

**TITLE OF REPORT: HITCHIN POST OFFICE SITE, PLANNING BRIEF –
INFORMATION NOTE**

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, HOUSING AND
ENTERPRISE

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To provide an update for Members on the production of a Planning Brief for the future development of the former Post and Sorting Office Site located between Hermitage Road and Portmill Lane in Hitchin.
- 1.2 For the ease of updating Members this Note will be divided into various sub-sections.

2. PROJECT ISSUES

- 2.1 Royal Mail have recently been marketing the site for disposal to a potential developer. As part of this exercise, Royal Mail have been aware that a Planning Brief is expected to be compiled in conjunction with whoever acquires the site from Royal Mail Holdings.
- 2.2 It is anticipated that a draft Planning Brief will come before the Hitchin Area Committee in due course in accordance with the method stipulated in the adopted Hitchin Town Centre Strategy. The Hitchin Town Centre Strategy stipulates (in Policy 22), that "The Council, working together with potential developers and landowners, will prepare Planning Briefs for the following key development sites in accordance with the aims and policy guidance set out in this Town Centre Strategy for:d) The Post Office Site".
- 2.3 A Scoping Paper for the Planning Brief which was compiled in October 2011 (presented at Appendix A) and was made publicly available on the NHDC web site in early November of last year. This Scoping Paper was drafted for when the successful bidder is announced. At this stage, when the successful bidder is announced, the Council will move forward on the detail of the brief in conjunction with that new owner/developer, as stipulated in the Hitchin Town Centre Strategy. When this happens the brief will move forward and, when drafted, will include public consultation before any final draft is produced for adoption.

3. NEXT STEPS

- 3.1 To engage with the appointed purchaser of the Post and Sorting Office Site to enable the production of a draft Planning Brief to be approved for publication as a document for public consultation.
- 3.2 Following completion of the consultation stage an analysis of the representations received will be made, leading to the compilation of a final Planning Brief for adoption.

4. REPORTS TO CABINET

4.1 None

5. APPENDIX

5.1 Appendix A – Development Brief Scoping Paper

6. CONCLUSION

6.1 That the Hitchin Committee note the content of this Information Note.

7. CONTACT OFFICER

7.1 Andy Beavan, Local Development Framework Manager Telephone 01462 474317. E-mail address andy.beavan@north-herts.gov.uk