development would accept such paucity of information but the issues of commercial confidentiality were paramount and NHDC was severely constrained as to what information could be released. Discussion continued on the justification for applying Part 2 conditions to all reports presented to the Hitchin Town Centre Working Party (HTCWP) and the SDFS replied that legal advice would always be sought as to the need for Part 2 and to date all meetings and prospective meetings of the HTCWP would be in Part 2 unless there was legal advice to the contrary.

In response to an enquiry the SDFS confirmed that if one of the two bidders withdrew then subject to verification NHDC could proceed with one bidder and if both bidders withdrew then Cabinet and/or Council would have to reconsider the options available to it and decide on the most appropriate course of action in light of the prevailing circumstances. The SDFS also confirmed that discussions between the two bidders and Hammersmatch would not be influenced by NHDC and it was purely an issue for the other parties and that the withdrawal of two bidders was as per the wording of the press release agreed by all parties.

The SDFS assured the Committee that the viability of the proposed schemes would be discussed at each and every stage with the bidder/s, there would be no 'second guessing' of the commercial market and no assumptions for 2010 – 2012.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Strategic Director of Finance and Regulatory Services be thanked for the information provided on the procurement process;
- (2) That the Strategic Director of Finance and Regulatory Services be requested to provide to the Committee a full breakdown of the three criteria used in the pre qualification questionnaire (attached at Appendix A to these Minutes).

REASON FOR DECISIONS

To provide wherever possible information concerning the re-generation of the Churchgate Centre and Surrounding Area into the public domain.

65. HITCHIN TOWN CENTRE MANAGER

The Hitchin Town Centre Manager (TCM) thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the Committee and welcomed the comments made earlier concerning Community Engagement in Hitchin and communication with the NHDC Administration and that improved community interaction could be a feature of future Hitchin Committee meetings.

The TCM was pleased to pass on the thanks of the Hitchin Market Traders for the support of the Hitchin Committee, market stall usage was up day on day, new lighting had been installed, some permanent stalls would be removed and the provision of kiosk type stalls had been approved. The TCM confirmed that all surpluses were invested in the Market operation. The TCM drew the Committee's attention to recent flooding in lower Hitchin Hill (Park Street) and Bridge Street and that it was essential that the gully cleaning programme was co-ordinated with the autumn leaf fall.

Support for a Hitchin BIDS vote was strong and would be a ideal opportunity to enhance unity within the town. The 2008 Christmas Lights will be 'switched on' on Friday 28 November, with a Christmas Sale in the Market Place on 29 November and another fundraising event at Hitchin Town Hall on 8 December.

The Chairman thanked the TCM for the information provided and requested that the Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning should contact the appropriate department at Hertfordshire Highways for immediate attention to the blocked gullies in lower Hitchin Hill (Park Street) and Bridge Street.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Hitchin Town Centre Manager be thanked for the provided information;
- (2) That the Committee noted that the Hitchin Christmas Lights would be 'switched on' at 6.30 p.m. on Friday 28 November 2008;
- (3) That the NHDC Portfolio Holder for Transport and Planning be requested to contact the appropriate officer at the Local Area Office of Hertfordshire Highways for immediate action (gully cleaning) to attend the current flooding problems in Lower Hitchin Hill and Bridge Street, Hitchin.

66. SECTION 106 AGREEMENTS AND UNILATERAL UNDERTAKINGS

The Planning Control and Conservation Manager (PCM) confirmed that the Performance, Audit and Review Committee requested that the five NHDC Area Committees should be given the opportunity to review the spreadsheets applicable to their own area and comment.

The PCM advised that the list before the Committee was an amalgam of Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings for NHDC and Herts County Council presented at Appendix A and clarified the colour codings:

1. Yellow - Live contributions that need to be received/allocated and /or spent;
2. Blue - Agreement fulfilled;
3. Orange - Social housing;
4. Green - Allocated to project – not spent;
5. Red - Contribution received from Unilateral Undertakings – not allocated;
6. Light purple - Agreement not requiring NHDC input.

