

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ROYSTON & DISTRICT COMMITTEE

(Royston and Ermine Ward – Parishes of Barkway, Barley, Kelshall, Nuthampstead, Reed and Therfield)

**Meeting held at Royston Town Hall, Melbourn Street, Royston
On 26 April 2006 at 7.30 p.m.**

PRESENT: *Councillors W.M. Davidson (Chairman), Mrs F.R. Hill (Vice-Chairman), P.C.W. Burt, R.E. Inwood, H.M. Marshall and F.J. Smith.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Planning Control & Conservation Manager, Principal Planning Officer, Transport Policy Officer, Community Development Officer for Royston and Committee & Member Services Officer.*

ALSO PRESENT: *28 members of the public.*

123. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor A.F. Hunter.

124. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 15 March 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

125. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman agreed consideration of the following additional items:

- Changes to fire service provision in Royston. This item to be considered as Agenda Item 13.

126. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

No declarations of interests were made during the meeting.

127. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Roger Wood had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/00147/1 – 2-3 George Lane, Royston. Mr Wood was speaking as an objector to the application.

Key points raised by Mr Wood were:

- The proposed development will have a detrimental impact on the security and privacy on his company's offices.
- Proposed storage arrangements for refuse bins will cause environmental problems for residents.
- The wall between the site and his company's car park is under his company's ownership and they will not allow access across their property, which will result in a "dead space" to the rear of the new properties.
- The developer had made no effort to undertake any consultation or discussion prior to submitting the application, and Mr Wood had only been made aware of the proposal through the site notice.

The Chairman thanked Mr Wood for his presentation and informed him that the points he had raised would be considered when the Committee determined the application.

Mr John Winstanley had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/00264/1 – Sells Close Office, High Street, Barley. Mr Winstanley was speaking as an objector to the application.

Key points raised by Mr Winstanley were:

- The building is too large for its stated purpose and will overshadow his garden.
- If a larger building is needed to include a meeting room, the extra space should be accommodated through increasing the building's depth rather than its width, thus reducing the impact on his property.
- The location of the chimney will result in the emissions drifting across his property because of the prevailing wind direction.
- Whilst the highways authority have stated that they have no objection, there are already problems with poor visibility and obstruction and parking issues, which will only be exacerbated by the proposed development.
- It should be recognised that people choose to live in villages for a particular lifestyle and not to be in the vicinity of this sort of industrial development.

The Chairman thanked Mr Winstanley for his presentation and informed him that the points he had raised would be considered when the Committee determined the application.

Mr Neil Hitchcock had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/00076/1HH – Samaras, Jacksons Lane, Reed. Mr Hitchcock was speaking as the applicant.

Key points raised by Mr Hitchcock were:

- The plans had been revised four times, in consultation with the Council's Conservation Officers, to ensure that they addressed the concerns of the Parish Council and minimised its visual impact.
- Concerns about loss of light were unfounded as Samaras and its neighbouring properties were south-facing so enjoyed light all day.
- The proposed extension and alterations would not raise dominance issues as Samaras was a detached property which was a substantial distance from its neighbours who had clear side views of the property.
- The proposed dormer window was located on the existing property and was in line with the existing window and so would not be any more intrusive.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hitchcock for his presentation and informed him that the points he had raised would be considered when the Committee determined the application.

Mr Trevor Ball had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/00224/4HH – Thatchers Cottage, Jacksons Lane, Reed. Mr Ball was speaking as the applicant.

Key points raised by Mr Ball were:

- The extension was needed as he now had a disabled relative he had to care for.
- When designing the extension, he had tried to keep it as discreet as possible by setting it back and putting slate on the roof rather than thatch.

The Chairman thanked Mr Ball for his presentation and informed him that the points he had raised would be considered when the Committee determined the application.

128. WEIGHT LIMIT IN MELBOURN STREET, ROYSTON

The Committee considered a letter from the Clerk to Royston Town Council regarding the proposal for a 7.5 tonne weight limit in Melbourn Street, Royston. The letter set out the concerns of the Town Council about the number of larger vehicles using Melbourn Street to access the bypass rather than using the approved route, and asked the Area Committee to consider the issue and support the Town Council in its request to Hertfordshire Highways for the 7.5 tonne weight limit to be imposed.

The Committee supported the concerns of the Town Council and stressed the need to protect the Royston Cave. It was suggested that the weight limit could also be imposed on Kneesworth Street to further protect the cave, and that additional

measures such as the installation of bollards in the area immediately above the Cave to prevent the parking of heavy vehicles should also be investigated.

