

5 March, 2024

Our Ref Baldock and District Area Forum 11
March 2024

Contact. Community & Partnerships
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To: Members of the Committee: Councillors Tom Tyson (Chair), Alistair Willoughby (Vice-Chair),
Juan Cowell, Steve Jarvis, Michael Muir and Michael Weeks

NOTICE IS HEREBY GIVEN OF A

MEETING OF THE BALDOCK AND DISTRICT AREA FORUM

to be held in the

**ST MARYS JUNIOR SCHOOL, ST MARY'S WAY, BALDOCK
SG7 6HY**

On

MONDAY, 11TH MARCH, 2024 AT 7.30 PM

Yours sincerely,

Jeanette Thompson
Service Director – Legal and Community

****MEMBERS PLEASE ENSURE THAT YOU DOWNLOAD ALL AGENDAS AND REPORTS VIA THE MOD.GOV APPLICATION ON YOUR TABLET BEFORE ATTENDING THE MEETING****

Agenda Part I

Item		Page
1.	APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	
2.	CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest or Declarable Interest and are required to notify the Chair of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a Disclosable Pecuniary Interest must withdraw from the meeting for the duration of the item. Members declaring a Declarable Interest, wishing to exercise a 'Councillor Speaking Right', must declare this at the same time as the interest, move to the public area before speaking to the item and then must leave the room before the debate and vote.	
3.	GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE To provide the Forum with an update to ensure Members are kept informed of the work of the Community and Partnerships Team.	(Pages 3 - 8)
4.	PRESENTATION - POLICE UPDATE Presentation by North Herts Safer Neighbourhood Team.	
5.	PRESENTATION - HERTFORDSHIRE GROWTH BOARD Presentation by Hertfordshire Growth Board.	
6.	CHANGES TO BALDOCK DESIGN CODE To review changes to Baldock Design Code.	(Pages 9 - 28)
7.	WARD MATTERS & OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS To receive any verbal reports from Members and members of the public regarding Ward matters and Outside Organisations.	
8.	FUTURE AREA FORUMS To discuss topics for future meetings.	

REPORT (FOR NOTING BY AREA FORUM)

**BALDOCK AREA FORUM
11 MARCH 2024**

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

SERVICE DIRECTORATE: LEGAL & COMMUNITY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Area Forum on the current expenditure and balances of the Community Grant budget.
- 1.2 To advise the Forum of the activities and schemes with which Community & Partnerships officers have been involved in and some important community-based activities that will take place during the next few months.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

None

3. BACKGROUND/ RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 3.1 The community grant base budget for Baldock Area Forum 2023/24 is **£5,000**.
- 3.2 The budget available for community grants for the Baldock area stands at **£2,229**.
- 3.3 Discussions around the future of Baldock street furniture. Report attached with Appendix 3,4 and 5.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 Any issues raised in this report are for information and noting and therefore no direct legal implications arise.

5. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 As outlined in Appendix 1, and under item 3.2, the remaining Community Grant budget available is **£2,229**. This is to be carried forward into the 2024/25 budget, subject to approval from Cabinet.

6. RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no risk implications relating to this report.

7. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no equalities implications in relation to this report.

8. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

8.1 The Social Value Act and “go local” policy do not apply to the matters contained within this report, as there are no recommendations on procurement.

9. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

9.1 There are no environmental implications in relation to this report.

10. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

10. The activities of the Community & Partnerships team are covered by existing budgets.

11. BACKGROUND PAPERS

11.1 Terms of Reference for Area Forums, Section 9 of Council Constitution updated May 2023.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1. Baldock Community Grant Budget 23-24

12.2 Appendix 2. Community Updates

12.3 Appendix 3. Extract Baldock Committee Minutes 7.08.07 Agreement of Design

12.4 Appendix 4. Report Baldock & District Committee 7.08.07

12.5 Appendix 5. Baldock TC Enhancement Consultation Rev Recommendation 7.08.07

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

13.1 Author

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13.2 Contributors

Claire Morgan, Community & Partnerships Team Leader

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Antonio Ciampa, Accountancy Manager

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BALDOCK AND DISTRICT AREA FORUM BUDGET 2023/24**SUMMARY FINANCIAL POSITION**

