

7 November 2006

Our Ref: SRuralCtte/November 2006
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To: The Members of the Southern Rural Committee of North Hertfordshire District Council

(Councillors: D.J. Barnard (Chairman), Tom Brindley (Vice-Chairman), Alan Bardett, John Bishop, Tricia Gibbs, J. Gray, Sal Jarvis, David Miller and Mrs C.P.A. Strong)

You are invited to attend a meeting of the

SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE

to be held at

**COMMITTEE ROOM 1, COUNCIL OFFICES,
GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY**

on

THURSDAY 16 NOVEMBER 2006

at

7.30 p.m.

Yours sincerely,



David Miley
Democratic Services Manager

AGENDA
PART I

ITEM	PAGE
	-
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	-
2. MINUTES To take as read and approve as a true record the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 5 October 2006.	-
3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS Members should notify the Chairman of other business which they wish to be discussed by the Committee at the end of the business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency. The Chairman will decide whether the item(s) raised will be considered.	-
4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive from Members of the Committee any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda. Members should either declare a prejudicial or personal interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared. Members declaring a prejudicial interest should leave the room and not seek to influence the decision during that particular item of interest.	-
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions, comments and questions from members of the public. Public participation requests received within the agreed time will be notified to Members as soon as practicable.	-
6. SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING – SAVINGS AND GROWTH 2007/08 TO 2011/12 REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES <i>To seek the Committee's view on the provisional savings and growth items as part of the consultation process on Service and Financial Planning for 2007/08 onwards.</i>	1
7. SOUTHERN RURAL CHAMPION NEWS REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES <i>A summary of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for the Southern Rural area since the meeting of the Committee held on 5 October 2006 and events taking place in forthcoming months.</i>	55

- 8. SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT & AREA VISIONING BUDGETS 2006/2007** 57
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES
To advise the Southern Rural Committee of the current expenditure and balances within the delegated budgets.
Grant Applications - None
- 9. COVERT CAMERAS & FURTHER ANTI FLY-TIPPING ENFORCEMENT MEASURES FOR FUNDING FROM CAPITAL PLANT & EQUIPMENT VISIONING FUNDS** 61
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES
- 10. PLANNING APPLICATIONS** 65
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

Planning applications for determination by the Committee:
1. Land at and to North-East of Gosmore End House, Hitchin Road, Gosmore.
 2. 144 London Road, Knebworth
- 11. PLANNING APPEALS** 77
ORAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL
An update for the Committee on any Planning Appeals that have been lodged or determined since the meeting of the Committee held on 5 October 2006.

Future meetings of the Southern Rural Committee will be held on:

21 December 2006
1 February 2007
15 March 2007
26 April 2007

**TITLE OF REPORT: SERVICE & FINANCIAL PLANNING – SAVINGS & GROWTH
2007/2008 TO 2011/2012**

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCIAL AND REGULATORY SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To present to Committee the list of savings and growth items submitted by officers for 2007/2008 to 2011/2012 that were presented to Cabinet on 17 October 2006 and then forwarded for consultation to Council Members at the Budget Workshops held on 18 and 19 October 2006.
- 1.2 To seek the Committee's views on the provisional savings and growth items as part of the consultation process on Service and Financial Planning for 2007/2008 onwards.

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 1 July 2006.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's Financial Strategy was presented to Cabinet on 25 July 2006 and the accompanying report outlined the following:
 - the financial background to the service and financial planning process for the period 2007 to 2012
 - the known funding pressures which the Council will face in that period and the Council's medium term financial forecast
 - the strategy for dealing with any funding gap.
- 3.2 In identifying the likely Council Tax requirement, the report focussed on the pressures on expenditure and assumed a neutral position with regard to income. The Strategy was based on the following assumptions:
 - Year on year spend is adjusted to take account of cyclical variations in expenditure.
 - Investment income falls by £250k per annum to take account of the reducing balance of capital receipts.
 - Assumed average base rate of 4.5% for 2007/2008 and subsequent years.
 - Any approved one-off growth or carry-forward budgets for 2006/2007 have been removed from the base figures in subsequent years.
 - Government support will not increase in real cash terms year on year, other than that contained within the 2006/2007 to 2007/2008 settlement.
 - Contract inflation at an average of 3% and pay inflation at 2.5% for 2007/2008.
 - Pay increments due in 2007/2008.
 - General inflation of 2.5% on expenditure and fees and charges income.

- Use of the HRA earmarked reserve will happen on a phased basis to prevent erratic movements in Council Tax increase.
- The Council tax base figure will rise by 1% per annum.
- The minimum General Fund balance should be 5% of net expenditure plus an allowance for identified risks.
- Allowance for Statutory Growth of £500k per annum.
- Any growth in Area Committee budgets to reflect additional responsibilities will be offset by reductions in Directorate budgets.

3.3 The Financial Strategy is an integral part of the Service & Financial Planning process, providing the financial analysis to complement the objectives in the Corporate Plan.

3.4 The medium term Financial Strategy recommended a continuation of a phased use of balances over this and the next three years to bring the amount held in balances and reserves back to the 5% of net General Fund expenditure plus an allowance of £400k for known risks.

3.5 Within the Financial Strategy report the savings target required for 2007/2008 that maintained the council tax increase and council reserves within the parameters set in the Financial Strategy, outlined in paragraph 3.2 above, was £1.267million.

3.6 At its meeting on 17 October 2006, Cabinet received an update on the Council's financial position and officer's proposals on savings and growth for 2007/2008 and onwards. The issues outlined in that report are repeated in section 4 below. Following discussion on the report Cabinet resolved the following:"

(1) That the comments and potential changes to the lists of savings and growth items, discussed, be noted (see Appendix 5), and the views of all Members at the Member workshops and the views of Scrutiny, PARC, Area Committees, Local Strategic Partnership and Business Ratepayers be sought during October and November;

(2) That, from 2008/09 onwards, the allowance for growth to be included in the annual savings target be capped at £250,000 per annum;

(3) That those items for which the savings or growth were listed as commencing in financial years 2008/09 onwards should be re-evaluated afresh each year as part of the savings and growth process."

4. ISSUES

4.1 Since the meeting in July, work on refining the base budget figures in the light of known changes has been progressing and the following table presents the position at September 2006. This base figure includes the items agreed as on-going growth when setting the current year's budget and known changes following the closure of 2005/2006 accounts and the 1st quarter budget monitoring review. Following the 2nd quarter budget monitoring review any further changes to the anticipated 2006/2007-outturn position will be reported at the December Cabinet meeting when the draft budget recommendations will be made.

4.2 The parameters contained with the budget strategy have now been reviewed and the following changes have been made:

- Assumed average base rate of 5% for April to June 2007 and 4.75% thereafter for the remainder of the financial year and subsequent years.
- A reassessment of the amount of investment interest projected for 2007/2008 onwards, based on lower cash balances to invest. The investment interest projected for 2007/08 is anticipated to be lower by £197k.
- Contract inflation at an average of 3.05%, (excluding gas and electricity charges which are estimated to rise by 25% and 20% respectively), the strategy just referred to 3.0%.
- General inflation of 5% fees and charges income.
- A reduction in the allowance of growth from £500k per year to £250k per year.

Table 1 - Revised Budget Forecast 2006/2007 onwards

Revised Budget Forecast	2006/07	2007/08	2008/09	2009/10	2010/11	2011/12
2006/2007 Onwards	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000	£,000
District Net Expenditure	16,773	17,128	16,923	17,255	17,692	18,227
Add/Less:						
Inflation	954	1,095	1,287	1,469	1,469	1,469
Savings target	-1,430	-1,003	-1,200	-1,200	-1,200	-1,342
Growth Allowance	596	258	250	250	250	250
Adjusted Net Expenditure	16 893	17,478	17,260	17,774	18,211	18,604
Less:						
Government Support	-7,334	-7,559	-7,559	-7,559	-7,559	-7,559
Use of Balances	-1,405	-1,313	-617	-628	-533	-366
District Precept	8,154	8,606	9,084	9,587	10,119	10,679
Average Band D Council Tax	£170.05	£177.70	£185.70	£194.05	£202.78	£211.90
Percentage Increase	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%	4.50%

4.3 Members will notice that the savings target for 2007/2008 is £1.003 million. This is lower than the 2007/2008 original savings target of £1.267million, but £233k higher than all the saving options of £770.2k identified in Appendices 1 & 2. The savings target has been reduced because the effect of the savings options in future years is in excess of £1million. The growth allowance for 2008/2009 onwards has been reduced to £250k. The main reason is the high level of inflation each year that is mainly staff based an average of £900K per annum rising to over £1 million in 2009/2010.

