

Ref: Cabinet 06.01
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6 January 2006

To: Members of the Cabinet:

Councillor F.J. Smith (Chairman) (Leader of the Council);
Councillor Mrs A.G. Ashley (Portfolio Holder for Housing & Environmental Health);
Councillor W.M. Davidson (Portfolio Holder for Waste and Environment);
Councillor Tricia Gibbs (Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement & Rural Affairs);
Councillor T.W. Hone (Portfolio Holder for Finance);
Councillor I.J. Knighton (Portfolio Holder for Leisure & E-Government);
Councillor R.A.C. Thake (Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport);
Councillor A.D. Young (Portfolio Holder for Policy).

Distributed to other Members on request.

You are invited to attend a

MEETING OF THE CABINET

to be held in the

**COUNCIL CHAMBER, COUNCIL OFFICES,
GERNON ROAD, LETCHWORTH GARDEN CITY**

on

TUESDAY 17 JANUARY 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 Cabinet held on 20 December 2005. | - |
| 3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS Members should notify the Chairman of other business that they wish to be discussed by the Cabinet at the end of either Part I or Part II business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances that 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 Cabinet 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. | - |
| 5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions, comments and questions from the public. At the time of preparing the agenda no requests to speak had been received. Any public participation received within the agreed time scale will be notified to Members as soon as practicable. | - |
| 6. ITEMS REFERRED FROM COMMITTEES No referrals received at date of publication | |
| 7. REGIONAL AND STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUES REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL <i>To update Cabinet about the current positions regarding:</i> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• <i>West of the A1(M) at Stevenage;</i>• <i>The draft East of England Plan;</i>• <i>Growth Area Liaison for the Luton conurbation;</i>• <i>Luton & Dunstable Northern Bypasses;</i>• <i>London Luton Airport and Stansted Airport.</i> | 3 |
| 8. REVIEW OF GATEWAY ALLOCATION SCHEME (HOUSING) PLAN REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING & ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH | To Follow |
| 9. WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS TO ENGAGE GROUNDWORK HERTFORDSHIRE REPORT OF HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES <i>To seek approval for a waiver of the contract standing orders to allow Groundwork Hertfordshire to develop and manage enhancements to play and outdoor youth</i> | 21 |

provision on the Grange Estate in Letchworth.

10. **PROCUREMENT STRATEGY ANNUAL REVIEW** **To follow**
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

11. **ASSET STRATEGY ANNUAL REVIEW** **To follow**
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES

12. **SUGGESTED RESOLUTION** **43**
That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 7 Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

Note: The definition of Paragraph 7 referred to above is as follows:

7. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority).

PART II

13. **REVENUES – COUNCIL TAX, BUSINESS RATES AND SUNDRY** **45**
DEBTOR WRITE OFFS
REPORT OF HEAD OF REVENUES & BENEFITS

Future meetings of the Cabinet will take place on:

31 January 2006;
28 February 2006;
28 March 2006;
25 April 2006.

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

6

TITLE OF REPORT: REFERRALS FROM COMMITTEES

No referrals received at date of publication

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TITLE OF REPORT: REGIONAL AND STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUES

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR R. A. C. THAKE

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To inform Members of the current positions regarding:
- West of the A1(M) at Stevenage;
 - The draft East of England Plan;
 - Growth Area Liaison for the Luton conurbation;
 - Luton & Dunstable Northern Bypasses;
 - London Luton Airport and Stansted Airport.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report to Cabinet is included within the Forward Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Members will be aware of, and familiar with, many of the issues surrounding the significant strategic planning issues referred to in paragraph 1.1 above. This report is intended to provide Members with the current positions on these strategic planning matters.
- 3.2 The major issue to report to Members this month is the proposed Master Plan for London Luton Airport. In December 2003 the Government published its Air Transport White Paper (ATWP). The document set out the strategic framework for the development of airport capacity in the next 30 years. In the White Paper the government stated that they expected all airports to produce Master Plans, detailing airports' development proposals. The government subsequently produced guidance on Master Plans. The guidance expected that Master Plans should be submitted to the Department for Transport by the end of 2005.
- 3.3 Over the last year or so, London Luton Airport (LLA) has been producing its Master Plan. It has done so under the guidance of a Project 2030 Steering Group, and a number of Working Groups. These groups comprised of various stakeholders including local authorities, transport organisations and representatives of Go-East, EERA and EEDA. This Council is a member of the Steering Group and two of the Working Groups. However, as LLA state in the Master Plan, involvement of NHDC and other organisations, 'does not necessarily mean that they support all of the contents of our draft Master Plan'.

- 3.4 The documents which are out for consultation are as follows: Core Strategy; Surface Access Strategy; Sustainability Appraisal; Proposed Sound Insulation Scheme. The main proposals are in the Core Strategy. The closing date for comments is Friday the 27th January 2006.
- 3.5 The airport operators will consider responses, make any amendments they consider appropriate and submit the final Master Plan to the Department for Transport in Spring 2006. This will be swiftly followed by the submission of the Phase 1 application. This will include an extension to the existing taxiway, extension to the terminal and extra aircraft stands, and car parking. The application for Phase 2, which includes the new runway and terminal, is expected in late 2006/early 2007.

4. ISSUES

4.1 West of the A1(M) at Stevenage

- 4.2 At the meeting on the 20th October 2005 it was reported that the Council had received a decision letter from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister relating to the planning applications proposed for housing development for 3,600 or 5,000 dwellings together with associated development on land west of the A1(M) at Stevenage. The application for 5,000 dwellings was refused. However, the Secretary of State is minded to approve the scheme for 3,600 dwellings and that a decision be deferred to allow for a reformulated planning obligation to be submitted for his consideration. He requires this to be prepared by the 20th January 2006, preferably in the form of an agreement between the parties. The Secretary of State also invited parties to make representations on what measures can be taken to improve current arrangements for pedestrian and cycle routes between the application site and Stevenage town centre by the same date.
- 4.3 The consortium have produced a revised draft legal agreement and solicitors acting on behalf of the Council's are, at the time of writing this report, looking at the detail of the agreement to ascertain whether it fully meets the concerns expressed. It is understood that the Consortium have now applied for an extension of time for the formulation of the legal agreement. Any further progress will be reported orally to the meeting.

4.4 The Draft East Of England Plan

- 4.5 The Examination in Public into the draft East of England Plan is now underway. Matters 1 and 2, relating respectively to the scale of growth proposed and to its general distribution, have been concluded. This Council had a seat at the table for Matters 2A and 2B, and the Regional & Strategic Developments Manager expressed this Council's concerns on these issues. These included the apparent lack of justification for the proposed strategy in the draft Plan to distribute growth around the Region, the failure to properly consider the part a new settlement could play in any strategy and the lack of guidance concerning Green Belt boundary review post-2021.
- 4.6 The statements for the post Christmas sessions were submitted as required by the 9th December. The Council has a seat at the table for the Stevenage and Bedfordshire sessions, and will "hot-seat" with Hertfordshire County Council for the Affordable Housing and Cambridge sessions.

4.7 **Growth Area Liaison for Luton/Dunstable/Houghton Regis**

4.8 The next meeting of the Joint Committee will be held in March 2006.

4.9 **Luton & Dunstable Northern Bypasses**

4.10 Luton Northern Bypass

4.11 There is nothing to add to the December report to Cabinet.

4.12 Dunstable Northern Bypass

4.13 There is nothing to add to the December report to Cabinet.

4.14 **London Luton Airport / Stansted Airport**

4.15 London Luton Airport Master Plan

4.16 As was stated in the November Cabinet report, the Luton Airport Master Plan was published on the 25th October. The consultation period is now fully underway. There have been a number of meetings and exhibitions in the District relating to the document. There were exhibitions held in Kimpton, Whitwell and Breachwood Green during November, and there will also be one in Hitchin on the 21st December. Public meetings were held in Breachwood Green and Whitwell, held by LADACAN and Whitwell Parish Council respectively. There will also be a further public meeting in Kimpton in early January.

4.17 A scoping opinion for an Environmental Impact Assessment has been applied for to Luton Borough Council and it is anticipated that an application for the first phase a development will be submitted in April 2006.

4.18 Appendix A contains the full response which it is proposed to send to Luton Airport on their draft Master Plan. The comments cover a range of issues and are summarised below.

4.19 Air Transport White Paper (ATWP)

4.20 The ATWP says that the Government 'supports the growth of Luton up to the maximum use of a single full-length runway based broadly on the current alignment, on condition that the overall environmental impacts of such development will be carefully controlled and adequate mitigation provided' (11.89).

4.21 The Master Plan states that the existing runway will continue to be used for emergencies and maintenance and possibly for business aviation. As such, it is considered that the new runway is not a replacement runway but in effect a second runway.

4.22 Forecasts

4.23 It is not clear whether the forecasts include any use of the existing runway in addition to the full use of the new runway. There is also no data on the capacity of a fully

operational two-runway airport, which would be a possibility with this Option, if the demand were there.

4.24 Preferred Option/Optioneering

4.25 The airport has floated the idea of making a Luton a fully fledged two-runway airport but there is no discussion of the implications of this. The Council would object to the existing runway being used for anything other than emergencies and essential maintenance. There is also a lack of information on the costs of the options considered.

4.26 Land take/Visual Impact

4.27 There is concern about the amount of Green Belt land which is proposed to be lost through this proposal, and the impact which the new terminal will have on the landscape. To this end, whatever the outcome of the master planning exercise, the scale of growth (and resulting impact) is likely to be significant in landscape (and other) terms on North Hertfordshire. Notwithstanding the concerns expressed in this report the aim of a master planning exercise is to properly plan long term development. It is suggested that whatever applications are submitted they should properly include longer term mitigation measures and this should be reflected in the Environmental Impact Assessments. Applications should cover the whole of the Master Plan site.

4.28 Transport

4.29 *Increased Traffic*

One of the main concerns about increasing passenger numbers at Luton Airport by over three times is the increase in traffic. According to the Surface Access Strategy, 14% of airport traffic comes along the A505 from the east. Much of this traffic will have come through Hitchin which already suffers from some congestion at peak periods. There may also be more traffic coming off the A1(M) to avoid congestion, and travelling along unsuitable rural roads in North Hertfordshire to reach the Airport.

4.30 The Council would have liked to have seen a Transport Assessment (TA) done in support of the Master Plan. The Council would wish to be involved in any future TA or Scoping Report done prior to a TA.

4.31 *Modal Split*

The other three main London Airports have set targets of 40% of passengers using public transport, and Stansted have almost met that target. It is debatable whether the Luton target of 35% is challenging enough, and we would suggest that this is increased to 40% as a minimum with a view to increasing this via effective operation of a Travel Plan.

4.32 Paragraph 3.19, bullet 16 talks about working with bus and coach operators to improve east-west public transport. The Council supports this, but would like it to go further, and for investigations to be made into using Hitchin station as a railhead for passengers from Cambridge, Peterborough and locations between them and London. There should be some more detail about how the airport expects to increase the modal share of rail and bus/coach.

- 4.33 *Severance of roads and public rights of way*
A number of roads around the airport will be severed by the new boundary. Without further information, the Council is not convinced that the movement of people in the vicinity of the airport is not going to be significantly inconvenience by the blocking of a number of local roads.
- 4.34 *Pressure for off-site parking*
The Council is concerned that there may be pressure for car parking within North Hertfordshire, if it cannot be accommodated within the airport, or the Luton conurbation. This would likely have adverse impacts on the rural environment.
- 4.35 Air Noise
- 4.36 Although the number of people affected by noise will reduce , this is mainly due to the fact that residents in south Luton will no longer be within the noise contour, as the runway moves south. However, the number of people affected in North Hertfordshire is likely to increase.
- 4.37 Night noise is something which is particularly concerning for people who live around the airport, and this will increase dramatically. The number of people affected by night noise within the 48 dB(A) contour will increase from 6,731 in 2004 to 16,010 in 2030.
- 4.38 Ground Noise
- 4.39 The greater distance between the new runway and the various terminal buildings will result in considerable aircraft taxiing and this is likely to be a significant source of noise.
- 4.40 Sound Insulation Scheme
- 4.41 Any scheme to provide respite to residents should be welcomed, particularly if it is provided on a voluntary basis. However, the scheme suggested by LLA has a number of limitations.
- 4.42 Air Quality
- 4.43 The proposed expansion of LLA, should it proceed, is likely to have a significant impact on local air quality due to direct aircraft emissions and also from the greater use of road transport.
- 4.44 Water Resources and Flooding
- 4.45 The large increase in hard surfacing will have some impact of the drainage in the area, and could lead to flooding problems elsewhere if not properly dealt with. LLA is situated over an unconfined chalk aquifer that is used for water abstraction, and it is therefore vitally important that this scarce resource is protected from contamination.
- 4.46 Employment and Economy
- 4.47 The number of people who work at Luton Airport who come from North Hertfordshire is small compared to other areas such as Luton, South Beds and Mid Beds. More jobs for North Hertfordshire's residents are generally to be welcomed, but not if it comes at the expense of other residents' quality of life.

