

17 July 2009

Our Ref. Hitchin 7.09
Your Ref.
Contact. Nigel Schofield
Direct Dial. 01462 474590
[Email.nigel.schofield@north-herts.gov.uk](mailto:nigel.schofield@north-herts.gov.uk)

To: The Members of the Hitchin Committee of North Hertfordshire District Council:

Councillors: Judi Billing (Chairman), Deepak Sangha (Vice-Chairman), Mrs A.G. Ashley, David Billing, Clare Body, Paul Clark, Joan Kirby, Bernard Lovewell, Alan Millard, Lawrence Oliver, R. Shakespeare – Smith, Martin Stears - Handscomb and R.A.C. Thake

You are invited to attend a meeting of the

HITCHIN COMMITTEE

to be held at

**CHRIST CHURCH HALL,
BEDFORD ROAD, HITCHIN**

on

TUESDAY 28 JULY 2009

at

7.30 p.m.

Yours sincerely,



David Miley
Democratic Services Manager

AGENDA - PART I

ITEM	PAGE
1. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE	-
2. MINUTES To take as read and approve as a true record the Minutes of the meeting of this Committee held on 9 June 2009.	-
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. 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 can speak on the item, but must leave the room before the debate and vote.	-
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions, comments and questions from members of the public. Public Participation (all to be confirmed). 1. North Herts Sanctuary 2. Sub Zero 3. The Samaritans 4. JUMP Public participation requests received within the agreed time will be notified to Members as soon as practicable.	1
6. INFORMATION NOTE – CHURCHGATE AND SURROUNDING AREA – PROCUREMENT PROCESS UPDATE THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE, POLICY AND GOVERNANCE <i>To provide the Hitchin Committee with an update on the procurement process following the meeting of the Hitchin Town Centre Working Party held on 7 July 2009.</i>	3
7. NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL – DRAFT PARKING STRATEGY REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, HOUSING AND ENTERPRISE	13

ITEM	PAGE
<p>8. OUTCOME OF NORTH HERTS RETAIL SURVEY – HITCHIN INFORMATION NOTE FROM THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, HOUSING AND ENTERPRISE This item was not available at the time the Agenda was published. It will be circulated as soon as it becomes available.</p>	<p>59</p>
<p>9. HITCHIN TOWN CENTRE MANAGER This presentation will be in an oral format.</p>	<p>61</p>
<p>10. CHAMPION NEWS AND FINANCE REPORT REPORT OF THE ACTING HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES <i>To advise the Hitchin Committee of the schemes and activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer since the meeting held on 9 June 2009. No grant applications.</i></p>	<p>63</p>

INFORMATION NOTE

The following item has been prepared as an Information Note to all Members of the Hitchin Committee and is presented as a supporting paper to the main agenda.

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

ITEM	PAGE
<p>A.1, HITCHIN COMMUNITY SURGERY – 6 JUNE 2009 REPORT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER</p>	<p>1</p>
<p>A.2 HITCHIN COMMUNITY SURGERY – 4 JULY 2009 REPORT OF THE DEMOCRATIC SERVICES MANAGER</p>	<p>2</p>

The dates for the meetings of the Hitchin Committee in the Civic Year 2009-2010 will be as follows:

- 22 September 2009 – Westmill Community Centre, Westmill, Hitchin**
- 17 November 2009 - Benslow Music Trust, Benslow Lane, Hitchin**
- 12 January 2010 – The Gudwara, Wilbury Way, Hitchin**
- 9 March 2010 – Roman Catholic Church Hall, Nightingale Road, Hitchin**

HITCHIN COMMITTEE
28 July 2009

***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

5

PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Presentations are expected as follows:

1. North Herts Sanctuary
2. Sub Zero
3. The Samaritans
4. JUMP

THIS PAGE IS BLANK

**TITLE OF INFORMATION NOTE : CHURCHGATE CENTRE AND SURROUNDING AREA
PROCUREMENT PROCESS UPDATE****REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF FINANCE AND REGULATORY
SERVICES****1. INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 Further to a request from the Chair of the Hitchin Area Committee, and a resolution of the Hitchin Town Centre Working Party, an information note is provided to update on the ongoing procurement process to appoint a development partner for the redevelopment of the Churchgate Centre and surrounding area.

2. CONFIDENTIALITY ISSUES

- 2.1 As previously explained to the Hitchin Area Committee the procurement process is highly commercially sensitive and whilst it is ongoing very little, if any, information can be provided publicly. Paragraphs 2.2 to 2.5 explain the reasons for this, as set out in the three previous information notes provided.
- 2.2 The competitive dialogue process differs from other procurement processes in that it confers on the Council a statutory obligation to ensure commercial confidentiality during the dialogue process. This means that any information relating to one candidate's proposal should not be revealed to any other candidate so that the bids are not compromised. This is to ensure that the developer's intellectual property is protected. In other words, the edge they have on their competitors generally only lies in the design (their architectural techniques) and financial modelling and this is what they are keen to protect at all costs. That is why scheme specific information is not made public until they are finally selected and why it was not possible to have community involvement in this type of procurement. We of course are keen to ensure that they remain competitive and this is why we protect their desire for confidentiality.
- 2.3 The process can be expensive for the developers as it will require each of them to invest time and money in the evolution of a scheme which may not be successful at tender. Commercial confidentiality is therefore an important aspect to the process.
- 2.4 At the very highest end of the risk, disclosure of confidential or sensitive information may open the Council up to challenge by any of the bidders and put the Council at risk. In addition any action may bring the project to a halt.
- 2.5 The Council has to therefore carefully consider on an ongoing basis the extent to which we are able to put information into the public domain, in light of the above. The information below is what we are able to provide at this time.

3. UPDATE ON PROCUREMENT PROCESS

3.1 The Committee has previously received an explanation of the procurement process that is being followed, and an explanation of the steps which will be required after the award of contract. This section aims to provide a brief update on the ongoing procurement process.

3.2 Since the Committee meeting of 9 June 2009 a number of further meetings have been held with both bidders to explore, evolve, and rigorously test, their proposed schemes. These dialogue meetings are ongoing and further meetings are required and planned with both bidders. The Council is pleased that the process is progressing with two bidders and that Hitchin remains an attractive proposition to the bidders despite the current economic climate. Members will be aware of other schemes both locally and nationally which have been put on hold or cancelled due to the economic downturn and the fact that there are still two bidders spending money on their proposed schemes in a competitive situation is a reflection of the relative strength of Hitchin and its ability to recover sooner than other towns.

3.3 Dialogue meetings with the bidders will continue until the Council is satisfied that there is one or more solutions capable of meeting its needs, at which point it will close the Competitive Dialogue and issue an Invitation to Tender to the remaining bidders. The marking of this final tender and standstill period prior to Contract Award operate in much the same way as any other procurement process. The Council, in conjunction with its advisers, have devised an indicative eight week programme after the close of dialogue in which to assess the tenders prior to contract award. This is attached at appendix A. Please note that this is subject to change. This assessment process will include scrutiny from the Hitchin Town Centre Working Party of the project team's scoring of the tender submissions and a referral to Cabinet for approval. Cabinet will also scrutinise and assess the recommendation prior to making its decision. The headline criteria against which the bidders will be assessed is set out at appendix B. The project team has received legal advice that as the full scoring criteria forms part of the ongoing procurement process and therefore relates to the financial and business affairs of the authority it should not be disclosed at this state. However the full scoring criteria, including weightings, will be published after award of tender.

3.4 Members will recall that the project team has been targeting contract award in August or potentially September 2009. It is now anticipated that this will not happen until November 2009 as additional time is required to close dialogue than originally anticipated. This is due to a number of reasons, including the length of time the commercial discussions have taken to date, the likely amount of time required for the discussions on the legal documents and the holidays booked during July and August by all parties involved in the process. The speed of the discussions on the commercial aspects has in part been impacted by the decision making process whereby the bidders have needed to refer points back to their boards and equally the project team has had to consider the Council's approach on issues in separate discussions outside of the dialogue meetings. The respective advisers tasked with drafting/amending the documentation have also then needed their work to be approved by the relevant client before passing to the other side. This inevitably builds in delay, no matter how quickly the Council's project team has sought to turn matters around. Our advisers DTZ have reported that they are finding both within this process, and on other projects, that bidders are moving at a much slower sequential pace than they ever used to.

Companies are having to regularly report back to their Boards to report progress and seek approval to proceed and commit further funds and when 'risk' items are identified, rather than moving forward on other issues whilst attempting to resolve that item, they are tending to not move forward substantively until that item has been dealt with.

3.5 It has always been reported that the close of dialogue was a movable target due to the nature of the discussions and the procurement process. The project team, whilst frustrated at the likely remaining timescale (frustration which is no doubt shared by the members), considers that the most important factor is to ensure that the process achieves the right end result, even if that takes slightly more time than desired.

3.6 The current position relating to costs incurred to date, total £713K, is summarised as follows:

- Consultancy support & advice £464K
- Landlord functions £121K
- Planning authority functions £128K

This covers the period from when development was first mooted in 2001 to July 2009, these are exclusive of internal staff resources incurred by the Council.

3.7 The total costs estimated to be incurred up to developer selection stage is £780K. It is standard practice that some pre-development costs are recovered by agreement from the selected developer. Although at this stage in the selection process it cannot be predicted with any accuracy, the Council can expect to recover at least £200K of the above costs.

3.8 The next Hitchin Town Centre Working Party has not been fixed at this time, in order to allow the date to be arranged for a convenient time once further progress has been made with the bidders. It is likely that a meeting will be held in late August or early September and dialogue will not be closed without at least one further meeting.

4. PROGRAMME FOR COMMUNITY INVOLVEMENT

4.1 At the Hitchin Area Committee of 9 June 2009 there was a brief discussion on community involvement after the award of contract to the winning bidder. This issue was discussed at the Hitchin Town Centre Working Party on 7 July 2009 in order to agree the principles of a programme of community involvement in the Churchgate project, which in turn would be supplied to the bidders to help inform the delivery programmes that will be submitted as part of their tender submissions. Whilst there has been significant public consultation on the future of Churchgate during the preparation of the Planning Brief it is recognised that further consultation will be required prior to the submission of any planning application by the successful bidder.

- 4.2 The Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires all local planning authorities to prepare a Statement of Community Involvement (SCI). NHDC's SCI was adopted in July 2006. Paragraph 3.2 states "It is important to ensure that the community is involved in the determination of planning applications, particularly major applications". There are two main stages where we consult external bodies when determining planning applications, at the pre-application stage and formal consultation once a planning application has been submitted. At paragraph 3.3 it is stated that "The Council cannot insist on pre-application discussions with applicants but they are recommended. Where major schemes are proposed, the Council will encourage developers to engage with the local interest groups and residents."
- 4.3 As well as this statutory framework which affords considerable weight to the need for responsible developers to engage the local community prior to the submission of major planning applications, the importance of this approach is also emphasised in central government planning policy guidance in Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 1 'Delivering Sustainable Development'. Moreover, the Commission for Architecture and the Built Environment (CABE) in their publications emphasise how the evolution of good design is more effective when it is based on meaningful and early public consultation throughout the design process. The project team and both bidders are mindful of the need to follow this best practice and consider that the wider community should become involved in any further design evolution of any scheme post award of contract.
- 4.4 In addition to the requirements set out above, both bidders have indicated during the dialogue sessions that they wish to engage the community prior to submitting a planning application. In their view it is not in their interests to try to "force through" a development which will not be well received by the community it purports to provide for.
- 4.5 The Working Party has agreed a minimum of 3 levels of community engagement which will be required, with the winning bidder welcome to suggest further methods. The minimum requirements are:-
- A Churchgate Liaison Forum
 - A dedicated section on the NHDC website for the Churchgate project
 - Public exhibition

In addition the bidders will wish to hold discussions with key stakeholders such as the Hitchin BID team, Hitchin Market Limited, Herts Highways, English Heritage etc in relation to specific issues of interest to that stakeholder which have the potential to affect the scheme design proposal.

- 4.6 A Churchgate Liaison Forum (CLF) would be set up, made up of Councillors, officers, the developer, Hertfordshire County Council, business community representatives (including the market), residential community representatives and interest group representatives. At the point that the CLF is being established groups would be requested to contact the Council if they are interested in being part of CLF. In order to keep the numbers workable it is likely that some groups decide amongst themselves one or two representatives to attend the meeting. The purpose of the forum would be to test initial ideas, but also provide an important mechanism for communicating with Hitchin. Initially it is anticipated that CLF would meet bi-monthly.

- 4.7 It is also proposed that a dedicated section be created on the NHDC website for the Churchgate project. This would be a central point for announcements, publication of material and also collate past press releases, information notes to Hitchin Area Committee and other publicly released information.
- 4.8 At an appropriate point the winning bidder will be required to hold a public exhibition of their proposed scheme as part of the pre-planning submission consultation. A suitable venue in Hitchin, for example the Town Hall or an empty shop, would be hired and the proposed scheme displayed with the developer's team on hand to answer questions. Feedback forms would be handed out and an assessment made of the results. The consultation would be widely advertised but it would also be possible to invite groups to attend, for example local schools.
- 4.9 The above would all be carried out prior to the preparation of the planning permission in order to inform the scheme which is submitted. Further statutory consultation would be required during the planning application stage.

5. CONTACT OFFICERS

Norma Atlay, Strategic Director of Financial and Regulatory Services. Telephone: 01462 474297. E-mail address: norma.atlay@north-herts.gov.uk

Anthony Roche, Assistant Solicitor. Telephone 01462 474588. E-mail address: anthony.roche@north-herts.gov.uk

APPENDIX A – Post Dialogue Indicative Programme

APPENDIX B - Headline Criteria for Assessing Churchgate Tenders

- THIS PAGE IS BLANK -

Hitchin Churchgate - Post Dialogue Indicative Programme

Version: 26 June 2009

TASKS	WEEKS											
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12
Tender Period												
Issue Invitation to Tender	◆											
Tender Period	■	■										
Tender Submission Date		◆										
Tender Evaluation Process												
Clarifications as Required			■	■	■	■						
Initial Individual Evaluation & Score			■	■								
Project Team - Agree Initial Scores & Key Issues for Presentations			■									
Bidder Presentations to Project Team				■								
Project Team - Agree Final Scores & Justifications (Allow 2 days)				■	■							
Preparation of Tender Report & Recommendation					■	■						
Tender Board Process												
Tender Evaluation Report & Tender Documents to HTCWP					◆							
Bidder Presentations to HTCWP						■						
HTCWP challenge / provide feedback to Project Team						■	■					
Project Team amend / supplement report as appropriate & resubmit							■					
HTCWP endorse recommendations. Cabinet approval							◆					
Award Process												
Advise Bidders / PQQ Parties of Decision							◆					
Standstill Period							■	■	■			
Prepare Contract Documents							■	■	■			
Award Contract / Sign Contract Documents								◆				
Prepare & Submit Contract Award Notice									■	■		

HEADLINE CRITERIA FOR ASSESSING CHURCHGATE TENDERS

The Council will award the contract on the basis of the most economically advantageous tender. Bidders will be evaluated during the dialogue and tender phases in accordance with the following headline criteria:

- Extent that the proposed solution meets the Council's objectives; and
- Extent of risk allocation that may be detrimental to the Council, in terms of:
 - Financial risk;
 - Reputation risk;
 - Deliverability / viability;
 - Value for money; and
 - Compliance

The bidder submissions will focus on three key aspects:

- Quality and Design,
- Viability, Financial Return and Commerciality
- Delivery Programme

KEY DEVELOPMENT OBJECTIVES

The scoring on Quality and Design focuses on the ability to meet the key development objectives of:-

Vision – A high quality retail-led, mixed use scheme, with a significant residential component which will significantly enhance the town, both in terms of the quality of its retail offer and its visual amenity. This should contribute to the promotion of the town as a place to invest and live and attract a broad mix of visitors and residents;

Site Area – The inclusion as a minimum of areas 1 to 3 of the Churchgate Development Area, for redevelopment, and the potential enhancement of areas 4 & 5;

Design – A high quality overall design which contributes to the historic character and life of the market town and is integrated into its physical environment that retains key open views of St. Mary's Church particularly from Queen Street;

Retail – The provision of additional comparison units of variable size, including in excess of 200 sqm to enable the town to maintain its current market share as outlined in the Core Strategy Preferred Options Paper and the NLP Town Centre and Retail Study. The provision of suitable units to encourage both multiples and local independent retailers to move into or relocate within the town centre;

Residential – The provision of a mix of high quality private and affordable housing that has regard to the Council's Strategic Housing Market Assessment;

Market – Re-provision of the market to improve the operational efficiency and quality of the market's environment and contribution to the diversity of the town centre retail offering;

APPENDIX B

Car Parking – The provision of an integrated car parking solution that not only enhances accessibility but also maintains, as a minimum, the current number of parking spaces;

Highways, pedestrian linkages & public realm – The provision of high quality public realm that will provide a seamless connection of active streets, spaces and paths where compatible with the historic character of the town including a strengthened pedestrian link between the Market Place, River Hiz and St. Mary's Square. The delivery of a sustainable transport solution for the highways in the town centre to ensure easy access to and from the centre for public and private transport;

Conveniences – Re-provision of public conveniences that should be conveniently located, freely accessible to the public and maintained at no expense to the Council.

