

3 October 2008

Ref: HD/Scrutiny/Oct 08
Contact: Hilary Dineen
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To: The Members of the Scrutiny Committee of the North Hertfordshire District Council

(Councillors L.W. Oliver (Chairman); R.L. Shakespeare-Smith (Vice-Chairman); David Billing, John Bishop, S. Bloxham, P.C.W. Burt, Paul Clark, Sal Jarvis, Lorna Kercher, H.M. Marshall, Alan Millard, M.R.M. Muir, Elliot Needham and Michael Paterson).

[Substitutes: Councillors Judi Billing, John Booth, Lee Downie, S.K. Jarvis, David Kearns and Paul Marment]

You are invited to attend a

MEETING OF THE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

to be held in

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

on

TUESDAY, 14 OCTOBER 2008

at

7.30 p.m.

[Note: A Pre-Meeting For Members Of The Committee Will Take Place At 7.00pm In Committee Room 3]

Yours sincerely,



David Miley
Democratic Services Manager

AGENDA
PART I

ITEM	PAGE
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	-
2. MINUTES To take as read and approve as a true record the Minutes of the meeting of the Scrutiny Committee held on 2 September 2008.	-
3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS Members should notify the Chairman of other business which they wish to be discussed by the Committee at the end of the business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency. The Chairman will decide whether the item(s) raised will be considered.	-
4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions, comments and questions from members of the public. At the time of printing the agenda, no requests to speak had been received. Public participation requests received within the agreed time will be notified to Members as soon as practicable.	-
5. URGENT/GENERAL EXCEPTION ITEMS The Chairman to report on any urgent or general exception items which required his agreement. At the time of printing the agenda, the Chairman had not agreed any urgent or general exception items.	-
6. CALLED-IN ITEMS To consider any matters referred to the Committee for a decision in relation to a call-in of a decision. At the time of printing the agenda, no items of business had been called-in.	-
7. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS 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 should leave the room and not seek to influence the decision during that particular item.	-
8. QUESTIONS To receive and respond to any questions either set out in the agenda or tabled at the meeting.	1

ITEM	PAGE
<p>9. NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – THE DRAFT FORWARD PLAN: 1 NOVEMBER 2008 – 28 FEBRUARY 2009 <i>To note items on the Council's Forward Plan and to give consideration to any items set out in the Plan prior to a decision being made.</i></p>	3
<p>10. PRESENTATION BY PLANNING AND TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO HOLDER <i>To receive a presentation by Councillor Richard Thake, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Transport.</i></p>	9
<p>11. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/2009 REPORT OF THE LEAD SCRUTINY DIRECTOR <i>To consider the issues that the Scrutiny Committee plans to review at future meetings and the activities of its sub-groups.</i></p>	19
<p>12. SCRUTINY FINANCE SUB-GROUP REPORT OF THE LEAD SCRUTINY DIRECTOR <i>To receive recommendations from the Finance Sub-Group in relation to financial reports considered at its meeting held on 13th October 2008.</i></p>	31 [Report to be tabled]
<p>13. STRATEGIC APPROACH TO CAR PARKING REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL <i>To consider a report on a proposed Strategic Approach to Car Parking, prior to its submission to Cabinet on 21 October 2008.</i></p>	33 [Report to follow]

The Scrutiny Committee Meetings for the Civic Year 2008 – 2009 will be as follows:

Tuesday, 9 December 2008

Tuesday, 20 January 2009

Tuesday, 24 March 2009

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<p style="text-align: center;">SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 14 October 2008</p>

<p>*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM No.</p> <p style="text-align: center;">8</p>
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TITLE OF REPORT: QUESTIONS

To consider any questions submitted by Members.

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*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No.
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9

TITLE OF REPORT: NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – THE DRAFT FORWARD PLAN: 1 NOVEMBER 2008 – 28 FEBRUARY 2009

To note items listed on the Council's Forward Plan and to give consideration to any items set out in the Plan prior to a decision being made.

The Forward Plan is attached, together with the list of Pending Items.

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NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

DRAFT Forward Plan of Key Decisions – 1 November 2008

The Forward Plan contains brief details of Key Decisions that the Council is likely to take over the next four month period. You will also find details of contacts who can provide further information and hear your views. **Please note that the dates of some of the decisions may change from month to month, please check with Committee Services on 01462 474403 before deciding to attend a meeting.**

Decision required and date first appearing on Plan	Overview and Scrutiny	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Main Consultees	Method of Consultation	Relevant Documents	Costs or Savings	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer
Adoption of Green Space Strategy 10/07	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	16 th Dec 2008	Portfolio Holders – Leisure & E-Government and Waste & Recycling	Meetings	NHDC Green Space Strategy	Capital - £100K p.a. Revenue - £50K p.a.	Cllr Richard Thake Cllr Lynda Needham Cllr Ian Knighton steve.geach@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474553 louise.symes@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474359
North Herts Landfill Site at Holwell 11/08	Scrutiny Committee	Cabinet	16th Dec 2008	Hertfordshire County Council	Meetings	Joint Municipal Waste Strategy for Hertfordshire 2007	TBA	Cllr Lynda Needham Vaughan.watson@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474641
New Customer Service Strategy and updated Customer Care standards 05/08	PARC	Council (via Cabinet)	16 th Dec 2008	Customers Staff CMT	Via the Citizens Panel, Staff Survey and meetings	Previous Customer Care Strategy and Standards	Contained within existing budgets	Cllr Bernard Lovewell lynn.saville@north-herts.gov.uk
2 nd Quarter Revenue Budget 2008/09 Spend Profile 09/08	Scrutiny Committee (via Scrutiny Finance Sub)	Cabinet	16 th Dec 2008	Budget Holders; CMT	Meetings	Budget Papers	£17.7M net estimated annual budget 2008/09	Cllr Terry Hone tim.neill@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474470
2 nd Quarter Capital Budget 2008/09 Spend Profile 09/08	Scrutiny Committee (via Scrutiny Finance Sub)	Cabinet	16 th Dec 2008	Budget Holders; CMT	Meetings	Budget Papers	£10.9M estimated programme 2008/09	Cllr Terry Hone tim.neill@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474470