4.48 One of the purported benefits of the airport expansion is the rise in foreign tourists coming to this country via Luton Airport, and spending their money in this country. It is unlikely that much of the money spent by foreign tourists will be in North Hertfordshire.

4.49 Housing

4.50 Increasing the number of jobs at Luton Airport will create an increase in demand for housing in and around the conurbation. The Council strongly opposes the loss of further areas of Green Belt in the west of the District to support the growth of Luton Airport.

4.39

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 There are no legal implications directly arising from this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 There are no new financial or risk implications arising from the contents of this report. The Consortium have undertaken to pay the Council's legal costs in respect of the preparation of revised S106 agreement. Other costs can currently be accommodated within existing budgets.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 There are no new HR or equalities implications arising from the contents of this report with the exception of the additional work associated with the reformulation of the legal agreement and appraisal of the Inspector's report and Secretary of State's decision. Adjustments may need to be made to the Service Plan to accommodate specific work associated with the Secretary of State's decision.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

8.1 The Council has not carried out any formal consultation on the London Luton Airport Master Plan, as it is the responsibility of London Luton Airport to do so. Exhibitions have been held by Luton Airport in Breachwood Green, Whitwell, Kimpton and Hitchin. Community Newsletters have also been sent out to some of the population of the western part of the District. These summarise the proposals in the Master Plan. Copies of the documents have been put in the District's libraries and there is a link to the Project 2030 website, from the Council's website. The Council has received eighteen letters from members of the public raising concerns about the proposals in the Master Plan.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That Cabinet authorise officers to respond to the London Luton Master Plan - Project 2030 as set out in this report and Appendix A.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure that the Council's views on the London Luton Airport Master Plan are taken into account by the airport operator.

11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 11.1 There have been no alternative options considered.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix A – Comments on the London Luton Airport Master Plan – Project 2030.

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

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14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 14.1 Luton 2030 Consultation Document.

ADDENDUM TO AGENDA ITEM 7. REGIONAL AND STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUES

The Draft East of England Plan

1. The second half of the Examination in Public into the draft East of England Plan has now commenced. The Council has received a statement by the Government Office for the East of England relating to Matter 8J, the Stevenage Sub-Area. Broadly, this is to address the issue of district level apportionment of regional growth to Stevenage and North Herts, including any specific apportionment to be made in East Herts to meet the needs of Stevenage Sub-Area.
2. In the Go-East submission to the Examination in Public, the Panel's, attention is drawn to a specific locational proposal advanced through developer representation at Hitchin. The respondent proposes to provide 8,000 dwellings in a mixed-use development to the west and south of the town, including a new bypass.
3. Go-East draw attention to the plans for the regeneration and growth of Luton adding to the importance of improving the A505 – A602 – A1(M) – A505 - A10 east-west route to Cambridge, which passes through North Herts just north of Stevenage. It is acknowledged that the A505/A602 is particularly congested along the remaining single carriageway section through Hitchin (once the Baldock bypass has opened). Go-East now seek the advice of the Panel as to whether an improvement scheme of some sort, bypassing Hitchin may be of sub-regional rather than only local importance and, if so, whether the East of England Plan should identify this section for early appraisal.
4. There is currently nothing in the Regional Transport Strategy that relates to a possible Hitchin southern bypass and nothing at present in the Regional Funding Allocation priorities.
5. Whilst the principle of a Hitchin southern bypass may be of benefit to Hitchin it should not come at the expense of thousands of houses. There is no strategy for 8,000 new homes to be built to the southwest of Hitchin, and this is has not been proposed in the Regional Spatial Strategy. In this context, the Council should not support the very significant housing proposals to fund the provision of a bypass in the absence of a clear sustainable justification for such an extraordinary level of growth for the town in this location.

RECOMMENDATION

1. That Cabinet supports the view that major growth of Hitchin should not be allowed as a reason to fund a southwestern bypass for the town, for the reasons stated in paragraph 5 above.

REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

2. To ensure that the Council's views on matter 8J – Stevenage Sub-Area, are taken into account by the Panel at the Examination in Public of the East of England Plan.

APPENDIX A

LONDON LUTON AIRPORT MASTER PLAN –PROJECT 2030

COMMENTS OF NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

Introduction

In commenting on the Luton Airport Master Plan, this Council is at all times concerned primarily with the impact which any proposal will have on the people and environment of North Hertfordshire. Safeguarding and promoting the quality of life of people in North Hertfordshire, is the main concern of this Council.

As such, North Hertfordshire District Council has serious concerns about the proposals contained in the Luton Airport Master Plan, particularly the actual and potential impacts on people in North Hertfordshire. The Council objects in principle to the proposed increased scale of operations at Luton Airport, which will see passenger numbers increase by over three times, and double in physical size.

It is accepted that the current Government policy is to increase the capacity of Luton Airport to around 30mppa by 2030, however the Council does not agree with this policy. The Council are objecting to the Option put forward in this document, because of the impacts it will have on residents of North Hertfordshire. However, the Council will also comment on matters dealing with impacts and mitigation, on the premise that despite this Council's objections, these proposals may gain approval and be implemented in the future.

Air Transport White Paper (ATWP)

The ATWP says that the Government 'supports the growth of Luton up to the maximum use of a single full-length runway based broadly on the current alignment, on condition that the overall environmental impacts of such development will be carefully controlled and adequate mitigation provided' (11.89)

Throughout the section of the ATWP which deals with Luton, it talks about a 'replacement' runway. This suggests that the Government expected the existing short runway to be 'substituted' by another full-length runway. However, the Master Plan makes clear that this will not be the case.

The Council are of the opinion that Option D is not a replacement runway, as set out in the ATWP, but in effect a second runway. Paragraph 11.92 of the ATWP states that 'On balance, we do not support a second runway at Luton'. The Master Plan admits that the current runway will probably be used in the future for some form of aircraft movements. Therefore, the 3000m runway is in no sense replacing the 2,160m runway, it is in addition to it. The Council would like all references to 'replacement' runway removed from the document.

Forecasts

The document contains figures on demand forecasts for the airport at various dates up to 2030. Table 7.2 gives key operational thresholds and capacity constraints. It states that the maximum capacity of the airport will be reached by 2020 and will be 30mppa. It is not clear whether this includes any use of the existing runway in addition to the full use of the new runway. There is also no data on the capacity of a fully operational two-runway airport, which would be a possibility with this Option, if the demand were there.

Preferred Option/Optioneering

Despite being told that more details would be included in the Master Plan on the cost of each option, this has not happened. Unless some information is provided on costs, there will always be the suspicion that Option D was chosen as it was the cheapest one. (para 6.4)

According to paragraph 7.27, the current runway will be used for emergencies and maintenance. It also states that LLAOL wish to continually review the opportunity (of using the current runway), and maintain, 'limited continued use of the existing runway for aircraft movements, beyond 2015, ...'. This is particularly worrying as it shows that the airport will consider using both runways to their full potential in the future.

The Council is concerned that the idea has been floated in this document that Luton Airport could at some point in the future operate as a two-runway airport, but the implications of this have not been considered nor discussed in the Master Plan. The Master Plan is supposed to look forward to 2030, and so it should contain more detail on what the airport is proposing post-2015, with regard to use of the current runway. The fact that the airport will consider using both runways in the future, will cause more uncertainty and concern amongst local communities and should be explained more fully.

Should the full-length runway be constructed, the Council objects to the continued use of the current runway for any purposes other than emergencies or essential maintenance.

Land Take/Visual impact

The proposal in the Master Plan will involve the loss of 330 hectares of Green Belt land, for development within the boundary of the airport. This is the largest land take of all the options considered, and six times as much land as would have been lost under Option A to extend the existing runway. Of the 330 hectares of land, 177 is within North Hertfordshire. Including the 'environmental buffer', there will be approximately 277 hectares of Green Belt land in North Hertfordshire required for this proposal.

The physical size of the airport will increase greatly, approximately doubling the site area. Whilst the proposal is to try and minimise the impact of the new terminal, it will still be a large new building in the middle of what is now Green Belt land. It is not clear from the Core Strategy and the Sustainability Appraisal, if and how different factors such as land take were weighted when the optioneering was being done.

Transport

Increased Traffic

One of the major concerns which the Council has over increasing passenger numbers by approximately four times, is the ability of the transport infrastructure to cope. It is even more concerning because of the fact the airport operators have no control of the vast majority of transport infrastructure which will be required. Therefore, they can only hope that the infrastructure is provided to deal with the increase in passenger numbers.

Whilst the Council does not support the scale of development proposed in the Master Plan, if it should happen then the proper transport infrastructure must be put in place when it is required, and preferably before it is required. The airport operators will be required to ensure that sufficient resources are made available to meet travel

demand generated at the time it is needed, especially to support mode share targets that seek higher levels of passenger transport, walking and cycling than are currently being achieved. It will not be acceptable to rely on infrastructure managers and service providers to meet the future surface access needs of the airport.

Paragraph 2.13 of the Airport Surface Access Strategy (ASAS) mentions the strategic road network, but contains no discussion of the existing constraints on the network. The number of extra passengers using the airport between now and the 2030 could be in the region of 22 million. This is an extra 60,273 passengers per day. In 2004, 61% of passengers used private cars (excluding hire cars and taxis) as their main mode of transport to the airport. Based on these figures, the number of additional people arriving each day by car would be 36,766 (61% of 60,273) in 2030. The overall passenger numbers will include some transferring passengers, though this will be very small, as Luton is not a hub airport.

According to the ASAS (2.13), 14% of the airport traffic comes along the A505 (east). Therefore, the number of extra people potentially using Luton Airport per day who come by car and use the A505 (east) could be 5,147 (14% of 36,766). The latest count of vehicles on the A505, just to the west of Hitchin was 24,848 over a weekday average. Clearly, not every car contains only one individual, with the average occupancy rate for cars in Hertfordshire is 1.25.

The vast majority of the traffic on the A505 will have to come through Hitchin, or on rural roads not intended for the purpose of accessing the Airport. Hitchin currently experiences congestion at peak times. Should Luton Airport expand as is proposed, as well as the potential construction of a Luton Northern by-pass which may join the A505 within North Herts, the result will be a significant increase in congestion in and around Hitchin.

The Council would have liked to have seen a Transport Assessment (TA) done in support of the Master Plan. An overarching and robust TA could have been produced to support the Masterplan to which detail could have been added for individual phases as they come forward. As it has not been done, the Council wish to ensure that any future Transport Assessment covers the impact which these proposals will have on the A505 east and Hitchin.

Paragraph 1.6 of the ASAS states that a Scoping Report will be carried out prior to the Transport Assessment. North Hertfordshire District Council would wish to be involved in this Study. Paragraph 3.19, bullet 2 talks about costs and benefits and options for improving connections to the east of Luton. This should include constrained junctions in and around Hitchin.

Another concern which the Council has relates to traffic on A1(M). When the development at West of Stevenage is built, this will create more congestion on the A1(M) around Stevenage. As congestion worsens, there may be more pressure for those travelling to the airport up the A1(M), to come off at Junction 6 and travel up the B656 and indeed other less suitable rural roads.

Figure 3.1 in the ASAS shows Proposed Surface Access Improvements. The purple dotted lines show 'Possible Alternative Routes'. It is unclear what these routes from the A6 to the A505 relate to, especially the lines shown to the south of the A505. One alternative north of the A505 appears to be similar to the current safeguarded route whereas the other has not status. The Council is concerned that these routes are put in the public domain without a robust appraisal of the transport and environmental impacts as well as a clear view on how they will be delivered.

With regard to the Luton Northern by-pass, paragraph 2.45 of the ASAS says that it is under consideration for inclusion in the LTP, and in paragraph 3.19, bullet 4 it is a 'proposal' on the Bedfordshire County Council. The Luton Northern by-pass is only at the feasibility stage, and no case has yet been made for the need for it, or what its purpose would be, in the feasibility work so far. Therefore, it is probably incorrect to say that it is a proposal, or under consideration for inclusion in the LTP.

Modal Split

The Council is keen to see as many passengers and employees as possible arriving and departing Luton Airport by public transport. This is for reasons of limiting Co2 emissions as well as having less car traffic on the roads in North Hertfordshire. Paragraph 3.22 of the ASAS state that the challenging targets of 35% public transport use will be retained.

The other three main London Airports have set targets of 40% of passengers using public transport, and Stansted have almost met that target. Therefore, it is debatable whether the Luton target of 35% is challenging enough, and we would suggest that this is increased to 40% as a minimum with a view to increasing this via effective operation of a Travel Plan. A date for achieving all targets should also be set.

Paragraph 3.19, bullet 16 talks about working with bus and coach operators to improve east-west public transport. The Council supports this, but would like it to go further, and for investigations to be made into using Hitchin station as a railhead for passengers from Cambridge, Peterborough and locations between them and London. As stated above, the Council is concerned that operators will be relied on to meet demand without any financial assistance from the Airport Operator.

