

**North Herts Council**  
**ROYSTON & VILLAGES COMMUNITY FORUM**

**Meeting held at Royston Town Hall, Melbourn Street, Royston, SG8 7DA**  
**On Wednesday, 24 September 2025 at 7.30pm**

**Actions from this meeting:**

**DF** to provide further information on the cycle path route on Newman Avenue and A505 after consulting with the transport team.

**NOTES**

**Present:** Councillor Tim Johnson (TJ) (Chair), Councillor Bryony May (BM) (Vice-Chair), Councillor Matt Barnes (MB), Councillor Ruth Brown (RB), Councillor Sarah Lucas (SL),

**In Attendance:** Becca Edwards (BE) (Community Partnerships Officer), Ian Keith (IK) (Vistry), David Fletcher (DF) (Ceres Property), Cllr Daniel Allen (DA) (Leader of the Council)

**Also present:** At the commencement of the meeting there were 23 members of the public.

Meeting started at **7.30pm**

**1. Apologies for absence**

Councillor Ruth Clifton (RC), Councillor Martin Prescott (MP), Councillor Cathy Brownjohn (CB)

**2. Chair's Announcements**

Cllr Johnson welcomed everyone in attendance.

**3. Public Participation – Grant Applications**

Received presentations in support of grant applications by the following:

**Councillor Peter Baker (PB) on behalf of Barkway Parish Council.**

Members and members of the public enquired and received satisfactory answers about:

- If the project would go ahead if they didn't receive this grant funding.
- Where visitors to the venue/events come from.
- If the Local History Group are in contact / work with other museums.
- Link ups with other events.
- Visitor numbers
- Finances
- Groups that use the venue
- Rent and insurance

Proposer Cllr Tim Johnson  
Seconder Cllr Ruth Brown

***Majority vote in favour of recommending Barkway Parish Council receive £1,350 towards display units for the Reading Room.***

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**Rebecca Wild (RW) and Georgina Northern (GN) on behalf of Barley Community Garden.**

Members and members of the public enquired and received satisfactory answers about:

- Offer to other schools
- How the group is incorporated
- Access to the venue
- Volunteering

Proposer Cllr Ruth Brown  
Seconder Cllr Matt Barnes

***Unanimous vote in favour of recommending Barley Community Garden receive £1,043 towards veg trugs and gardening equipment.***

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**Gary Sutcliffe (GS) on behalf of Resolve.**

**RB** spoke in favour of the work Resolve do.

Members and members of the public enquired and received satisfactory answers about:

- Other grants applied for from North Herts Council
- Activities in the local area
- Core funding
- Cost of the service to attendees
- Referrals

**DA** spoke in favour of the organisation.

Proposer Cllr Ruth Brown  
Seconder Cllr Sarah Lucas

***Unanimous vote in favour of recommending Resolve receive £1,000 towards key worker staff members.***

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#### **4. Presentation – Burloes Development**

**David Fletcher (DF)** presented.

##### **Site Overview**

- Located on the east side of Royston (map slightly outdated).
- North of the site: recreation ground.
- Allocated in the adopted local plan.

##### **Planning History**

- Scheme submitted for 325 dwellings.
- Phase 1: Full application for 105 houses (ready to begin if granted).
- Remaining dwellings submitted in outline form.

##### **Access & Layout**

- Main access via Newmarket Road.
- Emergency access proposed on the east side of Newmarket Road.
- Phase 1 includes:
  - Pedestrian link to Aintree Road via Bury Plantation.
  - Development set back 6–12m from trees.
  - Bus turning area included.

##### **Transport & Connectivity**

- Proposed shared cycleway (blue) with toucan crossing over Newmarket Road.
- Discussions with Highway Authority to reduce vehicle speeds and extend speed limit zone.
- Additional cycleway improvements (orange) to connect Newman Avenue to Icknield Walk.
- Plans to widen pavements (not yet submitted).

##### **Environmental & Recreational Features**

- Circular route proposed to the south of the site.
- Existing informal path from Newmarket Road to be secured in perpetuity to offset impact on Therfield Heath (agreed with Natural England).

##### **Timeline & S106 Contributions**

- Targeting Planning Committee in November.
- Anticipated start: February.
- First occupation: Spring 2027.
- S106 contributions include:
  - Primary and secondary education
  - Highways improvements (Newmarket Road)
  - Sport England initiatives
  - NHS support
  - Therfield Heath mitigation
  - North Herts standard contributions
  - Estimated value: £9m (25% affordable housing)

##### **Q&A Discussion**

**TJ** Will the permissive path be formalised?

**DF** Still working out the details. Likely to remain informal for dog walking - not tarmacked. May include dog bins and benches.

