

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ROYSTON & DISTRICT COMMITTEE

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

**Meeting held at Icknield Walk First School, Poplar Drive, Royston
on 31 May 2006 at 7.30 p.m.**

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

IN ATTENDANCE: *Simon Ellis (Principal Planning Officer), Alan Breckon (Senior Planning Officer), Alan Fleck (Community Development Officer for Royston) and Donna Levett (Committee & Member Services Officer).*

ALSO PRESENT: *Doug Drake (County Councillor for Royston) and 31 members of the public.*

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the first meeting of the Royston & District Committee of the new Civic Year and explained that she had been elected as Chairman of the Committee for the year, with Councillor H.M. Marshall as her Vice-Chairman.

The Chairman expressed the Committee's thanks to former Councillor Bill Davidson for his hard work and dedication during his time in office, particularly during his year as Chairman of the Committee.

The Chairman also welcomed Councillor Liz Beardwell to the Committee, who had been elected as a Councillor for Royston Palace Ward at the elections on 4 May 2006.

4. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Liz Beardwell.

5. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 April 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

6. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was submitted for consideration by the Committee.

7. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor F.J. Smith declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 8 – Area Committee Development Budget 2006/2007 – Grant Application: Royston Day Centre - as his wife was the treasurer of the Centre. Councillor Smith reserved his right to speak and vote on this matter.

8. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr P. Myring had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning applications reference 05/01893/1 and 06/00380/1 – Ling Dynamic Systems Ltd, Baldock Road, Royston. Mr Myring was speaking as an objector to the applications, on behalf of the Heath Avenue & Chilcourt Residents' Association.

Key points raised by Mr Myring included:

- Residents were concerned about the applicants' frequent withdrawal and resubmission of plans;
- Site should be classified as urban fringe or rural, not town centre, and as it bordered conservation areas it should be treated sensitively;

- Required car parking levels had not been met and there was not adequate public transport in the area to meet the exception requirements;
- Density of developments at over 140 dwellings per hectare was more than 4 times that specified in government guidance and represented severe over-development of the site;
- Infrastructure such as water, doctors, dentists and schools was already struggling to cope with existing residents in the town and could not support the additional 300 residents that these developments would bring to the town;
- Residents did not object to the principle of redevelopment of the site for residential purposes – it was just felt that these particular applications were not appropriate and, if approved, would result in super-high density housing throughout the town, blighting its character forever.

Mr Shellum of The Planning Bureau had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 05/01893/1 – Ling Dynamic Systems Ltd, Baldock Road, Royston. Mr Shellum was speaking on behalf of McCarthy & Stone (Devs) Ltd, the applicants.

Mr Shellum outlined for the Committee the circumstances that had led to the applicant's selection of the Ling Dynamics site. He stated that they had undertaken a long consultation and development process with residents and Council officers to ensure that the application was the most high quality possible and provided the best design for such an important gateway to Royston. He also stressed the additional benefit to the local community and economy that a sheltered housing development would bring, as proven throughout the country.

Mr Boddey of BBR Architects had also given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/00380/1 – Ling Dynamic Systems Ltd, Baldock Road, Royston. Mr Boddey was speaking on behalf of SHH (Baldock Road) Ltd, the applicants.

Mr Boddey stated that the proposed development took into account negotiations that had taken place with Council officers and neighbours, and that he was confident that it addressed all the concerns raised and made the best use of the brownfield site. Mr Boddey also stressed that great care had been taken to ensure that as many of the existing trees as possible were retained to reduce the impact of the development and to ensure that it fitted into its surroundings when completed.

The Chairman thanked Mr Myring, Mr Shellum and Mr Boddey for addressing the Committee and informed them that their representations would be considered when the Committee determined the applications.

Mr Geoff Chapman had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/00095/1 – The Maltings, Green Drift, Royston. Mr Chapman was speaking on behalf of Sunhill Daycare (Europe) Ltd, the applicants.

