

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE
(Cadwell, Codicote, Graveley & Wymondly, Hitchwood, Hoo, Kimpton
Knebworth and Offa Wards)**

**Meeting held at Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City
on 16 November 2006 at 7.30p.m.**

Minutes

PRESENT: *Councillors: D.J. Barnard (Chairman), Tom Brindley (Vice-Chairman),
Alan Bardett, John Bishop, Sal Jarvis and David Miller.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *John Chapman – Area Planning Officer,
Garry Gover - Community Development Officer,
Giovanna Silverio – Licensing and Enforcement Manager
Barrie Jones- Head of Financial Services,
Nigel Schofield – Committee Administrator,
Tim Hobman – Committee Administrator.*

62. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

The Chairman confirmed that following his letter concerning the volume of traffic using Priory Lane, Little Wymondley as a 'rat run' sent to the North Hertfordshire District Manager he had received a reply '*I regret that I am not able to deal with the traffic issues raised by the Committee in the manner requested. The correct process for dealing with highway issues which have been raised by the area committees is via the Highways Joint Member Panel. Indeed, there is a standing agenda item at every JMP meeting for just that purpose*'. The Chairman advised the Committee that a temporary liaison officer between NHDC and the JMP had recently been appointed and that it would now be appropriate (to which the Committee agreed) to refer this item to the JMP at its meeting to be held on 29 January 2007.

63. VENUE FOR DECEMBER MEETING

The Chairman advised the Committee that Councillor A. Bardett wished to propose an alternate venue for the next meeting on 21 December 2006. Councillor A. Bardett proposed, and the Committee agreed, that the December meeting would take place at St. Martins Parish Centre, Knebworth.

64. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors: J. Gray, T. Gibbs and Mrs C.P.A. Strong.

65. MINUTES – 5 OCTOBER 2006

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 5 October 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman subject to confirmation that Councillor Paul Clark did not attend this meeting.

MINUTE 55 (3) CHAMPION NEWS

The Chairman advised the Committee that unfortunately the Head of Communications was unable to attend this evening due to a family commitment, and that an updated review of Outlook distribution would be made at the meeting to be held on 21 December 2006.

MINUTE 54 – NHHP – JMP DISCRETIONARY BUDGET

The Chairman sought the views of the Committee in light of the appointment of the temporary liaison officer between NHDC and NHHP – JMP and the request for information concerning 'A review of Rabley Heath Road, Grimstone Road (Little Wymondley), and Bedford Road between Ickleford and Holwell to determine the lengths requiring repairs'. After a short discussion the Committee agreed that this item should be referred to the next meeting of the NHHP – JMP to be held on 29 January 2007.

66. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

No items of other business was submitted for consideration by the Committee.

67. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

There were no Declarations of Interests.

68. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

No items were presented under Public Participation.

69. SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING – SAVINGS AND GROWTH 2007-2008 AND 2011 – 2012

The Head of Financial Services (HFS) advised the Committee that the list of savings and growth items as presented at Appendices 1 to 4 had been presented to Cabinet at its meeting held on 17 October 2006 (Minute 87 refers) and referred the Committee to Appendix 5 which detailed Cabinets comments made on 17 October as per the savings proposals.

Cabinet had also requested that the views of all Members should be sought on the savings and growth proposals for 2007-2008 via Members workshops (18 and 19 October 2006), Scrutiny Committee, PARC, Area Committees, Local Strategic Partnerships and Business Ratepayers during October and November 2006. The HFS advised that Cabinet also resolved that allowance for growth should be included in the annual savings target capped at £250,000 per annum and that items identified for savings and growth from 2008/2009 should be re-evaluated each year.

The Committee reviewed Appendices 1 and 2 and noted the total savings options of £770K, and at Appendix 3 the revenue growth proposals of £285.8K plus the capital proposals listed at Appendix 4. The HFS advised the Committee that the net effect of the revised budget strategy and the savings and growth proposals was an outstanding £233K still to be found in order to achieve a balanced budget based on an assumed 4.5 per cent Council Tax increase.

The HFS concluded his report by stating that the outstanding £233K may well increase due to negotiations awaited on Concessionary Fares and Meals on Wheels Service, together with the need to balance the budget by reducing expenditure, increasing incomes from fees and charges, using balances and increasing Council Tax.

The Chairman thanked the Head of Financial Services for the details provided on the savings and growth proposals for 2007-2008 and invited comments and suggestions which the Head of Financial Services was asked to consider when preparing his report for Cabinet at the meeting to be held on 19 December 2006.

