

23 June 2006

Our Ref. Hitchin 6.06
Your Ref.
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To: The Members of the Hitchin Committee of North Hertfordshire District Council:

Councillors: Judi Billing (Chairman), Derek Sheard (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A.G. Ashley, David Billing, Paul Clark, Joan Kirby, Bernard Lovewell, Lawrence Oliver, D Sangha, R. Shakespeare – Smith, Martin Stears, R.A.C. Thake and Sarah-Jane Wren.

You are invited to attend a meeting of the

HITCHIN COMMITTEE

to be held at

**BENSLOW MUSIC TRUST
BENSLOW LANE, HITCHIN**

on

4 JULY 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 meetings of this Committee held on 16 and 30 May 2006.	-
3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS Members should notify the Chairman of other business which they wish to be discussed by the Committee at the end of the business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency. The Chairman will decide whether the item(s) raised will be considered.	-
4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive from Members of the Committee any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda. Members should either declare a prejudicial or personal interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared. Members declaring a prejudicial interest should leave the room and not seek to influence the decision on that particular item of business.	-
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions, comments and questions from members of the public. Presentation of a petition concerning traffic calming issues in Wilbury Way, Hitchin. (to be confirmed) Public participation requests received within the agreed time will be notified to Members as soon as practicable.	1
6. NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S MARKETS ACTION PLAN - HITCHIN REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES. <i>To allow the Hitchin Committee make comment on the NHDC Action Plan for Hitchin Market.</i>	3
7. NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – PUBLIC CONVENIENCES REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES. <i>To allow the Hitchin Committee discuss and comment on the Cabinet decision regarding public conveniences in North Hertfordshire.</i>	7

ITEM		PAGE
8.	PLANNING APPLICATIONS REPORT OF THE PLANNING CONTROL AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER 1. Land at 22 Dale Close, Hitchin. 2. Land at 41-111 Milestone Road, Hitchin. 3. Land at Brookers Yard, former Suzuki and Peter Firth premises, Paynes Park, Hitchin.	11
9.	PLANNING APPEALS REPORT OF THE PLANNING CONTROL AND DEVELOPMENT MANAGER This presentation will be in an oral format.	83
10.	NHHP – JMP DISCRETIONARY BUDGET 2007-2008 – SCHEMES AND PROJECTS <i>Members are invited to submit to the North Herts District Manager proposals for schemes and projects that could be included in the Discretionary Budget programme of works for 2007-2008.</i>	85
11.	CHAMPION NEWS AND COMMUNITY REPORT REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES <i>To advise the Hitchin Committee of the schemes and activities undertaken by the Community Development officer since the last meeting held on 30 May 2006.</i>	87
12.	ANNUAL GRANTS, DEVELOPMENT, DISCRETIONARY AND VISIONING BUDGETS 2006 – 2007 <i>To advise the Hitchin Committee of the current expenditure and balances within the delegated budgets.</i>	91
13.	HITCHIN TOWN CENTRE MANAGER This presentation will be in an oral format.	99

INFORMATION NOTES

The following items have been prepared as Information Notes to all Members of the Hitchin Committee and are presented as a supporting volume to the main agenda.

These items will not be published with this agenda. Copies will be deposited at Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock and Royston Libraries for public inspection.

ITEM

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| A. | HITCHIN COMMUNITY SURGERY – 3 JUNE 2006 | 3 |
| | REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES | |
| B. | HITCHIN TOWN CENTRE - STREET SCENE | 5 |
| | REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES | |
| | This report is 'to follow'. | |

The Hitchin Committee will next meet in the Civic Year 2006/2007 as follows:

2006

15 August	Christ Church Hall, Hitchin.	
28 September	Morrison Hall, Benslow Music Trust, Hitchin.	
31 October	Roman Catholic Hall, Nightingale Road, Hitchin	TOWN TALK
12 December	Morrison Hall, Benslow Music Trust, Hitchin.	

2007

23 January	Roman Catholic Hall, Nightingale Road, Hitchin (or other venue tbc)	TOWN TALK
6 March	Roman Catholic Hall, Nightingale Road, Hitchin (or other venue tbc)	
17 April	Roman Catholic Hall, Nightingale Road, Hitchin (or other venue tbc)	TOWN TALK

HITCHIN AREA COMMITTEE
4 July 2006

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

6

**TITLE OF REPORT : NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S MARKETS
ACTION PLAN - HITCHIN**

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Hitchin Members to discuss and to comment on the North Hertfordshire District Council's action plan for Hitchin Market.

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 Officers and Councillors regularly meet with the Hitchin Market Traders Association to discuss the operation and recently have been investigating new initiatives that can be implemented to improve the current position of the markets.
- 3.2 The Chair of Hitchin Area Committee requested that the Project Manager presented the current action plan to the July 2006 Hitchin Area Committee.

4. ACTION PLAN FOR NORTH HERTS MARKETS - HITCHIN

- 4.1 Appendix A provides the Action Plan that is being implemented at the moment to improve the current position of Hitchin market.
- 4.3 The Project Manager is responsible for ensuring that the action plan is implemented and meets with the Spokesperson for Leisure and the Head of Leisure and Environmental Services on a weekly basis, to inform them of such progress.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No legal implications have been identified.

6. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The work programme will be managed and contained using the 2006/07 budgets.

- 6.2 The appointment of the Markets Manager is the only item that has any Human Resource implications, therefore, the Project Manager has been working closely with a representative from Human Resources to ensure correct procedures are followed.

7. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 7.1 Consultation has been undertaken with the Chair of Hitchin Area Committee, Spokesperson for Leisure, Hitchin Market Traders Association, Senior Officer and a range of potential suppliers.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 For Hitchin Area Committee to note the action plan for the Hitchin Market.

9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To ensure the delivery of the action plan.

11 APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A – North Hertfordshire District Council’s Markets Action Plan – Hitchin.

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 12.1 Steven Crowley
Project Manager
Steve.crowley@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474211

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Action Plan for Hitchin Market

APPENDIX A

Task	Target date	Who
Senior Officers in partnership with the Hitchin Town Centre Manager to consider the viability of running a Sunday Market in Hitchin.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Vaughan Watson and Steve Crowley met with Keith Hoskins to discuss the possibility of running a Sunday Market in Hitchin Market Square. It was agreed that the best approach would be to run a monthly craft and local produce market, aim to start Sept – Oct 06, to run 10 months of the year. 	Completed	Steve C & Vaughan W
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Meeting with Keith in July to discuss detail plans. 	July 06	Steve C & Vaughan W
Remove some empty stalls to allow for more space to have additional mobile stalls and trading vehicles at Hitchin.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Write to traders that are affected, giving 4 weeks notice. 	Completed	Steve C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Remove stalls, Company due to do work as of 21st June 06. 	Completed	Steve C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Need to attract traders to trade from vehicles – contact previous traders that have shown an interest. 	July 06	Steve C
Abolish the requirement for a month in advance system of collecting rent, and introduce an option to pay daily, by using a modern portable device to enable traders to pay by credit card if they prefer to do so.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend rules and regulations, to abolish the month in advanced. Traders must clear their accounts by the last day of trading in the period. 	July 06	Manager
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Investigate the introduction of portable credit and debt card devises. 	Aug 06	Manager
Once a full risk assessment has been undertaken, the Council to consider opening Biggin Lane car park for shoppers on Tuesdays and Fridays in Hitchin.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertaking a risk assessment. 	Completed	Pete Marshall
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Amend sign to allow customers to use Biggin Lane car park. 	July 06	Steve C
Options Appraisal of Markets		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake options appraisal to investigate the best way of managing the Council's markets 	July 06	Steve C & Vaughan W
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Report to Cabinet identifying the options that are available. 	July 06	Steve C & Vaughan W
Management Arrangements		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Interview and offer contract of employment. 	Completed	Steve C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Undertake references and medical checks. 	End of June	Human Resource
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Commence employment. 	Mid July	
£10 a stall on Tuesday Market for 6 month trial.		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Advertise in national market trader press. 		Steve C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Hand flyers out at nearby markets. 		Steve C
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Implement start of period five. 	10th July	Steve C
Employ a maintenance and toilet cleaner for Hitchin market		
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Individual started Middle of June 	Completed	Steve C

TITLE OF REPORT : NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S MARKETS TRADERS BUSINESS PLAN

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENT SERVICE
PORTFOLIO HOLDERS: COUNCILLOR I KNIGHTON

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To seek funding from Hitchin Area Committee to assist the promotion for the proposed introduction of new charges at Hitchin Market.
- 1.2 Reason for urgency
 - 1.2.1 The advertising needs to be placed prior to the next Hitchin Area Committee in order to keep to the minimum the potential loss of financial investment

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 Officers presented to June 06 Cabinet a report regarding the financial aspects of the Hitchin Market Traders Association (HMTA) Business Plan, by introducing the following rates; £10 for any stall on a Tuesday and £15 for any stall on a Saturday.
- 3.2 Cabinet recommended to Council:
 - (1) That a £10 charge for any stall on a Tuesday market, £15 for any stall on a Saturday market and casual traders to pay the same as licensed traders for a trial period of six months be approved at the next meeting of Council on 27 July 2006;
 - (2) That, in principle, the potential loss of c£31k be underwritten for the same period of six month.

4. ADVERTISING REQUIRED TO INTRODUCE THE NEW CHARGES

- 4.1 To ensure that sufficient advertising is undertaken to attract traders, officers recommend that the Council advertise in the two main trader publications, the table below shows the cost for advertising in both publications:-

Publication	Period-Cycle	Cost for half page colour advert
Market Trader	Weekly	£445
Market Trader New	Monthly	£504

- 4.2 The aim is to advertise in the weekly publication for the first four weeks, then to advertising in the monthly publication for five months. Total cost £4,300
- 4.3 The market operation has an annual budget of approximately £20k for advertising and promotions for all its markets, on average £2k is spent on most events and promotions to ensure the budgets last the year.
- 4.4 In addition to the above, officers will be contacting any traders that have left in the last year and request the support from Hitchin market traders to promote to other traders in the industry in maximise utilisation.
- 4.5 Officer will also liase with the HMTA to see if any other opportunities can be explored to improve the advertising of the new charges.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 No legal implications have been identified.

6. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Financial issues have been covered in section four of this report.
- 6.2 No Human Resource implications have been identified.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 For Hitchin Area Committee to provide funding for four adverts, to the value of £2k.

8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 To ensure that sufficient advertising can take place to promote the proposed new charges for Hitchin Tuesday and Saturday market.

9. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 9.1 Steven Crowley
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01462 474211

TITLE OF REPORT: NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S PUBLIC CONVENIENCES

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEISURE AND ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 For Members to note the strategic decision from Cabinet for the North Hertfordshire District Council's Public Conveniences.
- 1.2 To inform Members of the type of internal equipment that will be used in the Public Conveniences.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 1st March 2005.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The consultants presented their options appraisal to Cabinet on 6 June 2006, this is attached as Appendix A, the following was resolved:

7. NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL'S PUBLIC CONVENIENCES***RESOLVED:***

- (1) That, in respect of the proposed Capital improvements to the Public Conveniences, Option 2, as detailed in section 5 of the report, be agreed, subject to the following amendments:-
 - (i) addition of the proposal for improvements to the Hitchin Arcade Public Conveniences, in lieu of the proposed new units for Market Place Square, Hitchin and Mosses Corner, Hitchin, but at the same overall cost of 226,000;
 - (ii) substitution of refurbishment works of £15,000 contained in Option 3 for the The Cross, Royston for the £44,000 scheme contained in Option 2;
- (2) That Contract Standing Orders be waived to allow Danfo to be the supplier of the new facilities, with the waiver being justified in terms of the nature of the works and overall quality required, as stipulated in Contract Standing Orders 10.2 (a) and (d), and as referred to in appendix 1b of the consultant's report;

- (3) That Contract Standing Orders be waived to permit a single tender for the cleaning and maintenance of the public conveniences up until the completion of the capital works programme, with the waiver being justified as being in the Council's overall interest to provide a better quality of service at a reduced cost, as stipulated in Contract Standing Order 10.2 (d);
- (4) That those public conveniences identified for closure, as identified in Option 2 in section 5 of the report, and with the exception of the Hitchin Arcade, be closed by no later than March 2007, and that Hitchin Bancroft be closed once the Hitchin Arcade works are completed and the facility open;
- (5) That consultation take place with area committees regarding the location and the external design of the new facilities, where appropriate, and where this is not the case the reports being for information only, with Members being reminded of the need to take account of the requirements of the Council's Planning Code of Practice, as outlined in paragraph 6.3 of the report to cabinet.
- (6) That the comments of the Scrutiny Committee be noted.