The Committee welcomed the detail presented in the report and Appendix A although it was difficult to analyse the information and particularly how many awards were close to expiry. This was amplified by the current lack of Member involvement in the allocation of monies as soon as Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings were agreed as well as the allocation of highway monies to specific schemes in each area. This was amplified by the recent allocation of highway monies from Hitchin Town Centre to the Hitchin Station Forecourt improvements. The Committee requested that the next presentation of the spreadsheets to the Hitchin Committee should be separated for NHDC and HCC respectively. And if possible to define in the spreadsheets the total amount of monies applicable to transport, youth, education, road safety, amenity and play areas. Particular comment was made to the slowness of traffic monies being allocated and that some were approaching time expired and this had a marked effect on works at the Cadwell Lane, Wilbury Way, Grove Road and Woolgrove Road junction.

The Committee also considered it was essential for immediate action on the award of small amounts that could be monitored by Members and the Community Development Officer and allocated to an appropriate project or scheme.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the contents of the report be noted;
- (2) That the progress for the utilisation of the Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings monies for presentation to PARC on 11 December 2008 be noted;
- (3) That the Planning Control and Conservation Manager be requested to present an updating report on Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings to the meeting of the Hitchin Committee scheduled for June 2009 and annually thereafter;
- (4) That the Planning Control and Conservation Manager be requested to provide regular updates via Champion News announcements of small pre-allocated Section 106 sums available.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure a robust system for the negotiation and management of Section 106 and Unilateral Undertakings and to provide a regular updates on awards.

67. HITCHIN CONSERVATION REVIEW

The Planning Control and Conservation Manager (PCM) provided a brief resume of the proposed work programme for the review of the Hitchin Conservation Area. The Committee noted that Consultants would be appointed at the end of 2008 or early 2009, a member workshop in February/March 2009, Consultants review in March to June 2009, public consultation in June and July 2009, review of representations in August 2009, report to Hitchin Committee in the September 2009 cycle followed by report to Cabinet in October with outcome of the Review, with any recommendations from the Hitchin Committee.

The Chairman thanked the PCM for the report and details of the time table, notwithstanding the review report to Hitchin Committee in September 2009 a request was made that the PCM should ensure that Members received a regular update on any issues concerning the Conservation Area Review.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Planning Control and Conservation Manager be thanked for the information provided on the forthcoming Hitchin Conservation Review;
- (2) That the Planning Control and Conservation Manager be requested to ensure that the Hitchin Committee be made aware of any updating on a regular basis.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

To ensure that the Hitchin Committee are regularly updated on the progress of the Hitchin Conservation Review.

68. AREA COMMITTEE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS – REVIEW OF 2006-2009 AND PROPOSALS FOR 2009 - 2012

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Judi and David Billing both declared a personal interest as a member of their immediate family was a performing artiste at the 2008 ROTW festival and it was very likely that this family member would be performing at the 2009 ROTW festival and for the sake of probity advised that they would not participate in the agenda item.

Councillor Joan Kirby declared a personal interest as she was closely involved with Hitchin Senior Citizens and for the sake of probity advised that she would not participate in the agenda item.

The Committee were pleased to receive this invitation to review the current Service Level Agreements (SLA) applicable to Hitchin and the one new proposal that ROTW should receive an SLA for the next three years. The Committee were in agreement for all the proposals as listed at Paragraph 4.7 except for ROTW and proposed two additional projects that could be considered i.e. Hitchin Town Centre Initiative and The Soundbase Dry Club 'Sub Zero'.

With regard to ROTW it was agreed that whilst the Hitchin Committee would be pleased to support the 2009 Festival subject to sight of the audited accounts for 2008 and any revised policy set for admission to the event it would be best to defer a decision as to establishment of an SLA.

In response to an enquiry the Community Development Officer confirmed that any monies dedicated to SLAs would be in addition to the Discretionary and Development Budgets for 2009-2010.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the information provided on current and prospective SLAs awards at Paragraph 4.7 to the report be noted;
- (2) That the proposal to approve an SLA for Rhythms of the World be deferred subject to the receipt of audited accounts for the 2008 Festival;
- (3) That the five other SLA awards as listed at Paragraph 4.7 be agreed;
- (4) That the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services be requested to make the appropriate investigations to make an SLA award to:
 - a. Hitchin Town Centre Initiative
 - b. The Soundbase Dry Club 'Sub Zero'and report back to the next meeting of the Hitchin Committee to be held on 13 January 2009 with details of the annual budget required for the two organisations listed above.
- (5) That the proposed timescale for the implementation of the new Service Level Agreements be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION

To confirm the future strategic policy direction for the programme of financial assistance to the voluntary and community sector.