RESOLVED: That a letter from the Committee be sent to Hertfordshire Highways in support of the imposition of a 7.5 tonne weight limit in Kneesworth Street and Melbourn Street, Royston and asking for investigation of additional measures such as the installation of bollards to protect the Royston Cave.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) To assist the protection of the Royston Cave. The Grade 1 architectural monument is situated beneath Melbourn Street, close to the traffic lights.
- (2) To protect the buildings in the conservation area and to improve the atmosphere by reducing emissions in the environment.

129. CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Officer for Royston presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which advised them of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for Royston since the meeting of the Committee held on 15 March 2006, and brought to their attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services be noted;
- (2) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer for Royston to promote greater community capacity and well-being for communities in the Royston & District area be endorsed.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in the Royston & District area.

130. ANNUAL GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT DISCRETIONARY BUDGET 2004/05

The Community Development Officer for Royston presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which set out the budgetary situation for the Committee, together with 1 additional grant application that had been received.

RESOLVED: That the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget be noted.

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (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.

131. GRANT APPLICATION – YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE YEAR

RESOLVED: That the sum of £1,000 be awarded to the Young People of the Year Volunteer Board as a financial contribution toward the cost of mounting a District-wide Young People of the Year Award 2006 event.

REASON FOR DECISION: 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.

132. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee heard the following oral representations:

- Mr Roger Wood with regard to planning application reference 06/00147/1 – 2-3 George Lane, Royston.
- Mr John Winstanley with regard to planning application reference 06/00264/1 – Sells Close Office, High Street, Barley.
- Mr Neil Hitchcock with regard to planning application reference 06/00076/1HH – Samaras, Jacksons Lane, Reed.
- Mr Trevor Ball with regard to planning application reference 06/00224/1HH – Thatchers Cottage, Jacksons Lane, Reed.

Details of these representations can be found above at Minute 127.

RESOLVED: To determine the applications as set out in the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control as submitted to the Committee in the following schedule:

SCHEDULE

Reference Number	Description of Development and location	Decision
06/00147/1	2-3 George Lane, Royston Erection of two storey building to provide three 1-bedroom and one 2-bedroom flats and associated infrastructure.	DEFERRED (See (a) below)
06/00264/1	Sells Close Office, High Street, Barley Erection of office building following demolition of existing barn/outbuilding	GRANTED (As per report)
06/00076/1HH	Samaras, Jacksons Lane, Reed First floor rear extension, rear dormer window to facilitate loft conversion and side/rear conservatory (as amended by plans received on 2 March 2006).	GRANTED (As per report)
06/00224/1HH	Thatchers Cottage, Jacksons Lane, Reed Single storey side extension incorporating conservatory and residential annexe.	GRANTED (See (b) below)

(a) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 06/00147/1, determination of the application be **DEFERRED** to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 31 May 2006 to allow the applicant to address the following issues raised by the Committee:

- The ownership of the wall at the rear of the site;
- The lack of rear access to the site which would result in a dead space as access across property owned by Mr Wood's company has been refused;
- Lack of parking provision could result in on-street parking to the detriment of the street scene, and which could potentially result in safety problems by blocking access for emergency service vehicles;
- Proposed refuse storage arrangements could result in environmental health issues as a result of fortnightly refuse collections;
- Location of bedrooms at front of proposed property could result in

severe noise disturbance for residents from users of the adjoining takeaways.

- (b) **RESOLVED:**
- (1) That, with regard to planning application reference 06/00224/1HH, planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions set out in the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control.
 - (2) That details required pursuant to condition 3 to be referred to Committee for a decision in relation to external materials.

The Planning Control & Conservation Manager introduced the final planning application to the Committee, which related to Tesco Stores Ltd, Old North Road, Royston. She informed the Committee that, since the report before them was written, the Section 106 Agreement for the application considered in April 2004 had been completed, and that planning permission reference 03/01496/1 had been issued. As a result, the planning application before the Committee was a variation of this permission.

The Committee expressed their displeasure that Tesco had started work prior to determination of the planning application, on the assumption that permission would be granted. However, they noted that it was not illegal to begin work without planning permission, but this left the applicant vulnerable to enforcement action if planning permission was refused. Whilst the Committee noted that a representative from Tesco was present at the meeting, they asked that the Planning Control and Conservation Manager write a covering letter to accompany the decision notice, strongly expressing the Committee's displeasure that works were commenced prior to determination of the application.