**TJ** Right turn onto A505 only allows two cars. Has the impact of the development been considered?

**DF** Detailed consultation has been done. Highways are not requiring changes to that junction.

**MB** Highways report from last month says detail is missing. Is there a more detailed response?

**DF** Our expert provided updated details today, but they haven't been submitted yet.

**MB** Some documents tonight haven't been published?

**DF** Correct. We wanted to bring the most up-to-date information.

**MB** What will happen regarding the footpath, taking into account other planning applications.

**DF** We can't prejudice future planning applications. Legal agreement will be in place. Any future applications must work around it.

**MB** Is it a Right of Way?

**DF** Not formally, but the permissive path will be secured for the next 80 years as part of the Section 106. Secured with Natural England.

**MB** Timeline for infrastructure changes?

**DF** Finalising S106. Highway infrastructure - especially site access - is critical.

**RB** Pedestrian access from Newmarket to Aintree? Concerned about children walking to school.

**DF** Priority is cycleway improvements.

**RB** More pedestrian links would help avoid long detours.

**DF** There's a lot of vegetation and trees - balancing access and preservation is difficult. The link proposed provides a link but without resulting in substantial tree removal.

**MB** S106 and affordable housing?

**DF** Previous 2020 application indexed to £7.2m. Current S106 over £9m, with 25% affordable housing. Already had to underground cables. Balancing costs.

S106 includes:

- Education (primary/secondary)
- Highways (Newmarket Road improvements)
- Sport England
- NHS
- Therfield Heath mitigation
- North Herts standard contributions

**MOP** 5-year waiting list for allotments. Any provision?

**DF** No. Not discussed and not in site policy.

**MOP** Other sites have them - we'd expect the same.

**DF** Will take that feedback.

**MOP2** No right turn from A505 onto Newmarket Road. Forces traffic through congested town centre. Can a right turn be added?

**DF** Will consult transport consultant.

**MOP3** Concern about fast traffic from A505. Request for more in-depth traffic analysis.

**DF** Road narrowing planned near the two cottages.

**MOP3** Will construction trucks come via A505 or through town?

**DF** Emergency access intended.

**IK** Construction access via existing junction. Some junction works and curb formalisation planned.

**MOP3** At the top of Newmarket Road?

**IK** Yes.

**DA:** Transport plans will be reviewed at Planning Committee. Weight limits are only suggested.

**MOP4** What's the point of a suggested weight limit?

**SJ** It dates back to the bypass construction to deter trucks.

**MOP5** People do U-turns on A505. Worth noting. Will both phases go through if approved?

**DF** Yes, both phases proceed if approved.

**MOP5** Will Phase 2 be left as wasteland?

**DF** No. Prefer to continue the build.

**MOP6** Has Natural England assessed the plans? What funding ensures 80-year maintenance?

**DF** Natural England is satisfied. S106 obligations will ensure long-term maintenance.

**MOP7** Larger vehicles struggle in Royston. Suggest emergency access becomes secondary access.

**DF** Highway Authority prefers single access due to lower speeds on at the main access from Newmarket Road.

**MOP8** Is the cycle route practical for average cyclists?

**DF** Yes, designed for regular users.

**MOP8** Cottages will be surrounded - how will they be protected?

**DF** They're well set back. Views will change.

**MOP9** Will the cycle route cut around the car park?

**DF** Master plan shows red line immediately north.

**MOP9** Confusion by developers between Newman Avenue and Newmarket Road. Will cycle path go through tree line or around car park?

**DF** Will take that away for review.

**MOP10** Newmarket Road is a racetrack. Toucan crossing won't help. Blind rises are dangerous. Royston Town roundabout already congested needs addressing.

**DA** Planning must follow legal advice. Highways often say it's safe, and we must accept that. Developers can appeal and bypass us, which risks losing S106 contributions.

**MOP10** National press has reported deaths due to reckless drivers. Planning must account for that.

**MOP8** You must ensure traffic survey includes peak times and M11 closure scenarios.

**DF** Surveys follow standard traffic conditions as required.

**MB:** Car park is called Newmarket Road - Google Maps mislabels it. Important for cycle path planning.

**DF** Everyone's called it Newman Avenue. Appreciate the local insight.

TJ Meridian Gate had to install a roundabout. Similar solution here could help.  
DF Will consider that.

## 5. Presentation – Local Government Reorganisation (LGR)

DA presented. Please see separate presentation.

### Q&A Discussion

**MOP8** We currently have a three-tier system – Government, County Council (CC), and District Council (DC). Are you suggesting we move to a three-tier system again?

**DA** With waste services, each district currently has its own team. Under a unitary system, you'd have one waste team per unitary. Instead of having both county and district councillors - where it's often unclear who answers which questions - you'd streamline that.

**MOP8** So it's about bringing departments together?

**DA** Yes and no. There will be fewer management teams running things.

**SJ** The key point is that we can either set out how we think it should happen, or let Government decide. It's going to happen regardless of whether we support it.