69. CORPORATE BUSINESS PLANNING 2009-2014 – EFFICIENCIES AND INVESTMENT

The Head of Financial Services (HFS) referred the Committee to the five appendices which detailed the Efficiencies and Investments proposed for 2009-2010 together with the Medium Term 5 Year Forecast and the General Fund Estimate. The HFS reminded the Committee that two Member workshops had been held in early November and that he would take any questions from the Committee. All parts of the Corporate Business Planning Process were aligned to the Corporate Plan.

One concern raised was the cessation of placing planning applications notices in the local media (Efficiency RE/7) and that the proposal to use the NHDC web site for information was not acceptable – not everyone had access to the internet and many people still regarded the local press as the main source of information for public notices. The PCM advised the Committee that advertisements would continue until legislation was enacted and that notices around a development site would be continued and neighbours were notified as a matter of courtesy.

The Committee noted the information provided in the report and although there were no major comments to make on the proposed Efficiencies and Investments it was agreed that it was necessary for all NHDC Councillors to see the proposals well in advance of the Member Workshops and Area Committees. Several Members regarded the presentation to Area Committees as far too late in the Corporate Business Planning Process.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the information provided on the proposed Efficiencies and Investments for 2009-2014 be noted;
- (2) That the Head of Financial Services be requested to take note of and make the necessary arrangements to ensure that all NHDC Councillors are invited to participate in the Corporate Business Planning Process before presentation at workshops and to Area Committees.
- (3) The Chairman proposed and it was agreed that a vote of thanks be recorded in respect of the service by Mr Barrie Jones as Head of Financial Services to North Hertfordshire District Council and in particular the advice provided to the Hitchin Committee on the Corporate Business Planning Process (formerly the Service and Financial Planning Process, with every best wish to Mr Jones for a long and happy retirement.

REASON FOR DECISIONS

To allow the opportunity for NHDC Councillors participate at a much earlier stage in the Corporate Business Planning Process.

70. RHYTHMS OF THE WORLD 2008 AND FUTURE PLANS FOR 2009

Declarations of Interest

Councillors Judi and David Billing both declared a personal interest as a member of their immediate family was a performing artiste at the 2008 ROTW festival and it was very likely that this family member would be performing at the 2009 ROTW festival and for the sake of probity advised that they would not participate in the agenda item.

The Community Development Officer provided details on the 2008 Festival and the successful event held at the Priory. The CDO confirmed that at Paragraph 3.6 the attendance was estimated at 23,000 over the two days and not 20,000 each day. The CDO advised the Committee that as there had been no major issues during the event the £1,000 bond had been released to the 2008 Committee.

The Committee noted the success of the 2008 Festival and agreed to support the 2009 Festival with a grant 'in principle' of £10,000 subject to sight of the audited accounts for 2008, with the matter of a bond being deferred accordingly.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the ROTW Festival Committee for 2008 be thanked for the successful event in 2008;
- (2) That subject to consultation with, and approval of the appropriate local organisations the use of Butts Close as a car park during ROTW in 2009 be agreed;
- (3) That an award 'in principle' and not exceeding £10,000 should be pre-allocated from the 2009-2010 Development Budget towards the running costs of ROTW in 2009 and subject to inspection of the audited accounts for ROTW in 2008;
- (4) That the decision on retention of a damage bond be deferred subject to the award of a grant to the ROTW 2009 Festival.

REASON FOR DECISION

To provide an opportunity for the Hitchin Committee to support the ROTW festival in 2009.

71. CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Officer provide a comprehensive update on her activities since the last meeting held on 23 September 2008 including *inter alia*: Youth Diversionary Activities, Voice of Hitchin Youth, Angel Support Group, Licensing of local events, Cadwell Lane Residents/Hitchin Alliance, Democracy Week, Hitchin Town Talk, Soundbase 'Sub Zero', Starbucks waste clearance, Annual Community Conference, Councillor Surgeries (at local schools), Adult Exercise Equipment, Hitchin Allotments, Hitchin Railway Curve.

