

11 July 2008

Our ref: B&D Ctte/Jul08
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To: Members of the Baldock and District Committee of North Hertfordshire District Council

(Councillors M.R.M. Muir (Chairman), I.J. Knighton (Vice-Chairman), S.K. Jarvis, Marilyn Kirkland, M.E. Weeks and A.D. Young)

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

to be held at

THE COMMUNITY CENTRE, SIMPSON DRIVE, BALDOCK

on

MONDAY 21 JULY 2008

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 2 June 2008.	-
3. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS Members should notify the Chairman of other business which they wish to be discussed by the Committee at the end of the business set out in the agenda. They must state the circumstances which they consider justify the business being considered as a matter of urgency. The Chairman will decide whether any item(s) raised will be considered.	-
4. CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS Members are reminded that any declarations of interest in respect of business set out in the agenda, should be declared as either a prejudicial or personal interest and are required to notify the Chairman of the nature of any interest declared at the commencement of the relevant item on the agenda. Members declaring a prejudicial interest should leave the room and not seek to influence the decision during that particular item.	-
5. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION To receive petitions, comments and questions from members of the public. Any public participation requests received within the agreed time will be notified to Members as soon as practicable.	-
6. WICKSTEED XERSCAPE EQUIPMENT <i>A presentation will be given by David Owen of Wicksteed on this exercise equipment for all ages, to be sited in parks and open spaces. The Baldock and District Committee will consider the possibility of providing it for the residents of Baldock.</i>	1
7. BALDOCK TOWN HALL STAKEHOLDERS' GROUP <i>Jeni Gosling will give the Baldock and District Committee a verbal update on the current situation.</i>	3
8. AREA COMMITTEE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS – REVIEW OF 2006-2009 AND PROPOSALS FOR 2009-2012 REPORT BY THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES <i>A report by the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services on North Herts District Council's Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to the Voluntary and Community Sector, SLAs and general grants awarded by Area Committees.</i>	5

9.	LETCHWORTH GATE AND JUNCTION 9 OF THE A1(M) <i>The Chairman will lead a discussion based on the Report and Papers presented to the North Hertfordshire Highways-Joint Member Panel on 21 April 2008.</i>	13
10.	CHAMPION NEWS REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES <i>A summary of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for Baldock since the meeting of the Committee held on 2 June 2008, and events taking place in forthcoming months.</i>	33
11.	BALDOCK & DISTRICT COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT AND AREA VISIONING BUDGETS 2008/2009 REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT & CULTURAL SERVICES <i>To take the Members through the current budget balances for the Committee Development and Area Visioning Budgets and to present the following grant applications which have been submitted for consideration:</i>	37
	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Champions Holiday Club (for children aged 5 to 11 years) ▪ Baldock Guides – a feasibility study on their Guide Hut ▪ St Mary’s Church - a new internal audio system and the Proposed Schemes referred from the Area Committee to the JMP meeting of 21 April 2008. 	 44 45 46 47 48

The date of the next meeting of the Baldock & District Committee is:

Monday 22 September 2008

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BALDOCK & DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE
Monday 21 July 2008

PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT

AGENDA ITEM No.

6

TITLE: WICKSTEED XERSCAPE EQUIPMENT

A VERBAL PRESENTATION ON THIS OUTDOOR EXERCISE EQUIPMENT BY DAVID OWEN OF WICKSTEED.

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***PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT**

AGENDA ITEM No.

7

TITLE: BALDOCK TOWN HALL STAKEHOLDERS' GROUP

A VERBAL UPDATE ON THE CURRENT SITUATION BY JENI GOSLING OF THE BALDOCK TOWN STAKEHOLDERS' GROUP.

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TITLE OF REPORT: AREA COMMITTEE SERVICE LEVEL AGREEMENTS – REVIEW OF 2006 - 09 AND PROPOSALS FOR 2009 – 2012