4. HITCHIN FACILITIES

- 4.1 The following table shows the work that will be undertaken in Hitchin. The detail of each proposal is provided on pages 8-19 and Appendix A of the consultant's report (Appendix A).

Location	Description of work	Capital work
The Market	Provide time lock doors.	£ 7,500
Bancroft	Provide time lock doors, then close once the Arcade facility is complete and open.	* £ 7,500
The Arcade	Refurbish existing facility to provide 1 adapted unit, 2 urinals and 2 W/C, all with time lock doors.	£ 208,500
Portmill lane	Close	
Total		£ 223,500

- 4.2 Page 42 of the consultants' report provides examples of the type of internal equipment that will be used; this is to demonstrate the quality of the product that the Council is aiming to achieve.
- 4.3 The project will have to be carefully managed to ensure that other facilities are available within the town when the work is being undertaken. Therefore, it is important that the programming of work is included as part of the tender evaluation process.
- 4.4 Currently, the Council has a contractor that undertakes the maintenance and another contractor that undertakes the cleaning arrangements. To improve the quality of both roles, Cabinet has agreed that Contract Standing Orders be waived to enable the Council to appoint a single contract to undertake the work whilst the capital programme is being carried out, as stated in paragraph 3.1 (3) of this report.

5. PLANNING REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 Part 12 Development by Local Authorities, of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995 explains that the District does not require planning permission for the facilities outlined in this report.
- 5.2 Although the facilities in Hitchin will not require planning application, officers and the consultants will work closely with the planning department to ensure that the final designs are in keeping with the area.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 At its meeting on 6 June 2006 Cabinet was presented with the capital options; they approved the money that is required to undertake the necessary improvements which is shown in the table in section 4 of this report.

7. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The Council has the power to provide public conveniences in proper and convenient situations by section 87 of the Public Health Act 1936.

8. HUMAN RESOURCES AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 8.1 None.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 For Members of Hitchin Area Committee to note the strategic decision from Cabinet for the North Hertfordshire District Council's Public Conveniences, as stated in paragraph 3.1.

10. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure the delivery of project objectives.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix A - A report on a possible strategy for improvements to the provision of public conveniences in North Hertfordshire (Inkpen Downie).
- 11.2 Appendix A is presented as a supporting volume.

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

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13. CONTRIBUTORS

- 13.1 Vaughan Watson
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TITLE OF REPORT: PLANNING APPLICATIONS
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

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

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

AGENDA INDEX

ITEM:	REF NO:	LOCATION:DESCRIPTION	CONTACT OFFICER:	PAGE:
1.	06/00734/ 1HH	22 Dale Close, Hitchin, SG4 9AS Front dormer window	Naomi Gould 01462 474318	13
2.	06/00741/ 1	41 - 111 Milestone Road, Hitchin, SG5 Demolition of 88-111 Milestone Road (Phase II); residential redevelopment of 41-111 Milestone Road to provide affordable housing consisting of 6 one-bedroom flats, 12 two-bedroom flats, 2 two-bedroom bungalows, 13 two-bedroom houses, 6 three-bedroom houses and 2 four-bedroom houses together with new accesses and ancillary parking and landscaping (as amended by plan no. 1416 - 010 Rev A received 21st June 2006)	Tom Rea 01462 474565	17
3.	05/00741/ 1	Brookers Yard, Suzuki & Peter Fish Premises, off Paynes Park, Hitchin 2, 3 & 4 storey buildings together with conversion of part of existing Carling Building and Building B to provide 148 residential units 28 one bedroom & 104 two bedroom flats; 1 one bedroom, 12 two bedroom & 3 three bedroom houses. Basement parking for 175 cars and cycle storage. Use of part of existing Carling Building for retail purposes (272 sq.m). Two separate points of vehicular access via Paynes Park following closure of existing. Service access to new ground floor loading bay rear of Brookers via Market Place. Landscaping and ancillary works.	Graham Haerle 01462 474209	

		(As amended by plans received 17 January 2006, 17 March 20 May & 13 June 2006).		
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ITEM NO: 1 Location: **22 Dale Close, Hitchin, SG4 9AS**

Applicant: **Mr & Mrs R Chalkley**

Proposal: **Front dormer window**

Ref.No: **06/00734/ 1HH**

Officer: **Naomi Gould**
01462 474318

Date of expiry of statutory period : 29 June 2006

Reason for referral to Committee

Applicant is employed by the District Council.

Reason for delay

Committee cycle

1.0 Relevant History

An application for a first floor front extension was withdrawn on 11th January 2005, following my advice that I would be minded to recommend the application for refusal.

2.0 Policies

2.1 North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No.2 with Alterations

Policy 28- House Extensions
Policy 55 – Car Parking

2.2 Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991-2011

Policy 25 – Car Parking and Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking Provisions at New Development.

3.0 Representations

3.1 Local residents/site publicity notice - No representations received

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site & Surroundings

4.1.1 The property is a detached house on the north west side of Dale Close, which is a cul-de-sac off Gosmore Road.

4.2 Proposal

4.2.1 The proposal is to widen the existing dormer so that it would be approximately 2.5m in width, 1.6m in height and 1.8m in depth.

4.3 Key Issues

- 4.3.1 The key issues to the determination of this application are the impact of the proposal on the existing house and the streetscene.
- 4.3.2 The withdrawn application was for a larger gable end first floor front extension, which would not have been sympathetic to the existing house in design and form. This revised scheme is a result of pre-application discussions with the agent. This scheme has overcome the previous objections. Whilst the proposed dormer would have a flat roof, this design is appropriate as it would match the other existing front dormer. As such the proposal would be acceptable in design in the streetscene.
- 4.3.3 The proposed dormer would be constructed of boarding and tiles to match existing. I have recommended a condition that details and/or samples of materials be submitted and approved before work commences, as the proposal would be on the front of the property. The window would be leaded to match existing.
- 4.3.4 The proposed dormer would not have any adverse impact on neighbouring properties.
- 4.3.5 The proposal would result in an increase in the number of bedrooms from three to four. The property has at least two on-site parking spaces. In my view the parking provision is satisfactory, given that the property is in a quiet cul-de-sac, with no obvious parking problems, and there is a driveway over the deep highway verge.

5.0 Legal Implications

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

6.0 Recommendation

- 6.1 That permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:
1. The development hereby permitted shall be begun before the expiration of 3 years from the date of this permission.

Reason: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by Section 51 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.
 2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting, approved documents and plans, or with minor modifications of those details which have previously been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority as being not materially different from those thereby permitted.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. Details and/or samples of materials to be used on all external elevations and the roof of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced.

Reason: To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area.

Reason for Decision

The extension, hereby permitted, would have no adverse effect on the amenities of the neighbouring residential properties, the visual amenity of the locality or on highway conditions in the vicinity of the site and, as such, complies with the relevant provisions of the development plan, as summarised below.

Summary of Development Plan Policies and Proposals relevant to the Decision:-

North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No 2 with Alterations

Policy 28- House Extensions

Policy 55 – Car Parking

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991-2011

Policy 25 – Car Parking and Supplementary Planning Guidance: Parking Provisions at New Development.

ITEM NO: 2	<u>Location:</u>	41 - 111 Milestone Road, Hitchin, SG5
	<u>Applicant:</u>	North Herts Homes
	<u>Proposal:</u>	Demolition of 88-111 Milestone Road (Phase II); residential redevelopment of 41-111 Milestone Road to provide affordable housing consisting of 6 one-bedroom flats, 12 two-bedroom flats, 2 two-bedroom bungalows, 13 two-bedroom houses, 6 three-bedroom houses and 2 four-bedroom houses together with new accesses and ancillary parking and landscaping (as amended by plan no. 1416 - 010 Rev A received 21st June 2006)
	<u>Ref.No:</u>	06/00741/ 1
	<u>Officer:</u>	Tom Rea 01462 474565

Date of expiry of statutory period : 29 June 2006

Reason for Referral to Committee (if applicable)

The site area exceeds 0.5 hectares

1.0 Relevant History

- 1.1 Application ref: 1/1987/86 - Formation of 36 car parking spaces fronting 41 - 111 Milestone Road, approved 8.1.87
- 1.2 Application ref: 06/00069/1 - Demolition of Nos. 41 - 87 prior to demolition, approved 10.3.06.

2.0 Policies

- 2.1 **Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011**
Policy 1: Sustainable Development
Policy 25: Car Parking (Including Supplementary Planning Guidance)
Policy 36: Critical Capital and other important Environmental Assets
- 2.2 **North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 With Alterations**
Policy 1: Pattern and Character of North Hertfordshire
Policy 8: Development in Towns
Policy 26: Housing Proposals
Policy 29A: Affordable Housing
Policy 55: Car Parking Standards (and Supplementary Planning Document, 'Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development')
Policy 57: Residential Guidelines and Standards

3.0 Representations

- 3.1 **Hertfordshire County Council Highways:** Comments will be reported verbally at the meeting
- 3.2 **Housing Strategy and Renewals Manager:** The proposed mix meets the priority need for the area and is therefore satisfactory.

- 3.3 **Environmental Health officer:** Recommends conditions relating to road traffic noise, demolition and site contamination
- 3.4 **Three Valleys Water:** Any comments will be reported verbally at the meeting
- 3.5 **Parks and Countryside Manager:** Does not require a Local Area for Play (LAP) due to limited play value and high maintenance costs.
- 3.6 **Community Development Officer:** Comments that there will be an increased number of people using facilities on the Westmill estate. A Youth Works Project envisages the provision of a temporary Youth Works Manager for the Westmill estate by end of June.
- 3.7 **Site Notice/adjoining occupiers:** Letter received from Mr & Mrs Holbrook of 39 Milestone Road concerned about the limited height of the boundary fence between No. 39 and plots 1 - 6 within the development site.

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site & Surroundings

- 4.1.1 Nos 41 - 111 Milestone Road comprise 3 three storey blocks of flats located on the east side of Milestone Road. There are 12 flats in each block. The flats were erected in the 1950's during the layout of the Westmill estate. The blocks are set out in a crescent shape on the site with the central block (Nos 65 - 87) being set well back into the site from the two outer blocks. The site includes a redundant area of play space located at the rear of No. 88 - 111. The car parking allocated for the flats is located directly off Milestone Road at the front of the site (36 spaces).

4.2 Proposal

- 4.2.1 The proposal, as amended, is to provide a comprehensive redevelopment of the site following the demolition of all three existing blocks (36 flats). The scheme would provide 41 dwellings in total with a range of one, two, three and four bedroom units comprising flats, family houses and bungalows. The development would include six types of housing accommodation as follows:

Type A: 2 bed/4 person house (13 no.)
Type B: 3 bed/5 person house (6 No.)
Type C: 2 bed/3 person flat (12 No.)
Type D: 1 bed/2 person flat (6 No.)
Type E: 2 bed/3 person bungalow (2 No.)
Type F: 4 bed/7 person house (2 No.)

- 4.2.2 The application is accompanied by a design statement, survey drawing and outline soft landscape plan. The design statement also includes a summary of the public consultation exercise undertaken by the applicants including the amendments made in response to suggestions from existing residents.
- 4.2.3 The development proposes one and two storey buildings around the perimeter of the site with ancillary private gardens and two, three storey blocks in the centre of the site set in open landscaped areas. The existing footpath link to Bedford Road is maintained. Two new vehicular accesses are provided into the site with ancillary footpaths and turning space for service and emergency vehicles. A total of 73 residents parking spaces are provided grouped around the cul-de-sac accesses and along the Milestone Road frontage. The existing bus stop is brought forward to be in front of the main road kerb line.

4.2.4 The style of the development provides for mono-pitched and conventional pitched roofs with a traditional style of development. Materials include bricks, render and timber cladding. Balconies are provided to the flats in the centre of the site.