The scoring on Viability, Financial Return and Commerciality focuses on the ability to meet the key development objectives of:-

Viability & Financial Return – The provision of a solution that is commercially viable, sustainable, satisfies Best Value considerations and is in excess of NHDC's current revenue income;

Management & Maintenance – Establishment of long term management and maintenance structures at minimal cost and risk to the public sector.

Commerciality – To contract with a development partner on a favourable commercial and appropriate risk sharing basis.

The scoring on Delivery Programme focuses on the ability to meet the key development objectives of:-

Delivery timing – The provision of a timely development within the proposed timeframe;

Site assembly – The efficient assembly of land necessary for the timely execution of the Development;

Market Continuity – The provision of continuity of service for the market during the Works period;

Car parking – The continuous provision of an appropriate level of car parking during the Works period.

TITLE: DRAFT PARKING STRATEGY

REPORT OF THE STRATEGIC DIRECTOR OF PLANNING, HOUSING AND ENTERPRISE

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The Council's current Parking Strategy runs until 2009. A new draft Parking Strategy has been produced and was considered by Cabinet in June. Cabinet resolved to seek the Area Committees' views on the draft Strategy prior to its meeting in September.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report contains a recommendation on a key decision that was published in the Forward Plan in June 2009.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's current Parking Strategy runs until 2009. In 2008 the Transport Fundamental Service Review identified the need for the Strategy to be reviewed.
- 3.2 The Council's car park ticket machines are now nearing the end of their working lives so there is a need to consider how to replace them.
- 3.3 A draft Parking Strategy was considered at Cabinet on 23rd June 2009. Cabinet resolved to seek the views of the Area Committees on the draft Strategy prior to considering it in more detail at Cabinet in September 2009.

4. ISSUES

- 4.1 Appendix 1 sets out the draft Parking Strategy and Appendix 2 the report that accompanied it to Cabinet. The majority of the issues are considered in these two documents.
- 4.2 The draft Parking Strategy's main purpose is to set the policy for directing decisions on parking.
- 4.3 The draft Parking Strategy acknowledges that there is a need to consider additional parking management areas in some residential areas alongside a review of existing Controlled Parking Zones. An area wide approach is recommended to avoid a piecemeal and less cost effective approach to parking management.

- 4.4 In town centres the draft Parking Strategy sets out policy on reviewing tariffs and the potential for considering evening and Sunday charging off-street as well as on-street charging.
- 4.5 There is a need to consider a new off-street parking management system as current ticket machines are nearing the end of their working lives. Further work will be commissioned to compare Pay and Display options with Pay on Foot. In the interim, Cabinet has endorsed a trial Pay by Phone service for 12-15 months.
- 4.6 Following completion of the Strategy and once a decision is made on a car park management system, an Action Plan will be produced setting out the work programme over the ten year timescale of the Strategy, subject to the Corporate Business Planning Process. The Strategy will be regularly reviewed over this period, reflecting changing circumstances not least due to the ongoing Town Centre Strategies and Urban Transport Plans.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 There are no financial or risk implications arising directly from this report. Refer to Section 6 in the Cabinet Report attached at Appendix 2.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no human resource or equalities implications arising from this report.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 8.1 Hertfordshire Highways and Hertfordshire Constabulary were consulted prior to the draft Strategy being prepared. Since Cabinet in June, both organisations have been consulted on the actual draft Parking Strategy. In addition, Town Centre Managers have been consulted on the draft Parking Strategy, as have County Council Members of the North Hertfordshire Highways Joint Member Panel. Any issues from those consulted on the draft Strategy will be reported at the Area Committee.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That the Area Committee consider the draft Parking Strategy and refer any comments on it to Cabinet for its consideration in September 2009.
- 9.2 That Members provide the Transport Policy Officer with any parking issues they wish to see included in the forthcoming Action Plan.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 Cabinet has requested the views of the Area Committees on the draft Parking Strategy.
- 10.2 In order to ensure that any Action Plan resulting from the draft Parking Strategy is informed by as much local knowledge as possible.

11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 11.1 None other than those identified in Appendix 2.

12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Draft Parking Strategy
Appendix 2 – Report to Cabinet, 23rd June 2009

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 13.1 Simon Young
Transport Policy Officer
Simon.young@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474846

Please also see Officers listed in Appendix 2.

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

Please see reference in Appendix 2.

THIS PAGE IS BLANK

DRAFT

CABINET: 23 JUNE 2009

ITEM 12
APPENDIX 1

North Hertfordshire District Council

Parking Strategy 2009 – 2019

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 North Hertfordshire District Council's first parking strategy covered the period 2004-09. This review of that strategy follows several years' experience of managing on-street parking enforcement as well as demand for additional parking controls and pressure for changes in how town centre car parking is managed.
- 1.2 The Council's role with regard to on-street car parking remains one of implementing Controlled Parking Zones and managing the enforcement of all on-street parking restrictions in the district. This management and enforcement role extends into the off-street car parks the Council owns and/or manages mainly in town centres.
- 1.3 The Council's agreement with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC - i.e. the Highway Authority) does not include the implementation of other on-street parking controls (i.e. Traffic Regulation Orders – TROs) that are intended to address safety or public amenity issues. There are examples of safety and/or amenity concerns included in this strategy but the responsibility for implementing lies with HCC.
- 1.4 The Council's town centre car parks have 'Pay and Display' ticket machines. These machines have reached the end of their working lives and the Pay and Display system itself presents a number of challenges in terms of management and, importantly, ease of use for the customer. This Strategy identifies how the Council will look to improve its town centre car parks over the next five to ten years.
- 1.5 There are a number of other parking issues that this strategy will cover. For example, there is increasing demand for Blue Badge Holder parking bays in residential areas and this strategy will set the policy and criteria for providing such bays. Demand for cycle parking in town centres and at other key destinations has grown and especially at Stations has proved to be very popular.

DRAFT

2.0 Planning in times of uncertainty

- 2.1 The economic downturn clearly affects town centres and demand for parking generally. Pressure of non-residential parking in residential areas may, in some areas, ease but will be likely to return when economic circumstances improve. Similarly demand for town centre parking may reduce during less favourable economic times but there is an opportunity to plan for returning high levels of demand alongside the forecast growth in housing and jobs in and around the district.
- 2.2 In addition to the planned growth for the area, there are major development opportunities in Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston. In all cases new developments should improve the attractiveness of each town and therefore demand for parking. Much of the land identified for new developments includes land currently used for car parking so this strategy will need to consider how this affects town centre parking provision in the medium to longer term. The uncertainties about timing of these developments means that this strategy will need to be reviewed on a regular basis.
- 2.3 This Strategy is intended to cover the period 2009 to 2019. This ten year timescale reflects the lifetime of a new car park management system as well as an amount of time that could allow for many of the ongoing on street parking control issues to be addressed. It is acknowledged, however, that the Strategy should be kept under review during this period not least because of the implications of major development opportunities in Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston.

3.0 Background and Policy

- 3.1 Parking availability of any type of vehicle is an important factor in determining how people travel. Parking availability also influences the vitality and viability of town centres and the attractiveness of residential areas. In some places on-street parking can act as a traffic calming measure, in others it is a problem for residents and businesses and can be a barrier to accessibility for pedestrians, cyclists, passenger transport, emergency and other service vehicles.
- 3.2 There is a balance to be struck between providing and restricting car parking. This strategy must be read alongside Urban Transport Plans for towns as well as the Town Centre Strategies, Community Strategy and the Local Development Framework to provide the full picture on how a balance can be struck between environmental protection, economic growth, accessibility, health improvement and social inclusion.

DRAFT

- 3.3 Car ownership is predicted to continue to grow over next twenty or so years alongside growth from new housing in and adjacent to the District. The Strategy is flexible enough to respond to demand for parking and at the same time seek to influence car use. Experience with parking standards at new development indicates that policies on parking are best suited to influencing car use not ownership.
- 3.4 There is a range of national, regional and local policy that is relevant to parking, promoting the vitality and viability of town centres, assisting residents and businesses and seeking to minimise the impact on Climate Change. Some of the key aims and objectives are set out below.
- 3.5 At the national level the Government's Strategy is set out in 'Delivering a Sustainable Transport Strategy' which sets out the Government's five main goals as follows:
- "We want our transport system:*
- to support national economic competitiveness and growth, by delivering reliable and efficient transport networks;*
 - to reduce transport's emissions of carbon dioxide and other greenhouse gases, with the desired outcome of tackling climate change;*
 - to contribute to better safety, security and health and longer life expectancy by reducing the risk of death, injury or illness arising from transport, and by promoting travel modes that are beneficial to health;*
 - to promote greater equality of opportunity for all citizens, with the desired outcome of achieving a fairer society; and*
 - to improve quality of life for transport users and non-transport users, and to promote a healthy natural environment."*
- 3.6 Alongside planning policies contained in Planning Policy Statements and other advice on providing for parking (e.g. Blue Badge Holders, Motorcycles and Pedal Cycles) the Parking Strategy supports national objectives. There is a balance that needs to be struck between tackling climate change and providing for parking to support town centres. The Strategy will ensure that excessive amounts of parking are not provided and the Council's Town Centre Strategies are promoting greater pedestrian priority and less circulation of traffic. The Strategy also seeks to reduce long stay parking in many residential areas, thus promoting alternative modes of travel or car sharing by restricting parking.

DRAFT

- 3.7 Countywide policy on parking is set out in Hertfordshire County Council's Local Transport Plan (LTP) Long Term Strategy. The following summarises the LTP approach:

“Car parking is one of the key elements in managing the highway network and encouraging alternatives to the car. The overall aims of the parking strategy are:

- *to reduce dependence on the car, particularly in town centres*
- *to minimise the safety and congestion effects of on-street parking*
- *to help maintain the vitality of town centres and to discourage out-of-town developments*
- *to ensure that car parking provision and enforcement are broadly self-financing”*

- 3.8 The Parking Strategy sits alongside the existing Town Centre Strategies and will support existing and emerging Urban Transport Plans for our towns. The Strategy acknowledges the importance of parking in our town centres but seeks to strike a balance between providing for cars and other modes of transport. In addition the policy on charging supports alternative modes of travel, especially in the case of long stay and the Strategy provides the scope for considering on street charging which will help manage the impact of traffic in town centres.

The Council's own Corporate priorities are focused on promoting Town Centres, Green Issues and Sustainable Development.

- 3.9 Key features of the Strategy that support the above priorities are as follows:

- **Town Centres** – provision of a balance of on and off street, short and long stay parking with appropriate tariffs supports the retail and business functions of town centres. The Strategy does not seek to provide an excessive amount of car parking but, at its heart, is the need to promote the economic vitality and viability of town centres.
- **Green Issues** – the need to reduce Carbon Dioxide emissions is a key consideration and the Parking Strategy will contribute towards reducing long stay parking in residential areas by commuters and employees. This is one way of encouraging use of alternative modes of travel. In town centres the Strategy supports the Town Centre Strategies' insofar as it recognises the need to minimise circulating traffic by way of balancing on and off street parking provision. In addition the Strategy identifies the need to improve the ease of use of car parks, thus reducing circulating traffic and queuing traffic.

DRAFT

- **Sustainable development** – the Parking Strategy acknowledges as a key issues the need to support town centres as local facilities. This support will help ensure that towns in the district remain important retail and service destinations in their own right. The provision of new housing and employment in and around our existing towns will place additional pressures on parking facilities and the Strategy will enable the Council to find the best way for providing for and managing this demand. The Strategy also supports the provision of parking for Blue Badge Holders, allowing improved accessibility and ensuring people with disabilities have access to local shops, services and their own homes.

4.0 Management and resources

- 4.1 The management of on and off street parking in the district falls into two broad categories. Firstly the enforcement of on and off street parking (i.e. the public 'face' of the service) and secondly, the back office management which assists the enforcement function as well as day to day management of issues such as Season Ticket and Residents Permit applications as well as customer queries.
- 4.2 Managing car park ticket machines (in terms of cash collection, planned and reactive maintenance) as well as monitoring the status of machines also falls within the day to day management function. In addition the Council allocates resources to physical maintenance of car parks, again on a planned and reactive basis.
- 4.3 With regard to on street parking the Council, in conjunction with Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary, prepares and implements new or amended Traffic Regulation Orders, principally for Controlled Parking Zones.
- 4.4 The entire daily management resource covers both town centres and elsewhere, both on and off street so changes to one aspect of the service as a result of this Strategy are likely to have implications for the whole service resource. The level of resources provided will dictate how the Strategy will be delivered and the service managed. As such the need to consider management and resource issues across the whole service is an appropriate place to start.

DRAFT

Policy 1 - Management and Resources

In order to deliver this Parking Strategy the Council is committed to finding the most efficient and effective use of resources to implement improvements and manage the parking service on a day to day basis.

To do this the Council will consider the resource implications of:

- 1) The type of off street car park management system in use and demand for it to be managed
- 2) The amount of on street parking controls and demand for it to be managed, including changes in times of day or days of the week
- 3) The implications of a review of CPZs on the demand for managing on street parking
- 4) The potential impact of on street charging
- 5) The potential of future development sites in town centres
- 6) The possibility of partnering or other parking management options
- 7) Changes in legislation or financial issues
- 8) The potential to manage other third party car parking facilities

4.5 The Council is acutely aware of the limitations on its resources. As well as looking at more efficient and effective ways of working the Council will, therefore, seek to secure additional resources towards delivering this Strategy. For example developer contributions, Lottery funding, Growth Area Funding or matched funding with or from other organisations are potential sources of funding for parking, often as part of a package of measures.

