

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 20 December 2006 at 7.30 p.m.**

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

IN ATTENDANCE: *Patrick Candler (Head of Community Development & Cultural Services), Louise Symes (Projects Manager, Planning Policy & Projects), Liz Marten (Principal Conservation Officer), Mark Simmons (Conservation Officer), Tom Rea (Area Planning Officer), Alan Fleck (Community Development Officer for Royston) and Donna Levett (Committee & Member Services Officer).*

ALSO PRESENT: *Inspector Geoff Camp, P.C. Julie-Ann Cundell and P.C.S.O. Sarah Lamb (Hertfordshire Constabulary), County Councillor Doug Drake and 10 members of the public.*

72. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor R.E. Inwood.

73. MINUTES

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

The Head of Community Development & Cultural Services provided an update for the Committee in relation to the application by Reed Parish Council to the Parish Challenge Panel for funding toward the construction of a footpath in Jacksons Lane, Reed (Minute 69 refers). He informed the Committee that, whilst the final decision on the application would be made by himself and the Portfolio Holder, and would then be subject to the Council's 28-day call-in process, the Panel had positively supported the application.

74. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

The Chairman agreed consideration of the following additional items:

- a) Highway Verge Assessment for North Herts Highways Partnership Joint Member Panel. This item to be considered as Agenda Item 14.
- b) Parking tickets outside Tannery Drift School. This item to be considered as Agenda Item 15.

75. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor P.C.W. Burt declared a personal interest in Agenda Items 9 – Annual Grants & Discretionary Budget 2006/2007 – Grant Application: Royston Town Council – and 10 – Royston Conservation Area Review - as he was a member of the Royston Town Council. In relation to the Conservation Area Review, Royston Town Council was a consultee in the review as an owner and tenant of property within the town. Councillor Burt reserved his right to speak and vote on this matter.

Councillor Liz Beardwell declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 – Royston Conservation Area Review - as she was a member of the Royston Town Council who were a consultee in the review as an owner and tenant of property within the town. Councillor Beardwell reserved her right to speak and vote on this matter.

76. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Terry Hutt, Chairman of the Royston Pensioners' Action Group, had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting and present petitions on three matters: the proposed changes to public conveniences provision in Royston, the increased parking charges and the proposed reductions to bus services.

Mr Hutt made the following the statements to the Committee:

- To close the most important toilet in Royston and not listen to the thousands of people who have signed a petition is contempt.
- To touch on transport is outrageous – for the elderly and those without transport it leaves them stranded, and what's the use of a free bus pass without any buses to use them on?
- The increased parking charges will be the downfall of Royston – this is the last straw.

Mr Hutt stated that the people who he had spoken to and who had signed the petitions felt frustrated at they felt that the Council continued not to listen to their views. He expressed the hope that that people would continue to vote in local elections, despite many feeling that it was a waste of time.

Mr Hutt then presented a petition of 552 signatures in relation to the proposed changes to public conveniences provision in Royston, one of 173 signatures against the increased parking charges, and one of 266 signatures in relation to the proposed reductions to bus services.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hutt for addressing the Committee and accepted the petitions on their behalf. She informed Mr Hutt that these petitions would be forwarded to the Head of Leisure & Environmental Services (public conveniences), Strategic Director of Customer Services (parking charges) and the Transport Policy Officer (bus services).

77. COMMUNITY POLICING UPDATE

The Committee received two presentations from representatives of the Hertfordshire Constabulary due to the late arrival of Inspector Geoff Camp at the meeting.

P.C. Julie-Ann Cundell, who was the new Community Officer for Royston, replacing P.C. Colin Mingay, introduced herself and P.C.S.O. Sarah Lamb to the Committee. She updated the Committee on initiatives currently taking place in the Royston & District Area, including steps being taken to target underage drinking and anti-social behaviour in the town.

With regard to a recent sexual assault case that had occurred in the town, P.C. Cundell informed the Committee that, whilst the man arrested for the offence had been released from custody, he was not allowed to enter Hertfordshire. She therefore encouraged the Councillors to reassure any concerned constituents that contacted them and to contact the police if they saw him.

P.C. Cundell also spoke of a basketball project currently being run in the town as a diversionary activity for youths susceptible to anti-social behaviour. This project had been established in partnership with several other agencies, including Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). The Head of Community Development & Cultural Services informed the Committee that the North Hertfordshire Childrens Partnership, of which he was Chairman, had been approached by HCC prior to the establishment of this project as they had suggested locating it in Hitchin. However, after a review of the crime statistics at the Partnership's request, it was decided to locate it in Royston instead, and stated how positive it was to see the benefits that resulted from these schemes.