Decision required and date first appearing on Plan	Overview and Scrutiny	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Main Consultees	Method of Consultation	Relevant Documents	Costs or Savings	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer
Setting of Council Tax Base for 2009/2010 03/08		Cabinet	16 th Dec 2008	Portfolio Holder		Tax Base Calculation	None	Cllr Terry Hone howard.crompton@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474247
Corporate Business Planning 2009/10 and Draft Budget 09/08	Scrutiny Committee (via Scrutiny Finance Sub)	Cabinet	16 th Dec 2008	Budget Holders; CMT	Meetings	Budget Papers	£17.7M net estimated annual budget 2008/09	Cllr Terry Hone Norma.atlay@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474297
Climate Change Strategy 11/07	Scrutiny Committee	Council (via Cabinet)	16 th Dec 2008	Community groups; Partners; Residents; Parish Councils; LSP Members	Meetings and consultation events; Draft report to April Cabinet	Draft Climate Change Bill 2007; Nottingham Declaration	TBA	Cllr Claire Strong jim.brown@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474835
Asset Management Plan – Annual Review 09/08	Scrutiny Committee (via Scrutiny Finance Sub)	Cabinet	16 th Dec 2008	Asset Management Group	Meetings	Asset management database.	£65million asset value	Cllr Terry Hone barrie.jones@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474243
Great Ashby Rural Resource Centre Conclusions of feasibility study 10/08		Cabinet	27th Jan 2009	Local Residents, Ward Members Portfolio Holders	Meetings	Feasibility Study once complete		Cllr Lynda Needham Cllr Ian Knighton Cllr Tricia Gibbs Andrew.mills@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474272
Corporate Business Planning 2009/10 Budget Setting 10/08	Scrutiny Committee (via Scrutiny Finance Sub)	Cabinet	27 th Jan 2009	Budget Holders; CMT	Meetings	Budget Papers	£17.7M net estimated annual budget 2008/09	Cllr Terry Hone Norma.atlay@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474297
Capital Programme 2009/10 onwards 10/08	Scrutiny Committee (via Scrutiny Finance Sub)	Cabinet	27 th Jan 2009	Budget Holders; CMT	Meetings	Budget Papers	£10.9M estimated programme 2008/09	Cllr Terry Hone barrie.jones@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474243
3 rd Quarter Revenue Budget 2008/09 Spend Profile 11/08	Scrutiny Committee (via Scrutiny Finance Sub)	Cabinet	17 th Feb 2009	Budget Holders; CMT	Meetings	Budget Papers	£17.7M net estimated annual budget 2008/09	Cllr Terry Hone tim.neill@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474470

Decision required and date first appearing on Plan	Overview and Scrutiny	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Main Consultees	Method of Consultation	Relevant Documents	Costs or Savings	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer
3 rd Quarter Capital Budget 2008/09 Spend Profile 11/08	Scrutiny Committee (via Scrutiny Finance Sub)	Cabinet	17 th Feb 2009	Budget Holders; CMT	Meetings	Budget Papers	£10.9M estimated programme 2008/09	Cllr Terry Hone tim.neill@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474470
Adoption of Choice Based Lettings Scheme 11/08		Cabinet	17 th Feb 2009	Portfolio Holder Members Community groups RSL's Housing Apps	Meetings, publications and draft scheme sent to all current housing apps	The Choice Based Lettings Code of Guidance August 2008	Costs of £17.5K for implementation and £19K pa	Cllr Bernard Lovewell martin.lawrence@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474250
Submission Core Strategy Development Plan Document (DPD) 05/08	Scrutiny Committee (TBC)	Council (via Cabinet)	26 th Feb 2009 (via 17 th Feb 2009)	Community Groups; Residents; Parish Councils; LSP Members	Online consultation; Written comments; Press Release	Submission DPD	TBA	Cllr Richard Thake andy.beavan@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474317
Submission Development Policies DPD 05/08	Scrutiny Committee (TBC)	Council (via Cabinet)	26 th Feb 2009 (via 17 th Feb 2009)	Community Groups; Residents; Parish Councils; LSP Members	Online consultation; Written comments; Press Release	Submission DPD	TBA	Cllr Richard Thake andy.beavan@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474317

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

PENDING ITEMS

Decision required and date first appearing on Plan	Overview and Scrutiny	Decision Maker	Date of Decision	Main Consultees	Method of Consultation	Relevant Documents	Costs or Savings	Portfolio Holder and Contact Officer
Building Control Policy 08/08		Cabinet	31 st Mar 2009	Portfolio Holder Customer Liaison Panel	Meetings		TBA	Cllr Richard Thake ian.fullstone@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 476 370
Preferred Options Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) 02/08	Scrutiny Committee (TBC)	Cabinet	TBA	Community Groups; Residents; Parish Councils; LSP Members	Online consultation; Written comments; Press Release	Preferred Options DPD	TBA	Cllr Richard Thake andy.beavan@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474317
Baldock Air Quality Management Area 01/08		Cabinet	TBA	Portfolio Holder				Cllr Bernard Lovewell andy.godman@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474293
Comprehensive Equality Policy 07/07	Scrutiny Committee	Council (via Cabinet)	TBA	Community groups; Residents; LSP Members; Partners	Meetings and consultation events	Race, Disability & Gender Equality Schemes	TBA	Cllr John Smith liz.green@north-herts.gov.uk 01462 474230

PRESENTATION BY THE PLANNING AND TRANSPORT PORTFOLIO HOLDER

PRESENTATION BY COUNCILLOR RICHARD THAKE, THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND TRANSPORT

The presentation is attached.

This is to assist Members in the formulation of any questions they may wish to ask Councillor Thake at the conclusion of his presentation.

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PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL

PORTFOLIO HOLDER BRIEFING

SCRUTINY COMMITTEE 14th OCTOBER 2008

SECTION 1 - SERVICE AREAS

Planning Control and Conservation

OVERVIEW

- Determination of application under the Planning and Related Acts.
- Provision of advice to owners of buildings which are listed as being of historic or architectural importance.
- Reviews of conservation areas within North Hertfordshire.
- Enforcement of breaches of planning control and associated legislation.
- The naming and numbering of streets and properties and the associated service of property verification and notification.

OUTPUTS

During 2007, 1678 applications were determined.
Advice was given on 25 major proposals at the pre- application stage and 905 responses were provided to minor and domestic planning proposals.
3 Conservation reviews have been undertaken with input into the compilation, consultation process and management of consultants.
212 Enforcement complaints were registered during 2007, with a average workload of 300 ongoing cases during the year.
10 Section 106 agreements and 31 Unilateral undertakings have been agreed and completed during the year.
5 Tree preservation Orders have been prepared and served during the year
63 Applications for street naming and numbering were completed.