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 The report invites Area Committees to consider their preferred approach to the provision of locally focussed Service Level Agreements (SLA) for the period 2009-12.
- 1.2 Any decision taken needs to be made within the context of the strategic approach to the development of the next phase of SLA for the period April 2009 – March 2012 that is currently out for consultation, prior to a final approval by Cabinet in October 2008.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Cabinet approved a new comprehensive set of policies and procedures for financial assistance to voluntary and community organisations (VCOs) in November 2002 which included the establishment of SLA.
- 3.2 The first three year tranche of SLA was set up from April 1 2003 to March 31st 2006 with those organisations with whom the Council had developed a longer term grant funding relationship and was based on the work that the organisations were doing at that time. The second three year tranche of SLA commenced on April 1st 2006 and is due to time expire on March 31st 2009.
- 3.3 Prior to this date, consideration needs to be given to establishing the context and framework for the next phase of SLA for the period 2009 - 2012.
- 3.4 Though the main thrust of SLA were those funded centrally, it became apparent that at a local level, where Area Committees had funded an organisation on an historical basis for a number of years, then similar principles could be applied.
- 3.5 During 2002/3, each Area Committee determined its support for those organisations or project with which it wished to enter into a longer term funding relationship.
- 3.6 The report to Cabinet on 24th June 2008, included the following comments specifically about Area Committee SLA:

Area Committee Service Level Agreements

In addition to the main, centrally funded SLA, Area Committees have increasingly funded smaller SLA with those local organisations with whom a longer term service relationship has been deemed appropriate and beneficial. This was one of the developments that emerged from the review of the first tranche of SLA funding summary of these SLA in October 2005.

It is appropriate that these SLA should also be reviewed during the current financial year by each Area Committees to determine whether these should be continued for a further three years (2009/12) and at what level of funding.

At the same time the review will consider the balance of funding between the Area Committees and the central SLA funds.

- 3.7 There is a growing recognition within all levels of Government of the value and importance of the voluntary and community sector (often now referred to as the 'third sector' as a provider of services. This is reflected in the development of Compacts, in the involvement of the voluntary sector in Local Strategic Partnerships, the new duty placed on partners to co-operate in the delivery of local improvement planning and in the development of Local Area Agreements.
- 3.8 If there are to be any changes to the way the SLA are administered and awarded, the minimum notice that must be given to existing SLA holders is three months in writing. Furthermore, in keeping within the terms and spirit of the North Hertfordshire Compact, there needs to be a twelve week consultation period with voluntary and community organisations on the overall strategy.
- 3.9 However, good practice suggests that if there are to be any changes to the way in which the Council wishes to continue its support for the voluntary and community sector, as much notice as possible should be given.

4. ISSUES - PROPOSALS FOR 2009-12

Strategic Objectives for the Council

- 4.1 All current SLA should be compliant with the LSP's district-wide Vision, the Council's Mission and Strategic Objectives.
- 4.2 The Sustainable Community Strategy that has recently been drafted has also identified a number of key priorities for the District to 2021 and it is evident that funding the voluntary and community sector is an efficient and effective way of achieving a number of its ambitions and aspirations. The use of Local Area Agreement reward grant funding via the Local Strategic Partnership to fund voluntary and community projects will also require formal corporate governance, using an SLA.
- 4.3 The Council is currently preparing the revision of its Corporate Plan 2005-2015, including three new priorities of work for 2009/10 and beyond, which are:

Green issues
Sustainable development
Town centre improvements

The detail of what each of these themes will include is currently under discussion and will form the basis for the new Corporate Business Planning programme for the Council.

- 4.4 The alignment and ownership of actions to be undertaken on the Council's behalf by the voluntary and community sector contributing to these themes will be included in future SLA. All organisations will be required to demonstrate how they can contribute.

Future Proposals for Service Level Agreements – April 2009 – March 2012

Funding Context

- 4.5 Each Area Committee needs to consider how best it wishes to allocate its resources for the voluntary and community sector for the period 2009/12 when the present tranche of awards time-expires on March 31st 2009.
- 4.6 Within the context of the Council's Corporate Business Planning, any increased or new SLA for 2009 and beyond will be funded through the Area Committee Development budget. (The base budget for SLA was transferred out from the Development budget in 2002/3).
- 4.7 There are no accurate figures yet available to reflect the changing demography of the district at an Area Committee level, arising from the increased population since 2001 and the review of the ward boundaries following the 2006/7 Boundary Review. Therefore, for the foreseeable future, the Development budgets for each Committee will remain as:

Area Committee	% Population (2001 census)	Budget 2008/9 £
Baldock	14,348 (12.27%)	18,320
Hitchin	30,851 (26.39%)	37,180
Letchworth	32,932 (28.17%)	46,150
Royston	17,002 (14.54%)	22,800
Southern Rural	21,775 (18.63%)	30,510
Total	116,908 (100%)	154,960

Service Context

- 4.8 It is suggested that during the course of the 2009/10 Corporate Business Planning process, each Area Committee needs to determine the following actions:
1. That it wishes to conclude new SLA for a three year period
 2. If so, if it wishes to continue to fund some or all of the existing tranche
 3. If not, with whom it would wish to enter into new SLA
 4. The level of its funds that it wishes to commit to SLA
- 4.9 The Council's proposed strategy for 2009-12 provides a framework within which Area Committees can consider their preferred options. This is summarised in Appendix 1.

