

3 March 2009

Our Ref: HD/SRuralCtte/ Mar.09  
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To: The Members of the Southern Rural Committee of North Hertfordshire District Council

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

You are invited to attend a meeting of the

## **SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE**

to be held at

**CASELL MEMORIAL HALL,  
WEST STREET, LILLEY. LU2 8LH**

on

**THURSDAY 12 MARCH 2009**

at

**7.30 pm**

Yours sincerely,



David Miley  
Democratic Services Manager

**AGENDA**  
**PART I**

<b>ITEM</b>	<b>PAGE</b>
<b>1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE</b>	-
<b>2. MINUTES – 22 JANUARY 2009</b> To take as read and approve as a true record the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 22 January 2009	-
<b>3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS</b> 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 then decide whether the item(s) raised will be considered.	-
<b>4. CHAIRMAN’S ANNOUNCEMENTS</b> Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of any business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a prejudicial or personal interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a prejudicial interest can speak on the item, but must leave the room before the debate and vote.	-
<b>5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION</b> <i>To receive presentations from members of the public.</i>	1
<b>6. ANNUAL GRANTS, DEVELOPMENT, DISCRETIONARY AND VISIONING BUDGETS 2008-2009</b> REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES <i>To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets.</i>	3 [Report To Follow]
<b>7. HIGHWAY ISSUES</b> 1. <i>To re-consider funding following the response from Knebworth Parish Council regarding funding for Highways Issues in Knebworth;</i> 2. <i>The Chairman to update the committee regarding funding for Highways issues at Luton Road, Cockernhoe.</i>	5
<b>8. UPDATE ON THE 2005 – 2010 RURAL STRATEGY</b> REPORT OF THE HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE <i>To provide Southern Rural Committee with an update on progress with the 2005 – 2010 NHDC Rural Strategy.</i>	19



**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE**  
**12 March 2009**

**\*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

**AGENDA ITEM No.**

**5**

**PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

To receive presentations from members of the public.

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**TITLE: ANNUAL GRANTS, DEVELOPMENT, DISCRETIONARY AND VISIONING  
BUDGETS 2008 - 2009**

**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES**

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the delegated budgets for financial year 2008/09. and the carry forward preallocated balances of delegated budgets from financial year 2007/08.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent applications, allocation and commitment of delegated funds for Community initiatives and projects.

**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 A spreadsheet detailing the total spends to date of the Area Development Budgets is enclosed as Appendix 3.
- 3.2 The Committee has now agreed its programme of awards to community organisations for 2008/09 on a meeting by meeting basis. All Parish Councils & Parish Meetings, Community & Voluntary Groups and Organisations have been advised on this change and invited to apply for grant-aid. This process has resulted in nine grant applications being submitted for consideration at this meeting as set out in Appendices 1.1 – 1.9.
- 3.3 Appendix 1.10 is for the Committee's information only as it is a 'Community Start-up Grant' which has been fast tracked under the criteria and does not require full Committee approval.
- 3.4 The Committee is asked to note the Area Committee Discretionary Base Budget for 2008/09 is £23,510 and should be allocated by this meeting.
- 3.5 The Committee is asked to note that the Member Ward Budget for 2008/09 of £700 per Member should be allocated by March 31<sup>st</sup> 2009.
- 3.6 The Head of Community Development and Cultural Services has advised that where there are multi Member Wards, it is good practice, and indeed custom and practice, for Members to advise their colleagues on any community grant requests. This will avoid any potential application conflicts and ensuring that multiple requests are managed in a coordinated way from the same organisation.

#### **4. ISSUES & FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE**

- 4.1 Appendices 1.1 - 1.9 set out the grant applications for funding consideration.
- 4.2 Appendix 2 sets out the summary of applications and recommendations for 2008/09 including levels of external funding already achieved.
- 4.3 Appendix 3 is a spreadsheet which sets out the detailed spend to date of the Area Development budget.

#### **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

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

#### **6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 3 of the report, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2008/09.
- 6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2007/08.
- 6.3 In addition, the spreadsheet includes the balances and past expenditure relating to the allocated Area Visioning Budgets available to the Committee.
- 6.4 The total budget for the Committee for 2008/09 is £30,510 including a Ward Members budget of £7,000.
- 6.5 The current unallocated Development Grant base budget is £2,770.
- 6.6 The current unallocated Members Ward Discretionary Budget is £4,075.
- 6.7 The current unallocated Highways Project Budget is £1,427.
- 6.8 The current unallocated Capital Visioning Budget is £39,600.
- 6.9 Nine discretionary criteria compliant grant applications with a recommended total of £8,087, have been received as outlined in Appendices 1.1 - 1.9 for consideration under funding from the 2008/09 and in principle 2009/10 Committee Base Budgets.
- 6.10 Should the grants totalling £8,087 be supported, only £2,770 would remain in the Committee's unallocated 2008/09 budget. Therefore, the balance of the requested applications totalling £5,317 would need to be awarded from the Committee's 2009/10 unallocated base budget.
- 6.11 The meeting being the last of the 2008/09 Committee cycle, the Committee should allocate all of its 2008/09 unallocated budget.
- 6.12 The current unallocated Members Ward Discretionary Budget is £4,075 and all grant applications from this budget should be allocated by 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.

- 6.13 At the time of writing the report, there were additional Ward Member grants being processed. A further update will be given to Members at the meeting of the exact unallocated budget, prior to the end of the current financial year of 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.
- 6.14 If the Committee is mindful of supporting the appendices 1.1 – 1.9, no funds would remain in the Committee's 2008/09 Discretionary Budget.

## **7. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBER**

- 7.1 Consultation with Members has occurred in connection with the allocation of funds for Community Projects.
- 7.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external agencies/groups has taken place with regard to funding proposals for Area Committee Discretionary Development Funds.

## **8. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 8.1 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Ward Development Budgets and the allocated Visioning Budgets as set out in Appendix 3.
- 8.2 The Committee is asked to approve the grants as set out in Appendices 1.1 - 1.9.
- 8.3 The Committee is asked to consider the future commitment of any unallocated funds within the Committee's Development Budgets prior to the end of the current financial year which ends 31<sup>st</sup> March 2009.
- 8.4 The Committee is asked to consider the possible reallocation of funds from any initiatives/projects that are approaching two years on the original date of commitment and/or where there is likely to be no foreseeable progress in the near future, should this be applicable.

## **9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 To inform Members of the budgetary situation and the current balances of funds available for to the Committee for consideration and allocation.
- 9.2 The allocation of funds will improve the services provided by the local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by various members of the community.

## **10. APPENDICES**

- 10.1 Appendices 1.1 - 1.9 – Grant Applications submitted for consideration.

### Cadwell Ward

Appendix 1.1: Grant request from Ickleford Cricket Club

Appendix 1.2: Grant request from Ickleford Pre-School Committee

### Chesfield Ward

Appendix 1.3: Grant request from Great Ashby Community Centre Management Association

### Codicote Ward

Appendix 1.4: Grant request from Codicote Heart Action Team

### Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo Ward

Appendix 1.5: Grant request from Lilley Village Fete Committee

### Knebworth Ward

Appendix 1.6: Grant request from Knebworth Festival Committee

Appendix 1.7: Grant request from Knebworth Parish Council

Appendix 1.8: Grant request from Knebworth Scout & Guide Group

Appendix 1.9: Grant request from Knebworth Scout & Guide Group

### Kimpton Ward

Appendix 1.10: Grant request from Kimpton Allotment Association (for information purposes only as already supported under the 'fast track' process as a 'Community Start-up Grant').

- 10.2 Appendix 2 - Summary of applications and recommendations for 2008/09 including levels of external funding already achieved.
- 10.3 Appendix 3 – Budget expenditure, balances, and carry forwards from the Ward Development Budgets and the allocated Visioning Budgets.

## **11. CONTACT OFFICERS**

11.1 Garry Gover  
Community Development Officer – Southern Rural  
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## SOUTHERN RURAL AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2008/2009

<b>SUMMARY/ TOTALS</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Spent</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Unallocated Budget</b>					
Revenue Visioning	£12,340	£12,340	£4,835	£7,505	£0					
Capital Visioning	£54,600	£15,000	£10,000	£5,000	£39,600					
Discretionary Budget 0809	£23,510	£20,740	£8,580	£2,160	£2,770					
Member Discretionary Budget 0809	£7,000	£2,925	£1,925	£1,000	£4,075					
Preallocated Amounts carried forward from 0708	£26,325	£24,898	£8,727	£16,171	£1,427					
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>£123,775</b>	<b>£75,903</b>	<b>£34,067</b>	<b>£41,836</b>	<b>£47,872</b>					

<b>REVENUE VISIONING</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Year Allocated</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Spent</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Unallocated</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Preallocated Budgets Brought Forward from 0708	£12,340	2005/06		Southern Rural - Community Events	£450	16.03.06	£453	-£3		
		2005/06		Southern Rural - Volunteers	£1,000	16.03.06	£1,000	£0		
		2005/06		Southern Rural - Parish Plans	£4,150	16.03.06	£782	£3,368		
				Southern Rural - Warranty for CCTV Cameras	£5,200	16.11.06	£2,600	£2,600		
		2008/09		Southern Rural - Youth Provision	£550	22.01.09	£0	£550		£47 from community events, £500 from youth events
		2008/09		Southern Rural - Village of the Year	£990	22.01.09	£0	£990		reallocated from village halls
<b>Total</b>	<b>£12,340</b>				<b>£12,340</b>		<b>£4,835</b>	<b>£7,505</b>	<b>£0</b>	

<b>CAPITAL VISIONING SR</b>	<b>Funding</b>	<b>Year Allocated</b>	<b>Codes</b>	<b>Project</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Spent</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Unallocated</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Capital Visioning SR	£54,600	2006/07		Scooter & Cycle Transport Solutions (Scoots)	£15,000	13.07.06	£10,000	£5,000		
	<b>£54,600</b>				<b>£15,000</b>		<b>£10,000</b>	<b>£5,000</b>	<b>£39,600</b>	