Building Control

OVERVIEW

- The determination of applications under the Building Regulations and Associated Regulations/Acts.
- The Statutory Authority in relation to Dangerous Structures including liaison with the "blue light" services when structures become dangerous.
- The Statutory Authority in relation to Demolitions.
- The enforcement of Building Regulations and associated legislation.
- Training and liaison with developers/builders and other stakeholders to raise awareness of current construction methods and standards.

OUTPUTS

Average of 4490 construction projects in progress
£ 278,764,012.00 construction value of works
7352 inspections of work undertaken
5095 non fee earning applications processed
1393 fee earning applications processed
96% of fee earning applications booked in within 4 days
36 Dangerous Structures responded to, 100% responded to within 3 hours (24/7)
100% of all decisions made within statutory timescales
46 unauthorised building projects controlled
163 applications received for works outside of NHDC (plan assessment undertaken on behalf of the authority where the work is being undertaken through a partnering arrangement between NHDC and architects, developers and Herts County Council)

Regional and Strategic Planning

OVERVIEW

- To respond to Government initiatives regarding Regional Planning issues.
- To respond to the Regional Assembly's/EERAs proposals for Regional Plans and the forthcoming Single Regional Strategy.
- To make effective representations through the Regional Planning Panel process.
- To manage the Council's Corporate response to major development proposals on land west of the A1M at Stevenage and east of Luton.
- To assess the applications for development at WA1M and The Secretary of State's Report on the Call-in Inquiry and proposed legal agreement.
- To negotiate with the developer's Section 106 contributions in relation to strategic developments.
- To monitor and take appropriate action regarding the Stevenage and Luton/South Beds Local Development Frameworks.

OUTPUTS

Responses have been made to other bodies' consultations including: Luton & South Beds Issues and Options consultation East of England Plan Proposed Modifications
Production of SNAP documents in association with Stevenage Borough Council for public consultation in November/December 2007.
Formation and servicing of informal Joint Member Panel to progress SNAP (3 meeting per annum).
Responding to numerous versions of the Unilateral Agreement proposed by the WA1M consortium.
Liaison with Luton & South Beds regarding the progression of their Joint Area Action Plan
Lead District in joint working with HCC through the HTCOA Planning Committee leading to the joint funding and commissioning of work on infrastructure deficit throughout Hertfordshire (£1.3 million consultancy project).

Local Development Framework

OVERVIEW

To prepare the Local Development Framework (LDF) to guide development throughout North Hertfordshire.

To undertake Strategic Environmental Assessments on emerging policy documents and plans.

To prepare supplementary planning documents (SPD) to provide more detailed advice on the appropriate nature of development on individual sites.

To prepare development plan documents (DPD) to provide guidance to the public and developers on strategic development policies within the District.

To undertake specialist studies to support the LDF/SPD either in-house or through the use of consultants.

To provide planning policy advice to all other services within the Council and to prospective developers.

OUTPUTS

LDF Documents Produced:
Core Strategy – Preferred Options Development Control Policies – Preferred Options Land Allocations – Issues & Options
Technical Studies Completed:
Strategic Flood Risk Assessment Strategic Housing Market Assessment Strategic Housing Land Availability Assessment Housing Viability Study
Annual Monitoring Report and technical work completed for submission to Government Office by 31 st December 2007

Projects & Transport

OVERVIEW

- To undertake Town Centre studies and produce Town Centre strategies for each of the districts four main towns.
- To manage the improvement of the physical environment through capital improvement schemes and other funding streams.
- To prepare and manage development briefs and design schemes.
- To provide advice on urban design/landscape and transportation to other services within the Council and to prospective developers.
- To negotiate and manage the Council's concessionary bus fare scheme.
- To develop the North Hertfordshire Transport Plan and associated town plans with HCC.
- To implement and contribute towards transport improvement schemes (eg. through traffic regulation orders and controlled parking zones) throughout the District.

OUTPUTS

Strategies Produced – 2007	Letchworth Garden City Town Centre Strategy Jan 2007 Royston Town Centre Strategy June 2008 Royston Parking Strategy June 2008
Urban Design Statement Produced for each of the 4 towns and Knebworth	Sept 2007
Development Briefs/Design Statements –	Fish Hill Square 2008/2009 Royston Civic Centre Site 2009/10
Contribution to HCC urban transport plans –	Letchworth & Baldock 2006/7, Hitchin 2008/9, Royston 2009/10.
Management of transport feasibility studies –	Hitchin employment area access (2007), Hitchin access 2008/9, Stevenage access 2008-10
Progress delivery of Royston Rail Crossing with HCC and Sustrans	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> – successful lottery bid secured 2008 – delivery of crossing 2009 to completion 2010
Urban design/landscape advice provided –	on approx 150 sites since April 2007
Baldock Town Centre environmental enhancement scheme – £3m capital project to redesign the public realm space of Baldock following the opening of Baldock by-pass.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Appoint designers Feb 2007 - Design consultation – 2007. - Appoint contractor Feb 2008. - Start on site June 2008. - Scheduled completion of works April 2009
The evaluation of proposed schemes and the introduction of on street parking controls where these are considered to be necessary, feasible and funded.	
The Chilterns and The Avenue, Hitchin – CPZ introduced	Jan 2008
TRO controls in Royston (Newmarket Rd area) –	June 2008
TRO controls (Royston town centre) –	June 2008
Baldock town centre controls – temporary and then permanent –	June 2008
The Triangle Area, Hitchin – consultation	June 2008, implementation planned September 2008.
TRO and CPZ controls in Letchworth (Lytton Ave area) –	consultation May 2008
TRO and CPZ controls in Letchworth (Icknield Way area) –	August 2008

