

6 March 2007

Our ref: R&D Ctte/Mar07
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To: Members of the Royston and District Committee of North Hertfordshire District Council

(Councillors Mrs F.R. Hill (Chairman), H.M. Marshall (Vice-Chairman), Liz Beardwell, P.C.W. Burt, A.F. Hunter, R.E. Inwood, and F.J. Smith)

You are invited to attend a meeting of the
ROYSTON & DISTRICT COMMITTEE

to be held at

ROYSTON DAY CENTRE, THE OLD BARN, UPPER KING STREET, ROYSTON *

on

WEDNESDAY, 14 MARCH 2007

at

7.30 p.m.

[*PLEASE NOTE CHANGE FROM USUAL VENUE]

Yours sincerely,



David Miley
Democratic Services Manager

AGENDA
PART I

ITEM	PAGE
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	-
2. MINUTES To take as read and approve as a true record the minutes of the meetings of this Committee held on the 31 January 2007.	-
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 any item(s) raised will be considered.	-
4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST To receive from Members of the Committee any Declarations of Interest in respect of business set out in the agenda. Members should either declare a prejudicial or personal interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared. Members declaring a prejudicial interest should not seek to influence the decision and leave the room during that particular item of business.	-
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions, comments and questions from members of the public. The following request has been received: TOWN COUNCILLOR BILL PRIME - PROPOSED BUS SERVICE: ROYSTON TO LETCHWORTH	1
6. CHAMPION NEWS REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & CULTURAL SERVICES <i>A summary of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for Royston since the meeting of the Committee held on 31 January 2007 and events taking place in forthcoming months.</i>	3
7. AREA COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT BUDGET 2006/2007 REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & CULTURAL SERVICES <i>The current budget balances for the Committee and grant applications from the Royston Community Association and Royston & District Sports Council.</i>	5

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| 8. | PLANNING APPLICATIONS
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL | 15 |
| | <i>Planning application for determination by the Committee – 16-20 Green Drift, Royston: Erection of 14 dwellings with associated garages, parking spaces, access road and other works..</i> | |
| 9. | PLANNING APPEALS & ENFORCEMENT
ORAL REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL | 31 |
| | <i>An update for the Committee on any Planning Appeals that have been lodged or determined, and any Planning Enforcement that has been authorised or taken since the meeting of the Committee held on 31 January 2007.</i> | |
| 10. | ROYSTON CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL | Report
to
Follow |
| | <i>To report on the outcome of the consultation exercise carried out in respect of the review of the Royston Conservation Area.</i> | |
| 11. | ROYSTON COMMUNITY SURGERIES | 35 |
| | <i>A brief overview of the Royston Community Surgeries held since the trial period commenced in February 2005, information on the attendance of the public at the Surgery since alterations were made to its format in August 2006, and to consider the continuation of the Surgery in the Civic Year 2007/2008.</i> | |

The next meeting of the Royston & District Committee will be held on:

25 April 2007

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<p style="text-align: center;">ROYSTON & DISTRICT COMMITTEE 14 March 2007</p>

<p>*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT</p>	<p>AGENDA ITEM No. 5</p>
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TITLE OF REPORT: PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The following request has been made to speak at the meeting:

**TOWN COUNCILLOR BILL PRIME – PROPOSED BUS SERVICE: ROYSTON TO
LETCWORTH**

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TITLE: CHAMPION NEWS**REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & CULTURAL SERVICES****1. PURPOSE OF REPORT**

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

2. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS**2.1 Town Centre Partnerships**

A growth bid of approximately £35,000 was made through the recent service and financial planning process in order to provide additional funding (above the £50,000 already provided) to both established and new, Baldock, town centre partnerships. In order to link the allocation more critically to the needs of each town, it was proposed that the funding should correlate with the population of each town in question, taking Hitchin, our longest established partnership as the baseline for assessment. Cabinet agreed this approach on 16th January, and as a result the funding for the year 2007/08 will therefore be;

Baldock	£9,165 per annum	plus £5,000 additional 'pump priming' for the first year only
Hitchin	£27,500 per annum	
Letchworth	£27,500 per annum	
Royston	£13,750 per annum	

Cabinet also agreed the proposal to reduce funding in the longer term, encouraging partnerships to source other funding, but the amount of that reduction is to be determined through the regular Service and Financial Planning process each year, subject to consultation through Area Committees, partnerships, scrutiny etc.

Investigation of other potential sources of support for town centres to replace the current grants allocation, including the consideration of street trading licences etc is now under way and will form a separate report to Cabinet in due course.

- 2.2 The CDO has been working on several issues around young people. The issue of a youth shelter had been suggested, and some informal consultation with the Police and young people suggested that a shelter in Shakespeare was unlikely to be used. An earlier proposal for a town centre shelter is being re-examined,

again with Police and young people, and a formal proposal will be brought to this Committee if the young people indicate this suggestion is more acceptable. This work is being done with the Thames Valley Constabulary guide to best practice with Youth Shelters very much in mind.

(www.thamesvalley.police.uk/reduction/designoutcrime/pdf/ys2.pdf).

- 2.3 The CDO has also been involved with work around the new Letchworth Arts Centre and its opening, fencing in York Road, parking penalty regulations, tree pruning, and temporary office accommodation in Royston.
- 2.4 The CDO has met with a representative of the Highways Partnership on site to consider parking issues in Newmarket Road and the adjoining streets. Some survey work will be done to assess the nature of the usage of Newmarket Road before proceeding further. It is anticipated that the survey work will have taken place before the next meeting of this Committee.
- 2.5 The CDO also continues to provide support for the Baldock Town Partnership; there are proving to be some useful synergies between Baldock and Royston.

3. RECOMMENDATIONS

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

4. CONTACT OFFICER

- 4.1 Alan Fleck (Community Development Officer, Royston Area)
Tel: 01462-474274
E-Mail: alan.fleck@north-herts.gov.uk

TITLE OF REPORT: AREA COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT BUDGET 2006/07

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & CULTURAL SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the current expenditure and balances of the Area Committee delegated budgets.
- 1.2 To request a Committee decision on the grant applications as set out in the Appendices.

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. FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE

- 3.1 An application has been received from the Coombes Community Centre for grant aid towards replanting outside the building. This is attached as Appendix B.
- 3.2 A request for financial support for a Sports Fayre to be held at the Royston Leisure Centre is attached as Appendix C.

4. STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE DELEGATED BUDGETS 2004/5

- 4.1 The statement of the Committee's budgets is appended as Appendix A.
- 4.2 There is a balance of £1,550 available in the Small Area Grants budget.
- 4.3 There is a balance of £7,450 available in the Discretionary Budget.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications pertinent to this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Section 4 of the report (Appendix A) relating to previous awards.

7. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 7.1 Ward Members and applicant groups have been consulted.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Committee is asked to note the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget, as set out in Appendix A, and to consider the grant applications set out in Appendices B and C.

9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary and community organisations

10 APPENDICES

10.1 Appendix A – Budget Statement
Appendices B & C – Grant applications.

11. CONTACT OFFICERS

11.1 Alan Fleck, Community Development Officer, Royston,
Tel 01462-474274
E-mail alan.fleck@north-herts.gov.uk

Steve Smither, Group Accountant, Customer Services
Tel 01462-464566
E-mail steve.smither@north-herts.gov.uk

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 None.