4.2.5 All of the proposed dwellings are to be retained for rented accommodation by North Hertfordshire Homes.

4.3 **Key Issues**

4.3.1 Principle of development

The site is already in established residential use therefore there can be no fundamental objection to residential redevelopment. The benefits of redevelopment over limited refurbishment of the flats which currently provide poor quality, energy inefficient housing was clearly accepted with the previous application to demolish the flats. This scheme makes more efficient use of the site with an increased density and greater mix of property types.

4.3.2 Design and Layout

The design approach is to provide the lower density one and two bedroom units around the site perimeter of the site increasing in scale towards the centre of the site with three storey flats. The provision of the two access roads helps to break down the development into small groups of buildings and provides visual links through to the back of the site which contrasts with the built up and overbearing nature of the existing blocks of flats. The layout provides for substantial gaps between the various groups of buildings and gives a focus to the public footpath running through the site which is provided with lighting and surveillance from a number of the plots. The result is a very permeable and pedestrian friendly form of development in accordance with Policy 57 guidance, national planning advice and 'Secured by Design' criteria.

4.3.3 The layout achieves a good mix of dwellings throughout the site with family houses and bungalows sited alongside each other providing variety in terms of occupier profile and visual impact and scale. The higher density flatted accommodation is appropriately sited towards the front of the site where it will have less impact on the remainder of the development. The layout also takes advantage of the depth of the site and the extensive perimeter boundary to provide development at right angles to Milestone Road and to facilitate central parking areas which are overlooked by and easily accessible to the new dwellings. I consider that the range of external facing materials proposed will assist in providing a visual relief and interest to the dwellings whilst maintaining the overall theme of the development.

4.3.4 All of the family houses and bungalows will be provided with private gardens which meet the minimum amenity requirements of Policy 57. In addition the flats will be sited within communal landscaped areas which will complement the amenity space provided by the balconies to the upper floor flats.

4.3.5 In terms of impact on adjoining properties the development will have limited impact given the considerable separation distances between the new houses and properties in Times Close, Bedford Road and Wellingham Avenue. The layout comfortably achieves the privacy distances between the rear of dwellings as set out in Policy 57 of the local plan.

4.3.6 Concern has been raised by the occupier of No. 39 Milestone Road with regard to the height of the boundary fence with the development site. This has been addressed by the applicants by increasing the height of the fence along the site boundary between plots 1 - 6 and No. 39 Milestone Road from 1.8m to 2.1m with an additional 300mm of trellis above (overall height 2.4m).

4.3.7 Landscaping is proposed as part of the application and full details of the planting schedule are indicated on the landscape plan. Generally the layout provides a spacious and well landscaped setting for the development and I consider that the soft landscaping details are acceptable.

4.3.8 Access and Parking

The development would provide a total of 73 car parking spaces which only slightly exceeds the required number of spaces (68) required by the recently adopted supplementary planning document 'Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development'. The development is therefore acceptable in terms of the level of parking provision.

4.3.9 The new access points into the site are situated so that sight lines can be easily achieved and service and emergency vehicles can enter and turn around within the site without difficulty. The development also provides a better siting of the existing bus stop on Milestone Road to a position immediately adjoining the kerblines and in a manner which can achieve the Disability and Discrimination Act standards and the requirements of the 'Quality Bus Stop Design Guide 2004'.

4.3.10 Education, library and youth matters

Although this development proposes 41 new dwellings the net increase is of five units and therefore below the usual threshold (20 dwellings) where the County Council would normally seek contributions for education, library and youth facilities. As many of the residents have opted to stay and be re-housed within the new development (hence the phasing of the development) it would not be reasonable to seek additional contributions in lieu of education, library and youth facilities provision in the area.

4.3.11 The existing site contains an area that was previously used as a children's play area however the equipment has long since been removed due to vandalism and its poor location. Normally a Local Area for Play (LAP) would be required on a development of this size however the Parks and Countryside Manager advises that such a provision would offer limited play value and would be costly to maintain. Furthermore, a nearby existing facility at John Barker Place has been upgraded which would also assist in serving the needs of this development. In these circumstances it is considered that a LAP is not required on this site.

4.3.12 Affordable Housing

The site currently provides 36 affordable units managed by North Hertfordshire Homes. The site would continue to provide 100% affordable housing to those in local housing need. It is recommended that a condition is attached to secure the continued provision of affordable housing on this site.

4.4 **Conclusion**

4.4.1 The proposal represents an acceptable use of the site. The proposed density is of an appropriate level given the character of the area and its accessible location. I consider that the general form and appearance of the development would not be out of context having regard to the surrounding pattern of development. Furthermore the layout would not detract from the street scene or the amenities of the adjoining residential occupiers. The development would have no significant impact on the local highway network. There are, in my opinion, no sustainable objections that can be raised on planning or highway grounds and therefore the following favourable recommendation is made.

5.0 Legal Implications

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

6.0 Recommendation

- 6.1 That permission be GRANTED subject to the following conditions:

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

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

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting, approved documents and plans, or with minor modifications of those details which have previously been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority as being not materially different from those thereby permitted.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. **Details and/or samples of materials to be used on all external elevations and the roof of the development hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced.**

Reason: To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area.

4. **A noise mitigation scheme designed to minimise the impact of road traffic noise shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) for approval. The development shall not commence until there is a scheme approved by the LPA and approved measures are fully implemented in accordance with the scheme. Once implemented, the scheme of measures shall be maintained in accordance with approved details.**

Reason: To protect the residential amenities of future occupiers of the development.

5. **A scheme designed to minimise the impact from site dust during demolition activities shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. Demolition activities shall not commence until there is a scheme approved by the LPA. Once implemented the scheme of measures shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: To protect the residential amenities of existing residents, and to minimise the potential for dust nuisance.

6. **A noise mitigation scheme designed to minimise the impact from demolition activities shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Demolition activities shall not commence until there is a scheme approved by the Local Planning Authority and the approved measures shall be fully implemented in accordance with the scheme. Once implemented the scheme of measures shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: To protect the residential amenities of existing residents and to minimise the potential for noise from inherently noisy plant and equipment.

7. **Before any part of the development hereby approved is first commenced full details of all the external areas to be hardsurfaced shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.

8. a) Construction work on the development site hereby permitted shall not commence prior to the submission to, and agreement of the Local Planning Authority of a written environmental report (Phase 1) which identifies the current and past land uses of this site (and adjacent sites) with a view to determining the presence of contamination which is likely to be harmful to human health, the aquatic environment, buildings structures and local ecosystems.

b) If the Local Planning Authority is of the opinion that the report which discharges condition (a) above indicates a reasonable likelihood of harmful contamination then a further report (phase II) shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority which includes:

(i) A full identification of the location and concentration of all pollutants on this site and the presence of relevant receptors and

(ii) The results from the application of a appropriate risk assessment methodology, and

(iii) A method statement that specifies the steps necessary to render any contamination harmless and

(iv) A contingency plan, which specifies how unanticipated pollutants will be dealt with.

No construction work (other than that necessary for the discharge of this condition shall commence on this site until the Phase II report has been approved, in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

c) This site shall not be occupied, or brought into use, until:

(i) All works which form part of the agreed scheme pursuant to the discharge of condition (b) above have been fully completed;

(ii) A remediation validation report (Phase III) confirming that the site is suitable for use has been submitted to and agreed by the Local Planning Authority

d) Any contamination, other than that reported by virtue of condition (a) and (b) encountered during the development of this site shall be brought to the attention of the Local Planning Authority as soon as practically possible; a scheme to render this contamination harmless shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the LPA and subsequently fully implemented prior to the occupation of this site.

e) All works agreed with the Local Planning Authority with regard to remediation of this site shall be permanently maintained.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination present within the site is dealt with in a manner that safeguards human health, the built and aquatic environment and local ecosystems

9. Before the occupation of any of the dwellings hereby permitted, the car parking facilities shown on the approved plan shall be marked out and made available, and shall thereafter be kept available solely for the parking of motor vehicles.

Reason: To ensure the provision of satisfactory car parking facilities clear of the public highway to meet the needs of the development.

10. **Prior to the commencement of the development details of the design and appearance of the timber garden sheds, external bin/refuse storage facilities and lampposts/lamps shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: In the interests of visual amenity.

11. The affordable housing hereby permitted, as described with the application and supporting documents and shown on the submitted plans, shall be provided and reserved permanently (i.e not only for the initial occupants, but also for subsequent occupants) for people in need of such housing.

Reason: To ensure that the development meets the affordable housing need within the district.

12. All building work associated with the development hereby approved shall be restricted to between the hours of 07.30am and 06.00pm Monday to Fridays and between the hours of 08.00am and 1.00pm on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenity of nearby occupiers.

Reason for Decision

The development hereby permitted would have no material adverse impact on the character of the neighbourhood, the amenities of local residents or on highway conditions in the vicinity of the site and as such complies with the relevant provisions of the development plan as summarised below:

Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011

Policy 1: Sustainable Development

Policy 25: Car Parking (Including Supplementary Planning Guidance)

Policy 36: Critical Capital and other important Environmental Assets

North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 With Alterations

Policy 1: Pattern and Character of North Hertfordshire

Policy 8: Development in Towns

Policy 26: Housing Proposals

Policy 29A: Affordable Housing

Policy 55: Car Parking Standards (and Supplementary Planning Document, 'Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development')

Policy 57: Residential Guidelines and Standards

ITEM NO: 3	<u>Location:</u>	Brookers Yard, Suzuki & Peter Fish Premises, off Paynes Park, Hitchin
	<u>Applicant:</u>	Stephen Howard Holdings Ltd
	<u>Proposal:</u>	2, 3 & 4 storey buildings together with conversion of part of existing Carling Building and Building B to provide 148 residential units 28 one bedroom & 104 two bedroom flats; 1 one bedroom, 12 two bedroom & 3 three bedroom houses. Basement parking for 175 cars and cycle storage. Use of part of existing Carling Building for retail purposes (272 sq.m). Two separate points of vehicular access via Paynes Park following closure of existing. Service access to new ground floor loading bay rear of Brookers via Market Place. Landscaping and ancillary works. (As amended by plans received 17 January 2006, 17 March 20 May & 13 June 2006).
	<u>Ref.No:</u>	05/00741/ 1
	<u>Officer:</u>	Graham Haerle

Date of expiry of statutory period : 15th July 2005

Reason for Delay

Negotiations with applicants

Reason for Referral to Committee

Area of application site exceeds 0.5 hectares

1.0 Relevant History

- 1.1 The applicant's first application was submitted in November 2004 and proposed a total of 148 one, two and three bedroom flats and 7 three and four bedroom town houses accommodated in a variety of 2-6 storey buildings with basement car parking and a single point of access off Paynes Park. That application would have been recommended for refusal to this Committee on the grounds of unsatisfactory layout, scale and design. Before reaching that stage, the application was withdrawn by the applicants on the 2nd February 2005.
- 1.2 The second, revised application, subject of this report was received on the 20th May, last year.
- 1.3 There have been numerous applications over the years associated with the businesses operated from the now vacant Peter Fish and Suzuki garage premises which front Paynes Park: similarly there have been applications associated with the operations performed by Brookers from their yard area. These applications are of little relevance to the current proposals.

- 1.4 Of relevance, insofar as the Brookers main shop and the floorspace behind is concerned, is a permission recently granted which involves the demolition of various parts of the building at the rear (now carried out) to be followed by the construction of new first and second floors to provide 12 flats, a new ground floor loading bay and 9 parking spaces.
- 1.5 In para 4.2.7 of this report I explain the manner in which that approved development affecting the Brookers premises would link directly with the current application.
- 1.6 I should mention two other applications, the first of which will be recalled by those longer serving members of the Committee and the second which is much more recent. The first was a comprehensive scheme submitted by Lovell Developments Ltd for a retail, offices, food and drink proposal on land around Paynes Park House, including Jacksons Yard, the Arcade car park, the land now developed by McCarthy and Stone and Brookers Yard. This was refused by Hitchin Committee in 1998.
- 1.7 The second relates to the recent sheltered housing development carried out by McCarthy and Stone on the adjoining former car sales and garage site between Brookers and the Arcade. Proposals for this latter site were first presented to the Council in the late 1990's. An application for retail and residential development was refused permission in 2001. The first approach from McCarthy and Stone was received later in 2001 with their formal application being submitted in May 2003 and granted permission in April 2004.