SECTION 2 - ACHIEVEMENTS FOR 2007/8

Planning & Building Control Service has:-

- Secured nearly £400,000 of Planning Delivery Grant for 2007/8.
- Been successful in bidding for nearly £900,000 GAF funding to start improving infrastructure in the District .
- Started to implement our strategic review of our E services within a 5 year programme.
- Developed our E enabled services so that we meet 21/21 Government criteria.
- Undertaken a review of our service processes to facilitate the implementation of Document Management.
- Commenced the roll out of document management for planning control.
- Improved our Planning Control Performance so we exceed all Government targets for BVPI 109 and have improved performance since last year. We continue not to be a Standards Authority.
- Successfully implemented the Single Planning Committee
- Been reaccredited BSI for Building Control (the award has been held since 1995).
- Been awarded a Charter Mark for Building Control (the award has been held since 2000).
- Featured in the top quartile nationally for the Building Control Quality Matrix.
- Undertaken design work for the enhancement of Baldock town centre and have let the construction contract on time and within budget.
- Undertaken public consultation on Royston town centre strategy and completed work on the associated Royston parking strategy.
- Worked with potential developers to facilitate the redevelopment of Churchgate centre and surrounding land in Hitchin. Reappraised the development brief in light of changed circumstances with a view to the long term development of the area.
- Produced and obtained approval from Government Office for a Local Development Scheme and continued negotiations on further revisions to reflect the timescale of the EoE Plan. (with smartcard technology) and the subsequent migration of the processing of bus passes to the CSC.
- Successful introduction of the national free travel scheme.
- Completion of Landscape Sensitivity and Capacity Study of the peripheral area around the 4 towns and Knebworth.
- Completion of the North Herts Urban Design Assessment for the 4 towns and Knebworth.
- Implementation of the Avenue controlled Parking Scheme and the appointment of consultants to progress and implement high priority TRO schemes within the 4 towns as part of a pilot project.
- Completed North Herts and Stevenage Housing Viability Study.
- Meet the targets in the Local Development Scheme (LDS).
- Consulted with the Public on the Council's preferred options for the Core Strategy DPD.
- Consulted with the Public on the Council's preferred options for the Development Policies DPD.
- Consulted with the Public on the Council's Issues and Options for the Land Allocations DPD.
- Consulted with the Public on the joint issues and options for the SNAP DPD.

SECTION 3 - MEETING THE COUNCIL'S STRATEGIC OBJECTIVES

The Planning and Building Control service contributes significantly towards the Council's strategic objectives.

Sustainable

"Promoting sustainable development of the District to ensure we deliver adequate affordable housing, protect the environment and conserve the heritage of our historic towns and rural settlements."

Virtually all of the work of the Planning Service contributes to the first of the Council's strategic objectives which relates to creating sustainable communities. Work on policy formulation through the Local Development Framework sets the Statutory Planning policies for the District. This is inextricably linked to the emerging Sustainable Communities Strategy which the service contributes towards.

The planning policies are then implemented through the development control and enforcement process which are undertaken by the Planning Control and Conservation section.

The structural integrity and construction standard of new buildings and adaptations to buildings are controlled through the Building Regulation process. The content of the building regulations has changed significantly over the 4 years with a far higher emphasis now on sustainable methods of construction and energy efficiency than was ever the case previously. The relationship between the Building Control process and policy formulation and implementation through the Planning Legislation has become more tightly knit since the Corporate restructuring of Building Control to be within the Planning Service which took effect in 2005 and this has been most recently emphasised by the Central Government consultation on the future of Building Control.

The Building Control Service operates in a competitive commercial environment with Approved Inspectors who can undertake income generating work that traditionally has been the remit of local authority Building Control. In order to promote the service that North Hertfordshire operates to ensure that it provides a high quality of service NHDC Building Control works with other authorities on partnership schemes to ensure that best practice is carried out. It has partnership arrangements with other Councils to work on projects within their areas and with the private sector. The Building Control team holds Charter Mark and is accredited with a BSI quality award.

The Projects team is involved in both actively promoting and undertaking major projects throughout the District (e.g. Baldock Town Centre Enhancement) and providing advice to others who wish to undertake projects which have a public realm impact.

The Regional and Strategic Planning Team lead the Council's corporate approach to major development both in and around the District. This work is essential to the promotion of sustainable communities throughout the District.

Safer Communities

"Encouraging responsible citizenship and creating safer communities with less crime and less fear of crime."

The Planning and Building Control service contributes to this objective through the consideration of safety issues through the planning process and through ensuring

that schemes relating to the public and private realm are designed in a way such as to reduce the opportunity for crime and the perception of fear of crime. This relates to large scale schemes (e.g. strategic developments) down to schemes which are small in size, but their detailed design is very important.

Prosperous Communities

"Creating opportunity for all by promoting sustainable local economical development."

The preparation of the Local Development Framework and Town Centre Strategies together with the implementation of Planning Policies ensures that there is a balance between the provision of new land for housing and opportunities for economic development. An employment study has been produced which seeks to identify the quantity of new employment land which will be needed in the District to meet the reasonable employment needs of local people. These areas of work are being progressed principally through the following Local Development Framework in documents:-

- Core Strategy
- Land Allocations
- Development Control Policies
- Stevenage Joint Area Action Plan (SNAP)
- Relevant SPDs

These policies are then effected through the development control process. In considering major urban extensions the Regional and Strategic Planning team takes into account the need for economic development opportunities as well as other services and facilities on site.

The Local Development Framework Team now accepts representations to its Local Development Documents (LDD) on line.

Satisfied Communities

"Ensuring that we listen to our citizens and deliver responsive high quality, value for money, customer focussed services."

The service has integrated its customer reception facilities with the Customer Service Centre which was established in 2006. There has been an increase in the provision of information on line and applications for planning permission are now accepted on line. The Planning Control and Conservation team has significantly improved its performance in relation to the speed of determining planning applications and the Council's success rate for planning appeals has increased significantly. The Planning and Building Control teams will be piloting remote and mobile working in 2007/8 with a view to both improving customer service and reducing costs to the Council tax payer.

SECTION 4 - LEGISLATIVE CHANGES AND HOW THEY WILL AFFECT THE SERVICE

The period since 2003 has seen a significant number of legislative changes which have worked through the Planning and Building Control Service. These legislative changes continue to take effect and there will be more changes announced shortly.

The **Planning Act 2004** promoted changes both to the Planning Control and Planning Policy arenas. For Planning Control this introduced a new requirement for Design and Access Statements which previously did not exist. For Planning Policy this abolished the old style local plans and structure plans and introduced Local Development Frameworks which are the responsibility of the District Council and Regional Spatial Strategies which are the responsibility of the Regional Assembly.