4.4 Included in this staff inflation is the higher employer pension contribution that is required to reduce the estimated pension fund deficit. The contribution is on a five year stepped basis starting at £197K in 2007/2008 and rising to £384K in 2009/2010 onwards, a total increased contribution of £1.546 million over the five years. The application of reserves over the five-year period to ameliorate the impact of the annual budget rises is higher in the middle years to match these stepped increases.

- 4.5 Directorates have been asked to put forward growth items which will assist in meeting the vision to make North Hertfordshire a vibrant place to live, work and prosper by achieving its strategic objectives: -
- Promoting sustainable development of the district to ensure we deliver adequate affordable housing, protect the environment and conserve the heritage of our historic settlements.
 - Encouraging responsible citizenship and creating safe communities with less crime and less fear of crime.
 - Promoting first class leisure and cultural facilities to contribute to healthy living for all of our citizens.
 - Targeting resources at areas of disadvantage in the district to reduce social exclusion and improve the quality of life for everyone.
 - Creating opportunity for all by promoting sustainable local economic development.
 - Ensuring that we listen to our citizens and deliver responsive, high quality, value for money, customer focussed services.

Table 2 shows the growth items for 2007/2008 analysed over the strategic objectives, which are detailed in Appendix 3 and 4.

Table 2 - Growth items analysed over Strategic Objectives

Strategic Objectives	Revenue £'000	Capital £'000
Sustainable Communities	21.50	0
Safer Communities	53.62	0
Prosperous Communities	35.00	0
Satisfied Communities	33.78	0
Healthier Communities*	44.90	237.00
Equal Communities	0	0
	<u>188.80</u>	<u>237.00</u>
Add:		
IT initiatives subject to business case	69.00	164.65
Total Strategic Growth identified	<u>257.80</u>	<u>401.65</u>

* Growth bid RG 17 has been excluded from the growth above, as this item requires approval only if SG22 is not approved

- 4.6 In preparing growth options, officers have sought to ensure that these objectives are driving the budget process. Both growth and savings options have been scored as the Service and Financial Planning Process provides a cyclical framework by which the Council determines its priorities and aligns both resources and finances to achieve these, in line with our short, medium and long term commitments determined in the Corporate Plan. To assist in the prioritisation process a scoring system was developed for 2006/2007.
- 4.7 The Council's Capital Strategy requires that projects submitted by services be classified against ten key factors, as outlined in the attached table. The scoring has been applied to all considerations of both growth and savings in order to determine the risk and effect of growth, reduction or complete removal of a service.

	Revenue	Capital	Points Score
1	Strategic/Corporate objectives*	Strategic/Corporate objectives*	4
2	Statutory pressures	Statutory pressures	4
3	Health & Safety	Health & Safety	5
4	Political Direction	Political Direction	4
5	Contractually inescapable	Contractually inescapable	5
6	Risk Management	Adverse impact on service	4
7	Consultation/Opinion Poll survey*	Consultation/Opinion Poll survey	2
8	Condition survey	Condition survey	1
9	Best Value FSR & Service review	Best Value FSR & Service review	3
10	Invest to save	Invest to save	3

*Strategic/corporate objectives include the priorities identified in the North Hertfordshire District Council Corporate Plan in response to items raised via earlier work on Area Visioning and the approved North Herts Community Strategy.

The Service & Financial Planning Group has recommended an increase in the score for Consultation/Opinion Poll survey from one to two points.

- 4.8 In applying this methodology, critical analysis has taken place to ensure that where reference is made to a strategic objective that is recorded, but the project itself has only received a strategic/corporate objective score of four points where there is specific reference within the Corporate Plan. This was considered to provide a more robust determination of priority.
- 4.9 Similarly, if an objective appears in the Corporate Plan it was taken to reflect prior political direction and hence scored only the once, whereas projects and services lying outside the Plan but which have clear political interest have received four points in recognition. There will also need to be additional work following the completion of the Service & Financial Planning process to integrate any objectives supported for growth/savings into the next edition of the Corporate Plan.
- 4.10 Savings were scored in an identical manner, taking account of the negative impact of removal from the Corporate Plan, adverse effect on service and evidence of public opinion in the form of an existing survey. This will assist in the establishment of ranking in terms of overall impact as decisions are taken.
- 4.11 Part of the Service and Financial Planning process involves the Challenge Board, comprising the Chief Executive, the two Strategic Directors and the Accountancy Manager scrutinising the Council's budgets for potential areas of saving and raising questions with the budget holders. At the same time, Heads of Service are required to put forward their suggestions for potential savings and growth to the Challenge Board.
- 4.12 Challenge Board has continued the work commenced last year in looking at subsidised services and those functions which are County Services subsidised by this authority.
- 4.13 Budget scrutiny savings linked to review of income and expenditure budgets which varied from the original budget and arising from more efficient ways of delivering services have produced savings of £240.31k.
- 4.14 The Financial Strategy provided a forecast of the position over the next five years and this has been updated and shown in paragraph 4.2, Table 1. The forecast is based on latest information including the projected balances position at the end of 2006/2007.

- 4.15 At this stage, the model does not take into account any future year savings as a result of IT investment although this will be built in as soon as figures are available and Members will note that business cases must be available by December in advance of the draft budget setting meeting.
- 4.16 Appendix 1 lists the Savings options totalling £565k and Appendix 2 lists the income increase options totalling £135k giving a total savings options of £770k.
- 4.17 Members will recall that an allowance of £500k for growth is included in the £1.267m savings target. Revenue growth proposals totalling £285.8k are included at Appendix 3.
- 4.18 Appendix 4 lists the capital proposals for 2007/2008 and onwards that are additional to the current capital programme. Following the consultation period the impact of any changes to the capital programme will be reported to Cabinet in January 2007.
- 4.19 The net effect of the revised budget strategy and the savings and growth proposals is a sum of £233k still to be found, if we are to achieve a balanced budget based on an assumed 4.5% Council Tax increase. Members will recall that the 4.5% was based on the inflation rate plus a maximum of 2 percentage points. Inflation at the end of August was 3.4 %. Indications are that capping will again be applied to any increases over 5%.
- 4.20 The figures produced are based on the best available information and may be subject to further change before the final budget is set in February 2007. There are, for instance, a number of items which are still subject to negotiation such as Concessionary Fares and Meals on Wheels which on a worst case scenario could add a further £250k as a minimum to the savings still to be found.
- 4.21 Challenge Board will continue to work to find ways of bridging the gap which currently stands at £233k.