2.0 Policies

2.1 County Structure Plan Review 1991-2011:

Policy 1	Sustainable Development
Policy 2	Design & Provisions of Development
Policy 4	Town Centres
Policy 10	Affordable Housing
Policy 22	Reduction of Travel Need & Car Usage
Policy 25	Supplementary Planning Guidance – Parking Standards
Policy 38	Critical Capital & Other Important Environmental Assets

2.2 This site is identified in the District Local Plan No 2 with Alterations as being within Town Centre Area HTC2 Paynes Park which lists the following priorities:

- 1. To promote development to link Paynes Park to the High Street for the benefit of pedestrians.*
- 2. To improve the environment of Paynes Park, particularly the service yards at the rear of High Street premises.*

Policy 1	Pattern and Character of North Hertfordshire
Policy 8	Development in Towns
Policy 16	Areas of Archaeological Significance & other Archaeological Areas
Policy 22	Urban Environment
Policy 26	Housing Proposals
Policy 29A	Affordable Housing
Policy 55	Parking Standards (plus SPD)
Policy 57	Residential Guidelines & Standards

2.3 Hitchin Town Centre Strategy adopted November 2004

2.4 Paynes Park Planning Brief adopted February 2005.

2.5 Planning Policy Guidance Notes and Statements:

PPS1	Delivering Sustainable Development
PPG3	Housing
PPG6	Town Centre and Retail Development
PPG13	Transport
PPG15	Planning and Historic Environment

3.0 Representations

3.1 **County Highway Authority** - no highway objections subject to conditions and a Section 106 financial contribution towards the implementation of off-site sustainable transport measures. The County Council's covering letter of the 9th May 2006 is copied as appendix 1.

3.2 **County Archaeologist** - has confirmed that an archaeological evaluation, desk-based assessment and historic buildings assessment have already been carried out in conjunction with the previous application: he raised no objection to the current application subject to a suitably worded condition to secure the level of archaeological investigation that the site warrants.

3.3 **County Planning Obligations Manager** - would wish any planning permission granted to be subject to financial contributions via a planning agreement towards secondary education, library facilities, child care and youth facilities and the provision of fire hydrants.

3.4 **County Council's Architects Advisory Panel** - the Panel has considered the applicant's proposals on 4 occasions, the first 2 were in connection with the first application, the third occasion in response to the current application as submitted and the final occasion in February this year to consider amended plans prepared in response to their previous criticisms: the minutes of this last meeting include the following:

"In the discussion Panel members were pleased to see a much more simple and imaginative scheme. The buildings and spaces between and enclosed by them were a significant improvement. The fretted plan form of Blocks J and E added interest to the layout and the proposals for the eastern end near Market Square had been carefully handled. Detailed drawings of parts of the scheme demonstrated the potential quality of the proposals. However there were still concerns about some aspects of the scheme particularly in the vicinity of Block A....."

In summary the panel welcomed the improvements generally.. Although they were unable to assimilate every detail of the proposals in the relatively short time available, particularly the detailed plans and elevations they were confident that the scheme would make a positive contribution to this historic part of the town. They recommended that further negotiations should take place to address those outstanding points which are referred to above."

(The outstanding points related to Panel's criticisms of Block A, primarily directed at the design of the vehicular entrances and other elevational treatments).

- 3.5 **English Heritage** - consultation with English Heritage has been carried out by virtue of the site being within a Conservation Area and its area exceeding 1000sq metres. Their comments and advice have, I believe it is reasonable for me to say, been somewhat perplexing. Their first letter criticised the application, however, by referring to " four and six storey buildings of a modern form and character", it seems they had mistaken the second application for the first - the first including buildings of a modern style and a 6 storey building but the current application proposing a maximum of 4 storey development. In response to being re-consulted upon amended plans received on the 17th January, the second letter received from English Heritage stated *"our specialist staff have considered information received and we do not wish to offer any comments on this occasion. The application should be determined in accordance with national local policy guidance and on the basis of your specialist conservation advice."* In an endeavour to clarify whether this second letter was to be regarded as confirmation that the amended plans had satisfactorily addressed their original (inaccurate ?) criticism, I spoke to and subsequently received a third letter from English Heritage. I have copied this as appendix 2 from which Members will see the writer concludes by advising that *" the overall scheme still suffers from a propensity for forms, details and materials that do not take their cue from the historic surroundings."* The department's Principal Conservation Officer disagrees with much of what is said in this third letter and I have copied her comments as appendix 3. I have forwarded to English Heritage her comments plus the latest amended plans which respond to the criticisms raised by the Architects Panel and your officers to certain aspects of the development. At the time of completing this report I had not received their reply which hopefully will be available for reference to Members at the meeting.
- 3.6 **Environment Agency** - no objections subject to conditions dealing with surface water drainage, site contamination and details of the method for piling foundations.
- 3.7 **Anglian Water** - no objections: advises the need for the applicants to carry out the relevant survey work in order to submit detailed drainage proposals to their office.
- 3.8 **Hertfordshire Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer** - has been in discussions with the applicant's architects and considers the design and layout has been changed for the better in comparison with their first application with suitable treatment to help create the necessary demarcation between public and private space. Advises the applicant to include security arrangements within the basement parking area as specified within the County's 'Safer Parking' Award scheme.
- 3.9 **Environmental Protection Officers (NHDC)** - recommend suitable conditions to address land contamination, mitigation measures in respect of road traffic and entertainment noise and to minimise the impact of nuisance from demolition and construction works.
- 3.10 **Housing Strategy and Renewals Manager (NHDC)** - has confirmed the mix of one bedroom flats and one, two and three bedroom houses is satisfactory as the required element of affordable housing to meet current local needs.
- 3.11 **Parks & Countryside Development Manager (NHDC)** - although there are no planned works in the locality as listed in the Council's adopted Play Area and Outdoor Youth Provision Strategy, a contribution towards a 2005/06 growth bid proposal for an item of play equipment (£7000) at Smithsons Recreation Ground and improvements/maintenance of the Reginald Hine Memorial Garden would be appropriate in association with this application.
- 3.12 **Community Development Manager (NHDC)** - to be advised insofar as the Council's Hitchin town centre project for a children and young people's centre is concerned.

- 3.13 **Local Groups/residents** - in consulting with local groups and residents upon this second application, individual letters were originally sent out to all those occupiers adjoining the site who had written to the Council in respect of the first application. In addition notices were displayed around the site and in the local press. Further similar consultation was carried out in respect of amended plans received on the 17th January plus any additional new individuals who had written in response to the application as submitted. The third round of consultation was carried out on the 10th April although in view of the nature of the further amendments it was necessary to re-notify only those who had previously written. I have not arranged for any consultation in respect of final amended plans received on the 12th May which made some detailed refinements to Blocks A, C & D to which I shall refer in due course, nor to detailed landscaping plans received on the 13th June.
- 3.14 In response to the plans as originally submitted with this second application, 5 individual letters from local residents were received, 3 from properties in Tilehouse Street (nos 32, 30 and 71), the remaining 2 from properties in Deacons Way (objecting until a traffic survey is carried out; need for a planning agreement) and Walnut Way, Ickleford (development should only be of 2 storey height; likely traffic congestion along Paynes Park). Of the 3 Tilehouse Street letters, I have copied as appendix 4 one of the 2 letters of objection and the third letter which is generally complimentary about the development. Copied as appendix 5 are letters of objections received from Hitchin Forum and The Hitchin Society.
- 3.15 In response to the 17th January consultation, a greater number of letters was received (21 from local residents and from Hitchin Forum, The Hitchin Society and Keep Hitchin Special), all objecting to the amended plans and the development generally. Nine letters were received from Tilehouse Street properties (nos. 31, 34 and 36, 70, 71, 73, 74, 2 and 3 The Chapmans) objecting on the following summarised grounds:
- (i) Building heights adjoining the rear of Tilehouse Street properties will cause overshadowing and loss of privacy - refer to para 4.10 of the Planning Brief which states that the height and scale of any development should "respect the historic layout and existing character of the area... higher buildings will generally be more appropriate further into the site than on the Paynes Park frontage."
- (Note: I believe this quote is taken from an earlier draft version of the Brief).
- (ii) Loss of sunlight to Reginald Hine garden
 - (iii) The Suzuki garage buildings should be retained to provide continuity to Tilehouse Street.
 - (iv) Potential danger to pedestrians by virtue of the proposal to move the existing footpath along Paynes Park closer to the road.
 - (v) Query the ability to prioritise the pedestrian use of Coopers Alley public footpath.
 - (vi) Overdevelopment of the site resulting in added traffic congestion along Paynes Park and increased traffic noise in the area.
 - (vii) Parking spaces inadequate to serve the number of potential occupiers.
 - (viii) Inadequate provision of recreational and outside space for residents.
 - (ix) To accommodate all of the required affordable housing in one part of the development rather than being integrated into the scheme is, inter alia, demeaning to potential purchasers. The development makes no concessions

to family housing.

(x) Access and right of way to the garages rear of 70-75 Tilehouse Street via the top of the street must be retained - query the inclusion of this access within the application site.

(xi) The amended plans have not gone far enough to produce a development appropriate for the conservation area of a historic town.

3.16 The additional letters of objection received from properties throughout the town raise some of the above issues plus the following summarised points:

(i) Insufficient retail content within the scheme.

(ii) Nuns Close may be used as a rat-run: provision should be made to prevent additional traffic from entering the road by making it a cul-de-sac.

(iii) The proposed service access via Market Place is contrary to the plans to increase traffic restrictions in this area.

(iv) Basement parking will cause noise and vibration to adjacent historic buildings.

(v) No proposals for the local highway network to improve morning and evening rush hour traffic.

(vi) Proposed density is "in excess of Government Guidelines of 40-75 dwellings per hectare - why?.....where will all these extra people do their shopping? Where is the infrastructure for them?" (reference made to doctors, dentists, water drainage).

(vii) Important to note the concern being expressed upon the long term social implications of the higher densities of the scale as proposed.

(viii) Mixed use development would be more appropriate including retail, commercial and leisure as well as some housing.

(ix) One letter supports the development of flats and houses in Hitchin, particularly for young people provided the design is acceptable. The adjoining McCarthy & Stone development is quoted as an example of poor design; the shared ownership developments at Parkside, near Grove Road and Jeeves Yard as much nicer.

(x) Queries raised upon the control of access through the site and to the basement car parks, will the footways through the development be respected by users and residents?

3.17 Letters received from Hitchin Forum, The Hitchin Society and Keep Hitchin Special have been copied as appendix 6.

3.18 In response to the final consultation carried out in respect of amendments made to the plans on the 17th and 20th March, one further letter was received from the occupier of 71 Tilehouse Street maintaining her earlier objections upon the impact of the density proposed in terms of noise and traffic, height of buildings, loss of privacy, concerns over right of way to garages, damage from construction of basement car park. Letters from Hitchin Forum and The Hitchin Society state the amendments do not cause them to modify their previous objections.

3.19 As usual, all these letters are available for Members to read beforehand by request and will be available at the meeting.

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site & Surroundings

- 4.1.1 Members will be very familiar with the site and surroundings of the long-established Brookers premises, together with the former Suzuki and Peter Fish garage businesses fronting Paynes Park, if for no other reason than being involved through this Committee in the consideration of the Paynes Park Planning Brief during its various stages in 2004 and leading to its adoption in February 2005.
- 4.1.2 The location plan at the end of this report shows the northern boundary of the site adjacent to the recently completed McCarthy & Stone development, its irregular southern boundary principally next to residential and commercial properties in Tilehouse Street, its existing eastern access on to Bucklersbury and the Market Place and its western frontage of some 80metres on to Paynes Park.
- 4.1.3 The former commercial garage premises fronting on to and with 3 separate points of access to and from Paynes Park, is separated from Brookers Yard by Coopers Alley (public footpath no. 35) which leads from Paynes Park in front of the McCarthy & Stone development through to Tilehouse Street.
- 4.1.4 The site has an overall area of 0.83 hectares and is occupied by a range of buildings and structures, the great majority of which will again be familiar to Members. Apart from the buildings, the site is entirely hard surfaced and prior to the vacation of the various businesses used for a mix of vehicle sales, employee and customer parking and various servicing arrangements. Traffic primarily associated with the builders merchants and retail services provided by Brookers, was able to access and leave the site, the latter involving an acute turning manoeuvre, via Paynes Park and also pass through the site from Paynes Park to Market Place.
- 4.1.5 There is a general fall in ground level of some 5.5m from Paynes Park down to the Carling Building. This is the only building of any "status" on the site, being included on the Register of Important Local Buildings. It has a relatively imposing overall height of some 13m as viewed from Market Place between Threshers and Country Casuals.