**MOP8** I'm trying to understand how this will affect us.

**MOP** Smaller unitary councils will have fewer staff. Does that reduce their capacity to apply for central grants? Has that been considered?

**DA** This has been considered. If you want to save money, you have fewer unitaries. If you want to be closer to the people, you have more.

**SJ** We've agreed to talk with other leaders about the options. Do we want something cheap and remote, or more costly and more local? Where on that scale should it sit?

**DA** It will go to central Government with recommendations from each council. Each cabinet will submit its recommendation as an Executive Decision. A decision will be made at Full Council, then passed to Cabinet.

**SJ** County Council is doing the same.

**MOP7** Will a proper economic analysis be published? Plans might look efficient, but they often don't work out that way. And they might not reflect what local people want.

**DA** We're waiting for the full analysis. We have some figures, but not all. Once they're sent to Government, we'll publish them (*SJ later clarified this*). Also, changes are coming - like the [fair funding formula](#), which will change how council tax is distributed.

**SJ** Figures broadly show that two unitaries are cheaper than three, and three cheaper than four - but how that looks in practice is still unclear.

**DA** Finance directors from each district are working together on this.

**MOP8** So the figures will be published when it goes to Government?

**SJ** The figures will be published before they're sent to Government.

**MOP8** How will you know what we think?

**SJ** Please fill in and send your responses. However, we can't give you the figures before receiving your feedback.

**DA** The public will also be able to speak to Government once the districts' recommendations have been submitted.

**MOP6** This seems to have come out of the blue. I don't recall it being in any manifesto. We only get a month or so to comment. The Government will make the decision - we don't get a say. If it ain't broke, don't fix it?

**DA** I didn't say that. However, the system is broken. There's not much time, and it's not ideal. But I'm trying to make sure people are heard as much as possible.

**SL** Is this just an alternative to properly funding local government?

**DA** We live in hope that local funding will change. But we'll never have the right amount of money. Adult social care costs are terrifying - but necessary.

**MOP** The four-unitary option splits Royston in half. Why?

**DA** It doesn't split Royston in half. All of Royston goes across.

**DA/SJ:** Please scan the QR code to submit your feedback.

## 6. Royston Town Council

**Deputy Mayor Elizabeth Freeman** presented.

It's been a very busy period. Funding has been approved for the Christmas lights switch-on event. We're also working on increasing the use of the Town Hall and exploring green initiatives for both the Town Hall and the Market Hill rooms. Additionally, we have new staff joining the team. The two plantations have been surveyed, with plans underway to make them safer.

## 7. Hertfordshire County Council

**Leader of Hertfordshire County Council Steve Jarvis** presented.

Work being done on filling pot holes. SEND is a national problem, Herts not done as well as they should have done – 100s of people came together to see how we could do better and we are working towards this.

## 8. Open Discussion

**DA** What are County Council going to do about getting the flags down?

**SJ** They will be taken down. Removal has already started. However, when it began, staff were threatened. The people responsible for removing them also have other duties.

As for dealing with those who put the flags up - it's complicated. It's not a criminal offence, but it is an offence under the Highways Act. It's unlikely the County Council will prosecute anyone. Many people put things on lampposts, and if we started prosecuting, it would open up a much wider issue.

**MOP8** If a member of the public takes a flag down themselves, would they be prosecuted?

**SJ** No.

**TJ** Shared information about relevant offences. Suggested that a nationwide stance should be taken on this.

**RB** Just to add - there was a GoFundMe page in Royston related to this. Several people reported it, and it has since been taken down due to the funds being raised for an activity that would constitute an offence.

## 9. Future Forums

Suggestions included

- Police
- Updates on previous issues

Closed 21:45

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**Responses received from David Fletcher, Ceres Property, in response to questions raised at the meeting:**

>The possibility of a right turn on the A505

**DF** We have spoken to our transport consultants and they have provided the following response:

- *Capacity testing at this junction for future year scenarios that include the cumulative impact of this development, and other proposed developments has demonstrated that the junction operates within capacity.*
- *Trip distribution analysis has demonstrated that only a small proportion of trips generated by the development in the peak hours is reliant on making the right turn from Newmarket Road to the A505 (19%).*
- *As part of both the previously approved development and this current proposal, HCC have not raised any particular concerns with us regarding this junction as part of their consultation response.*

>The proposed route of the cycle path

**DF** To confirm the proposed route of the cycle path is to connect to Newmarket Road cul de sac (labelled Newman Avenue on Google) to the north of the existing trees. The parking area the local resident referred to is to the south of Newmarket Road. In accordance with the plans shown we are looking to connect directly onto Newmarket Road and therefore the existing car park area would not be impacted.