ROYSTON AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2006/2007

SUMMARY/ TOTALS	Funding	Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget				
REVENUE VISIONING	£18,940	£18,940	£11,978	£6,962	£0				
CAPITAL VISIONING	£62,700	£62,700	£0	£62,700	£0				
SMALL AREA GRANTS	£4,244	£2,694	£2,025	£669	£1,550				
DISCRETIONARY	£46,706	£39,256	£24,374	£14,882	£7,450				
Total	£132,590	£123,590	£38,377	£85,213	£9,000				

Revenue Visioning	Funding	Year Allocated	Project	Allocated	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Amount	Comments
Preallocated Funds Brought Forward from 05/06	£18,940	2003/2004	Conservation Plan	£3,250	10.11.04	£0	£3,250		
		2004/2005	Youth Event	£4,000	10.11.04	£3,286	£714		£4000 allocated in 0405
		2004/2005	Community Event	£7,500	10.11.04	£7,500	£0		
		2004/2005	Kneesworth St Bus stops - additional seating	£1,400	15.12.04	£0	£1,400		Allocated from 2005/06 budget
		2005/2006	Royston Town Council/East of England	£2,000	24.03.06	£1,192	£808		
		2003/2004	Visioning Process	£790	31.03.04	£0	£790		
Total	£18,940			£18,940		£11,978	£6,962	£0	

Capital Visioning	Funding	Year Allocated	Project	Allocated	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Amount	Comments
Capital Visioning	£62,700		Various Highway Works - NHHP JMP	£62,700	23.08.06	£0	£62,700		
	£62,700			£62,700		£0	£62,700	£0	

DEVELOPMENT BUDGETS

SMALL AREA GRANTS	Funding		Project	Allocated	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Amount	Comments
Preallocated Funds Brought Forward from 05/06	£434		Health Walks	£434	24.08.05	£0	£434		
Base Budget for 2006/07	£3,810		Royston Kite Festival	£750	31.05.06	£750	£0		
			Replacement of Trees in Campion Way	£300	15.11.06	£67	£233		
			HomeStart Royston	£660	15.11.06	£658	£2		
			Royston May Fayre	£550	31.01.07	£550	£0		
Total	£4,244			£2,694		£2,025	£669	£1,550	

DISCRETIONARY BUDGETS	Funding		Project	Allocated	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Amount	Comments
Preallocated Funds Brought forward from 05/06	£26,716		Recycling Bins Tesco Site	£3,000	20.04.05	£1,975	£1,025		
			Vehicle Activated Signs - London Rd & Baldock St	£6,720	20.04.05	£0	£6,720		
			CCTV Camera Burns Rd Community Centre	£375	24.08.05	£347	£29		
			Royston Town Trail Leaflets	£330	05.10.05	£299	£31		
			Community Centres Booklet	£250	16.11.05	£0	£250		
			Replacement fencing - Burns Rd Community Centre	£1,651	15.03.06	£1,651	£0		
			Repair Fence at Swift Close/ Blakes Close Royston	£400	15.03.06	£544	-£144		
			Repair work to fence at Betjeman Road, Royston	£200	15.03.06	£0	£200		
			Young People of the Year Awards	£1,000	15.03.06	£1,000	£0		
			Hanging Baskets	£12,790	15.03.06	£8,124	£4,666		
Base Budget for 06/07	£19,990		Young People of the Year Awards	£1,000	26.04.06	£1,000	£0		
			Royston Day Care Centre	£1,000	12.07.06	£1,000	£0		
			Royston Celtic Football Club	£1,000	12.07.06	£0	£1,000		
			Kelshall Village Hall	£1,065	04.10.06	£1,065	£0		
			Repair Public Bench	£100	08.12.06	£115	-£15		
			Repair to War Memorial	£7,000	20.12.06	£7,000	£0		
			Stage Coach	£1,125	20.12.06	£0	£1,125		
			Royston Parish Church - Repair Clock	£250	31.01.07	£254	-£4		
Total	£46,706			£39,256		£24,374	£14,882	£7,450	

**TITLE OF REPORT: PLANNING APPLICATIONS
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL****Local Government (Access to Information) Act 1985 and Local Government
Act 1972**

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

AGENDA INDEX

ITEM:	REF NO:	LOCATION:DESCRIPTION	CONTACT OFFICER:	PAGE:
1.	06/02712/ 1	16-20 Green Drift, Royston, SG8 5DA Erection of 14 dwellings with associated garages, parking spaces, access road and other works (As amended by drawing nos. 073:02B, 03B, 04C, 06C, 07A, 08A received on 12th February 2007).	Kate Poyser 01462 474244	17

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ITEM NO: 1	<u>Location:</u>	16-20 Green Drift, Royston, SG8 5DA
	<u>Applicant:</u>	Croudace Homes Ltd
	<u>Proposal:</u>	Erection of 14 dwellings with associated garages, parking spaces, access road and other works (As amended by drawing nos. 073:02B, 03B, 04C, 06C, 07A, 08A received on 12th February 2007).
	<u>Ref.No:</u>	06/02712/ 1
	<u>Officer:</u>	Kate Poyser 01462 474244

Date of expiry of statutory period : 20 March 2007

Reason for Referral to Committee

The application has been called to Committee by Cllr Mrs Fiona Hill in the wider public interest. A previous application for residential development of this site was also considered at Committee.

1.0 Relevant History

1.1 An application for planning permission for 17 dwellings (ref: 04/00976/ 1) was refused on 11th August 2004 for the following reasons.

1. The design of the dwellings and the layout of the development plays inadequate regard to the character and visual qualities of the site and the street scene of Green Drift and as such would be contrary to the objectives of Policy 21. Landscape and Open Space Pattern, and Policy 57, Residential Guidelines and Standards of North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No 2 with Alterations. Furthermore, the proposal represents an over development of the site with the removal of trees and hedges and the resultant inadequate provision of amenity space to serve the reasonable needs for the occupiers of the proposed dwellings. This would give rise to unsatisfactory relationships with adjacent properties such as to cause significant overlooking and with consequent loss of privacy to the occupants of those dwellings to the detriment of their amenities.

2. The vehicle to vehicle visibility for vehicles leaving the site is substandard in both directions. This will lead to interference with the free and safe flow of all traffic on County road U826 Green Drift.

3. There is insufficient space for large vehicles and especially refuse trucks, to enter, turn around and leave in a forward gear. This will lead to vehicles reversing onto and causing interference with the free and safe flow of all traffic on County road U826 Green Drift.

4. There are no parking spaces for visitors, This will lead to vehicles being parked on County road U826 Green Drift. This will then cause interference with the free and safe flow of all traffic on that road.

2.0 Policies

2.1 Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 - 2011

Policy 1 - Sustainable Development

Policy 6 - Settlement Pattern and Urban Concentration

Policy 25 - Car Parking and supplementary Planning Guidance: Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development.

2.2 North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No 2 with Alterations

Policy 8 - Development in Towns

Policy 21 - Landscape and Open Space Patterns in Towns

Policy 26 - Housing Proposals

Policy 55 - Car Parking Standards

Policy 57 - Residential Guidelines and Standards

2.3 Central Government Guidance:

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development'

Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 3 'Housing'

3.0 Representations

3.1 **Hertfordshire Highways** - to the drawings first submitted as part of this application, raised no objections subject to conditions. Formal comments on the amended scheme have yet to be received, although advice has been given verbally.

3.2 **The Head of Legal and Democratic Services** - confirms that the Unilateral Undertaking is acceptable and that there are no issues of concern regarding the title.

3.3 **Royston Town Council** - To the originally submitted drawings. "Members object to this application for the following reasons:

1. Over-development of a small site
2. Out of keeping with the character of the road and street scene
3. Development is unsustainable
4. Concerns were raised over the increase in traffic in a small road that is also used for access to the school in Tannery Drift
5. Existing sound dwellings should not be demolished.

Members are aware that there can be no objection in principle to a residential development on this site but feel a much smaller development would be more appropriate in this traditional established road and support the views of the local residents in the area.

3.4 **County Archaeology** - recommends a condition requiring a field evaluation of the site.

3.5 **Hertfordshire Property** - have advised that an education contribution is not required in the Unilateral Undertaking.