The Council agree with the comment in paragraph 2.21 of the ASAS that demand management will be required to promote more people to use public transport, and consideration should be given to restraining and managing car parking provision to promote alternative modes. Paragraphs 2.34 and 2.35 should give some more detail about how the airport expects to increase the modal share of rail and bus/coach.

As part of the Transport Assessment process, a Travel Plan for employees and passengers should be developed. Such a Plan should be considered the implementation part of the Transport Assessment and should run alongside any infrastructure improvements required to maximise the potential for passenger transport, walking, cycling and car sharing.

Severance of roads and public rights of way

The proposal to expand the area of the airport will have serious implications for the surrounding road network. A number of roads around the airport will be severed by the new boundary. This will have significant implications for accessibility in the area. Paragraph 8.29 states that these roads and affected public rights of way will be diverted, but does not say how. Without further information, the Council is not convinced that the movement of people in the vicinity of the airport is not going to be significantly inconvenience by the blocking of a number of local roads.

Pressure for off-site parking

Table 7.1 in the document states that there will be a requirement for approximately 14,000 extra parking spaces. The aim of the airport is to accommodate as much of this as possible within the boundary of the airport, but it is acknowledged that this may not be possible. The Council is concerned that there may be pressure for car parking within North Hertfordshire, if it cannot be accommodated within the airport, or

the Luton conurbation. This would likely have adverse impacts on the rural environment.

Air Noise

The impact of noise on residents of North Hertfordshire is one of the most important issues for the Council. The Master Plan states that the number of people within the 57dB(A) noise contour will reduce between 2004 and 2030, from 3,773 to 2,790. However, this is mainly due to the fact that residents in south Luton will no longer be within the noise contour. This is not the case to the east of the airport in North Hertfordshire.

In 2030, the 57 dB(A) contour will stretch right across the southern rural part of North Hertfordshire, and reach central Stevenage. It will encompass a number of small communities in North Hertfordshire, including some who have not been exposed to these levels of noise before, e.g. Whitwell.

Night noise is something which is particularly concerning for people who live around the airport. Therefore, the increase in night noise which these proposals will lead to, is worrying. The number of people affected by night noise within the 48 dB(A) contour will increase from 6,731 in 2004 to 16,010 in 2030. Whilst some of this increase will be within Stevenage, some will be in North Hertfordshire, west of St Paul's Walden and to the south in places like Peter's Green and Whitwell.

It has been estimated by London Luton Airport Consultative Committee's noise consultant, that there will be an increase in night noise of 13 dB L Aeq T in Langley, 12 in Peter's Green and 13 in Whitwell.

Ground Noise

The creation of noise by an airport is not entirely associated with aircraft in flight but also from ground operations. This aspect has been mentioned within the draft Master Plan documents in as far as the preferred option D, is stated as being further away from housing and therefore noise levels will be naturally lower. All things being equal, this is likely to be true. However, the greater distance between the new runway and the various terminal buildings will result in considerable aircraft taxiing and this is likely to be a significant source of noise. The comment that aircraft stands are to be designed to reduce noise whilst aircraft are static is welcome but is unlikely to have an important part to play in general noise control given the above comments relating to taxiing.

Sound Insulation Scheme

Any scheme to provide respite to residents should be welcomed, particularly if it is provided on a voluntary basis. However, it is important to note that the scheme suggested by LLA is limited in the following respects:

- Protection is only afforded to dwellings – obviously there is no protection for gardens or other amenity areas;
- The scheme relates to grant aid for windows. No comment is made regarding the real objective – the management of the internal living space as regards noise levels and ventilation;
- Windows may not be the only acoustic weak spot in a dwelling (e.g. the roof);

- The trigger for compensation appears to be based entirely on modelled noise levels and not those actually encountered by the community;
- The proposed 63 dB(A) threshold needs to be based on accepted published guidance and be consistently applied with regard to best practice within the industry;
- The proposed threshold is based entirely on daytime noise levels – a second trigger relating to night-time noise may be a reasonable addition;
- A sound insulation scheme relating to future noise levels has been deferred until later in the development process..

Air Quality

The proposed expansion of LLA, should it proceed, is likely to have a significant impact on local air quality due to direct aircraft emissions and also from the greater use of road transport. Whilst the documentation published by LLA acknowledges the potential environmental harm in this respect no prediction has been made on the scale of this impact or whether it is capable of being adequately controlled. Indeed, a full assessment has been deferred until Phase 1 of the development process.

Water Resources and Flooding

In 2001 the village of Kimpton suffered serious flooding - there were unconfirmed suggestions at the time that the flooding could have been attributable to some extent from run off from the airport. The large increase in hard surfacing will have some impact of the drainage in the area, and could lead to flooding problems elsewhere if not properly dealt with.

The Environment Agency is the prime regulator as regards water resources and therefore it is inappropriate to comment other than to state that a full hydrological survey has yet to be completed. LLA is situated over an unconfined chalk aquifer that is used for water abstraction. It is therefore vitally important that this scarce resource is protected from contamination.

Employment and Economy

This Council can appreciate the objective of Luton Borough and South Beds District Councils to regenerate the urban area through increasing employment opportunities for its population. However, the Council is most concerned with its own communities.

The number of people who work at Luton Airport who come from North Hertfordshire is small compared to other areas such as Luton, South Beds and Mid Beds. The study undertaken by Halcrow on the 'Employment and Housing Implications of an Extended or Replacement Runway At Luton Airport' (2004), put the figure at 376 (4.8%) in 2000.

Hitchin and Letchworth have higher unemployment than the District average. However, it is not so high as to mean that some extra jobs at Luton Airport, which may go to residents in the western part of North Hertfordshire, is a major incentive for the District to support significant growth at the airport. More jobs for North Hertfordshire's residents are generally to be welcomed, but not if it comes at the expense of other residents' quality of life.

One of the purported benefits of the airport expansion is the rise in foreign tourists coming to this country via Luton Airport, and spending their money in this country. However, according to the Halcrow study, in 2003 there were 2.5 times as many people leaving the country from British airports, as were coming in from abroad. The balance of payments deficit on overseas travel and tourism was £18.5 billion in 2004. In any case it is unlikely that much of the money spent by foreign tourists will be in North Hertfordshire.

Housing

Increasing the number of jobs at Luton Airport will create an increase in demand for housing in and around the conurbation. Paragraph 8.73 estimates that this could be in the region of 8,000 new dwellings in the core catchment area, which includes North Hertfordshire. North Hertfordshire is already having to accommodate at least 3,500 extra dwelling in its Green Belt to support the growth of Stevenage. The Council cannot support the loss of further areas of Green Belt in the west of the District to support the growth of Luton Airport.

Conclusion

The Council is not claiming that there are no benefits to some North Hertfordshire residents of an expanded Luton Airport. However, in the Council's view, the benefits of this proposal are outweighed by the disbenefits, particularly with regard to traffic and accessibility, noise, loss of land, and visual impact. The Council is also of the view that this proposal is for a second runway, rather than a replacement runway, and is contrary to the government's policy in the Air Transport White Paper. Should Luton become a fully fledged two-runway airport, the disbenefits to North Hertfordshire would become even more serious. Given the scale of development proposed applications for expansion of the airport should treat development in a long term and comprehensive manner, rather than in a piecemeal approach. Applications should be for the whole of the master planning area to properly assess and control the context of development. This is particularly important given the location of the administrative boundaries and the need for this Council to ensure that the appropriate mitigation measures are secured.

TITLE OF REPORT: REVIEW OF GATEWAY ALLOCATION SCHEME (HOUSING)

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF HOUSING AND ENVIRONMENTAL HEALTH
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR ALLISON ASHLEY

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to seek endorsement for minor changes to the Gateway Allocation Scheme. The Scheme has been in operation for almost a year and has been working well. The proposed changes will ensure the scheme operates as efficiently as possible.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key decision, and has been included in the Forward Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 NHDC's Gateway Allocation Scheme was launched in December 2004.
- 3.2 This review was identified before the launch of the scheme to identify and consider minor amendments.

4. ISSUES

- 4.1 The scheme has been operational for almost 12 months and 412 households have been permanently housed through it.
- 4.2 The scheme is markedly different from previous NHDC allocation schemes and as a consequence there was some uncertainty as to the exact effect of the changes.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 The scheme enables NHDC to fulfil our duty to housing applicants, including those who are homeless, under the Housing Act 1996 Parts VI and VII, and the Homelessness Act 2002.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

None.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

None.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

8.1 The views of users, stakeholders and officers have all fed into the review.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The proposed changes are attached as Appendix 1.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To ensure that any ambiguous areas are clarified, to avoid confusion and possible challenge.

11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

None.

12. APPENDICES

12.1 Table of proposed changes (Appendix 1).

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14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

14.1 The Gateway Allocations Scheme

January 2006 – Review of Gateway Allocation Scheme.

Appendix 1 - table of recommended changes.

| Current | Proposed change | Reason |
|--|--|---|
| Applicants sharing a bedroom or using a living room to sleep in get the same priority as those with their own bedroom. (Households with children with insufficient bedrooms are placed in band C) | Add category in band D Households without children with insufficient bedrooms for their needs. | To acknowledge that those without their own bedroom have a housing need. |
| Households that include at least one dependent child under the age of 11 that lack access to a garden or secure play area. | Change wording to ... an enclosed garden or secure play area. | To clarify that those with access to communal gardens are entitled to preference. |
| 12.3 most people will be invited to indicate their preferred type of accommodation. However, single people and couples without resident children who are not current tenants of a Registered Social Landlord are advised that they will only be offered studio flats, flats and maisonettes..... | 12.3 Applicants will be invited to indicate their preferred type of accommodation. However, households without children under the age of 11 years, who are not under-occupying tenants of a Registered Social Landlord, are advised that they will only be offered studio flats, flats or maisonettes. | Houses are in high demand. It is considered that those with young children are in the greatest need of houses with gardens to ensure that there is somewhere safe for their children to play. |
| Shared ownership – no mention of how many offers of shared ownership properties they may receive. | Add a paragraph – ‘There is no limit to the number of offers of shared-ownership properties an applicant may receive.’ | There is a limit of 2 offers of social rented housing – if applicant refuses both s/he must re-apply to the register. There is a need to clarify that this rule does not apply to |

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| | | shared-ownership properties. |
| 8 Offers of Accommodation | Add paragraph: Applicants may request a review if they consider an offer of accommodation is not reasonable (see para 3.9). A request for a review must be made within 21 days of the offer. Applicants are advised that should they refuse a first offer, they will not be made a second offer until a period of 21 days has passed, unless they wish to submit a written statement confirming that the first offer was reasonable and they will not be requesting a review. | To clarify the position of applicants who refuse an offer. It is not possible to make a second offer of accommodation to an applicant who has requested a review as the outcome of the review will affect their position and potentially their decision on the second offer. As the applicant has 21 days in which to request a review on an offer of accommodation, another offer cannot be made within that time unless we are certain that they will not request a review. This will ensure that applicants are fully aware of their position before considering their decision. |
| Paragraphs: 7.3.1, 7.3.2, 7.3.3 & 7.3.4 Applicants with a local connection and insufficient resources to resolve their own housing need | Change wording to: Applicants with a local connection and insufficient capital and/or income to resolve their own housing need | To clarify the resources taken into account when making a decision on the preference an applicant receives on the housing register. |
| Paragraph 7.3.5 Applicants that have sufficient resources to resolve their own housing need. | Change to: Applicants who have sufficient income and/or capital to resolve their own housing need | As above. |
| Paragraph 7.5 | Add: The position will be reviewed | To ensure that households that have |

| | | |
|--|---|--|
| Intentional worsening of circumstances | after 12 months or upon a material change of circumstances within the household. | worsened their own circumstances are treated fairly and do not live in overcrowded or otherwise inadequate accommodation indefinitely. |
| 7.3.2 Band B | Add: Applicants who have been placed in supported accommodation outside the district by NHDC, to discharge their homelessness duty, and who subsequently no longer require the level of support provided. | The homelessness team occasionally place homelessness applicants in supported accommodation outside the district when there is no availability within the district. This will ensure that once the applicant is able to sustain their own tenancy s/he will be given sufficient preference on the housing register to move on quickly, back into the district, and not take up a place that could be used for someone with relevant support needs. |

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE
DISTRICT COUNCIL



Gateway Allocation Scheme

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1. INTRODUCTION

The Council's Allocations Policy is designed to provide assistance with securing accommodation to households with a housing need.

In North Hertfordshire the demand for social rented housing far outweighs the supply. Moreover, government guidelines dictate that we must give priority to those households with the greatest housing need and the least capacity to satisfy that need via other routes. As a consequence we are unable to guarantee that social rented housing will become available to all those who desire it.

Because of this and in recognition of the varied circumstances and aspirations of the population, we have broadened the functions of the housing register. The result is an inclusive register that takes account of a diversity of housing needs by offering a gateway into a wide range of housing options.