Outcomes from Budget Workshops

- 4.22 Members have had the opportunity to raise any queries on the suggestions in informal meetings held on 18 and 19 October 2006 and to express a view on the items contained in the lists. Members' comments will help to inform Cabinet's decision on which items to maintain in the list for further consideration.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no specific legal implications arising from this report. Members are reminded of the duty to set a balanced budget.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The financial implications arising from this report are outlined in the main body of the report.
- 6.2 Given the pressures identified in this report, in order to balance the budget and achieve a Council Tax figure in accordance with the agreed strategy, it will be necessary to find an acceptable balance between reducing expenditure, increasing income from fees and charges, using balances and increasing the Council Tax. The final decision on the District Council Tax level for 2007/2008 will be made at Council on 8 February 2007.
- 6.3 Risks relating to the achievement of savings targets and growth approvals are managed by a combination of regular monitoring reports and maintenance of adequate revenue reserves. An update on 2006/2007 savings options will be given at the November Cabinet as part of the 2nd quarter monitoring report.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITY IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 Human resource and equality implications that may arise from proposed savings and growth options are outlined in the 'anticipated impact' column of the savings and growth forms. Human resources are currently involved in consultation with the 2 staff directly affected by the savings options detailed in Appendix 1 and there may be some redundancy costs in 2006/2007.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 8.1 As part of the normal Service & Financial Planning process, consultation on the growth and savings will be carried out during October and November. As in previous years, Member workshops were held on 18 and 19 October 2006. This is in addition to seeking the views of Area Committees, PARC, Scrutiny, the Local Strategic Partnership and business ratepayers.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the Committee gives its views on any changes to the lists provided and the prioritisation of revenue growth items in Appendix 3.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure that all Members are consulted on the proposed savings and growth bids and afforded the opportunity to comment before Cabinet sets the draft budget on 30 December 2006.
- 10.2 To ensure that the Council is able to adjust its base expenditure downwards to narrow the gap between our 2007/2008 District Requirement figure, as adjusted for anticipated capping limits, and our service spending requirements

11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

11.1 Not applicable.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Appendix 1 – Savings – Service options

12.2 Appendix 2 – Savings – Income increase options

12.3 Appendix 3 – Growth – Revenue options

12.4 Appendix 4 – Growth – Capital options

12.5 Appendix 5 – Cabinet comments on savings proposals, 17 October 2006

13. Contact Officers

13.1 Norma Atlay (Strategic Director Financial and Regulatory Services)
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14. Background Papers

14.1 Budget Working Papers 2007/2008

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Link to Corporate Plan - Sustainable/Safer/Healthier/Equal/Prosperous/Listening	Budget 2006/7	Actual 2005/06	Saving in 2007/08	Saving in 2008/09	Saving in 2009/10	Saving in 2010/11	Saving in 2011/12	Ongoing (Y/N) or No of further years available
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Key: Scoring in the 'Link to Corporate Plan' column is against 10 Key factors - Factors that count are listed and the total score given, a - score shows that the savings item meets the key factors, a + score shows that they do not. (maximum savings score - 13)

BUDGET SCRUTINY SAVINGS				£ 170,110	£ 141,860	£ 141,860	£ 141,860	£ 141,860
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REVENUE SAVINGS -SALARY EXPENDITURE RELATED										
SG1	Removal of health development officer post (Post currently on fixed term to March 2007 and part funded by PCT £12.4k).	Healthier - Strategic Objectives -4, Service review -3 = -7	£22,130	£19,033	£22,130	£22,130	£22,130	£22,130	£22,130	Y
SG2	Remove IT Help Desk Customer Care Officer Post (vacant post)	Satisfied - Strategic Objective -4, Service review -3 = -7	£ 21,840	£ -	£21,840	£21,840	£0	£0	£0	N
SG3	With the implementation of the new Human Resources (HR) payroll system, 0.5 FTE post can be deleted from the establishment. Further savings may be possible in future years if further efficiencies are realised. (vacant post).	Satisfied - Strategic Objective -4, Service review -3 = -7	£62,220	£58,820	£3,990	£10,550	£10,550	£10,550	£10,550	Y
SG4	Delete Land & Property Officer (Currently filled by temporary staff on fixed contract which finish before 31st March - no redundancy costs)	Satisfied - Strategic Objective -4, Service review -3 = -7	£21,960	£21,960	£21,960	£21,960	£21,960	£21,960	£21,960	Y

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Statutory Function (Y/N)	Anticipated Impact of Proposal (on Public/ Customers/ Staff/ Members/ Reputation etc)
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REVENUE SAVINGS -SALARY EXPENDITURE RELATED

SG1	Removal of health development officer post (Post currently on fixed term to March 2007 and part funded by PCT £12.4k).	N	Post currently on fixed term to March 2007 and part funded by PCT £12.4k. The PCT funding will not continue post March 2007. The authority has a requirement to consider the well being of all its residents and to fulfil partnership role with health partners, but this could be fulfilled in a reduced manner by integration with scrutiny officer function
SG2	Remove IT Help Desk Customer Care Officer Post (vacant post)	N	Budget provision was made in October 2005 for a new help desk function post within the IT service structure . The post was for a three year fixed term and budget provision was made until 2008/09. It has now become clear that following reorganisation of the existing service, the new post is not required and the full time grade 4 vacant post should be removed.
SG3	With the implementation of the new Human Resources (HR) payroll system, 0.5 FTE post can be deleted from the establishment. Further savings may be possible in future years if further efficiencies are realised. (vacant post).	N	New payroll system due to be in place for 01-04-07. System selection is currently taking place. Further salary savings may be realised in years 2 & 3 when the new system is embedded and on-going staffing requirements will be subject to a full assessment once the new system is operational. This is part of the implementation of the HR Fundamental Service Review (FSR).
SG4	Delete Land & Property Officer (Currently filled by temporary staff on fixed contract which finish before 31st March - no redundancy costs)	N	Remove post following Accolaid project which has improved efficiency regarding property searches.

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Link to Corporate Plan - Sustainable/Safer/Healthier/Equal/Prosperous/Listening	Budget 2006/7	Actual 2005/06	Saving in 2007/08	Saving in 2008/09	Saving in 2009/10	Saving in 2010/11	Saving in 2011/12	Ongoing (Y/N) or No of further years available
<p>Key: Scoring in the 'Link to Corporate Plan' column is against 10 Key factors - Factors that count are listed and the total score given, a - score shows that the savings item meets the key factors, a + score shows that they do not. (maximum savings score - 13)</p>										
SG5	Delete Decriminalisation Parking Attendant Post from establishment, (vacant post)	Safer - Strategic Objectives - 4, Service review -3 = -7	£ 414,210	£ 396,105	£24,760	£24,760	£24,760	£24,760	£24,760	Y
SG6	Deletion of Accountancy Assistant post (Currently Vacant -grade 6) £25.7k, with transfer of part of the cost to cover the appointment of a Shared Procurement Officer on a 50% basis with East Herts D.C., (net cost to Council £19k.) Leaving saving of £6,700.	Satisfied - Strategic Objective -4, Service review -3 = -7			£6,700	£6,700	£6,700	£6,700	£6,700	Y
SG7	Restructure of caretaking service as part of current office improvements. Partial saving in 2006/07 - full saving in 2007/08 of £24k. (Staff consultation underway, saving means a reduction in the Caretakers employed hours.)	Satisfied - Strategic Objective -4, Service review -3 = -7			£24,000	£24,000	£24,000	£24,000	£24,000	Y

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Statutory Function (Y/N)	Anticipated Impact of Proposal (on Public/ Customers/ Staff/ Members/ Reputation etc)
SG5	Delete Decriminalisation Parking Attendant Post from establishment, (vacant post)	Y	This post was created as part of the decriminalisation of parking enforcement. This post has never been filled and is no longer required in the establishment
SG6	Deletion of Accountancy Assistant post (Currently Vacant -grade 6) £25.7k, with transfer of part of the cost to cover the appointment of a Shared Procurement Officer on a 50% basis with East Herts D.C., (net cost to Council £19k.) Leaving saving of £6,700.	N	Post is currently vacant and its impact upon earlier closure of 2005/06 accounts was not apparent. However with further changes regarding the accounting treatment of capital and the presentation of accounts for 2006/07 and onwards from 'Statement of Recommended Practice' (SORP) 2006' there is a risk that existing staff capacity may need to be enhanced during the closure period (Feb to June) at additional cost. Part of the saving on the Accountancy Assistant post has been used to fund the CMT approved procurement officer post which was agreed during the current financial year. The remaining £6,700 has been offered up as a saving.
SG7	Restructure of caretaking service as part of current office improvements. Partial saving in 2006/07 - full saving in 2007/08 of £24k. (Staff consultation underway, saving means a reduction in the Caretakers employed hours.)	N	The restructure of the caretaking service at the main council offices (DCO), will improve caretaking and cleaning service together with improved office security. The caretaker will be on site half an hour prior to the start of any official Council meetings to meet and greet both members of the public and Councillors. The Caretaker will be situated in reception to show members of the public to the committee rooms. The caretaker will be on site at the DCO for the whole evening as the Town Lodge building will be secured by the contract cleaning supervisor. There will be changes for other meetings held in the evening, such as Arts centre AGM, food hygiene and Town Twinning. The arrangements for these meetings will need to be separately agreed with Property Services, so the caretaker can be there prior to the start of the meeting. However, officers organising these meeting will have to arrange for late attendees to be admitted to the building. Consultation with staff has commenced and the restructure will take place before March 2007 thereby reducing the risk of any delay in its implementation.