3.6 **Local Residents** - To the original drawings a petition with 47 signatures against the proposal and 1 signature in favour, also 42 letters have been received 1 expressing no objection and 41 objection from residents in Green Drift, Mallard Road, Gower Road, Stephenson Close, Leete Place, Tannery Close, Farrier Court, Downlands, Cedar Crescent, Saddlers Place and High Street, Bassingbourn. The objections can be summarised as follows.

1. Overdevelopment of the site
2. Existing houses should be retained.
3. Out of keeping with the character of the area due to density and not respecting the existing building line.
4. Increase in traffic causing added danger to school children.
5. Loss of privacy to 14 Mallard Road
6. Would lead to flooding of other properties
7. Residential development in Royston is outstripping economic development
8. Would give rise to general noise and disturbance to residents
9. Inadequate space on site to manoeuvring vehicles and pedestrians
10. Site in the Johnson Matthey evacuation zone.
11. Lack of open space.
12. Loss of landscaping.
13. Inadequate garage accommodation.
14. Objects in principle.
15. Questions main drainage capacity.
16. Concern for safety of the 2 Beech trees.
17. Require traffic calming measures.
18. Terraces are not in keeping with the character of the area.
19. Parking to rear of properties in Mallard Road would be a security risk to the rear of these properties.
20. Excessive number of parking spaces.
21. Plots 6 and 7 are too close to the boundaries of properties in Mallard Road.
22. Concern about lighting.
23. Contrary to Policies 21 and 22 and Proposals for Royston RR13, RR13/14.
24. Would cause further overcrowding of trains.

Several residents comment that this proposal is an improvement on the previously refused application.

Further comments have been received regarding the amended drawings. At the time of writing this report 10 letters have been received from residents in Green Drift and Mallard Road. Some welcome the amendments, but mostly objections are maintained, and concern raised regarding the loss of 2 parking spaces and the introduction of railings to the Green Drift frontage and increased risk of flooding due to removal of paving slab edging.

3.7 **County Minerals and Waste** - draws our attention to the policies on the Waste Local Plan.

4.0 Planning Considerations

4.1 Site & Surroundings

- 4.1.1 The application site covers the two residential plots of 16 and 20 Green Drift. (there is no No. 18.) These are large properties that amount to a site of 0.36 hectares. It lies to the south of Green Drift, approximately 125 metres from the junction with Kneesworth Street. The character of Green Drift does vary along its length. Much of its length is of detached houses on medium size plots. There are two developments close to the application site, Saddlers Place and Farrier Court, which are largely of terrace houses with some flats and semi-detached houses. Nos 16 and 20 Green Drift are larger than most residential plots. No 16 has two large Beech trees the subject of a Tree Preservation Order (TPO No 160) and hedge to the front boundary and No. 16 has a fence on a low wall to the front boundary with Lime trees just behind. The site lies within an area covered by Policy 21 - Landscape and Open Space patterns.
- 4.1.2 Mallard Road lies to the rear of the site, Nos 6 to 14 (evens) abut the rear boundary. No 12 Green Drift lies to the east of the site and 1 Saddlers Place lies to the west. Nos 13 to 21 (odds) Green Drift are opposite the site.

4.2 Proposal

- 4.2.1 This is a second application for the residential development of this site. The first was for 17 houses and was submitted by a different applicant. It was refused for reasons given in paragraph 1.1 above.
- 4.2.2 The proposal is to demolish the 2 existing houses and build 14 new two storey houses with an access road. Two houses would be detached and front onto Green Drift (plots 1 and 14). Another 2 would be corner properties forming a symmetrical arrangement either side of the new access road, but fronting onto Green Drift. The remaining houses would be terrace properties gaining access from the new road. There would be a variety of 2,3 and 4 bedroom properties.

4.3 Key Issues

- 4.3.1 The key issues relate to effect upon neighbouring residential property, whether the development would be in keeping with the character of the area, its overall design and layout including density and parking and highway issues. In addition to the policies mentioned above in paragraph 2.1 and 2.2 there are also Planning Policy Statements 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development and 3 - Housing are also relevant to the determination of this application. There is no objection in principle to residential development within the residential areas of Royston.

Residential Amenity

- 4.3.2 The 3 bedroom detached house on Plot 14 would be adjacent 1 Saddlers Place. The garage would be approximately 2 metre from the neighbouring house. The proposed two storey house being 5 metres away. The position, orientation and distance is such that no significant loss of residential amenity would be caused to this property. No 12 Green Drift is adjacent to the proposed Plot 1, a four bedroom detached house. Again the garage would be 1 metre from the property boundary and the two storey house would be 5 metres away. I consider the relationship between the two properties is such that no significant loss of residential amenity would be caused to the occupiers of No. 12 either.

4.3.3 House Nos 6 to 10 Mallard Road would back on to the site. The side elevations of Plots 6 and 7 would face these properties at a distance of 28 metres to 44 metres measured at first floor level. There would be no side facing windows on these plots. I consider that no significant loss of residential amenity would be caused to these properties. Concern was raised to the original drawings over security to the rear gardens of properties in Mallard Road, due to the car parking and fence to their boundary. Amended drawings have omitted 2 car parking spaces from this boundary and replaced with defensive planting, such as pyracantha, against a 1.8 metre fence. This part of the site is also well overlooked from the new dwellings and I consider the layout would not result in a significant threat to security. No 14 Mallard Road is closer to the boundary. It is an L-shaped house, with single storey extensions. The distance from the rear elevation to the side boundary is between 4.5 and 15 metres. It would have a partial back to back relationship with Plot 1 at a distance of 25 to 30 metres. The property currently has a back to back relationship of 28 metres with the existing No 16. Plot 6 is at a 90 degree angle to 14 Mallard Road. I consider that due to the L-shape of No 14 and this angle, that there would not be a significant loss of privacy to the rooms within the house. There would be some overlooking of the bottom of the garden. There would be one existing tree and three proposed trees (2 Rowan and 1 Silver Birch) to the boundary. I consider that although there would be some loss of residential amenity caused to this property, it would not be significant and would not form a sustainable reason for refusal.

Density

4.3.4 One of the main concerns of local residents focuses on the density of the development. Many favour the retention of the existing two houses and would accept a very small number of houses between the two, fronting Green Drift. In considering what density would be appropriate for this site consideration should be given to recent Government advice in Planning Policy Statement 1 - Delivering Sustainable development and Planning Policy Statement 3 - Housing. There is a good deal of focus on making efficient use of land, given the demand for housing and sustainability issues. There is a national target for 60 % of new housing to be on previously developed land. There is strong encouragement for new development to be located where everyone can access services and facilities on foot, bicycle and public transport rather than having to rely on access by car. The application site is within easy walking distance of the railway station and town centre, making this a good location for residential development.

4.3.5 PPS 3 advises that 30 dwellings to the hectare should be used as a national indicative minimum guide until local density policies are in place. The proposed development would be at a density of 39 dwellings per hectare. Saddlers Place is the adjacent development built in the 1990s at a density of 41 dwellings per hectare and Farrier Court on the opposite side of Green Drift, on the former highway depot, is built at a density of 41 dwellings to the hectare. Generally, older development in Green Drift are built at a lower density than that proposed. Although the views of local residents is quite understandable, given the recent government advice and the slightly higher density of recent nearby development in Green Drift, I feel that there could be no sustainable objection to the proposed density of the application site.

4.3.6 The layout of the site is such that the private rear gardens vary in size from approximately 62 metres squared to 180 metres squared. The average garden size being 103 metres squared. The Council's Policy 57 has a guideline recommending that private amenity space should be a minimum of 75 metres square. Even though this policy was written before current government advice advocating efficient use of land, I feel that the rear garden sizes are quite adequate and should not form the basis of a sustainable reason for refusal.