Mr Chapman informed the Committee that, due to the previous application being refused as a result of a late change of position by the Highway Authority, there had been a loss of nursery places and jobs following the closure of the nursery's Market Hill site. He stated that, following changes to the application by the applicants to address the concerns by halving potential traffic movements, the Highway Authority had changed their objection and alleged that they had failed to provide safe turning places on the site. Mr Chapman also informed the Committee that he had met with some of the objectors on the site to try and address some of their problems, and many had confirmed that their main concerns related to traffic movements and parking in The Maltings. The applicants had therefore addressed this by arranging with the rail operators to have annual parking space allocation in the station car park, with access to the site through a connecting gate.

Mrs Frances Turkington had also given due notice that she wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/00095/1 – The Maltings, Green Drift, Royston.

Mrs Turkington was a parent whose child attended the Sun Hill Nursery, and she spoke in favour of the application. She emphasised to the Committee that, as a private nursery rather than a state school, the times at which children would be arriving and leaving would be much more varied. She stated that the turning circle at The Maltings was larger than that at the current Sun Hill site, and that, with responsible parents always accompanying children to and from the car, there had never been an accident at any of the nursery's sites. In closing, Mrs Turkington asked the Committee not to be short-sighted and turn down what was a wonderful opportunity for the nursery and the town.

The Chairman thanked Mr Chapman and Mrs Turkington for addressing the Committee and informed them that their representations would be considered when the Committee determined the application.

Ms Lesley Dickinson had given due notice that she wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 06/00454/1TPO – 11 Perry Drive, Royston. Ms Dickinson was speaking as the applicant's representative.

Ms Dickinson emphasised to the Committee the applicant's commitment to retaining landscaping and keeping the development in keeping with the area, protecting the amenity of neighbouring properties as much as possible. However, she stated that the existing trees were not the most appropriate for this location as they were dark and overgrown, and some of the roots would be damaged when the car park was surfaced, resulting in unstable or dead trees. She stressed that the proposal was to replace the trees with both alternative, more suitable trees and an evergreen hedge, and stated that provision of bird boxes could ensure that alternative habitats for birds were available whilst the new planting was established.

The Chairman thanked Ms Dickinson for addressing the Committee and informed her that her representation would be considered when the Committee determined the application.

9. CAR PARKING CHARGES

The Chairman introduced a Committee discussion item relating to car parking charges in Royston. She informed the Committee that her original motivation for placing this on the agenda had been to thank the Cabinet for taking on board the concerns previously expressed by the Committee which, following the meeting of the Cabinet on 28 March 2006, Members had believed would be taken on board. Instead she expressed her deep disappointment and anger at learning, through a report in the Members Information Service publication on Friday 26 May 2006, that those concerns had been ignored and that the original proposals, with only very slight amendments, would now be implemented.

The Committee expressed their support for the sentiments expressed by the Chairman and their concerns that, should the proposed increases be implemented, it would be an act of diminishing returns, driving more people out of Royston town centre to the detriment of the town as a whole.

To ensure that the views of the Committee were heard by those persons who were responsible for determining the charges under the power delegated by Cabinet at its meeting on 28 March 2006, it was

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Transport and the Strategic Director of Customer Services be requested to attend the meeting of the Committee to be held on 12 July 2006 to justify the car parking charges that were proposed for implementation in Royston;
- (2) That the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Transport and the Strategic Director of Customer Services be requested to defer implementation of changes to car parking charges in Royston until such time as they have attended that meeting;
- (3) That, should it be deemed necessary for financial reasons, a special meeting of the Royston & District Committee be called for the purpose of consideration of this item;

- (4) That copies of all previous and supporting documentation, including the ECOTECH and Members Information Service reports, be circulated with the agenda prior to that meeting;
- (5) That the Council's Scrutiny Committee be requested to investigate the process through which the decision on these charges was made.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that the decision made about car parking charges in Royston was in the best interests of the town.