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Link to Corporate Plan - Sustainable/Safer/Healthier/Equal/Prosperous/Listening	Budget 2006/7	Actual 2005/06	Saving in 2007/08	Saving in 2008/09	Saving in 2009/10	Saving in 2010/11	Saving in 2011/12	Ongoing (Y/N) or No of further years available
<p>Key: Scoring in the 'Link to Corporate Plan' column is against 10 Key factors - Factors that count are listed and the total score given, a - score shows that the savings item meets the key factors, a + score shows that they do not. (maximum savings score - 13)</p>										
SG8	Student Environmental Health Officer (EHO) training: The Authority currently has a Student EHO post that is a salaried position - this could be converted to an annual bursary. (Part saving in 07/08 - proposal would come into effect for Student recruited in Sept 07)	Satisfied - Strategic Objectives -4, Service review -3 = -7	£21,080	£21,000	£5,540	£11,080	£11,080	£11,080	£11,080	Y
SG9	Reduced noise call-out service: The current 7 days per week service could be reduced to Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays (and Bank Holidays) only. Local Authorities can adopt powers from Clean Neighbourhood Environmental Act (CNEA) at their discretion and need not provide a noise call out service.	Safer - Statutory pressures +4, consultation +2 = +6	£11,950	£11,608	£4,200	£4,200	£4,200	£4,200	£4,200	Y

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Statutory Function (Y/N)	Anticipated Impact of Proposal (on Public/ Customers/ Staff/ Members/ Reputation etc)
SG8	Student Environmental Health Officer (EHO) training: The Authority currently has a Student EHO post that is a salaried position - this could be converted to an annual bursary. (Part saving in 07/08 - proposal would come into effect for Student recruited in Sept 07)	N	The proposed change from a salaried to a more cost effective bursary arrangement is consistent with how some other local authorities financially assist student EHO's. Accordingly, the impact is likely to be negligible since students are still likely to be attracted by the planned level of remuneration.
SG9	Reduced noise call-out service: The current 7 days per week service could be reduced to Thursdays, Fridays, Saturdays and Sundays (and Bank Holidays) only. Local Authorities can adopt powers from Clean Neighbourhood Environmental Act (CNEA) at their discretion and need not provide a noise call out service.	Y	An analysis of call-outs over the past few years has indicated that the majority of call-outs in respect of noise nuisance occur at weekends. A remodelled service focusing on weekends is likely to reduce the impact of this option. However, the reduced service may attract criticism from the public and our partners (i.e. the Police) as it has a high, and increasing number of users. <i>This option is linked to the on-going review of standby payments being conducted by the Authority as part of Equal Pay Status. Following this review costs may go up.</i>

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Link to Corporate Plan - Sustainable/Safer/Healthier/Equal/Prosperous/Listening	Budget 2006/7	Actual 2005/06	Saving in 2007/08	Saving in 2008/09	Saving in 2009/10	Saving in 2010/11	Saving in 2011/12	Ongoing (Y/N) or No of further years available
<p>Key: Scoring in the 'Link to Corporate Plan' column is against 10 Key factors - Factors that count are listed and the total score given, a - score shows that the savings item meets the key factors, a + score shows that they do not. (maximum savings score - 13)</p>										
SG10	Deletion of the Empty Homes Officer post: This officer works 21 hours per week encouraging owners of vacant residential properties in areas of high demand to return their dwellings to occupancy. (Consultation with the member of staff is currently underway).	Sustainable - Strategic Objectives -4, Service review -3 = -7	£16,053	£ 16,053	£16,050	£16,050	£16,050	£16,050	£16,050	Y
SG11	Delete Technical Officer post (Vacant post - Grade 7)	Sustainable - Strategic Objectives -4, Service review -3 = -7	£27,596	£0	£17,600	£17,600	£17,600	£17,600	£17,600	Y
TOTAL SALARY EXPENDITURE SAVINGS OPTIONS			£619,039	£544,579	£168,770	£180,870	£159,030	£159,030	£159,030	

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Statutory Function (Y/N)	Anticipated Impact of Proposal (on Public/ Customers/ Staff/ Members/ Reputation etc)
SG10	<p>Deletion of the Empty Homes Officer post: This officer works 21 hours per week encouraging owners of vacant residential properties in areas of high demand to return their dwellings to occupancy. (Consultation with the member of staff is currently underway).</p>	Y	<p>Using BV64 it is possible to see that the number of properties being returned for residential use is low. Deletion of this post (arising from the Authority's CPA inspection) may be criticised by GO East/ the Audit Commission. The level of expenditure does not, however, appear to be good value for money to bring only a small number of properties back into use (2 in 2005/6, 2 in 2004/5) Alternative more cost effective ways of performing this function are being considered.</p>
SG11	<p>Delete Technical Officer post (Vacant post - Grade 7)</p>	N	<p>Reduce revenues technical team by one officer (1FTE). Part of the workload will be covered by more specialist advice in addressing external audit queries. To facilitate this £10K has been allocated to consultancy budgets leaving resulting saving of £17,600.</p>

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Link to Corporate Plan - Sustainable/Safer/Healthier/Equal/Prosperous/Listening	Budget 2006/7	Actual 2005/06	Saving in 2007/08	Saving in 2008/09	Saving in 2009/10	Saving in 2010/11	Saving in 2011/12	Ongoing (Y/N) or No of further years available
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Key: Scoring in the 'Link to Corporate Plan' column is against 10 Key factors - Factors that count are listed and the total score given, a - score shows that the savings item meets the key factors, a + score shows that they do not. (maximum savings score - 13)

REVENUE SAVINGS -SERVICE RELATED										
SG12	Improve "What the Media Say" service	Satisfied- Strategic Objective -4, Service review -3 = -7	£7,600	£6,890	£5,300	£5,300	£5,300	£5,300	£5,300	Y
SG13	Bring forward introduction of alternate week collection of residual waste with effect from Sept 2007. This is to meet the Government Recycling targets and reduce landfill tax.	Sustainable - Strategic Objectives -4, Service review -3, Consultation +2 = -5	£ 1,795,880	£ 1,743,165	£50,000	£250,000				See notes in Impact Column
SG14	Reduce advertising with pictorial montages for Council vacancies and / or advertise in local papers with a generic advert pointing people to the NHDC website	Satisfied - Strategic Objectives -4, Service review -3 = -7	£4,790	£96,980	£36,800	£36,800	£36,800	£36,800	£36,800	Y
SG15	Reduction of Area Committee Budgets in line with the savings target of £1.267m on General Fund 2006/07 expenditure of £17.456 million or 7.26%	Equal - Strategic Objectives -4, = -4	£164,480	£175,660	£11,940	£11,940	£11,940	£11,940	£11,940	Y

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Statutory Function (Y/N)	Anticipated Impact of Proposal (on Public/ Customers/ Staff/ Members/ Reputation etc)
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REVENUE SAVINGS -SERVICE RELATED