BALDOCK AREA FORUM	Original Budget 2023/24	Carry Forward Budget 2022/23	Total Funding 2023/24	Grants Allocated	Unallocated Budget
BALDOCK TOWN	£2,400	£1,874	£4,274	£3,281	£993
BALDOCK EAST	£1,000	£750	£1,750	£1,367	£383
ARBURY	£900	£792	£1,692	£1,231	£461
WESTON & SANDON	£700	£649	£1,349	£957	£392
TOTAL BALDOCK AREA FORUM	£5,000	£4,065	£9,065	£6,836	£2,229

APPROVED PROJECTS**BALDOCK TOWN**

Project	Forum Date	Grant Allocated
Christchurch Baldock - Tea & Tots and Tea & Tinies	17-Jul-23	£120
Christchurch Baldock - Holiday Club	17-Jul-23	£336
Christchurch Baldock - Body & Soul	17-Jul-23	£180
Friends of Brandles - Gardening equipment, tools and storage for outdoor adventure classroom	11-Sep-23	£936
Resolve - Treatment and rehabilitation. Key workers and operational running costs.	15-Jan-24	£720
Home-start Herts - Family support for family in Baldock.	15-Jan-24	£989
TOTAL BALDOCK TOWN		£3,281

BALDOCK EAST

Project	Forum Date	Grant Allocated
Christchurch Baldock - Tea & Tots and Tea & Tinies	17-Jul-23	£50
Christchurch Baldock - Holiday Club	17-Jul-23	£140
Christchurch Baldock - Body & Soul	17-Jul-23	£75
Friends of Brandles - Gardening equipment, tools and storage for outdoor adventure classroom	11-Sep-23	£390
Resolve - Treatment and rehabilitation. Key workers and operational running costs.	15-Jan-24	£300
Home-start Herts - Family support for family in Baldock.	15-Jan-24	£412
TOTAL BALDOCK EAST		£1,367

ARBURY

Project	Forum Date	Grant Allocated
Christchurch Baldock - Tea & Tots and Tea & Tinies	17-Jul-23	£45
Christchurch Baldock - Holiday Club	17-Jul-23	£127
Christchurch Baldock - Body & Soul	17-Jul-23	£67
Friends of Brandles - Gardening equipment, tools and storage for outdoor adventure classroom	11-Sep-23	£351
Resolve - Treatment and rehabilitation. Key workers and operational running costs.	15-Jan-24	£270
Home-start Herts - Family support for family in Baldock.	15-Jan-24	£371
TOTAL ARBURY		£1,231

BALDOCK AND DISTRICT AREA FORUM BUDGET 2023/24**WESTON & SANDON**

<u>Project</u>	<u>Forum Date</u>	<u>Grant Allocated</u>
Christchurch Baldock - Tea & Tots and Tea & Tinies	17-Jul-23	£35
Christchurch Baldock - Holiday Club	17-Jul-23	£98
Christchurch Baldock - Body & Soul	17-Jul-23	£53
Friends of Brandles - Gardening equipment, tools and storage for outdoor adventure classroom	11-Sep-23	£273
Resolve - Treatment and rehabilitation. Key workers and operational running costs.	15-Jan-24	£210
Home-start Herts - Family support for family in Baldock.	15-Jan-24	£288
TOTAL WESTON & SANDON		£957

Districtwide Community Updates

- The Community Investment Fund has now closed. Successful grant applicants have been informed.
- Coordinating voluntary support response to Asylum Seekers based in North Herts.
- The winners of the North Herts Heroes Awards were celebrated at the Chair's Civic event which took place on 1st March.
- Co-ordinating various local and district wide Network Groups including Westmill, Youth Action, Food Provision, Arts and Culture, and Green and Growing Group.
- Continuing to facilitate NHC Councillors' Community Surgeries.
- Sharing and disseminating information on social media and to mailing lists, keeping in touch with the community, voluntary, statutory, and non-statutory agencies.
- The Community Partnership Team met with the Royal British Legion and Letchworth BID to discuss this year's Letchworth Remembrance Day Parade and how they can recruit more members from across North Herts.
- Holocaust Memorial Day hybrid event took place in the North Herts Council Chamber and can be viewed on the Council's YouTube channel.

Area Community Updates

- Community Partnerships Officer is continuing to build up connections with local groups/organisations in Baldock, including the Baldock Events Forum, The Royal British Legion - Baldock & District Branch and Baldock Library.
- Continued work with Growing Baldock.
- Over the coming months the Community Partnerships Officer will be reaching out to local groups to better connect with them. If anyone has any useful contacts / links please contact Danny.