<b>DEVELOPMENT BUDGETS</b>	<b>Funding</b>			<b>Project</b>	<b>Allocated</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Spent</b>	<b>Outstanding</b>	<b>Unallocated Amount</b>	<b>Comments</b>
Preallocated Funds Brought forward from 2007/2008	£10,808			Preston Cricket Club	£1,000	24.08.06	£1,000	£0		
				Preston Cricket Club	£700	01.02.07	£700	£0		
				Highways Project - Codicote	£2,000	15.03.07	£0	£2,000		22.01.09 reallocate to Highways projects
				Southern Rural Community Projects	£4,108	15.03.07	£3,214	£894		£448 reallocated from Preston Tennis Club to Community Projects
				Letchworth Arts Centre	£3,000	20.02.08	£3,000	£0		
					<b>£10,808</b>		<b>£7,914</b>	<b>£2,894</b>		
Highways Project Budget Carryforward from 2007/08	£13,427			Highways Project: Graveley Highways Works	£6,300	31.07.08	£0	£6,300		

			Highways Project: Knebworth Highways Works	£3,200	31.07.08	£0	£3,200		
			Highways Project: Knebworth Highways Issues	£2,500	27.11.08	£0	£2,500		
				<b>£12,000</b>		<b>£0</b>	<b>£12,000</b>		<b>£1,427</b>
Preallocated Member Ward Budgets Brought forward from 2007/2008	£2,090		Dog Bin	£210	14.03.08	£149	£61		
			Dog Bin	£210	14.03.08	£149	£61		
			Graveley Planting	£450	03.04.08	£0	£450		
			Ickleford Highways Issues	£490	03.04.08	£487	£3		
			Hitchwood:Website Costs	£100	03.04.08	£0	£100		
			Knebworth Badminton Club	£182	03.04.08	£0	£182		
			Hitchwood:Refurbishment of Play Equipment	£420	03.04.08	£0	£420		
			Kimpton: Support resources for Parish Room	£28	03.04.08	£28	£0		
				<b>£2,090</b>		<b>£813</b>	<b>£1,277</b>		
Base Budget 08/09	£23,510		Wymondley Baptist Church	£642	20.02.08	£642	£0		
Lilley Village Fete Committee reallocated back to base budget - £579			Codicote Village Day Committee	£1,000	03.04.08	£1,000	£0		
			Codi-Fest	£1,000	03.04.08	£1,000	£0		
			Kimpton May Festival 2008	£1,000	13.12.07	£1,000	£0		
			Great Ashby Fun Day	£500	13.12.07	£500	£0		
			Ickleford Parish Council - Village Information Handbook	£757	12.06.08	£757	£0		
			Knebworth Festival Committee	£1,000	12.06.08	£1,000	£0		
			Lilley Over 60's Club	£130	27.11.08	£130	£0		
			Lilley Parish Council	£500	27.11.08	£500	£0		
			Pirton School Association	£318	27.11.08	£318	£0		
			Pirton Village Hall	£500	27.11.08	£500	£0		
			Preston Parish Council	£375	27.11.08	£375	£0		
			St Ippolyts Bowls Club	£1,000	27.11.08	£1,000	£0		
			St Ippolyts Parish Council	£500	27.11.08	£500	£0		
			Youth Activities	£5,000	22.01.09	£0	£5,000		
			Offley & Cockernhoe Parish Council	£500	22.01.09	£0	£500		
			Offley & Cockernhoe Parish Council	£500	22.01.09	£0	£500		
			Highways - Luton Road Cockernhoe	£6,000	22.01.09	£0	£6,000		
			Village of the Year	£10	22.01.09	£0	£10		

			Kimpton Allotment Association	£150	6.03.09	£0	£150		
				<b>£20,740</b>		<b>£8,580</b>	<b>£12,160</b>		<b>£2,770</b>
Member Discretionary Awards £700 per Member 08/09	£7,000		Knebworth Link Up Club	£249	20.08.08	£249	£0		
			Kimpton Community Orchard Project	£249	26.11.08	£249	£0		
			Kimpton Village Day Event	£249	26.11.08	£249	£0		
			Cllr L Downie -Great Ashby Youth Club	£500	27.11.08	£0	£500		
			Cllr S Jarvis -Great Ashby Youth Club	£500	27.11.08	£0	£500		
			Knebworth Car Park Initiatives	£30	16.12.08	£30	£0		
			Wymondley Parish Council - Village Landscaping Costs	£150	16.12.08	£150	£0		
			Kimpton Bench Working Party	£200	16.12.08	£200	£0		
			Codicote Playgroup - Uniform Costs	£249	07.01.09	£249	£0		
			Lilley Parich Council - Junior Countryside Seat	£249	11.02.09	£249	£0		
			Lilley Parich Council - Spring Bulbs	£200	11.02.09	£200	£0		
			Offley & Cockernhoe Parish Council - Website costs	£100	13.02.09	£100	£0		
				<b>£2,925</b>		<b>£1,925</b>	<b>£1,000</b>		<b>£4,075</b>
<b>Total</b>	<b>£56,835</b>			<b>£48,563</b>		<b>£19,232</b>	<b>£29,331</b>		<b>£8,272</b>

Note: Year end need to do payment in advance accrual. £5,200 has spend against Warranty. £1,300 relates to each individual year

**HIGHWAYS ISSUES**

- 1 To re-consider funding following the response from Knebworth Parish Council regarding funding for Highways Issues in Knebworth.

Appendix A Southern Rural Committee Minute 31 July 2008;

Appendix B Letter received from Knebworth Parish Council dated 12 December 2008;

Appendix C Southern Rural Committee Minute 22 January 2009.

- 2 The Chairman to update the Committee regarding funding for traffic issues at Luton Road, Cockernhoe

Appendix D Southern Rural Committee Minute 22 January 2009;

Appendix E Offley Parish Council Minutes 12 January 2009.

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**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE**  
**(Cadwell, Chesfield, Codicote, Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo, Kimpton**  
**and Knebworth Wards)**

**Minutes of the meeting held at The Council Offices, Letchworth Garden City on**  
**Thursday, 31 July at 7.30 p.m.**

**EXTRACT FROM MINUTES**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** Patrick Candler – Head of Community Development and Cultural Services  
Hilary Dineen – Committee and Member Services Officers.

Two members of the public at commencement of meeting.

**28. GRANT REQUEST – HIGHWAYS PROJECTS IN KNEBORTH PARISH**  
***RECOMMENDED TO NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS JOINT MEMBER***  
***PANEL:***

- (1) That a grant of £3200 be awarded to North Hertfordshire Highways – Joint Member Panel as a fifty per cent joint matched funding for a project in Knebworth Parish as detailed below, on condition that Knebworth Parish Council provide funding of £1000;
- (2) That the provision of the grant funding already agreed does not imply that funding will be granted for work on 2009/2010.

**PROJECT IN KNEBORTH PARISH**

Lighting and some resurfacing at Pondcroft Road to London Road. 50 percent = £4200

Contribution to be sought from Knebworth Parish Council £1000

**GRANT FUNDING AWARDED £3200**

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**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE**  
**(Cadwell, Chesfield, Codicote, Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo, Kimpton**  
**and Knebworth Wards)**

**Minutes of the meeting held at the Council Offices, Letchworth Garden City on**  
**Thursday, 22 January 2009 at 7.30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**61. HIGHWAY ISSUES – KNEBORTH PARISH COUNCIL**

The Chairman advised the Committee that Knebworth Parish Council had agreed to fund £500 toward lighting and some resurfacing at Pondcroft Road to London Road Knebworth which amounted to 50 percent of the amount requested for this project.

***RESOLVED:***

- (1) That Knebworth Ward Members be asked if they would wish to fund the additional £500 required for lighting and some resurfacing to Pondcroft Road to London Road, Knebworth;
- (2) That this Committee reconsider the funding of this project at the next meeting of the Committee due to be held on 12 March 2009.

***REASON FOR DECISION:*** To consider funding of actions that will increase road safety in the Knebworth area.

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**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**SOUTHERN RURAL COMMITTEE**  
(Cadwell, Chesfield, Codicote, Hitchwood, Offa & Hoo, Kimpton  
and Knebworth Wards)

**Minutes of the meeting held at the Council Offices, Letchworth Garden City on  
Thursday, 22 January 2009 at 7.30 p.m.**

**MINUTES**

**63. HIGHWAY ISSUES – LUTON ROAD, COCKERNHOE.**

The Chairman advised the Committee that he had met Officers from Hertfordshire Highways at the site and it was clear that the road was very narrow and the verges were being used as passing places for buses and the proposed work would solve the issues along this stretch of road. He informed the Committee that Hertfordshire Highways had provided an estimate of £15000 for verge protection work, signage and bollards required at Luton Road, Cockernhoe.

***RECOMMENDED TO NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP –  
JOINT MEMBER PANEL:***

- (1) That a grant of £6000 be awarded as matched funding to undertake verge surfacing, closure/signage/diversion and 4 wooden bollards at Luton Road, Cockernhoe on provision that Offley Parish Council agree funding in the amount of £1500;
- (2) That Offley Parish Council be requested to fund £1500 towards joint matched funding to undertake the work as detailed in resolution (1) at Luton Road, Cockernhoe.

***REASON FOR DECISIONS:*** To support actions that will improve road safety in the Cockernhoe area.

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**OFFLEY PARISH COUNCIL****MINUTES OF THE PARISH COUNCIL MEETING  
MONDAY 12<sup>th</sup> JANUARY 2009, 7.30 PM  
OFFLEY VILLAGE HALL**

**Present:** Councillors Parker (Vice Chairman), Campbell, Dyer, Foulkes, Hussain and Smith

Emma Payne (Clerk)

**1. APOLOGIES**

Apologies were received from NHDC Councillors Barnard and Miller. HCC Brook and Offley Parish Councillors Sayer and Hislop.

**2. DISCLOSURES OF INTEREST**

None declared.

**3. APPROVAL OF MINUTES**

Cllr Smith was omitted as attending at last month's meeting.

Item 7.1 amended to read "seek alternative locations."

The minutes of the meeting held on 8<sup>th</sup> December 2008 were approved.

**4. CHAIRS REPORT AND URGENT ITEMS****4.1 Village Voice**

Cllr Parker reported that the Parish Council had only been reported in the Village Voice once in the last six months. The next issue will be March and will have a combined January/February report included.

4.2 Cllr Parker reported that he had left a message for Mr Ingram of 1 Chapel Cottages to arrange a meeting as soon as possible to discuss Mr Ingram's complaint to the Clerk concerning damage to his wall and his contention that the Recycling Bank is illegally sited on a designated allotment and access to collect the contents by the size of vehicle used is also illegal.