4.6 In addition to Council owned and managed parking resources there are other privately owned and run car parks in town centres and especially at Railway Stations. Charging policies in private car parks can have significant implications for surrounding streets and car parks. The Council will maintain a dialogue with other car park providers in order to ensure that parking provision as a whole does not have unacceptable impact on other car parks or on street locations.

5.0 Town Centres

5.1 The four towns of Hitchin, Letchworth, Baldock and Royston are different in terms of demand for parking, reflecting the different retail and servicing offer in each town as well as their physical characteristics. The economic downturn has affected each town centre alongside other longer term trends where out of centre retailing and growth in internet and other types of shopping have affected town centres for shopping purposes.

DRAFT

- 5.2 The availability of car parking supports the town centres and the level of demand for parking in each town reflects the variations between the amount of shops and services in each town. Currently off-street parking is charged during the daytime, Monday to Saturday whilst on-street parking is free of charge at all times. There are privately operated car parks in Hitchin and Letchworth that, combined with Council owned and operated car parks and off-street parking provide a varied amount of parking in terms of on and off-street, short and long stay, location and price.
- 5.3 The balance between short and long stay off-street parking broadly reflects current demand. The Pay and Display (P&D) system in operation does not offer suitable flexibility to manage tariffs to respond to changes or variations in demand. Differential tariffs were agreed for 2009 between car parks within towns and also between towns. This approach has been adopted to reflect the different demands for parking between and even within town centres.
- 5.4 Currently on-street parking within town centres is free of charge, as is off-street parking after 6pm and on Sundays. On-street parking in 'core' shopping streets as well as more peripheral areas provide a significant additional parking resource and is especially important for Blue Badge Holder access as well as for servicing and loading. The majority of this parking is short stay although some longer stay on-street parking conflicts with residents' parking in peripheral streets.
- 5.5 Hitchin is the busiest town in terms of parking demand. Parking survey work at the end of 2008 suggested that, on Saturdays there is almost 100% take up of parking on and off-street. With future plans for significant development in Hitchin town centre the availability of parking in Hitchin will need to be considered carefully so as to ensure the vitality and viability of the town is supported without seriously undermining its environment and running contrary to wider objectives to reduce carbon emissions.
- 5.6 Letchworth has similar development potential although currently has capacity off-street in car parks. Again there will be a need to balance the provision of parking to support the town centre economically without having an adverse effect on its environment. It is especially important that the significant volume of on-street parking does not act as a catalyst for promoting excessive circulating traffic to the detriment of the pedestrian environment.

DRAFT

- 5.7 Royston town centre is currently not realising its potential. Consequently parking supply outstrips demand quite considerably and the recent Town Centre Strategy identifies that potentially some parking could be lost to accommodate development sites to expand the town's retail offer. The availability of parking will need to be re-assessed as individual sites come forward for development.
- 5.8 Baldock town centre is different to the other towns insofar as, until recently, much of its on-street parking in the core area was taken by long stay parking. The recent Town Centre Enhancements will result in a shift to shorter stay parking in the town centre with an anticipated need to protect residents' parking in areas around the town centre. There are also existing rail commuter parking issues which often overlap with areas used as town centre long stay parking.
- 5.9 Whilst not a town centre, the centre of Knebworth has many of the same characteristics of a small town centre. There is demand for short stay parking for shoppers as well as long stay parking by rail commuters, employees and residents. Currently short stay parking is reduced by long stay usage which does not support local traders.
- 5.10 The Council will follow the following principles when providing for town centre parking:
1. To support the objectives of the Town Centre Strategies
 2. To ensure parking provision is considered within the context of all other policy considerations, in particular Urban Transport Plans and strategies to address Climate Change
 3. Improve the ease of use of all parking facilities i.e. the customer experience
 4. Increase the potential for on street parking to be self-financing
 5. Improve the management of parking by providing better information for users and decision makers
- 5.11 Off-street provision

In general there is sufficient capacity for all types of parking in town centres. There are some pressures as follows:

1. In Hitchin in market days there is very little capacity available both on and off-street.
2. Certain short stay car parks are more popular than others (e.g. Town Hall in Letchworth) and users will wait for spaces in these car parks rather than use other short stay alternatives.
3. Despite there being capacity in off-street car parks there is pressure on on-street parking both in town centres and adjacent streets.

DRAFT

4. Future developments planned via the Town Centre Strategies will place even more pressure on off-street parking provision.

Policy 2 - Off Street Car Park Capacity

The Council will investigate the need for additional capacity for car parking where it can be justified in supporting town centre economic vitality and viability without unacceptable environmental impact.

- 5.12 The quality and safety of off-street car parks is often a key consideration for car park users. This often falls into two basic categories – the quality, convenience and safety of the car park and the quality, safety and convenience of the route from the car park to town centre shops. Much of the latter will be dealt with via Town Centre Strategies and development proposals but there are some key issues for consideration with regard to enhancing the use of car parks.

Policy 3 - Physical Improvements to Car Parks

The Council will identify and keep under review a programme of physical improvements for its car parks. This will be done in conjunction with Area Committees, Town Centre Management, Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary and via feedback from car park users.

- 5.13 Some of the key issues the Council will consider are:

1. The Letchworth multi-story car park has narrow parking spaces, poor lighting, décor and pedestrian circulation space. There are also problems with regard to water leaking between decks and general surfacing quality. The lifts are often in a poor condition or not working
2. The Lairage multi-story in Hitchin is accessed from the top and exited at the bottom. Car park users have no way of knowing whether spaces are available in lower levels so a system of advising users of space availability would address this problem.
3. There is an ongoing need for maintaining car park surfacing, lining, and signing.
4. In some places security and vandalism are a problem so there is a need to consider how to manage this and eradicate it.
5. In order to support the need for better traffic management and to direct users towards available parking, the potential for Variable Message Signing on approaches to car parks should be considered. This could be in the form of 'real time' information or just more basic signing advising on the direction to and capacity of each car park.

DRAFT

5.14 Off-street car park management system

Currently the Council provides coin only operated Pay and Display ticket machines in car parks it owns or operates. The equipment is now dated and the following issues have to be considered:

- The age of machines and the cost of maintaining them
- The appropriateness of Pay and Display for promoting town centre use (i.e. the user has to anticipate the length of stay before buying a ticket)
- The amount of non-payment of tariffs either due to users 'taking a chance' or not having the correct change
- The amount of transferring of tickets between users
- Meter feeding.
- The potential for users to pay for actual use rather than over-payment due to machines not issuing change
- Potential for cashless payment – in line with credit card or 'Chip & Pin' transactions either at the machine or via telephone
- The security of machines and cash handling issues
- The lack of data from machines on usage, management or faults
- The staff resources required to ensure compliance with car park tariffs and car park regulations as well as 'back office' management.

5.15 Modern Pay and Display machines can offer cashless payments and provide data for management and usage but many of the other key issues that affects the current system will still apply.

5.16 An alternative could be the introduction of a Pay on Foot system. In simple terms this involves barriered entry and exit with users paying at pay stations before returning to their vehicles. Whilst this system ensures all users pay for parking and only pay for the time they stay it is very expensive and will require a considerable change in approach to parking management.

5.17 More recently payment for parking by telephone has been introduced by other local authorities that operate a Pay and Display system. This has the potential to provide flexibility for people wishing to stay in town centres without having to be restricted by what ticket they have purchased at the outset.

DRAFT

Policy 4 – Car Park Management System

The Council will investigate the most appropriate car park management system for the district with a view to agreeing a programme for implementing a new system with a minimum ten year lifespan.

Options to consider will include:

1. Replace current machines with similar coin only Pay and Display machines
2. Replace current machines with coin and 'Chip & Pin' Pay and Display machines
3. Provide Pay by phone with either of the above two Pay and Display options, potentially on a trial basis initially
4. Replace the current machines with a 'Pay on Foot' system

The Council will have regard to the wider economic and development influences on town centres and the likely demand for parking in the medium to longer term.

The Council will also consider the implications of introducing a charging system for other 'free of charge' car parks.

- 5.18 More modern ticket machines with daily connectivity will provide accurate information on usage and management issues. Payment by telephone will also provide data on usage. Usage information will negate the need for expensive surveys of car parking and will also allow the Council to consider managing car parks and tariffs on a more flexible basis, possible even on a micro scale rather than district wide.
- 5.19 Accurate information from car parks also allows the Council to support initiatives at Christmas or for parking rebate schemes in partnership with traders.
- 5.20 Currently the Council reviews its town centre parking tariffs every three years, usually reflecting inflation per annum, equating to a minimum increase of 10p per tariff band. This largely reflects the limitations of the ticket machines in terms of coin types accepted and the very limited information available on car park usage from ticket machines and on-street usage.
- 5.21 In 2009 tariff increase considered the different demand for parking both within and between towns. As a result 'differential' tariffs now exist reflecting the higher demand for parking in Hitchin and Letchworth compared to Royston. In addition some 'prime' short stay car parks within Hitchin and Letchworth have higher tariffs than other short stay car parks in the same towns, reflecting observed demand from surveys of users.

DRAFT

5.22 Tariffs can also be used to manage parking demand, potentially directing users to less busy car parks. There is a fine line between using tariffs in this way and putting people off coming to town centres.

Policy 5 - Reviewing Tariffs

The Council will review tariffs every two years starting from 2010 allowing for inflation as a baseline. It will consider the following:

1. Usage and demand for car parks within towns as a whole
2. Differences in demand for parking within car parks
3. Differences in demand for parking between days and times of the day
4. Economic vitality and viability of town centres
5. Tariffs used in other private car parks within towns
6. Tariffs used in other nearby towns
7. Tariff rebate or discount schemes
8. Short stay tariffs should to reflect the key objectives of Town Centre Strategies with specific regard to supporting duration of stay.
9. Long stay tariffs should compare favourable with return local bus or rail fares in order to encourage alternative modes of travel to town centres.
10. The practicalities of implementing tariff increases depending on the types of ticket machines in operation.
11. Other issues such as the need to prevent unnecessary circulating traffic due to big tariff differences between car parks.

5.23 Currently there is no charge for Sunday or evening parking in town centres. In recent years certain towns have increased activity on Sundays and during the evenings and car parks are used during these times. Charging for parking will place greater demands on management and enforcement resources as well as have implications for the economic viability of town centres during these times.

Policy 6 - Charging for Evenings and Sundays

The Council will consider charging for parking for evenings and Sundays when tariffs are reviewed and depending on what charging system may be in place in the future. The evening and Sunday charging review will be carried out in consultation with Area Committees and Town Centre Management and will consider the demand for Evening and Sunday parking, economic circumstances of town centres at the time and availability of alternatives as well as resource implications for managing car parks outside current charging hours.

DRAFT

- 5.24 In line with modern car park operations, there is potential for other services to be provided in off-street car parks in the district. Where appropriate some of these services may benefit car park users and the Council will consider opportunities on a case by case basis.

Policy 7 - Other Services in Council Car Parks

The Council will consider opportunities for providing other services to customers in its car parks. In some cases services may be provided by third parties and in all cases consideration will be given to the appropriateness of the service provided as well as the implications for use of the car park and town centre generally.

Services could include:

1. Advertising on tickets, ticket machines or elsewhere
2. Promotion or marketing initiatives
3. Other events associated with town centre promotion or activities
4. Other appropriate commercial activities

- 5.25 There is a considerable amount of on-street parking in town centres. Much of this parking is as close, if not closer, to main shopping areas than off-street parking. This makes it popular and survey information indicates that turnover of spaces is significant.
- 5.26 On-street parking is currently free of charge and this, coupled with the short stay parking restrictions in place, means a significant amount of vehicles moving through town centres searching for on-street parking, often when there is spare capacity in off-street car parks. In some locations this puts circulating traffic in areas where pedestrian activity is busiest.
- 5.27 On-street parking generally falls into five categories:
1. Short stay (e.g. 20 minute or half hourly duration)
 2. Medium stay (e.g. 1 – 3 hours duration)
 3. Long stay (e.g. 3 hours plus)
 4. Blue Badge holder parking
 5. Loading and servicing
- 5.28 The Council will review the provision of on-street parking, especially where Town Centre Strategies are progressing and the demand for or need for on-street parking may change over time. The principle of short stay in core area and medium/longer stay further away from shops is the preferred approach.

DRAFT

- 5.29 From time to time there may be a need to review provision of on-street parking in town centres where servicing, emergency vehicles and buses have difficulty accessing key destinations.

Policy 8 - On Street Parking Provision

In consultation with District Area Committees, Town Centre Management, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary the Council will review provision of on-street parking as and when circumstances change in town centres. Consideration will be given for retaining the overall quantum and balance in duration of stay of on-street parking spaces unless circumstances indicate that there will be limited detrimental impact to the town centre of removing on street parking or amending duration of parking.

The Council will continue to pursue a policy of short stay in core streets, medium stay in peripheral streets and medium to longer stay in streets further out from the centre, subject to provision not conflicting with other demands or giving rise to safety, access or amenity concerns

- 5.30 The Council manages the enforcement of on-street parking controls in town centres. This considerable cost is not off-set by users paying for service at source, as is the case in off-street car parks. In addition the Council is concerned about the implications for town centre vitality and viability of the volumes of traffic circulating in town centres. This problem will only become more acute when development sites in town centres come forward.
- 5.31 Town Centre Strategies identify the need for increased pedestrian priority measures as well as identifying the need for town centre users to use car parks on the edges of shopping areas and walk rather than circulate by car through core town centre streets.
- 5.32 In summary there is a balance between providing on-street parking in town centres, the cost of managing that provision and the implications for town centres as shopping environments of the volume of traffic it generates.
- 5.33 Charging for on-street parking is one way of managing these impacts and is in line with managing parking elsewhere in car parks and on-street parking in residential areas (i.e. via permit charges).

Policy 9 - On Street Charging

The Council will consider the case for on-street parking charges when off-street parking tariffs are reviewed. This will be carried out in consultation with Area Committees, Town Centre Management, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary.

DRAFT

Key issues to consider will be as follows:

1. The economic vitality and viability of town centres and the implications of introducing on street charging
2. The cost of implementing and managing on-street charging
3. Appropriate tariffs for on-street charging alongside off-street parking charges (see also the issues in 'Reviewing Tariffs')
4. Appropriate charging times and days for on-street parking

The following category of on street charging areas will be considered in conjunction with the above:

1. Core shopping streets with the lowest duration of stay and highest turnover of spaces.
2. Next to core shopping streets with short to medium stay duration
3. Longer stay on the edges of town centres, with specific regard to the potential for parking migrating to non-town centre areas.
4. Longer stay elsewhere e.g. for employee, commuter or education users

5.34 The Council has maintained a policy of providing on-street and off-street parking for Blue Badge Holders in a variety of locations in town centres. This reflects the need for Blue Badge Holders to park near their destination on grounds of reduced accessibility. There is, at times, great demand for prime Blue Badge Holder spaces and the opportunity for increasing provision in key destinations is limited. There is also a considerable amount of abuse of Blue Badge Holder parking bays by non-Blue Badge Holders, especially on a short stay basis.