The **Sub National Review** was announced in July 2007 for full implementation by 2010. The key areas which will impact on the Planning & Building Control Service are:-

- Integration of Regional Planning & Economic development under the Regional Development Agencies with an integrated regional strategy
- A duty for Councils to undertake Economic Development activities

The **Planning Bill** continues the passage through the Houses and they key features are:-

- Revised LDF processes
- Establishment of a Infrastructure Commission to deal with projects of national significance.
- The creation of National Policy Statements setting out Government Policy on major issues
- A fundamental review of the Permitted Development system

There are fundamental changes to the General Permitted Development Order that come into effect on the 1st October 2008.

The Government consultation on the Future of Building Control is yet to be concluded and this will shape the way that we deliver this service in the years to come.

TITLE OF REPORT: SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME 2008/09

REPORT OF THE LEAD SCRUTINY DIRECTOR

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report presents the policies and topics that the Scrutiny Committee plans to scrutinise. The report also updates members on the work of the scrutiny sub-groups.

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. SCRUTINY COMMITTEE WORK PROGRAMME

14 Oct 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Strategic Approach to Car Parking▪ Cllr Richard Thake, Planning & Transport Portfolio Holder.
09 Dec 08	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Climate Change Strategy – (TBC)▪ Adoption of Green Space Strategy▪ Local Economic Development Task & Finish Group – Final Report▪ Summary of New Scrutiny Powers resulting from Government Legislation▪ Cllr Claire Strong, Policy & Green Issues Portfolio Holder (TBC)
20 Jan 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Preferred Options Land Allocations Development Plan Document (DPD) - (TBC)▪ Submission Development Policies DPD - (TBC)▪ Review of Scrutiny Task & Finish Group outcomes▪ Cllr Tricia Gibbs, Community Engagement & Rural Affairs Portfolio Holder
24 Mar 09	<ul style="list-style-type: none">▪ Land Allocation Development Plan Document (DPD) – Preferred Options – (TBC)▪ Cllr Lynda Needham, Waste & Environment Portfolio Holder

4. SUB-GROUPS

4.1 Local Economic Development Task & Finish Group

A meeting of the Group took place on 3rd July 2008. The Group spoke to the following witnesses: David Burch (East of England Policy Manager, Federation of Small Businesses), Richard Hardiman (Partnership Director, Business Link), Annie Hawkins (Head of Tourism and County Cultural Officer), Yolanda Rugg (Area Director, Herts Chamber of Commerce & Industry) and Michael Veasey (Chief Executive, Stevenage Business Initiative).

The Group met again on 31st July 2008 in order to review outcomes and consider draft conclusions and recommendations.

The final meeting of the Group has been re-scheduled for 22 October 2008, at which time the final report will be agreed, ready for presentation to the Scrutiny Committee meeting on 9 December 2008 and Cabinet on 16 December 2008.

4.2 Finance Scrutiny Sub-Group

The Finance Sub-Group will be meeting on Monday, 13 October 2008. Any recommendations from the Sub-Group to the Scrutiny Committee will be considered later in the meeting.

4.3 Scrutiny Task and Finish Groups for 2008/09

Members will recall that, at its meeting held on 2 September 2008, the Scrutiny Committee agreed, inter alia, the following resolutions:

- “(3) That the proposed Task and Finish Group for Provision of CCTV be established, and that its review commences in December 2008;
- (5) That a decision as to whether or not the Provision for the Over 50s Task and Finish Group should proceed be deferred until next meeting of the Committee on 14 October 2008, pending clarification of the timing of the forthcoming Hertfordshire County Council Over 50s review, but that, should the Task and Finish Group proceed, the criteria for the Group attached at Appendix B to the report be agreed, subject to the following amendments:
- an additional reason for suggesting the topic to read “Is this a priority area given other demands on available resources”;
 - a re-wording of the first bullet point of the Desired Outcome to read “The outcome would be to identify if NHDC should contribute to the County Plan, and possibly develop its own new plan for over 50’s activities.”

The CCTV Task & Finish Group is due to start its review in December 2008 with Andy Godman (Head of Housing and Environmental Health) as the Lead Officer and the Committee has been invited to consider membership of this Group - Lead Member of this review to be a Liberal Democratic representative.

The Committee is also invited to consider whether to proceed with the proposed Provision for the Over 50s Task & Finish Group or consider other options from the listed provided at the meeting held on 17 June 2008 (set out below). In respect of the Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) Over 50s Review, it is understood that this is nearing completion, with the Topic Group established for this purpose meeting for the final time on 13 October 2008, following which its recommendations will be referred to the appropriate HCC Executive Member for consideration.

Suggested Scrutiny reviews for 2008/09:

- (a) Revisit major policy changes to monitor how effective they have been and look at any progress made (e.g. waste collection, fly tipping, Customer Service Centre)
- (b) Joint Scrutiny with a topic group at Hertfordshire County Council
- (c) Parking in residential areas
- (d) Green issues and the Council's carbon footprint (CO² emissions)
- (e) Does the provision of sports facilities meet the needs of communities (eg. youth, low income families, rural/urban areas)
- (f) Can the Council support / help to retain local community events
- (g) Effectiveness of the CCTV strategy (joint topic group with partners)
- (h) Increasing public involvement in the work of Scrutiny
- (i) Commercial waste and recycling (task & finish group **or** FSR)
- (j) Services for 50+ and reviewing the existing strategy.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 That the Scrutiny Work Programme for 2008/09 be noted;
- 5.2 That membership of the CCTV Task & Finish Group due to commence review in December 2008 be considered;
- 5.3 That, consideration be given to whether to proceed with the proposed Provision for the Over 50s Task & Finish Group;
- 5.4 That, consideration be given to alternative Scrutiny Reviews, should the Provision for the Over 50s review not proceed.

6. REASON FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1 To enable the Scrutiny Committee to plan and carry out its workload efficiently and effectively.

7. APPENDICES

- A. Scope – Scrutiny Task & Finish Group – CCTV;
- B. Scope – Scrutiny Task & Finish Group – Provision for over 50s.