2. ELIGIBILITY

All persons aged 16 years or over are eligible to join the housing register with the exception of persons from abroad who are subject to immigration control or not habitually resident in the Common Travel Area (see annex A).

2.1 Valuing Diversity

The Council values the diversity of the communities it serves and aims to provide services that meet their needs. We will implement this scheme regardless of a person's race, gender, colour, nationality, ethnic or national origin, sexuality or disability. The scheme will be monitored and analysed to ensure that it is meeting the needs of all communities.

2.2 Ethnic Monitoring

To ensure that we meet our commitment to implement this scheme without discrimination we ask all applicants to provide details of their ethnic origin.

The information collected will be used to measure the impact of the Allocations Policy on the black and minority ethnic community. This will help us to identify if we are not meeting the needs of a particular ethnic group. Should such a group be identified the Council will endeavour to identify and meet their need.

The Council's Race Equalities Scheme can be viewed at the council offices or on our website - www.north-herts.gov.uk

3. MAKING AN APPLICATION

Access to the register is via an application form. Applicants will be asked to indicate the housing options that they wish to be considered for. A trained Officer will make decisions on the application and, where possible, applicants will be added to the list(s) of their choice. Applicants will be notified of the list(s) they are placed on within 10 working days from the receipt of their application and any documentary evidence requested. Applicants accepted onto the Social Rented Housing Register will also be notified of the band to which they have been allocated and any medical priority awarded.

In the event of housing options that the applicant has not applied for being identified as viable and available to the applicant, he/she will be advised and invited to join the appropriate list.

3.1 Common Housing Register

It is the intention of the Council to form a Common Housing Register with registered Social Landlords operating within the District. When this is adopted both the Council and its partner Registered Social Landlords will carry out the function of assessing applications to the Housing Register and provide advice and assistance to applicants.

Access to Housing Association properties will be through a single application form with which anyone seeking housing in the area can register their need and specify their housing preferences. Applicants will be prioritised and selected from the Common Housing Register according to the criteria of the participating parties.

Applicants should note that the criteria for acceptance and priority for Social Rented Housing in this document apply solely to the North Hertfordshire District Council's quota for re-housing. Housing Associations set their own criteria, which may be significantly different to those of the Council.

3.2 Assistance with completing an application

We offer assistance with completing the application form either over the telephone or in person. Applicants requiring assistance should contact our Housing Needs Service on 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk in the first instance.

3.3 Translation

The application form can be made available in a number of different languages. We will also arrange a translation service for applicants who visit the Council Offices in person. Applicants requiring this service should contact our Housing Needs Department on 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk

3.4 Change in Circumstances

All applicants must inform the Council of **any** change in the information provided on their application form. Changes in circumstances may mean the application will need to be reassessed.

3.5 Monitoring and Reviewing Applications

Applications will be reviewed annually on the anniversary of the date of application. Applicants will be required to confirm that their circumstances have not changed. Failure to respond to two contacts will result in the application being cancelled.

3.6 Withholding information/giving false information

It is an offence, (under S 171, Housing Act 1996), for a person to make a statement which is false, or knowingly withhold information from the Council which would be relevant to their application.

The Council will prosecute any applicant found to have made a false statement following an assessment of the costs and benefits of such action. The landlord may seek possession of any tenancy that has been granted as a result of a false statement by the tenant or a person acting at the tenant's instigation.

3.7 Right to access information

Applicants on the Register have the right to see any information about them held on either manual or computer records apart from information provided by a third party, for example a letter from a GP, as such information can only be disclosed with the relevant party's consent. Applications to see records should be made in writing and addressed to the Housing Needs Manager at the Council. Copies of files can be provided for a small fee to cover administration costs.

3.8 Pets

Applicants are advised that there are some properties/schemes that do not allow pets. On receipt of an offer, applicants should make enquiries of the relevant landlord if they are concerned.

3.9 Right to a review on a decision

An applicant has the legal right to request a review of the following decisions:

- ◆ That an applicant is ineligible to join the Register;
- ◆ That an offer of housing was reasonable;
- ◆ That an applicant be removed from the Register.

An applicant has 21 calendar days from the date that they are notified of a decision to request a review. Unless there are exceptional circumstances, a request received beyond 21 days notification will not be considered. Requests for a review must be made in writing but do not have to be on a prescribed form.

When a request for a review is received, an acknowledgement letter will be sent to the applicant providing details of the review procedure and the date the review will be completed.

An Officer senior to the one who made the original decision and who was not involved in the original decision will make the review decision. Applicants or their representative may make a written representation to the reviewing officer.

The Council will undertake the review within four weeks from the date the review is requested. In exceptional circumstances it may be necessary to extend the review period. In such cases the applicant will be advised in writing of the new review completion date and the reasons why the review period needs extending.

The applicant will be advised in writing of the result of the review within 14 calendar days of the decision.

If an applicant is not satisfied with the review decision they can contact the Local Government Ombudsman or challenge the decision in the County Court.

3.9.1 Right to a review of the administration of the Scheme

Should an applicant consider that the Scheme has not been administered correctly they may make a request to the Reference Board to make an assessment. The Committee may not overturn a decision however, it may make a judgement on whether the Scheme has been correctly administered and, where necessary, refer the case back to the Housing Needs Manager for further consideration.

Applicants should note that a request for a review of the administration of the Scheme may only be made after a Senior Officer has reviewed the decision (see 3.9).

4. **HOUSING OPTIONS**

The Council keeps a list of those wishing to pursue one or more of the following housing options: -

Rented Accommodation

- Social Housing
- Sheltered housing
- Sub-market rental
- Private rental

Mobility

- Mutual exchange/Homes scheme
- Homes Mobility Scheme
- Transfers
- Lawn scheme

Home ownership

- Owner occupation
- Low cost home ownership schemes
- NHDC cash incentive scheme

Staying put

- Floating support
- Grants and loans

RENTED HOUSING

5. THE SOCIAL RENTED HOUSING REGISTER

The Council transferred its housing stock to a newly formed company called North Hertfordshire Homes in March 2003. As a result the Council no longer owns or manages any housing stock. We do, however maintain a Housing Register and have nomination rights to a large number of properties managed by numerous Social Landlords. This means that when a Housing Association, such as North Hertfordshire Homes, has a vacancy they may ask the Council to nominate a household from the register for social rented housing for the property.

With the exception of those deemed to be guilty of unacceptable behaviour (see 6.1), applicants who fulfil the requirements for the Housing Register are eligible to be placed on the list for social rented housing.

The information provided on the application form will be used to prioritise applicants according to their needs and to make best use of the available housing stock.

6. CONDITIONS & DEFINITIONS

6.1 **Unacceptable Behaviour.**

An applicant deemed to be guilty of unacceptable behaviour will be denied access to the register for social rented housing until such a time as the Council is satisfied that there is evidence that they have taken steps to correct the offending conduct.

A decision of unacceptable behaviour will be made if the Council is satisfied that the applicant, or a member of their household, has behaved in a manner that would have entitled the Council to a possession order should the applicant have been a secure tenant of the Council.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are: -

- ◆ A serious breach of tenancy obligations.
- ◆ Serious nuisance or annoyance of neighbours.
- ◆ A conviction for using the accommodation for illegal or immoral purposes.
- ◆ Serious damage or neglect of a property.

6.2 Tenant arrears and other debts to landlords

Applicants with former tenant arrears or other debts to landlords will be given access to the register but may not be offered a tenancy unless they have made arrangements to clear the debt and maintained those arrangements for a minimum of 6 months.

Applicants with current tenant arrears or other landlord debts will be accepted on the register. However, applicants are advised that should the Council nominate them for a property the landlord may refuse to accept the nomination unless the debt is cleared or acceptable arrangements have been made to clear the debt.

6.3 Local Connection

An applicant will have a local connection with the District if he/she; -

- ◆ Has been resident, by choice, in the District for 6 out of the last 12 months or;
- ◆ Has been resident, by choice, in the District for 3 out of the last 5 years or;
- ◆ Has an immediate family member, (this would normally be their mother, father, brother, sister, or adult child), resident in the District. Their residency must be by choice and have been so for a minimum of 5 years or;
- ◆ Has permanent employment in the District or;
- ◆ Has another special reason why they need to live in the District.

Applicants who do not have a local connection will be given no preference on the register.

6.4 Resources

An applicant who has sufficient resources to resolve their own housing need either by purchasing a property suitable for their household, (whether on the open market or through one of the low-cost home ownership schemes) or by other means, will be given 'no preference' on the register.

When assessing applicants' ability to purchase, the amount of income and capital available to the applicant and the cost of a suitable property in the District will be taken into account.

6.5 Definition of a Household

A household is defined as the applicant together with any other person(s) who normally reside with him or her as a member of the family, or any other person(s) who might reasonably be expected to live with him or her.

Members of a household may or may not live together at the time the application is made, however, it must be *reasonable* to expect them to do so. Such cases might include a carer or companion for an elderly or disabled person, children who are being fostered by the applicant or family members who are not living as part of the family at the time the application is made.

In the case of partners who are not living together at the time the application is made, the application must be made in joint names. The circumstances of both partners will be assessed when making the decision on which band the application is assigned to.

7.0 STRUCTURE

The Social Rented Housing register is divided into five bands ranging from A (maximum preference) to E (no preference). The purpose of the bands is firstly, to ensure that those with the most urgent need for accommodation are given the greatest priority and secondly, to make the most efficient use of available properties.

When a property becomes available the Council will seek to match it with an applicant in band 'A'. If there is more than one suitable applicant, the applicant with the most points will be offered the tenancy. Should the applicant refuse the offer, the property will be offered to the applicant with the next highest level of points. If a suitable applicant is not found in band 'A' the property will be offered to the applicant with the most points in band 'B'. This process will be followed through the bands until a suitable occupant is allocated to the property.

7.1 Points

Within each band, points will be awarded for waiting time. Thus, all applicants will be eligible for 1 point per month.

7.2 Booster points

An additional, one-off award of points may be awarded to applicants where it is considered that their housing need is greater than others within the band.

The Head of Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for housing can sanction a change to the level of booster points awarded.

7.3 BANDING CRITERIA

The eligibility requirements for each band are as follows: -

7.3.1 BAND 'A' - Maximum preference.

Applicants with a local connection and insufficient resources to resolve their own housing need who have an urgent need to move will be placed in this category.

The following applicants will fall into this category: -

- ◆ Applicants who have an urgent need to move due to a permanent medical condition or a disability and other remedies such as the Disabled Facilities Grant have been investigated and eliminated (see 9.1.1, 36 & 37).
- ◆ Applicants whose lives would be in immediate danger if they continued to live in their current accommodation and this has been substantiated.
- ◆ Existing tenants of Registered Social Landlords within the District who need an immediate move because of serious violence or harassment where management measures are unable to resolve the situation.

We do not anticipate that there will be a substantial number of applicants in Band 'A'. As all applicants in this band are considered to be urgent, booster points will not be awarded.

7.3.2 BAND 'B' - Very high preference

In order to make the best possible use of the available stock of social rented housing the following applicants will be placed in this category: -

Tenants of Social Rented Housing within the District who: -

- 1) Are under-occupying family sized properties and are willing to move to one-bedroom properties.
- 2) Are under-occupying four or five bedroom properties or three bedroom properties with 2 reception rooms who are willing to move to a smaller property.
- 3) Need to be moved to enable their current property to be redeveloped or refurbished.
- 4) Are in accommodation that is designated for a special needs client group and no longer require the level of support provided.
- 5) Have to leave accommodation that is leased by a Registered Social Landlord from a private landlord because the lease is due to end.

- 6) Are in intermediate care following hospitalisation because they are unable to return to their former home and their landlord is unable to make suitable adaptations.

We do not anticipate that there will be a substantial number of applicants in Band 'B'. Booster points will not be awarded in this category.

7.3.3 **BAND 'C'** - High preference

Applicants with a local connection and insufficient resources to resolve their own housing need that fulfil one of the following criteria will be placed in band 'C': -

- ◆ Households that have been accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness and in priority need and are owed a duty by this Authority, unless they are placed in temporary accommodation which is designated for a special needs client group (see band 'D', 7.3.4).
- ◆ Household whose accommodation lacks basic facilities such as a kitchen or bathroom and other remedies such as grants and loans (see 36 & 38) have been investigated and eliminated.
- ◆ Households whose accommodation has been assessed as being in severe disrepair by an Environmental Health Officer and other remedies such as grants and loans (see 36 & 38.) have been investigated and eliminated.
- ◆ Households with dependent children where the facilities are shared with others who are not members of the applicants' household and the applicant has no rights to occupy the property or to apply for an occupation order to grant this.
- ◆ Households with children without enough bedrooms for their needs.
- ◆ Households with a serious medical or welfare need to move and other remedies have been investigated and eliminated (see 9.1.2, 36 & 37).
- ◆ Applicants that are vulnerable and cannot be expected to find their own accommodation but can live in general needs housing either with or without support. Examples of vulnerable applicants are care leavers, those with learning difficulties and applicants with mental health problems.