Policy 10 - Parking for Blue Badge Holders

The Council will maintain its policy of providing free parking for Blue Badge Holders both on and off street in a variety of locations around town centres. Where circumstances change (for example associated with a new car park management system, development proposals or demand for more pedestrian priority) the views of stakeholders, the Area Committee, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary will be sought on future provision for Blue Badge Holders.

Where demand arises the Council will also seek to identify and provide parking space for mobility scooters.

Pedestrian priority measures will be designed with the needs of Blue Badge Holders' parking needs as a key consideration.

DRAFT

- 5.35 Another key issue for town centres is the availability of service access and loading bays for serving shops and businesses. Currently loading bays are provided in locations where demand for on-street parking is high, road space is often limited and specific provision is needed to assist business deliveries. The Town Centre Strategies identify potential demand for pedestrian priority measures and increased retail provision in town centres. Pressure for servicing and loading access will increase in town centres, potentially being directly at odds with the ability to carry out servicing and deliveries where pedestrian priority becomes more in-demand.
- 5.36 There is now restricted access to core shopping streets in Hitchin on Saturdays. This, along with experience from outside the district, suggests that there are ways of maintaining service access alongside demand for greater pedestrian priority.

Policy 11 - Servicing and Loading

The Council will seek to maintain servicing and delivery access for businesses and residents in town centres. As proposals from Town Centre Strategies come forward, the ability to maintain servicing and delivery access throughout the day in certain parts of town centres may be limited, therefore needing a more flexible or managed solution.

In consultation with Town Centre Management, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary the Council will review servicing and delivery access as and when circumstances require. The preference will be to serve properties from the rear where possible and, if not possible, from the street.

Pedestrian priority measures will be designed with the needs of servicing and delivery access as a key consideration.

- 5.37 Emergency access in town centres is a key consideration and many of the issues associated with it are similar to those affecting servicing and deliveries. The one key difference is the need to preserve human life overriding the need for any other access or parking requirements. The emergency services will park wherever needed in an emergency and the Council seeks to support their ability to get access into town centres and not be impeded by other parking. Much of this issue is a matter for the management and enforcement of town centre parking.

DRAFT

Policy 12 - Emergency Services' Access

The Council will work with Hertfordshire County Council and the Emergency Services to review town centre parking provision in order to ensure that there are no circumstances where parking is consistently impeding emergency service access.

Pedestrian priority measures will be designed with the needs of the Emergency Services as a key consideration.

- 5.38 Increased use of both modes of transport help reduce congestion in town centres and pressure on car parking. Increased bicycle use also helps reduce carbon emissions and the Council's Proposed Cycle Route Network alongside Urban Transport Plans for the towns will identify improvements to routes to and from town centres for bicycles.
- 5.39 Security and shelter are key issues for both types of two wheeled user. Both are able to park free of charge and bicycle parking stands are generally situated at various locations around town centres. Powered two wheelers are able to park in designated areas of off-street car parks, on street or in other informal locations, often sharing with bicycle parking.

Policy 13 - Powered Two Wheeler and Bicycle Parking

The Council will work with Town Centre Management, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary to seek to identify and provide additional parking facilities for powered two wheelers and bicycles. The most appropriate mechanism for delivering improvements is via Urban Transport Plans or Town Centre Strategies but the principle of small scale provision at a variety of locations in town centres is the start point.

For powered two wheelers the Council will work with Hertfordshire County Council to identify locations where specific provision can be made to park motorbikes and mopeds and lock them securely to a fixed object.

Provision for powered two wheelers will continue to be made in off-street car parks free of charge. Opportunities for increasing provision will be made where they can be identified.

- 5.40 Currently the Council provides Coach and Heavy Goods Vehicle (HGV) overnight parking in Woodside car park in Hitchin. The Council will consider provision for similar parking where demand arises.

DRAFT

Policy 14 - Bus, Coach and HGV Parking in Town Centres

The Council will work with Ward Councillors, Town Centre Management, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary to identify parking provision for Buses, Coaches and HGVs as and when demand is identified.

- 5.41 There are several locations within town centres where existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs) are not as clear as they should be, leading to some confusion amongst users. As such this encourages parking in locations or for durations not intended. These outstanding issues need to be resolved to ensure that parking management in town centres can be effective

Policy 15 - Updating Traffic Regulation Orders

The Council will identify and take action on any Traffic Regulation Orders in town centres that need to be reviewed to improve clarity for users.

6.0 Residential and other non-Town Centre Areas

- 6.1 The District Council has been managing on-street parking controls for five years and has considerable experience of the most appropriate way of addressing parking issues in residential areas. The agreement the Council has with Hertfordshire County Council permits the District Council to implement Traffic Regulation Orders that provide for parking, mainly in the form of Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs).
- 6.2 The Council now manages 12 Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs) in residential areas of Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston. These zones have been successful in removing non-residential parking although the original intention was for CPZs to be self financing. This has not been the case and with demand for additional CPZs this Strategy will consider how to provide additional CPZs, whether there is potential for CPZs and other on street parking to be self financing and whether existing CPZs need to be reviewed in the light of the past few years' experiences.
- 6.3 Other TROs are implemented from time to time in the district that are mainly to do with preventing parking and/or promoting safety and public amenity. Whilst the District Council may enforce these types of parking restrictions they remain the responsibility of Hertfordshire County Council to implement.

DRAFT

- 6.4 The overall aim is to minimising the effects of street parking upon road safety, congestion and the environment. The approach of this Strategy is to consider an area wide approach rather than street by street. It is recognised that it is difficult to convince residents of currently unaffected areas to consider parking controls but this Strategy seeks to identify how an area wide approach may benefit wider residential areas. In reality, provision of measures to provide for parking on-street may involve a combination of CPZs and other TROs by the District Council.
- 6.5 The provision of CPZs has been focussed on removing non-residential car parking in residential areas, normally long stay and mainly associated with commuters, employees and town centre users. The CPZ's implemented to date have been successful in achieving the removal of non-residential parking but experience over the last few years has shown that:
1. Non-residential parking problems migrate, not always to the most likely areas
 2. Controlled Parking Zones are expensive and income from permits do not cover the cost of implementing and managing the zones.
 3. There are other ways of dealing with non-residential parking that may be as effective in terms of removing non-residential parking but not being as costly to implement and manage as CPZs
- 6.6 Removing long stay, non-residential parking can help promote alternative modes of travel to town centres, employment areas and railway stations. There are important overlaps with the Urban Transport Plans in this respect as removing on-street parking may free up road space for other facilities such as cycle routes or pedestrian crossings.
- 6.7 There may be instances where removing non-residents parking creates the circumstances for excessive speed for vehicles and therefore demands for traffic calming. In some cases retaining some on street parking, including long stay may serve to keep traffic speeds down.
- 6.8 In considering parking control areas the Council will need to consider the wider implications of any parking restrictions for all road users. The Council will also identify whether there is any scope for delivering parking improvements in conjunction with other highways works being undertaken, for example, maintenance of safety engineering schemes.
- 6.9 The Council recognises that there are still some areas of the District that suffer from excessive amounts of long stay parking that is a problem and has identified areas that will need attention over the course of this strategy. The following objectives summarise the Council's priorities in dealing with on-street parking problems:

DRAFT

- ◆ where residents compete for road parking space in their own streets with other groups (local workers, commuters etc) new schemes will give greater priority to residents.
- ◆ where local businesses compete for road parking space in their local industrial areas with other groups, (commuters etc) new schemes will give greater priority to local businesses.

6.10 A two stage process is required to assess the need for action and, if it is agreed that action is needed, what needs to be considered to identify the best solution. Stage 1 of the process is largely concerned with identifying problem areas that need further detailed investigation to determine the extent of any problems and possible solutions.

Policy 16 - Identifying On Street Parking Problem Areas

The Council will investigate and take action according to the following initial appraisal:

- ◆ Where residents, with no off street parking provision, are regularly prevented from parking in their streets or reasonable walking distance by commuters, local workers, students or other long-stay parkers.
- ◆ Where businesses are impeded in their daily activities, by parked vehicles associated with commuters, local workers, students or other long-stay parkers.
- ◆ Where the local Area Committee, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Police are agreed that action needs to be taken to reduce the risk of accidents.
- ◆ Where the Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Police are agreed that action needs to be taken to prevent regular significant queuing and congestion as a result of obstructive parking.
- ◆ Where the Council, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Police are agreed that pedestrian, cycle or passenger transport routes are regularly impeded by obstructively parked vehicles.

6.11 Where an initial appraisal has identified the need for action the Council will move to the second stage of appraisal required before detailed implementation. The second stage appraisal seeks to consider the specific characteristics of the area based on observations or information supplied to the Council.

DRAFT

Policy 17 - Identifying Solutions to On Street Parking Problems

In deciding the best approach to take to remove long-stay parking it will consider the following:

1. The possible amount of non-residential parking and the amount of residential or operational business parking competing for roadspace.
2. The likely availability of off-street parking.
3. Locations where long-stay parking is impeding private accesses and junctions
4. Locations where non-residents' parking is causing other concerns, such as verge parking, blocking pedestrian routes, causing highway safety concerns or preventing safe and convenient access especially for cyclists, buses, servicing and/or emergency vehicles
5. The extent to which other parking generators influence demand (e.g. local businesses, schools and other organisations)
6. The potential for other issues such as speeding to become more prominent when parking is removed.
7. Whether removing non-residential parking will lead to a clear and unacceptable worsening of parking conditions elsewhere.
8. If a CPZ is implemented what are the resource implications for the Council, including an estimate of permit take up by local residents/businesses.
9. The views of Ward Councillors, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary on the above as well as initial views on the best method to addressing problems including whether a CPZ is appropriate.

6.12 In order to implement measures to support residents' or businesses parking, the Council will continue to seek their support before moving from second stage to implementation. In some locations it may be preferable to consult on a wider area if it is anticipated that an existing problem could be moved to an adjoining area where parking isn't currently a concern.

DRAFT

Policy 18 - Consultation

A full public consultation will be undertaken of all local Ward Councillors, residents and businesses in an affected area to ascertain the scale of any problems and to determine the number of residents with no off street parking provision.

With regard to specific proposals the Council will continue to seek the support of at least 50% of residents and/or affected businesses before implementing any parking controls. This includes the support of a minimum of 50% of those with no off-street parking.

Where a parking scheme is progressed in detail the formal process associated with advertising Traffic Regulation Orders allows for anyone affected to make representations to the Council during an advertised period of time. The Council will consider any representations made to a formal Order prior to finalising any parking scheme.

Where practical, consultation will include areas beyond those immediately affected where it can be demonstrated that parking problems may migrate.

- 6.13 This above policies set out the approach to implementing potential parking controls. The Council has identified areas that need attention, areas that need investigation at a later date and areas that will need to be monitored for future parking issues.
- 6.14 Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston have a number of CPZs in place. There are a still number of areas in these towns affected by non-residents parking largely as a result of problems migrating from other controlled areas but also as a result of other changes both in terms of employment uses and even timetable changes for rail services.
- 6.15 Baldock does not currently have any CPZs although issues that exist in certain areas suggest that CPZs may be appropriate. There are existing parking issues that are likely to be worsened by the introduction of shorter stay parking in the core town centre streets.
- 6.16 Certain areas of Knebworth have competition for parking spaces between residents and non-residents associated mainly with rail commuters. A CPZ may be appropriate alongside other safety related parking controls.

DRAFT

Policy 19 - Future Parking Control Areas

The Council will identify and keep under review a programme of parking controls for areas of the District in need of assistance. Areas identified fall within the following broad categories:

1. Area with an existing problem
2. Area requiring further investigation
3. Area to be monitored for potential future problems

The resources allocated to delivering solutions to those areas included within categories 1 and 2 above will dictate when and what solutions can be delivered. In identifying a programme the Council will give careful consideration to resources required to deliver and manage improvements.

6.17 There are a number of other smaller scale issues associated with providing or managing on-street parking that aren't area wide. The Council is aware of many of these but recognises that from time to time additional ones will be added and this list will need to be flexible enough to respond to changes.

6.18 In addition the Council is also aware of the environmental impact of on street parking in some areas (e.g. on verges or footways) and has undertaken works to mitigate this impact alongside use of byelaws where appropriate.

Policy 20 - Smallscale Parking Improvements

The Council will identify and keep under review a programme of implementation of smallscale parking improvements in locations where parking is having a detrimental environmental impact or is not serving the needs of local people as required. In addition the Council will investigate whether other methods of enforcement than a Traffic Regulation Order are appropriate.

Parking issues that are largely safety related will be referred to Hertfordshire County Council to address.

6.19 Many of the smaller scale issues identified will need to be implemented by Hertfordshire County Council either in full or in partnership with the District Council. In some cases these issues may need to be addressed as part of the Urban Transport Plan delivery programme for each town. Agreement on a programme for these measures will be made with the County Council.

DRAFT

- 6.20 Existing CPZs have largely addressed the problem of long stay, non-residential in areas covered by the zones. The original plans for these CPZs envisaged a higher take up of residents permits and, therefore, lower cost to the Council of managing these areas. In light of the past experience of managing CPZs there is a need to review some of the existing zones. Reviews will consider how well they operate, whether a CPZ is the most appropriate way of addressing parking issues and whether a zone needs to be amended in any way.
- 6.21 Part of the review process will include the pricing of residents' permits and potential concessions on permits as well other issues such as whether to increase prices for multiple car owned properties or restrict the number of permits available per property as is standard practice in other Local Authorities.

Policy 21 - Review of Existing Controlled Parking Zones

The Council will review existing CPZs in order to determine whether they remain 'fit for purpose' in terms of their purpose and operation.

In consultation with Local Area Committees, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary, a programme for amending CPZs will be drawn up where it is considered appropriate to do so but without undermining the principle of supporting residents and/or local businesses in preference to longer stay non-residential or local business parking.

- 6.22 The Council receives regular requests for providing Blue Badge Holder Parking bays adjacent to residential properties or community facilities. In order to provide Blue Badge Holder bays the Council will develop a criteria based eligibility policy as well as a programme for implementing Blue Badge Holder Bays. A clear process for applying for Blue Badge holder parking bay(s) will also be developed.

DRAFT

Policy 22 - Blue Badge Holder Parking Bays

The Council will develop a policy for providing Blue Badge Holder Parking and an annual programme for delivering parking spaces for Blue Badge Holders. It will focus on eligibility criteria as well as site specific circumstances. Considerations will include but not be limited to the following:

1. The availability and distance from the applicant's destination of off and on street parking
2. The ability of the applicant to walk or otherwise manoeuvre to the nearest parking provision, possibly via confirmation from a medical professional
3. Whether a formal or informal parking bay is the most appropriate course of action
4. Site specific safety or amenity issues for other road users
5. The views of local Ward Councillors, Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary

6.23 The Council has Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) guidance on the parking policy and standards to be applied to all new development. This will be regularly reviewed to reflect changing development pressures and demand for parking.

6.24 As the provision of CPZs and the number of brownfield sites developed within urban areas have increased, the pressure for parking space in CPZs from new developments¹ has intensified. The Council considers that all new development should, as far as possible, be self sufficient in providing for future occupiers' parking insofar as there should be no unacceptable residual demand for parking in CPZs from new development.

6.25 Some residual parking on existing streets may be acceptable but where it is considered to add pressure to existing residents' and businesses' parking provision, new development will be required to provide for its own parking and possibly provide a financial contribution towards protecting existing residents' and businesses' parking.