**5. PUBLIC QUESTIONS**

There were no public questions.

**6. HERTS. COUNTY COUNCIL REPORT**

There was no HCC Councillor present.

## 7. NHDC REPORT

There was no NHDC Councillor present.

## 8. HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS AND OTHER MATTERS

### 8.1 Pavement on Luton Road, Cockernhoe

Herts Highways have agreed to tarmac the area in question. The cost of this is £15,000 which is higher than originally anticipated because the tarmac has to be to a high standard if cars are to park on it. Southern Rural Area Committee has agreed a contribution of £6,000 with £7,500 coming from Herts Highways and £1,500 proposed from Offley Parish Council.

It was proposed and resolved that:

***“Offley Parish Council will make a contribution of £1,500 towards this project.”***

### 8.2 Offley Hill

To date no response has been received from Herts Highways about contacting the County Safety Officer about traffic speeding up this road.

Clerk to chase Herts Highways.

### 8.3 Offley Village Hall Sign

The Clerk reported on the possibility of having a brown ‘amenity’ sign showing the location of Offley Village Hall. She is making enquiries with Herts Highways.

## 9. PLANNING

### 9.1 Plans Received

#### 9.1.1 Offley Place, Kings Walden Road, Offley SG5 3DS

Variation to Condition 6 (Archaeology) and 8 (Bat Mitigation and Conservation).  
No objections.

#### 9.1.2 Land to north and west of Putteridge Bury estate road, Putteridge Park, Luton LU2 8HJ

Full planning permission: change of use of agricultural land to playing fields and associated landscape areas.  
This had been brought of the meeting in December although plans had not been received. The Meeting had verbally agreed to object to this application.

## 10. OFFLEY PLAY AREA WORKING PARTY

Cllr Parker reported on developments to date and circulated a report to the meeting.

It was proposed and resolved that:

***“Cllr Parker and the Clerk are authorised to sign the Wren contract when received.”***

**11. OFFLEY RECREATION CENTRE**

See 10 above.

**12. ST MARY MAGDELENE CHURCH CLOCK**

The Clerk is working with CDA to identify grant sources.

**13. VILLAGE GREENS COMMITTEE**

**13.1 Cockernhoe – Installation of Bollards**

The residents of the road affected are going to make a contribution to the installation of the bollards. A skip needs to be hired for the disposal of rubbish. The bollards will be ordered together with ten sets of keys. The same lock to be installed in all bollards. Installation is expected later this month. The Clerk is going to seek a grant application towards the cost of the bollards.

**13.2 Offley – Village Green**

Cllr Dyer is to locate pictures of the former well.

It was proposed and resolved that:

***“A plaque to be installed to identify that the feature is to replace the village well that stood on the site.”***

**14. TEA GREEN NOTICE BOARD**

A decision is waited on a grant application to NHDC.

**15. LUTON ROAD, COCKERNHOE**

See Herts Highways.

**16. CLERK’S REPORT**

Nothing to report.

**17. FINANCE**

17.1 Noted.

17.2 Payments totalling £2,361.16 approved at the meeting.

17.3 The Meeting received the completed audit report for the Parish Council accounts for 2005/06 and 2006/07. They noted the comments raised by the external auditors which had been rectified.

17.4 The Meeting discussed the investment of Parish Council reserves.

It was proposed and resolved that:

- “a) Cllr Hussain to find a bank account in which to invest £20,000.***
- b) The Clerk to arrange for the transfer to funds to a suitable bank account when found.”***

17.5 The accounts for the 9 months ended 31 December 2008 were presented to the meeting and discussed.

## **18. DATE OF NEXT MEETING**

Monday 9<sup>th</sup> February 2009, 7.30pm, Cockernhoe School

The meeting closed at 8.40pm.

Signed ..... Date .....

**TITLE OF REPORT: UPDATE ON THE 2005-2010 RURAL STRATEGY**

REPORT OF HEAD OF POLICY, PARTNERSHIPS AND PERFORMANCE

**1. SUMMARY**

- 1.1 To provide the area committee with an update on progress with the 2005-2010 NHDC Rural Strategy.

**2. FORWARD PLAN**

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision.

**3. BACKGROUND**

- 3.1 The Rural Strategy for North Hertfordshire 2005 – 2010 was published in May 2005. The strategy was developed through consultation with and contributions from a number of local, county, regional and national agencies including parish councils within North Hertfordshire.
- 3.2 The strategy contains priorities for action for community safety, education and life-long learning, health, housing, leisure and community development, planning and development, transport, young people.
- 3.3 The document also included an appendix detailing key issues arising from the original consultation, which were considered in workshops with rural partners to develop the action plan attached as Appendix 1.
- 3.4 In early March 2007 an elected members' Scrutiny Task and Finish Group published a report on partnership working with Parish and Town Councils. This delivered thirty six recommendations. Following a referral to CMT to consider which could be implemented within existing resources twenty five of these were signed off by the Executive Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Rural Affairs as reported to the Scrutiny Committee on 22 January 2008.
- 3.5 A progress report was discussed at PARC on 29 January 2009. That committee asked for reports to be submitted to the Southern Rural, Baldock and Royston Area Committees.

**4. ISSUES**

- 4.1 The table attached as Appendix One has been prepared by concentrating on the key priorities for action found in pages 11 to 17 of the rural strategy. An extract from that strategy will be found as Appendix Three.
- 4.2 The intention was that the Rural Strategy should be adopted by all participant organisations and agencies. Since 2005 some agencies, such as the Primary Care Trust, have experienced significant changes – geographical area, structure and ways of working. This has contributed to difficulties in obtaining feedback on completion of some actions, or indeed confirmation that the actions are still in hand or a priority for such agencies.

- 4.3 Members' attention is particularly drawn to a number of changes to the actions, which are:
- The falling attendance at village hall networking events (in Section E Leisure and Community Development). It is thought that the programme has now run its course. Instead a newsletter is being considered. In addition, representatives from all parishes are invited to the Annual Parish and Town Councils' Conference; the opportunity for representatives to network prior to that event is one of the most popular aspects of the event, as indeed are the workshops..
  - Funding has been requested from the Area Committees to enable North Hertfordshire to participate in the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) "Village of the Year" competition. (Please see Section F Planning and Environment). The result of this application will be known at the end of the current round of area committee meetings.
  - Rural small businesses will continue to be supported by the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB) but will be kept under review in the light of the current economic situation. NHDC are participating in the "Leader" regeneration bid for rural areas (see Section F Planning and Environment).
  - That NHDC withdrew financial contributions towards contract bus services in 2007 (see Section G Transport)
  - There are currently still no plans for a cycle network in rural areas (see Section G Transport)
- 4.4 Twenty five of the recommendations in the task and finish group report were adopted as policy by the portfolio holder for community engagement and rural affairs in January 2008. A report on progress with those actions can be found in Appendix Two.
- 4.5 The rural strategy itself will be due for a refresh in 2010, with consultation commencing in January 2010.

## **5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS**

- 5.1 None arising from this progress report albeit individual activities may require compliance with relevant legislative frameworks..

## **6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS**

- 6.1 Suggestions for future actions will need to be considered alongside the Council's immediate priorities which are town centres, green issues and sustainable development, and in accordance with the established corporate business planning process, to ensure allocation of adequate resources exist to deliver the agreed actions..

## **7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS**

- 7.1 The rural strategy includes actions relevant to equalities including those for young people, housing for people with disabilities, support for older people and for those with learning difficulties and the reduction of the risk of rural exclusion and isolation.
- 7.2 Resourcing delivery of this strategy is currently undertaken by officers from the PPP., community development, planning teams and by working with external partners.

## **8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS**

- 8.1 A Parish and Town Councils' Conference is held every year, when the opportunity to discuss issues arising from this strategy can be taken..
- 8.2 The Parish and Town Councils' Conference sends three representatives, two from parish councils, to the North Hertfordshire Partnership.
- 8.3 Portfolio holder liaison, rural Community Development Officer (CDO) and other consultations with parishes. Consultation with and agreement of activities to be included has taken place with the Community Engagement and Rural Affairs portfolio holder, the Rural CDO and through regular events held with our Parish Council colleagues.

## **9. RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 9.1 For the committee to note the progress with the 2005-2010 Rural Strategy.
- 9.2 For the committee to note the intention to revise the Rural Strategy in 2010.

## **10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS**

- 10.1 To allow members of this committee to monitor progress against an agreed strategy.

## **11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED**

- 11.1 Not applicable.

## **12. APPENDICES**

- 12.1 **Appendix 1:** Update on the actions contained in the 2005-2010 Rural Strategy.

**Appendix 2:** Progress with the agreed recommendations from the Review of Partnership working with Parishes and Town Councils (March 2007).

**Appendix 3:** Extract from the 2005-2010 Rural Strategy.

## **13. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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**14. BACKGROUND PAPERS**

14.1 2005 – 2010 Rural Strategy available from the PPP team.

## North Hertfordshire District Council Rural Strategy for North Herts 2005 - 2010: Progress at March 2009

### A. Community Safety

**Objective: Increasing community safety and reducing crime**

**Lead Partners: North Hertfordshire District Council /Police**

Priorities for Action	Progress at January 2009
Increase allocation of Police Community Support Officers (PCSOs)	There are 25 PCSOs in North Herts, 7 with responsibility for rural areas. This is an increase from 2006 when there were 13 PCSOs in North Herts including 5 with responsibility for rural areas. An additional 5 youth and schools PCSOs have responsibility for rural schools within their respective Extended Schools Consortia. Some Parish Councils are taking advantage of the Constabulary's part-funded option for PCSOs e.g. Codicote and Ickleford/Kimpton
Extend the use of mobile anti-fly tipping cameras	Covert surveillance via the use of mobile CCTV equipment is regularly undertaken in rural areas that suffer from persistent fly-tipping. Evidence from this equipment has secured 2 convictions and a number of similar prosecutions are pending.
Carry out high visibility operations day and night to cause disruption to the criminal fraternity in rural areas.	The mobile police station is a way of providing further services to rural residents and continues to be deployed across the district. The Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) has funded 6 bicycles that will be used by the local policing team. These bicycles will improve the ability for rural PCSOs to cover a larger area. An additional vehicle has been purchased for use by the Baldock/Royston rural based PCSOs helping to promote visibility.
Conduct hare coursing patrols followed by prosecutions	Operation Groat focussing on District wide hare coursing.
Work with partners to develop "diversionary" activities for children and young people	NHDC provided Stay and Play schemes for 5-13 year olds in 16 villages throughout summer 2008. NHDC supported the summer Youthoria programme providing activities in village parks for 11-19 year olds throughout summer 2008. Rural Youth Clubs and initiatives receive financial support from Area Committees and the Youth Development Budgets. Parishes are encouraged to develop local activities for young people and Community Development and Children's Services Officers offer practical assistance and support.
Support for rural businesses to increase security of premises.	Rural Watch - 56 vulnerable premises have been identified to date for the scheme to supplement already existing Neighbourhood Watch Schemes within the rural community. 400 signs have been purchased and locations are being identified.