The CDO advised the Committee that the inclement weather this summer had perhaps deterred users to the late Wednesday sessions although the number of visitors was encouraging. However, the proposed cost of £200 per hour plus VAT to run a similar scheme in 2009 (12 nights for a total of 1.5 hours) was considered to be excessive and the CDO was requested to contact the appropriate officer for clarification.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well being be endorsed;
- (2) That the Community Development Officer be requested to make the necessary arrangements for a report to be brought to the next meeting of the Hitchin committee that would clarify the reasoning and costs analysis for the proposed charge of £200 per hour for extended opening hours at Hitchin Swim Centre in the summer of 2009.

REASON FOR DECISION

To ensure that the Hitchin Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer since the last meeting and support the development of Community activities in Hitchin.

72. ANNUAL GRANTS, DEVELOPMENT, DISCRETIONARY AND VISIONING BUDGETS 2008-2009

The CDO advised the Committee of the balances in each of the budget headings and current balance for each Ward and confirmed that there was only one grant application to be determined.

RESOLVED: That the current expenditure and balance of the Development budget be noted;

REASON FOR DECISION

To allow the Hitchin Committee further the aims and Strategic Objectives of north Hertfordshire District Council.

73. GRANT APPLICATION – HITCHIN ST MARY’S PAROCHIAL CHURCH COUNCIL

RESOLVED:

- (1) That a grant of £2000 be awarded towards the costs of undertaking further archaeological surveys in the vicinity of St.Mary’s Church and Hitchin Town Centre subject to the provision of matched funding from other agencies such as English Heritage and Hertfordshire County Council;
- (2) That the allocation of the agreed sum of £2000 be as follows:
 - a. £1000 – Central Area Grants 2008-2009
 - b. £250 - Priory Ward Development Budget 2008-2009
 - c. £250 – Highbury Ward Development Budget 2008-2009
 - d. £250 – Bearton Ward Development Budget 2008-2009
 - e. £250 – Walsworth Ward Development Budget 2008-2009

74. GRANT APPLICATION - CESSATION OF CAR PARKING CHARGES IN HITCHIN ON SATURDAY 20 DECEMBER 2008

RESOLVED: That the Hitchin Committee were unable to support the tabled request for financial support to provide free car parking in Hitchin on Saturday 20 December 2008.

REASON FOR DECISION

The grant requested was in excess of £3000 and as such should be presented in advance to the Committee as a formally registered grant application via the Community Development Officer.

75. HITCHIN COMMUNITY SURGERIES

The Chairman advised the Committee that it was clear from the attendance of two visitors to the last Surgery held on 1 November that unless the weather was so inclement every attempt should be made to hold the surgery in the Market Place.

On conclusion of the meeting the Chairman thanked Members and Officers for their support to the Hitchin Committee and extended seasons greetings to everyone and wished all a Happy New Year.

The meeting closed at 9.44 p.m.

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Chairman

APPENDIX A

CHURCHGATE CENTRE AND SURROUNDING AREA – PROCUREMENT PROCESS

WEIGHTINGS

Financial information = 25 per cent

Professional ability = 30 per cent

Technical ability = 45 per cent

FULL BREAKDOWN

Basic details of your organisation – information only

Professional and business standing – 15 per cent

Financial information – 25 per cent

Business activities – information only

Previous contracts – 15 per cent

Insurance – Pass/Fail on provision of information

Health and Safety – information only

Equal opportunities – information only

Technical capability – 45 per cent broken down as follows:

- a. Names and addresses of architects and other professional advisers, where known (information only);
- b. Details of similar projects recently undertaken by the developer and architect , including brief details of the scale, development costs and provisional team involved (15 per cent);
- c. Experience of working on projects requiring land assembly against a backdrop of compulsory purchase (10 per cent);
- d. Details of similar projects carried out in partnership with a public body (5 per cent);
- e. Use of and ability to secure methods of funding (10 per cent);
- f. Project management and deliverability of schemes (5 per cent)

DECLARATION

PASS or FAIL