6.26 Where new roads are adopted and off-street parking is provided in new development, the Council will work with developers and Hertfordshire County Council to ensure that the detailed design of new development does not create unnecessary parking overspill onto existing streets, especially in areas where there is pressure for parking space. The Council will consider the availability of existing on and off street parking space in determining planning applications.

¹New developments in this case are considered to be those developments that have been built after CPZs or other TROs were implemented on adjoining streets.

DRAFT

- 6.27 As a result of many 'brownfield' sites being redeveloped adjacent to CPZs the Council faces increasing pressure to issue permits to residents of new development. Each case will need to be considered on its merits and careful consideration will need to be given to the availability of parking space for residential areas that pre-dated the CPZ and have little or no off-street parking.
- 6.28 Increasingly new developments in urban areas have been provided with at least one allocated parking space although car ownership per household may be higher and there may be limited space for visitors so there is demand for on street parking.

Policy 23 - New Developments and Existing Controlled Parking Zones

The Council will consider the need for including residents of new developments in existing CPZs on a case by case basis. As general guidance the following will be considered:

- 1) The amount of off-street parking provided formally or informally in the new development
- 2) The extent to which the parking standards used in the new development comply with 'Parking Standards at New Development' guidance
- 3) The availability of existing roadspace for additional residential parking
- 4) Any constraints on a development site that may have restricted the provision of parking (e.g. need to retain Listed Buildings)
- 5) The potential for imposing a limit on the amount of permits provided per household for new developments
- 6) Any other issues for example Planning Conditions or Legal Agreements that may prevent or restrict the issuing of permits.

In all cases priority will be given to residents and/or businesses that existed prior to the CPZ being implemented and who have little or no off street parking.

For further information or If you would like to discuss this Parking Strategy in more detail please contact:

Simon Young
Transport Policy Officer
01462 474846

Brian Perkins
Parking Services Manager
01462 474475

simon.young@north-herts.gov.uk

brian.perkins@north-herts.gov.uk

APPENDIX 1

DRAFT

More detailed information on car parks, tariffs and Controlled Parking Zones can be found at:

www.north-herts.gov.uk/index/living/travel/car_parking_in_north_herts.htm

North Hertfordshire District Council
June 2009

DRAFT

- THIS PAGE IS BLANK -

APPENDIX 2

This report was presented to Cabinet at the meeting held on 23 June 2009

TITLE OF REPORT: DRAFT CAR PARKING STRATEGY 2009-2019

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

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The draft Parking Strategy attached as Appendix 1 covers a range of parking issues under the broad headings of 'town centres' and 'elsewhere'. Within the town centre section of the draft Strategy there is consideration about the future approach to both on and off-street parking provision and management.
- 1.2 The draft Strategy also considers future on-street parking controls outside town centres areas, the need to consider them on an area wide rather than piecemeal basis and the possibility of reviewing existing on-street controls.
- 1.3 The draft Strategy is intended to cover the next ten years, reflecting the lifetime of off-street car park ticket machines and a realistic timescale for implementing on-street parking controls. Due to uncertainties associated with development sites in town centres and the wider economic context, it is envisaged that the Strategy be kept under review to reflect changing circumstances.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision. A key decision will occur in relation to the approval of the final Parking Strategy and the Strategy has been included on the Forward Plan for June.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 The Council's current Parking Strategy covers the period 2004 - 2009 and the Transport Fundamental Service Review (FSR) in 2008 identified the need to review the Parking Strategy.

- 3.2 At its meeting in January 2009 Cabinet resolved as follows:

(1) That the differential car parking tariffs, as recommended by MVA Consultancy and set out in Appendix 2 to the report, be introduced with effect from 1 April 2009, and that these differential tariffs be reviewed for 2010/11;

(2) That a revised Parking Strategy be produced in 2009/10, having regard to items contained within Paragraphs 4.9 to 4.11 of the report, including charges in Baldock and Royston, and that parking tariffs be reviewed annually to assess performance of tariffs against the Council's priorities for Green Issues and Town Centres;

(3) That the proposals for investment in new ticket machines be noted, and that this be considered as part of its budget setting process for 2009/10 and beyond, with strong

APPENDIX 2

support for capital funding being used for “on foot/barrier” investment rather than replacing the existing machines.

- 3.3 The section of the report to the January 2009 Cabinet referred to in resolution (2) above stated as follows:

“4.9 Aside from consideration of tariffs it is also important to bear in mind that the Council loses revenue due to non-payment of tariffs (there is a considerable volume of people staying for less than 15 minutes in short stay car parks who may be most likely to risk non-payment) as well as ticket transfer. As part of the wider car parking strategy considerations the Council may wish to assess the benefits of ‘Pay on Foot/Pay on Exit’ parking systems that are widely considered to benefit users and be better for retaining income. The Capital Budget for 2009/10 and 2010/11 includes investments in new parking machines/control measures which could have the following benefits:

- > Greater flexibility of payment methods, including pre-payment*
- > Improved flexibility over charging bands*
- > Information on actual car park usage*
- > Ability to pay for actual time used in car parks rather than anticipated stay (this may encourage an increase in time people spend in our town centres)*

4.10 As well as pay on exit the Council should also consider cashless payment methods which are being introduced by other authorities around the country.

4.11 Despite observing very high demand and use of on-street parking and considerable evening and Sunday parking both on and off-street parking in town centres, there is no recommendation that on-street, evening or Sunday parking tariffs are introduced in 2009/10. The introduction of parking charges in The Twitchell car park in Baldock needs to be considered once the town centre enhancement scheme is complete and parking patterns settled. In addition there may be potential for introducing charges in the St Martins Road car park in Knebworth to assist with parking management issues in the village centre. These issues identified in this paragraph should be considered as part of the wider parking strategy work to be undertaken in 2009/10 for implementation in 2010/11 together with a long term charges policy.”

- 3.4 The above issues are addressed in the draft Parking Strategy although since the January Cabinet it should be noted that the Council’s financial circumstances have been significantly affected by the wider economic downturn.
- 3.5 In preparing the draft Parking Strategy officers have considered the role of the Parking Strategy as part of the Council’s wider commitment to its three immediate priorities; Town Centres, Sustainability and Green Issues.
- 3.6 The draft Parking Strategy has been informed by cost estimates from suppliers for various parking charging systems as well as various types of physical improvements to car parks. In addition officers have considered the future implementation costs of on street parking controls and, for both on and off street parking, the management and enforcement resources required.
- 3.7 Discussions have also been held with other Local Authorities on parking issues including neighbours Stevenage Borough Council, and East Herts District Council as well as Huntingdonshire District Council, Test Valley District Council, Winchester City Council and Taunton & Deane District Council.

APPENDIX 2

4. ISSUES

Town Centres

- 4.1 There is the need to consider the off-street car park ticket machines which are in need of replacement. As coin only Pay and Display (P&D) machines that provide very little information on tickets purchased, the machines are limited in terms of providing a modern facility for customers, retaining revenue in line with the level of usage and providing information to inform tariff and other parking management decisions.
- 4.2 Modern P&D systems allow payment by 'Chip & Pin' or credit card as well as have machines equipped to provide accurate information on tickets purchased and even day to day management where machines are linked to the back office. There are various options available but the main benefit is that, relative to other systems, P&D is the cheapest and simplest system to implement in terms of capital cost.
- 4.3 P&D requires regular enforcement to ensure compliance with car park regulations. A P&D system suffers from non-payment, meter feeding and transferring of tickets. Some machines are available that require customers to input car registration details for printing onto a ticket. Experience elsewhere suggests that this type of system is not popular and requires more management. It also needs an enforcement presence in car parks and is still a system that requires users to anticipate how long they wish to remain in a car park before purchasing a ticket.
- 4.4 Another feature of P&D that customers do not like is the inability of machines to provide change. There is a level of overpayment for parking where customers do not have the correct change. It is difficult to quantify this but it may go some way to off-set non-payment or transferral of tickets.
- 4.5 The Council has suffered from some theft from ticket machines in the past. As cash payment is the only method available in car parks at the moment there is a need to consider whether cashless payment as an option. There is a cost to the Council of a cashless option (via debit and credit card charges) but there may be benefits in reductions of losses to theft and cash handling charges.
- 4.6 In recent years many Local Authorities with P&D systems have provided payment by telephone as an additional service. This system allows cashless payment and flexibility for customers who do not have change and/or may wish to extend stays in car parks without having to return to ticket machines. It may also have some benefits in terms of reducing ticket transfer or non-payment. Payment by phone will also work when ticket machines are out of operation. Discussion with other authorities suggests such a system is 'cost neutral' in terms of revenue implications, has minimal capital and set up costs but is well received by those who use the service, especially medium to long stay users. Other authorities also report that there has been steady growth in use of pay by phone month on month over the last 18 months or so.
- 4.7 Payment by telephone may also offer benefits via the data provided on usage. It could help refine decisions on future ticket machine purchases insofar as payment by phone may negate the need for Chip & Pin functions on ticket machines (which adds a considerable capital and revenue cost to a machine). In addition, payment by phone may also inform decisions on the total number of ticket machines actually required. Payment by phone is not considered to be a way of completely removing the problems

APPENDIX 2

associated with P&D but it provides flexibility with regard to payment and could reduce the enforcement resource requirement in car parks by a small amount.

4.8 Currently it is possible to trial payment by phone for a minimum of a year and the draft Parking Strategy identifies this as a way forward whilst further detailed investigations can be made into off-street parking equipment. There will be a one-off set up cost of approximately £6,000 for a one year payment by phone trial and, subject to identifying the detailed arrangements for managing and running pay by phone as well as the implications in terms of cashless payment charges, it is recommended at 9.2 that the Council considers a trial pay by phone arrangement over the next 12 to 15 months.

4.9 A 'Pay on Foot'¹ (POF) parking system is widely acknowledged to be the most efficient and cost effective way of running car parking. POF offers several benefits but these must be considered against the considerable costs and the necessary change in management resource required to run POF. The following points summarise POF benefits:

- It removes the element of 'non payment' that exists in P&D as well as ticket transferral and should increase income simply by virtue of revenue retained
- Customers pay for however long they stay and the need to anticipate length of stay is removed so this should support increased duration of stay in town centres – this may be an issue for car park capacity on busy days if spaces do not 'turnover' enough
- Ticket machines generally offer change, alongside coin, banknote and cashless payment
- There is greater flexibility in tariff setting and monitoring
- There is a wealth of data on usage and duration of stay that is invaluable in setting tariffs and managing car parks
- Car park operations can be monitored and run remotely from back office systems, potentially shared with other local authorities
- Season Tickets can be purchased in car parks reducing the need for back office management
- Pre-paid 'smartcards' can be used and topped up at payment machines
- There is potential for income from advertising on screens on pay machines
- Charging for evenings and Sundays is made more cost effective (operationally) as a barrier system supports 24 hour operation
- There is likely to be little or no need for off-street car park enforcement as car park users need to pay before they can leave a car park.

4.10 Considering a POF system must, however, consider the costs and management implications of running POF. These can be summarised as follows:

- The considerable capital cost of implementing POF, even just for the POF equipment
- Cost of CCTV for all entry/exit barriers
- Cost for 'Variable Message Signing' on approaches to car parks to advise motorists when car parks have spaces/are full
- Physical changes to car parks to allow POF equipment
- Provision of shelters for payment machines in surface car parks

¹ 'Pay on Foot' meaning payment for parking on foot at a payment machine before returning to a vehicle and leaving a car park rather than payment at a barrier on exit (i.e. 'Pay on Exit')
HITCHIN (28.7.09)

APPENDIX 2

- Some concern about the relative security of payment machines compared to P&D machines
- Cost of cabling, CCTV links and power supply to both machinery and back office
- Cost of other works to car parks (mainly surface) that will prevent vehicles bypassing exit barriers
- Potential loss of spaces to accommodate barriers/machines and queuing space
- Possible off-site highways works where there may be highway implications of vehicles queuing at entry to car parks
- In terms of management there is a need to have enough resources to be able to respond to a problem in a car park within a very short time period
- Linked to the above point, there may be concerns regarding the reliability of some manufacturers' equipment
- If 24 hour operation is required there is a need to consider how management issues are handled during evenings and Sundays.
- Currently blue badge holders park for free in P&D car parks but this is unlikely to be possible in POF car parks without significant costs being incurred
- Currently staff park free of charge and the cost of issuing free passes for POF is likely to be more expensive than the current paper pass
- The considerable maintenance cost of a POF system compared to P&D

4.11 Officers have spent some time considering the above as well as visiting and overseeing the operation of the POF system at Stevenage Borough Council. There is potential for partnering the management of POF with Stevenage, thus sharing the back office management and maintenance of the system but the main issue to overcome is the likely cost of a POF system.

4.12 The estimates received from suppliers confirm that there will still be a need for some P&D car parks in our towns where POF is not a practical solution. This means there will still need to be an enforcement regime for remaining P&D car parks.

4.13 In terms of looking at whether POF may be implemented in the larger capacity car parks such as the two multi storeys, it is generally true to say that, physically, both multi storey car parks lend themselves to POF infrastructure. The main issue to be considered for both car parks, however, is the amount of long stay parking in both that reduces the benefits from income retention/longer stay that could be expected from a short stay POF car park. In addition much of the Letchworth multi storey long stay is taken up by NHDC staff who park free of charge.

4.14 The table below summarises the costs that have been identified to date, based on suppliers' estimates and assumptions regarding other works. More difficult to identify is the changes that could arise from POF for the purposes of management and enforcement. It is likely that efficiencies can be identified should a POF system be implemented but further work needs to be done to understand the full scope of efficiencies in the wider context of the Councils parking service. In addition the revenue costs associated with both types of charging system need to be more accurately assessed (e.g. cashless payment charges, machine connectivity charges).

4.15 Looking beyond the Council's own car parks there may be potential to roll out any future car park system to other town centre car parks operated by third parties, especially in the case of POF.

APPENDIX 2

4.16 Set out below is a summary of capital cost estimates for installation and potential annual maintenance costs:

System	Estimate for parking equipment	Estimate for other works	Total estimated capital cost	Annual maintenance costs (beyond 1 year warranty)
Pay on Foot ² Coin, note & Cashless	£700,000	£500,000	£1.2 million	£35,000
Pay and Display Coin only	£168,000	£32,000	£200,000	£20,000
Pay and Display Coin and Chip & Pin	£200,000	£50,000	£250,000	£20,000
Pay and Display Coin & Pay by Phone	£168,000	£38,000	£206,000	£20,000
Current machines with Pay by Phone	NIL	£6,000	£6,000	NIL for Pay by Phone £16,500 for machines

4.17 The above figures do not include the two off street car parks in Baldock and Knebworth but do include both Birdshill in Letchworth and Hitchin Swimming Centre. With regard to Baldock, it is recommended that the recent changes to town centre parking are given at least six months to 'settle down'. In considering Car Park charges earlier in the year Cabinet concluded that charging be considered for 2010/11 for the Twitchell off-street car park to support short-stay usage of that car park.

4.18 In Knebworth recent survey work has identified that the off street car park in St Martins Road is used by a significant amount of people for durations beyond what may be considered 'short stay'. Discussion with local ward Members, representatives of the Parish Council and traders suggests that introducing charging in this car park would help support the local shops and remove long stay parking. It is recommended that P&D machines be considered for this car park as part of investment proposals.