SG12	Improve "What the Media Say" service	N	Circulation of press cuttings costs the council substantial copyright fees to the Newspaper Licensing Authority (£3,042 in 2006/07).The savings option would replace the cuttings with a weekly digest of the local reports, to be emailed, including links where appropriate to the local papers' own websites where many articles can be found. Copies of local papers will also be made available in the Members' room.
SG13	Bring forward introduction of alternate week collection of residual waste with effect from Sept 2007. This is to meet the Government Recycling targets and reduce landfill tax.	Y	The proposal will enable NHDC to meet Government recycling and waste minimisation targets, and reduce the impact on landfill tax. Savings as a result of this change will also allow the enhancement of the current household recycling schemes to include plastics and cans. Because of the need to communicate changes in household waste arrangements to all NHDC residents substantial investment will be required in year one, restricting the saving to £50k. Note this is a saving already budgeted for from part of 2009/10 onwards and this proposal is a recommendation to bring the scheme forward one year, the figures quoted are subject to confirmation with the contractor.
SG14	Reduce advertising with pictorial montages for Council vacancies and / or advertise in local papers with a generic advert pointing people to the NHDC website	N	This saving would mean maximising the use of the website for advertising vacancies, which is under redevelopment.
SG15	Reduction of Area Committee Budgets in line with the savings target of £1.267m on General Fund 2006/07 expenditure of £17.456 million or 7.26%	N	Savings options are being identified across all areas of the Council's budgets and to ensure equity, a reduction in Area Committee budgets is proposed proportional to the savings target.

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Link to Corporate Plan - Sustainable/Safer/Healthier/Equal/Prosperous/Listening	Budget 2006/7	Actual 2005/06	Saving in 2007/08	Saving in 2008/09	Saving in 2009/10	Saving in 2010/11	Saving in 2011/12	Ongoing (Y/N) or No of further years available
<p>Key: Scoring in the 'Link to Corporate Plan' column is against 10 Key factors - Factors that count are listed and the total score given, a - score shows that the savings item meets the key factors, a + score shows that they do not. (maximum savings score - 13)</p>										
SG16	Change delivery approach of holiday playschemes from direct management to commissioning the voluntary and community sector/other agencies. NHDC would provide indirect financial assistance.	Equal - Strategic Objectives -4, = -4	£119,450	£126,684	£0	£13,580	£13,580	£13,580	£13,580	Y
SG17	Discontinue Historic Buildings Grants	Sustainable - Strategic Objectives -4, Service review -3 = -7	£ 15,000	£ 10,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	£15,000	Y
SG18	The Handyperson/Securing scheme: This NHDC / Anchor Staying Put project is match-funded in collaboration with Supporting People and assists older and disabled people with minor repairs and improvements to security. A notice period of 6 months is required if the Authority wishes to terminate its contract with Anchor Staying Put.	Safer - Strategic Objective +4	£ 12,000	£ 12,000	£6,000	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000	£12,000	Y

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Statutory Function (Y/N)	Anticipated Impact of Proposal (on Public/ Customers/ Staff/ Members/ Reputation etc)
SG16	Change delivery approach of holiday playschemes from direct management to commissioning the voluntary and community sector/other agencies. NHDC would provide indirect financial assistance.	N	NHDC would no longer directly run summer holiday playschemes. Within the context of 'Every Child Matters' (ECM), greater development and financial support would be given to other partner providers to fund the schemes, e.g. voluntary sector organisations, extended schools, children's centres.
SG17	Discontinue Historic Buildings Grants	N	Current grant is designed to help private owners with structures and buildings which are at risk (those on the "at risk" register), however the grant take up in 2005/6 was at a low level. The only grant allocation in 2005/6 was given to the church commissioners as matched funding for church improvements (against landfill tax credits); this was a specific one off scheme. Should the Council withdraw Historic Building Grants alternative funding sources are very limited to private owners. English Heritage (EH) only provide funding for Grade 1 and Grade2* listed buildings and where the building is on their (EH's) building at risk register.
SG18	The Handyperson/Securing scheme: This NHDC / Anchor Staying Put project is match-funded in collaboration with Supporting People and assists older and disabled people with minor repairs and improvements to security. A notice period of 6 months is required if the Authority wishes to terminate its contract with Anchor Staying Put.	N	This project is based on match-funding and cessation of the service will equate to a £24k pa reduction in local expenditure. The scheme's clients are from both private and Registered Social Landlords (RSLs) client groups and are mainly elderly and/or disabled. The service also provides security initiatives, however the service is of a social welfare nature. This is a policy conflict in terms of providing welfare services, which is a County function. (Number of scheme users, 1st January 2005-31st March 2006, 428. Number of scheme users 1st April - 30th June 2006, 124)

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Link to Corporate Plan - Sustainable/Safer/Healthier/Equal/Prosperous/Listening	Budget 2006/7	Actual 2005/06	Saving in 2007/08	Saving in 2008/09	Saving in 2009/10	Saving in 2010/11	Saving in 2011/12	Ongoing (Y/N) or No of further years available
<p>Key: Scoring in the 'Link to Corporate Plan' column is against 10 Key factors - Factors that count are listed and the total score given, a - score shows that the savings item meets the key factors, a + score shows that they do not. (maximum savings score - 13)</p>										
SG19	Contaminated land consultancy: The investigation and remediation of contaminated sites, outside of the planning system, often requires the use of technical consultants to undertake sampling, soil analysis, etc.	Safer - Strategic Objectives - 4, Service review -3 = -7	£ 45,000	£ 15,727	£ 20,000	£ 20,000	£ 20,000	£ 20,000	£ 20,000	N
TOTAL SERVICE EXPENDITURE SAVINGS OPTIONS			£2,164,200	£2,187,106	£145,040	£364,620	£114,620	£114,620	£114,620	

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Statutory Function (Y/N)	Anticipated Impact of Proposal (on Public/ Customers/ Staff/ Members/ Reputation etc)
SG19	<p>Contaminated land consultancy: The investigation and remediation of contaminated sites, outside of the planning system, often requires the use of technical consultants to undertake sampling, soil analysis, etc.</p>	Y	<p>A partial reduction in this budget will inhibit the delivery of the Authority Contaminated Land Strategy. However more emphasis can be placed on the remediation of brown field sites via the planning system. There is a risk that expenditure may be required in later years.</p>

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Link to Corporate Plan - Sustainable/Safer/Healthier/Equal/Prosperous/Listening	Budget 2006/7	Actual 2005/06	Saving in 2007/08	Saving in 2008/09	Saving in 2009/10	Saving in 2010/11	Saving in 2011/12	Ongoing (Y/N) or No of further years available
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Key: Scoring in the 'Link to Corporate Plan' column is against 10 Key factors - Factors that count are listed and the total score given, a - score shows that the savings item meets the key factors, a + score shows that they do not. (maximum savings score - 13)

REVENUE SAVINGS -CONTRIBUTIONS TO OTHERS										
SG20	Deletion of contribution to subsidised bus routes	Sustainable - Adverse impact on service +4 = +4	£ 152,110	£ 125,000	£62,500	£152,000	£152,000	£152,000	£152,000	Y
SG21	Deletion of contribution to dial-a-ride	Equal - Corporate objective +4, = +4	£ 38,660	£ 45,151	£19,000	£38,660	£38,660	£38,660	£38,660	Y
TOTAL CONTRIBUTIONS TO OTHERS SAVINGS OPTIONS			£ 190,770	£ 170,151	£ 81,500	£ 190,660	£ 190,660	£ 190,660	£ 190,660	
TOTAL OF SAVINGS OPTIONS IDENTIFIED			£2,974,009	£ 2,901,836	£ 565,420	£ 878,010	£ 606,170	£ 606,170	£ 606,170	

Service Savings

Ref No	Description of Savings Proposal	Statutory Function (Y/N)	Anticipated Impact of Proposal (on Public/ Customers/ Staff/ Members/ Reputation etc)
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REVENUE SAVINGS -CONTRIBUTIONS TO OTHERS