Appearance of Development

- 4.3.7 The site lies within an area covered by Policy 21 - Landscaping and Open Space patterns. This site currently has an open, green leafy feel to it, with a hedge to much of the front and some mature trees, the two Beech trees being a particular feature of the site. There is not a strong building line to Green Drift. Following the receipt of amended drawings, the distance of houses from the back edge of the footpath in the immediate area varies from 7 metres to 14 metres. Four houses on the application site would front onto Green Drift. Following receipt of amended drawings, their distance from the back edge of the footpath would vary from 8 metres to 16.5 metres. The appearance of the front of the site would be of front gardens with a new privet hedge to the front boundary. The applicant has agreed to omit the railings to the front boundary of the site and I anticipate suitably amended drawings to show this before the Meeting. The 2 prominent Beech trees would be retained as would 3 Lime trees to the front boundary. There would be large gaps between the 4 dwellings within which the side boundary of the rear gardens of Plots 2 and 13 would be visible. These would be marked by, for the most part a 1.8 metre high wall, which would project forward of the houses by 2.5 metres. Although the houses to the rear of the frontage properties would be visible, I consider the overall appearance of the site frontage would be of fairly open and soft landscaped residential development. I, therefore, consider that the objectives of Policy 21 would be met.
- 4.3.8 I consider that the layout of the development would very successfully achieve the difficult compromise required of it, in achieving an 'efficient' use of land required by recent government advice and retaining the fairly open and leafy character of this site and other older development in Green Drift.
- 4.3.9 The houses on Plots 2 and 13, either side of the access road would be symmetrical and rendered. The other dwellings would be mostly of facing brick with some tile hung sections. Bricks and roof tiles would need to be approved by condition. Several of the houses would have the driveways running under a first floor section of the house to a garage in the rear garden. I feel that the house designs and layout have been considered thoughtfully and would result in an aesthetically pleasing development.

Parking and Highway

- 4.3.10 The Highway Authority raised no objections to the original drawings, subject to various conditions. The formal comments have yet to be received on the amended drawings, although verbal advice has been given. The highway changes on these drawings relate to a reduction in the size of the turning area at the end of the new access road, to which the Highway Authority have verbally raised no objection. Also the vehicular access to Plots 2 and 13 have been amended to be shared with the accesses to Plots 1 and 14. The verbal highway advice is that part of the privet hedge would if allowed to grow above 600mm, restrict pedestrian visibility and this needs to be amended. The applicant's agent has agreed to omit the small sections of hedge required to achieve this and I anticipate suitably amended drawings before the Meeting. I consider that the omission of these small sections of hedge would be unlikely to significantly alter the appearance of the scheme.

- 4.3.11 The Council currently has maximum parking standards. Less than this standard can be acceptable if there are good reasons to justify it. The proposal falls short of the maximum standard by two spaces. The shortfall relates to the 4 houses sharing 7 unallocated spaces. The site is close to the facilities and services of the town centre and close to the railway station, both of which are within easy walking distance (325 metres and 230 metres respectively). I, therefore, feel that there is good justification to support parking provision below the maximum standard. There is local concern that this could lead to on street parking problems. I understand that Green Drift has suffered on-street parking problems in the past. However, this has now been rectified by the introduction of double and single yellow lines. The proposed access road into the site would be 5 metres wide. If necessary it would be possible to park on this road and still allow vehicles to pass. I, therefore, consider it unlikely to result in an on street parking problem being again created in Green Drift. For clarification, the current maximum parking standards do include visitors parking.
- 4.3.12 There is concern by local residents over the increase in traffic generation in Green Drift, especially during school drop off and pick up times, and the danger this may cause to pedestrian school children with the additional access road to cross. This matter has been discussed with the highway engineer who has advised that the Highway Authority would consider the increase in traffic that the scheme would generate to be quite insignificant. For clarification, the recent refusal of the day nursery on The Maltings site related to the inadequacies of the existing vehicular entrance and the ability to manoeuvre within the site and did not relate to traffic generation.
- 4.3.13 I, therefore, feel that subject to the formal comments of the Highway Authority on the amended drawings, that there are no sustainable highway or parking reasons to justify withholding planning permission.

Other Concerns

- 4.3.14 There are a variety of concern of local residents. One is that the site lies within the evacuation zone for Johnson Matthey. I am unaware of such a zone, but I can advise Members that the site does not lie within the Health and Safety Executive consultation zone. Overcrowding of trains is a matter for the train operators to rectify and should not effect the determination of this application. Land drainage is a concern mentioned by several residents, particularly following the flood that Royston experienced last July. The site does not lies within a flood plain and is nowhere near one. The site does gently slope down towards the road. However, the Highway Authority does recommend a condition which requires details of surface water run off drainage for approval and I feel that this is sufficient in this case. There is a concern about lighting, although this in not very specific. Again a condition is recommended requiring details for approval.
- 4.3.15 Local residents have objected as the site would be contrary to Proposals RR13 and 13/3 of North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No 2 with Alterations. RR13 seeks to resist the sub division of plots in Green Drift. This proposal was written some time ago before the current government advice for housing and sustainable development, which effectively supersedes the proposal. I consider that a refusal based on this proposal would today be unsuccessful for this reason.

- 4.3.16 Local residents raise concern over the safety of the 2 Beech trees, which are the subject of a Tree Preservation Order. Both are prominent, mature trees in good condition. The existing driveway runs between them and there is tarmac up to the tree trunks. It is proposed to retain the existing access and the amount of tarmac would be reduced in the area of the roots. This would probably benefit the trees over time. However, Beech trees have shallow roots and it is important that ground work within the canopy of the trees is carried out by hand and not machinery. Also that any builders materials and machinery is not kept within the crown of the trees. Should permission be granted, conditions are recommended for the protection of the trees. The nearest proposed houses are generally south of the trees, so I would not expect a lack of sunlight through overshadowing to be an issue here.
- 4.3.17 The applicant has submitted a signed Unilateral Undertaking in accordance with the Planning Obligations Supplementary Document approved November 2006. The Head of Legal and Democratic Services raises no objections to it.
- 4.3.18 I consider that the objections raised to the 2004 application have been overcome. Although the various concerns of local residents are quite understandable. I feel that they would not amount to sustainable reasons for refusal, particularly given recent government advice.

Summary

- 4.3.19 Perhaps the greatest and most common concern of local residents, which comes across from their letters, is not so much an objection in principle to the development of the site, but to the number of houses. Most would seem to accept the retention of the two existing houses with say 2 or 3 houses filling the gap in the street frontage. This would probably create a very pleasant development similar to the character of Green Drift beyond the Tannery Drift junction. However, recent government advice is very concerned "to ensure that everyone has the opportunity to live in a decent home, which they can afford in a community where they want to live." Sustainability issues are also very high on the agenda. This has led to making 'efficient' use of land and a national minimum residential density of 30 dwellings to the hectare. The location of the application site, within a town, close to the town centre and railway station has made it a good site for a additional housing. In addition to this I feel that the layout of the site and the houses have been sensitively designed and that the finished result should be of a visually pleasing development.

4.4 Conclusion

- 4.4.1 I consider that the objections raised to the 2004 application have been overcome. Although the concerns of local residents are quite understandable, I feel that they would not amount to sustainable reasons for refusal, given recent government advice. I, therefore, feel that there are no sustainable planning objections to raise to this proposal.

5.0 Legal Implications

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

6.0 Recommendation

6.1 That permission be GRANTED subject to the signed Unilateral Undertaking and the following conditions

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

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

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

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

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

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

4. The development hereby permitted shall not be brought into use until the proposed access has been constructed, and the footway has been constructed to the current specifications of Hertfordshire County Council and to the Local Planning Authorities satisfaction.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety and amenity.