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BALDOCK AREA FORUM
5TH March 2024

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

TITLE OF REPORT:

REPORT OF: Economic Development Officer

EXECUTIVE MEMBER:

COUNCIL PRIORITY: SUSTAINABILITY

1. EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- 1.1 The public seating in Baldock Town Centre requires to be replaced. The Council proposes that, subject to satisfactory public consultation, to replace the wooden seating with seating made from low maintenance materials to ensure the longevity of the equipment.
- 1.2 This requires a deviation from the Baldock Management and Maintenance Plan (“Baldock Design Code”) approved and adopted in 2008.

2. RECOMMENDATIONS

Subject to the results of public consultation, to recommend to Cabinet

- 2.1 To liaise with relevant Council services and commence an appropriate consultation on specific proposed amendments as described in 8.2, of this report, to the Baldock Design Code in respect of materials and locations of seating and benches.
- 2.2 *Subject to that consultation*, to then consider and make appropriate recommendations to Cabinet in respect of any amendments to the Baldock Design Code, and in principle funding from the UK SPF 2024/25 allocation.

3. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

NHC no longer has resources to maintain the style of public seating designated in the Baldock Design Code. Therefore, approval is sought for consultation to amend this – to a more sustainable designed and different locations.

4. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 4.1. The alternative is to repair or replace the seating with new timber items in accord with the Baldock Design Code.

5. CONSULTATION WITH RELEVANT MEMBERS AND EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS

- 5.1. There has been some initial liaison with Cllrs Willoughby and Muir regarding this issue.
- 5.2. Further to this, the Service Director: Legal & Community has relayed discussions with the Strategic Planning & Projects Manager to Cllr Willoughby, regarding the previous process and need for consultation and approval by Cabinet if changes to material and location are proposed.

6. FORWARD PLAN

- 6.1 Not relevant for the Area Forum, and it is not anticipated that if, post consultation, proposed changes are recommended that this would amount to a key Executive decision that would need to be in the Forward Plan.

7.0 BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Members have raised concerns that the wooden seats and benches installed as a part of the Baldock Design Code, have not been maintained for several years and are now in a state of dereliction due to water and other damage. They are both unsightly and, in some cases, possibly dangerous to sit on. (See picture A in Appendix B). (The Baldock Design Code is available in Appendix A).

8. RELEVANT CONSIDERATIONS

- 8.1 Members have discussed a number of sustainable options for replacement and for slight realignments of the seats to reduce the incidence of car damage and increase their usability.
- 8.2 A number of designs are being considered, although a final decision on model will be made on the basis of the durability of the seats over time, as North Herts Council does not currently have the resource to maintain materials which will deteriorate over time, as well as aesthetics and sympathy with the environs. It is most likely that replacements will be cast iron framed with recycled plastic slats, which are easier to maintain and clean and less prone to weather damage and vandalism. (see picture B below)
- 8.3 The change in design to metal and plastic does not conform to the Baldock Design Code. Therefore, we seek approval to commence consultation on changing the Code on the grounds of long-term sustainability and ease of maintenance.

9. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 9.1. The Area Forums are informal Council bodies, and provide a 'sounding board' for community opinion and an opportunity to input to the Council. Under their Terms of Reference, their role can be "*To act as a Forum for discussion on matters of local interest and to elicit/hear the views of local bodies and organisations*" – as per section 9.7.1. and "*To provide local input into service specifications where feasible for a local area and input*

for relevant local area consultations”, as per section 9.7.5. The Forums can therefore in this instance agree to a consultation on something of this nature with a localised impact, albeit that the formal decision on the subject, given it is design/ planning in nature, would be by Cabinet. Any funding would also have to be agreed, potentially by Cabinet – through their adjustments within the overall budgetary framework in-year, or more specifically in this instance, potentially as an, in principle decision from the UK SPF funding pots identified for 2024/25, if so minded.

10. FINANCIAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. None at this stage.

11. RISK IMPLICATIONS

11.1. Good Risk Management supports and enhances the decision-making process, increasing the likelihood of the Council meeting its objectives and enabling it to respond quickly and effectively to change. When taking decisions, risks and opportunities must be considered. Otherwise, none at this stage.

12. EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

12.1. In line with the Public Sector Equality Duty, public bodies must, in the exercise of their functions, give due regard to the need to eliminate discrimination, harassment, victimisation, to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between those who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

13. SOCIAL VALUE IMPLICATIONS

See Guidance notes for how to complete this section

Use one of the following paragraphs only

13.1. The Social Value Act and “go local” requirements do not apply to this report. However, it is likely to apply through any replacement procedure process.

14. ENVIRONMENTAL IMPLICATIONS

See the separate guidance note “Environmental Impact Assessment” before completing this section <https://intranet.north-herts.gov.uk/home/doing-business/communications-and-print/communications-templates/committee-reports>

Use one of the following paragraphs only

14.1. There are no known Environmental impacts or requirements that apply to *[the actions/ Policy/this report]*.

14.2. *Environmental Impact Assessment has been undertaken. [The actions / Policy /this report] have been considered and [there are/ are no relevant adaptations/ mitigation*

measure that could be applied] [the following adaptations/ mitigations have been included – as detailed in X].”

15. HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 15.1 Summarise any impacts on staff and how they will be addressed, or state there will be no impact.

16. APPENDICES

- 16.1 Appendix A – Baldock Management and Maintenance Plan “Baldock Design Code”.
Appendix B – Pictures

17. CONTACT OFFICERS

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18. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 18.1 Area Committee report from 2008.

Appendix A

Management and Maintenance Plan for Baldock



Management-Maintenance Plan Baldock_FI

Appendix B

Picture A



Picture B



Extract:

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

BALDOCK and DISTRICT COMMITTEE
(Baldock, Arbury and Weston and Sandon Wards)

**Meeting held in The Main Hall, Knights Templar School, Park Street, Baldock
on 7 August 2007 at 7.30 p.m.**

MINUTES

PRESENT: *Councillors A.D. Young (Chairman), M.R.M Muir (Vice-Chairman), Marilyn Kirkland, I.J. Knighton and M.E. Weeks.*

IN ATTENDANCE: *Stuart Izzard (Senior Community Development Officer (Youth))
Louise Symes (Projects Manager - Planning Policy and Projects)
Terry Nickolls (Principal Engineer - Planning Policy and Projects)
Susanne Gow (Committee and Member Services Officer).*

Roxanne Glaud (Hertfordshire Highways)

ALSO PRESENT: *Mehron Kirk (Landscape Architect Associate, Building Design Partnerships)*

Approximately 72 members of the public for Agenda Item 6.

19. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed everyone to the meeting.

20. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received from Councillor S.K. Jarvis.

21. MINUTES – 4 JUNE 2007

RESOLVED: that the Minutes of the meeting held on 4 June 2007 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and be signed by the Chairman, subject to confirmation that at line 2 of Minute 10, Mr Mills and Mr Jenkin were officers of Baldock Town Football Club, not Baldock Town Youth Football Club.

22. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

There was no notification of other business.

23. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

- Councillor A.D. Young declared a personal interest in the relevant item in Minute 26 as he is a trustee of the Baldock Bowls and Social Club and confirmed that he would remain in the room, take part in the debate and vote if it was appropriate.
- Councillor M.R.M. Muir declared a personal interest in Minute 28 as he was the founder of Friends of Baldock Greenspaces who have submitted a Grant Application for approval by the Baldock and District Committee. He confirmed that he would remain in the room, reserved the right to speak and vote.

24. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There were no items presented under public participation.

25. BALDOCK TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT SCHEME – DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR AGREEMENT FOLLOWING PUBLIC CONSULTATION

The Projects Manager introduced the item and advised that some 200 written responses had been received to the consultation on the draft proposals, and that the majority of the responses were positive. She then introduced Mehron Kirk of Building Design Partnerships (BDP), who

presented to the Baldock and District Council Meeting the findings of the 6-week consultation on the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme, and BDP's draft proposals for the actions to be taken to enhance Baldock town centre. These proposals are to be approved in stages by the Baldock and District Committee, and implemented between April 2008 and April 2009.

Mr Kirk listed Building Design Partnerships' "Proposals for Approval to Freeze the Public Realm Masterplan" under Category A as follows, and formally requested that the Baldock and District Committee approve this list so that the Consultants could proceed with preparation of the detailed design and maintain progress on the agreed project programme.