SG20	Deletion of contribution to subsidised bus routes	N	The Council currently supports subsidised bus routes which also receive a subsidy from Herts County Council, (HCC). The Council's policy is to cease funding County functions and associated subsidies. The HCC funding of £390k is likely to continue irrespective of District funding. HCC are currently undertaking a review of supported bus routes which will be concluded in March 2006. If NHDC were minded to withdraw funding then the NHDC input to the HCC review process would determine the optimum use of funding. The likely impact on services is: • Reduction in frequency of Royston town service from half hourly to hourly, Rural services less frequent and/or combined, Reduced frequency Hitchin-Luton service, Reduction in evening services, Reduction in Sunday services, Evening and Sunday services into Beds could also be reduced but this might prompt a review of Beds services into Herts. A 50% saving has been assumed in year 1 (for termination periods). Negotiations with the HCC will continue and this may determine the level of saving in year 1.
SG21	Deletion of contribution to dial-a-ride	N	Reduction in specialist transport for vulnerable groups i.e. elderly and disabled who can not use the normal bus service. The Council's policy is to cease County functions and associated subsidies. This saving does pre-empt the Transport FSR, which although scoped has yet to be started. Currently 2 vehicles are used with one funded by the District Council and the proposal is to reduce it to 1 vehicle wholly funded by the County Council. This would reduce capacity of the service. Negotiations with the HCC will continue, this may determine the level of saving in year 1.

The following comments were made by Members during Cabinet's detailed consideration of the list of savings and growth options at its meeting on 17 October 2006:

- SG13 – Alternate Week Collection of Waste – the Portfolio Holder and officers were in the process of negotiations with the contractor regarding the cost associated with this proposal.
- SG15 – Reduction of Area Committee Budgets – the Portfolio Holder commented that this had become necessary due to underspends on these budgets, although it was noted that this may be due to projects for which funding had been approved remaining unfulfilled.
- SG16 – Change Delivery Approach to Holiday Playschemes – the Portfolio Holder considered that it would be important for any change to be managed in a careful manner.
- SG18 – Cessation of the Handyperson Scheme – Members were concerned at the potential loss of this scheme, and suggested that alternative funding sources could be investigated, such as Social Landlords, or funding the whole scheme from the Supporting People Budget.
- SG19 – Partial Reduction in Budget for Contaminated Land Consultancy – the Portfolio Holder drew attention to the fact that, despite this proposed saving, there was the risk that increased expenditure may be required in later years.
- SG20 – Deletion of Contribution to Subsidised Bus Services – the Portfolio Holder acknowledged that the list of reduced services seemed extensive, and that he may require more time to firm up this proposal.
- SG22 – Increase Charges for Burials – further work may be required to average out the proposed increased charges for interment, monuments and grave purchases.
- SG29 – Increase in Pest Control Fees – clarification would be required on this item, in terms of the income accrued by the contractor and the Council for this service.

TITLE: SOUTHERN RURAL CHAMPION NEWS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & CULTURAL SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the activities and schemes with which the Community Development Officer has been involved since the previous Committee meeting.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention some important community based activities that will be taking place during the next few months.

2. ISSUES – PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

- 2.1 Lilley Young People – A very positive and engaging meeting took place at Cassel Memorial Hall, Lilley on 17th October 2006 to discuss the needs of the young people in the village, where Officers from this Council and Hertfordshire Youth Service met with 15 representatives of the community to consult on the 'Way Forward'. Various key objectives were identified and in particular establishing a youth club, as well as organising youth & sports events such as archery. A youth representative was also appointed to attend every Parish Council meeting to give feedback and to be a voice of the young people in the village. A follow up meeting took place on the 24th October, where a Steering Group was formed with young people and adults, to project manage the various options discussed. Hertfordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Service will also offer advice.
- 2.2 Ickleford Young Peoples Open Event – Hertfordshire Youth Service and Hertfordshire Council for Voluntary Youth Service held a very successful event at Ickleford Sports & Social Club on Saturday 7th October 2006, following the work that the Detached Outreach Team have recently undertaken in the village since April 2006, to discuss the way forward in light of the recent Parish Plan questionnaires returned to the Parish Council focussing on the needs of the young people. A youth club will be established as a direct outcome of this event. Further information can be obtained by contacting Stuart Pittman on 01438 219068, or email: stuart.pittman@hertscc.gov.uk.
- 2.3 Ickleford Parish Plan Action Group – The group met with strategic officers of this Council on Thursday 2nd November to review the Results Summary of their recent Parish Plan Questionnaire. A number of directions and initiatives were identified for the group to consider in the 'Way Forward' in rolling out the plan.

- 2.4 Local Democracy Week – As part of the engagement of this Council with young people, the first ever ‘Question Time’ event was held on 19th October 2006 in Plinston Hall, Letchworth supported by a panel of the Council’s elected Members and other Community leaders, with the questions being provided by over 80 young people from 6 senior schools across the district to fully participate them in local democracy. This very successful event will be held again next year and it may go ‘mobile and visit other locations across the district.
- 2.5 Hertfordshire Rural Youth Partnership – A travel questionnaire on behalf of the partnership was taken on a total of 6 days into The Priory & Knights Templar Senior Schools during weeks commencing 30th October & 6th November 2006, to ask rural young people what their issues and concerns are regarding rural transport. Once the results of all the questionnaires have been analysed, a strategic and appropriate way forward will be assessed to address these transport problems. An opportunity was also taken to promote the SCooTS Project and the co-ordinator displayed one of the 50cc loan scooters which will be available from the scheme
- 2.6 Scrutiny Task & Finish Group - The CDO has been attending this Council’s Scrutiny Task & Finish Group meetings in assessing partnership working within neighbouring authorities, as well as Parish & Town Councils and Meetings. A full and detailed assessment will then be forthcoming in deciding best practice working.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 3.1 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well being for rural communities.

4. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 4.1 Garry Gover (Community Development Officer – Southern Rural Area)
Telephone: 01462 474674
E-Mail: garry.gover@north-herts.gov.uk

**TITLE: SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT & AREA VISIONING BUDGETS
2006/7**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

3. ISSUES – FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE

- 3.1 A full report for funding consideration for the support in the provision of additional anti fly-tipping Covert Camera equipment from the Committee's Capital Plant & Equipment Visioning budget will be presented to Members at the Committee meeting. In order to ensure that the equipment being proposed is 'fit for purpose', a full and detailed assessment of all appropriate CCTV Covert Camera equipment available on the market has been undertaken by the Council's Enforcement team and the CDO, as well as liaison with neighbouring authorities for case study results.
- 3.2 Members should note that the Area Committee Development Discretionary Budget for 2006/7 is £30,510 and that £6,300 has been allocated for the Member Discretionary Awards of £700 per Member.
- 3.3 The second tranche of applications will be presented to the Committee on 1st February 2007. The closing date for applications will be 15th December 2006.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets described.
- 4.2 There are no other legal implications pertinent to this report.

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix A of the report, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2006/7.
- 5.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2005/6 to the current financial year 2006/7.

- 5.3 In addition, the spreadsheet includes the balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated Revenue Visioning & Unallocated Capital Visioning Budgets available to the Committee.
- 5.4 The unallocated Members Ward Discretionary budget that must be allocated by 31 March 2007 is £6,300 and is detailed in the Appendix A.
- 5.5 In recognition of the amount of unallocated underspend from the Area Committee Discretionary budget after the applications for funding from both tranches have been considered, the Community Development Officer will consult with Members ahead of presenting a report for consideration at the Southern Rural Area Committee meeting on 15th March 2007.
- 5.6 The Committee has a total Base Budget of £30,510 to allocate in 2006/7.
- 5.7 The Committee has a total Capital Visioning Budget of £79,600 to allocate in 2006/7. The de-minimis for Capital Plant & Equipment Visioning Funds is £15,000.

6. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 6.1 Consultation with the respective Ward Members will take place in connection with the pre-allocation of funds for community projects for the current financial year 2006/7.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Ward Development Budgets and the allocated Visioning Budgets.

8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary and community organisations, schemes and initiatives.