We anticipate that households in this band will fill a substantial number of the available lettings.

An award of 4 booster points will be made to applicants in this band for the following: -

- Households that are homeless or threatened with homelessness and in priority need. Such applicants will only receive further booster points if a member of their household has been awarded medical priority in which case, a further 4 points will be awarded for serious medical priority and 2 points for moderate medical priority.
- Applicants who fulfil more than one of the categories in band 'C'.

- Households lacking more than one bedroom.
- Households that lack more than one basic facility.
- Second and subsequent applicants in a household that been assessed as having a serious medical need to move.

An award of 2 booster points will be made for each member of a household that has been assessed as having a moderate medical need to move.

7.3.4 **BAND 'D'** - Moderate preference

Applicants with a local connection and insufficient resources to resolve their own housing need that fulfil one of the following criteria will be placed in this band: -

- ◆ Households in accommodation with limited security of tenure (see 10.).
- ◆ Applicants who have been accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness and in priority need by NHDC and are owed a duty by this Authority, who are placed in temporary accommodation that is designated for a special needs client group.
- ◆ Households with a moderate medical or welfare need to move and other remedies have been investigated and eliminated (see 9.1.3, 36 & 37).
- ◆ Households accepted as homeless or threatened with homelessness but not in priority need, under the terms of the Housing Act 1996 part VII.
- ◆ Households found to be intentionally homeless under the terms of the Housing Act 1996 part VII (see 7.5).
- ◆ Households that include at least one dependent child under the age of 11 and/or a pregnant woman that are living in accommodation above the ground floor.
- ◆ Households that include at least one dependent child under the age of 11 that lack access to a garden or secure play area.
- ◆ Households with no living room or sharing a living room with another household.
- ◆ Keyworker households.
- ◆ Households that need to move to give or receive care.

An award of 4 booster points will be made to applicants in this band for the following: -

- Households that fulfil more than one of the criteria with the exception of those awarded moderate medical priority (see below).
- Second and subsequent children under the age of 11 years in households living above the ground floor.

An award of 2 booster points will be made for each member of a household that has been assessed as having a moderate medical need to move.

***Intentionally homeless households are not eligible for booster points**

7.3.5 BAND 'E' - no preference

The following applicants will be placed in band 'E': -

- ◆ Applicants that do not fulfil any of the criteria required to be placed in bands A - D.
- ◆ Applicants that do not have a local connection.
- ◆ Applicants that have sufficient resources to resolve their own housing need.

Booster points will not be awarded in this band.

7.4 Management discretion

In exceptional circumstances, the Housing Needs Manager has the discretion to decide the level of priority awarded.

7.5 Intentional worsening of housing circumstances

Should an applicant perform a deliberate action or inaction that results in a worsening of their housing circumstances they will not gain preference on the social rented housing register. The household will be placed in the band they would have qualified for should they not have worsened their housing circumstances or, in the case of applicants found to be intentionally homeless, placed in band 'D'

8. OFFERS OF ACCOMMODATION

Applicants will be made 2 suitable offers of accommodation. Should an applicant refuse both offers they will be removed from the list. In these circumstances, the applicant may reapply to join the register with immediate effect. The application will be assessed as a new application thus, points accumulated on their previous application for waiting time, will be lost.

Statutory homeless applicants being accommodated in temporary accommodation, will be made one suitable offer of accommodation. In the event that the offer is refused, we may decide that the Council has discharged its duty and temporary accommodation may cease to be made available.

9.0 MEDICAL GROUNDS FOR MOVING

9.1 Medical Assessment

An applicant who considers that he/she or a member of their household has a medical reason for moving should complete a self-assessment medical form. The Council's medical advisor will make a recommendation on the level of priority, if any, the application should receive. The medical advisor may also make a recommendation on the type and location of accommodation and any special aids or adaptations necessary. The Council's Housing Needs Officer will take account of the recommendations of the medical advisor when making the decision on whether medical priority should be awarded.

Where applicable, medical priority will only be awarded on the understanding that the applicant will accept the type of property recommended.

Medical priority will be given in the following circumstances: -

9.1.1 Urgent medical priority

Urgent medical priority will only be granted in circumstances whereby: -

- ◆ The applicant or a member of their household has a permanent medical problem that prevents them gaining access to their property or to basic facilities within the property or;
- ◆ The medical condition of the applicant or a member of his/her household may lead to danger to life and limb if they are not re-housed.

Such priority will only be awarded where other remedies such as a Disabled Facilities Grant (see 36 & 37) have been investigated and eliminated.

Applicants awarded urgent medical priority will be placed in band 'A'.

9.1.2 Serious medical priority

Serious medical priority will be granted in circumstances whereby: -

- ◆ The applicant or a member of his/her household has a medical condition that causes them serious difficulty in gaining access to their property or to basic facilities within their property or;
- ◆ The applicant's continued occupation of their current property is likely to cause a significant deterioration to their health or the health of a member of the household.

Such priority will only be awarded where other remedies such as a Disabled Facilities Grant (see 36 & 37) have been investigated and eliminated

Applicants awarded serious medical priority will be placed in band 'C'

9.1.3 Moderate medical priority

Moderate medical priority will be awarded in circumstances whereby: -

- ◆ The applicant or a member of his/her household has a medical condition that diminishes their ability to gain access to their property or to basic facilities within their property or;
- ◆ The applicant's continued occupation of their current property is likely to cause deterioration to their health or the health of a member of their household.

Such priority will only be awarded where other remedies such as the Disabled Facilities Grant (see 36 & 37) have been investigated and eliminated.

An applicant in bands 'C' and 'D' with moderate medical priority will be awarded 2 booster points. Applicants with a moderate medical priority and no other identified housing need will be placed in band 'D'.

10.0 LIMITED SECURITY OF TENURE

Limited security of tenure will apply where the Council is satisfied that the applicant can legally be evicted without the need for a ground for possession being proved in court or where the nature of the applicant's occupancy excludes them from the terms of the Protection from Eviction Act 1977.

Examples of limited secure of tenancy are: -

- ◆ Assured Shorthold Tenancy
- ◆ Non-secure tenancy.
- ◆ Licence.
- ◆ Sharing accommodation with a resident landlord
- ◆ Sharing accommodation with a member of their family
- ◆ Unauthorised occupancy.

Applicants with limited security of tenure will be placed in band 'D'.

11.0 OVERCROWDING

A household will be assessed as lacking one or more bedrooms if their current accommodation does not fulfil the following criteria: -

- ◆ With the exception of partners a separate bedroom is required for each member of the household aged 18 years or over.
- ◆ Two children of opposite sex should not share a bedroom once the elder child is over the age of 8 years.
- ◆ Two children of the same sex should not share a bedroom if there is an age difference of 10 years or over between them.

12. CHOICE

12.1 Location

The District of North Hertfordshire is divided into 51 areas (see annex B). Applicants may select as many locations as they wish to be considered for accommodation in.

Homeless Households

Homeless households provided with temporary accommodation must select at least three areas one of which must be in an urban location.

Applicants will not normally be considered for a property in an area that they have not indicated a preference for.

12.2 Size

The Council will assess the **minimum** sized property an applicant will be considered for. In doing so, the size, composition and any special requirements of the household will be taken into consideration.

| No. of people in household* | Minimum size of property |
|---|--|
| Single person | Bedsit |
| Single person with residential access to children or childless couple | 1 bedroom |
| Couple | 1 bedroom |
| Up to 4 people | 2 bedrooms |
| Up to 6 people | 3 bedrooms |
| More than 6 people | 4 bedrooms or 3 bedrooms and two reception rooms |

* Where a household includes a woman who is 26 weeks or more into a pregnancy any offer of accommodation take into account the housing need of the household once the child is born.

12.3 Type

Most applicants will be invited to indicate their preferred type of accommodation. However, single people and couples without resident children who are not current tenants of a Registered Social Landlord are advised that they will only be offered studio flats, flats and maisonettes.

It should be noted that preference for certain types of accommodation will be given to the following applicants: -

Flats with gardens

Preference will be given to households with children under the age of 11 years.

Ground floor flats

Preference will be given to the following; -

- ◆ Those with mobility problems awarded medical priority.
- ◆ Households with at least one member over the age of 60.

Adapted housing

Preference will be given to applicants with a recognised need for the facilities provided.

Bungalows

Preference will be given to: -

- ◆ Applicants over the age of 55 years who want to move out of a house in the District, which belongs to a Registered Social Landlord.
- ◆ Applicants with a medical reason to move to single storey accommodation.

Applicants will not normally be considered for property types they have not indicated a preference for.

12.4 Choice of Landlord

Applicants are required to indicate their preferred landlord(s). They may choose as many or as few landlords as they wish. Applicants will not be offered accommodation from a landlord they have not indicated a preference for.

Homeless Applicants

Homeless applicants in temporary accommodation will not be offered a choice of landlord.

Applicants are advised that they are likely to face longer waiting times if they restrict the type, location and landlord of properties they will accept.

13. EXCEPTIONS

13.1 16 & 17 year olds

Eligible applicants of 16 and 17 years of age will be accepted onto the Housing Register. However, where a landlord insists, an offer of accommodation will not be made without a guarantor for the tenancy.

13.2 No Fixed Abode & Rough Sleepers

Applicants that are of no fixed abode or rough sleepers, should, in the first instance, make a Homelessness Application. A Homelessness and Housing Advice Officer will investigate and make a decision on the duty owed to the applicant. Applicants found to be homeless and in priority need, will be owed a duty of accommodation by the Council. Applicants found to be homeless but not in priority need will be eligible to be placed in band 'D'.

13.3 Armed forces/prison leavers

Applicants leaving institutions such as the armed forces or prison will not be eligible to apply to join the register until they are within 6 months of discharge/release.

In cases where no other local connection exists either with North Hertfordshire or any other District, the applicant will be deemed to have a local connection if he/she lived in the North Hertfordshire for the 12 months prior to entering the armed forces, prison or other institution.

13.4 Agricultural Workers

Applications from displaced agricultural workers in tied accommodation will be referred to the Agricultural Dwelling House Advisory Committee (ADHAC) for a recommendation.

Should the ADHAC Tribunal be satisfied that the agricultural worker's accommodation is properly required by another employee, the applicant will be placed in band 'C'.

14. FLOATING SUPPORT

In order to promote the sustainability of tenancies, there may be occasions whereby an offer of accommodation is made on the condition that the applicant accepts an accompanying offer of floating support (see 35.)

15. LOCAL LETTINGS POLICIES

In some circumstances, properties may be reserved to fulfil an identified housing need. There may also be instances where there is a need to ensure a mixed, balanced and sustainable community. In such cases, properties will be offered with a view to meeting these ends rather than selecting the applicant that is next on the list.

Rural schemes

Where there are legal restrictions on letting properties in rural housing schemes these will be taken into account when making allocations. To meet the local connection criteria (see 6.3) for such a scheme, applicants will need to demonstrate a connection with the parish in which the scheme is located rather than the District.

Copies of local lettings policies in force can be viewed at the Council Offices or on the North Hertfordshire District Council Website www.north-herts.gov.uk

16. THE SHELTERED HOUSING REGISTER

16.1 INTRODUCTION

Sheltered and Extra Care Sheltered Housing is self-contained accommodation specially designed for older people who want to live independent lives but are in need of a degree of support.

There are sheltered schemes throughout the District, managed by Housing Associations (see Annex D). The Council has nomination rights to a percentage of the properties that become vacant. This means that when a property becomes available the Housing Association may ask the Council to nominate a household from the register for sheltered housing to the property.

All schemes have a scheme manager, (the manager is not necessarily resident at the scheme), and some have communal rooms such as lounge, laundry and hairdressing room. All properties and communal areas are linked to a community alarm control centre to enable residents to receive emergency help at any time of the day or night.

17. ELIGIBILITY

Generally, to be eligible for Sheltered Housing, applicants must be over the age of 55 and have a support need (see 17.3 & 17.4). In exceptional cases, applicants under the age of 55 with a support need may be eligible to join the list.

For Extra Care Sheltered Housing, applicants must have a support need or an identified care need that can be managed by a moderate care plan.

17.1 **Assessment**

All offers of sheltered and extra care housing are subject to an assessment to ascertain the clients support needs. Details of any relevant support needs should be provided by the applicant at the point of applying to the register. This will enable the Council's Housing Needs Officer to make an initial judgement of their suitability for sheltered or extra care housing. When a suitable property becomes available, a more thorough assessment will be undertaken to ensure that the applicant's needs are compatible with the provision of support at the scheme. Where the scheme is not suitable the offer may be withdrawn. In these circumstances alternative solutions to the applicant's housing and care need will be advised upon.

Applicants **must** be willing to accept the support that the assessment determines them to need.

17.2 Couples

Only one of the partners in a couple needs to fulfil the criteria for sheltered housing to be eligible to join the list.