10. 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 26 April 2006, and brought to their attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

The Community Development Officer for Royston informed the Committee that, with regard to the fencing repairs carried out at Betjeman Road, the Police had apprehended six 11 year olds for malicious damage, and the Council would be claiming for the cost of the damage.

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.

11. 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 2 additional grant applications 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.

12. GRANT APPLICATION – ROYSTON DAY CENTRE

The Community Development Officer for Royston presented an application for funding from the Royston Day Centre to the Committee. The Centre was seeking financial assistance toward the cost of providing non-vocational art and handicraft classes for its elderly clients.

The Community Development Officer for Royston informed the Committee that the need for this support had arisen as North Herts College had imposed course fees of £45 per person, where there had previously been no cost. The Centre's grant from Hertfordshire County Council Adult Care Services was conditional upon the provision of those courses but, due to the late notification of the fees, there was no prospect of the County Council's grant being increased to accommodate the changes.

Whilst the Committee were supportive of the service provided by the Centre and had no objection to supporting the application in principle, they felt that more negotiation should have taken place between Hertfordshire County Council, the Day Centre and North Herts College to ensure that the service was being provided in the best and most cost-effective manner.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the decision on the allocation of funding to the Royston Day Centre be deferred until the meeting of the Committee to be held on 12 July 2006 to allow further negotiations as to the cost and manner of delivery of the non-vocational art and handicraft classes to take place;
- (2) That the Community Development Officer for Royston be requested to investigate further methods by which the Committee could assist the work of the Royston Day Centre.

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.

13. GRANT APPLICATION – ROTARY CLUB OF ROYSTON

The Community Development Officer for Royston presented an application for funding from the Rotary Club of Royston to the Committee. The Rotary Club was seeking financial support for the annual Royston Kite Festival and the officer's recommendation was for £750, the same amount as had been granted the previous year.

Councillor P.C.W. Burt expressed concern that, because the Royston Kite Festival donated all profits to charity, making a grant to the event was essentially making a donation to charity. He therefore **PROPOSED** that, rather than making a grant of £750, the Committee make a commitment to underwrite any losses that the Festival made, up to the sum of £750. As no other Member seconded this proposal however, his proposal was lost.

Councillor Hill **PROPOSED**, Councillor Hunter **SECONDED** and the Committee **RESOLVED** that the sum of £750 be awarded to the Rotary Club of Royston as a financial contribution toward the Royston Kite Festival.

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.

14. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee heard oral representations in relation to the following planning applications:

1. Planning application reference 05/01893/1 – Ling Dynamic Systems Ltd, Baldock Road, Royston:
 - a) Mr P. Myring, an objector on behalf of the local residents' association
 - b) Mr Shellum of The Planning Bureau, the applicant's agent
2. Planning application reference 06/00380/1 – Ling Dynamic Systems Ltd, Baldock Road, Royston:
 - a) Mr P. Myring, an objector on behalf of the local residents' association
 - b) Mr S. Boddey of BBR Architects, the applicant's agent.
3. Planning application reference 06/00095/1 – The Maltings, Green Drift, Royston:
 - a) Mrs Frances Turkington, a parent who uses the existing nursery, speaking in favour of the application;
 - b) Mr Geoff Chapman of Sunhill Daycare (Europe) Ltd, the applicants.
4. Planning application reference 06/00454/1TPO – 11 Perry Drive, Royston:
 - a) Ms Lesley Dickinson, the applicant's representative

Details of these representations can be found at Minute 8 above.