- General public realm masterplan layout;
- New public spaces and War Memorial;
- Closure of the south end of Church Street;
- Parking locations for all areas, and allocation for core areas;
- Style and character of materials and street furniture:
 - Types of material to include a mix of York stone, granite, buff coloured bound gravel on footways and asphalt on carriageways;
 - Street furniture to be a neutral, elegant and contemporary design, making use of timber material for seating, litterbins and bollards;
- Street trees, including existing trees where appropriate, and planting new semi-mature lime or similar species and green areas comprising mostly lawn;
- Church Street to become one-way to Pond Lane;
- Incorporation of a roundabout at the main junction and relocated queuing.

Mr Kirk then presented a list of additional studies to be undertaken as a direct result of consultation, a report of which will be brought to the Baldock and District Committee Meeting to be held on 19 November 2007. He listed these as:

- Slip road towards the southern end of High Street;
- Extent of parking controls, including permit parking;
- Railway station car park;
- Link to Tesco supermarket
- Land ownership issues;
- Further traffic management and parking in Baldock;
- Improved signage outside Baldock, diverting traffic away from Baldock town centre;
- Introduce pedestrian phasing at junction of Station Road/Whitehorse Street;
- HGV restrictions in Baldock town centre;
- Public toilets.

Mr Kirk advised those present that there would be another public meeting early in 2008 to inform Baldock residents of the progress of the plans, as work was programmed to begin in April 2008.

Baldock and District Committee Members then asked pertinent questions interalia, the provision of additional disabled parking, the exact position of "gating" for Baldock town centre, and the means of easing traffic flow and slowing down traffic in Baldock town centre.

Mr Kirk answered some of the questions, and assured the Members that those questions he had not answered would be taken on board, and answers provided at the Baldock and District Committee Meeting to be held on 19 November 2007.

The Chairman requested a Recorded Vote of the Baldock and District Committee Members on the recommendations (below) made by the Head of Planning and Building Control, and this was proposed by Councillor Weeks and seconded by Councillor Knighton. The Recorded Vote was taken as follows:

Councillor Jarvis	Absent
Councillor Kirkland	For the motion
Councillor Knighton	For the motion
Councillor Muir	For the motion

Councillor Weeks For the motion
Councillor Young For the motion

The motion was therefore passed unanimously.

RESOLVED:

- 1) That Baldock and District Committee agreed the amended proposals for the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme in accordance with:
 - the list of proposals in Category A;
 - the revised Public Realm Masterplan (Ref: 90 LP004 Revision C);
 - the parking locations and core area plan (Ref: 90 LP007).
- 2) That the Baldock and District Committee consider the list of additional studies required as set out in Category B, and that officers report back on the outcome of these studies at the meeting of the Baldock and District Committee to be held on 19 November 2007.

REASON FOR DECISIONS:

To maintain the best possible rate of progress, the areas of work associated with Categories A and B have been separated. Requesting Members to consider and agree the areas of work associated with Category A would release a substantial volume of work to the Consultants, which would allow the momentum of progress to be maintained in the meantime, while the outstanding areas of work in Category B were considered. The recommendations were offered after due consideration of the information collected over the last four months, and in the full knowledge that the amended design reflected the majority and/or balanced views of the various groups consulted, survey material and expert consideration.

The Chairman thanked Building Design Partnerships and the Planning Policy and Projects officers for their hard work for the people of Baldock. He also thanked the public who had taken the time to attend this District Meeting, and opined that this is an exciting time for the people of Baldock, as it is the start of the refurbishment process for their town centre, which would shortly become a great place in which to live and work.

The Chairman then announced a short break in which those present could speak briefly to their Councillor, or be added to a list for receipt of details of the presentation.

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BALDOCK AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

7 August, 2007

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No.
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TITLE OF REPORT: BALDOCK TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT SCHEME – DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR AGREEMENT FOLLOWING PUBLIC CONSULTATION

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

The attached report was listed as 'to follow' at the first issue of the agenda.

BALDOCK COMMITTEE

7 August 2007

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

AGENDA ITEM No.

6

TITLE OF REPORT: BALDOCK TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT SCHEME – DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR AGREEMENT FOLLOWING PUBLIC CONSULTATION

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To present to Members the findings of the public consultation on the draft proposals for Baldock Town Centre Enhancement scheme.
- 1.2 For Members to agree the amended proposals following public consultation to allow Building Design Partnerships (BDP), the designers, to proceed with the detailed design.
- 1.3 To gain the Members agreement on the next stage in the project programme up to the production of formal contract drawings.