The Chairman thanked P.C. Cundell and P.C.S.O. Lamb for addressing the Committee and expressed their support for the continued work of the Police in the Royston & District area.

Inspector Geoff Camp apologised for his later arrival at the Committee meeting but explained that he had been delayed by an arrest. He reiterated the Constabulary's commitment to tackling the problems of underage drinking and anti-social behaviour in the Royston & District area, and throughout Hertfordshire. He also provided the following crime statistics to the

Committee, based on the period from 1 April to 19 December 2006, in comparison with the same period in 2005:

- The total number of crimes (all crime) – this figure was down by 19.1% or 190 fewer crimes – the second highest reduction in the County.
- Violent crime – this figure was down by 35.1%, with serious violent crime down by 45% - both of which were the highest reductions in the County.

In response to questions from the Committee and County Councillor Drake, Inspector Camp stated that, since 1 October 2006, over 60 containers of alcohol had been confiscated from young people in the town. Whilst the alcohol-free zone in the town was intended to address problems with adults abusing alcohol in the town centre, Inspector Camp explained that it also served as an additional deterrent for the young people.

The Chairman thanked Inspector Camp for attending the Committee and making his presentation.

RESOLVED: That the information provided in the presentation by the Hertfordshire Constabulary be noted.

REASON FOR DECISION: To ensure the Committee were apprised of community policing issues in the Royston & District area.

78. **AREA GOVERNANCE & COSTS OF DEMOCRACY**

The Head of Community Development & Cultural Services presented a joint report of the Heads of Community Development & Cultural Services, Planning & Building Control and Legal & Democratic Services to the Committee that set out a series of proposals and options to determine savings which could be made if the Council's approach to its governance and decision making arrangements was restructured. The Head of Community Development and Cultural Services confirmed that this report was being brought to the Committee as a direct response to implementing the Council's decision to make savings of £50,000 which was part of the Service and Financial Planning Process for 2006/2007.

The report had been presented to Cabinet at its meeting to be held on 19 December 2006, and the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services had tabled a copy of the resolutions that the Cabinet had made at its meeting on 19 December 2006. The Head of Community Development & Cultural Services acknowledged that the proposals represented a fundamental change to the way that the Council's civic process currently operates, but stated that the resulting arrangements would be more streamlined and less bureaucratic, whilst operating within the law. He also informed the Committee that the report before them presented only the outline proposals and principles, and that a further report with more detailed information about the proposals would be presented to Cabinet at a later meeting.

Councillor F.J. Smith informed the Committee that, as Leader of the Council and Chairman of the Cabinet, he wished to further supplement the information provided by the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services. First he drew the Committee's attention to the resolutions made by the Cabinet, which were as follows:

“RESOLVED:

- (1) That the principles of the key proposals in the report, as set out in Section 4 be agreed;*
- (2) That Options 1 and 2, with regard to the establishment of a central Development Control Committee and a reduction of Area Committees, be investigated further;*
- (3) That the Area Committees be consulted on the finer details of the report and its implications, and that an all Member Workshop be arranged in the New Year to allow Members to meet collectively to consider further the key proposals contained in the report;*
- (4) That a greater delegation of responsibilities to Cabinet Portfolio Holders be considered by the Leader of the Council;*

- (5) *That the Head of Legal and Democratic Services be requested to prepare a report on the Constitutional implications of the proposed changes set out in the report;*
- (6) *That a further report on the detailed proposals and timescales for implementation be submitted with recommendations to Cabinet on 27 February 2007 and Council on 1 March 2007;*
- (7) *That the further report referred to in (6) above considers the effect of the options relating to a reduction in Area Committees on the work of the Community Development Officers;*
- (8) *That officers report on the potential efficiency savings which may accrue, other than those already identified in the report, should the key proposals be agreed."*

Councillor Smith stated that the Cabinet had taken the view that the key aims of the review were the greater efficiency of operations and reductions in bureaucracy, rather than the level of savings achieved. Whilst these initial proposals would make progress towards achieving these aims, the Cabinet felt that the general principles should now be explored further by officers and Members to allow formation of the more detailed proposals to make up the final report to Cabinet and Council in the New Year.

The Committee discussed the proposals in the report and two main areas of concern were expressed: the proposed centralisation of planning and the options relating to a reduction in Area Committees.