4.10 The proposed indicative timescale for negotiation of the new phase of SLA is:

ACTION	TIMESCALE
Approval by Cabinet of outline proposals for consultation	24 th June 2008
Approval of final report by Cabinet	21 st October 2008
Start review of individual SLA for 2009/12	27 th October 2008
Complete review of individual SLA	31 st December 2008
Write to all projects with new SLA	31 st January 2009
Start next three year tranche of SLA	1 st April 2009

4.11 The review of performance of each SLA for this Committee for 2007/8 is summarised in Appendix 2

4.12 As part of the review of both the Major and Minor SLA (centrally funded), consideration will be given to those organisations which clearly have a local rather than a district wide focus to be administered, funded, monitored and evaluated through Area Committees.

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

5.1 The Terms of Reference in relation to Area Committees confirm that they may establish and maintain relationships with outside bodies/voluntary organisations which includes discretionary grant aid/financial support. However this does not include grants for district wide activities.

5.2 When re-negotiating SLA these may need to comply with the Council's Contract Procurement Rules.

5.3 Section 2 Local Government Act 2000 provides that the Council has power to do anything which it considers likely to promote or improve the economic, social or environmental well-being of its area. This would apply on the basis that financial assistance to voluntary and community organisations improves the economic, social or environmental well-being of the District or part of it.

5.4 Section 137 Local Government Act 1972 provides specific authority for the Council to incur expenditure on anything which is in the interests of and will bring direct benefit to its area. This includes a charity or other body operating for public service.

5.5 To better reflect current legislation pertaining to contracts, it is proposed that revised and improved SLA documentation will be introduced in the renegotiation of the SLA for introduction in 2009/10.

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

6.1 The total Area Committee Development budget for 2008/9 is £154,960

6.2 When the Area Committee SLA were originally set up, the expenditure was transferred from the Committee's Development budget and a small separate SLA budget heading was created.

6.3 A more detailed analysis of each SLA with budget and performance information is set out in Appendix 2.

- 6.4 The Area Committee Development Budgets for 2009/10 have not yet been agreed. However, for the past few years, given the significant carry forward for Area Committee Development budgets, there has been no inflationary allowance, so an assumption is made that the baseline for 2009/10 will be the same as 2008/9.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 The local SLA are managed by the Community Development Officer as part of their regular work programme.
- 7.2 However, a Business Process Review has been commissioned this year to review the most effective and efficient way in which SLA and the more general grant awarding arrangements can be improved.
- 7.3 The great majority of the voluntary and community projects that are funded by the Council have equality and social inclusion as a key objective of their purpose. Such projects work very closely with and for the more disadvantaged and potentially socially excluded within our communities. There is a strong argument to be made that if the Council did not provide financial support for projects to do the work that they do, then it would, itself, have to meet the needs of such people in other ways.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 8.1 Each organisation having a Service Level Agreement with the Council had an annual review with the Community Development Officer.
- 8.2 There will be in-depth consultation with the North Hertfordshire Compact prior to the final report being submitted to Cabinet for its meeting on 21st October 2008.
- 8.3 Members who represent the Council on the management committees/boards of voluntary groups and organisations will be consulted and their comments considered within the final report to Cabinet.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

The Area Committee is asked to:

- 9.1 Note the review of the local SLA arrangements for 2007/8 as set out in Appendix 2.
- 9.2 Note that a rebalancing of the funding of SLA is proposed to reflect better the district wide/local area focus.
- 9.3 Determine the approach to be adopted for any further tranche of SLA to be funded through Area Committees for 2009/12.
- 9.4 Confirm that the detailed negotiations with individual projects will be conducted by relevant officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Rural Affairs (for Major and Minor funded projects) and Area Committee Chairmen.
- 9.5 Note the proposed timescale for implementing the new SLA.
- 9.6 Receive a further report on SLA outcomes later in the year as part of the Corporate Business Planning Process.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 To confirm the future strategic policy direction for the programme of financial assistance for the voluntary and community sector, through the negotiation of SLA.