A presentation of the amended proposals and the next stages in the project programme will be made by BDP and Officers at the committee meeting.

2 FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This Report contains a recommendation on a key decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 1st June 2007.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Baldock Town Centre Strategy, adopted in January 2006 as the Council's Statement of Policy, includes an Action Plan which requires the preparation and delivery of an enhancement scheme for Baldock town centre. This scheme is being undertaken by NHDC in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC). Completion of the Baldock bypass in Spring 2006 resulted in changes to the traffic flows through the centre of Baldock and created opportunities for enhancement of the town centre.
- 3.2 The Council appointed Building Design Partnership (BDP) in February 2007 to prepare design proposals for the Baldock Town Centre enhancement scheme and supervise the implementation of the works on site.
- 3.3 NHDC and HCC are jointly funding the enhancements works. Due to the size of Baldock Town Centre, part of BDP's brief is to determine how to make the most effective use of the funding available to achieve the best design solution and using the most appropriate materials.
- 3.4 Officers and BDP undertook a series of stakeholder workshops and attended various meetings to understand and gain the views of the local community as input into preparing the proposed design scheme. Members subsequently agreed the

draft design proposals for public consultation at the Baldock & District Committee meeting on 4th June 2007.

3.5 The public consultation period ran for six weeks starting with a launch on Saturday 9 June followed by a public meeting on 12 July 2007. The consultation period closed on 20th July 2007. The consultation was supported by a permanent exhibition in the Simpson Drive Community Centre, and the following was undertaken to promote awareness of the design proposals:

- Press releases appeared in the local paper through out the consultation period and in the Baldock Mail;
- Leaflets were hand delivered to every household and businesses within Baldock inviting everyone to attend the launch and the exhibition;
- Posters were displayed in prominent positions around the town informing people about the exhibition;
- The adjacent Parish Councils, individuals involved in the pre-consultation meetings, members of the Baldock Town Partnership and key organisations were written to and informed about the draft proposals;
- The consultants supported by officers attended a meeting of both the Baldock Town Partnership and the Knights Templar School Council during the consultation period to present and discuss the draft proposals;
- A public meeting was held on 12th July during the consultation period to enable the Baldock Members, Consultants and Officers to listen and discuss people's views and comments about the draft proposals. In excess of 80 people attended this meeting;
- The Council's website has been kept up-to-date through out the period of the project.

Section 9 of this report sets out the community involvement process to date.

4. CONSIDERATIONS

4.1 The proposed enhancement scheme relates to the town centre, (see Appendix 1 attached) and encompasses the following key principles, upon which people were consulted. These included:

- Understanding and analysing parking arrangements within the core town centre area and the surrounding streets.
- Making provision for business, visitor and residential parking within the town centre that supports the vitality and viability of the town centre now and in the future.
- Creating new public open spaces.
- Increasing footpath widths where necessary to allow for areas of activity and outdoor trading, cafes etc.
- Creating a market place and giving the market a real presence

- Improving the junction at High Street, Whitehorse Street, Church Street and Hitchin Street to increase pedestrian links and safety at this critical point.
- Introducing signs and/or other measures at junctions and gateways into the town centre to slow down and discourage through traffic, improve the pedestrian experience and safety.
- Improving the pedestrian links between Church Street and High Street.
- Reducing street clutter, improving the street scene and coordinate all elements of street furniture including trees and soft landscaping.
- Improve the physical and visual links between the town centre and Tesco's store.
- Seeking views on the location of the war memorial and public conveniences.

4.2 Nearly 200 written comments were received during the consultation period on the draft proposals. It is interesting to note that the majority of comments were in support of the scheme as a whole. Each comment has been considered and where necessary amendments have been made adding value to the overall design scheme. An analysis of the consultation responses together with the consultant's and officer responses are included in the 'Summary of Comments' attached as Appendix 2. A compilation of all these comments is available in the Members Room and on the Council's website.