## B. Education and Life-long Learning

**Objective: To promote participation in lifelong learning and improve access to facilities in rural areas.**

**Lead Partners: North Hertfordshire College and North Hertfordshire District Council**

Priorities for Action	Progress at January 2009
Improve participation (in education / learning) from people living in rural areas	The Museum Service provides ongoing outreach teaching and loans to rural schools including projects with Gravely Primary and St Pauls Walden JMI to produce new loan boxes for rural schools. The subscription service is weighted towards rural schools, allowing two visits from our Learning Officer rather than one, to offset the cost of coach trips to the museums.
Closer working between North Herts College, Parish Councils and schools	North Hertfordshire College is the lead partner for these areas and is in the process of providing an update on progress broken down into rural areas.
IT for older people	Participation by older people in IT Training in North Hertfordshire as a whole shows a good picture of continued participation.
Community Information Points	
E-links with rural facilities	<p>There are 24 community venues for learning across North Hertfordshire.</p> <p>These include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• 4 secondary schools</li> <li>• 3 primary school ( Children's Centres)</li> <li>• 4 Community Centres</li> <li>• 2 Libraries</li> <li>• Cheshire Homes, mainly music classes</li> <li>• 10 other community venues</li> </ul>
Influencing the retention of rural schools	This is essentially a County Council function as the Local Authority with responsibility for education

## C. Health

**Objective: To improve access to health facilities and services in rural areas**

**Lead Partners: North Herts and Stevenage PCT/Royston, Buntingford and Bishops Stortford PCT**

Priorities for Action	Progress at January 2009
Improved co-ordination of patient transport services through the Herts Integrated Transport Partnership	A board made up of representatives of PCTS, NHS Trusts and Hertfordshire County Council advising on access and transport as the reconfiguration of health services is rolled out. The Health Shuttle is a door to door chargeable transport service to and from the Lister Hospital - covering Stevenage, Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock and surrounding areas Mondays to Fridays (except public holidays). It also offers a link between the Lister and QEII hospitals.
New national contracts for family doctors (April 2004), dentists and pharmacists (April 2005)	New contracts have been successfully implemented and there is an extended opening hours scheme in place. Some pharmacies have also extended their opening hours in response to GP extended hours. The new dental contract was successfully implemented with existing dental practices that offered NHS services.
Visible Kids road safety project	Herts County Council encourage schools to set up pedestrian/cycling skills training.
Crucial Crew health and safety	Police led, in partnership with 8 local partner organisations, personal safety and crime prevention interactive information day. Available for all year 6 students in North Hertfordshire. In 2008 1367 students attended. The sessions all take place at Wilshere Dacre School in Hitchin and year 9 students from The Priory School Hitchin support the scheme by taking part in role play activities.
Healthy eating - tackling obesity	The PCT is the lead partner for this area. There is no provision relating to tackling obesity specifically aimed at rural areas but the following schemes are running in North Hertfordshire: Two Letchworth GP practices are piloting a scheme to refer patients to weight management exercise referral and cardiac rehabilitation schemes through the Council's leisure service providers. A similar scheme, where GPs can refer patients to the local Gym is up and running in Royston. Royston Health Centre has an Exercise Practitioner who provides healthy lifestyle consultation and Roysia Surgery has a scheme to manage young people's weight. The Countryside Management Service have run a successful pilot Health Walks scheme Hitchin, begun in 2006. The scheme is now well established with 15 active leaders trained. Each quarterly programme includes 40 - 50 volunteer lead walks attracting a total of 500 participants. Sports partnership funding has led to county-wide re-branding and web promotion. Conference held for leaders in July 2008.
Tackling drug and alcohol abuse	Night Time Economy Strategy is in place and there are plans for an Alcohol Strategy

	to be developed to compliment this. Test purchasing and Licensing activities continues to take place. Youth and Schools PCSOs continue to provide crime prevention and substance misuse education within rural schools. Pub Watch continues to promote 'safe drinking'.
Outreach support for older people leaving hospital	<p>East and North Hertfordshire PCT is the lead partner for this area and has provided the following response:</p> <p>Following a stock-take of 0708 intermediate care bed and home based activity, a proposed new model for intermediate care has been devised. The new model includes a new tier of residential intermediate care services and the recommendation that a new integrated intermediate care team is established by the PCTs and Adult Care Services. Under the new model the integrated intermediate care team will provide home based services enabling more people to be cared for at home without the need for hospital admission. The new model is focused on helping people to achieve and maintain independent living by giving them the time and support needed to achieve this.</p> <p>The team will also work closely with providers of long term care, offering training and support to ensure that ongoing care is delivered in an enabling way. The integrated intermediate care team will visit people in care homes to avoid where possible the admission of long term residents to Hospital. The proposed model is currently being reviewed and assessed for feasibility. This stage is anticipated to take a number of months and a report will be prepared later in the year.</p>
Parenting support for young families	Hertfordshire County Council is the lead partner for this area and is in the process of providing an update on progress.
Improved sporting facilities especially for children and young people	NHDC provided Stay and Play schemes for 5-13 year olds in 16 villages throughout summer 2008. NHDC supported the summer Youthoria programme providing activities in village parks for 11-19 year olds throughout summer 2008. Both programmes involve varied sports opportunities. We held a 2012 mini-Olympic event at Breachwood Green Primary School in Dec 2007 and tennis coaching was held in Weston in the summer 2008.
Support for people with learning difficulty.	Hertfordshire County Council is the lead partner for this area. Health facilitation Teams work to support people with learning difficulties to improve access to acute hospitals and primary care. Data is not available to show service provision specifically in rural areas.

**D. Housing****Objective: To improve availability of affordable Housing****Lead Partners: North Hertfordshire District Council/North Hertfordshire Homes**

<b>Priorities for Action</b>	<b>Progress at January 2009</b>
Deliver 16 affordable homes on exception sites to meet rural housing needs.	It is expected that 18 units of affordable housing will be provided on exception sites by 2010.
Implement a gateway allocation scheme widening access to affordable housing.	A gateway allocation scheme was established by the Council in 2005. North Hertfordshire District Council, North Hertfordshire Homes and Howard Cottage Housing Association are developing a common social housing allocation policy in order to improve housing.
Bring back into use 5 long term empty properties per year.	The owners of long term empty properties are contacted on a regular basis to encourage the early return of these properties to residential occupation. Enforcement action is taken where properties are not effectively secured against unauthorised access. 7 empty properties have been brought back in to productive use since 2005.
Improve access to (housing) advice services.	The Council has strengthened its services in respect of housing advice. An additional officer was appointed in 2007/8 specifically to deal with homelessness prevention issues and the provision of related housing advice.
Continue to work with CDA Rural Housing Enabler.	The Council continues to part fund the CDA Rural Housing Enabler in collaboration with the London Commuter Belt housing sub-region.

## E. Leisure and Community Development

**Objective: To increase use of local amenities**

**Lead Partners: North Hertfordshire District Council/Hertfordshire County Council**

Priorities for Action	Progress at January 2009
Follow up networking events for village halls.	The follow up networking events for village halls proved to be successful for the first two years of operation. However attendance dropped off significantly towards the end of the period because it had run its course and it was decided that they should no longer be held. It is thought that a newsletter might be a possible replacement to inform the rural community of significant issues that might be of interest. In addition representatives from the village halls are invited to the Annual Parish and Town Councils Conference. NHDC Museums service has run events in village halls e.g. Hitchin Museum set up a display case in Hexton Village Hall; local history stall at Pirton History Fair.
Produce new brochure and information.	This has been a very successful publication, originally published in 2004 in hard copy format, it is now somewhat out of date. A more dynamic web based updated Village Hall Handbook is in preparation and will be published by April 2009. This will capture new information on the Village Halls in the district where appropriate and include hyperlinks to the Village Halls own websites where applicable and to other relevant external organisations such as the CDA. It is also planned to create a new area on the NHDC website giving improved information on the districts Urban Community Centres and Halls to that currently available. It is planned to update the new version on the website every six months.
Improve the physical condition of the halls.	This is being implemented through the Parish Amenity and Capital Improvement Fund (PACIF) by the award of capital works grants. Now in its fourth and final year the scheme has awarded a total of £610k to the rural community for improvements to Village Halls and other Community facilities. this has brought much needed improvements to the physical condition of the building in such areas as the Disability Discrimination Act (DDA) and operational efficiency and management. It is anticipated that any funding remaining from the original £1m for this scheme after the 2008/09 round of applications / awards will be directed to a modified form of PACIF, still focussed on the rural community facilities, but with an increased emphasis on 'green' projects, in line with the Council's revised Strategic Objectives for 2009 onwards. Other funding streams such as Parish Challenge also provide funds for the improvement of rural facilities. These schemes are run in parallel with PACIF, and all are formally launched each April, by the Council, with a Launch Event held by Community Development officers.
Encourage greater community volunteering	Volunteering in the rural areas is wider than just "environmental" projects. Whitwell,