4.2 Proposal

- 4.2.1 In dealing with major applications of this importance Members will know, from earlier examples, of my advice that the full nature of the layout and appearance of what is being proposed can only be fully appreciated by studying the plans prior to the meeting. To assist, I understand that the applicants will shortly be providing each Member with an appropriate selection of plans in a reduced A3 form together with some perspective views.
- 4.2.2 From these plans and views, Members will appreciate the concept of the layout based on a frontage development to Paynes Park incorporating an archway entrance that would continue as a "street" of varying width and adjoining spaces, flanked by separate 3/4 storey buildings as far as and to include the Carling Building. Opposite the Carling Building would be the new 3 storey rear section of the Brookers store (see para 1.4). The "street" would continue between these buildings to exit as existing on to Market Place.

- 4.2.3 The archway entrance to which I have referred would be limited via appropriate controls to large service vehicles such as fire, refuse, removal and large delivery vehicles which would exit via Market Place. Access to the basement parking area as noted in the description of the application would be gained via a separate covered entrance/exit off Paynes Park incorporated within the frontage block (Block A).
- 4.2.4 The existing route of Coopers Alley would not change although it would pass through the archway entrance.
- 4.2.5 The whole of the ground floor and a small part of the first floor of the Carling Building is proposed for retail use.
- 4.2.6 I shall deal with the specific details of the proposal in the next section when covering the key issues associated with the application.
- 4.2.7 In the opening "relevant history" section of this report I referred to the permission granted to Brookers for work to the rear of their shop premises in the form of new first and second floors to provide 12 flats, a new ground floor loading bay and 9 parking spaces. As far as the application, subject of this report, is concerned that part of Block F shown next to Brookers would in fact overlap with the area identified for the 9 parking spaces and turning area for service vehicles to the Brookers shop. In practice, the Brookers permission will proceed to completion in accordance with the approved plans: in the event of the current application being granted and carried out, the 9 parking spaces would be relocated to the basement car park with the area in question being utilised to provide a covered loading area for Brookers shop as shown on the ground floor plan for Block F.
- 4.2.8 Both the previous withdrawn application and this current application have been supported by technical reports covering urban structure design and architectural statements, transport, archaeology, noise, environmental studies, historic buildings record and survey, planting and landscaping.

4.3 **Key Issues**

- 4.3.1 In the consideration and determination of this application the following key issues need to be addressed:
- (i) the principle of redeveloping the site principally for residential purposes having regard to its long occupation for business purposes and its location in the District Local Plan as being within a town centre environmental area;
 - (ii) the layout, density and design of the new buildings having regard to the sites town centre location within the Conservation Area;
 - (iii) traffic impact, arrangements for vehicular and pedestrian access and parking/cycle provision; and
 - (iv) assessment of the application against other relevant Development Plan policies, eg, provision of affordable housing, amenity space, Section 106 issues.

4.3.2 **The Principle** - Section 38 (6) of the Planning & Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 (formerly Section 54A of the 1990 Planning Act) requires Local Planning Authorities to determine applications in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. As noted in the policy section (para 2.2) the site is within a Town Centre Area in the District Local Plan. However, as a "material consideration" and bearing in mind the dated nature of the current Local Plan is the recent adoption by the Council of two policy documents. Firstly, the Hitchin Town Centre Strategy adopted in November 2004 advises that residential would be an acceptable predominant use in the southern part of the Paynes Park area which covers the application site and what is now the McCarthy and Stone development (para 3.2.28). Secondly, the Paynes Park Planning Brief adopted in February, last year, which provides the following guidance in para 3.2 - 3.4:

3.2 The southern area of Paynes Park could be developed for a mix of residential with some retail and community uses. The site is extremely central, very convenient for town centre facilities, and is a sustainable location for housing. Any proposals for residential development should contribute towards the Council's strategic priority of providing adequate affordable housing.

3.3 The Council wish to see the southern part of the site developed comprehensively, rather than in a piecemeal fashion. However, should the Suzuki site and/or the Peter Fish site be developed separately from Brookers, developments should be complementary in visual terms to its surroundings.

3.4 Within the Brookers site there is a Locally Listed Building called the Carling Building. At present the ground floor is being used for retail purposes. In any redevelopment proposal the Council wish to see this Locally Listed Building retained. Because of its proximity to the Market Place, the Council wish to see the retail element on the ground floor of this building retained.

4.3.3 In addition to these 2 up to date policy documents is the Government guidance contained in Planning Policy Guidance Note (PPG) 3 - Housing which emphasises the need to give priority to re-using previously developed land within urban areas for new housing. Viewed against this guidance and the Council's adopted policy documents which deal specifically with the land, subject of this application, I do not believe there is any planning objections to raise in principle to the proposed development. Indeed via these documents, the Council has indicated its support for a redevelopment of the site for predominantly residential purposes.

4.3.4 **Layout, density & design** - before commenting in any detail about the proposed layout it is appropriate to make a few comments, self-evident though they may be, upon the background to the application. It would, for example, have been preferable in planning terms for both the adjoining site now developed by McCarthy & Stone and the application site to have been available for redevelopment at the same time. Obviously that has not occurred for various reasons which are now academic and which have been recognised in the Paynes Park Design Brief in the following manner (paras 1.11 and 1.12):

1.11 For the purposes of this Brief, the area can be split between the northern part and the southern part. The southern part includes Brookers yard, the Suzuki site, Peter Fish Commercial Vehicles, and the area granted planning permission for elderly persons' housing (McCarthy and Stone). The northern part includes, the Arcade car park, Paynes Park House, West Alley, Jackson's Yard car park, Woolworths' staff car park, the disabled car park, the Stonegate private car park, Stapletons and the entrance to the Lairage multi-storey car park.

1.12 The northern part of the site consists of a mixture of well established uses, while the southern part includes site where redevelopment is underway (McCarthy and Stone) and where redevelopment is being actively pursued (Brookers, Suzuki and Peter Fish).

- 4.3.5 Although the McCarthy and Stone development has not physically prevented the current application site from being redeveloped, the relationship of the building in terms of its height and scale close to the common boundary between the two sites has formed a major determining influence upon the opportunity to design a satisfactory layout within the application site, particularly the area in the "shadow" of the McCarthy and Stone building. Various layouts have been explored, with the original application failing to satisfactorily address this difficult relationship. Following subsequent discussion and with the benefit of constructive criticism being obtained from the County Council's independent Architect's Panel, the layout as now proposed was conceived. Having regard to the constraints imposed by the close proximity of the McCarthy and Stone building, the narrow configuration of the site, Coopers Alley public footpath and limited access opportunities via Paynes Park, the scheme proposes in my opinion a reasonable and satisfactory layout both in operational (access, servicing, etc) and townscape terms.
- 4.3.6 Turning to the issue of density, this continues to be a controversial subject insofar as third party representations are concerned, particularly those received from local groups (refer to Section 3.0 and the relevant attached appendices). Leaving aside for the moment the matter of the overall height of the buildings, which has been widely criticised and quoted as an example of the application resulting in an overdevelopment of the site, the issue of density is one I have presented in previous reports during recent months insofar as the more intensive residential schemes for the town are concerned. For the moment I have no reason to change what I have previously advised Members which has been along the following lines.
- 4.3.7 Critical comments now being made by the public in response to the relatively high density proposed by current planning applications, including this one, appear to be strongly influenced by the Government's draft Planning Policy Statement 3: Housing (PPS3) published in December 2005. Suffice to say this draft, which was included as a Members' Information Note 13th January, presently carries little, if any, material weight in the consideration and determination of applications by the Local Planning Authority. At the best it may be regarded as providing the intentions of Government upon housing issues, to include guidance upon indicative density ranges for specific types of location. However, until it is published in its final form to replace PPG3, the current draft is not to be regarded as a relevant planning document of any significant weight in reaching decisions upon current planning applications. Members will be aware of the Government advice given in PPG3 to achieve between 30-50 dwellings per hectare and a greater intensity where sites have good access to public transport and town centre facilities
- 4.3.8 Overall, the proposal for a total of 148 dwellings on a site area of 0.83 ha would result in a density of 178 dwellings per hectare.
- 4.3.9 For comparison purposes in terms of recent decisions upon applications in Hitchin, the William Ransom site provided 100 dph and the A&B Glasswork's site in Cooks Way 113 dph: the recent development at 88 Walsworth Road in close proximity to the site achieved 186 dph although the original permission granted to the developers was 160 dph. From these figures it will be seen that the current application proposes a density at the higher end of recent schemes in the town. Developments in excess of 200dph have been granted permission in Letchworth (Former Bridger Packaging site in Birds Hill) and Royston (Upper King Street).

4.3.10 In view of the fact that neither the Structure Plan nor Local Plan contain any policies requiring minimum/maximum housing density figures - nor should they - a density figure by itself, however high, does not present a valid reason in my opinion to refuse planning permission. It is the manner in which the density is planned and accommodated on the site that needs to be considered and can give rise to material planning objections eg factors associated with the scale or height of development, parking provision, amenity space.

4.3.11 I now turn to the third topic in this section of the report, that of design. It is reasonable for me to say that, given the principle of a predominantly residential development is acceptable and the layout is the one best suited to meet the operational and townscape requirements for the site, details of the many aspects of design have been without question the most difficult and protracted part of the application to consider. I have, I am grateful to say, been assisted in this work by the Council's Urban Design and Landscape Officer, Principal Conservation Officer, the services of a consultant architect and feedback from my meetings with the County Council's Architects' Panel.

4.3.12 Design covers the following:

- (i) the appearance of the development, most importantly as seen at ground level from any public vantage points such as along Paynes Park, from Market Place, from gaps between buildings in Tilehouse Street and from the Reginald Hine Memorial gardens at the top of Tilehouse Street;
- (ii) the design implications associated with securing a satisfactory means of vehicular access to the site from Paynes Park to satisfy the highway authority's requirements;
- (iii) the relationship of building to building and building to boundary within the scheme;
- (iv) the relationship of the buildings as proposed with adjoining existing properties and buildings, particularly those at the top end of Tilehouse Street which back on to the site;
- (v) the design details of the buildings themselves - elevations, roof forms, fenestration; and
- (vi) the choice of external materials.

4.3.13 The Town Centre Strategy gives a framework for guiding the overall development and growth of the town centre, identifying key development sites which include the area subsequently covered by the Paynes Park Planning Brief. This latter document gives more detailed guidance on the relevant design and conservation issues. I have copied the relevant section entitled "Design and Conservation as appendix 7 against which I have considered the design aspects of the scheme. The key guidance is as follows:

Paras 4.1 and 4.3

"Any future development in the area must improve the visual character of Paynes Park and maintain or enhance the character and appearance of the Hitchin Conservation Area"

Para 4.5

"The Carling Building.... special consideration should be given to how development would impact on (this) building."

Paras 4.6 and 4.8

"The Council wish to see frontage development along most of Paynes Park from the Paynes Park Social Club to the roundabout.... careful consideration will need to be given to the heights of buildings..... no buildings should dominate adjacent ones. However, in order to create an attractive and interesting streetscape, variations in the height of buildings will be encouraged."

Para 4.10

"The height and scale of buildings within the site should also respect the historic layout and existing character of the area..... use could be made of the gradient of the site, falling from Paynes Park to Market Place.

Paras 4.12 and 4.13

".....new development should respect and have no adverse impact on the rear of properties on Tilehouse Street and The Reginald Hine Memorial Garden at the top of Tilehouse Street.... and should be in harmony with the historic mediaeval grain and scale of the area".

Paras 4.14 and 4.15

".... Proposed developments should use materials which complement the existing materials in the area.... and include quality roofscapes which should be sympathetic to the surrounding area."

Paras 4.16 and 4.17

".... consideration should be given to appropriate hard and soft landscaping.... there may also be the potential for a townscape feature at the apex of the Peter Fish site."

Para 4.18

"Developers will be expected to consider designs which retain some views from the west of local features such as St Mary's Church spire, the Corn Exchange cupola and Windmill Hill."

Para 4.19

"Proposals should take account of the Police document "Secured by Design".... no gated communities should be created".