4.3 The main amendments can be categorised as follows:

- (a) Category 1 – changes that have been made to the general masterplan layout including the proposed new public spaces, layout of the trees and green areas, style and character of materials and street furniture, closure of the south end of Church Street and parking allocation and locations.
- (b) Category 2 – changes that will need to be made subject to further studies within this scheme such as the access road off High Street opposite Tesco's superstore, the final location of the war memorial, the pedestrian link to Tesco's and the extent of parking controls in the immediate adjacent streets.
- (c) Category 3 – additional studies that will be needed as a direct result of the proposed scheme that will have an effect beyond the immediate area in relation to both traffic management and on street parking controls. This may include improving signage outside of Baldock diverting through traffic away from the core area and the possibility of HGV restrictions.

4.4 **The findings from the consultation and the proposed amendments made to the design proposals will be presented to Members at the Committee Meeting.** This will include amendments made in light of Category 1, to which officers are seeking Members agreement to allow those parts of the design scheme to be frozen. This will enable the consultants to proceed with the preparation of the detailed design and maintain progress on the agreed project programme.

4.5 **The studies that will be required as part of Categories 2 and 3 will also be presented at the Committee meeting together with suggested actions on how these issues are to be taken forward in accordance with the overall programme for the project** (See Appendix 3 for the project programme). Officers will be seeking Members agreement to these suggested actions.

- 4.6 A major element of the design proposal is the modification of the junction of High Street, Whitehorse Street and Hitchin Street. The preferred option is to make this location more pedestrian friendly by introducing traffic control lights with a pedestrian phase with pedestrian crossing at desired points. While a signalled junction would provide safer conditions for pedestrians and cyclists, it was considered necessary that the proposed junction be analysed to establish its capacity, possible lengths of queues and anticipate the impact on surrounding streets. An experimental layout was run to measure these effects.
- 4.7 A number of comments including complaints were received during the experiment. **These comments, the data and measurement of queue lengths from the experiment is still being analysed at the time of writing this report and will be presented together with responses to the key issues raised by the public at the Baldock Committee Meeting.**

5. ENHANCEMENT SCHEME - FINAL DESIGN

- 5.1 A report on the outcome of the studies referred to in Category 2, will be submitted to the Baldock & District Committee on 17 September 2007. If accepted, the elements from the 17th September will be added to the previously frozen schemes under Category 1, allowing the detailed design work to be completed.
- 5.2 Both Members and the local community will be kept informed of progress on the project via a series of exhibitions run at the Simpson Drive Community Centre, through the Council's website and Outlook, leaflet drops, press releases and public meetings when considered necessary and relevant to a particular stage of the project.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees apply to this Report.
- 6.2 In the event that the final design scheme is agreed, there will be legal implications regarding working on the highway and allowing for a Section 278 Agreement, the procedure for any Traffic Regulation Orders required and dealing with any involvement of private land in the case of requiring necessary consents.
- 6.3 NHDC and HCC are in the process of agreeing a partnership agreement to deliver the enhancement scheme.

7. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There is an agreed capital budget for the project of £2.8m.
- 7.2 The prime partners, namely NHDC and HCC will co-fund the project development costs through staff time in relation to project development, partnership working with strategic organisations and consultancy support. In the council's case, this is to be funded through the service and financial planning process. An agreement between NHDC and HCC has been prepared to ensure that the project is run to time and on budget.
- 7.3 With regard to risk there are significant reputational risks associated with the non-delivery of the project, which has a very high public profile. The Council's risk register has been updated to reflect this area of risk. A risk register for the project has been prepared and will be maintained by the Project Team.

- 7.4 A CDM co-ordinator has also been appointed for the project to manage health and safety risks as required by the CDM 2007 Regulations.

8. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 The officer time involved in the enhancement project is identified as part of the Service and Financial Planning Process for Planning & Building Control Services, and to be included in other relevant Service plans given the requirement to bring in other officers across the council at various stages in the project.
- 8.2 All efforts will be made to meet the Council's equalities plan when consulting with the local community on the design scheme and the implementation plan for the project.

9. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 9.1 Officers undertook a series of workshops and attended various meetings as part of the preparation of the Baldock Town Centre Strategy. Outputs from these sessions provided a good baseline for understanding the issues raised in relation to the future enhancement of the town centre.
- 9.2 BDP, since their appointment in February 2007 have undertaken a variety of stakeholder workshops, presentations to key organisations, drop-in events and interviews. These, together with work undertaken by an earlier consultant, Buchanan's, has provide a significant understanding of the views of local residents and businesses.
- 9.3 Briefing sessions have been held with Baldock Members to gain further information and to give feedback on proposals and on progress.
- 9.4 A public consultation exercise was undertaken between 9th June and 20th July as outlined in paragraph 3.5 above.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 That Baldock and District Committee agree the amended proposals for the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme described as Category 1 presented at the meeting.
- 10.2 That Baldock and District Committee agree the actions as presented under categories 2 and 3 at the meeting.

11. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 11.1 To maintain as best as possible rate of progress the areas of work associated with Category 2 and 3 have been separated out. By asking Members to consider and agree the areas of work associated with Category 1 would release a substantial volume of work to the consultants, which would allow the momentum of progress to be maintained in the meantime while the outstanding areas of work are considered. The recommendations are offered after due consideration of the information collected over the last four months and in the full knowledge that the amended design reflects the majority and/or balanced views of the various groups consulted, survey material and expert consideration.

12. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 12.1 The final proposals include a number of design components within the overall scheme which will be resolved at the detailed design stage.

13. APPENDICES

- 13.1 Appendix 1: Proposed Masterplan showing design proposals for consultation
- 13.2 Appendix 2: Summary of Comments received to Consultation on Design Proposals – 9 June to 20 July 2007
- 13.3 Appendix 3: Project Programme

14. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 14.1 Louise Symes, Planning Policy and Projects, ext 4359
Helen Leitch, Planning Policy and Projects, ext 4513
Terry Nickolls, Planning Policy and Projects, ext 4425
David Scholes, Head of Planning & Building Control, ext 4836
Katie White, Senior Lawyer, ext 4315
Anita Thomas, Group Accountant, ext 4451

15. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 15.1 Baldock Town Centre Strategy
- 15.2 Relevant committee reports
- 15.3 Baldock Town Centre Design Proposals Exhibition documentation

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BALDOCK COMMITTEE

7th August 2007

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

AGENDA ITEM No.

6

BALDOCK TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT SCHEME – DRAFT PROPOSALS FOR AGREEMENT FOLLOWING PUBLIC CONSULTATION

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

Reference is made to the following report and to Section 10 Recommendations.

Members of the Baldock and District Committee are requested to agree the following Recommendations which now supersede those in the report and will be in line with the presentation made to Members at the Committee Meeting.

10. RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 That Baldock and District Committee agree the amended proposals for the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme in accordance with:

- (i) the list of proposals in Category A, attached as Appendix 4,
- (ii) the revised Public Realm MasterPlan (Ref: 90 LP004 Revision C) , attached as Appendix 5, and
- (iii) the parking locations and core area plan (Ref:90 LP007), attached as Appendix 6.

10.2 That the Baldock and District Committee agree the list of additional studies required as set out in Category B attached at Appendix 4 and that Officers report back on the outcome of these studies at the meeting of the Baldock and District committee on 19 November 2007.

**BALDOCK TOWN CENTRE ENHANCEMENT SCHEME – PROPOSALS FOR AGREEMENT
FOLLOWING PUBLIC CONSULTATION**

**CATEGORY A: List of Proposals for Approval to Freeze the Public Realm Masterplan
(Ref: 90 LP004 Revision C)**

- i. General public realm masterplan layout
- ii. New public spaces and War Memorial
- iii. Closure of the south end of Church Street
- iv. Parking locations for all areas and allocation for core area (as per Plan Ref:90 LP007)
- v. Style and character of materials and street furniture where:
 - Types of material to include a mix of york stone, granite, buff coloured bound gravel on footways and asphalt on carriageway
 - Street furniture to be a neutral, elegant and contemporary design making use of timber material for seating, litterbins and bollards
- vi. Street trees including existing trees where appropriate and planting new semi-mature lime or similar species and green areas comprising mostly lawn
- vii. Church street one way to Pond Lane
- viii. Incorporation of a roundabout at the main junction and relocated queuing

**CATEGORY B: Additional Studies to be undertaken as a direct result of consultation.
(Report back to Baldock & District Committee 19 November 2007)**

- i. Slip road towards southern end of High Street
- ii. Extent of parking controls including permit parking
- iii. Train station car park
- iv. Link to Tesco
- v. Land ownership issues
- vi. Further traffic management and parking in the town
- vii. Improved signage outside of Baldock diverting through traffic
- viii. Junction at Station Road / Whitehorse street with pedestrian phasing
- ix. HGV restrictions
- x. Public toilets