11. APPENDICES

- 11.1 Appendix 1 - Proposed Framework for the Renegotiation of SLA
Appendix 2 - Performance Review of SLA 2007/8

12. CONTACT OFFICERS

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13. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 13.1 Review of Policies and Procedures for Financial Assistance to Voluntary and Community Organisations, November 2002.

APPENDIX 1

Proposed Framework for Re-Negotiation of SLA

Subject to final decisions on the Corporate Business Planning process for 2009/10, for the next three years (April 2009 – March 2012), the current programme of Service Level Agreements should be renegotiated in compliance with the following conditions:

1. There should be a comprehensive review of the current SLA arrangements to ensure that all organisations have fully complied with the terms and conditions of the agreement and have met targets that were agreed during the second phase 2006-2009.
2. If a project/scheme is not compliant or met its targets, then the Council may wish to withdraw its financial support. Any savings made here can be redirected into other schemes.
3. Existing organisations will be expected to link their activities into the three new Council priorities. If a project or organisation is no longer able to reflect the new strategic themes or the Council in its work, the Council may wish to terminate funding.
4. The Council will be able to identify any gaps in service and commission applications from new organisations, specifically to help implement its new strategic priorities, but any financial assistance for these would have to come from within the existing budget provision.
5. If an organisation no longer wished to continue its work then the contract would be formally concluded and funds could be redirected.
6. Consideration of longer term “exit strategies” will be given as part of the re-negotiation of the SLA.
7. The Council will delineate between those SLA that have a clear district-wide remit which should remain centrally funded and those that have a clearer local focus that can be funded from Area Committees.

APPENDIX 2

PERFORMANCE REVIEW OF SLA FOR 2007/8

SLA	Budget 2007/8	SLA Funds	User Figures	Commentary
Baldock Festival	£1,060	Costs associated with the formal Road Closure Order and the associated safety arrangements.	Approximately 3000 people attend more than 50 events over a two week period.	Annual Community event run over a period with the main activity being an a fair held on the High Street car park o weekend of the festival period. Festival h to sign up to a 3 year SLA and this is th of the three year funding agreement.
Baldock Senior Club	£1,388	Hire of Baldock Community Centre	41 Members. Average 36 weekly attendees. 1800 attendees per annum.	Community based group providing voluntary support and services for its friends & Senior Citizens of Baldock Provides a social outlet for older people likely to suffer from social isolation. Operates every Wednesday from 2.00- 4
Retirement Sewing Club	£420	Cost of room hire at the Baldock Guide Hut.	14 Members. 840 attendees per annum.	Community based group providing valuable voluntary support and services for its me friends & Senior Citizens of Baldock & Di Members pay £12 per 10 week term, week terms during the year. Two classes on Tuesdays and Thursdays 2pm to 4pm The group organises two outings per year summer and winter.

*PART 1 – PUBLIC DOCUMENT	AGENDA ITEM No. 9
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LETCHWORTH GATE AND JUNCTION 9 OF THE A1(M)

The Chairman will lead a discussion on the attached papers:

1. North Herts Highways – Joint Member Panel minute 51 of meeting of meeting held on 21 April 2008.
2. Letchworth Gate and Junction 9 Of A1(M)
Report of the Technical Standards & Programmes Manager, Hertfordshire Highways
As presented to the meeting of North Hertfordshire Highways – Joint Member Panel held on 21 April 2008.

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PAPER 1

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS PARTNERSHIP – JOINT MEMBER PANEL

Meeting held at the Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City
at 7.30 p.m. on Monday, 21 April 2008

EXTRACT FROM MINUTES

51. LETCHWORTH GATE AND JUNCTION 9 OF THE A1 (M)

District Councillor Julian Cunningham thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the JMP. Councillor Cunningham referred the JMP to an increased delay to traffic approaching Junction 9 of the A1 (M) from Letchworth Gate of up to 20 minutes which he considered was caused by works in Baldock Town Centre during regeneration work. Of major concern was the use of residential roads as an alternative 'rat run' e.g. Radburn Way which ran parallel to Letchworth Gate. Councillor Cunningham advised the JMP that he had made a request to Hertfordshire Highways for traffic and speed checks but as yet there had been no response. This build up of traffic had increased in the last two weeks and he sought the support of the JMP in addressing this problem.

Letchworth Town councillor D. Knappert thanked the Chairman for the opportunity to address the JMP and confirmed that many users of Junction 9 of whom a vast percentage were either residents or people working in Letchworth found the strictures of the current slip far too tight and that there would be a serious accident if the slip was not extended towards Letchworth Gate and parallel to the A505 together with a no left turn ban at the top of the Baldock slip lane.