4.3.14 Having carefully considered the 6 design issues I listed in para 4.3.12 against the above guidance and with the benefit of advice received from colleagues, I am satisfied the proposed development - as amended by the applicants through discussion and negotiation - satisfactorily meets the important design and conservation criteria for this site. I reach this conclusion based on the following comments and taking the 6 design issues in turn.

- (i) The appearance of the development as seen from public vantage points - as viewed from Paynes Park and locations to the west, the 2½ /3 storey frontage development (Block A) with its irregular "building-line" and varied roof heights (10.5/12/13metres) would satisfactorily integrate with the McCarthy and Stone development without dominating the road or the "listed" Hitchin Museum on the opposite side. The need to accommodate separate access to the site from Paynes Park for service and private vehicles as required by the Brief (para 5.4) has been successfully incorporated in the angled elevations of the building whilst producing an interesting and attractive streetscape. As viewed from Market Place through the gap between Threshers and Country Casuals, extensions to the Carling Building to the rear and behind the Corn Exchange would not have any significant impact. From Tilehouse Street, between no. 78 and the Coopers Arms PH, the height of the 2/3½ storey development of Blocks C & D (9.4/12.4m) at a distance of some 33-48m from the road would not impinge to an adverse degree on the view as seen through this gap. Similarly, at the top of Tilehouse Street, that part of the south elevation of Block A that would flank the Reginald Hine Memorial Garden (11m) would compare with the heights of the taller properties in Tilehouse Street.
- (ii) The design implications associated with accommodating vehicular access to the site from Paynes Park - I have touched on this in the last paragraph. In comparison with the original application which proposed a single access between buildings and across Coopers Alley, the revised application has after a protracted period of negotiations with the County Highway Authority and your officers managed to successfully incorporate the access requirements within the frontage building. The archway entrance, 4.8m high, would not unduly dominate views when approaching the site along Paynes Park whilst the separate covered entrance to the basement car park would be at a return angle, facing away from approach views along the road. A perspective drawing has been produced showing this approach view along Paynes Park.
- (iii) The design relationship of building to building and building to boundary within the site - I have previously mentioned (para 4.3.5) the constraints faced by the applicants in designing their proposals for the site, with particular reference to the adjoining McCarthy & Stone development. Having satisfactorily addressed those constraints as far as the layout is concerned, the design has taken advantage of the drop in ground level from Paynes Park to Market Place and the form and scale of the Carling Building to produce a series of buildings, Blocks G, H and J on the north side and C/D, E and F on the south side. As mentioned towards the beginning of this report, these details can only be fully appreciated from the plans which Members will be able to view both before and at the meeting. In my view the overall design as considered under this heading would provide an attractive layout of building to building and building to space/boundary as you pass through the development via the central "street" from the Paynes Park archway to Market Place.

- (iv) The relationship of the proposed buildings to adjoining existing properties and buildings - in para 4.7.8 I particularly identified under this design issue the relationship of the development with the properties which adjoin the site at the top end of Tilehouse Street. Considerable attention has been required to the south elevation of Block A and to a lesser degree Blocks C and D with regard to this relationship. As submitted and as first amended, I remained unhappy at the design of Block A in terms of appearance and potential overlooking, however, further revisions have been carried out to address these concerns resulting in an overall design of Blocks A, C and D to which no sustainable planning objections can in my opinion be raised. No other part of the layout would result in any material harm being caused to the occupiers of adjoining residential and commercial properties.

Insofar as the height of the various buildings are concerned, to which I made brief reference in para 4.3.6, the 3 blocks within the "shadow" of McCarthy and Stone would vary between 11.5m and 13m which compares with the McCarthy and Stone building height which varies between 10.5m and 11.5m. The blocks to the rear of Brookers would be between 12.8m and 13.6m which compares with the 12m height of the scheme recently approved for the rear part of the Brookers shop premises (sec para 1.4). The buildings designed to accommodate the affordable housing element (Blocks C & D) would be between 9.2m and 12.6m and the frontage building on to Paynes Park (Block A) would have overall roof heights varying from 10.5m to 13m. The appropriateness of these building heights in terms of the appearance of the scheme itself and its overall impact upon the Conservation Area has been addressed by the Council's Principal Conservation officer (see appendix 3 and para 4.3.15 below). Given the variety of building heights in the locality and the town centre generally and based on her conclusions I do not consider there to be any valid planning objections to raise against the application on the grounds of the overall height of the various buildings.

Reference has been made in the objections received to the tight relationship between Blocks G,H & J to the McCarthy and Stone development. Having regard to the constraints upon any planned layout for the site this has proved to be unavoidable, a point upon which I have already made a general comment (para 4.3.5). With regard to the central building (Block H) only bathroom windows would face toward the McCarthy and Stone building. As far as Blocks G & J are concerned some bedroom windows would face this direction although in the case of G this is to avoid as far as possible windows facing the Corn Exchange: with regard to J, it affects only 4 windows.

- (v) Design details of the proposed buildings - again, these details can be best appreciated from an examination of the plans which illustrate a relatively traditional brick design for the buildings with a varied pitch roof form and dormer windows. My only continued reservation is the number of full height windows with traditional balconies and safety railings. However, this feature occurs only on internal views within the scheme and can, I acknowledge, equally be said to create variety to the overall appearance of the buildings. In all other respects I have no criticisms to raise to the design, having successfully negotiated several changes with the assistance received from colleagues, the Architects Panel and consultant architect.
- (vi) Choice of external materials - these would be restricted as far as elevational treatment is concerned to 2 bricks as shown on the coloured street elevation plan and, although not clearly shown on this plan, slate and plain clay roof tiles. Windows and doors would be painted timber with stone lintels and cills. For design interest Block A would use slim painted metal crital type window frames which have been used, successfully in my view, on the applicant's development adjoining the Bancroft Recreation Ground. Metal gutters and downpipes are proposed. All these materials would be conditioned in order to reserve approval to the final choice, to also include the detailed design for the balconies which I believe is very important.

- 4.3.15 My comments upon layout and design may be best summarised by endorsing the conclusions of the Council's Principal Conservation Officer who states: *"that the general layout, building form, height scale and design are acceptable in this part of the Conservation Area. This takes account of retaining positive characteristics of the Conservation Area and must also consider the existing unsympathetic and unattractive appearance of the site"*. Based on those comments and having regard to the guidance presented in the Town Centre Strategy and Design Brief for the site, I am satisfied there are no sustainable objections to raise in planning terms to the layout, density or design details of the application, as amended.
- 4.3.16 On behalf of the applicants and in response to the letter received from English Heritage (copied as appendix 2) a letter has been received from a firm of architects and surveyors with specific expertise in conservation proposals. This is copied as appendix 8).
- 4.3.17 **Traffic impact, access and parking** - as is normal, the District Council has been advised by the County Highway Authority on the traffic and access details which form a fundamental element of this application. In a similar manner to the design details having been the subject of an extensive dialogue with the applicants and their architects, so too has consideration of the access details been between the County Council's highway officers with the applicant's transport consultants. Already mentioned under the highway authority's representations (para 3.1) is the Highways Manager's letter of the 9th May 2006 copied as appendix 1. Although this refers in error to the accommodation as it was originally proposed, the letter sets out the manner in which the 2 separate points of access from Paynes Park would be used and controlled. Members will also note the advice given on behalf of the County Rights of Way Unit with regard to raising no objection to the application insofar as it is proposed to accommodate Coopers Alley public footpath along its existing route. Insofar as the impact of traffic generated by the proposal upon the local road network is concerned, I have to assume from the lack of comment made in the County Council's letter that they are satisfied this would not cause a highway safety problem.
- 4.3.18 Turning to the proposed parking arrangements, these are all to be provided in a basement area with entrance/exit via Paynes Park. A total of 175 are proposed which equates to 1.2 spaces per dwelling. These proposals originated a considerable time before the Council's recent adoption on the 1st March this year of its policy document "Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development" (Supplementary Planning Document) which followed the Council's Car Parking Strategy 2004-2009 adopted 27th July 2004. In the SPD, the application site is shown within the town centre zone for the purposes of calculating the maximum number of parking spaces required to serve the development. Based on the standard set out, the mix and number of dwellings proposed would require 143 spaces - effectively one space per dwelling - together with the 9 spaces to be relocated from the rear of the Brookers shop as redeveloped (see para 4.2.7). Consequently, when viewed against SPD Standards there would be an over-provision of parking spaces in the order of 23. I have discussed this with the Council's Transport Policy Officer who agrees with me that this does not present a valid planning objection to raise against the application

The basement area would provide secure facilities for cycle storage to meet the Council's standard of one space per dwelling.

4.3.19 **Other relevant issues** - as advised by the Paynes Park Planning Brief, the applicants have addressed the following:

- 1 the need to incorporate suitable measures to conserve water and energy resources and to minimise waste and foulwater recycling;
- 2 provided a minimum of 25% of the number of dwellings to comprise affordable housing to meet current local needs;
- 3 had discussions with and incorporated the advice of the Hertfordshire Constabulary Architectural Liaison Officer;
- 4 produced a layout that facilitates safe pedestrian movement both to and from and within the site;
- 5 provided a range of dwelling sizes and types, albeit with a high proportion of two bedroom flats;
- 6 retained the Carling Building within the proposed layout and identified the retail element on the ground floor to continue, plus a small amount at first floor level at the front part of the building;
- 7 retained a small detached building of some quality behind Tilehouse Street and adjoining Coopers Alley with plans to convert it to a one bedroom house as a part of the affordable housing element within Blocks C and D;
- 8 provided a Local Area for Play within the affordable housing "courtyard" to be maintained by a management company;
- 9 identified the opportunity for a townscape feature or work of public art at the apex of the former Peter Fish site;
- 10 provided comprehensive hard and soft landscape details following the somewhat indicative details submitted with the original application. These comprehensive details, received on the 13th June show, inter alia, proposals for the re-alignment of the footway along Paynes Park closer to the road with details of safety railings and tree planting. This work would be carried out on highway land and I have thus consulted with the County Council to obtain their views. Although such details have only been recently received, the plans as originally submitted and subsequently amended have indicated minimal areas to serve as amenity space for the occupiers of the proposed flats. The houses which form part of the affordable housing element (Blocks C & D together with the single house Block B) would have small rear patio areas with the courtyard arrangement as a whole enclosing an open amenity space identified as a Local Area for Play. Open spaces between Blocks G & H and H & J plus a semi-courtyard space to Block A would provide landscaped sitting out areas. As part of the streetscape through the centre of the development, ground floor flats would have shallow front gardens. Having regard to the town centre location of this site, I believe this minimal provision when judged against the Local Plan guideline standard is nevertheless quite acceptable and by itself does not justify raising a valid planning objection to the application.

4.3.20 **Section 106 issues** - in addition to the matters referred to in the responses received from various consultees (see section 3.0), and as itemised in my recommendation, an additional item upon which I am giving further consideration is the reference made in the Design Brief to the Town Centre Strategy's identification of the potential for enhancing the visual 'gateway' of the Parkway roundabout via developer contributions, I shall report my conclusions upon this item at the meeting, together with the results of any additional discussions I have with colleagues insofar as Section 106 matters are concerned.

4.4 **Conclusion**

- 4.4.1 This is, arguably, the most important residential proposal to be considered by the local planning authority in Hitchin during recent years in terms of its particular location in the town centre and within the Conservation Area. It has been the subject of discussion between the applicants and their advisors with your officers prior to submission and detailed negotiations following receipt of the application in May of last year.
- 4.4.2 These discussions and negotiations have been positive and have resulted in plans which, in my opinion, satisfactorily accord with the County Structure and District Local Plans and, of greater practical significance perhaps in view of its recent adoption, the framework and objectives of the Planning Brief prepared for the Paynes Park area. They also reflect, where appropriate, the policies contained in the recently adopted Hitchin Town Centre Strategy.
- 4.4.3 In these circumstances and in the absence of any sustainable objections to raise to the application on planning or highway grounds, the following favourable recommendation is made.

5. Legal Implications:

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

6.0 Recommendation :

- 6.1 That in the event of the applicants first entering into a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 with the District and County Councils:
- (a) To secure the provision of affordable housing in accordance with Policy 29A of the District Local Plan No.2 with Alterations or such other arrangements as may be agreed under Circular 6/98-Planning and affordable Housing and to secure their permanent occupation for local people in need;
 - (b) To make a financial contributions towards County Council facilities of £26,788 (library facilities), £53,724 (youth and childcare facilities), £38,532 (secondary education provision);
 - (c) To make a financial contribution of £500 per dwelling towards sustainable transport measures within the area;
 - (d) To make financial contribution of £5000 towards improvements to the Smithson Recreation Ground and the Reginald Hine Memorial Garden;
 - (e) The provisions of fire hydrants.