5. Other than those shown on the approved drawings, there shall be no gates associated with this site, unless previously agreed to in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

Reason: In the interests of highway safety so that vehicles are not forced to wait in the carriageway while the gates are being opened or closed.

6. A 2.0 metre x 2.0 metre visibility splay shall be provided and permanently maintained on either side of the accesses. It shall be measured from the edge of the accessway to the edge of the carriageway/back of footpath, within which there shall not be obstruction to visibility between 600mm and 2.4 metres above the carriageway/footpath level.

Reason: To provide adequate visibility for drivers entering or leaving the site.

7. The development shall not be brought into use until a properly consolidated and surfaced turning space for commercial vehicles has been provided within the curtilage of the site. The turning space should be free from obstruction and available for use at all times.

Reason: To allow vehicles to enter and leave the site in a forward gear in the interests of highway safety.

8. The gradient of the access shall not be steeper than 1 in 20 for at least the first 12 metres from the edge of the carriageway.

Reason: To ensure a vehicle is approximately level before being driven on to the highway.

9. The access shall be 5 metres wide and the kerb radii shall include a pram crossing complete with tactile feature.

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

10. The access shall be constructed in a hard surfacing material for the first 12 metres from the edge of the carriageway.

Reason: To prevent loose material from passing onto the public highway which may be detrimental to highway safety.

11. **Notwithstanding the details shown on site layout plan Drg No JC: 073/08A full details of the off site works shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority prior to the commencement of the development, showing street lighting, white lining, road signs and the surface water run off drainage from the proposal. Thereafter the approved highway works shall be carried out and completed prior to any development work is commenced.**

Reason: To provide a satisfactory access into the site for construction traffic, in the interests of highway safety.

12. **Before any part of the work, hereby approved, is commenced details of the existing and proposed site levels, street lighting and surface water drainage shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and thereafter carried out in accordance with the approved details.**

Reason: In the interest of the appearance of the development and effect the development would have upon the surrounding residential area.

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

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

14. None of the trees to be retained on the application site shall be felled, lopped, topped, uprooted, removed or otherwise destroyed or killed without the prior written agreement of the Local Planning Authority.

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

15. Any tree felled, lopped, topped, uprooted, removed or otherwise destroyed or killed contrary to the provisions of the tree retention condition above shall be replaced during the same or next planting season with another tree of a size and species as agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, unless the Authority agrees in writing to dispense with this requirement.

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

16. Before the commencement of any other works on the site, trees to be retained shall be protected by the erection of temporary chestnut paling or chain link fencing of a minimum height of 1.2 metres on a scaffolding framework, located at the appropriate minimum distance from the tree trunk in accordance with Table 1 in 'Trees in relation to Construction' (BS5837:2005), unless in any particular case the Local Planning Authority agrees to dispense with this requirement. The fencing shall be maintained intact for the duration of all engineering and building works. No machinery shall be stored or building materials stacked or mixed within 10 metres of the tree. No fires shall be lit where flames could extend to within 5 metres of the foliage, and no notices shall be attached to trees.

Reason: To prevent damage to or destruction of trees to be retained on the site in the interests of the appearance of the completed development and the visual amenity of the locality.

17. **No demolition or development shall take place within the proposed development site until the applicant, or their agents, or their successors in title, has secured the implementation of a programme of archaeological work in accordance with a written scheme of investigation, which has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. This condition will only be considered to be discharged when the Local Planning Authority have received and approved in writing archaeological reports of all the required archaeological works.**

Reason for Decision

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

Planning Policy Statement 1 - Delivering Sustainable Development
Planning Policy Statement 3 - Housing

Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 - 20

Policy 1 - Sustainable Development
Policy 6 - Settlement Pattern and Urban Concentration
Policy 25 - Car Parking and supplementary Planning Guidance: Vehicle Parking Provision at New Development.

North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No 2 with Alterations

Policy 8 - Development in Towns
Policy 21 - Landscape and Open Space Patterns in Towns
Policy 26 - Housing Proposals
Policy 55 - Car Parking Standards
Policy 57 - Residential Guidelines and Standards

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

9

TITLE OF REPORT: PLANNING APPEALS & ENFORCEMENT
REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING & BUILDING CONTROL

This item will take the format of an oral presentation.

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TITLE OF REPORT: ROYSTON CONSERVATION AREA REVIEW AND REGISTER OF BUILDINGS OF LOCAL INTEREST

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF PLANNING AND BUILDING CONTROL

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 On 16th January 2007, Cabinet resolved that the format and processes for public consultation in respect of the Royston Conservation Area Review and in accordance with the wishes of the Royston & District Committee, be approved.
- 1.2 On 20th January 2007, a 6-week public consultation exercise was launched with an exhibition at Royston Town Hall. On the 6th February, the Royston Conservation Area Review and Register of Buildings of Local Interest (BLI's) were considered at the first of a series of three Royston Town Centre Strategy workshops. The following day, the exhibition was moved to Royston Library until the end of the consultation period on the 2nd March.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This Report contains a recommendation on a key decision that was first notified to the public in the Forward Plan on the 1st December 2006.

3. PUBLIC CONSULTATION

- 3.1 Over 80 people attended the exhibition launch, 14 people attended the Royston Town Centre Strategy workshop and a further 29 people signed to say that they had viewed the exhibition in the library. The following were formally consulted: Royston & District Town Twinning Association, Royston Society, Royston Chamber of Commerce, Royston & District Local History Society and Royston Town Council, North Herts Homes, Hertfordshire Property and Hertfordshire Highways. In addition, internal consultation with other District Council departments has taken place and letters were hand delivered to 29 of the 32 buildings of local interest.
- 3.2 Over 150 'consultation packs' were handed out during the consultation period and 31 questionnaire responses have been received of which 6 were made on-line. The results of the questionnaire responses are found at APPENDIX A.
- 3.3 Royston Town Council replied on the 13th February with respect to supporting the inclusion of the Town Hall on the Register of Buildings of Local Interest and on the 28th February regarding the Conservation Area Review.
- 3.4 Rapleys Planning Consultancy has responded on behalf of the owners of the Mill, Kneesworth Street and a letter was received suggesting that Mulberry House

(adjacent to Billabong, Sun Hill) should be excluded from the proposed conservation area.

- 3.5 The Conservation Team has also received letters from Oliver Heald MP, the owners of 5 separate properties in Palace Gardens and from the Kneesworth Street Neighbourhood Conservation Group requesting that the adjoining Telephone Exchange site be included in the conservation area.

Overview of questionnaire responses

- 3.6 Generally, the responses were very positive. For instance over 90% were fairly or very satisfied with the text, layout, photographs and plan of document referred to as Part 1 of 3. There is also general support for all of the proposed additions and exclusions, although the closest result came with respect to the proposed exclusion of Area H where 41.9% objected.
- 3.7 Although 9.7% expressed a view that they were fairly or very dissatisfied with the text in the document referred to as Part 2 of 3, this percentage relates to only three questionnaire responses.
- 3.8 Interestingly, no one under the age of 35 responded to the process and 74% were aged 50 or older.

4. ISSUES

Legislative

- 4.1 Local Planning Authorities have a statutory duty under Section 69 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 to designate as conservation areas any *'areas of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance'*. Section 69 of the Act also imposes a duty on local authorities to review their conservation areas from time to time and to consider whether further designations are appropriate.
- 4.2 Section 71 of the same Act requires local authorities to formulate and publish proposals for the preservation or enhancement of conservation areas, clearly identifying what it is about the character and appearance of the area that should be preserved or enhanced.

Planning Requirements

- 4.3 A local authority's performance in designating conservation areas, defining the special architectural or historic interest that warrants designation through up-to-date character appraisals, and publishing management proposals for the areas based on the character appraisals is now the subject of a three-part heritage "Best Value Performance Indicator" (BV219) for 2006-07.
- 4.4 Once approved, the Royston Conservation Area Review will be adopted for Development Control purposes and will support future Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) that will be produced as part of the Local Development Framework (LDF).