4.19 It is recommended that a more detailed feasibility study of the most appropriate car park management system should be undertaken, via advice of a consultant specialising in car park management systems, to inform final decision making on this significant capital investment. This work should include POF and it is suggested that consideration of POF should pay close attention to partnering car park management, data gathering and possibly even maintenance with another authority. The operation of the existing CCTV control station is a good example of how this can work.

4.20 The feasibility study should also include an in depth analysis of the Council's current revenue costs associated with managing and enforcing on and off street parking. The potential for partnering and sharing resources with neighbouring authorities should be

² This includes some Pay and Display machines in smaller car parks
HITCHIN (28.7.09)

APPENDIX 2

considered in order to assess the future resources required for a new P&D or POF system alongside ongoing demand for more on street parking management.

- 4.21 The draft Parking Strategy sets out a suggested approach towards reviewing tariffs. It includes many of the issues considered in the 2009 tariff review. Whilst not specifically referring to differential tariffs the approach suggested is likely to perpetuate different tariffs between car parks and between towns. Should a new parking management system be introduced it is likely that it will provide better information on usage and be more responsive to tariff changes for short term or experimental periods. It is important to note that the draft Strategy suggest a two year review of tariffs, starting in 2010.
- 4.22 The draft Strategy considers charging for Sundays and evenings and that this should take place at the same time tariffs are reviewed. Charging outside normal hours is heavily dependent on resources to enforce parking regulations and, in the case of POF, resources to manage car park operations.
- 4.23 Turning to physical improvements to car parks, the majority of concern regarding physical condition and therefore attractiveness of car parks is associated with multi story car parks, especially in Letchworth. Issues such as parking bay size, lighting, surfacing, waterproofing and décor are issues that need to be considered.
- 4.24 In Hitchin the Lairage has recently been improved although there are still concerns expressed about the lack of information on available spaces as users descend from the upper levels. It is possible to install a system that monitors usage of bays which could also be linked to advance messages on approach to the car park.
- 4.25 The following table summarises some preliminary cost estimates for potential improvement works (excluding CCTV) to car parks for consideration as part of the Corporate Business Planning process for 2010/11 and beyond:

Car park	Description of work	Cost estimate
Letchworth multi storey	Repair damaged surfacing, improve water proofing, re-lining, clean & fix lighting to current levels	£160,000
	Option: improve lighting to higher levels	£238,000
Letchworth multi storey	Replace sodium lighting with white lighting	£90,000
Letchworth multi storey	Resin deck coating and wall/ceiling repainting	£360,000
Hitchin multi storey	Replace sodium lighting with white lighting	£70,000
Hitchin multi storey	Install bay monitoring sensors, external 'spaces available' sign and internal level guidance info	£80,000

The above reflects some of the improvements that could be made to the two multi storey car parks and in the case of Letchworth will need to be considered alongside a new ticketing system so as to maximise the potential of the car park. There are other significant security and vandalism issues to be addressed and other 'routine'

APPENDIX 2

maintenance costs that have not been included in this report but will need to be considered in any future programme of works.

- 4.26 With regard to on street parking the draft Strategy identifies that the amount and location of free on street parking is an important asset for each town centre. At this point in time there is limited scope for additional on street parking and the durations available are suitable for each location. In all towns there will be a need to consider additional on-street provision where off-street car parks may form part of redevelopment sites. The draft Strategy seeks to monitor this situation both in terms of amount & location of parking and durations of stay.
- 4.27 The draft Strategy identifies the need to consider the case for on-street charging each time off-street tariffs are reviewed. The current economic downturn suggests that now may not be the right time to introduce on street charging. The draft Strategy does identify that there is a cost associated with managing town centre on street parking and that, unlike in off street car parks, users do not pay for parking at source.
- 4.28 In addition it is clear from the town centre parking surveys that took place last year that there is, potentially, a significant amount of income that may be generated by on-street charging. Whilst this may be perceived by users as 'another charge on the motorist' the legal position regarding charges levied for on street parking is that any surplus income must be used for transport related projects or environmental improvements. Clearly there is the potential to consider how any excess income generated could be used to enhance town centres, in line with Corporate objectives.
- 4.29 There would be a capital cost associated with introducing on street charging. This includes providing pay and display machines, associated works and amending orders. As 'on street' is highway, the views of the County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary are important considerations. The revenue costs of management and enforcement will also need to be carefully considered, albeit in the context of any income generated.
- 4.30 Turning to residential and other non-town centre areas, the provision of parking controls to remove long stay non-residential parking has been successful in many respects. It is clear, however, that there are still parts of the district that have problems with commuter or employee parking competing with residential parking. The draft Strategy sets out the approach to identifying problem areas, initial appraisal on solutions to problems and the consultation process that will take place before any solutions can be implemented.
- 4.31 The draft Strategy suggests that an area wide approach to addressing parking problems, rather than a street by street piecemeal approach if it is considered to be a priority for investment as part of the Corporate Business Planning process for 2010/11 and beyond. In addition the draft Strategy confirms that there is a key role for Hertfordshire County Council in addressing parking problems that are largely to do with safety or amenity concerns, regardless of whether they involve competition between residents and non-residents.
- 4.32 A programme of area wide parking control areas can be identified and considered as an action plan resulting from the draft Strategy. Initial appraisal of the potential areas has taken place with a view to identifying resource implications for implementing new schemes. For the purposes of resource planning as a general guide approximately £50,000 will be required to implement one parking control area over an 18 month

APPENDIX 2

period. This assumes one member of staff progressing the project. Currently approximately 15 areas have been identified. This these would be a significant investment should the Council wish to support this approach.

- 4.33 The draft Parking Strategy specifically refers to 'Parking Control Areas' rather than 'Controlled Parking Zones' (CPZs). This reflects the experience that a CPZ solution is not always the correct solution. Members will no doubt be aware of the cost of running on street parking enforcement as compared with the lower than expected income from permits sold in CPZs. In future much closer attention will need to be paid to the most effective solution given the limited enforcement resources available to the Council.
- 4.34 In addition to new parking control areas the draft Strategy identifies the need to review existing CPZs in the light of recent years' experience. This includes the need to review whether a CPZ remains the best, most cost effective solution as well as policy for running CPZs, e.g. approach to permit charges, eligibility, concessions and impact of new developments.
- 4.35 The final key issue the draft Strategy will address is the need to develop a policy and programme for delivering parking bays for Blue Badge holders outside town centres. The Council has a growing list of potential schemes and needs policy to determine entitlement and how and when bays may be delivered. There is considerable best practice from elsewhere and this plus discussion with Hertfordshire County Council, Hertfordshire Constabulary and relevant stakeholders should enable a robust policy to be identified.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 5.1 Cabinet are responsible under their terms of reference for approving and adopting a car parking strategy and for setting car parking fees and fines.
- 5.2 There are no direct legal implications arising from the contents of the draft Strategy but there will be legal implications of new and revised Traffic Regulation Orders for on and off street parking.
- 5.3 Should on street charging proposals come forward then the requirements of the Traffic Management Act 1984 (and subsequent revisions) will need to be considered. The agreement between the Council and Hertfordshire County Council regarding Decriminalised Parking Enforcement will also need to be reviewed.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The only direct financial implications of this report and the draft strategy is to consider the costs of a trial of the Pay by Phone system for a period of 12-15 months. In addition Cabinet is asked to endorse the need for consultancy advice towards a feasibility study into the best car park management system for the district.
- 6.2 The feasibility study can be funded from the capital programme to the extent that the study contributes directly to the scoping of the asset ultimately acquired. This may mean that the proportion of the study will need to be funded from revenue and it is suggested that the Strategic Priorities Fund be used for this purpose. The Strategic Priorities Fund is utilised to encourage innovations/invest to save bids to be financed,

APPENDIX 2

to enable the outputs from service reviews and continuous performance improvement strategies to be funded and to facilitate achievement of strategic priority projects.

- 6.3 Depending on future decisions on car park management, there will be implications for the revenue costs of managing on and off street parking and the resources required to do both to be considered as part of the Corporate Business Planning process for 2010/11 and beyond. At this stage it is not possible to advise on the detailed implications for future resources of the draft Strategy and the feasibility study into car park management options will help clarify the situation.
- 6.4 There is likely to be a considerable capital cost to the Council of implementing a new off street parking charging system. There is currently a total of £300,000 in the capital programme for "Car Park Management Systems". Funding for the capital programme would need to be reviewed if a further substantial commitment of resources was approved for, for example, a POF system given that it is the most expensive option by a long way albeit with the potential for better income returns.
- 6.5 The main risks involved with a new system is that predicted income forecasts do not materialise, the machines do not have at least a ten year life span or have significant reliability problems that affect income. There are also wider economic issues that may affect usage and income regardless of what system is used.
- 6.6 The uncertainty about the future of several surface car parks in Hitchin, Letchworth and Royston is also a consideration. In all cases potential development sites may result in the car parks ceasing to exist or ceasing to be under the Council's control. Implementing a new system would, however, set a standard that a future developer should be expected to maintain or enhance.
- 6.7 Increasing on street parking controls will increase demand for enforcement resource. Experience suggest that income from CPZs will not cover that cost, adding further demand to off street car park income or other sources of revenue.
- 6.8 Implementing on street parking charging will incur considerable capital cost to implement and revenue cost to manage and enforce. Further analysis is need to establish if income from on street charging would off-set the costs of implementation, management and enforcement. Survey information gathered at the end of 2008 demonstrated a considerable volume of short stay on street parking in Hitchin and Letchworth so this data could be used as the basis for analysis.
- 6.9 Members will be aware of the special Cabinet meeting arranged on 15th July 2009 for consideration of the Medium Term Financial Strategy and efficiency proposals required for the 2010/11 budget. Members may wish to consider further capital and revenue implications at the July meeting in the light of the draft Strategy.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The implications for the Council's human resources of the draft Strategy will only really be possible to identify once further progress has been made with a car park

APPENDIX 2

management feasibility study. A POF system will change the Council's approach to car park management considerably.

- 7.2 Resources for on street management and enforcement are stretched and adding additional parking controls will increase this problem. The type of car park management system and a review of existing CPZs will provide further clarity on future on street resource required.
- 7.3 With regard to equalities, consideration needs to be given to how Blue Badge holders use car parks if a POF system is implemented. The draft Strategy identifies the Council's commitment to providing town centre parking for Blue Badge holders and also that the Council will be considering concessions for CPZ permits and provision of bays for Blue Badge holders outside town centres.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 8.1 Initial consultation has been undertaken with Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire Constabulary on the issues reflected in the draft Parking Strategy.
- 8.2 It is proposed that the Area Committees be consulted on the draft Strategy prior to further consideration by Cabinet.
- 8.3 Many of the issues the Strategy covers were discussed by the Transport FSR Member Working Group and the FSR Action Plan reflects this work.
- 8.4 Subject to Cabinet endorsement the Town Centre Managers in the District will be consulted.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 That Cabinet comments on the draft Strategy and refers it to Area Committees for consideration with a view to finalising the Strategy for consideration at the September Cabinet meeting.
- 9.2 That Cabinet endorse the Pay by Phone trial for 12 to 15 months subject to a satisfactory service provider being identified and costs not varying significantly from those shown in this report.
- 9.3 In order to assist decisions on a future off street charging system, Cabinet is requested to endorse the appointment of a consultant to undertake a feasibility study on the most appropriate car park management system over the next ten years as a minimum.
- 9.4 That Cabinet notes the indicative estimates for both car park management systems, physical improvements to both multi-story car parks and indicative figure for any new parking management areas and considers them as part of the Corporate Business Planning process for 2010/11 and beyond.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To ensure Area Committees' views on the draft Strategy are taken into consideration before being adopted.

APPENDIX 2

- 10.2 A trial of the Pay by Phone system is considered to be a relatively cheap way of assessing this system as an option for improving customer services and potentially informing decisions on a future off street charging system without committing the Council to any significant expense or longer term commitment.
- 10.3 Officers have undertaken a considerable amount of work on off street charging systems but as the cost of a new system is likely to be considerable and there is a need to take an independent overview on future resources to manage parking, there are benefits in seeking detailed independent advice from an industry expert.
- 10.4 Given the financial planning timetable in 2009/10, the estimates provided in this report offer the opportunity for consideration in the Corporate Business Planning process for 2010/11, subject to more detailed feasibility appraisal of car park management systems.

11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 11.1 Other options for car park management systems that could be considered include:
- Pay on Exit – Car park users pay at barriers on exit of car parks. This system is generally considered to have been superseded by POF systems which now avoid cars queuing at exit barriers
 - Advanced Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) – This system works with both POF and P&D and would allow monitoring of use of car parks. For P&D it would allow back office monitoring of usage and the existence of ANPR offers another incentive to ensure users pay for parking. An enforcement regime is still required to back it up and ANPR would provide evidence in the case of disputed Penalty Charge Notices. There is also a need to rely on the technology as well as clarity of number plates.
- 11.2 Neither system have been looked into in detail at this stage as the POF and P&D options are considered the most appropriate in terms of a replacing the current system (P&D) and bringing in the most customer friendly alternative (POF) with Pay by Phone potentially acting as a P&D 'add on'.

12. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – NHDC Draft Parking Strategy

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

David Scholes
Head of Planning & Building Control

HITCHIN (28.7.09)

APPENDIX 2

David.scholes@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474836

Vaughan Watson
Head of Leisure & Environmental Services
Vaughan.watson@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474641

Simon Young
Transport Policy Officer
Simon.young@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474846

Brian Perkins
Parking Services Manager
Brian.perkins@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474475

Katie White
Senior Lawyer
Katie.white@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474315

Tim Neill
Accountancy Manager
Tim.neill@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474470

Kerry Shorrocks
Head of Human Resources
Kerry.shorrocks@north-herts.gov.uk
01462 474224

14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

NHDC Parking Strategy 2004-2009
Transport FSR Action Plan

TOWN CENTRE AND RETAIL STUDY WORKING DRAFT: INFORMATION NOTE

REPORT OF THE PROJECTS MANAGER, PLANNING SERVICES

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise Members of the status of the draft Town Centre and Retail Study.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 One of the Council's key priorities is to promote town centres. In light of this, the Council appointed consultants, Nathaniel Lichfield and Partners (NLP) to carry out a full review of the previously prepared NHDC Town Centre and Retail Study of 2004 and the Update of 2006. The study covers the period to 2026 and has been prepared in accordance with government policy and guidance principally contained within Planning Policy Statement 6 – Planning & Town Centres (PPS6).
- 2.2 The objectives of the study are to provide:
- a qualitative analysis of the existing retail and leisure facilities within North Hertfordshire in order to identify the role of each centre and the relationship between the centres and neighbouring authorities;
 - a quantitative and qualitative need assessment for new retail and commercial leisure facilities within North Hertfordshire to 2026, including an assessment of both food and non-food retailing; and
 - an assessment of existing development commitments and allocations in North Hertfordshire and the identification of the suitability sites to meet any demand to be considered later in the Local Development Framework (LDF).
- 2.3 This study is a technical document that will provide background evidence in the formulation of retail policies in the Core Strategy and Development Policy DPDs of the Local Development Framework. This document will also contribute to other work that the Council may be involved in the development and promotion of its town centres. It is currently a working draft and once the Study is finalized it will be presented to Cabinet in September for their agreement as background evidence to feed into the Local Development Framework.