Permission be **GRANTED** subject to the following conditions:

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

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

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out wholly in accordance with the details specified in the application and supporting, approved documents and plans, or with minor modifications of those details which have previously been agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority as being not materially different from those thereby permitted.

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in accordance with details which form the basis of this grant of permission.

3. **Details and samples of materials to be used on all external elevations and the roof of the development, including external balconies and fenestration, hereby permitted shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority before the development is commenced.**

Reason: To ensure that the development will have an acceptable appearance which does not detract from the appearance and character of the surrounding area.

4. The approved details of landscaping shall be carried out before the end of the first planting season following either the first occupation of any of the buildings or the completion of the development, whichever is the sooner; and any trees or plants which, within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development, die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced during the next planting season with others of similar size and species, unless the Local Planning Authority agrees in writing to vary or dispense with this requirement.

Reason: To safeguard and enhance the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.

5. **Before any part of the development hereby approved is first commenced full details of all the external areas to be hardsurfaced, shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.**

Reason: To safeguard the appearance of the completed development.

6. **Before any site works associated with this development are commenced, survey details of existing ground levels together with details of proposed building levels shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority following which the development shall be carried out in accordance with these details.**

Reason: To ensure the development is carried out in a satisfactory manner having regard to the ground levels of the application site and adjoining properties.

7. **Before any part of the development hereby approved is first occupied details of external lighting shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. No part of the development shall be first occupied until the details as approved have been carried out and completed.**

Reason: To provide adequate lighting for the safety of the users of the development.

8. **Before any part of the development hereby approved as first occupied, full details of the Local Area for Play shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The play area as approved shall be provided as part of the overall approved landscaping details and shall thereafter be permanently maintained solely for this purpose.**

Reason: To ensure the permanent provision of a satisfactory play area to serve the occupiers of the proposed development.

9. **A scheme for the mitigation of road traffic noise and night entertainment noise from premises in the locality designed to protect residential amenity within the dwellings shall be submitted for approval of the Local Planning Authority. The scheme is to include the predicted interior and external noise levels and their subsequent measurement and reporting to the Local Planning Authority. The approved scheme shall be fully implemented before any of the dwellings are occupied and thereafter maintained in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: To safeguard the residential amenities of the prospective occupiers and the proposed flats.

10. **A noise mitigation scheme designed to minimise the impact from construction and demolition activities shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. Demolition and construction activities shall not commence until there is a scheme approved by the Local Planning Authority and the approved measures are fully implemented in accordance with the scheme. Once implemented the scheme of measures shall be maintained in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: To safeguard the general amenities of nearby occupiers.

11. All building work associated with the development hereby approved shall be restricted to between the hours of 7.30 a.m. and 6.00 p.m. Mondays - Fridays and between the hours of 8.00 a.m. and 1.00 p.m. on Saturdays and at no time on Sundays or Bank Holidays.

Reason: To safeguard the general amenities of nearby occupiers.

12. Construction work on the development site hereby permitted shall not commence prior to the submission to, and agreement of the Local Planning Authority of a written environmental report (Phase II) which includes:

- (i) A full identification of the location and concentration of all pollutants on this site and the presence of relevant receptors², and;
- (ii) The results from the application of an appropriate risk assessment methodology, and;
- (iii) A method statement that specifies the steps necessary to render any contamination harmless, and;
- (iv) A contingency plan, which specifies how unanticipated pollutants will be dealt with.

(a) This site shall not be occupied, or brought into use, until:

(i) All works which form part of the agreed scheme pursuant to the discharge of condition (b), above, have been fully completed;

(ii) A remediation validation report (Phase III) confirming that the site is suitable for use has been submitted to, and agreed by, the Local Planning Authority.

(iii) Any contamination, other than that reported by virtue of condition (a) and (b), encountered during the development of this site shall be brought to the attention of the Local Planning Authority as soon as practically possible; a scheme to render this contamination harmless shall be submitted to (but not necessarily in writing), and agreed by, the Local Planning Authority and subsequently fully implemented prior to the occupation of this site.

(b) All works agreed with the Local Planning Authority with regard to remediation of this site shall be permanently maintained.

Reason: To ensure that any contamination present within the site is dealt with in a manner that safeguards human health, the built and aquatic environment and local ecosystems.

13. Construction of the development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until detailed plans of internal layout and traffic management works are submitted to and approved in writing by their Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure that adequate measures are provided within the site to safeguard the safety and priority that pedestrians presently enjoy as they use the public FP35, Coopers Alley.

14. Construction of the development hereby permitted shall not be commenced until access/egress works have been constructed and completed to the satisfaction of the local Planning Authority.

Reason: In order to ensure the impact of the construction and use of the development hereby approved on the free and safe flow of traffic on the highway network is minimised.

15. The gradient of access/egress shall not be steeper than 1: 20 for the first 5 metres from the edge of the carriageway.

Reason: So that vehicles may enter and leave the site with the minimum of interference to the free flow and safety of other traffic on the highway.

16. Construction of the development hereby approved shall not commence until details of construction vehicle movements are submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure the impact of construction vehicles on the local road network is minimised.

17. Before any development commences details of mechanical wheel cleaning facilities to be provided on site during site preparation and construction shall be submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. As approved these shall be installed before any development commences and shall be retained in working order during the whole of the site preparation and construction period. All vehicles leaving the site shall use the facilities.

Reason: In order to minimise the amount of mud, soil and other materials origination from the site being deposited on the highway, and in the interests of highway safety and visual amenity.

18. All areas for parking and storage and delivery of materials associated with the construction of this development shall be provided within the site on land which is not public highway and the use of such areas must not interfere with the use of the public highway.

Reason: In the interest of highway safety and free and safe flow of traffic.

19. No demolition or development shall take place within the proposed development site until the applicant, or their agents, or their successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to the planning authority and approved in writing. This condition can only be considered to be discharged when the planning authority has received an approved archaeological report of all the archaeological investigations.

Reason: The site lies within an area of known archaeological interest and any archaeological remains therein should be retrieved or recorded before they are damaged or destroyed due to the development hereby permitted.

20. Prior to the commencement of any development, a scheme for the provision, implementation and maintenance of surface water drainage shall be submitted and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The works/scheme shall be constructed and completed in accordance with the approved plans/specification at such time(s) as may be specified in the approved scheme. Soakaways shall only be used in areas on site where they would not present a risk to groundwater. If permitted their location must be approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: To ensure a satisfactory method of surface water drainage and to prevent pollution of controlled waters.

21. Development approved by this permission shall not be commenced until the method for any piling foundations has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The piling shall thereafter be undertaken only in accordance with the approved details.

Reason: The site is contaminated/potentially contaminated and piling could lead to the contamination of groundwater in the underlying aquifer.

Reason for Decision:

The proposed development would satisfactorily meet the relevant Development Plan Policies for this town centre site within the Hitchin Conservation Area as listed below and would not cause any material harm to conditions of highway safety on the local road network:

County Structure Plan Review 1991-2011:

Policy 1 - Sustainable Development
Policy 2 - Design & Provisions of Development
Policy 4 - Town Centres
Policy 10 - Affordable Housing
Policy 22 - Reduction of Travel Need & Car Usage
Policy 25/Supplementary Planning Guidance - Parking Standards
Policy 38 - Critical Capital & Other Important Environmental Assets

This site is identified in the District Local Plan No 2 with Alterations as being within Town Centre Area HTC2 Paynes Park which lists the following priorities:

1. To promote development to link Paynes Park to the High Street for the benefit of pedestrians.

To improve the environment of Paynes Park, particularly the service yards at the rear of High Street premises.

Policy 1 - Pattern and Character of North Hertfordshire
Policy 8 - Development in Towns
Policy 16 - Areas of Archaeological Significance & other Archaeological Areas
Policy 22 - Urban Environment
Policy 26 - Housing Proposals
Policy 29A - Affordable Housing
Policy 55 - Parking Standards (plus SPD)
Policy 57 - Residential Guidelines & Standards

TITLE OF REPORT: PLANNING APPEALS

This item will be in the format of an oral presentation by the Principal Planning Officer.

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**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP – JOINT MEMBER PANEL
DISCRETIONARY BUDGET 2007-2008**

Would Members please refer to the copy of Minute 57 (4) per the meeting of NHHP – JMP held on 24 April 2006.

Should Members have any PROJECTS or SCHEMES (in Hitchin) that they wish to put forward for inclusion in the JMP Discretionary budget for 2007-2008 would they either email Steve Greenhill direct: steve.greenhill@hertshighways.org.uk with their proposals or pass to the Hitchin Committee Administrator.

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP – JOINT MEMBER PANEL

Meeting held at the Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City
at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, 26 June 2006

DRAFT MINUTES

13. JOINT MEMBER PANEL DISCRETIONARY BUDGET 2006 - 2007

The North Herts District Manager (DM) advised the JMP that this was a comprehensive and detailed report with the confirmation of an increase by £10,000 to £90,000 for disbursement in the year 2006-2007. The JMP noted that a cap of £30,000 had been set to cover design and consultation costs.

The DM reminded the JMP of the themes for 2007-2007 and described the projects approved for 2006-2007 in detail and with updates as necessary. With regard to the traffic calming measures proposed for Redhill Road, Hitchin near to Oughtonhead Primary School the DM was requested to provide an update on costs and revised design at the meeting to be held on 16 October 2006. With regard to works in Leys Avenue, Letchworth a Member queried the need for urgent attention to paving blocks due to their hazardous condition where the DM had confirmed that work had yet to commence because of the higher costs and complexity of works in Eastcheap.

The JMP noted the additional scheme at Peters Green and it was agreed that this kerbing scheme deserved further investigation and it was proposed that a cheaper option of bollards might be more appropriate and that the Southern Rural Area Committee should re-examine this scheme at its meeting to be held on 12 July 2006.

The JMP entered into a long debate on candidate schemes for 2006 – 2007 where proposals had been made at meetings of the JMP, and Area Committees had put forward additional schemes. It was clear from discussions that the protocol for the recommendation of schemes and projects had become 'tangled'. Consequently, for the benefit of new members to the JMP the DM provided a resume of the protocol and as per (5), (6) and (7) below it was agreed that this procedure should be followed.

In response to an enquiry concerning the provision of a pedestrian phase at the traffic light control at the junction of A505 and A507 the DM confirmed that this would be funded from monies set aside for Baldock Town Centre Enhancement via the financing of Baldock Bypass. The DM advised the JMP that the traffic lights controls at this junction were outdated and would have to be replaced completely.

The DM noted that at Cadwell Lane, Hitchin there was in fact a request for a set of traffic lights and a pedestrian crossing.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the information provided on the 2006-2007 uncompleted schemes and works as presented at paragraph 3.1 to the report be noted;
- (2) That the information provided on the schemes and works for consideration in 2006-2007 as presented at paragraph 3.3 to the report be noted;
- (3) That the provision of £20,000 from the Discretionary Works Budget 2006-2007 to address verge areas subject to repeated damage be agreed;
- (4) That the five NHDC Area Committees be invited to make in total a matched contribution of £20,000 towards the costs of repair and maintenance to verges subject to repeated damage;

- (5) That during the July cycle of meetings the five NHDC Area Committees be requested to submit to the NHDC Chief Engineer schemes and projects with as much detail as possible for the preparation of preliminary cost estimates.
- (6) That upon receipt of the schemes and projects the NHDC Chief Engineer in liaison with the North Herts District Manager be requested to prepare cost estimates for each scheme or project and make the necessary arrangements to present these cost estimates to the August cycle of NHDC Area Committees
- (7) That upon receipt of the cost estimates each NHDC Area Committee reviews each item at its' August meeting and refers back to the next meeting of the Joint Member Panel to be held on 16 October 2006 with an indication as to whether (a) the scheme or project should be included in the 2006-2007 JMP Discretionary Budget and (b) the amount of financial contribution to be made by each NHDC Area Committee for each scheme or project.