5. PROPOSED CHANGES FOLLOWING PUBLIC CONSULTATION

Royston Conservation Area Draft – January 2007 [Part 1 of 3]

- 5.1 On the basis that these documents will be approved by Full Council on 29th March 2007, it is recommended that the front cover text be amended to read as 'Royston Conservation Area (with map) – 29th March 2007 [Part 1 of 3]'. A summary of public consultation has been added to the back cover (see APPENDIX B).
- 5.2 Under the heading 'CHARACTER' change the wording from '*....the market (held on Wednesdays)...*' to '*...the market (held on Wednesdays and Saturdays)....*'
- 5.3 Change the opening paragraph under the heading 'IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES' to read as '*The following areas and buildings are considered to be where improvement opportunities exist*'.
- 5.4 Under the heading 'IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES' change sub-heading '*Garage and Mill, Kneesworth Street*' to '*Mill and adjoining garage, Kneesworth Street*' and amend the text to read as '*The Mill is identified as a building of local interest and is located within the conservation area. The garage together with extension and some alterations to the mill are the reasons why the area is considered appropriate for improvement*'.
- 5.5 Under the heading 'IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES' and with respect to the sub-heading 'The Warren Car Park, Bus Station and Public Toilets', delete the words '*....and the toilets are poorly maintained...*'.
- 5.6 Under the heading 'AREAS IDENTIFIED AS REDEVELOPMENT OPPORTUNITIES' add 27a, 27b and 27c to the sub-heading 'No.27 High Street'.
- 5.7 Under the heading 'IMPROVEMENT OPPORTUNITIES' and with respect to the sub-heading 'No.10 Melbourn Street', amend to read as '*.... are set at an angle...*'.
- 5.8 On the map, include an additional Important View looking east from in front of Manor House, no.14 Melbourn Street towards The Banyers Hotel (see APPENDIX B).
- 5.9 On the map, delete hatched annotation on the open space between nos.25 and 27a High Street (see APPENDIX B).
- 5.10 On the map, remove the property known as Mulberry House from the revised conservation area (see APPENDIX B).

Royston Conservation Area Draft – January 2007 [Part 2 of 3]

- 5.11 Amend the front cover to read as 'Royston Conservation Area - Townscape Analysis – 29 March 2007 [Part 2 of 3] and a summary of public consultation has been added to the back cover (see APPENDIX C).
- 5.12 Paragraph 1.9, change '*... in which their will be ...*' to '*... in which there will be...*'.
- 5.13 Paragraph 1.12, change '2005-6' to '2006-07'.
- 5.14 Insert a full stop after 19th century in paragraph 2.32.

- 5.15 A representation has been received suggesting that Lloyds Bank (referred to in paragraph 3.69) is in fact a *'very disappointing building'*. Officers have reconsidered the text and whilst not agreeing with the representation made, the wording is proposed to be changed to read as *"Lloyd's bank is Italianate in style, steps down in height from the adjacent building and addresses this corner position onto The Cross"*. The emphasis on the bank being a *'particularly effective corner building'* now deleted.
- 5.16 Paragraph 3.104 inserted with reference to nos.1 and 2 Barkway Road.

Royston Register of Buildings of Local Interest Draft – January 2007 [Part 3 of 3]

- 5.17 Amend the front cover to read as 'Royston – Register of Buildings of Local Interest – 29th March 2007 [Part 3 of 3]'. A summary of public consultation has been added to the back cover (see APPENDIX D).
- 5.18 Photographs changed for entries 1 and 31 (see APPENDIX D).

6. MATTERS RAISED BY PUBLIC CONSULTATION BUT NOT CHANGED ON THE DOCUMENTS

The Mill, Kneesworth Street

- 6.1 Rapleys Town Planning Consultancy have made representations on behalf of Cereform Ltd / Associated British Food (see APPENDIX E), proposing that the Mill is not included on the Register of Buildings of Local Interest or within the proposed extension to Royston Conservation Area.
- 6.2 With respect to the building's inclusion in the conservation area, Rapleys has stated that *"...whilst we accept that the previous corn mill on the site might be of historical interest, that is more than offset by the significant changes to this site and its surroundings in terms of their character and appearance...."*. Rapleys has referred to *'proposals for improvement'* and the *'viability of such enhancement'*. Furthermore, concern has been raised that because this site has been identified as an 'Improvement Opportunity' that this may increase the constraints on any necessary development associated with the owner's operational needs. Members should be aware that including the Mill within the conservation area does not necessarily preclude development from taking place.
- 6.3 These concerns are misplaced in that there are no proposals for the site. The reference to the site being an 'Improvement Opportunity' is simply a visual audit as at the time of re-survey in January 2007.
- 6.4 Furthermore and with respect to the Mill's inclusion on the BLI Register, Rapleys has stated that *"... the only parts of the building that are retained from its corn mill origins are the northern and southern facades of the central section of the existing building. The appearance of even these has been radically changed...."*
- 6.5 In addition, Rapleys comment on the lack of Local Plan Policy in the first paragraph of page 3 of their letter. With respect to the policy situation, it is accepted that there is no current policy relating to BLI's, however, there is a draft policy in the District Council's Preferred Options of the Development Control

Policies Development Plan Document (DPD) which is due to go out to public consultation in September 2007. Rapleys have stated that if such policy is to be formulated, it should be the subject of consultation simultaneously to the consultation on a register of Buildings of Local Interest. Members will be aware that registers of BLI's are being compiled on an incremental basis in conjunction with conservation area reviews, therefore, it is considered appropriate to consult on the policy in the Preferred Options separately from the BLI registers (as and when these are produced).

- 6.6 At the first Royston Town Centre Strategy Workshop, one group dismissed the Mill as an 'ugly building' and disagreed that area 1 on the boundary changes document should be included. The second group raised concerns as to whether the Mill enhances the area and questioned its proposed addition to the conservation area.
- 6.7 Having considered (i) the points made by Rapleys, (ii) the views expressed at the workshop and (iii) the fact that 80% of questionnaire responses supported the inclusion of Area 1, officers maintain the view that the original part of the building as viewed in entry 1 on the Register of Buildings of Local Interest, retains sufficient architectural integrity and historical association to merit retention on the Register and that Area 1 is still considered worthy of including in the conservation area.

Telephone Exchange

- 6.8 Representations have been made by Oliver Heald MP, the owners of 5 separate properties in Palace Gardens and from the Kneesworth Street Neighbourhood Conservation Group requesting that the Telephone Exchange site be included in Royston Conservation Area (see APPENDIX F) and the following reasons have been cited:-

- Proximity to several important listed buildings
- Enhanced protection of visual amenity of listed buildings
- More consistent boundary line and
- Habitat for Local wildlife

- 6.9 A conservation area should only be extended if the area or building(s), the subject of the extension, contribute to the special architectural or historic interest of the existing conservation area. Planning Policy Guidance Note 15 states that *"...in considering further designations authorities should bear in mind that it is important that conservation areas are seen to justify their status and that the concept is not devalued by the designation of areas lacking any special interest. Authorities should seek to establish consistent local standards for their designations and should periodically review existing conservation areas and their boundaries against those standards"* (paragraph 4.3).

- 6.10 Furthermore, paragraph 4.5 states that *"...The principal concern of a local planning authority in considering the designation of a conservation area should be to form a judgement on whether the area is of special architectural or historic interest the character and appearance of which it is desirable to preserve or enhance...."*

- 6.11 Firstly, the local wildlife habitat does not meet the necessary criteria whilst the proximity and the enhanced protection of the visual amenity of listed buildings, is a matter addressed by the local authority when it assesses a proposal that affects the 'setting' of a listed building(s).

