

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

ROYSTON AND DISTRICT COMMITTEE

**MEETING HELD AS A VIRTUAL MEETING
ON WEDNESDAY, 1ST JULY, 2020 AT 7.30 PM**

MINUTES

Present: *Councillors: Ruth Brown, Bill Davidson, Jean Green, Tony Hunter and Gerald Morris*

In Attendance: *County Councillor Fiona Hill and Steve Jarvis, Simon Ellis (Development and Conservation Manager), Ashley Hawkins (Community Engagement Officer) and Hilary Dineen (Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager)*

1 WELCOME AND INTRODUCTION

Audio Recording – 4 seconds

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager welcomed everyone to this virtual Hitchin Committee that was being conducted with Members and Officers at various locations, communicating via audio/video and online.

She then gave guidance as follows:

Attendance

A roll call was undertaken to ensure that all Members and Officers could hear and be heard.

Live Streaming

The meeting was being streamed live on the Council's You Tube channel. If live streaming failed the meeting would adjourn. If the live stream could not be restored within a reasonable period then the remaining business would be considered at a later date.

If for any reason the meeting was not quorate an Officer would notify attendees by interjecting the meeting. The meeting would adjourn immediately. Once the meeting was quorate the meeting would resume. If connection could not be restored within a reasonable period, then the remaining business would be considered at a later date.

Only Members present for the entire debate and consideration of an item were entitled to vote.

If technology failed for a Member during the debate and they rejoined the meeting, they would not be able to vote on that item.

Noise interference

Electronic devices should be muted and all present should have the mute button on their tablet or computer activated when not speaking.

Rules of Debate

The raise hand button (located under participants) should be used to alert the Chair that you wish to speak. Please wait for the Chair to invite you to speak before doing so.

Voting

Voting would be undertaken using the Green tick for “Yes”, Red Cross for “No” and Blue Raise Hand for “abstain”, located in the participants section at the bottom of the screen. To enable the votes to be counted, votes should not be cleared until requested to do so.

Details of how Members voted will not be kept or minuted unless a Recorded Vote was requested or an individual requests that their vote be recorded, and it will not be heard or seen on the audio and YouTube recordings of the meeting.

2 ELECTION OF A CHAIR FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2020/21

Audio Recording – 2 minutes 41 seconds

The Committee, Member and Scrutiny Manager called for nominations for Chair of the Royston Committee for the Civic Year 2020/21

Councillor Bill Davidson proposed, Councillor Gerald Morris seconded and there being no further nominations it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Tony Hunter be appointed Chair of Royston and District Committee for the Civic Year 2020/21.

Councillor Tony Hunter took the Chair.

3 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Audio Recording – 2 minutes 45 seconds

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor Carol Stanier.

4 ELECTION OF A VICE-CHAIR FOR THE CIVIC YEAR 2020/21

Audio Recording – 4 minutes

The Chair called for nomination for Vice-Chair of the Royston Committee for the Civic Year 2020/21.

Councillor Tony Hunter proposed, Councillor Gerald Morris seconded and there being no further nominations it was:

RESOLVED: That Councillor Bill Davidson be appointed Vice-Chair of Royston and District Committee for the Civic Year 2020/21.

5 NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

Audio Recording – 4 minutes 25 seconds

No other business was notified.

6 CHAIR'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

Audio Recording – 4 minutes 34 seconds

(1) The Chair thanked those who attended Town Talk.

- (2) The Chair advised that, in accordance with Council policy, this meeting was being audio recorded and live streamed on the Council's YouTube channel.
- (3) Members were reminded to make declarations of interest before an item, the longer reminder about this and speaking rights is set out under Chair's Announcements on the agenda.

7 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Audio recording – 5 minutes 10 seconds

There were no presentations by members of the public.

8 S106 OBLIGATIONS ANNUAL UPDATE

Audio recording – 5 minutes 16 seconds

The Development and Conservation Manager presented the report entitled Annual Update on S106 Obligations for Royston and District Committee together with the following appendix:

- Appendix 1 - Table 4 - Current held funds for Royston and District.

He drew attention to the following:

- It had been hoped that there would be more to report, but the examination of the Local Plan had been cancelled due to the Covid.19 Pandemic;
- New dates for these hearings had not yet been set and this had an impact on the presentation of the SPDs;
- The Developer Contributions SPD would be presented to Cabinet in July;
- A report would be considered by Cabinet in December regarding CIL (Community Infrastructure Levy);
- Paragraph 4.2 detailed a new requirement that all Section 106 activities will need to be reported to central Government;
- Paragraph 8.4.5 detailed the discretionary Section 106 funds remaining for the Royston and District area.

The following Members asked questions and took part in the debate:

- Councillor Ruth Brown;
- Councillor Tony Hunter.

In response to questions the Development and Conservation Manager advised:

- That if identified projects don't make progress with the timescales then money would have to be refunded;
- NHDC had only ever refunded £7,000 across the whole district;
- He would look at funding with a short time limit and consider asking for variations to allow an extension of time.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the content of the report entitled Annual Update on S106 Obligations be noted.

- (2) That a report shall continue to be presented on an annual basis to Royston and District Committee, which sets out full records of all Section 106 activity for the preceding financial year and which reflects changes in legislation and practice.
- (3) That, other than where a contribution has been negotiated for a specific purpose or project, Ward Members of the area where the Section 106 Obligation or Unilateral Undertaking funding is generated and the Area Committee be consulted prior to funding being allocated away from that area. Members must note that the discretionary funds are rapidly diminishing and will not be replaced under current legislation and practice, for reasons that are set out in this report.