	<p>Kimpton and Ickleford are very active in fundraising and developing community activities. Pirton has a large number of volunteers who participate in "Pirton Joycare" and their "Good Neighbour Scheme".</p> <p>The Countryside Management Service (CMS), Community Development Agency and Council for Voluntary Service and working in partnership to help maximise awareness of rural volunteering opportunities. CMS continues with its volunteer program and is developing and will publish a volunteer charter. They have launched a Friends of Baldock Green Spaces and for Norton Common. Hertfordshire Local Area Agreement includes targets for all Local Authorities for the number of people volunteering. Volunteering numbers have increased and will be reorganising volunteering programmes to fulfil needs of volunteers and resources available such as vehicles/tools/staff. Looking to adopt the volunteering standard for CMS voluntary activity. Provided training in 2008 to North Hertfordshire friends of green spaces groups to enable their self sufficiency in managing tasks. Established a Friends of Greenspaces Action Pack. Created the Friends of Purwell Valley 0809. (Current groups: Friends Of Oughtonhead Common, Norton Common, Baldock Greenspaces and Purwell Valley.)</p>
<p>Develop partnerships e.g. with the CDA Village Halls Adviser, CMS.</p>	<p>Opportunities to partner with the CDA Village Halls Adviser to jointly produce a newsletter giving the rural community advice and information from NHDC, in the management of Village Halls, are to be explored. The Museum Service offers exhibition facilities for rural artists and groups e.g. Lilley Art Group. Community Development Officers continue strong links and good partnership relations with officers from the CDA for Hertfordshire.</p>
<p>Improve informal recreation opportunities, e.g. rights of way.</p>	<p>The Community Development Agency is the lead partner for this area and has worked in partnership with North Hertfordshire District Council's Community Development Team on Parish Plans (Kimpton, Pirton, Gravely , Wymondley, Codicote, Knebworth) and on getting funding for Clothall Village Hall £45.5k).</p>
<p>Promote economic development issues, e.g. maintenance of rural post offices.</p>	<p>The emerging Development Policies DPD (Preferred Options) contains policies resisting the loss of such community facilities.</p>
<p>Promote the rural areas for recreation and outdoor activities.</p>	<p>Actions will be identified in the Council's Developing Rural Space Strategy, due for publication later in 2009.</p>

## F. Planning and Environment

**Objective: To ensure sustainable development of green spaces**

**North Hertfordshire District Council/Hertfordshire County Council/Countryside Management Service/Community Development Agency**

Priorities for Action	Progress at January 2009
Increase recycling facilities and services	All households in North Herts have a kerbside recycling collection service that includes paper, glass, tins, cardboard and garden waste. In October 2007 a new waste collection service was introduced so residents could also have food waste collected. The amount of household waste sent for recycling and composting has risen from 26.74% in 2005/06 to 40.10% in 2007/08. Recycling sites located in our rural areas include 18 out of 46 district sites specifically for plastics along with 7 rural sites out of 23 in the district for other recyclable materials.
Introduce North Hertfordshire Best Kept Village competition.	Funding has been requested to enable North Hertfordshire to participate in the Campaign for the Protection of Rural England (CPRE) "Village of the Year " competition, whereby a new category for North Hertfordshire could be included. Participation in the competition would be delivered by CPRE on behalf of NHDC. It is hoped to launch the competition in February 2009.
Enable Parish Councils to develop more Parish Plans and Village Design Statements.	The Southern Rural Area Committee allocated £4,150 of Revenue Visioning Funds in March 2006 to encourage and help support Parishes initiate, develop and then implement individual Parish Plans.
Develop Parish environmental action plans.	Parish Council Green Space will be included in the Council's Developing Green Space Strategy, due for publication later in 2009.
Rural proof forthcoming Local Development Framework.	The emerging Core Strategy DPD (Preferred Options) contains a policy to protect the rural areas of the District.
Increase rural economic support.	Rural small businesses will continue to be supported by the Federation of Small Businesses but will be kept under review in light of the current economic situation.
Enhance the Parish Paths Partnership.	A new permanent right of access to common land came into effect in October 2006. Hertfordshire County Council are improving information and access across the county including North Hertfordshire. Lilley joined the Partnership in 2005, Reed joined in 2006 and Kimpton joined in 2007.
Work with CDA rural team.	<p>The Community Development Agency is the lead partner for this area works in partnership with North Hertfordshire District Council, Hertfordshire County Council Highways and other partners to deliver services on the ground, for example Village Travel Plans and the successful Two Wheels project.</p> <p>They have also worked on a number of housing needs surveys in North Hertfordshire (for Reed, Ashwell and Barkway).</p>

Enhance conservation and historic aspects of village life.	These aspects of village life are covered in National Policy Guidance (PPGs 15 and 16).
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**G. Transport****Objective: To offer increased travel choices while improving traffic flows and road safety****Lead Partners: Hertfordshire County Council/Herts Rural Transport Partnership/Community Development Agency/North Hertfordshire District Council**

<b>Priorities for Action</b>	<b>Progress at January 2009</b>
Undertake a network review of all bus services, routes and usage.	The HCC review is ongoing. NHDC withdrew funding contribution towards contract bus services in 2007.
Support Village Travel Plans.	Hertfordshire County Council work with two villages per year on village transport schemes.
Update NHDC cycling strategy to cover rural areas.	We have a proposed cycle network focussed on our four towns and there are no current plans of a policy change to that priority to enable the rural areas to be added.
Develop school travel plans and safer routes to schools.	This is the responsibility of the County Council as the Highway Authority.
Reduce rat runs.	This is the responsibility of the County Council as the Highway Authority through the village schemes mentioned under 'develop school travel plans' and the larger Urban Transport Plans produced in partnership with NHDC for the four main towns.
Implement lorry and large vehicle bans.	This is not an area of priority for Hertfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority.

## H. Young People

**Objective: To improve facilities and social opportunities for children and young people**

**Lead Partners: North Hertfordshire District Council/Community Development Agency/Hertfordshire County Council/  
Hertfordshire Association for Young People**

Priorities for Action	Progress at January 2009
Establish more youth clubs and activities (Hertfordshire Association for Young People/Children's Fund Rural Play Project).	NHDC provided Stay and Play schemes for 5-13 year olds in 16 villages throughout summer 2008. Rural Play project providing play opportunities during Oct half term and Feb half term in 2008/9. Children's Services Team supporting Pirton Parish Council to look at youth issues in the village. Children's Services Team made presentations to Offley and St Ippolyts Parish Council's about developing play opportunities. Rural Play Project worked in 9 village schools developing lunchtime play in 2008/9. Rural Youth Clubs and initiatives receive financial support from Area Committees and the Youth Development Budgets. Parishes are encouraged to develop local activities for young people and Community Development and Children's Services Officers offer practical assistance and support.
Improve rural play areas.	NHDC Parish challenge makes £10,000 available for improvements to rural play areas.
Improve transport facilities for young people.	Herts Rural Transport partnership is active on this issue for rural transport issued for young people.
Develop new youth council with young people.	NHDC Community Development Officers endeavour to ensure that Rural young people are represented on each Council. Codicote have established a Youth Council for the area and many other Parishes develop youth participation for specific projects/initiatives on an ad-hoc basis.
Increase take up of sporting opportunities through grant aid	Area Committee Grants are awarded on a request basis to assist in the development of Sports Clubs, Teams and Facilities. Sports North Herts administers over £6000 per year in grant aid to elite performers and coaches competing at regional or national level. Other Rural based grants such as PACIF focus funding on Capital investment into the facilities, structures and supporting venues of rural sporting clubs.
Develop new Greenspace Action plans.	The importance of rural 'green space' has been highlighted in the NHDC draft Green Space Strategy 2008 and it lists actions to promote and enhance this provision.

## RESPONSE TO THE SCRUTINY TASK & FINISH GROUP REVIEW ON PARTNERSHIP WORKING WITH PARISHES & TOWN COUNCILS (2006/07)

**THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE AGREED BY THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER IN JANUARY 2008. THEY HAVE BEEN / CAN BE IMPLEMENTED IMMEDIATELY WITHIN EXISTING RESOURCES BY NHDC:**

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsible Body</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
1	NHDC builds on the current Community Development Officer (CDO) impetus	NHDC	NHDC has built on its good practice by recruiting a replacement CDO for Letchworth and Baldock.	Baldock CDO appointed 2008	Head of Community Development and Cultural Services
2	NHDC be responsible for collecting and maintaining a database showing all the services that are provided by individual parishes, with a view to exploring which of these services can be developed or shared	NHDC & HAPTC	To obtain information of which services can be developed or shared between parishes, the Head of Community Development will work with HAPTC to compile a "check list" of services that are provided by parishes. Parish clerks will need to provide this information. This checklist can then be used to determine which services can be developed or shared. This can also be used to build on work started as part of the Rural Strategy and delivered through the annual Parish and Town Councils Conference and inter-parish meetings. Work started on this but not completed. Significant resource implications, especially officer time, to complete the data gathering.	By 30 Sept 2009	Head of Community Development and Cultural Services
3	The deadline for submitting parish precepts is extended	NHDC	Following an officer review of the timetable, a later date for submitting precept notices was planned into the Service & Financial Planning (S&FP) process, a change from 7 <sup>th</sup> December 2007 to 4 <sup>th</sup> January 2008.	Completed	Head of Financial Services
4	An up to date structure chart is regularly maintained and sent to parishes	NHDC	The latest version can be found on the Council's website.	Completed	Head of Human Resources
5	NHDC review the Rural Strategy to	NHDC	This will commence in late February 2008,	Completed	Head of Policy,

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	assess whether the action plan has been delivered		once the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS) is finished and approved. The SCS was approved in November 2008. This report forms the review of the Rural Strategy to January 2009.		Partnerships & Performance
6	NHDC promotes the benefits of Parish Plans by incorporating elements into the Local Development Framework and area Committees providing financial support to those parishes who may need it	NHDC	Area Committees already support the production of parish plans, and will continue to do so on a case by case basis. NHDC has a protocol for supporting parish plans at inception through to completion.  NHDC supports the undertaking of parish plans by local parish communities and does, where appropriate, incorporate suitable elements into Local Development documents.	Completed	Head of Community Development and Cultural Services / Head of Planning & Building Control / Head of PPP
7	NHDC investigates ways to make the process of applying for grants simpler	NHDC	A review of the Council's Policy and Procedures for Financial Assistance to the voluntary and community sector. Revised procedures to be effective from April 2009.  Business Process Improvement (BPI) review.	Revised procedures to be effective from April 2009  On-going	Head of Community Development and Cultural Services
8	NHDC and parishes and town councils agree to adhere to a standard response time to telephone calls, letters and emails from parishes to council officers	NHDC	The Council is currently revising its Customer Care Standards. New Standards should be adopted by the Council by the end of the civic year and the parish & town councils should be invited to attend a workshop regarding these at the same time as NHDC Cllrs and officers. This will include developing an action plan to roll out.	June 2009	Customer Service Manager
9	NHDC's Enforcement Review considers the implications for parishes	NHDC	The Street Scene FSR completed in May 2007, this was before the Parishes Review reported to Cabinet. However, the Council has adopted the Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) powers contained in the Clean Neighbourhoods & Environment Act in	Completed	Head of Housing & Environmental health