- (1) SG13 – Alternate week collection of residual waste – The Committee raised concerns with the implementation of this proposal. It was confirmed by the Head of Financial Services that the proposal will not be implemented until half way through 2007/08 and that funds have already been set aside for advertising, but methods of implementing the collections have not yet been confirmed with the contractor;
- (2) SG15 – Reduction of Area Committee Budgets – The Committee asked how any reductions will effect Southern Rural Area Committee. The Head of Financial Services stated that £2220 would be the potential saving from the discretionary budget;
- (3) SG16 – Change delivery approach of holiday playschemes - The Committee were not in favour of this proposal. In response to a question on this matter the Head of Financial Services confirmed that NHDC would still need to provide financial assistance, because Parish Councils do not have sufficient funding to cover this scheme. The Head of Financial Services also comments that the planned savings of 2008/09 will take time to implement and draws attention to alternative provision stated in RG18;

- (4) SG20 – Deletion of contribution to subsidised bus routes – The Committee is strongly opposed to this proposal;
- (5) CG 2 – Green space strategy – A Member reminded the Committee that the ongoing problem of access to Great Ashby Park was not mentioned in this growth item, and the access problems should be addressed under the Green space strategy.

RESOLVED: That the information provided in the report and appendices of the Head of Financial Services be noted;

REASON FOR DECISIONS:

To allow the Southern Rural Committee make comments and suggestions to Cabinet on the savings and growths bids made within the Financial and Planning process for 2007-2008.

70. CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Officer (CDO) provided an update on his and other activities within the Southern Rural Area since the last meeting held on 5 October 2006.

The CDO advised the Committee that a meeting at Lilley on 17 October 2006 to discuss the needs of young people in the village had a very positive outcome from discussions on the 'Way Forward'. The need for a youth club was emphasised together with youth and sports events. Another positive outcome was the appointment of a youth representative who would attend each Parish Council meeting to provide feedback and a voice of young people in Lilley. A follow-up meeting was held on 24 October and a Steering Group of young people and adults was formed to progress the options for youth in Lilley, another meeting had taken place on 6 November where the Parish Council confirmed its support for a Youth club and agreed the need for a young person to be present at Parish Council meetings. An initial meeting to discuss the establishment of a youth club had been arranged for Tuesday 21 November 2006 at the Cassell Memorial Hall, Lilley commencing at 6p.m. The Committee noted that the Hertfordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Service would provide advice.

The CDO was pleased to confirm that the Ickleford Young Peoples Open Event held on 7 October had also been very successful. This gathering was a follow-up to the work of the Detached Outreach Team since April 2006 in response to the Parish Plan questionnaires concerning the needs of young people in Ickleford. The Committee noted that a youth club would be established in Ickleford supported in the first instance by two part time Outreach Workers. The CDO emphasised that this arrangement could not be long term as the Outreach workers were assigned to work in Lilley and Offley. The CDO advised that the Ickleford Parish Plan Action Group had met with officers on 2 November 2006 in order to review the Parish Plan questionnaires and identify directions and initiatives for the 'Way Forward'.

In conclusion the CDO provided a brief summary of activities related to Local Democracy Week, Hertfordshire Rural Youth Partnership and the Scrutiny Committee Task and Finish Group. The Chairman and the Committee thanked the CDO for his excellent progress with youth activities in the Southern Rural Area.

RESOLVED: That the information provided by the Community Development Officer on activities since the last meeting of the Southern Rural Committee held on 5 October 2006 be noted;

REASON FOR DECISION:

To ensure that the Southern Rural Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer and approve the implementation of schemes or projects within the Southern Rural Area Visioning Programme.

71. ANNUAL GRANTS, DEVELOPMENT, DISCRETIONARY AND VISIONING BUDGET 2006/2007

The Committee considered the current expenditure and balance of the Annual Grants, Development, Discretionary and Visioning budget for 2006 – 2007. In response to an enquiry on grant application deadlines, the CDO confirmed that the deadline for applications was 15 December 2006, that the applications would be presented to the Committee at its meeting to be held on 1 February 2006 with all approved grants issued no later than 31 March 2007.

RESOLVED: That the expenditure, allocations, and balance of the current 2006-07 Development budget, as set out in Appendix A to the report, be noted;

REASON FOR DECISIONS:

To advise the Committee of funds remaining for disbursement in the year 2006/2007.

72. CAPITAL VISIONING BUDGET FUNDING CONSIDERATION FOR COVERT CAMERAS

The Community Development Officer (CDO) reminded the Committee that the Visioning Consultation in 2003 identified fly tipping as an issue (in 2005-2006 there had been 721 fly tips in North Herts with a marked increase in 'hot spots' in the Southern Rural area) and the CDO confirmed that a considerable amount of officer time had been used to review equipment that would be 'fit for purpose' and meet the Community Strategy rural priorities, one of which was mobile anti fly-tipping cameras using digital wireless technology.