06/00244/1	Tesco Stores Ltd, Old North Road, Royston	GRANTED
	Single storey front extension to store and provision of mezzanine floor to accommodate a café. Single storey side extension to sales area. Single storey rear extension to accommodate office space. Rear extension to provide bulk storage, loading bay and canopy. Alterations to access road and car parking area, including extension to staff car park and associated infrastructure.	(See (c) below)

- (c) **RESOLVED:** That with regard to planning application reference 06/00244/1, planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the applicant company Tesco first entering into an agreement under Section 106 of the Planning Act and the conditions set out in the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control, with the following amended condition 7:

7. Following the removal of the contractor's compound the staff car parking and loading and unloading facilities shown on the approved plan 1337/P/100 Rev AG shall be marked out and made available, and shall thereafter be kept available solely for parking in connection with the premises.

Reason: To ensure the provision of satisfactory vehicle and cycling parking clear of the public highway to meet the needs of the development.

133. PLANNING APPEALS

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following planning appeal had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee held on 15 March 2006:

Appellant	Blackwater Services Ltd
Reference number	05/01478/1
Address	1 Angel Pavement, Royston
Proposal	Change of use of ground and first floor from A1 (retail) to A2 (financial and professional services)
Method	Written representations

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the no appeals had been determined since the meeting of the Committee held on 15 March 2006.

134. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC AND PRESS

The Committee noted that Agenda Item 11 comprised a suggested resolution to exclude the public and press from the meeting on the grounds that the report at Agenda Item 12 included information that could be considered commercially sensitive. The resolution suggested that this exclusion be made under Section 100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 as amended.

The Committee felt, however, that the report at Agenda Item 12 should be discussed under Part 1 business as the information within it was in the public interest.

Cllr Smith therefore **PROPOSED** and Cllr Davidson **SECONDED** and following a Committee vote it was

RESOLVED: That Agenda Item 12 be considered under Part 1 business.

REASON FOR DECISION: The report at Agenda Item 12 was felt to contain information that was in the public interest and not of a commercially sensitive nature.

135. ROYSTON – CAMBRIDGE BUS SERVICE CONCESSIONARY FUNDING

Copies of this report were circulated to members of the public present before consideration of this item by the Committee.

The Transport Policy Officer presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which outlined a means of re-introducing a half-fare concessionary bus fare on route 26 between Royston and Cambridge for North Herts elderly and disabled bus permit holders only.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Transport Policy Officer stated that, were the Committee minded to fund the re-instatement of the half-fare concessionary bus fare, the target date for re-instatement would be mid-May. He confirmed that the re-instatement would be advertised in the local press and that the Council would write to all elderly and disabled bus permit holders in Royston and the surrounding area to inform them as well.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services be noted;
- (2) That the re-instatement of a half-fare concessionary bus fare on route 26 between Royston and Cambridge for North Herts elderly and disabled bus permit holders be implemented as soon as practicable;
- (3) That the sum of £2,300 be allocated from the Committee's development budget to fund the re-instatement of this provision for the 2006/2007 financial year, subject to the negotiation of an appropriate reimbursement agreement with Stagecoach to the satisfaction of the Chairman;

- (4) That a further report be brought to the Committee to review the concession usage and funding arrangements for the 2007/2008 financial year at its meeting to be held on 14 March 2007.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To respond to a need expressed locally for elderly and disabled Royston residents to access Cambridge that could not be met out of the existing concessionary fares budget or under the terms of the existing agreement.

136. CHANGES TO FIRE SERVICE PROVISION IN ROYSTON

The Chairman agreed consideration of an additional item of business which had been submitted by Councillor Mrs F.R. Hill.

Councillor Hill stated that Hertfordshire County Council had agreed the proposed changes to Fire Service provision, which included the loss of 5 full-time firefighter positions at Royston Fire Station, and a change in shift patterns which meant that only retained firefighters would staff the Station overnight and at weekends. Councillor Hill asked the Committee's support to respond to Hertfordshire County Council and show their disappointment at the decision, and that the representations made by both the Committee and the public had been ignored.

The Committee supported Councillor Hill's proposal and added their thanks to County Councillor Drake and Councillor Hunter for making representations at the Hertfordshire County Council meeting.

The meeting closed at 9.24 p.m.

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Chairman