8. CONTACT OFFICERS

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Scrutiny Lead Director
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Criteria used by the Scrutiny Committee before agreeing a task & finish group

Suggested Topic for Task & Finish Group Review:

CCTV provision

Reason for suggesting the topic:

- CCTV provision was reviewed and a new strategy agreed in early 2008 – how is that implementation going and what improvements have been made
- CCTV is an essential tool in tackling local crime and disorder, and its presence reduces fear of crime in our communities
- CCTV evidence is increasingly used in order to tackle cross border crime (using automatic number plate recognition) fly tipping, damage to buildings and reduction of nuisance – what do the covert, ANPR and private CCTV cameras add to the public system
- Benchmarking against other CCTV partnerships – do we provide value for money
- CCTV use in the fight against envirocrime – following receipt of the recent Audit Commission report
- CCTV is key to our immediate priority theme of ‘town centres’

Supporting Evidence:

- Resource for this review is limited at present due to the responsible officers being involved in the corporate business planning/budget setting cycle, but a review taking up to three months in the early part of 2009 should be realistic
- The review of CCTV is available prior, as is the CCTV strategy itself and figures from the control room, including costs of cameras, operations etc can be provided

Desired Outcome:

- To evidence the value for money which the CCTV partnership work now represents
- To make recommendations regarding good practice which can be adopted from other authorities and partnerships
- Identify opportunities to increase use of other systems to enhance the existing public CCTV system, and reduce incidence of fly tipping, damage etc.

Name and contact details:

(temporary pending recruitment) Liz Green
Head of PPP x 4230

North Hertfordshire District Council
CCTV
Scrutiny Task and Finish Group

DRAFT SCOPE

Terms of reference

To review provision and use of CCTV across the district

The key areas of focus will be:

- The early stages of implementation of the CCTV strategy itself and changes in practice which have taken place as a result
- Complimentary CCTV systems, i.e. covert, privately owned, Automatic Number Plate Recognition
- Regulation and appropriate use of CCTV
- Benchmarking against other CCTV providers
- CCTV use in the fight against Envirocrime
- Impact of CCTV on the fear of crime.

Expected Outcome

To present an evidence based report with recommendations that will support, or otherwise, the existing provision and identify opportunities for future improvement.

Timeframe

This will be confirmed once a full timetable of work to be undertaken has been agreed by the group.

Link with Council Priority

- The use of CCTV falls into the Council's priority to support town centres, one of the three immediate priorities for the Authority's Corporate Planning process
- This review falls within the Council's strategic objective to

Potential witnesses

Barrie Jones (Head of Financial Services), Liz Green (Head of Policy Partnerships and Performance) Jim Turner (Property Services Manager), Linda Wharmby (Strategy Officer, Community Safety) Andy Godman (Head of Housing and Environmental Health) Giovanna Silverio (Licensing Manager), Robbie Holgate (CCTV Partnership Manager) Cllr Tricia Gibbs (Community Engagement and Rural Affairs Portfolio) Chief Inspector Geoff Camp (Herts Constabulary), CDO for rural areas

Other witnesses will be confirmed as the group develops, but may include: Representatives from the parishes regarding the impact of covert camera use for

flytipping detection, businesses (such as garage owners) to assess benefits of their systems, good practice etc

Key Questions

- What impact has the CCTV strategy had to date?
- What evidence is there that CCTV is effective?
- What are the benefits of covert cameras and what challenges do they bring in terms of enforcement?
- How is data gathered, viewed, used and stored
- What measures are in place to conform with legislative requirements?
- What are the benefits of Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR)?
- How does the cost compare with other partnerships run by other local authorities?
- What good practice can we evidence from elsewhere i.e. Beacon authorities?

Information documents –

Review and Strategy Document for NHDC CCTV Strategy – adopted January 2008
 CCTV partnership review document 2007
 Review of use of Flytipping cameras to Southern Rural Committee

Membership - tbc

Portfolio Holder - Cllr Tricia Gibbs (Community Engagement & Rural Affairs)

Shadow Members

Lead Officer Barrie Jones, Head of Financial Services/Jim Turner

Support Officer – Scrutiny Officer - tbc

Key Tasks:

Areas to cover - aim & objectives	Date
Pre-scoping meeting with the Chair	
First meeting for the committee to agree scope	
First meeting of the T&F group	

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Criteria used by the Scrutiny Committee before agreeing a task & finish group

Suggested Topic for Task & Finish Group Review:

Provision for 'Over 50s'

Reason for suggesting the topic:

- New audit Commission guidance 'Don't Stop me Now' has been issued on meeting the needs of over 50s
- New policy from central government emphasises the need to engage more with both young people and older people, with the launch through the Older Peoples' day in October 2008
- With the increased life expectancy, is 'over 50' too broad an age range in terms of interests, abilities etc
- Has the Over 50s Fundamental Service Review made the differences anticipated in the local communities
- The county over 50s plan is currently in development – will this meet the changing needs of our residents, what actions/plans will be required for North Herts
- Is this a priority area, given other demands on available resources.

Supporting Evidence:

- There are adequate review documents available to inform the start of the review
- The Over 50s Officer has confirmed that she is available to assist with the review and has identified good practice and relevant witnesses and groups to support the review
- The review can be completed in 3-4 months

Desired Outcome:

- The outcome would be to identify how NHDC should contribute to the County Plan, and possibly develop its own new plan for over 50s activities
- Assessing our current activity against changes in policy and making recommendations based on findings regarding good practice, value for money etc

Name and contact details:

(Temporary – pending recruitment) Liz Green Head of PPP x 4230

**North Hertfordshire District Council
PROVISION FOR OVER 50s
Scrutiny Task and Finish Group**

DRAFT SCOPE

Terms of reference

To review provision of services for those in the over 50's age group in North Herts

The key areas of focus will be:

- Consider the Audit Commission guidance 'Don't stop me now' on meeting the needs of Over 50s
- The range itself – is 'over 50s' too broad in terms of interests, ability etc
- How has the over 50s Fundamental Service Review made the differences anticipated to the local community
- The new over 50s plan in development – will this meet the changing needs of our residents

Expected Outcome

To present an evidence based report with recommendations that will support existing and promote development of new facilities for over 50s in North Herts.

Timeframe

This will be confirmed once a full timetable of work to be undertaken has been agreed by the group.

Link with Council Priority

- This review falls within the Council's *Equal, Prosperous and Healthier Communities* strategic objective.

Potential witnesses

Dr Patrick Candler (Head of Community Development and Cultural Services), Claire Morgan (Over 50s Officer) Vaughan Watson (Head of Environment and Leisure Services), Cllr Tricia Gibbs (Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement), a 'consultation' panel of residents from the citizens panel

Other witnesses will be confirmed as the group develops, but may include: Representatives from the voluntary and community sector, including Age Concern, the Council for Voluntary Service, training providers such as North Herts College,

Key Questions

- Have the recommendations from the Fundamental Service Review brought about significant changes in the service for NHDC residents?
- How do we know what the needs of over 50s are now?
- How will the changing needs, i.e. an increasing number of over 50s, be considered and addressed in future years
- With life expectancy increasing, and with flexible retirements, is 'over 50s' too wide an age group to cater for effectively

APPENDIX B

- What evidence will be used to develop the new over 50s development plan?
- Is there a co-ordinated approach between agencies to supporting over 50s across the district?
- How will the recommendations by the Audit Commission be used in North Herts
- What good practice can we evidence from elsewhere i.e. Beacon authorities?