In light of the Committee's concerns, Councillor P.C.W. Burt suggested that, instead of moving planning from the Area Committees to a centralised Development Control Committee, equivalent benefits could be achieved through the reduction in number of Area Committees but retention of planning at those Committees. For example:

Option 1 – reduction to 4 Area Committees meeting 9 times per year each, with Council, Cabinet, PARC and Scrutiny to meet 6 times per year each.

Key Committees Meeting total	24
Area Committees Meeting total	<u>36</u>
Meetings (total)	<u>60</u>

Option 2 – reduction to 3 Area Committees meeting 9 times per year each, with Council, Cabinet, PARC and Scrutiny to meet 6 times per year each.

Key Committees Meeting total	24
Area Committees Meeting total	<u>27</u>
Meetings (total)	<u>51</u>

As can be seen, when comparing these figures to those shown in the tables at paragraph 4.10, these proposals would result in an equal or greater reduction in the total number of meetings.

In response to a question from the Committee, Councillor Smith stated that the composition of the Development Control Committee would be politically balanced, with each Group Leader determining their choice of Members and substitutes.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report of the Heads of Community Development & Cultural Services, Planning & Building Control and Legal & Democratic Services be noted;
- (2) That copies of the documentation cited as supporting a more streamlined approach to the democratic processes, such as the Local Government White Paper and the Lyons Review, be provided to all Members to allow them to make informed decisions on the proposals contained within the report.

- (3) That the following key issues raised and comments made by the Royston & District Committee be taken into account by Cabinet when considering the recommendations in the report:
- Care should be taken to ensure that changes are motivated by democratic improvement rather than purely financial rewards.
 - The proposed ability for Councillors to take on more of an advocacy role in relation to planning applications as a result of the centralisation of the determination of planning applications was supported in principle but the logistics of this proposal needed to be more clearly defined.
 - Consideration should be made of the proposal outlined above for the retention of planning at Area Committees whilst making reductions in the overall number of meetings.
 - The centralisation of planning determination would be likely to require more site visits due to the reduced local knowledge of Councillors determining the applications.
 - A centralised planning Committee would result in large numbers of Councillors and members of the public in attendance and registering to speak at meetings which, together with the likely heavy workload when determining applications from across the District, would lead to long agendas and meetings.
 - Further consideration of the logistics of centralised planning determination must be made, taking into account the potential workload of the Committee, and the method for determining the most appropriate locations for meetings to be held.
 - The reduction of officer positions should take place only with a commensurate reduction in workload, and taking into account the important role that such officers play in the democratic processes at the Council.
 - The proposed workshops for further exploration of issues arising from the proposals contained in the report should be supported as an important tool for Member discussions.
 - More clarification is required of the role that Area Committees could play in the District and the new responsibilities that they could assume should planning be centralised, to address Members' concerns about the dilution of the Committees' influence in local decision making.
 - Careful consideration of the nature of each Area Committee and the Wards that they cover would need to be made when determining their amalgamation, to ensure the best associations took place.

REASON FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To provide the Royston & District Committee with an opportunity to provide its views on the proposed changes to the Area Governance and decision making arrangements.
- (2) To ensure that savings identified within the context of the Service & Financial Planning process for 2006/2007 and beyond are achieved.

79. 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 November 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 drew the Committee's attention to the information provided by Hertfordshire Highways (HH) in relation to cost estimates and the suggested action plan for schemes previously put forward by the Committee for inclusion by the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership Joint Member Panel (NHHP JMP) in the revised Integrated Works Programme (IWP) (Draft 2) to be considered by the JMP on 29 January 2007.

The schemes outlined in Appendix A to the report were those referred for inclusion in the JMP's IWP with funding contributions from the Committee at its meeting on 23 August 2006 (Minute 39 refers). Two additional schemes had been put forward by the Committee for implementation at that meeting without funding support – the installation of a crash barrier to

separate the two sides of the carriageway on the Royston Bypass and the installation of crash barriers for protection of properties and pedestrians in Barkway Street, Royston. The Committee had not committed funds to the former scheme in light of its location outside of the Committee's area, and the latter scheme would need to be implemented by the Highways Agency as the road was classified as a trunk road. No further progress on these schemes, or the proposed provision of a school crossing in Newmarket Road, Royston, between Valley Rise and Icknield Walk as proposed at the Committee's meeting on 12 July 2006 (Minute 24 and addendum refer).