17.3 Sheltered Housing

The type of support offered on-site is as follows: -

- ◆ Daily contact from the scheme manager either via intercom or face to face.
- ◆ Regular home visits to check on client's wellbeing.
- ◆ Assistance from the scheme manager in emergency situations. This might include contacting a doctor, ambulance or family member.
- ◆ Assistance with accessing local facilities/activities.
- ◆ Assistance with personal problems. This might include locating and contacting other agencies that offer the appropriate service.

Applicants do not have to need support with all of the above. As a rule the minimum level of support an applicant will be required to need is daily contact with the scheme manager.

17.4 Extra Care Sheltered Housing

Extra Care sheltered housing is available for applicants who have greater care needs than are catered for in Sheltered Schemes but want to maintain their independence. It offers in-house provision of flexible support suitable for those with personal care needs.

Assessments to establish an applicant's suitability for a scheme will be undertaken following the procedure summarised in 17.1 above.

18. CONDITIONS AND DEFINITIONS

18.1 Unacceptable Behaviour

An applicant deemed to be guilty of unacceptable behaviour will be denied access to the register for sheltered housing until such a time as the Council is satisfied that there is evidence that they have taken steps to correct the offending conduct.

A decision of unacceptable behaviour will be made if the Council is satisfied that the applicant, or a member of their household, has behaved in a manner that would have entitled the Council to a possession order should the applicant have been a secure tenant of the Council.

Examples of unacceptable behaviour are: -

- ◆ A serious breach of tenancy obligations.
- ◆ Serious nuisance or annoyance of neighbours.
- ◆ A conviction for using the accommodation for illegal or immoral purposes.
- ◆ Serious damage or neglect of a property.

18.2 Tenant arrears and other debts to landlords

Applicants with former tenant arrears or other debts to landlords will be given access to the register but may not be offered a tenancy unless they have made arrangements to clear the debt and maintained those arrangements for a minimum of 6 months.

Applicants with current tenant arrears or other landlord debts will be accepted on the register. However, applicants are advised that should the Council nominate them for a property the landlord may refuse to accept the nomination unless the debt is cleared.

18.3 Local Connection

An applicant will have a local connection if he/she; -

- ◆ Has been resident, by choice, in the District for 6 out of the last 12 months or;
- ◆ Has been resident, by choice, in the District for 3 out of the last 5 years or;
- ◆ Has an immediate family member, (mother, father, brother, sister, or adult child), resident in the District. The residency must be by choice and have been for a minimum of 5 years or;
- ◆ Has permanent employment in the District or;
- ◆ Has another special reason why they need to live in the District.

18.4 Resources

An applicant who has sufficient resources to resolve their own housing and support need will be given 'no preference' on the register.

When assessing applicants' ability to purchase, the amount of income and capital available to the applicant and the cost of a suitable property in the District will be taken into account.

18.5 Owner-Occupiers

Owner-occupiers can access sheltered housing, however, those who can meet their housing and support need either through release of equity or savings will be awarded no preference on the list. In these circumstances the Council will provide advice and assistance with securing alternative suitable accommodation within the District.

Owner-occupiers may also be able to access a grant or loan for aids and adaptations to enable them to continue to occupy their own home (see 36, 37. & 38).

All owner-occupiers are able to access the community warden service and may be eligible for additional support within the home through Adult Care Services telephone 01438 737400 for further information.

19. STRUCTURE

The Sheltered Housing Register is divided into four bands ranging from A (maximum preference) to E (no preference). The purpose of the bands is firstly, to ensure that those with the most urgent need for accommodation are given the greatest priority and secondly, to make the most efficient use of available properties.

When a property becomes available the Council will seek to match it with an applicant in band 'A'. If there is more than one suitable applicant, the applicant with the most points will be offered the tenancy. Should the applicant refuse the offer, the property will be offered to the applicant with the next highest level of points. If a suitable applicant is not found in band 'A' the property will be offered to the applicant with the most points in band 'B'. This process will be followed through the bands until a suitable occupant is allocated to the property.

19.1 Points

Within each band, points will be awarded for waiting time. Thus, all applicants will be awarded 1 point per month.

19.2 BANDING CRITERIA

The eligibility criteria for each band will be as for general needs social rented housing (see 7.3 to 7.3.5)

20. MANAGEMENT DISCRETION

In exceptional circumstances, the Housing Needs Manager has the discretion to decide the level of priority awarded.

21. OFFERS OF ACCOMMODATION

Applicants will be made 2 suitable offers of accommodation. Should an applicant refuse both offers they will be removed from the list. In these circumstances the applicant may reapply to join the register. The application will be assessed as a new application and points accumulated for waiting time will be lost.

Statutory homeless applicants accommodated in temporary accommodation will be made one suitable offer of accommodation. In the event that the offer is refused we may decide that the Council has discharged its duty and temporary accommodation will cease to be made available.

22. MEDICAL GROUNDS FOR MOVING

22.1 Medical Assessment

An applicant who considers that he/she has a medical reason for moving into Sheltered Housing should complete a self-assessment medical form. The Council's medical advisor will make a recommendation on the level of priority, if any, the application should receive. The medical advisor may also make a recommendation on the type and location of accommodation and any special aids or adaptations necessary. The Council's Housing Needs Officer will take account of the recommendations of the medical advisor when making the decision on whether medical priority should be awarded.

Where applicable, medical priority will only be awarded on the understanding that the applicant will accept the type of property recommended.

Applicants awarded medical priority that need a higher level of care than is offered in Sheltered and Extra Care Sheltered schemes will be ineligible for an allocation (see 17.3 and 17.4).

Medical priority will be awarded in the following circumstances: -

22.1.1 Urgent medical priority

Urgent medical priority will only be granted in circumstances whereby: -
The applicant has a serious permanent medical problem that prevents them gaining access to their property or to basic facilities within the property or;

- ◆ The medical condition of the applicant may lead to danger to life and limb if they are not re-housed.

Such priority will only be awarded where other remedies such as a Disabled Facilities Grant (see 36 & 37) have been investigated and eliminated.

Applicants awarded urgent medical priority will be placed in band 'A'.

22.1.2 Serious medical priority

Serious medical priority will be granted in circumstances whereby: -

- ◆ The applicant has a medical condition that causes them serious difficulty in gaining access to basic facilities within their property. Priority will only be awarded where other remedies such as a Disabled Facilities Grant (see 36 & 37) have been investigated and eliminated.
- ◆ The applicant's continued occupation of their current property is likely to cause a significant deterioration to their health.

Applicants awarded serious medical priority will be placed in band 'C'

22.1.3 Moderate medical priority

Moderate medical priority will be awarded in circumstances whereby: -

- ◆ The applicant or a member of his/her household has a medical condition that diminishes their ability to gain access to their property or to basic facilities within their property or;
- ◆ The applicant's continued occupation of their current property is likely to cause deterioration to their health or the health of a member of their household.

Such priority will only be awarded where other remedies such as the Disabled Facilities Grant (see 36 & 37) have been investigated and eliminated.

An applicant in bands 'C' and 'D' with moderate medical priority will be awarded 2 booster points. Applicants with a moderate medical priority and no other identified housing need will be placed in band 'D'.

23. CHOICE

23.1 Location

There are 29 sheltered housing schemes and 5 extra care sheltered housing schemes in the District (see annex D). Applicants may select as many of the schemes as they wish to be considered for.

Further information on the individual schemes can be obtained from the Council Offices or by contacting us on 01462 474688.

To arrange a visit to a scheme applicants should ring 01462 474688 in the first instance.

23.2 Size

The majority of units in sheltered accommodation are self-contained one bedroom flats suitable for either couples or single people. Applicants may choose between a studio flat or flat.

23.3 Ground floor units

In schemes without lifts preference for ground floor units will be given applicants with mobility problems.

24. The Sub-Market Rented Accommodation Register

24.1 INTRODUCTION

Sub-market rented accommodation is managed by Registered Social Landlords and aimed at satisfying the housing needs of applicants on an intermediate income. Properties are let on an Assured Shorthold Tenancy with rents set higher than those of traditional Social Rented Housing but below market rent levels.

24.2 Eligibility

The eligibility criteria for individual schemes are subject to agreement between the Council and the Registered Social Landlord to by which the scheme is managed. This may involve targeting the accommodation at certain groups such as single people and/or professions (key-workers).

Notwithstanding the criteria for individual schemes being met applicants must: -

- ◆ Have a local connection (see 6.3 & rural schemes, below).
- ◆ Have a housing need.

Rural schemes

Where there are legal restrictions on eligibility for properties in rural housing schemes these will be taken into account. To meet the local connection criteria (see 6.3) for such schemes, an applicant will need to demonstrate a connection with the parish in which the scheme is located rather than the District.

24.3 Making an application

Applicants wishing to register an interest in sub-market rented accommodation should express an interest on the application and for further details contact the Council by telephone on 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk in the first instance. The Council will then notify applicants of any suitable schemes and their terms and conditions.

25. The Private Rented Accommodation Register

25.1 INTRODUCTION

Private rented accommodation is managed by letting agencies and private landlords. Properties are usually let on a shorthold tenancy with a wide range of accommodation types and locations available. Rents are set at the market rate and a deposit and advance payment of rent should be allowed for in calculating the cost.

The Council will assist applicants with securing accommodation by informing them of any suitable available properties they have knowledge of and details of landlords and letting agencies that may be able to assist. Where applicants express an interest in the private rented sector the Council will pass their details to residential letting agents who can provide suitable properties.

Applicants that occupy private rented accommodation are usually eligible to join the Register for Social Housing (see 5.)

25.2 Eligibility

The eligibility criteria for private rented accommodation will vary between landlords and properties. Most landlords will require potential tenants to provide references.

25.3 Pre-tenancy determination

The Council can arrange for a pre-tenancy determination to be carried out prior to an applicant accepting a tenancy. A pre-tenancy determination is a rental evaluation, which will be used to assess the amount of housing benefit a claimant may be eligible for.

25.4 Deposit Guarantee Scheme

Employed applicants between the age of 18 and 25 may be eligible for the Deposit Guarantee Scheme administered by Herts Young Homeless Group (HYHG). The Deposit Guarantee Scheme replaces the cash deposit that most landlords request. It is a written agreement that covers the landlord for rent arrears and damage to the property. The tenant is ultimately responsible for any rent due and the cost of any damage caused. In the event that the landlord makes a claim against the Deposit Guarantee Agreement, HYHG will seek reimbursement from the tenant. Full details of the scheme can be obtained from Herts Young Homeless Group (North) on 01462 435668.

25.5 Advice

The Council will provide advice to applicants on the rights and responsibilities of tenants and landlords in the private rented sector. Applicants requiring this service should telephone 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk in the first instance.

25.6 Making an application

Applicants accommodation should express an interest on the application and for further details contact the Housing Advice Service by telephone on 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk in the first instance.

The Council will not provide references for applicants.

MOBILITY SCHEMES

26. Mutual Exchange/Homeswap

26.1 Introduction

Housing Association tenants that occupy permanent, self-contained accommodation and want to move either within or outside the District can register on the Homeswap scheme. Homeswap is a UK wide database of people who want to exchange their homes.

The Council keeps a list of people registered with Homeswap for interested parties to view. The list can also be accessed on the Homeswap website www.availablehomes.org.uk

26.2 Eligibility

All Housing Association tenants with a secure tenancy can apply to exchange their accommodation. Assured tenants have the right to exchange provided it is written into their tenancy agreement. Tenants in leased or private rented accommodation are not permitted to exchange. Tenants **must** apply for, and obtain permission from their landlord before proceeding with an exchange.

26.3 Making an application

There is a separate application form to complete. Applicants who express an interest on their application for the Housing Register will be sent details of how to apply. Tenants can also request an application form from the Council either by telephone on 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk. Alternatively, applicants can register on-line at the Homeswap website www.availablehomes.org.uk

26.4 Grounds for refusing an exchange

Permission for an exchange may be refused if the tenant has arrears or is in breach of their tenancy agreement. Tenants may be required to carry out any decoration or repair work, that is their responsibility, to bring the property up to standard.

Schedule 3 of the Housing Act 1985 contains legal grounds for refusing permission for an exchange, these are summarised below: -

- ◆ Any of the parties/properties concerned are subject to a possession order or a suspended possession order
- ◆ Any of the parties concerned has been served with a notice seeking possession or possession proceedings have begun
- ◆ The exchange would result in under-occupancy, (more than one bedroom in excess of the needs of the household), or overcrowding.

- ◆ The property has been adapted to make it suitable for a person with physical disabilities and the result of the exchange would be that no such person would live there.
- ◆ The property is part of premises that are mainly used for non-housing purposes or is situated in a cemetery and was let to the tenant or a predecessor with his/her employment.
- ◆ The landlord is a Housing Association or Trust which lets properties only for occupation by people whose circumstances make it especially difficult to satisfy their housing need and the result of the exchange would be that no such person would live there.
- ◆ The property is part of a group of properties which the landlord lets to people with special needs and a social services or special facility is provided nearby to assist such people and the result of the exchange would be that no such person lives there.