Information documents –

‘Don’t stop me now’ - Audit Commission report on good practice
Over 50s development – FSR recommendation report, from the Performance Team
Draft outline of over 50s development plan

Membership - tbc

Portfolio Holder - Cllr Tricia Gibbs (Community Engagement & Rural Affairs)

Shadow Members

Lead Officer Dr Patrick Candler (Head of Community Development and Cultural services)/Claire Morgan (over 50s officer)

Support Officer – Scrutiny Officer - tbc

Key Tasks:

Areas to cover - aim & objectives	Date
Pre-scoping meeting with the Chair	
First meeting for the committee to agree scope	
First meeting of the T&F group	

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TITLE OF REPORT: FINANCE SCRUTINY SUB-GROUP – 13 OCTOBER 2008

The Finance Scrutiny Sub-Group met on Monday 13 October and looked at:

- Car parking income
- Corporate Business Planning 2009/10 – Efficiencies and Investments
- Comparison of year by year General Fund budget slippages
- Investigations Team – Performance and Comparative data
- CCTV operation expenditure
- Treasury Management Report (distribution of investments)

1. Car Parking Income

Members noted the downturn in parking income and PCN income and commented on the need to assess the level of resource engaged in enforcement. Members noted that there needs to be continual monitoring and comparative information with other authorities and that they should continue to be sought.

2. Corporate Business Planning 2009/10

Members noted and accepted the report as a draft before submission to Cabinet commenting that some of the impact comments for the proposals could be expanded further. Clarity of the revised efficiency target was given.

3. Comparison of year by year General Fund budget slippages

Members welcomed the opportunity to see the General fund year end balances against original estimates over a number of years and commented on the welcome downward trend in year end underspend. Members asked for a further trend analysis on overspends reported in quarterly budget reports over the last few years and attempts to be continually made to gather comparative data with other authorities.

4. Investigation Team – Performance and Comparative Data

Members noted the comparative data but commented on the difficulty in interpreting the data. Members asked this item be re-visited when the full year's data for 2007/08 is available and expressed wishes that this information is used by Officers for continuous improvement in performance.

5. CCTV Operation Expenditure

Members commented on the trend in the cost of the CCTV service and the relationship with the direction of travel in performance data. Clarity was given on the reporting arrangements of the presented performance information. Members noted the importance of this item of spend and asked for an update in a years time.

6. Treasury Management Report (distribution of investments)

Members noted the distribution of investments and were encouraged by the strategy implemented to spread investments in order to minimise risks.

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

13

TITLE OF REPORT: CAR PARKING STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL

Attached is a draft of the report on the Car Parking Strategy. The final report on the Strategy will be considered by Cabinet at its meeting on 21 October 2008.

The Scrutiny Committee has asked to comment on the draft report before the matter is considered by Cabinet. Members' views are invited.

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TITLE OF REPORT : CAR PARKING STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL
PORTFOLIO HOLDER, COUNCILLOR RICHARD THAKE

1. PURPOSE OF THE REPORT

- 1.1 The purpose of this report is to inform Cabinet of the forthcoming review of the Car Parking Strategy, which follows from the conclusion of the Transport FSR and the report that was presented to PARC on the 9th October 2008. This report seeks Cabinet approval for the scope of a review of the Car Parking Strategy, which picks up a number of strands and recommendations from the Transport FSR. This report contains a key decision and is included on the Forward Plan.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 The Council adopted its first Car Parking Strategy in 2004 as precursor to the Authority undertaking on-street parking enforcement following a withdrawal of the parking warden service by the Police. The adopted Car Parking Strategy covers the 2004-2009 and it is in this context that, with the outcomes of the Transport FSR now known, it is appropriate to commence a review of the Car Parking Strategy.
- 2.2 In terms of the background, it is important to note that the period since the adoption of the Car Parking Strategy has seen a significant change in issues such as car parking trends and legislative changes that supports a total review of the strategy at this stage. There have been increases in population within the North Hertfordshire towns over these years and with the recently adopted East of England Plan advocating substantial housing growth within the District generally such increases will continue.
- 2.3 The Transport Fundamental Service Review commenced in January 2008 and provides in its Action Plan an overview of transport related matters that the District may wish to pursue over the next few years.
- 2.4 Clearly one of the most important of these is the approach that the Council takes to car parking and the approach taken to providing car parking at new developments. The key recommendations which the Car Parking Strategy will need to address are set out below:-
- Develop a policy for charging for off street car parking, considering our strategic objectives and next years themes for Green and Town Centres
 - Investigate whether we should continue to provide on-street parking services in line with the current arrangements
 - Investigate parking controls through the use of CPZs/TROs on a town-wide basis and not individually
 - Review the ratio of parking spaces to houses detailed in the Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) in light of more recent Government Policy

3. ISSUES

- 3.1 The Transport FSR provides an overview of the types of issues which may be considered in the review of the parking strategy. However, the duration of the FSR work and the level of detail needed in terms of primary data collection, means that

further work needs to be undertaken before being able to prepare a revised Car Parking Strategy.