With regard to the installation of a Vehicle-Activated Speed Sign in London Road, Royston, the Community Development Officer for Royston informed the Committee that, after delaying the installation until the road had been detrunked, HH had now informed the Council that the price had increased to £13,000 as a commuted maintenance charge was required.

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;
- (3) That Hertfordshire Highways be requested to carry out a survey of parking usage in the High Street, Royston, to ensure that no factors which might adversely affect the intended increase in short-term parking have be overlooked;
- (4) That Hertfordshire Highways be requested to carry out a speed survey to confirm the need for a Vehicle Activated Speed Sign (VASS) in London Road, Royston, should it not be possible to conduct such a survey in association with the Hertfordshire Constabulary using the portable speed gun previously purchased by the Committee;
- (5) That the Community Development Officer for Royston be requested to seek further clarification of the requirement by Hertfordshire Highways for a commuted maintenance charge, which would increase the cost of the VASS in London Road, Royston to £13,000;
- (6) That the Committee's disappointment at Hertfordshire Highway's decision that the resurfacing to rectify subsidence at the lower end of High Street, Barkway, be recorded;
- (7) That, with regard to the proposed schemes for speed control in Fish Hill, Royston, the Community Development Officer for Royston be requested to approach the police to request spot speeding checks be carried out at Fish Hill and the outputs be reported back to the Committee, and that the consideration of improvements of the gateway at Fish Hill be undertaken as part of the Royston Town Centre Strategy work;
- (8) That, with regard to the proposed scheme for extension of double yellow lines in Rock Road, Royston, this scheme be considered for inclusion in the Corporate strategic approach to implementing parking management schemes.

RECOMMENDED TO THE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP JOINT MEMBER PANEL (NHHP JMP):

- (1) That the ponding issue at the junction of Green Drift and Kneesworth Street, Royston, be included on the revised Integrated Works Programme (Draft 2) to be considered at the meeting of the NHHP JMP on 29 January 2007 for funding from the IWP Drainage Schemes Programme;
- (2) That the implementation of double yellow lines on the corner of Briary Lane and Sun Hill, Royston be included in the revised Integrated Works Programme (Draft 2) to be considered at the meeting of the NHHP JMP on 29 January 2007, with matched funding to be provided from the funds allocated by the Committee for highways schemes in the town at its meeting held on 23 August 2006 (Minute 42 refers).

- (3) That the installation of a speed management scheme in Burns Road, Royston, be included under the Hertfordshire Highways Safety Engineering Manager's future work programme and budget and that the requirement for a Safer Route to School initiative at this location be reported to the meeting of the NHHP JMP on 29 January 2007 to be recommended for inclusion on the Forward Work Programme for implementation in 2008/2009.

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

80. ANNUAL GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT DISCRETIONARY BUDGET 2006/2007

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 a funding request and one additional grant application that had been received.

The Community Development Officer for Royston drew the Committee's attention to the funding request as set out at Appendix C to the report. This related to the half-price concessionary bus fares on route 26 between Royston and Cambridge for North Herts elderly and disabled bus permit holders, which the Committee had agreed to subsidise at its meeting held on 26 April 2006 (Minute 135 refers). An invoice had been received from the bus company to the sum of £1,125, with a final invoice expected in January 2007.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget be noted;
- (2) That the sum of £1,125 be authorised for payment of the invoice for concessionary bus fares on route 26 between Royston and Cambridge for North Herts elderly and disabled bus permit holders, such funds to be taken from those allocated by the Committee for this purpose at the meeting held on 26 April 2006 (Minute 135 refers).

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.

81. GRANT APPLICATION – ROYSTON TOWN COUNCIL

RESOLVED: That the sum of £7,000 be awarded to the Royston Town Council as a financial contribution toward the refurbishment of the War Memorial in Melbourn Road, Royston.

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.

82. ROYSTON CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW

The Conservation Officer and Principal Conservation Officer presented a report of the Head of Planning & Building Control which sought the Committee's views on the documents proposed to be used for a 6-week consultation period commencing on 20 January 2007 for the revision of the Royston Conservation Area. These documents, to be presented to Cabinet for approval at its meeting to be held on 16 January 2007, were appended to the report and consisted of:

- □ □ □ □ Appendix 1 – Royston Conservation Area Review – Draft January 2007 (Part 1 of 3);

- Appendix 2 – Royston Conservation Area Review – Draft January 2007 (Part 2 of 3);
- Appendix 3 – Register of Buildings of Local Interest – Draft January 2007 (Part 3 of 3);
- Appendix 4 – Royston Conservation Area – Proposed Boundary Changes (January 2007); and
- Appendix 5 – Questionnaire.