3. THE DRAFT STUDY

- 3.1 Included in the study is an assessment of the main town centres, Hitchin, Letchworth Garden City, Royston and Baldock, to satisfy the requirements of PPS6: Planning for Town Centres (March 2005). This has involved conducting a district wide household survey, in-street surveys within each of the town centres and a number of business surveys. The Consultants have also undertaken a series of interviews with the town centre managers and are now completing interviews with other key stakeholders.
- 3.2 The Study assesses the quantitative and qualitative scope for new retail floorspace in North Hertfordshire in the period from 2009 to 2026.
- 3.3 The quantitative and qualitative assessment of the potential capacity for new retail floorspace in the draft Study suggests that there is scope for new retail development within North Hertfordshire. Although this may be reduced given the current recession, in the medium term (up to 2016) and it is anticipated that in the longer term (up to 2021 and 2026) there is scope for this to significantly improve due to growth projections in population and expenditure.
- 3.4 The working draft suggests that opportunities to accommodate this growth in retail floorspace up to 2026 should be identified within the four town centres, in order to ensure the District maintains its current market share of comparison expenditure in the future. This is a requirement of PPS6. It states that the potential for new high street comparison development is likely to be greatest in Hitchin and Letchworth Garden City.
- 3.5 Whilst the floorspace projections set out in the Study assumes that new shopping facilities within North Hertfordshire can maintain their current market share of expenditure within the study area, it considers that long term forecasts may be subject to change due to unforeseen circumstances and suggests that the long term floorspace projections (up to 2021 and beyond) should only be used as a broad guide. This is entirely expected and in line with the guidance that we have previously received. It is suggested that long term projections should be monitored and kept under-review.
- 3.6 A copy of the NHDC Town Centre and Retail Study Working Draft is available to view in the Members Room. Once the Study is finalized, it will be presented to Cabinet for their agreement as background evidence to feed into the Local Development Framework for Member consideration. At this time it will be posted on the council's website.

4. CONCLUSION

- 4.1 That the Hitchin Committee note the content of this Information Note.

5. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 5.1 Louise Symes, Planning Projects Manager, ext 4359
- 5.2 David Scholes, Strategic Director Planning, Housing & Enterprise, ext 4836

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No.
----------------------------------	------------------------

	9
--	----------

HITCHIN TOWN CENTRE MANAGER

This item will be in the format of an oral presentation.

THIS PAGE IS BLANK

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

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

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. PROJECT/ACTIVITY/SCHEME DETAILS**3.1 ROTW**

Rhythms of the World once again held a very successful festival on Saturday 4th and Sunday 5th July, 2009, in Priory grounds. A fuller report will be available for the September meeting.

3.2 Community Choice

In order to engage more fully with young people it is proposed that we hold an event where young people bid for funding for a project of their choosing. The young people present their project to their peers and they decide who will receive the funding. It is proposed that this be launched at the TASTE event in Hitchin Market Place on Saturday 12th September, 2009. The Community Development Officer will support the various groups of young people on their project and applications and an event will be held in January 2010 where the young people will decide on the project or projects to receive funding.

3.3 Triangle Planning Project

Consultation took place on the Design Statement over June, 2009. This included a stall at St Andrews School Fair. The final consultation took place at the Triangle Community Garden Open Day. A meeting is planned to discuss the results of the questionnaire on Thursday 16th of July, 2009.

3.4 Cadwell Lane Residents/Hitchin Residents Alliance

The updated Action Plan is attached as Appendix B. The next meeting will be held on Thursday 30th of July, 2009.

3.5 Town Talk

Notes and any actions arising from the last Town Talk, held on Tuesday 9th June, 2009, are attached as Appendix C.

3.6 CAYPOW

The Westmill Community Radio, Millfm on 87.9, is preparing for launch on the 29th July, 2009. The studio is now ready (a room at the rear of Westmill Community Centre) and discussion slots allocated. Workshops with young people will be running from now until launch date.

The young people are also putting together a newsletter which it is hoped will go out in September.

They also took part again in Rhythms of the World.

3.7 Respect Agenda

Presentation of Certificates to Year 9 pupils in Priory School took place on Tuesday 7th July, 2009. The project was welcomed by the school and was successful in raising awareness amongst the pupils. An evaluation of the project will be completed when all of the forms have been received from the pupils and teachers.

3.8 Summer in North Herts

The Booklet outlining the activities in North Herts available for young people from 0 – 19 is now available. Activities range from free play opportunities in towns and villages, Wild Camp, Friday Night Project and Brazilian Soccer workshops.

3.9 The Voice of Hitchin Youth

The Voice are holding a Year 6/7's Disco at Sub Zero on Saturday 18th July, 2009. When young people are questioned as to what activities they would like they often mention discos. This is a pilot and if it works then more will be planned.

3.10 Work Plan/Highways Work Programme

The Work Plan/Highways Work Programme for Hitchin is attached as Appendix D. Members are requested to suggest projects they would like in the work plan/highway work programme.

4. FINANCE REPORT

4.1 The budget sheets are attached as Appendix A.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Committee has delegated powers to administer funds from the budgets Described

5.2 There are no legal implications pertinent to this report.

6. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

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

7. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

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

8. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 8.1 That the Committee endorses the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being.
- 8.2 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure and balances carried forward from the Visioning, Development and Ward budgets.

9. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 To ensure that the Committee are kept informed of the work of the Community Development Officer.
- 9.2 This report is intended simply to inform Members of the financial resources available to the Committee. It draws attention to the current budgetary situation, assists in the effective financial management of the Area Committee's budget and ensures actions are performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance in the Grants procedure.
- 9.3 The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and Strategic Objectives of the Council.

10. APPENDICES

- 10.1 Appendix A – Annual Grant and Development Discretionary Budget Update
- 10.2 Appendix B – Cadwell Lane/Hitvchin Residents Alliance Action Plan
- 10.3 Appendix C - Work Plan/Highway Work Programme
- 10.4 Appendix D – Town Talk Notes 9th June 2009
- 10.5 Appendix E – Hitchin Committee Work Programme 2009 - 2010

11. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 11.1 Margaret Bracey, Community Development Officer. Ext: 4830.
Email. margaret.bracey@north-herts.gov.uk
- 11.2 Lois Stewart, Group Accountant. Ext: 4566.
Email. lois.stewart@north-herts.gov.uk

HITCHIN AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2009/2010

SUMMARY/ TOTALS	Funding	Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget
Capital Visioning	£112,600	£112,600	£0	£112,600	£0
Service Level Agreements	£39,520	£39,520	£29,635	£9,885	£0
Central Area Grants	£19,790	£17,150	£233	£16,918	£2,640
Discretionary - Bearton Ward	£10,446	£9,129	£1,175	£7,954	£1,317
Discretionary - Highbury Ward	£9,895	£8,740	£2,714	£6,026	£1,155
Discretionary - Oughton Ward	£7,090	£6,090	£0	£6,090	£1,000
Discretionary - Priory Ward	£1,870	£870	£0	£870	£1,000
Discretionary - Walsworth Ward	£2,780	£1,398	£118	£1,280	£1,382
Total	£203,991	£195,497	£33,874	£161,623	£8,494

HITCHIN AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2009/2010

1192

	CAPITAL VISIONING	Funding	Codes	Project	Allocated	Date Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget	Comments
5410	Capital Visioning	£112,600	5410 000 0836	Bancroft Gardens	£69,750	15.08.06	£0	£69,750		
			5410 000 0836	Windmill Hill	£42,850	15.08.06	£0	£42,850		
	Total	£112,600			£112,600		£0	£112,600	£0	

	Memorandum of Understanding	Funding	Code	Project	Allocated	Date Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget	Comments
	Base Budget 2009/10	£29,520	1192 201 6984	Hitchin Link	£350	18.11.08	£350	£0		
	3 year agreements until March 2012		1192 204 6984	Hitchin Festival	£2,500	20.04.09	£2,500	£0		
			1192 202 6982	Hitchin Senior Citizens	£4,500	18.11.08	£4,500	£0		
			1192 203 6983	Apni Duniya	£400	18.11.08	£400	£0		
			1192 205 6984	Hitchin British Schools Trust	£11,770	18.11.08	£5,885	£5,885		
			1192 207 6984	Hitchin Town Centre Initiative	£7,000	20.04.09	£7,000	£0		
			1192 208 6984	Soundbase sub zero	£3,000	13.01.09	£0	£3,000		
	Total	£29,520			£29,520		£20,635	£8,885	£0	

DEVELOPMENT BUDGETS										
	Central Area Grants	Funding	Code	Project	Allocated	Date Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget	Comments
	Base Budget 2009/10	£19,790	1192 000 6983	Hitchin Outdoor Pool - extended opening hours	£3,150	10.03.09	£0	£3,150		
			1192 000 6987	Hitchin Market Place - Traffic Regulation Order	£4,000	10.03.09	£233	£3,768		
			1192 206 6984	Rhythms of the World 2009	£10,000	13.01.09	£9,000	£1,000		
000 4784	Total	£19,790			£17,150		£233	£6,918	£2,640	

Bearton	Funding	Code	Project	Allocated	Date Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget	Comments
Pre allocated Funds Brought Forward from 2008/09	£8,946	1192 116 0558	Triangle Garden	£4,750	26.07.07	£0	£4,750		
		1192 116 0519	Triangle Planning	£3,000	26.07.07	£992	£2,008		
		1192 116 0296	Community Projects	£1,196	31.03.09	£0	£1,196		
Member Discretionary Budget 2009/10									
Member 1	£500	1192 116 0215	Litter pickers	£183	12.06.09	£183	£0		
Member 2	£500								
Member 3	£500								
Total	£10,446			£9,129		£1,175	£7,954	£1,317	

116 6980

Highbury	Funding	Code	Project	Allocated	Date Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget	Comments
Pre allocated Funds Brought Forward from 2008/09	£8,395	1192 117 0243	Trees	£1,200	15.01.08	£0	£1,200		
		1192 117 0244	Parking Project - Hollow Lane/Standhill Road	£7,195	19.06.08	£2,385	£4,810		
Member Discretionary Budget 2009/10									
Member 1	£500	1192 117 0261	Litter bin at St Johns	£345	15.04.09	329	£16		
Member 2	£500								
Member 3	£500								
Total	£9,895			£8,740		£2,714	£6,026	£1,155	

117 6980

Oughton	Funding	Code	Project	Allocated	Date Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget	Comments
Pre allocated Funds Brought Forward from 2008/09	£6,090	1192 118 0279	Westmill Steering Group	£100	20.10.08	£0	£100		
		1192 118 0248	Westmill Community Centre - dishwasher	£70	11.02.09	£0	£70		
		1192 118 0296	Community Projects	£5,920	31.03.09	£0	£5,920		
Member Discretionary Budgets 2009/10									
Member 1	£500								
Member 2	£500								
Total	£7,090			£6,090		£0	£6,090	£1,000	

Priory	Funding	Code	Project	Allocated	Date Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget	Comments
Pre allocated Funds Brought Forward from 2008/09	£870	1192 119 0296	Community Projects	£120	31.03.08	£0	£120		
		1192 119 0296	Community Projects	£750	31.03.09	£0	£750		
Member Discretionary Budget 2009/10									
Member 1	£500								
Member 2	£500								
Total	£1,870			£870		£0	£870	£1,000	

Walsworth	Funding	Code	Project	Allocated	Date Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget	Comments
Pre allocated Funds Brought Forward from 2008/09	£1,280	1192 120 0296	Community Projects	£1,280	17.06.08	£0	£1,280		
Member Discretionary Budget 2009/10									
Member 1	£500	1192 120 0215	Litter Pickers for Common	£118	08/05/2009	£118	£0		
Member 2	£500								
Member 3	£500								
Total	£2,780			£1,398		£118	£1,280	£1,382	







Housing & Environmental Health Service

1. Adopted recommendations of the Task and Finish Group - Dated 18th December 2008

	Recommendation	Comments
S3	<p>That the Council's Housing and Environmental Health Service formally contact the Environment Agency with an offer to provide technical advice on local pollution matters (such as noise and dust control) regarding that regulator's deliberations concerning the revision of the current H Williams & Sons Limited Waste Management Licence.</p>	<p>Whilst the Environment Agency did not take advantage of this offer in connection with the H Williams & Sons' Waste Management Licence, dialogue has nevertheless continued between the Council and the Agency as regards the regulation of emissions from both the Wallace Way site and Hitchin railway sidings. The Council has commissioned some dust monitoring in connection with the Wallace Way site and the Environment Agency has been made aware of this project (see below); the Agency has given a commitment to undertake its own dust analysis in this area and to share this data with the Council.</p> <p>Update 4th February 2009 – The dust monitoring has been completed and it is expected that the report will be published in the next two weeks. A meeting is taking place in early March with partnership agencies to discuss results and further information will be available after this meeting.</p> <p>Update May 2009 – Dust monitoring positive and it is expected that there will be joint enforcement action being lead by the Environment Agency. Further information will be available for the next Cadwell Lane/Hitchin Residents Alliance meeting in July and the Hitchin Area Committee meeting in July..</p>
S4	<p>That the Council's Housing and Environmental Health Service investigate the ownership and, if possible, the leasing of the access road off St Michaels Road to the Hitchin railway sidings and the H Williams & Sons Ltd. site at Wallace Way. The information gathered to be considered as part of any investigation relating to environmental protection complaints.</p>	<p>Herts Highways has declined to pursue formal enforcement action against the owners/users of the access road in respect of debris deposited on St Michaels Road.</p> <p>However, negotiations by the Council's Environmental Protection Team have resulted in a written agreement by H Williams, CEMEX, and EWS (the head lessee of this land) to surface this access track. The works will aim to significantly reduce the noise and dust liberated by heavy goods vehicles using this access road and it will also prevent soil from being left on the public highway.</p> <p>The businesses responsible for the funding of these works are currently awaiting quotes from prospective contractors before commenting on an implementation schedule. However, it is expected that the resurfacing works will be completed in the spring of 2009.</p>

		<p>Update 4th February 2009 – it was requested that the date for resurfacing of the access road be notified to the group. Discussions continue with the relevant businesses to get this work done as soon as possible.</p> <p>Update May 2009 – Agreement has now been reached between all concerned parties about the split in costs of tarmacing the road and it is expected that the work will start very soon. The work will be phased.</p>
M2	<p>That the Council's Housing and Environmental Health Service expand the Council's current nitrogen dioxide (NO₂) passive diffusion tube network to include four additional locations around Cadwell Lane and St Michaels Road. The exact locations for monitoring to be determined in consultation with representatives of the Cadwell Lane Residents Association and Hitchin Residents Alliance. The results from monitoring to be considered in respect of the Council's obligations regarding Local Air Quality Management (LAQM) as defined by the Environment Act 1995.</p>	<p>Nitrogen dioxide monitoring has taken place at the following sites since May of this year:</p> <p>NH67 Cadwell Court NH68 Bryon Close NH69 Grove Road</p> <p>Regrettably, sampling at NH70 (Meadowbank) had to be temporarily suspended as the monitoring equipment was subject to persistent damage or interruption. This equipment has been relocated to an adjacent position and is now yielding more reliable data.</p> <p>As indicated in a previous update, in order to draw reliable conclusions from this form of air quality monitoring at least 9 months of data is needed. Accordingly, it is not possible to provide an accurate commentary on the concentration of nitrogen dioxide at the above sites until the late spring of 2009. However, an <i>initial</i> review of the data collected thus far suggests that the results are not unduly concerning.</p> <p>Update It was agreed at the meeting on 4th February that all results be available before making further decisions.</p> <p>Update May 2009 – Fusion tubes have gone for analysis but there appears to be no significant cause for concern. Further information will be available for July's meetings.</p>