- 3.2 Linked to the Local Development Framework there is a need to review car parking standards and the car parking supplementary planning document and this is encompassed within the Council's Local Development Scheme. Resources are already identified within existing budgets to progress this work and, subject to confirmation of the Local Development Scheme by the Government Office, that review work can be commenced within the next two to three months.
- 3.3 With regard to car parking charges, the FSR acknowledges that the three yearly review of fees in line with inflation within car parks is a sensible practice bearing in mind the increments of increasing car parking charges and rounding to the nearest 10 pence. Further, the review recognises that an increase in car parking charges on the 3 yearly cycle is due to come into effect in April 2009 and that this increase in charges has already been incorporated into the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy. Less conclusively however, the FSR team examined evidence from a number of Districts about differential charging and ways in which this could be looked at for North Hertfordshire and felt that it was not possible to reach a conclusion on any future differential charging as there was not a sufficiently comprehensive view about the actual usage of car parks (as opposed to ticket sales data) and that further research and modeling would be necessary to inform a decision.
- 3.4 Equally, this is a time of significant change for our town centres, not only relating to the general economic conditions that prevail, but also in relation to other initiatives which seek boost the economic wellbeing of the towns which align with one of the Council's immediate priorities of Town Centres. Over the next year or so there will be some significant changes within each of the towns which may lead to different patterns of car use and parking use and these relate to:-
- The development of business improvement districts for both Hitchin and Royston.
 - The implementation of the environmental enhancement works within Leys Avenue and Eastcheap, Letchworth Garden City.
 - The re-development proposals for the Wynd area of Letchworth Garden City.
 - Proposals for regeneration and environmental enhancement in Hitchin Town Centre (Churchgate).
 - The completion of the Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme.
 - Town centre enhancements in Royston from 2009/10.
- 3.5 Survey work has been undertaken on car parking usage within Royston as part of the Royston Town Centre Strategy and equally pre-scheme car parking studies have been undertaken for Baldock. It is proposed that in order to inform a review of the Car Parking Strategy the gaps in information in Letchworth and Hitchin be filled with some further parking study work to inform a revised Car Parking Strategy.
- 3.6 It is understood that the BIDS teams in Royston and Hitchin have undertaken some car parking survey work within the towns and early discussions with the teams' consultant indicated that the information would be available to help inform the Car Parking Strategy. It is therefore proposed that in the period through to early summer 2009 survey work and further analysis is undertaken to provide a comprehensive picture of parking trends throughout the four towns and develop options for pricing structures.

- 3.7 With regard to on-street parking, it is proposed to undertake a detailed comparison exercise with other Hertfordshire Districts who operate the decriminalised parking enforcement regime, to look at the effectiveness of service provision, particularly with regard to the cost effectiveness of that service and the arrangements with Herts County Council. This work will then inform both the Car Parking Strategy and future discussions with Herts County Council regarding the management of on-street parking.
- 3.8 In addition to the work within the existing town centre areas, the Transport Fundamental Service Review has also looked at parking around town centres and railway stations within residential areas. The Council's practice in the past has been to respond to petitions or significant requests from local areas to implement on-street parking controls, either in the form of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) or more recently through the implementation of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) to limit parking. The Transport FSR concluded that given the pressures for on-street parking around town centres and railway stations, an ad-hoc approach of this nature was not satisfactory as it inevitably leads to displacement of car parking to adjacent areas which are not covered by such controls. The cost of implementing these on-street parking controls is often significant and there are on-going enforcement and management costs which are not recouped from the sale of permits or issue of parking notices. The Transport Fundamental Service Review advocates that an area based approach around town centres/railway stations be adopted for each of the four towns and that this is commenced for Hitchin to run along side the preparation of the Hitchin Urban Transport Plan. This element of work does not feature within currently allocated resources and would need to be identified growth as part of the Council's corporate business planning process for 2009/10 for it to be taken forward.
- 3.9 In addition to these items, a review of the Car Parking Strategy would need to encompass a policy framework for concessions on car parking permits and the approach to the provision of disabled parking bays in residential areas. In respect of concessions, hitherto the Council's approach has not been to allow concessions to residential car parking permits and the permits are currently at a relatively low cost. However, it may be appropriate to consider concessions for low income households should it emerge that significant increases are required in the cost of such permits. In respect of the residential area disabled parking bays, it is noted that the use of discretionary bays has been widely used county wide and as an interim measure prior to the adoption of a new parking strategy, it is proposed that this Authority adopts that approach too. The funding for any discretionary bays would need to be identified through the Area Committee discretionary budget process should the Area Committee support the provision of such bays.

4. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 4.1 The operation of both on and off street car parking needs to have regard to the Traffic Management Act 2004 and any on-street parking controls needed to be formulated with regard both to the Traffic Management Act and other legislation.

5. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are clearly significant financial and risk implications associated with the management of both on and off street car parking and the production of an up-to-date Car Parking Strategy will seek to manage those risks and provide a clear framework for the Council's initiatives in the forthcoming years. In settings its budget strategy for 2008/9 and beyond an allowance has been made that income will increase by £141K

next year and in every subsequent third year. It is proposed that car parking charges across the District be increased on the same pro rata basis as with previous price increases to achieve the overall income increase.

- 5.2 It has not been possible to conclude an approach to differential charging (should that be supported) though the Transport FSR, the additional information about car parking patterns and usage have been identified and a number of options for differential charging, it is proposed to complete this work through the progression of car parking surveys throughout the four North Hertfordshire towns and further work on modelling charges to inform a revised Car Parking Strategy that will be produced in summer 2009. Work with the BIDS Teams in Hitchin and Royston may identify initiatives that they wish to pursue with regard to off street car parking charges and these would be supported, provided they have no net impact on the Council's income.
- 5.3 The Growth Areas Fund (GAF) bid included proposals to consider car parking in the District's town centres. It is proposed that the necessary survey work be undertaken through the use of GAF funding and that the £56,000 of GAF revenue funding be allocated to this.

6. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

There are no direct HR or equalities implications arising from this report and any implications from the adoption of a revised Car Parking Strategy will need to be considered at that time.

7. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 7.1 The Planning and Transport Portfolio Holder has been fully informed and involved in the approach set out in this report and there has been significant involvement of other Members through the fundamental Service Review Group and with the wider stakeholders through the challenge and consult elements of the FSR process.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the North Hertfordshire District Car Parking Strategy 2004 to 2009 be reviewed in light of the outcomes of the Transport Fundamental Service Review encompassing the further work identified in this report.
- 8.2 That Cabinet approves the use of growth areas (GAF) funding to carry out the additional car parking usage survey work identified in Section 5.3 of this report to inform the production of a revised Car Parking Strategy.
- 8.3 That in the interim and before a new Car Parking Strategy is approved, Cabinet supports the use of discretionary disabled parking bays subject to funding for the implementation of such bays being identified and supported upon a case by case basis.
- 8.4 That Cabinet notes the outcome of the Transport Fundamental Service Review regarding the implementation of area based residential parking controls and that this be considered as part of the Corporate Business Planning process for 2009/10 and beyond.

9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 In order to produce an up to date Car Parking Strategy for the District and to reflect the outcomes of the Transport Fundamental Service Review.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 None.

11. CONTACTS

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