REASON FOR DECISIONS:

To ensure that the Joint Member Panel are advised as soon as possible of schemes and projects to be included in the final list for 2006-2007.

TITLE OF REPORT: CHAMPION NEWS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

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

2. THE 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. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS

- 3.1 Summer Play schemes - arrangements are under way for exciting activities for young people over the summer holidays. There are playzones, sportszones and Out 2 Play. In Hitchin there will be three weeks of playzones at St Andrews, Strathmore and Samuel Lucas Schools where children 5 - 11 will be able to participate in a number of activities including football, dance and drama and art workshops. Sportszones will be running from Hitchin Boys School Sports Centre and include table tennis, athletics, trampoline and badminton. The Out 2 Play sessions, delivering free open access play opportunities in local parks for 5 - 13, take place over a 4 week period at Walsworth Common, King George's Playing Field and St John's Recreation ground.
- 3.2 Triangle Festival - the application for a Premises Licence was approved for the Festival on Ransoms Recreation Ground. The organisers have decided to have the Festival on the Saturday only (July 1st 12pm - 8pm) because of finance. They are still waiting to hear from Awards for All Funding award and decisions have therefore had to be made as the result will probably be too late for this year.
- 3.3. Hitchin Visioning Capital Money - at the meeting with Hitchin Visioning and Members four projects were agreed and these were in order of priority:-
 - a) Rising Bollards for the High Street at the junction with Brand Street /Bancroft.
 - b) Windmill Hill ramp and enhancement
 - c) Enhancement of youth facilities at Bancroft Gardens to include Tennis Court improvements, lighting, CCTV and if possible a multi use games area in one of the tennis courts.
 - d) Fountain, in front of Church, either enhanced or taken out.

If Members confirm recommendation of the projects then these can go to Cabinet for approval.

- 3.4 Pavilions - at the meeting of the Members' working group with Hitchin Sunday Football League, Members agreed to support the partnership project that Hitchin Sunday Football League look after the Pavilions including the booking system. There would be control over who use the pitches and the pavilions and sanctions issued, if necessary, to those who are abusing the facilities. Other users would also be incorporated and contact numbers will be distributed for potential users such as Walsworth and Triangle Festival.

£5,000 is suggested be available for pump priming the project, £1,000 for each pavilion. It was suggested that the capital money from Hitchin Visioning may be used for this purpose but this project does not come under capital criteria.

There are available in Visioning Revenue some unallocated funds which, with Members' agreement with the addition of an amount possibly from allocated unspent funds, would make up the £5,000.

- 3.5 Windmill Hill - consideration is being given to the various options that are available for this project and site meetings are taking place with contractors to identify the way forward. No firm details are available at the time of writing to give Members.

- 3.6 Cemetery Gates - there are three options available with regard to the cemetery gates and they are:-

a) Situation remains as it is with the gates opened at 7.30am and closed at dusk. This can be organised for an earlier time if required, as dusk at this time of year is 9 - 10pm.

b) The gates are locked, however this will cause problems for funeral undertakers, stone masons and contractors requiring access. There is no permanent presence on site to open and lock the gate as required. The issuing of keys would be impractical as it would be difficult to control the number of keys and who has a copy.

c) The gates remain open. This may attract anti social behaviour in vehicles in the hours of darkness. However there is no evidence that this would be the case.

Since the current situation started six months ago there has only been one complaint. Previously there had been several complaints about the gates being closed and there being limited disabled access.

- 3.7 Forthcoming Events -

1st July - Triangle Festival, Ransoms Recreation Ground

1st July - Triangle Garden Open Day in conjunction with above

1st July - 29th July - Hitchin Festival

15th and 16th July - Rhythms of the World

4. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

5. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 5.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.

6. CONTACT OFFICER

- 6.1. Margaret Bracey, Community Development Officer. Ext: 4830.
Email. Margaret.bracey@north-herts.gov.uk.

TITLE OF REPORT: ANNUAL GRANTS, DEVELOPMENT, DISCRETIONARY AND VISIONING BUDGETS 2006//2007

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee of the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee's delegated funds.
- 1.2 For the Committee to confirm £5,000 to the Hitchin Sunday Football League to cover material costs associated with cleaning and maintaining the internal structure of the pavilions.

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. ANNUAL GRANTS, DEVELOPMENT, DISCRETIONARY AND VISIONING BUDGETS UPDATE

- 3.1 Attached at Appendix A.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

5. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no financial implications that have not been specified in the main body of the report.

6. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 6.1 Ward Members will be consulted about relevant grant applications.
- 6.2 Ward Members will be consulted in connection with projects that have been carried forward from previous years.

7. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 7.1 The Committee is asked to note the current expenditure and balance of the

Development budget.

- 7.2 That the committee allocate £5,000 to Hitchin Sunday Football League as set out in 1.2.

8. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 This report is intended simply to inform Members of the financial resources available to the Committee. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation, assists in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget and ensures actions are performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance contained in the Grants procedure.
- 8.2 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Strategic Objectives of the Council.

9. APPENDICES

- 9.1 Appendix A – Annual Grant and Development Discretionary Budget Update

10. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 10.1 Margaret Bracey, Community Development Officer, margaret.bracey@north-herts.gov.uk, x4830
- Steve Smither, Group Accountant Customer Services, steve.smither@north-herts.gov.uk, x4566

HITCHIN AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2006/2007

SUMMARY/ TOTALS	Funding	Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget					
Visioning	£149,220	£34,980	£19,797	£15,183	£114,240					
Central Area Grants	£36,930	£27,249	£10,649	£16,600	£9,681					
Discretionary - Bearton Ward	£13,950	£12,450	£350	£12,100	£1,500					
Discretionary - Highbury Ward	£26,360	£24,860	£5,631	£19,229	£1,500					
Discretionary - Oughton Ward	£6,940	£5,940	£350	£5,590	£1,000					
Discretionary - Priory Ward	£3,700	£2,700	£500	£2,200	£1,000					
Discretionary - Walsworth Ward	£6,460	£4,960	£4,583	£377	£1,500					
Total	£243,560	£113,139	£41,860	£71,279	£130,421					

<u>VISIONING</u>	<u>Funding</u>	<u>Year Allocated</u>	<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Unallocated Budget</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Pre allocated Funds Brought Forward from 2005/06	£21,930	2003/2004	Bring Bank (Woodside Screening)	£1,670	21.10.03	£0	£1,670		Outstanding can be reallocated
		2004/2005	Town Centre Strategy	£1,500	21.10.03	£927	£573		Ongoing
		2004/2005	Visioning Presentations	£500	02.11.04	£494	£7		Ongoing
		2004/2005	Enhancement of Triangle Area	£3,130	02.11.04	£0	£3,130		Ongoing
		2004/2005	Enhancement of Triangle Area (funded from Area Committee)	£1,870	02.11.04	£0	£1,870		Ongoing
		2005/2006	Churchgate Project	£4,000	24.05.05	£2,635	£1,365		Ongoing
		2005/2006	BMX Dirt Bike Track	£2,500	01.03.05	£1,372	£1,128		Ongoing
		2005/2006	Tree Planting - Butts Close	£1,500	08.11.05	£0	£1,500		Ongoing
		2005/2006	Community Centre Leaflet	£700	08.11.05	£0	£700		Complete
		2005/2006	Cabbies Hut Market Place	£1,300	24.01.06	£1,320	£20		Complete
		2005/06	East of England Dev Agency	£3,260	24.03.06	£0	£3,260		Finger Posting
Visioning Community Projects 05/06 C/F	£14,690	2006/07	Hitchin Town Centre Initiative - Hanging Baskets	£11,750	18.04.06	£11,750	£0		Complete
		2006/07	Hanging Baskets - Market Place, Hitchin	£1,300	18.04.06	£1,300	£0		Complete
Capital Visioning	£112,600								
Total	£149,220			£34,980		£19,797	£15,183	£114,240	

DEVELOPMENT BUDGETS

<u>Central Area Grants</u>	<u>Funding</u>		<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Unallocated Budget</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Base Budget 06/07	£36,930		Vaisakhi Festival	£1,000	07.03.06	£1,400	-£400		
			Rhythms of the World Festival	£10,000	18.04.06	£0	£10,000		
			Tilehouse Street Pre-School	£1,000	18.04.06	£1,000	£0		
			North Herts Amateur Boxing Club	£999	18.04.06	£999	£0		
			Hitchin Town Bowls Club	£1,000	18.04.06	£0	£1,000		
			Apni Duniya Club	£250	18.04.06	£250	£0		
			Hitchin Festival	£2,000	18.04.06	£2,000	£0		
			Hitchin Senior Citizens	£4,000	18.04.06	£4,000	£0		
			Triangle Festival	£5,000	30.05.06	£0	£5,000		
			Hitchin Rugby Club	£1,000	30.05.06	£1,000	£0		
			Hitchin Town Band	£1,000	30.05.06	£0	£1,000		
Total	£36,930			£27,249		£10,649	£16,600	£9,681	

<u>Bearton</u>	<u>Funding</u>		<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Unallocated Budget</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Pre allocated Funds Brought Forward from 2005/06	£12,450		Traffic and Parking Schemes	£4,830	25.03.03	£0	£4,830		Ongoing
			Local Environment Issues	£4,830	25.03.03	£0	£4,830		Ongoing
			Dogbin Brampton Park	£350	31.03.04 & 08.11.05	£350	£0		Complete
			Local Environment & Parking	£2,440	31.03.04	£0	£2,440		Ongoing
Member Discretionary Budget 2006/07	£1,500								
Total	£13,950			£12,450		£350	£12,100	£1,500	

<u>Highbury</u>	<u>Funding</u>		<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Unallocated Budget</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Pre allocated Funds Brought Forward from 2005/06	£24,860		Leisure Projects	£7,580	25.03.03	£727	£6,853		Ongoing
			Parking Projects	£5,500	25.03.03	£554	£4,946		Ongoing
			The Maples/Stevenage Road	£2,000	21.10.03	£0	£2,000		Ongoing
			Traffic Calming Proposals, Avenue/Chiltern Road	£5,000	01.03.01	£0	£5,000		Ongoing
			Brookview Play Area	£3,430	31.03.04	£3,000	£430		Completed underspend can be reallocated
			The Dell - Tree Felling and Rubbish Removal	£1,200	16.08.05	£1,200	£0		Ongoing
			Replace Tree in Woodside Carpark	£150	24.01.05	£150	£0		Completed
Member Discretionary Budget 2006/07	£1,500								
Total	£26,360			£24,860		£5,631	£19,229	£1,500	

<u>Oughton</u>	<u>Funding</u>		<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Unallocated Budget</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Pre allocated Funds Brought Forward from 2005/06	£5,940		Road Safety and Traffic Calming	£2,590	25.03.03	£0	£2,590		Ongoing
			Traffic Calming Moss Way/Redhill Rd	£3,000		£0	£3,000		Ongoing
			Dog Bin - Lucas Lane	£350	04/05 & 08-11-05	£350	£0		Completed
									04/05 & £270 allocated in 05/06 -
Member Discretionary Budgets 2006/07	£1,000								
Total	£6,940			£5,940		£350	£5,590	£1,000	

<u>Priory</u>	<u>Funding</u>			<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Unallocated Budget</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Pre allocated Funds Brought Forward from 2005/06	£2,700			Town Centre Manager	£1,500	31.03.04	£0	£1,500		Ongoing
				Rise Bollards in Town Centre	£700	31.03.04	£0	£700		Ongoing
				Replace Trees in Various Locations	£500	24.01.05	£500	£0		Completed
Member Discretionary Budget 2006/07	£1,000									
Total	£3,700				£2,700		£500	£2,200	£1,000	

<u>Walsworth</u>	<u>Funding</u>			<u>Project</u>	<u>Allocated</u>	<u>Date</u>	<u>Spent</u>	<u>Outstanding</u>	<u>Unallocated Budget</u>	<u>Comments</u>
Pre allocated Funds Brought Forward from 2005/06	£4,583			Tarmacing Walsworth Common	£4,233		£4,233	£0		Used for St Michaels project
				Dog Bin for Purwell Meadows - Chaucer Way Exit	£350	14.02.06	£350	£0		Complete
Member Discretionary Budget 2006/07	£1,500			Walsworth Festival	£377	31.05.06	£0	£377		Underspend from St Michaels project transferred to Festival
Total	£6,083				£4,960		£4,583	£377	£1,500	