Action beyond the adopted recommendations of the Task and Finish Group

	Investigation	Comments
	Dust monitoring around the Cadwell Lane industrial estate	<p>In addition to the nitrogen dioxide monitoring undertaken in connection with recommendation M2, above, the Council commissioned a specialist environmental consultant to undertake fine dust (PM₁₀) sampling at 3 locations in the Cadwell Lane industrial estate area. This monitoring was undertaken continuously for a 6 week period and finished in early December 2008.</p> <p>The consultant, DustScan Ltd, is currently finalising the QA/QC of the data collected and a report detailing the results and their implications as regards the Environmental Protection Act 1990 will be released shortly.</p> <p>Update - 4th February 2009 – This information to be available to the group as soon as possible as the results of this was important to residents and businesses. As in S3 this will be available after the meeting in March with the partnership agencies.</p> <p>Update May 2009 – See S3</p>

3. Further actions requested at meeting on 4th February 2009

Actions	Comments
<p>A. It was requested that the Environment Agency be asked about their dust monitoring proposals. When will this take place, the methodology, for example is it part of the conditions of the licence?</p>	<p>Under the Licence the licence holder informs the Environment Agency in writing when they are to undertake monitoring or spot sampling.</p>
<p>B It was agreed that the Police would put together an action plan. Building in publicity, with information about what they can do now and what can be done next.</p>	<p>An action plan has now been put in place. When operations have been carried out they will be publicised through the Corporate Communication department and results will be fed in through corporate communications with a view to having them publicised</p> <p>Update May 2009 – During March 2009 there were 30 vehicle stops with 3 seizures, April 20 stops and 1 seizure and May 19 stops 1 seizure.</p> <p>Speeding enforcement once a month and sometimes more. No endorsements but issued several warnings.</p>

APPENDIX B

<p>C. It was requested that all Councillors put the issues as a target on the Police Locality Ward Panels as these get forwarded to JAG (Joint Action Group)</p>	<p>Councillors to address this. Update May 2009 – This has been done and a priority on all panels.</p>
<p>D. It was requested that information and update be available for the GAF (Growth Area Fund) funding.</p>	<p>Information has been received on Growth Area Funding and initial discussions are taking place and Members will be informed Update May 2009 – More information is being requested for the meetings in July.</p>
<p>E. It was also asked if the businesses are involved with the Hitchin Urban Transport Plan?</p>	<p>Businesses have been involved in the various workshops and consultations</p>
<p>F. Section 106 is being followed up by Councillor David Billing regarding the pedestrian crossing at Cadwell Lane and that in the Hitchin Transport Plan it should be highlighted that this is a residential area not a business area.</p>	<p>Will be addressed. Update May 2009 - This has been done and emphasis placed on the importance of improved safety for pedestrian and cyclists at Cadwell Lane junction, speeding in Wilbury Way and access to the industrial area without going through residential.</p>
<p>G. It was said that land search is being done regarding the ownership of the triangular piece of land which has recently been fenced off and it was requested that the group get the result of this.</p>	<p>The land registry shows this piece of land as not being registered and investigations are continuing. Update May 2009 Investigations continue and further information will be available at the July meetings.</p>
<p>H. A Community Action Day was suggested and it was said that this needs to be organised by the community but that the police would support.</p>	<p>Community Development Officer for Hitchin to discuss this with Cadwell Lane Residents Update May 2009 - the residents are keen on a Community Day and possible dates will be identified.</p>
<p>I. It was requested that check be made on any planned improvements to the play area.</p>	<p>There are plans to improve the Pavilion in Summer 2009. There are no plans re a play area.</p>
<p>J. A request was made for the operating terms of the licence to be available.</p>	<p>The Licence is available and Members have received it.</p>

HIGHWAYS WORK PROGRAMME							
Hitchin Area Committee							
JMP/NHDC Area Committee Match Funded Highway Schemes					Year: 2009/10		
HCC Unique Ref. No.	Project/Scheme Work Area	Lead Officer	Costs	Start Date	Finish Date	Review of Progress	
						Traffic Light	Comments
WBS HR06770	Bancroft, "elderly people crossing" sign near Sainsbury's	Ken Clowes 01438 757800	£1,000 total for works JMP request for 50% contribution rejected by Hitchin AC	November 2008	May 2009	Green	JMP agreed to 100% funding. Sign has been installed but we have been experiencing difficulties in getting EDF to make the connection to the sign
	Proposed schemes from Hitchin Area Committee 9th June 2009						
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Improvements to Market Place and Churchyard, Hitchin • Cadwell Lane crossroads – pedestrian phase is needed in the traffic lights • Walsworth 						

HIGHWAYS WORK PROGRAMME							
Hitchin Area Committee							
JMP/NHDC Area Committee Match Funded Highway Schemes				Year: 2009/10			
HCC Unique Ref. No.	Project/Scheme Work Area	Lead Officer	Costs	Start Date	Finish Date	Review of Progress	
						Traffic Light	Comments
	<p>Crossroads – similarly a need for a pedestrian phase</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pedestrian crossing needed in Cambridge Road near the Stotfold junction • Willian Road needs a pedestrian crossing near the Purwell Lane junction • Bollards are needed in Periwinkle Lane to stop parking on the grass areas. 						

HIGHWAYS WORK PROGRAMME							
Hitchin Area Committee							
JMP/NHDC Area Committee Match Funded Highway Schemes					Year: 2009/10		
HCC Unique Ref. No.	Project/Scheme Work Area	Lead Officer	Costs	Start Date	Finish Date	Review of Progress	
						Traffic Light	Comments
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Physical measures are needed to reduce speeds on Stotfold Road and on Willian Road. For example Vehicle Activated Signs. 						

Town Talk Notes– Tuesday 9th June 2009 – 6.15 pm – 7.15pm @ Benslow Music Trust, Benslow Lane, Hitchin.

The Chair, Councillor Judi Billing, welcomed everybody to the Town Talk. She also welcomed the officers from Stevenage who were observing. John Robinson, Strategic Director Customer Services, was also in attendance. The next Town Talk, before a Hitchin Area Committee meeting, will be on Tuesday 28th July, 2009, at Christ Church Hall, Bedford Road, Hitchin.

Issues raised by members of the public present

Cigarette Ends
Museums
Roads

Cigarette Ends

A resident raised an item referring to the 'disgusting' mess outside public houses and other areas of the town re cigarette ends. The question was raised whether parking attendants could double up as litter wardens. John Robinson said that Parking Enforcement Officers at the moment simply do parking, although investigations were being carried out with regard to officers being given more powers.

Through the Hitchin Bid, three Town Rangers are to be employed, and it may be part of their duties to check on businesses and make sure that outside their premises are kept tidy and cigarette end receptacles emptied. Public education could also be part of their duties alongside the work that NHDC undertakes. Cleansing is carried out daily within the town and with problems rectified within 1 hour target time. It was emphasised that if there are certain areas that cause concern people could call the Customer Service Centre, 01462 474000.

Roads

A questioner asked about the strategy for dealing with road repairs around Hitchin, and named a few areas.

Councillor David Billing said that the service utility companies have the power to dig up the roads basically as they please and Herts Highways can only influence. It perhaps needs a study of how things could be planned better, for example gas main works being done at nights and/or weekends.

There is a potholes hotline that people can contact. It was suggested that perhaps Herts Highways would come a Town Talk or Committee meeting.

Museums

Hitchin Historical Society advised the meeting that correspondence was being sent for the attention of John Robinson and Councillor Tricia Gibbs, stating that with the knowledge and expertise in the history of Hitchin that members of the Society have, is a good reason why they should be fully involved in the process and terms of reference for the forthcoming feasibility study. It was noted that they wanted to be constructive in the process.

It was also advised that there was very strong support for the Town Hall remaining as a public facility for social activities and it must be remembered that this building had been originally donated to the town and that there were covenants on the building for social use for the residents of Hitchin.

Members present agreed that Hitchin Area Committee should also be involved in the groundwork and preparation of terms of reference and that a Facilities Working Group be formed.

John Robinson advised that all those with an interest will be consulted and involved.

A question was asked as to why the conversion of the Town Hall seemed to be the only option being considered for a new Museum, how can it be proved that this was the best way forward if no other option was being considered.

It was also asked if there was discussion taking place with the Library for example and that the Trustees of the Town Hall need to take advice re the structural state of the Town Hall and that part of the feasibility study should include a structural survey.

John Robinson advised that there were a number of options but due to the urgency of this matter they had been narrowed. He also pointed out that the trustees will probably carry out an their own structural survey.

It was also asked why it needed to be a 'District Museum' why could Hitchin not retain it's own Museum. It was felt that Hitchin was a poor relation and that Letchworth in particular had benefited from a number of new builds.

The involvement of the public was also a big factor in the consultancy process and the question was asked 'what if Hitchin residents, oppose the Town Hall being transferred to a Museum'?

John Robinson advised that all findings would be presented to the Cabinet at NHDC for consideration.

Additional Issues

Queen Mother Theatre

A representative from the Theatre said that they were no longer using the Dell as an open air theatre for a number of reasons and had found an alternative site. They were concerned though about the security involved with the proposed High Ropes project for the Dell. Judi said that all this would be part of the feasibility study and that there had already been initial concerns re this matter.

Subzero

It was mentioned that somebody should have informed Subzero that they required planning permission for the large signs they have put up. They expect there to be an enforcement notice or a planning application submitted. The question was raised 'was this a conservation area'?

APPENDIX E

Area Committee Work Programme 2009 - 2010							
Area: Hitchin		Lead Officer: Margaret Bracey					
Codes: Theme Code: G – Green; TC – Town Centre; SD - Sustainable Development C/R: C – Capital; R – Revenue; CS – Community Safety; YP – Youth provision							
Ward	Theme Code	Project/ Scheme	Budget	C/R	Start Date	Finish Date	Review of Progress Comment
Bearton	G	Triangle Design Statement	£5,000	R	2004	July 2009	Consultation takes place on draft document launching 8 th June and completion at the Triangle Garden Open Day on 28 th June, 2009.
Highbury	G	Tree planting	£1,200	R	2008	Autumn 2009	Planting of 8 trees at St Johns Playing Field
Hitchin	TC	Town Centre Enhancement	Not yet known	C/R	July 2009	Not yet known	Hitchin Committee request the enhancement of the Market Place along with a TRO re Sunday parking.
Hitchin	YP	Community Choice for young people			September 2009	January 2010	Proposal that young people apply for funding for a project and the young people choose project or projects to fund.

**TITLE OF REPORT: HITCHIN COMMUNITY SURGERY – 6 JUNE 2009
INFORMATION NOTE****REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

District Councillors: Allison Ashley, David Billing, Paul Clark and Deepak Sangha were in attendance assisted by Janette Smyth as Support Officer.

Thirteen Hitchin residents and one Letchworth resident attended the Surgery with **15** enquiries. These enquiries were passed to the Customer Services Centre for processing. The Customer Services Manager is requested to copy to Ward Councillors the responses sent to the surgery visitor.

ENQUIRY

- Request for support to provide a school bus between North Hitchin and North Letchworth (?) for children attending Highfield School;
- Request for the tracks from Cadwell along the Icknield Way to Letchworth to be upgraded to provide cycleway;
- Request for information on smoking in the ARCADE adjacent to West Alley and from Hitchin High Street. Allowed or not? If not what are the procedures to make it a non smoking area;
- Request for a road in Hitchin to be named after George Chapman (deceased) a Jacobean poet, playwright and translator born in Hitchin. His former home in Tilehouse Street has a blue plaque;
- Request for a dog waste bin in Burford Way, Hitchin;
- Request for information as to whether coarse/game fishing is allowed in River Oughton;
- Request for police enforcement of speed limits in Hitchin Hill as new road surface has allowed faster speeds by some drivers;
- Request for clearance of footpath (overgrown and rubbish) from Maytrees near Whitehill School;
- Request for immediate action regarding overgrown garden and rubbish at unoccupied (?) property at 243 Bedford Road, Hitchin;
- Request for pedestrian crossing near Three Moorhens roundabout on Stevenage Road side as at peak times many schoolchildren use this junction;
- General request for street cleansing in the Three Moorhens roundabout area;
- No progress on parking issues in St. Johns Road i.e. disabled bays. Visitor advised by letter 'not until 2012' Could this delay be investigated;
- Request for hedge trimming and cutting back on north side of A505 from Stotfold Road roundabout to Wyevale Garden Centre;
- Request for any changes to Hitchin Town Hall should include provision for community groups e.g. Workers Education Association;
- Request for rigorous attention to cleansing of pigeon waste in Hitchin Town Centre;

Note: One visitor to the Community Surgery expressed their satisfaction with the current performance of Veolia (aka NHDC) in the collection of refuse from Firs Close, Hitchin. Another visitor was grateful for the removal of an abandoned vehicle in St. John's Road.

THIS PAGE IS BLANK

**TITLE OF REPORT: HITCHIN COMMUNITY SURGERY – 4 JULY 2009
INFORMATION NOTE****REPORT OF THE HEAD OF LEGAL AND DEMOCRATIC SERVICES**

District Councillors: Allison Ashley, David Billing, Lawrence Oliver, Alan Millard, Ray Shakespeare – Smith and Deepak Sangha were in attendance assisted by Janette Smyth as Support Officer.

Eleven Hitchin residents and one Pirton resident attended the Surgery with **14** enquiries. These enquiries were passed to the Customer Services Centre for processing. The Customer Services Manager is requested to copy to Ward Councillors the responses sent to the surgery visitor.

ENQUIRY

- Request for enforcement action? To prevent residents of Bury Road, Pirton parking their vehicles at the entrance to this cul de sac which impedes parking for emergency services, District Nurse and other residents;
- Request for domestic refuse to be collected on a weekly basis in the summer months;
- Request for enforcement action against licensee of Radcliffe Arms, Walsworth Road – large banners advertising ‘pub open’ are too large and overbearing for this residential area;
- Request for urgent action to mitigate the problem of pigeons, both in numbers and guano deposited in Hitchin Town Centre and the town in general;
- Request for action against smokers in alleyway near to and at Lyles Garage and Court Housing – air pollution, cigarette ends and packets on ground and general rubbish;
- Complaint against the condition of the footway on West Hill. Residents of the Cheshire Home cannot use wheelchairs easily and have to revert to highway;
- Request for immediate action to remove dumped rubbish from dedicated parking places for residential home in Kershaws Hill;
- Request for overgrown vegetation on footpath between Barley Close and Lucas Lane, also a sign (highway?) in Redhill Road/Lucas Lane has gone missing;
- A resident at Hine Way (NHH) is concerned about non return of Warden following an incident to which the resident feels she has been unfairly blamed (neighbours dog);
- Request for information as to why the police took 30 minutes to attend an incident in Nightingale Road. No date of incident provided by visitor;
- Complaint about 10 wheeled vehicles using Whitehill Road;
- Complaint about the build up of traffic at junction of St. Johns Road and Park Street (Three Moorhens PH);
- Request for steam cleaning of alleyway next to H. Samuel (urine);
- Request for repairs to Market Place (large stone missing!).

THIS PAGE IS BLANK