27. The Homes Mobility Scheme

27.1 Introduction

Homes Mobility is a voluntary nation-wide scheme to help housing association tenants who need to move to another part of the country.

The Council can nominate a Housing association tenant to the Homes Mobility Scheme. We will assist by contacting the landlord in the area that the applicant wants to move to and ascertain whether they are accepting nominations for the type of property the applicant requires.

Applicants should note that there is no automatic right to move and the landlord in the area an applicant wants to move to is under no obligation to make an offer of accommodation.

27.2 Eligibility

Applications are usually considered for the following reasons: -

- ◆ To take up employment which is not within a reasonable travelling distance from their existing home.
- ◆ To be closer to family or friends to give or receive support.
- ◆ To escape domestic violence or harassment
- ◆ There are other pressing reasons to move, such as health problems.

To be considered, applicants must have a clear rent account and a satisfactory tenancy record.

27.3 Making an application

There is a separate application form to complete. Applicants interested in the Homes Mobility Scheme should contact the Council by telephone on 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk in the first instance.

28. Transfer

28.1 Introduction

Housing Association Tenants that wish to move to another property because their current accommodation is no longer suitable for their household can apply to join the Social Rented Housing Register (see 5.) or Sheltered Housing Register (see 16.).

28.2 Eligibility

Applicants deemed guilty of unacceptable behaviour will not be accepted on the register (see 6.1).

Applicants with rent arrears or other landlord debts will be given access to the register but should be aware that their landlord or the receiving landlord may refuse to consent to a move unless the debt is cleared or acceptable terms for clearing the debt have been agreed.

28.3 Making an application

Applications to join the Register for Social Rented or Sheltered Housing should be made to the Council, telephone 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk in the first instance.

29. LAWN

29.1 Introduction

The Lawn project helps applicants who are eligible for bands A to D on the Register for Social Rented Housing or Sheltered Housing, in areas where there is a high demand for housing, move to areas of low demand within the U.K. Those considering this option will be given the opportunity to visit the area before they commit themselves to a move. In some cases, the Council may be able to offer financial assistance to applicants considering pursuing this route.

Applicants will be provided with information about the area and employment opportunities in the District to which they are considering a move to from the Local Authority of that District.

The types of properties that become available may differ between Districts. Whereas some might have 3 bedroom houses with gardens others may only have one bedroom flats or sheltered accommodation.

29.2 Eligibility

Applicants must be on the Register for Social Rented Housing and eligible for bands A - D. It is the receiving landlord's decision whether to accept the application and whether to give the applicant preference for housing and make an offer. The council will not consider making a nomination for a move to applicants that: -

- ◆ Have rent arrears.
- ◆ Have a history of unacceptable behaviour.
- ◆ Are in serious breach of their tenancy agreement.

29.3 Making an application

Applicants should express an interest on their application for the Housing Register. Interested parties are advised to contact a Housing Needs Officer by telephone on 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk in the first instance.

Home Ownership

30. Purchasing a property on the open market

30.1 Anyone with sufficient financial resources to purchase a property or sustain a mortgage can be assisted by the Council with information on the following: -

- ◆ House prices within the District.
- ◆ Contact details of Estate Agents within the District.
- ◆ Details of new housing developments within the District

Those wishing to access this service should contact a Housing Needs Officer by telephone on 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk in the first instance.

31. Low cost/shared home ownership schemes

31.1 Low cost and shared homeownership schemes are targeted at people in housing need that cannot afford to purchase on the open market. The terms of schemes will differ between projects but, as a general guide, low cost home ownership provides for eligible parties to purchase a property at below the market price. In shared ownership schemes the supplier, usually a Registered Social Landlord, sells a percentage of a property to a purchaser and charges rent on the remaining portion. Thus, a purchaser might purchase 50% of a property and rent the remaining 50% from the Housing Association.

Details of the terms and conditions of individual schemes can be obtained from the Registered Social Landlord managing the project or the Council by telephone on 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk

31.2 Eligibility

Eligibility criteria may vary between schemes, however, to be considered applicants may be required to: -

- ◆ Have a housing need
- ◆ Have a local connection (see 6.3 and rural schemes, below)).
- ◆ Have sufficient savings to cover a deposit and legal fees.
- ◆ Be able to demonstrate an ability to sustain a mortgage.

Rural schemes

Where there are legal restrictions on eligibility for properties in rural housing schemes these will be taken into account. To meet the local connection criteria (see 6.3) for such schemes, an applicant will need to demonstrate a connection with the parish in which the scheme is located rather than the District.

31.3 Homeowners

Homeowners in housing need with insufficient resources to resolve their need on the open market are eligible to apply for low cost/shared ownership schemes.

31.4 Priority

Some schemes may be targeted at specific groups with an identified housing need. There may also be instances where there is a need to ensure a mixed, balanced and sustainable community. In such cases applicants who fulfil the relevant criteria will be given preference. In the absence of the above those that fulfil the following criteria will be given preference: -

- ◆ Tenants of Social Housing
- ◆ Applicants on the Register for Social Rented Housing
- ◆ Keyworkers

Copies of the terms for eligibility for targeted schemes can be viewed at the Council Offices or on the North Hertfordshire District Council website, www.north-herts.gov.uk

32. Homebuy

32.1 Introduction

The Homebuy scheme is managed by Stort Valley Housing Association. It is a form of equity loan whereby 25% of the initial purchase cost of a property is met by the scheme and is treated as an interest free loan. The loan is not repayable until the property is sold whereupon 25% of the current market value is repaid to the scheme. There is no rental element in the scheme.

32.2 Eligibility

To be eligible for a Council nomination to Homebuy the applicant must fulfil the following criteria: -

- ◆ Be a tenant of a Registered Social Landlord; or
- ◆ Be on the Register for Social Rented Housing.
- ◆ Have savings of at least £3000.
- ◆ Have sufficient income to sustain a mortgage.

32.3 Making an application

Applicants wishing to be considered for Homebuy accommodation should express an interest on the application and for further details contact the Council by telephone on 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk in the first instance.

Other low cost home ownership schemes become available from time to time. Applicants who express an interest will be sent details as and when they arise.

33. NHDC Cash Incentive Scheme

33.1 Introduction

The Cash Incentive Scheme is designed to assist tenants of Registered Social Landlords to purchase a property on the open market and, in the process, release their rented accommodation for occupation by a family in housing need.

The scheme is restricted to tenants that live in the North Hertfordshire District that occupy family size accommodation, (minimum of 2 bedrooms).

33.2 Eligibility

To be eligible for consideration for the Cash Incentive Scheme applicants must be tenants of a Social Registered Landlord and fulfil the following criteria: -

- ◆ Be in accommodation suitable for a family, (minimum of 2 bedrooms).
- ◆ Have been tenants of a Housing Association for a minimum of 2 years.
- ◆ Have maintained a clear rent account for a minimum of 6 months.
- ◆ Have a clear Council Tax account.
- ◆ Not be in receipt of means-tested benefits such as Council Tax Benefit, Housing Benefit, Income Support, Income based Jobseeker's Allowance.
- ◆ Be able to demonstrate an ability to sustain a mortgage.

33.3 Property eligibility

To be eligible for the Cash Incentive Scheme applicants must purchase a property that fulfils the following criteria: -

- ◆ The property must be within the European Union.
- ◆ The property must be suitable for the applicant's household.
- ◆ The property must be for the sole residential use of the applicant's household.
- ◆ The property must be must be a house, bungalow, maisonette or flat
- ◆ The purchase price of the property must not exceed £250,000.

The grant will not be awarded to applicants that wish to: -

- ◆ Purchase a mobile home or houseboat.
- ◆ Develop a site
- ◆ Buy a part share in a property from an existing owner-occupier

33.4 Making an application

Applicants wishing to be considered for the Cash Incentive Scheme should contact the Council by telephone on 01462 474688 or email housingneeds@north-herts.gov.uk in the first instance.

Staying Put

34. Introduction

There are a number of schemes and projects in North Hertfordshire aimed at enabling elderly, disabled or otherwise vulnerable people to remain in their own home. Such schemes can assist owner-occupiers and tenants with repair obligations to maintain or adapt their homes to meet their needs. At a more personal level floating support can be arranged to assist vulnerable tenants to sustain their tenancy.

35. Floating Support

35.1 Introduction

There are a number of agencies in the District that provide 'floating support' to assist vulnerable people in their own home. Support workers maintain regular contact with clients and help with tasks such as claiming welfare benefits, enrolling on education and training programmes and finding employment and other needs specific to the individual client.

Where appropriate, vulnerable applicants will be referred for floating support to enable them to stay in their current accommodation.

36. The Home Repair Assistance Grant

36.1 Introduction

The Home Repair Assistance Grant is available to owner-occupiers or private tenants with repair obligations. The grant provides cash limited assistance of up to £5000 to: -

- ◆ Remedy essential repairs or conditions that interfere materially with the personal comfort of the occupier.
- ◆ Carry out repairs that are necessary to prevent the property from becoming unfit for habitation within 5 years.
- ◆ Carry out repairs to the building's services or fabric to prevent risk to health or safety of residents.
- ◆ Carry out minor adaptations for the elderly, disabled or infirm.
- ◆ Carry out minor adaptations for the care of the elderly, disabled or infirm.
- ◆ Improve home security for the elderly, disabled or infirm.

- ◆ Carry out essential and significant repairs to the basic fabric or services of residential mobile homes.
- ◆ Carry out improvements to insulation to increase thermal efficiency.

36.2 Eligibility

The grant is only available to people who are in receipt of a means tested benefit such as, income support, working tax credit, council tax benefit, housing benefit income based job-seekers allowance or those receiving a state pension that have less than £6000 in savings.

36.3 Referral

Should the Council receive an application to the Housing Register from an applicant whose housing need could be resolved by minor repairs or adaptations they will be referred for a Home Repairs Assistance Grant. Alternatively, applicants may apply directly by telephone on 01462 474267.

37. The Disabled facilities Grant

37.1 Introduction

The Disabled Facilities Grant is available for structural alterations to provide basic amenities or facilitate access to and within a dwelling for disabled persons. Examples of the type of adaptations the grant might cover are: -

- ◆ Improving access within the dwelling for a disabled occupant.
- ◆ Making the dwelling safe for a disabled occupant and other residents.
- ◆ Providing a suitable bedroom.
- ◆ Providing an assessable bathroom and/or watercloset, or adapting existing amenities to enable use by a disabled occupant.

37.2 Eligibility

Applicants will be required to undergo an assessment by an Occupational Therapist to confirm the need for any proposed adaptations.

The grant is subject to a means test to determine the applicant's contribution towards the cost of any work carried out.

37.3 Referral

Should the Council receive an application to the Housing Register from an applicant whose housing need could be resolved with the assistance of a Disabled Facilities Grant, they will be referred for an assessment. Alternatively, applicants may apply directly by telephone on 01462 474267

38. The Renovation Grant/Loan

38.1 Introduction

A renovation grant or loan is for owner occupiers and tenants with repair obligations, whose property is in severe disrepair or lacks adequate amenities to enable the property to be brought up to standard.

38.2 Eligibility

The applicant must have owned and occupied the property for at least 1 year unless he/she is a tenant in which case he/she must have been resident for at least 1 year.

The grant is subject to a means test to determine the applicant's contribution towards the cost of any work carried out.

38.3 Property eligibility

To be eligible the property must be: -

- ◆ At least 11 years old
- ◆ Considered unfit for human habitation

38.4 Referral

Should the Council receive an application to the Housing Register from an applicant whose housing need could be resolved with the assistance of a Renovation Grant/Loan they will be referred to Environmental Health Services. Alternatively, applicants may apply directly by telephone on 01462 474267

Annex A

Persons Ineligible for an Allocation of Housing

Under s.160A (3) persons from abroad who are subject to immigration control within the meaning of the Asylum and Immigration Act 1996 are ineligible for an allocation of housing.

Under s.160A (5) certain persons from abroad who are not subject to immigration control, have to be habitually resident in the Common Travel Area in order to be eligible.

Persons meeting the following criteria are **not eligible** for an allocation of accommodation: -

- a) British & EEA citizens who are not habitually resident in the UK
- b) A person registered with the Home Office as an asylum seeker
- c) Those with leave to remain but no recourse to public funds
- d) Those who have leave to remain but are not habitually resident
- e) A sponsored person who has been in the country for less than 5 years and whose sponsor is still alive
- f) A person who is a national of a non-EEC country that is signatory to ECSCMA AND/OR ESC but has ratified neither or where ratified the person is not lawfully present in the UK
- g) A person who is in the UK illegally or has overstayed his/her leave.