The Conservation Officer confirmed that, whilst all five documents would be used during the consultation process, only those documents at Appendices 1 to 3 would form the final policy documents. He stressed that one of the key aims of the review process was to ensure that the policy documents presented an up-to-date benchmark of the character, appearance and setting of the Royston Conservation Area, and the potential amendments as outlined in these documents represented some significant additions and subtractions from the existing Area.

The Committee commended the officers on the quality of the report and expressed their support for the work undertaken in ensuring that the Royston Conservation Area definition was kept relevant to the changing nature of the town.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control be noted;
- (2) That the format and processes for the public consultation period for the review of the Royston Conservation Area be agreed.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To ensure that the Council's statutory duties are carried out and that targets set out by the Council with respect to BV 219 are satisfied.
- (2) To enable the Council to adopt a Register of Buildings of Local Interest and an up-to-date review of the Royston Conservation Area with appropriate documents to inform future planning decisions.

83. SCOPING REPORT FOR ROYSTON TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY

The Projects Manager (Planning Policy & Projects) presented a report of the Head of Planning & Building Control to the Committee, which was a Scoping Report for the preparation of a Town Centre Strategy for Royston. The report outlined various themes and related key issues to be investigated and considered when preparing the Strategy, the community involvement process, and a suggested project plan for the preparation of the Strategy.

The Projects Manager (Planning Policy & Projects) stressed that the aim of the Strategy was to provide a comprehensive framework for the development and enhancement of the town over the next 10 years, and the Council's commitment to working in partnership with all parties in the area. She also drew the Committee's attention to the proposal to build on work undertaken to date on the development of the Town Hall site, to provide a Civic Centre for the town.

At the invitation of the Chairman, County Councillor Drake informed the Projects Manager (Planning Policy & Projects) that Hertfordshire County Council were conducting reviews of transportation schemes in the county, including those in and around Royston. He therefore suggested that the Council should assess the ability of the two projects to combine in that area, to allow the Councils to work together.

The Committee supported the development of a Town Centre Strategy for Royston and the benefits that such a document and its development process could bring to the town.

RESOLVED: That the Scoping Report and Project Plan for the preparation of the Royston Town Centre Strategy, as set out in Appendix A to the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control, be agreed.

RECOMMENDED TO CABINET: That sufficient funds to cover the budget shortfall to enable the appointment of consultants to undertake a car parking and access assessment study of the Royston Town Centre as part of the necessary background work required for preparing the Royston Town Centre Strategy be agreed, the source of funds to be identified by officers and reported to Cabinet.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS: To proceed with the necessary work to produce a draft Town Centre Strategy for Royston and its associated SA/SEA for public consultation in September 2007. This will enable the Council to adopt the Strategy as SPD following 'public' involvement, that will provide an overall framework for guiding development and enhancement opportunities within the town centre over the next 10 years, and in doing so, contributes towards achieving the Council's strategic objectives.

84. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

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
06/02254/1	7 Lower King Street, Royston Change of use from shop unit (Class A1) to one bedroom flat (Class C3) and provision of 1 car parking space.	REFUSED (as per report)
06/00555/1	Heath House, Princes Mews, Royston Erection of 56 dwellings comprising 6 x 1-bedroom and 50 x 2-bedroom units in two and a half and three and a half storey buildings (including use of roof space); 56 basement (largely underground) car parking spaces and associated infrastructure following demolition of existing office building (as amended by drawing nos 99A, 100A, 101A, 201A, 202A, 204A received 11 July 2006 and drawing nos 23145/104, 200A 201B, 202B, 203A, 204B received 1 December 2006).	CONDITION DISCHARGED (as per report)

85. PLANNING APPEALS AND ENFORCEMENT

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

The Area Planning Officer also confirmed that no enforcement action had been authorised or taken since the meeting of the Committee held on 15 November 2006.

86. HIGHWAY VERGE ASSESSMENT FOR NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP JOINT MEMBER PANEL

Reason for Urgency: Decision to be made prior to the meeting of the NHHP JMP to be held on 29 January 2007.