- 6.12 With respect to the matter of a more consistent boundary line, four points are raised and each point is addressed separately.

Surrounded on three sides by conservation land.

This is clearly not the case, the northern boundary where it abuts 34c Kneesworth Street is outside the conservation area as is the western boundary where it abuts properties in Palace Gardens.

Natural extension of Cardinal's Gate

Cardinal's Gate is a residential development accessed off and relating more closely with development on Baldock Street. The land uses of Cardinal's Gate and the Telephone Exchange site are entirely different. The only similarity being the linear form and narrow width of both sites.

Useful link between Cardinal's Gate, Stamford Yard and the rear of the Museum and the Congregational Church

As a land parcel this may well be the case, but in terms of the applying the criteria for inclusion, the site is found wanting.

Similar justification used to include the garage, Mill and nos.54-68 Kneesworth Street

The case has been made previously that the Mill and almshouses merit inclusion on the Register of Buildings of Local Interest and within the conservation area. To compare the telephone exchange with either of these buildings is illogical and flawed. It is noted, however, that the garage does not meet the criteria in its own right but the garage site relates so closely with the Mill and almshouses that it is considered appropriate to see the site in its broader context.

- 6.13 To conclude, the east boundary of the telephone exchange site is well defined and follows the rear boundary of properties accessed off Kneesworth Street and Lower King Street. The conservation area boundary is drawn sufficiently tightly at this point to include buildings and spaces of special architectural and historic interest. The reasons cited above for including the telephone exchange do not relate to the special architectural or historic interest of the building or site and are therefore considered to be inappropriate reasons for inclusion.

Properties north of the railway line, Old North Road

- 6.14 Royston Town Council have suggested that nos.2-22 (even) Old North Road are considered for inclusion in the Register of Buildings of Local Interest.
- 6.15 Officers have looked at nos.3-21 (odds) and nos.2-24 (evens) Old North Road and no.2 Gower Road (see photographs and map at APPENDIX G). Nos.2 and 4 Old North Road are grade II listed and there are a number of other unlisted, double bay fronted, semi-detached houses on both sides of the road. A greater proportion of those on the east side are red facing brick whilst on the west side, the greater proportion are gault brick. No.2 Gower Road has a 1893 date plaque. Setting apart nos.2 and 4 Old North Road, the other dwellings are not considered to have individual architectural or historic interest to merit inclusion on the register but together they have group value within the streetscene.

- 6.16 Officers have considered whether or not to propose extending the conservation area even further north to include these buildings. However, after careful

consideration and taking into account the railway station, railway line and recent infill development directly on the north side of the railway line (for instance Gresley Lodge), the link between the dwelling on Old North Road and the buildings at the northern end of Kneesworth Street would be a tenuous one. Officers are also of the opinion that the properties on Old North Road do not merit a separate conservation area designation.

Former Priory Cinema site

- 6.17 One of the workshop groups together with a single questionnaire response have suggested that this site be included in the conservation area. The site is situated on the east side of Priory Lane at the junction with Newmarket Road with housing to the south and east of the site. On 16th January 2007, outline planning permission was granted for residential development (ref: 04/002669/1).
- 6.18 Officers consider that the site does not have special architectural or historic interest to merit inclusion, however, it is sufficiently close to the proposed conservation area and a gateway site at the approach to the conservation area from Newmarket Road, to merit the annotation on the conservation plan as a 'site beyond the conservation area where redevelopment would improve its setting'.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 None

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 8.1 See public consultation above.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 It is recommended that Members of Royston and District Area Committee agree to the final text, layout, photographs and maps incorporating the changes as outlined above and that their views are taken into account by Cabinet at its meeting on 27th March 2007.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure that the Council's statutory duties are carried out and that targets set by the Council with respect to BV219, are satisfied.
- 10.2 To enable the Council to adopt a Register of Buildings of Local Interest and an up-to-date review of Royston Conservation Area with appropriate documents to inform future planning decisions.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 The following appendices are attached:

- APPENDIX A - Results form questionnaire responses,
- APPENDIX B – Front/back cover and map extracts for document [Part 1 of 3],
- APPENDIX C – Front/back cover for document [Part 2 of 3],
- APPENDIX D - Extracts from Register of Buildings of Local Interest [Part 3 of 3] showing change of photographs for entries 1 and 31,

- APPENDIX E – Representations by Rapleys on behalf of Cereform Ltd / Associated British Foods,
- APPENDIX F – Representations made regarding telephone exchange site,
- APPENDIX G – Map and photographs of properties on Old North Road.

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 12.1 Mark Simmons (Conservation Officer)
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E-Mail: mark.simmons@north-herts.gov.uk
- 12.2 Liz Marten (Principal Conservation Officer)
Tel: 01462 474411
E-Mail: liz.marten@north-herts.gov.uk

13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 None other than those referred to in this report.

TITLE OF REPORT: ROYSTON COMMUNITY SURGERIES

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & CULTURAL SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 This report provides a brief overview of the Royston Community Surgeries held since the trial period commenced in February 2005. It also provides information on the attendance of the public at the Surgery since alterations were made to its format in August 2006.
- 1.2 The Committee are invited to consider the continuation of the Surgery in the Civic Year 2007/2008.

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 At the meeting of this Committee held on 15 December 2004 (Minute 67 refers), the Committee resolved to hold a trial of Community Surgeries at the Royston Town Hall. These Surgeries were scheduled for the first Saturday of each month. This trial was to run for four months.
- 3.2 At its meeting on 20 April 2005 (Minute 112 refers) the Committee agreed to continue holding monthly Surgeries. Surgeries were then held on a monthly basis until the meeting of the Committee held on 23 August 2006, with the exception of April 2005 and May 2006. Only two sessions yielded no visitors – January 2006 and August 2006.
- 3.3 At its meeting held on 23 August 2006, the Committee considered a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services which reviewed the Surgeries' success over the period February 2005 – August 2006 and recommended discontinuation of the Surgeries. The Committee instead

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the frequency of Members' Surgeries be reduced to bi-monthly, with the next Surgery to be held on 2 September 2006;

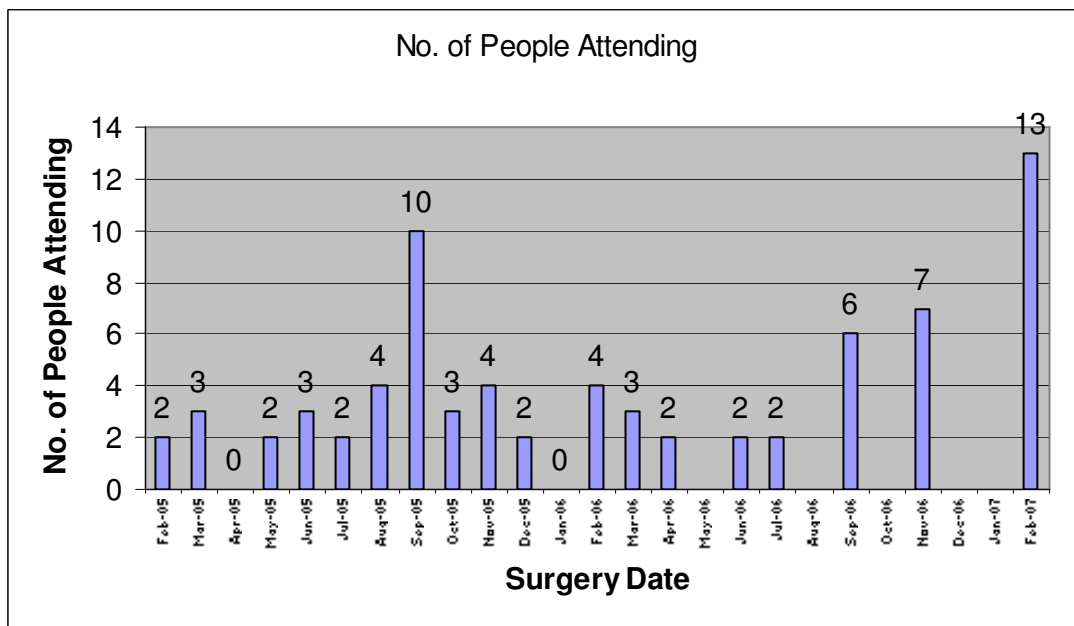
- (2) That additional steps be taken to improve advertisement of the Surgeries, such as display of a banner or board outside the venue to attract passing residents;
- (3) That the viability of the continuation of Members' Surgeries be reassessed at the meeting of the Committee to be held on 14 March 2007.