REASONS FOR DECISIONS:

- (1) To ensure that there is a robust system for negotiating and managing Section 106 Obligations and Unilateral Undertakings, that records activity for each financial year and is placed in the public domain.
- (2) To ensure that the process is kept under constant review and Member scrutiny and that the risk associated with this activity is managed in an appropriate manner.

9 GRANTS & COMMUNITY UPDATE

Audio Recording – 16 minutes 38 seconds

The Community Engagement Officer presented the report entitled Grants and Community Update together with the following appendix:

- Appendix 1 - 2020/21 financial year budget sheet.

He advised Members that:

- The grant application for £1300 to North Herts Emotional Support in Schools Service (NESSIE) that was due to be considered by this Committee had been funded from the Covid-19 Community Support Fund;
- That grant funding of £450 had been awarded to Royston Round Table to assist the Royston Vs Coronavirus Support Group via delegated decision;
- That the Committee needed to consider the annual allocation of funds from the Committee towards the Free after Three Parking initiative;
- Several events had been cancelled due to the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic including:
 - May Fayre;
 - Royston In Bloom
 - Royston Kite Festival.
- It should be noted that, due to events being cancelled, community groups had lost the opportunity to raise funds and businesses had also been affected.

The following Members took part in the debate:

- Councillor Ruth Brown;
- Councillor Jean Green;
- Councillor Tony Hunter;
- Councillor Gerald Morris.

The following issues were raised by Members:

- That due to the Covid-19 pandemic lockdown the grant funding allocated to Free after Three should be reduced;
- Projects such as the installation of bike racks and shelters had been delayed due to the Covid-19 pandemic;
- That Councillor Surgeries held via Zoom had been successful and enabled engagement with a different group of people and these should continue even after face to face surgeries can be held.

County Councillors Fiona Hill and Steve Jarvis both supported a reduced amount of grant funding for the Free after Three parking initiative.

Councillor Tony Hunter proposed and Councillor Jean Green seconded that:

The Community Engagement Officer requested to make enquiries as to the amount of reduction that could be expected in respect of the grant made from this Committee, County Councillors and the BID to free after three parking and that the amount paid this year is reduced accordingly.

Following detailed discussion it was proposed that:

That the Councillor Surgeries in Royston be held on a monthly basis via Zoom and six weekly as socially distanced face to face and that the first face to face Surgery be planned for 25 July 2020.

Upon the vote it was:

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the Councillor Surgeries in Royston be held on a monthly basis via Zoom and six weekly as socially distanced face to face and that the first face to face Surgery be planned for 25 July 2020;
- (2) That the award of £450 via Delegated Authority to Royston Round Table to assist the Royston Vs Coronavirus Support Group be noted;
- (3) That the Community Engagement Officer be requested to make enquiries as to the amount of reduction that could be expected in respect of the grant made from this Committee, County Councillors and the BID to free after three parking and that the amount paid this year is reduced accordingly;
- (4) That the Councillor Surgeries in Royston be held on a monthly basis via Zoom and six weekly as socially distanced face to face and that the first face to face Surgery be planned for 25 July 2020;
- (5) That the actions taken by the Community Engagement Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Royston be endorsed.

REASON FOR DECISIONS: To ensure the Committee is kept informed of the work of the Community Engagement Officer.

NB: County Councillor Steve Jarvis left the meeting at 20.00.

10 HIGHWAYS ISSUES

Audio Recording – 54 minutes 38 seconds

County Councillor Fiona Hill gave the Committee a verbal update on highways issues as follows:

- There had been a lot of work undertaken regarding social distancing in the High Street;
- The Greater Cambridge Partnership were supporting the Melbourn Greenway including a bridge over the A505;
- The A10 at Market Hill had been resurfaced;
- Resurfacing at Orchard Road had been completed;
- The following resurfacing of footpaths was planned:
 - Victoria Crescent;
 - The Warren;
 - Newmarket Road;
 - Brampton Road.
- The following resurfacing of roads was planned:
 - Dacre Green;
 - Gas Lane, Barway.
- There were some safety schemes planned including:
 - Feasibility traffic study in Burns Road;
 - Speed and volume surveys for Melbourn Road and Newmarket Road.
- Speed Indicator Devices were planned for
 - the A10 at Reed;
 - Nuthampstead;
- Drainage Works were planned in Kneesworth Street, Dog Kennel Lane and Garden Walk;
- Resurfacing works were planned for Kneesworth Street and Old North Road.

The following Members asked questions and took part in the debate and asked questions:

- Councillor Ruth Brown;
- Councillor Tony Hunter.

In response to questions County Councillor Fiona Hill advised:

- That the Greater Cambridge Partnership had endorsed the Melbourn Greenway. There were lots of funding streams could apply for and use of S106 funding.

11 WARD MATTERS AND OUTSIDE ORGANISATIONS - MEMBERS' REPORTS

Audio Recording – 1 hour 3 minute 1 seconds

The following matters were discussed:

Citizens Advice North Herts

Councillor Ruth Brown advised:

- They had responded quickly to the Covid-19 pandemic and moved services online;
- They were now considering recovery and looking at what went well during the lockdown and could be retained.
- They had appointed a new Trustee with the specific remit of equality, diversity and inclusion;

- NHDC were still funding a Courts officer;
- They were expecting a sharp increase in workload following the pandemic.

Royston and District Community Transport

Councillor Tony Hunter advised:

- They had been active throughout the pandemic;
- They had applied for funding from the Covid-19 support fund;

Coombes Community Centre Play Group

Councillor Jean Green advised:

- The Coombs Community Play Group had now closed due the Coronavirus;
- This meant that Coombes Community Centre would loose income from the hire of that room.

The meeting closed at 8.41 pm

Chair