**APPENDIX 2.**

			respect of environmental crime. FPNs can be used to deal with littering, fly posting etc. Also, additional CCTV equipment has been purchased in order to increase surveillance capacity so as to catch more fly-tippers, particularly in rural areas.		
10	The new fly tipping mobile CCTV is made available for parishes to utilise, and that parishes are made aware of who to contact for this	NHDC	<p>Parish councils will not be able to use the CCTV equipment <i>directly</i> as any covert surveillance operation needs to be authorised and managed by NHDC by virtue of the regulation of Investigatory Powers Act 2000.</p> <p>In practice, parish councils should be encouraged to contact the Licensing &amp; Enforcement Team to report incidents of fly tipping and, more importantly, any intelligence they have on who may be responsible. The team will then plan and execute targeted covert surveillance operations and brief parish councils on their success, or otherwise, after the operation has come to an end.</p>	On-going	Licensing & Enforcement Manager
11	NHDC create a parish page on the Council's website informing readers about parishes, where and when they meet and include links to individual parish/town council web pages. This is in addition to the current contact database	NHDC	<p>The Democratic Services team have established a base level of information to ensure equity – address, contact details, members, meeting dates.</p> <p>An area for village hall information has been established to provide information about village halls.</p> <p>Once this information is complete and general information about parish councils is compiled, links from the parish councils to the relevant village hall can be added.</p>	Completed	Democratic Services Manager / Head of Information Technology & Transformation

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12	Parishes send their meeting schedules to NHDC to be published on the website	NHDC	Contact details for parishes are available on the NHDC website. It would be more effective if parishes published their meeting schedules on their own websites. Links could be added to the relevant page on the parish website. Such links to parishes are already provided by the County Council.	January 2009	Democratic Services Manager
13	NHDC arrange a formal communication procedure for letting parishes know about any new funding or IT initiatives that are being discussed or explored	NHDC / HAPTC	This links into the agenda planning for the series of meetings between NHDC and Parish Chairs and Clerks.  Information about parish funding is also publicised on the HAPTC website.  Parish and Town Councils Conference held every year. Southern Rural Parishes meet formally twice a year. Similar twice yearly meetings for Northern Parishes are just being established.	On-going	Head of Community Development / Head of Information Technology & Transformation
14	NHDC offer a direct number for parish and town council clerks and councillors to call the district council	NHDC	We have a business number that goes directly to our switchboard service – 01462 474840. A business card calendar was distributed to Parishes to publicise this and is available for the town and parish councils to give to customers.	Completed 2008	Customer Service Manager
15	Written communication sent to parishes is as jargon free as possible and wherever possible a summary is provided that draws parish members to the most relevant part(s) of the document	NHDC	NHDC has existing guidance that encourages officers to avoid the use of jargon, however NHDC will be issuing a new style guide by May 2009 which will also cover this.	On-going	Communications Manager
16	Consulting with parishes becomes an official part of the working methods of NHDC officers	NHDC	Parishes are consulted on a wide range of issues such as the Local Development Framework, Planning Applications etc. Briefings are also undertaken during the annual parish conference.  The consultation officer puts a consultation update section in MIS informing members	On-going	Consultation Officer

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			of upcoming consultations and the CAR (Consulting & Reporting) database, which is used for all consultation. The CAR has an option in the 'who are you consulting with' section for parish and town councils.		
17	The email addresses of parish and town councils is included on the Council's global address list	NHDC	This will not be necessary if the contact details are published on the council website.	N/A	Democratic Services Manager
18	The 'Outlook Magazine' is distributed to homes or public places in all parishes	NHDC	Distribution by Royal Mail started in August 2007. This radically improved the distribution to rural areas.	Completed	Communications Manager
19	Feedback is provided to parish members on planning applications that they have responded to, or made comments on	NHDC	The first meeting with representatives from parish councils to discuss planning applications took place on 24 September 2007. A series of meetings over the year to be agreed to cover appropriate topics.	On-going	Planning Control & Conservation Manager
20	An official training schedule (for planning matters) is compiled and targeted at planning representatives of each parish	NHDC	As above. Training is provided when required and visits made to Parish Councils on request in relation to planning matters, particularly planning control.	On-going	Planning Control & Conservation Manager
21	Members of Hertfordshire County Council are informed about this review and that they consider carrying out a similar exercise with parishes	NHDC	A copy of final report was sent to HCC with a covering letter from the Scrutiny Officer. This was part of a wide distribution.	June 2007	Scrutiny Officer
22	Information on the LSP meetings is sent to all parishes and town councils	NHDC	Minutes are published on the Council's website. An LAA/LSP progress bulletin is to be produced bi-monthly which will be circulated through the Members Information Service to all district, county, town and parish council members. The LSP has its own website at <a href="http://www.northhertspartnership.org.uk">www.northhertspartnership.org.uk</a> where more details can be found independently.	On-going.	Policy Manager
23	NHDC includes a session on the work and role of parish and town councils, as part of the Council's induction of Members and officers. It is also suggested that the delivery of this session	NHDC & HAPTC	An induction programme for new members is not needed every year.  This topic can be included in the current induction programme for officers and	The next programme will be in 2010.	Democratic Services Manager (in liaison with Learning and Development)

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	is presented by an experienced parish councillor or clerk		<p>Members. However the induction programme for Members is usually tailored according to their needs, so it would not be necessary for a Councillor whose ward did not cover a parish to receive this as part of their induction.</p> <p>For officers, a brief overview is given but specific and bespoke training can be given to officers who have a high degree of interaction with Parishes, e.g. CDO of Head of Service.</p> <p>Training will be delivered by an appropriate training provider.</p>		
24	Parish and town councils are included in the training opportunities that are offered to NHDC councillors	NHDC	<p>Training specifically for District Councillors may not be appropriate for Parish Councillors. However Parish clerks can be emailed with information about opportunities sent to us by training providers and information we have about programmes that are tailored to the individual needs of NHDC Members. Parish Councillors would be expected to pay a charge per head.</p>	On-going	Democratic Services Manager (in liaison with Learning and Development)
25	An action plan is drawn up and a review of the recommendations is conducted by a group of district members and parish and town representatives, 12 months after publication of the original report, to monitor the action plan	NHDC	<p>Setting up another group to review the actions of a T&amp;F group goes against best practice and is not within the protocol for NHDC's scrutiny procedures. The Scrutiny Annual Report includes a review of past T&amp;F groups and will highlight the actions that have been undertaken as a result of scrutiny recommendations.</p>	On-going	Scrutiny officer

**THE FOLLOWING ACTIONS WERE FOR IMPLEMENTATION BY PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL CLERKS / HAPTC:**

	<b>Recommendation</b>	<b>Responsible Body</b>	<b>Response</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer</b>
1	Parish and town councils agree to share the provision of expertise from officers for common projects, as outlined above	HAPTC	<p><b><i>The following response was provided by NHDC's CMT:</i></b></p> <p>P &amp; T Councils will need to identify which projects they wish to share, then once identified, relevant Heads of Service to work directly with them, on a rechargeable basis and subject to the availability of resources. A single point of contact within NHDC will need to be identified, as separate approaches to different Heads of Service may produce anomalies in approach.</p> <p><b><i>The following response was provided by the County Officer for HAPTC:</i></b></p> <p>Carina Helmn, HAPTC will produce a county-wide questionnaire.</p>		County Officer
2	Villages consider sharing Police Community Support Officers	HAPTC / Clerks / Herts Constabulary	<p><b><i>The following response was provided by the County Officer for HAPTC:</i></b></p> <p>An update will be required from the Inspector, as Herts Constabulary have changed the way they work with villages.</p> <p><b><i>The following response was provided by NHDC's CMT:</i></b></p> <p>This can be done through the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership.</p>		County Officer
3	Parishes consider clustering and sharing a fully trained professional clerk, in appropriate areas	HAPTC / Clerks	<p><b><i>The following response was provided by the County Officer for HAPTC:</i></b></p> <p>HAPTC currently contact neighbouring councils and clustering is done on an ad</p>	Done	County Officer

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			<p>hoc basis.</p> <p>HAPTC place recruitment ads in their newsletter.</p>		
4	Parishes to invite their County Councillor to their meetings and send them meeting agendas.	Clerks			
5	Parish clerks set up an informal network group	Clerks	<p><b><i>The following response was provided by the County Officer for HAPTC:</i></b></p> <p>HAPTC organised a networking event for Clerks in July. However, as HAPTC is a member organisation, this would not have been attended by all parishes.</p>	Done	County Officer
6	HAPTC and NHDC provide support to produce job descriptions for parish clerks and parish councillors	HAPTC	<p><b><i>The following response was provided by the County Officer for HAPTC:</i></b></p> <p>HAPTC have JDs for clerks and provide training opportunities for parish &amp; town councillors.</p>	Done	County Officer
7	All parishes and town councils join HAPTC	Clerks	<p><b><i>The following response was provided by the County Officer for HAPTC:</i></b></p> <p>HAPTC will be promoting the organisation to encourage more parishes to join. Since a subscription is required, membership of HAPTC cannot be compulsory.</p>	Discussions remain ongoing with relevant parishes.	County Officer

HAPTC = Hertfordshire Association of Parish and Town Councils.

**Extract from Pages 10 to 18 of the Rural Strategy 2005 - 2010.**

**11. Key Findings, Issues and Priorities for the Rural Strategy**

- 11.1 There is much to celebrate in rural life in North Hertfordshire, but there is an urgent need to tackle and try to resolve those issues that have been raised as being important to rural communities. While some of these are common to all communities across the district, others may be one-off, bespoke, local issues that may only affect individual villages. Taken together, the various consultations, surveys and summit provided the issues, needs and aspirations that rural communities had identified. These form the basis of the series of actions set out in the strategy.
- 11.2 However, the point about having a rural strategy is that it must aim to address all these often diverse, but inter-related, needs. Moreover, while no one organisation can hope to deal with all the issues raised, a partnership approach has a much better chance of allocating out responsibilities to the most appropriate agency or commission particular projects to be undertaken.