9. APPENDICES

- 9.1 Appendix A – Spreadsheet of Committee Delegated Budgets 2005/6.

10. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 10.1 Garry Gover - Community Development Officer – Southern Rural
Telephone: 01462 474674
E Mail: garry.gover@north-herts.gov.uk
- 10.2 Jodie Penfold
Assistant Accountant Customer Services
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SOUTHERN RURAL AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2006/2007

Appendix A

SUMMARY/ TOTALS	Funding	Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget				
Revenue Visioning	£23,629	£23,629	£7,817	£15,812	£0				
Capital Visioning	£79,600	£15,000	£0	£15,000	£64,600				
Discretionary Budget 0607	£24,210	£4,594	£2,407	2187	£19,616				
Member Discretionary Budget 0607	£6,300	£997	£997	£0	£5,303				
Preallocated Amounts carried forward from 0506	£4,758	£4,758	£750	£4,008	£0				
Visioning & Discretionary Total	£58,897	£32,918	£11,971	£20,947	£25,979				

REVENUE VISIONING	Funding	Year Allocated	Project	Allocated	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated	Comments
Preallocated Budgets Brought Forward from 05/06	£23,080	2005/06	Southern Rural - Village Halls	£990	16.03.06	£0	£990		
Plus £49 underspend on Codicote Parish Council	£49	2005/06	Southern Rural - HAYP Youth Project	£6,000	16.03.06	£6,000	£0		
Plus £500 from reallocation of Holwell Village Hall Grant	£500	2005/06	Southern Rural - Community Events	£500	16.03.06	£53	£447		
		2005/06	Southern Rural - Lunch Link Up Club	£1,000	16.03.06	£350	£650		
		2005/06	Southern Rural - Volunteers	£1,000	16.03.06	£0	£1,000		
		2005/06	Southern Rural - Parish Plans	£4,150	16.03.06	£549	£3,601		
		2005/06	Southern Rural - Youth Events	£1,500	16.03.06	£119	£1,381		
		2005/06	Southern Rural - Anti Fly-tipping	£8,489	16.03.06	£747	£7,742		
Total	£23,629			£23,629		£7,817	£15,812	£0	

CAPITAL VISIONING SR	Funding	Year Allocated	Project	Allocated	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated	Comments
Capital Visioning SR	£79,600	2006/07	Scooter & Cycle Transport Solutions (SCooTS)	£15,000	13.07.06	£0	£15,000		
	£79,600			£15,000		£0	£15,000	£64,600	

DEVELOPMENT BUDGETS	Funding	Project	Allocated	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Amount	Comments
Pre-allocated Funds Brought forward from 2005/2006:	£7,204	Codicote Peace Memorial	£500	02.02.06	£0	£500		
Less underspend of £49 - Codicote Parish Council	-£49	Preston Cricket Club	£1,000	02.02.06	£0	£1,000		
Less projects now spent and completed	-£2,957	Preston Tennis Club	£448	02.02.06	£0	£448		

Less Holwell Village Hall grant reallocated to Anti Fly-tipping	-500			Offley Parish Council	£1,000	02.02.06	£0	£1,000		
				Pirton Parish Council	£750	02.02.06	£750	£0		
Youth Projects (CF 0405)	£1,060			Youth Projects	£1,060		£0	£1,060		
					£1,060		£0	£1,060		£0
Base Budget 06/07	£24,210			Holwell Parish Council	£875	24.08.06	£875	£0		
				Gt Ashby Community Group	£500	24.08.06	£0	£500		
				Sticky Mitts Arts & Craft	£687	24.08.06	£0	£687		
				Breachwood Green Village Hall	£525	24.08.06	£525	£0		
				Hexton Parochial Church Council	£507	24.08.06	£507	£0		
				Preston Cricket Club	£1,000	24.08.06	£0	£1,000		
				Knebworth Parish Council	£500	24.08.06	£500	£0		
					£4,594		£2,407	£2,187		£19,616
Member Discretionary Awards £700 per Member	£6,300			Cockernhoe Community Event	£100	25.09.06	£100	£0		
				Community Coffee Shop Codicote	£150		£150	£0		
				Coaching costs for Knebworth Park Cricket Club	£124	18.10.06	£124	£0		
				Coaching costs for Knebworth Park Cricket Club	£125	18.10.06	£125	£0		
				New Christmas Lights - Kimpton Parish Council	£249	18.10.06	£249	£0		
				Replacement of gate to childrens play area - Kings Walden Parish Council	£249	16.10.06	£249	£0		
					£997		£997	£0		£5,303
Total	£35,268				£9,289		£4,154	£5,135		£25,979

TITLE OF REPORT: COVERT CAMERAS & FURTHER ANTI FLY-TIPPING ENFORCEMENT MEASURES FOR FUNDING FROM CAPITAL PLANT & EQUIPMENT VISIONING FUNDS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 For the Committee to consider a funding application for Covert Cameras & further anti fly-tipping enforcement measures for £31,900 from the Area Committee Plant & Equipment Capital Visioning Fund.
- 1.2 The system will be tailored made to offer a professional and workable solution to detect & record fly-tipping and generate evidential images via a system of covert cameras & detectors, fit for purpose for low light & rural deployments, using wireless waterproof cameras , PIR detectors, trip sensors, high power battery packs, high resolution camera lens, remote viewing GSM module kit, GPS tracking and recovery module, computer software, vehicle Pan/Tilt & Zoom camera for remote viewing from an enforcement vehicle & additional enforcement/surveillance equipment.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The need for further anti-flytipping measures to be enforced is as a result of a substantial increase in fly-tipping 'hot spots' across the Southern Rural area of the district. The Visioning Consultation in 2003 identified fly-tipping as an issue and whilst the Council has existing analogue hard wire peripatetic cameras, the existing equipment requires high resource maintenance. The additional enforcement equipment is digital and wireless and would require the minimum of officer maintenance.
- 3.2 The Community Development Officer has spent a considerable time researching new equipment which is 'fit for purpose' and the proposed further enforcement measures are considered to be an effective means of preventing fly-tipping.
- 3.3 The Council's Rural Strategy for North Hertfordshire 2005 – 2010 states 'In March 2004, based on the extensive consultation of the previous year, the Rural Members Working Group determined that one of the rural priorities within the context of the Community Strategy is: Community safety, crime and policing, including vandalism and fly-tipping, as well as extend the use of mobile anti fly-tipping cameras'.

- 3.4 In discussion with officers in the Council's Enforcement Team, a promotion/advertising campaign to highlight fly-tipping offences, as well as the measures being taken by the Council will be implemented, as well as additional signage at all Southern Rural fly-tipping sites across the district.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The Committee has delegated powers to spend its Capital Visioning Budget.

- 4.2 This project meets the Strategic Objectives of the Council.

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The Committee has £64,600 remaining within its Capital Visioning Budget. The diminimis limit for items classed as 'Capital Plant & Equipment' is £15,000. The Committee cannot, therefore, apportion an award less than this amount.

- 5.2 The Community Development Officer has received confirmation from the Council's Accountancy Manager, that the proposed expenditure complies with NHDC's Capital Plant & Equipment criteria.

- 5.3 There are no on-going costs attributable to this equipment, as subject to any failure or faults developing with any of the electronic equipment, this would be covered under a 5 year warranty at a cost of £2,500. Whilst this would be a revenue cost item, it could be funded from the Committee's pre-allocated revenue budget for anti fly-tipping enforcement. This 5 year period is the recognised industry norm for the life expectancy of this equipment.

- 5.4 Whilst the costs of the warranty would be a revenue item and have to be paid in full at the time of purchasing the equipment, the pre-allocated revenue budget for anti fly-tipping enforcement would be reduced by £500 in each financial year over the next 5 years, to comply with the Council's financial and accountancy practice.

- 5.5 The Council's Risk Manager has been consulted and should any camera get damaged or stolen, the repair/replacement costs would be met under a blanket contingency insurance cover the Council has in place.

6. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 6.1 Consultation has been undertaken with Officers in the Council's Enforcement team to ensure that the equipment is fit for purpose.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 That the Committee approve £31,900 of its Capital Visioning budget to be allocated to anti fly-tipping enforcement measures.

8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To meet the Council's strategic objectives and implementation of the Area Visioning Action Plans.

9. CONTACT OFFICERS

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*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	<p style="text-align: center;">AGENDA ITEM No.</p> <p style="text-align: center; font-size: 2em; font-weight: bold;">10</p>
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TITLE OF REPORT: PLANNING APPLICATIONS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and Local Government Act 1972

In respect of each of the following reports concerning individual applications for planning permission, Listed Building Consent, the whole of the application file shall be regarded as background papers for the purposes of Section 100(d) of the 1972 Act.

AGENDA INDEX

ITEM:	REF NO:	LOCATION:DESCRIPTION	CONTACT OFFICER:	PAGE:
1.	06/01412/ 1	Land At And To The North East Of Gosmore End House, Hitchin Road, Gosmore, SG4 Change of use of garden land to form residential curtilage serving Gosmore End House.	John Chapman 01462 474516	67
2.	06/01855/ 1	144 London Road, Knebworth, SG3 6EY Change of Use from A1 (Retail) to A2 (Estate Agent).	Helen Caldwell 01462 474418	75

ITEM NO: 1	<u>Location:</u>	Land At And To The North East Of Gosmore End House, Hitchin Road, Gosmore, SG4
	<u>Applicant:</u>	Mrs F J Moore
	<u>Proposal:</u>	Change of use of garden land to form residential curtilage serving Gosmore End House.
	<u>Ref.No:</u>	06/01412/ 1
	<u>Officer:</u>	John Chapman 01462 474516

Date of expiry of statutory period : 04 October 2006

Reason for Delay

Need for further neighbour consultation

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Members will recall that this application was withdrawn from the agenda at the last Southern Rural Committee meeting on 5th October 2006 "to enable any representations submitted, as a result of further neighbour consultation, to be considered prior to a decision being reached." A copy of my previous report is reproduced as an Appendix to this report.
- 1.2 Notwithstanding further neighbour consultation having been carried out no additional representations have been received relating to the proposed development.
- 1.3 However, the relevant history part of my previous report needs to be updated to include the fact that permission has been refused since the last meeting to the change of use of the triple garage with residential annexe, associated with Gosmore End House, to a self contained 3 bedroom dwelling. The reason for refusal being:

" By reason of the close proximity of the access drive to nearby buildings and the relationship and size of amenity space to serve the proposed dwelling, compared to nearby dwellings, the building is not suitable for its reuse as a separate self contained dwelling and is therefore contrary to PPS 7 (Sustainable Development in Rural Areas) advice and the aims and objectives of PPG2 (Green Belts) and Policy 25 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No 2 with Alterations."

2.0 Legal Implications

- 2.1 In making decisions on applications submitted under the Town and Country Planning legislation, the Council is required to have regard to the provisions of the development plan and to any other material considerations. The decision must be in accordance with the plan unless the material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the decision is to refuse or restrictive conditions are attached, the applicant has a right of appeal against the decision.

3.0 Recommendation

3.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 as amended, no development as set out in Classes E and F of Part 1 and Class A of Part 2 of Schedule 2 to the Order shall be carried out without first obtaining a specific planning permission from the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: Given the nature of this development, the Local Planning Authority considers that development which would normally be "permitted development" should be retained within planning control in the interests of the character and amenities of the area.

Reason for Decision

The proposed development is supported by "very special circumstances" to allow a relaxation of the normal Green Belt policy applicable to this site and for this reason complies with the relevant provisions of the development plan, as summarised below:

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011

Policy 5 - Green Belt

Policy 38 - Critical Capital and other Important Environmental Assets

North Hertfordshire District local Plan No. 2 with Alterations

Policy 2 - Green Belt

Policy 3 - Settlements within the Green Belt

Policy 20 - Conservation Areas

4.0 Further Recommendation

- 4.1 In the event that Members agree with my previous recommendation it is no longer considered expedient to pursue the enforcement action authorised at the meeting of the Southern Rural Committee last December relating to an unauthorised hardstanding, identified as site 5 in that report.

ITEM NO: 2	<u>Location:</u>	144 London Road, Knebworth, SG3 6EY
	<u>Applicant:</u>	Mr J Hill
	<u>Proposal:</u>	Change of Use from A1 (Retail) to A2 (Estate Agent).
	<u>Ref.No:</u>	06/01855/ 1
	<u>Officer:</u>	Helen Caldwell 01462 474418

Date of expiry of statutory period : 08 November 2006

Reason for Delay

Committee cycle

Reason for Referral to Committee

Parish Council objection.

1.0 Relevant History

1.1 None.

2.0 Policies

2.1 Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011

Policy 1 - Sustainable Development

Policy 25 - Car Parking/Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking Provision at New Development

2.2 North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No2 with Alterations

Policy 5 - Excluded Village.

Policy 55 - Car Parking Standards.

3.0 Representations

3.1. **Knebworth Parish Council** - " The change of use will affect the balance of outlets in the "High Street". There are already 5 estate agents, 2 letting agents 3 takeaways and 2 cafes. The loss of a further retail outlet will affect the viability of the village."

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site & Surroundings

4.1.1 The application site comprises a vacant shop unit, with a frontage on to London Road of approximately 6 metres, situated within the main shopping area of Knebworth. The property is adjoined by a bakers and chemist. There is a single width vehicular access to the north side of the premises which provides access to a

car parking area to the rear of the site, with one space allocated to the shop premises. The London Road frontage comprises a mix of commercial uses and forms the centre of the shopping area of the village.

4.2 Proposal

- 4.2.1 The proposal involves the change of use of the shop premises from A1 (Retail) to A2 (Estate Agent).

4.3 Key Issues

4.3.1 Loss of Retail Premises

The shop unit is currently vacant and has been since June or July of this year. The shop was last being used for DVD sales. The applicant seeks to change the use of the premises to A2 (Estate Agents). The Parish Council have raised objections to the proposal on the basis that they do not wish to see the loss of another retail unit from the village shopping area and the impact that this may have on the viability of the shopping area.

However, the overall floor area (approximately 46sq metres) involved is relatively small. Furthermore the village shopping area appears to be thriving with a wide range of services available to shoppers. In the absence of any Local Plan policy relating to the loss of retail units within villages such as Knebworth, and whilst noting the concerns of the Parish Council, I do not consider that the change of use of this shop unit would significantly impact on the viability of the village so as to sustain a refusal of permission in this instance.

4.3.2 Car Parking.

The applicant has indicated that there is one car parking space with the unit, albeit this is not shown within the application site. The site is in a sustainable location with good access to the train station and bus routes. The maximum car parking standard for this unit is 1 car space per 30 sq m floor space. The unit being 46 sq m in floor space therefore complies with the parking provision standards, set out in the Development Plan

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 In the absence of any Local Plan policy relating to the loss of retail premises within the village of Knebworth the proposed change of use of the shop premises is acceptable, since it would have no significant impact on the viability of the local shopping area and complies with the relevant parking standards.

5.0 Legal Implications

- 5.1 In making decisions on applications submitted under the Town and Country Planning legislation, the Council is required to have regard to the provisions of the development plan and to any other material considerations. The decision must be in accordance with the plan unless the material considerations indicate otherwise. Where the decision is to refuse or restrictive conditions are attached, the applicant has a right of appeal against the decision.

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 That planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

Reason for Decision

The development hereby permitted, would have no adverse impact on the vitality and viability of the shopping area or Highway Safety and as such complies with the relevant provisions of the development plan as summarised below:

Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011

Policy 25 - Car Parking/Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking Provision at New Development

North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 with Alterations

Policy 5: Excluded Village.

Policy 55: Car Parking Standards

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No.
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11

TITLE OF REPORT: PLANNING APPEALS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

This report will be in the format of an oral presentation.

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