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
05/01893/1	Ling Dynamic Systems Ltd, Baldock Road, Royston Erection of 63 no. sheltered residential apartments for the elderly and managers house, communal facilities and associated infrastructure following demolition of existing commercial building.	GRANTED (See (a) below)
06/00380/1	Ling Dynamic Systems Ltd, Baldock Road, Royston Erection of 49 no. 1 and 2 bedroom flats, 8 no. affordable dwelling houses and 8 no. affordable flats and associated infrastructure (including below ground car parking, cycle and refuse storage) following demolition of existing commercial building (as amended by drawing nos. 02 Rev J; 03, 04, 05, 06 & 07 Rev E received on 09/05/06).	DEFERRED (See (b) below)
06/00095/1	The Maltings, Green Drift, Royston Change of use of Unit 1 from Use Class B1 to Use Class D1 (day nursery) with the use of eight on site parking spaces for a temporary period of three years.	REFUSED (as per report)
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.	GRANTED (as per report)
06/00235/1	Earls Wood Cottage, Barkway Two storey detached dwelling house and detached double garage following demolition of existing dwelling.	GRANTED (as per report)
06/00454/1TPO	11 Perry Drive, Royston Remove line of Lawson cypress trees.	REFUSED (as per report)

(a) **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That, with regard to planning application reference 05/01893/1, in the event of the applicants first entering into an Agreement under the provision of Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 to secure contributions of £262,500 towards the provision of affordable housing units elsewhere in Royston, £35,000 towards sustainable transport measures in the vicinity of the site, £5,792 for library services and the provision of fire hydrants within the development, planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions as set out in the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control, together with the following additional conditions:

22) *Notwithstanding the details of landscaping illustrated on the approved plans, full details of all hard and soft landscaping of the site (including a management plan and responsibilities, long term*

design objectives and maintenance schedule) shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of development.

Reason: To ensure adequate landscaping of the site, in the interests of visual amenity.

23) *Prior to the commencement of development and notwithstanding those details shown on the approved plans, full details of the railings, brick wall and piers fronting Baldock Road shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such works shall thereafter be carried in complete accordance with the approved details or particulars unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the first occupation of the development.*

Reason: To ensure suitable boundary treatment on the Baldock Road frontage, in the interests of visual amenity.

24) *Prior to the commencement of development details of speed reduction measures on the internal access road shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority (such details to include speed humps or other suitable traffic calming infrastructure). Such works shall thereafter be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details or particulars unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the first occupation of the development.*

Reason: In the interests of highway safety.

- (2) That the Head of Planning & Building Control be requested to serve a Tree Preservation Order to protect the trees on the site and maintain the natural screening along the site's perimeters.
- (3) That the Head of Planning & Building Control be requested to explore with the applicant and the Golf Club owners the possibility of closing the existing access onto Baldock Road from the Golf Club and forming an access into the clubhouse car park off the internal access road to the new development.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that the development of the site takes place with minimum impact on the natural visual amenity of the location and highway safety is maintained.

(b) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 06/00380/1, determination of the application be **DEFERRED** to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 12 July 2006 to allow the officers to present the following amendments proposed by the Committee to the applicant:

- The removal of the fourth storey on proposed western block and replacement with a three storey building (with rooms in the roof space) in this location.
- The reduction in height of central block from three storey building to three storey building with rooms in the roof space (or two and half storey) in this location.

Reason for decision: To reduce the height and visual impact of the western and central blocks.

15. PLANNING APPEALS

The Principal Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following planning appeals had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee held on 26 April 2006:

Appellant Dr Paul Merritt
Reference number 06/00092/1HH
Address The Croft, 21 Baldock Street, Royston, Herts SG8 5AY
Proposal Single storey side extension
Method Written representations

Appellant Dr Paul Merritt
Reference number 06/00093/1LB
Address The Croft, 21 Baldock Street, Royston, Herts SG8 5AY
Proposal Single storey side extension
Method Written representations

Appellant Mr J. Fuller
Reference number 05/01365/1
Address 2a Lower Gower Road, Royston, Herts SG8 5EA
Proposal Outline application (siting, design, external appearance and landscaping reserved) for erection of one dwelling.
Method Written representations

The Principal Planning Officer informed the Committee that no appeals had been determined.

The meeting closed at 10.29 p.m.

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Chairman