(Minute 40 refers).

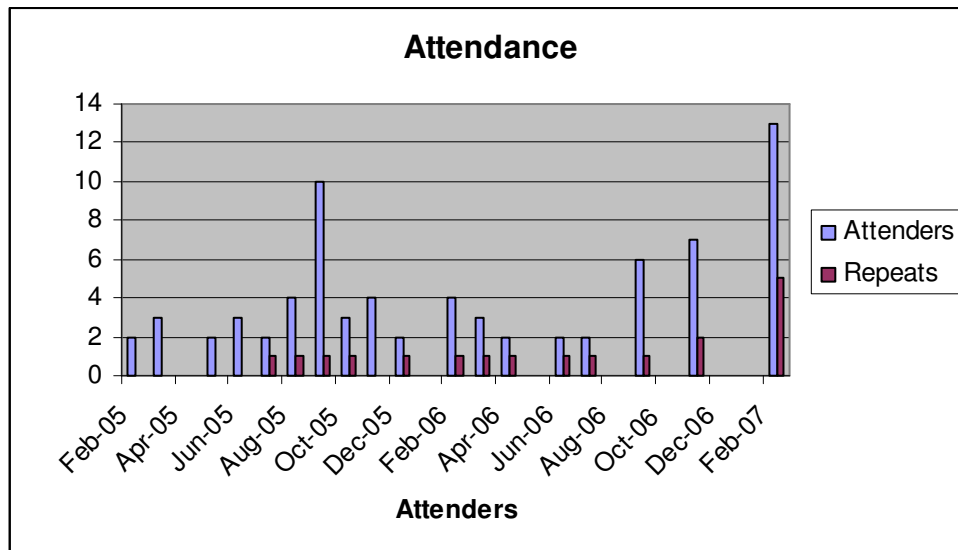
4. ISSUES

Attendance

4.1 Since the Surgeries commenced in February 2005, attendance has been as follows:



NB No surgeries were held in May, October and December 2006 or January 2007.



- 4.2 As can be seen, over this period Members have met 74 individuals or groups of individuals, averaging 3.9 individuals or groups per session. Of these 74, 18 are repeats by the same person or group. There is a seasonal pattern, of a fall from December to June, and a rise back to the following December. The peak in February 2007 does not fit this pattern.
- 4.3 It is also worth noting that, on those occasions when Surgeries have not been held, correspondence has been received by officers and some Councillors from members of the public who had wanted to attend.

Issues Raised

- 4.4 A variety of issues have been raised by people attending the Surgeries, although several recurring items have also been identified. A summary of issues raised is attached as Appendix A to this report.

Venue

- 4.5 The Surgeries take place in the Committee Room at the Town Hall. Whilst not ideal in terms of the Disability Discrimination Act as there is a flight of three steps into the room, this is not known to have turned any potential client away. On an occasion where a member of the public was not able to manage the steps, they were accommodated on the level entrance to the Town Hall.
- 4.6 The venue is close to the Town Centre and adjacent to the town's largest car park.
- 4.7 The current venue, whilst not ideal, is available at no cost.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 There are no legal implications pertinent to this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 Costs

The costs accruing monthly from the surgeries are as follows:

Advertisement costs in The Crow	£100.00
Staff support including on-costs	£60.12
The total cost per session is therefore	£160.12

The cost per enquiry in the financial year 2005/6 was £49.27; in the financial year 2006/7 it was £30.02.

6.2 Usage

Usage has clearly risen over the last few months; the number of visitors per surgery in the financial year 2005-6 was 3.36, and in 2006-07 it has been 5.33; and over the last 3 meetings has risen to 8.67.

6.3 **Promotion**

Apart from advertisement in The Crow, a poster is displayed on each of the Town Hall noticeboards, and a large poster on two A-boards outside the Committee Room during each surgery.

6.4 **Conclusions**

Whilst the cost per enquiry remains high, it is clear that for a group of people, there is much perceived value in a face-to-face discussion with Members, despite the ready availability of other modes of communication. There is sufficient budgetary provision to continue running the surgeries on either a monthly or bi-monthly basis.

7. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

7.1 Ward Members have been consulted as to their feelings on the effectiveness of the surgeries.

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

8.1 That the Surgeries continue on a bi-monthly basis.

9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 The efficient use of resources in communication with the public.

10. APPENDICES

A list of issues covered at Community Surgeries attached as Appendix A.
A draft schedule of attendance at Community Surgeries is attached as Appendix B.

11. CONTACT OFFICERS

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12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

None.

Appendix A

Issues raised by members of the public at Community Surgeries

Newmarket Road car parking problems	Car parking obstruction in Orchard Road
Parking charges	Proposed railway crossing
Parking ticket challenge	Disabled parking bay
Cemetery notice	Maintenance of public toilets
Coach starting point	Power supply failure to NHH home
Council Tax levels	Crossing in Kneesworth Street
Waste bin collections	Motorbike usage
Parking issues	Overhanging vegetation
Traffic issues	Lack of speech therapy
Area governance	Shortage of dental provision in town
Tree maintenance	Air traffic noise
Town Centre – role of manager, demise etc.	Royston Bypass
Parking charges	A10 footpath
Light pollution	New Leisure Centre – compliment
Cycle routes	Fencing problems, Priory Memorial Gardens
Flooding issues	Recycling and rubbish collection
Hole in path	Bollards in Church Lane
Footpath safety	Heron Way surfacing
Grass cutting regime and road sightlines	Car sales on highway
Local Development Framework	Proud manhole
EEDA housing provision	Unkempt land and dumping upon it
Adoption date for roads on Twigdens Estate	Traffic flow in car parks
Provision of letterbox on Twigdens Estate	Football Club floodlighting overspill
Dog bin cleaning regime	Access to Twigdens Estate
Litter collection methods	Colour of Leisure Centre roof
Storage of contractors' materials	Royston market
Anti-social behaviour	Town Centre Manager
Traffic speed on Barkway Road	Bad agricultural smell
Resurfacing of York Way	Council Tax re-assessment

Appendix B

Draft Community Surgery Schedule

Monthly basis

Apr-07 Cllrs. Smith & Marshall
Jun-07 Cllrs. Hunter & Burt
Jul-07 Cllrs. Inwood & Hill
Aug-07 Cllrs. Beardwell & Smith
Sep-07 Cllrs. Marshall & Hunter
Oct-07 Cllrs. Burt & Inwood
Nov-07 Cllrs. Hill & Beardwell
Dec-07 Cllrs. Smith & Marshall
Jan-08 Cllrs. Hunter & Burt
Feb-08 Cllrs. Inwood & Hill
Mar-08 Cllrs. Beardwell & Smith

Bi-monthly basis

Apr-07 Cllrs. Smith & Marshall
Jun-07 Cllrs. Inwood & Burt
Aug-07 Cllrs. Hunter & Beardwell
Oct-07 Cllrs. Hill & Marshall
Dec-07 Cllrs. Smith & Inwood
Feb-08 Cllrs. Burt & Hunter
Apr-08 Cllrs Beardwell & Hill