All existing tenants of accommodation allocated by a local housing authority are not affected by s.160A (3) and (5) and are thus eligible for an allocation of accommodation

Annex B

Areas of choice

Urban Areas

Letchworth

Grange Estate
Jackmans Estate
Pixmore
Standalone
Westbury
Wilbury

Hitchin

Highover
Hitchin Central
St Michaels Mount and Purwell
Sunnyside
Triangle
Westmill

Baldock

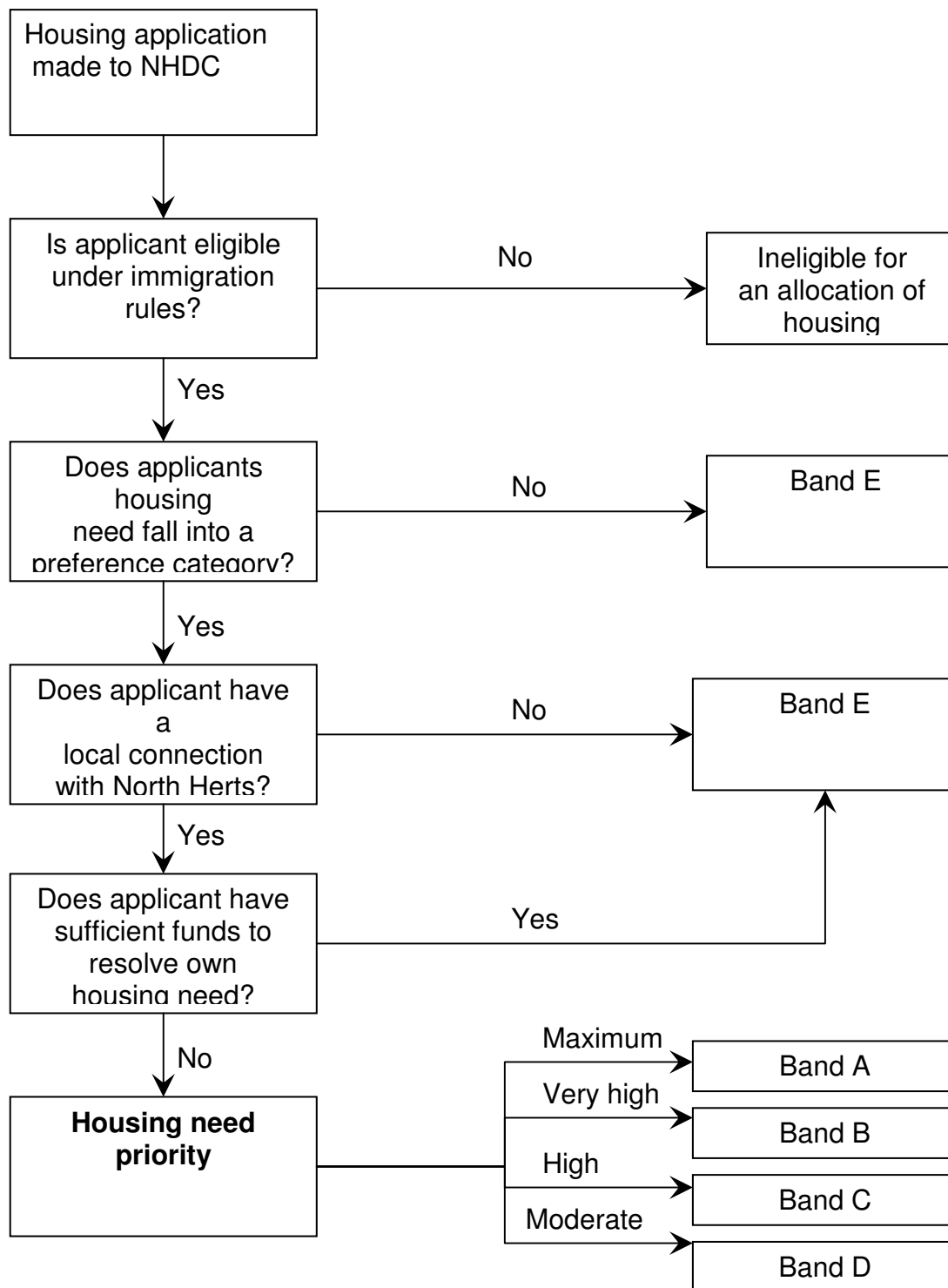
Royston

Parishes

Ashwell
Barley
Barkway
Breachwood Green
Bygrave
Clothall
Cockernhoe
Codicote
Graveley
Great Wymondley
Hinxworth
Holwell
Ickleford
Kelshall
Kimpton
Knebworth
Langley
Lilley
Little Wymondley
Newnham
Nup End
Offley
Peters Green
Pirton
Preston
Potters Heath
Radwell
Reed
Redhill
Rushden
St Ippolyts
St Pauls Warden
Sandon
Tea Green
Therfield
Wallington
Weston
Whitwell

Annex C

Social Rented Housing Application Flowchart



Annex D

Sheltered Housing Schemes

Letchworth

Edwin Nott House
Hadleigh
Hamonte
Kingfisher Court
Langleigh
MacFayden Webb House
Reynolds
Robert Saunders Court
Sax House
Tabor Court

Hitchin

Audley
Girton Court
Offa
Peter Sell House
Westmill Lawns

Baldock

Simpsons Court
The Tene

Royston

Blackett-Ord Court
Kings House
Queensway

Parishes

Wolverly House - **Ashwell**
Wheatsheaf Meadow House - **Barkway**
The Bury - **Codicote**
Ponders Meadow - **Codicote**
Glebe House - **Ickleford**
Deanscroft - **Knebworth**
Probyn House - **Kimpton**
Clarion House - **Kimpton**
Lime Tree House - **Whitwell**

Extra Care Schemes

Letchworth

Robert Humber House

Hitchin

Anderson House
St Andrews

Baldock

Temple Court

Royston

Mary Barfield

TITLE OF REPORT: WAIVER OF STANDING ORDERS TO ENGAGE GROUNDWORK HERTFORDSHIRE

REPORT OF HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR I. KNIGHTON

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To seek approval for a single tender to engage Groundwork Hertfordshire to develop and manage enhancements to play and outdoor youth provision on the Grange Estate in Letchworth.
- 1.2 To seek approval for a waiver of the contract standing orders to allow Groundwork Hertfordshire to use their procurement procedures in engaging sub-contractors to carry out the works, rather than this Councils.
- 1.3 This is a partnership project between North Hertfordshire Homes (NHH) and North Hertfordshire District Council (NHDC).

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 Council has adopted a Play Area & Outdoor Youth Provision strategy and the Grange is highlighted as being deficient in this provision.
- 3.2 The proposal is to improve the existing play facilities at Gaunts Way Recreation Ground and provide a new centrally located Community park within the Grange. Further details of the scope of the project are listed at Appendix 1.

4. SCHEME DEVELOPMENT

- 4.1 The scheme involves improvements to both land owned by NHDC and NHH.
- 4.2 In order to develop and manage the project it is proposed to engage Groundwork Hertfordshire. They are specialists in community based urban regeneration projects and are the sole local supplier. Groundwork Hertfordshire already have a proven track record managing similar projects for both NHH and NHDC and in both cases they have obtained significant external funding. It is for this reason that it is proposed that the Council invite them as sole tenderers for this project.

- 4.3 There will be three funding partners in the scheme, NHH, NHDC and Groundwork Hertfordshire. Each has different procurement procedures and in order for the project to have consistency, it is desirable to adopt a single approach towards procurement.
- 4.4 Groundwork Hertfordshire's procurement procedures are similar to that of a Local Authority and early indications suggest they are acceptable to NHH.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Paragraph 6.1 of the Council's Contract Standing Orders (CSO's) says that a Strategic Director may, after consultation with Cabinet, obtain a single tender for one of several reasons. The most applicable to this project is that it is in the Council's best interests to engage a particular consultant. The Strategic Director and Cabinet members must therefore be satisfied that the reasons given in paragraph 4.2 and 6.5 of this report demonstrate sufficient justification for the criteria to be met.
- 5.2 Once a contractor is engaged the Council's employees would ordinarily have to comply with paragraph 9 of the CSO's and ensure that in engaging any sub-contractors to carry out the project works the Council's CSO's are complied with. Under paragraph 10 of the CSO's it is possible to waive this requirement with the consent of Cabinet. Any waiver is subject to certain criteria being met. Paragraph 10.2(a) requires that the nature of the market for the works must have been investigated and a departure from the CSO's is justifiable. Paragraph 10.2(d) permits a departure where it is in the Council's best interests. Cabinet members must therefore be satisfied that this report provides sufficient justification for waiver.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 In 2006 /07 there is a capital allocation of £107,000 for play area and outdoor youth provision on the Grange Estate in Letchworth.
- 6.2 At this early stage it is estimated that the proposal for a community park will cost in the region of £300,000. More detailed costs will be available once Groundwork Hertfordshire have undertaken consultation and secured sources of external funding.
- 6.3 In addition works to the Grange recreation ground are estimated at £40,000.
- 6.4 In order to safeguard the Councils interest it is suggested that if the NHDC procurement procedure is not used to procure goods and services, it is proposed that the Councils Auditors and the Councils Project Manager approve the procurement procedures to be used by Groundwork Hertfordshire in writing and monitor each stage of the procurement process.
- 6.5 **Risk Implications**
- 6.5.1 Engaging Groundwork Hertfordshire provides more routes to external funding and they have a good track record of securing significant external funding into urban renovation projects. However there is a fee to provide this service and there is no guarantee that Groundwork Hertfordshire will be able to raise sufficient external funding to cover their costs.

6.5.2 Groundwork Hertfordshire have a good record and detailed below are examples of costs associated with similar projects:

| Project | Council Contribution | Ground Work Fund Raising | Other Funding | Total scheme | Ground Work Fees |
|-------------------------|----------------------|--------------------------|-----------------|-----------------|------------------|
| Riverside Park Watford | £40,000 | £464,000 | £110,000 | £614,000 | £89,000 |
| Quiet Garden Watford | £0.00 | £27,000 | £40,000 | £67,000 | £15,000 |
| Peartree Park Stevenage | £84,000 | £93,000 | £25,000 | £202,000 | £61,000 |
| TOTAL | £124,000 | £584,000 | £175,000 | £883,000 | £165,000 |

6.5.3 Other Risks

- ◆ Groundwork Trust fail to meet their obligations under the agreement
- ◆ Groundwork Trust have financial problems
- ◆ Scheme stops due to results of consultation
- ◆ NHH funding is not secured
- ◆ NHH fail to make their land available

6.5.4 The risks can be minimised by entering into an agreement between NHDC, NHH and Groundwork Hertfordshire. Although Groundwork Hertfordshire will be undertaking the procurement for the project, NHDC intend to pay instalments as the work progresses.

6.5.5 Groundwork Hertfordshire are a charitable Trust and have twenty years of experience in providing environmental solutions to Local Authorities. They are highly regarded by NHH, Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation and officers of NHDC.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Human resources for the capital programme are contained within existing resources.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

8.1 Letchworth Area Committee

8.1.1 The proposal to provide additional facilities in a central Grange location was reported to the Letchworth Area Committee in May 2005. The committee supported the programme to engage the local community to develop a scheme.

8.1.2 It is intended to report back to the Letchworth Area Committee on the 25th January 2006, to seek approval for the scope of the proposed works.

8.2 Community Bodies and Residents

8.2.1 Groundwork Hertfordshire will only develop a scheme that has resulted from consultation with residents and other bodies who have an interest in the Grange.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That under Standing Order 6.1, for the reasons listed in this report Cabinet endorses the use of a single tender to engage the services of Groundwork Hertfordshire

9.2 That subject to the conditions listed at 6.4 in this report, under Standing Order 10.2 (d), for the reasons listed in this report the requirement to abide by paragraph 9 of the CSO's is waived and the approved procurement procedures of Groundwork Hertfordshire be used instead.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To provide the framework for partnership working with NHH.

10.2 To secure significant external funding for the provision of a Community Park.

10.3 To meet the councils strategic objective to:

- ◆ Promote first class leisure and cultural facilities to contribute to healthy living for all our citizens.

11. APPENDICES

Appendix. 1. Draft Project Scope.

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

| | | | |
|------|---------------|------------------|-------------------|
| 12.1 | Steve Geach: | Leisure Services | Tel: 01462 474553 |
| | Edgar Howard: | Legal Services | Tel: 01462 474585 |
| | Lois Stewart: | Finance Services | Tel: 01462 474566 |

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

13.1 NHDC's adopted Play Area and Outdoor Youth Provision strategy.

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

10

TITLE OF REPORT: PROCUREMENT STRATEGY ANNUAL REVIEW

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR T.W. HONE

This item is to follow.

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***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

11

TITLE OF REPORT: ASSET STRATEGY ANNUAL REVIEW

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF FINANCIAL SERVICES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER: COUNCILLOR T.W. HONE

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| *PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT | AGENDA ITEM No. 12 |
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EXCLUSION OF PUBLIC AND PRESS

To consider passing the following resolution:-

That under Section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public and press be excluded from the meeting for the following items of business on the grounds that they involve the likely disclosure of exempt information as defined in Paragraph 7 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A of the said Act.

Note: The definition of Paragraph 7 referred to above is as follows:

7. Information relating to the financial or business affairs of any particular person (other than the authority).

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