The CDO advised the Committee that there would be a promotion and advertising campaign to highlight fly-tipping offences and additional signage at sites well frequented by fly-tippers throughout North Herts once the covert cameras were installed.

The Committee noted that the proposed expenditure of £31,900 to purchase two covert cameras would comply with the NHDC Capital Plant and Equipment criteria and that there were no ongoing costs to cover breakdown, subject, to a five year warranty fee of £2,500. The CDO advised that this warranty could be funded from the Committee's pre-allocated revenue budget for anti fly-tipping enforcement on a five year drawdown (5 x £500) basis. With regard to damage or theft the CDO confirmed that repair or replacement costs would be met under a blanket contingency insurance cover held by this authority.

The CDO advised the Committee that the Licensing and Enforcement Manager would be able to answer any specific questions on enforcement and legislation concerning camera locations in the Southern Rural Area. The CDO confirmed that a potential supplier had loaned a covert camera for assessment and that at the chosen location there had been one incident of fly tipping and that this had been recorded and the vehicle identified. The Licensing and Enforcement Manager (LEM) advised that a prosecution was pending and that it was hoped that a resolution would be reached before Christmas. In response to an enquiry about fines the LEM stated that all paid fines would be remitted to NHDC and that this included fixed penalty notices issued by this authority which would adequately cover costs incurred in the operation and maintenance of the covert cameras.

Members expressed concern about the ability to move a covert camera from one location to another quickly and with ease of administration and the LEM confirmed that physical movement was not a problem and that the issue of a RIPA (Regulation of Investigating Powers Act) authorisation could be made in a day by the appropriate officer at NHDC.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the sum of £31,900 be allocated from the Capital Visioning Budget (Area Committee Plant and Equipment Capital Visioning Fund) for 2006–2007 to purchase two covert CCTV cameras and other anti fly-tipping enforcement measures in the Wards that constitute the Southern Rural Area Committee.

- (2) That the Community Development Officer and the Licensing and Enforcement Manager be requested to provide an updating report on the incidents captured by Covert Cameras, together with details of revenue obtained from prosecution, in the Champion News report presented to the meeting of the Southern Rural Committee to be held on 1 February 2007 and quarterly thereafter.

REASON FOR DECISION:

To meet the strategic objectives of North Hertfordshire District Council and implementation of the Area Visioning Action Plans.

73. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

RESOLVED to determine the planning applications as set out in the report of the Planning Control and Conservation Manager and as indicated in the following schedule:

SCHEDULE

Reference Number	Description of Development and Location	Decision
1. 06/01412/1	Land at and to North-East of Gosmore End House, Hitchin Road, Gosmore Change of use of garden land to form residential curtilage serving Gosmore End House.	Granted (see (a) below)
2. 06/01855/1	144 London Road, Knebworth Change of use from A1 (Retail) to A2 (Estate Agent)	Granted (as per report)

- (a) Following permission being **GRANTED** to planning application reference 06/01412/1 the further recommendation set out at paragraph 4.1 in the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control was agreed.

74. PLANNING APPEALS - UPDATE

The Committee noted that two appeals have been lodged since the meeting of this Committee held on 5 October 2006.

Appellant: Mrs D. Salmon
 Address: 70 High Street, Codicote
 Description: First floor rear extension and rear conservatory
 Ref. 06/00480/1
 Procedure: Written Representations

Appellant: Mrs D. Salmon
 Address: 70 High Street, Codicote
 Description: Listed Building Consent :
 First floor rear extension and rear conservatory
 Ref. 06/00481LB
 Procedure: Written Representations

The Planning Officer confirmed that three appeals had been determined since the meeting of this Committee held on 5 October 2006.

Appellant: Costdeal Ltd.
 Address: Land Adjacent to 11-13, Bury End, Pirton
 Description: Erection of a 3 Bedroom dwelling with two parking spaces.
 Ref. 05/00548/1
 Decision: DISMISSED on 6 October 2006.

Appellant Mr R Kelly
Address Bridge Farm, School Lane, Offley
Description: Use of land for the temporary stationing of mobile home for worker in association with pheasant rearing and breeding for a period of three years.
Ref. 05/00339/1
Decision: DISMISSED on 5 October 2006.

Appellant Mr M. & Mrs R. Lewis
Address 7a Westbury Farm Close, Great Offley
Description: Retention of a shed in the rear garden without compliance with a condition relating to staining of the shed.
Ref. 05/01779/1HH
Decision: ALLOWED AND CONDITION VARIED on 9 November 2006.

The meeting closed at 9.00p.m.

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Chairman