**A. Community Safety**

- 11.3 Community safety is a concern in both rural and urban areas of the district. Fear of crime, nuisance behaviour and other types of disorder can have a significant effect on quality of life, particularly for the most vulnerable groups in society. A separate NHCDRP (North Hertfordshire Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership) Community Safety Strategy exists and Home Office project funding is already available, but there are some issues that must also be recognised as priorities for rural areas.
- 11.4 Types of crime in rural areas are often different to that experienced in urban settlements and therefore require a different approach to reduce. For example, the theft of trailers and riding tack from farms, hare coursing and use of off-road bikes on country footpaths are all concerns reported by our rural residents.
- 11.5 A Rural Advisory Group, chaired by the Hertfordshire Constabulary, has been set up consisting of local landowners, Councillors and others actively involved in rural communities, to share information and help reduce opportunities for crime to take place.

**Priorities for Action**

- **Increase allocation of Community Support Officers**
- **Extend the use of mobile anti fly-tipping cameras**
- **Carry out high visibility operations day and night to cause disruption to the criminal fraternity in rural areas.**
- **Conduct hare coursing patrols followed by prosecutions**
- **Work with partners to develop “diversionary” activities for children and young people**
- **Support for rural businesses to increase security of premises.**

**B. Education and Life-long Learning**

- 11.6 The core purpose of the North Hertfordshire Learning Partnership (NHLP) is to promote participation in lifelong learning by all residents.
- 11.7 The Children's Schools and Families (CSF) Adult and Community Learning Plan describes the learning potential in contributing to neighbourhood renewal and regeneration.
- 11.8 The North Hertfordshire Community Strategy raises the issue of improving access to facilities in rural areas. The overall aim of partners is to ensure that access to educational opportunities amongst rural communities is equal to those living in urban areas.

**Priorities for Action**

- **Improve participation from people living in rural areas**
- **Closer working between North Herts College, Parish Councils and schools**
- **IT for older people**
- **Community Information Points**
- **E-links with rural facilities**
- **Influencing the retention of rural schools**

**C. Health**

- 11.9 The key for rural areas is to ensure that the inhabitants are not disadvantaged in terms of access to health services. Data has indicated that there is a higher proportion of older people in certain rural parts of the district, but no other indicators that are excessively different from other rural areas elsewhere in the country.
- 11.10 National key targets include that patients will be able to see a primary care professional within 24 hours and a GP within 48 hours. NHS Direct is a 24 hour telephone line available to all staffed by trained professionals. There is a national minimum target of 70% uptake of flu vaccination of those aged 65 and over.
- 11.11 North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Primary Care Trust and Royston, Buntingford and Bishops Stortford PCT work in partnership with NHDC and are represented on the Local Strategic Partnership. The two PCTs contribute to the community strategy regarding national targets. The current work programmes are outlined in their annual Health Improvement and Modernisation Programmes.
- 11.12 Both PCTs contribute to the funding and management of the NHDC Health Development Officer.

**Priorities for Action**

- **Improved co-ordination of patient transport services through the Herts Integrated Transport Partnership.**
- **New national contracts for family doctors (April 2004), dentists and pharmacists (April 2005)**
- **Visible Kids road safety project**
- **Crucial crew health and safety**
- **Healthy eating – tackling obesity**
- **Tackling drug and alcohol abuse**

- **Outreach support for older people leaving hospital**
- **Parenting support for young families**
- **Improved sporting facilities especially for children and young people**
- **Support for people with learning difficulties**

#### **D. Housing**

- 11.13 Affordable housing is an issue that affects hundreds of villages around the country. In North Hertfordshire, the “perceived” problem is accentuated because of the close proximity to London and relatively high property prices.
- 11.14 Nationally and locally, many rural young people who aspire to continue living in their home villages when they reach adulthood and independence often are unable to because of the high property prices. Parents and young people in some villages struggle to find suitable accommodation within their means.
- 11.15 The Council currently has a commitment to provide 100 affordable homes each year for the next five years including consideration of schemes in rural areas.
- 11.16 The Herts Young Homeless Group (HYHG) has produced a report (September 2004), identifying approximately 200 young rural homeless people across the district, that is those ‘being without permanent, stable or suitable accommodation’.

#### **Priorities for Action**

- **Deliver 16 affordable homes on exception sites to meet rural housing needs**
- **Implement a gateway allocation scheme widening access to affordable housing**
- **Bring back into use 5 long term empty properties per year**
- **Improve access to advice services**
- **Continue to work with CDA Rural Housing Enabler**

#### **E. Leisure and Community Development**

- 11.17 There are 33 village halls across the district in various stages of fitness for purpose, with some having greater community use than others. During spring 2004, NHDC Officers met with all the management committees of village halls to review the state of village hall provision and identify future needs. The findings were presented to Cabinet (December 2004) and all Area Committees (January and February 2005) before a final report to Cabinet in March 2005.
- 11.18 Village halls networking events and the production of a village halls booklet for potential hirers and users were funded during 2004. So far, networking events have taken place at Pirton (April, 2004) and Barkway (September, 2004), where, as well as having speakers with a range of specialist expertise, volunteers who have “been there and done it” are also able to share their knowledge and experience.
- 11.19 Consideration of the physical fabric of village halls and the cost of their upgrading and future maintenance is also being reviewed within the context of the Council’s capital programme.

- 11.20 AGRE is the countrywide ‘Action for Growth in the Rural Economy’ and offers a range of free training to farms and rural businesses enabling them to increase their skills to meet the needs of the rapidly changing rural economy.
- 11.21 Farmers markets take place regularly in Letchworth, Royston and Hitchin and are a popular way of promoting the sale of local produce.
- 11.22 NHDC helps to fund the Stevenage Business initiative (SBI), the Enterprise Agency for Northern Hertfordshire. Operating both out of their impressive technical centre and in the wider community, this service provides wide ranging help for new businesses. In the last two years 25% of the business start ups supported by SBI within North Hertfordshire have come from the rural community.
- 11.23 4BEX (For Business Excellence) is a range of low cost training courses covering a variety of subjects all aimed at small businesses. The courses are provided by a partnership of Hertfordshire District Councils led by Dacorum.

**Priorities for Action**

- **Follow up networking events for village halls**
- **Produce new brochure and information**
- **Encourage greater community volunteering**
- **Improve the physical condition of the halls**
- **Develop partnerships e.g. with the CDA Village Halls Advisor, CMS.**
- **Improve informal recreation opportunities, eg: rights of way**
- **Promote economic development issues, eg: maintenance of rural post offices**
- **Promote the rural areas for recreation and outdoor activities**

**F. Planning and Environment**

- 11.24 Very often, the rural environment and surrounding landscape is key to what makes village life so special and desirable. For example, Ashwell Springs is a major asset to local people in terms of identity, recreation amenity, landscape management and conservation. The rural areas of the District offer superb opportunities for recreation and other leisure pursuits. The Garden City Greenway is a 13.6 mile circular route around Letchworth which makes accessible to the public a number of environmental centres, eg: Norton Pond, Willian Arboretum, Wymondley Wood.
- 11.25 Also, the built environment in many of the villages tells a story of local history and heritage. Ashwell village has more architecturally worthwhile houses than many others in the county and Pirton demonstrates many fine traditional buildings dating from the 16<sup>th</sup> and 17<sup>th</sup> centuries. Local people are often keen to conserve and improve their local environment, especially when they perceive it may be ‘under threat’. While Village Design Statements have helped highlight the character and quality of villages, there remain many attractive and interesting settlements throughout the District that retain historic layouts and buildings, with many that are listed.
- 11.26 The North Hertfordshire and Stevenage Landscape Character Assessment identifies ‘Landscape Character Areas’ in the district and provides a strategy and guidelines for managing change.

- 11.27 The Council has recently reviewed the district's provision of sports grounds, pavilions and associated facilities, including those in rural areas.
- 11.28 The Countryside Management Services work across Hertfordshire to enable community-led rural enhancement. In North Hertfordshire they are predominantly involved in the Parish Paths Partnership, Parish Environmental Action Plans and the Environmental Land Management Scheme supporting the conservation of County Heritage and Wildlife Sites. They also support a volunteer programme and devise and lead a range of walks across the district.

**Priorities for Action**

- **Increase recycling facilities and services**
- **Introduce North Hertfordshire Best Kept Village competition**
- **Enable Parish Councils to develop more Parish Plans and Village Design Statements**
- **Develop Parish Environmental action plans**
- **Rural proof forthcoming Local Development Framework**
- **Increase rural economic support**
- **Enhance the Parish Paths Partnership**
- **Work with CDA rural team**
- **Enhance conservation and historical aspects of village life**

**G. Transport**

- 11.29 The increase in traffic is one of the key issues that people say is affecting life in the rural areas. Public transport is a difficult issue for all villages. It is often hard to tackle on a very local basis and is most effectively addressed in a district, county or regional wide transport strategy. However, the issues raised apply to almost every community in the district. In particular, it is high on the agenda for those villages that are used as unsuitable through-routes to bigger highways and the towns. Project work on traffic and transport will not necessarily be Council led, but it will work in partnership on this important matter.
- 11.30 There are a number of matters relating to public transport, or at least its absence. Firstly, the daytime buses are often not provided at rush hour times when the majority of people need them. In particular, there are poor bus-rail link-ups. Secondly, the bus routes are often inappropriate and do not meet people's needs, eg: cross county-border travel.. The third issue is one that has the greatest social impact on young people – a lack of buses in the evening, where, in many cases, the bus service ceases after 6pm.
- 11.31 Serious consideration of innovative transport schemes that serve the general community during the day, as well as youngsters wishing to travel in the evening is vital.
- 11.32 HeRTP is supported by HCC and The Countryside Agency and is based at CDA for Herts. The Partnership is a partner on the Village Travel Plan. The Hertfordshire Rural Transport Partnership (HeRTP)/CDA has been given the remit of developing and researching the possibility of setting up a Two Wheels Project (mopeds/cycles) for young people wishing to access training, work and leisure in the County. North Hertfordshire has agreed to act as a pilot for such a project, and funding has recently been approved by the Herts

Rural Forum and EEDA. This project will start in spring 2005. Hertfordshire Highways and HeRTP will be key partners in this project.

- 11.33 There also needs to be recognition that some parishes will have expressed their concerns regarding traffic through a Village Travel Plan, Parish Plan or Village Design Statement. Any such aspirations will require support through the Planning Policy, Area Visioning and Community Strategy process alongside Hertfordshire Highways and HeRTP.