The Chairman had agreed consideration of an additional item of business in relation to the assessment of physical damage to highway verges within urban areas. This item was considered to be urgent due to the need to obtain the Committee's views on the damage assessed, as set out in Appendix A to the report, and to report back the Committee's preferred schemes to the North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership Joint Member Panel (NHHP JMP) meeting on 29 January 2007, prior to the next meeting of this Committee.

The Projects Manager (Planning Policy & Projects) presented the joint report of the Head of Leisure & Environmental Services, the Head of Planning & Building Control and the Head of

Housing & Environmental Health to the Committee, and drew their attention to the key problem areas in the Royston & District area, as identified by the Parks & Countryside Development Manager and set out in Appendix A to the report.

The Committee expressed their concern that those areas identified in the Appendix were not all clearly defined, and that the lay-bys proposed were not always suitable for those locations identified. However, the proposal to address the problems caused by verge parking was welcomed.

With regard to Lancaster Road and Stakepiece Road, Royston, the Committee agreed that these roads needed urgent remedial roads and should be top priority in Royston, although grasscrete would be more appropriate than lay-bys. However, these roads had been identified for funding from the NHHP JMP's discretionary budget, and further clarification was required whether that funding was to carry out the works identified here, or if these were ancillary to those to be funded by the discretionary budget.

RESOLVED: That the joint report of the Head of Leisure & Environmental Services, the Head of Planning & Building Control and the Head of Housing & Environmental Health, including the contents of Appendix A applicable to Royston, be noted.

RECOMMENDED TO THE NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP JOINT MEMBER PANEL: That the following comments from the Committee be considered when assessing the highway verge problem schemes applicable to Royston:

- Old North Road, Royston – More clarity is needed of the length concerned. Most relevant area is nearest to the station to Orchard Road, although parking on what is currently grass verge too close to the Orchard Road entrance will obscure it and cause danger to road users. This scheme should be identified as medium priority and should be grasscrete, not lay-bys.
- A10 Melbourn Road – again, more clarity is required of the length concerned, and the scheme should be grasscrete and identified as medium priority.
- Newmarket Road, Royston – the correct section of the road requiring remedial works is the section in the vicinity of Rowan Walk. This scheme should be identified as low priority.
- York Way, Royston – clarification is required of whether the whole of this area is to be concreted or only patches and, if the latter was the case, which locations. It was also noted that resurfacing work was scheduled for 2007 in York Way, Royston, and it might therefore be appropriate to carry out both sets of work simultaneously to reduce the impact on traffic in the industrial area.
- Lancaster Road and Stakepiece Road, Royston – confirmation was required whether the requirements identified in the appendix were those to be carried out using the funding allocated from the JMP's discretionary budget in 2006/2007.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure that the highway verge problem schemes identified by the Area Committee were considered for inclusion in the JMP Work Programme for reinstatement in 2007/2008.

87. PARKING TICKETS OUTSIDE TANNERY DRIFT SCHOOL, ROYSTON

Reason for Urgency: Decision to be made prior to the end of the 28-day payment period for penalty charge notices (PCNs).

The Chairman had agreed consideration of an additional item of business in relation to the recent issue of PCNs to parents parked in time-limited parking spaces in the vicinity of Tannery Drift School, Royston. This item was considered to be urgent due to the need for those parents to pay the tickets within 28-days of issue.

Councillor Peter Burt drew the Committee's attention to a story in the local press about a number of parents who had received PCNs recently when parked in Tannery Drift outside the school they were attending a nativity play which over ran its expected time. Whilst supporting the actions of the parking control officers as entirely correct, Councillor Burt explained that the

parents did not feel they could get up and walk out of a nativity play with young children without causing a disturbance, but had expected to be able to leave on time and therefore not infringe the parking regulations.

In light of the exceptional circumstances, Councillor Burt sought the Committee's support in requesting that the Council waive the PCNs in this instance, and on this occasion only, and remind all parents that anyone who parked in the restricted parking areas and overstayed the time limit would be prosecuted in future. He also stressed the need for the school to be contacted and reminded, and asked that any school events were planned to avoid this problem happening in the future.

The Committee were supportive of Councillor Burt's proposals, particularly as those parents affected had not deliberately ignored the time restrictions in place. They also concurred that, due to the nature of the event at the school, it would have been very difficult for those parents to have left the school any earlier than they did.

RESOLVED: That the Parking Services Manager be requested to waive the Penalty Charge Notices for exceeding the time limit in a restricted parking area issued to those parents from Tannery Drift School, Royston, affected by the over run in the school's nativity play.

The meeting closed at 9.47 p.m.

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Chairman