**Priorities for Action**

- **Undertake a Network Review of all bus services, routes and usage**
- **Support Village Travel Plans**
- **Update NHDC cycling strategy to cover rural areas**
- **Develop School travel Plans and safer routes to school**
- **Reduce rat runs**
- **Implement lorry and large vehicle bans**

**H. Young People**

- 11.34 One of the main concerns for villages across the district at present appears to be the lack of social opportunities for young people, where teenagers are often perceived to be suffering the greatest disadvantage. Young people have consistently said that not having things to do was one of the things that they felt most strongly about.
- 11.35 While 10 out of 33 villages have a youth club (4 are voluntary), the opening hours are usually very limited and sometimes do not offer the services or activities that this age group would like.
- 11.36 Even where facilities do exist, there is considerable difficulty recruiting paid evening Youth Workers, despite a concerted campaign by Herts County Council Youth service and Herts Association for Young People.
- 11.37 One outcome of this is that the future adult generations in our villages can more easily become bored. With relatively limited resources for young people, the boredom can develop into frustration, which can then lead to disturbance, disorder and anti-social behaviour.
- 11.38 While there are no direct causal links between youth boredom and youth bad behaviour in all cases, and although young people are not to blame for their boredom, nevertheless, outbreaks of anti-social behaviour can be detrimental to the quality of life in a village. To help maintain this, for all people, the benefits of using diversionary activities and the provision of more social facilities for young people in rural areas should not be underestimated.
- 11.39 In 2001, NHDC was awarded £89,000 from 'Better Play', a lottery funded programme, to undertake a three year action research project investigating play provision in North Herts. As part of this project, NHDC has produced the 'North Herts' Play Strategy for 2005-2008, which highlights specific targets concerning improving play and leisure opportunities for younger children in rural areas.
- 11.40 In 2003, NHDC was awarded £100,000 from the Hertfordshire Children's Fund Programme to assist local communities in providing play and leisure opportunities for children aged between 5-13 years old in the Southern Rural

area of North Hertfordshire. Since the bid came to fruition, the Rural Play Project Officer has facilitated a number of activities across the Southern Rural area including sports sessions, outward bound trips, 'drop – in' and 'free play sessions'. Training has also been provided for local communities working with children and young people. The external funding for this project currently ends in March 2006, although there is a possibility that this could be extended till March 2008.

- 11.41 The Children's Services Team currently run a number of play and sports activities in the rural areas as part the Council's summer holiday programme. Playschemes operate in Knebworth, Ashwell, Codicote, and Pirton and, in addition, a number of sports activities are delivered during half term and the Easter holiday periods using facilities in rural areas.
- 11.42 Children and young people's groups are also able to apply for funds to assist delivery of their service from their Area Committees or from funding organisations such as the Hitchin Youth Trust.
- 11.43 An audit has been undertaken of all rural playgrounds. NHDC Parks & Countryside officers can offer technical advice with funding available through the annual Parish Challenge award scheme.

**Priorities for Action**

- **Establish more youth clubs and activities (HAYP/Children's Fund Rural Play project)**
- **Improve rural play areas**
- **Improve transport facilities for young people**
- **Develop new youth council with young people**
- **Increase take up of sporting opportunities through grant aid**
- **Develop new Greenspace Action Plans**

**TITLE: CHAMPION NEWS AND COMMUNITY REPORT**

## REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT &amp; CULTURAL SERVICES

**1. SUMMARY**

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

**2. ISSUES – PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS**

- 2.1 Parish Challenge(PC)/Playground Challenge(PlayC)/Parish Enhancement & Cleansing Fund(PE&CF)/Parish Amenity Capital Improvement Fund (PACIF) 2008/09 - All award decisions have now been announced and all applicants advised.
- 2.2 Village of the Year North' Award – The Campaign to Protect Rural England (CPRE) formally launched the competition on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2009 and this will sit within the existing Village of the Year process. The CDO has also actively promoted the competition with all North Hertfordshire Parish Councils & Parish Meetings and the Council's communications Team will be including an article in the next edition of the Outlook magazine.

The Milestones for the competition are:

- Competition launched 1st February 2009 using a tried and tested format managed by the CPRE on behalf of NHDC:
  - Deadline for entries 28th April 2009
  - Judging 2<sup>nd</sup> -12<sup>th</sup> June 2009
  - Awards Evening at County Hall 25<sup>th</sup> June 2009
  - Presentation Ceremonies in 'Village of the Year North' 18<sup>th</sup> July 2009
  - Suggested NHDC Judge(s) to be current Chairman/Vice Chairman of the Council and/or Area Committee Chairman from SR & Rural Ward Members from the Baldock & Royston Committee areas.
- 2.3 Hitchin South & Villages Children's Centre Inaugural Partnership Meeting – An inaugural meeting was held by the Pre-school Learning Alliance on 12 February 2009 at Hitchin Christian Centre, as an opportunity to meet other 'early years' practitioners and key members of the Children's Centre community across the Southern Rural and South Hitchin areas. Discussions took place as to how the partnership could work together to meet the needs of local families and children. A name has yet to be decided for the newly formed centre which will have two bases at Highbury School in Hitchin and Whitehall Farm in Whitwell. A second meeting took place on 11 March 2009 to formalise an effective way forward.

- 2.4 Update on the implementation of Covert CCTV – The following update has been obtained from the Council's Licensing and Enforcement Manager on the implementation of the Covert CCTV Camera systems since the Committee funded the purchase of 2 new systems in 2006.

Cameras have been deployed based on the number of incidents logged for Licensing & Enforcement to investigate. The cameras have been deployed where evidence has identified hotspot areas within the Southern Rural area of the district. Other incidents have either been captured using the existing equipment or through evidence found at the scene of the incident.

2.4.1 Statistics of incidents recorded since the purchase of the equipment

- Period 1/9/07 to 31/1/09
- 260 incidents cases referred to Licensing & Enforcement for investigation;
- 134 Hitchin/Hitchin Rural
- 126 Letchworth/Letchworth/Baldock Rural
- 150 Rural incidents – Other than outlined at 2.4.2 in the report, there was no evidence to link them to an individual
- 111 Hitchin Rural
- 39 Letchworth/Baldock Rural

2.4.2 Numbers of Offenders caught on camera:

Four offenders have been caught on CCTV and pleaded guilty and successfully prosecuted at Stevenage Magistrates Court on the following dates. All fines & or costs were awarded in favour of NHDC:

- Wednesday 25<sup>th</sup> April 2007 – Offence took place on 9<sup>th</sup> October 2006 whereby the offender was seen fly-tipping rolls of carpet on the grass verge in front of Lilley Bottom Water Pumping Station. Contrary to Section 33 (1) (a) and (5) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act 2005). The offender who was from Luton, was fined £400.00 and a further £400 was awarded towards the Council's legal costs and £45.00 for the clear up of the carpet, making a total of £845.00.
- Wednesday 30<sup>th</sup> July 2008 – Offence took place on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2008 whereby the offender who was from Haringey, North London, was seen fly-tipping an amount of plasterboard, radiator, boxes, plastic pipes, paint tins, food containers and wrappers and other materials on the corner of Norton Bury Lane, Norton, Letchworth. Contrary to Section 33 (1) (a) and (5) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act 2005, Part 5, Section 42 & 43).

The Offender had a Community Order for 12 months imposed to undertake 100 hrs unpaid work. A sum of £665.56 was awarded for the Council's legal costs plus £50.00 Compensation Order in respect of clear up costs.

- Tuesday 9<sup>th</sup> September 2008 - Offence took place on 1<sup>st</sup> February 2008 whereby the offender who was from Luton, was seen fly-tipping a large quantity of builders waste which included timber, plasterboard and rubble sacks at the entrance to Lilley Bottom Water Pumping Station, Lilley. Contrary to Section 33 (1) (a) and (5) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, (as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act 2005, Part 5, Section 42 and 43). Offender was fined £100.00 plus £150.00 towards the clear-up costs together with £15.00 Victim Surcharge. The sum of £450.00 was also awarded as a contribution towards the Council's legal costs.
- Wednesday 10<sup>th</sup> October 2008 - Offence took place on 9<sup>th</sup> January 2008 whereby the offender who was from Letchworth, was seen fly-tipping six black sacks containing domestic household waste, clothing, toiletries, toys, paperwork with identification photographs and other materials in the wooded area, near the side of Norton Bury Lane, Norton, Letchworth. Contrary to Section 33 (1) (a) and (5) of the Environmental Protection Act 1990, (as amended by the Clean Neighbourhoods and Environmental Act 2005, Part 5, Section 42 and 43). Offender has a fine of £100.00 imposed plus £50.00 towards the clear-up costs. A further sum of £300.00 was also awarded as a contribution towards the Council's legal costs (which were £690.20).

In addition there have been 24 Interviews Under Caution (IUC) and 2 further fly-tipping cases (one of which is in Southern-Rural) are awaiting court action either side of the district.

#### 2.4.3 Effectiveness of the 2 Covert CCTV systems since purchased

- Aids the enforcement and investigation of anti-social behaviour and fly-tipping
- Video images can be assessed remotely via mobile phone data networks
- Enables access live and recorded footage from any location.
- No geographical restrictions or distance limitations
- Access footage from any PC, laptop or PDA
- Requires no fixed line installation
- Portable and instant deployability (RIPA)
- Significantly reduces manpower costs
- Provides evidential material to support prosecution
- Effective use of technology is practically a prerequisite for any civil enforcement Programme

#### 2.4.4 Licensing & Enforcement feedback on benefits of the 2 systems

The authority has worked very closely with enforcement agencies to tackle fly-tipping issues across the whole of the district however those close working relationships have now been developed to create a Rural Issues Forum with enforcement agencies namely the Police, Highways, the National Farmers Union and neighbouring authorities. This is a new group which has only recently been formed. As this develops and evolves feedback can be provided, obviously subject to any information being restricted/sensitive.

- 2.4.5 Further press coverage on CCTV offences - The Council's Communications Team has provided press coverage and the Council's Licensing & Enforcement Manager has been in discussions recently with the team regarding the court cases to ask if they could be 'recycled' in Outlook just as a reminder to the public of the consequences if found guilty. The Communications Manager has advised that this will be incorporated as part of the Housing & Environmental Health communications programme.

### **3. RECOMMENDATIONS**

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

### **4. CONTACT OFFICERS**

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