The Chairman thanked Councillor Cunningham and Town Councillor Knappert for their presentations and the JMP expressed its support for the introduction of traffic speed checks in Radburn Way. The North Herts District Manager (NHM) advised the JMP that the temporary traffic control measures in Baldock Town Centre could have an adverse effect on traffic queues but recent studies of travel times between Letchworth and East Baldock using the A505 /Baldock bypass or the B656/A507 had not shown one route being any faster than the other.

The Hertfordshire Highways – Project Manager – Baldock Bypass (PMB) presented this report to the JMP which sought to advise the JMP on the performance of the improvement to Junction 9 of the A1(M) and current initiatives on its operation. The PMB provided a review of the study findings for the north bound slip and south bound slip roads to Junction 9 and advised the JMP that the primary objectives of the scheme had been met and that the minor alterations to the exit of the left hand turn dedicated northbound lane had improved the situation overall. The PMB detailed the minor improvements to Letchworth Gate that had been considered: additional traffic signals, widening of the exit to Letchworth Gate from the dedicated lane, widening the approach to Junction 9 from Letchworth Gate and a dedicated 3rd lane from Letchworth Gate to A1 (M) north. Major improvements to Letchworth Gate between Junction 9 and the gyratory, dualling of Letchworth Gate between the gyratory and St. Pauls roundabout. The PMB advised the JMP that the Highways Agency had vetoed any proposals to prevent a No Right Turn, and a Member confirmed that *de facto* all vehicles had to turn left upon entering a roundabout. In conclusion the PMB advised that if any improvements were made to Letchworth Gate there would be implications for the road network as traffic could be drawn to the A505 Hitchin to Letchworth corridor with a potential upgrade to a County Primary route which require consideration within the Hertfordshire Infrastructure Implementation Strategy Study.

The JMP acknowledged the detailed information provided on Letchworth Gate and the two main points of concern were traffic queues to Junction 9 from Letchworth and the exit 'left turn' northbound from the A1(M) and the problems caused by motorists turning left for Letchworth from the right hand lane turn to the Baldock bypass.

The PMB referred the JMP to Appendix 2 which detailed 8 options which had been

PAPER 1

reviewed:

1. Investigate a traffic signal layout for signal control of the dedicated slip lane, with secondary signals on the exit from that lane into Letchworth Gate. This would prevent left turns from the right turning lane. Also investigate closing the dedicated lane leaving a 2 lane or a 3 lane signalised approach to the roundabout;
2. Extend the left turning lane towards Letchworth;
3. Dual Letchworth Gate. This option was reviewed several years ago and discounted on the grounds of possible objections from Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation, and costs of approximately £4 Million;
4. Provision of a second grade separation, taking right turns direct to the Baldock Bypass (similar to Stansted Airport) this was ruled out at the 1995 Public Inquiry;
5. Provide a left turn ban - 'No left turn' at the traffic signals for lane 2 (difficult to enforce);
6. Apply red anti-skid material to an area at the end of the current layout, which would tend to deflect vehicles towards a 90° angle at the 'Give Way' line;
7. Carry out permanent alterations to the line and angle of approach as per the 'trial layout', altering existing hatching, lining and anti-skid material;
8. Do nothing.

The PMB advised the JMP that Option 6 was considered to be the most appropriate action that would assist all users of Junction 9.

There ensued a debate on the way forward and it was concluded that the request for a 'no right turn' should be pursued again and that the PMB and the NHM should take note of the need to investigate further the possibility of 'dualling' the A505 between Junction 9 of the A1 (M) and the 'longabout' at Letchworth Gate.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That District Councillor Julian Cunningham be thanked for his presentation;
- (2) That Letchworth Town Councillor D. Knappert be thanked for his presentation;
- (3) That the update on traffic management issues concerning Junction 9 of the A1 (M) at Letchworth Gate and the eight options (Appendix 2) be noted;
- (2) That the JMP expressed its support for investigations to proceed for the dualling of the A505 between Junction 9 of the A1(M) and the Letchworth Gate 'longabout';
- (3) That the Hertfordshire Highways – North Herts District Manager in conjunction with the Hertfordshire Highways – Baldock Bypass Manager refer the request of the JMP for dualling of the A505 to the next meeting of the Hertfordshire County Council Highways and Transport Panel;
- (4) That the Hertfordshire Highways – North Herts District Manager in conjunction with the Hertfordshire Highways – Baldock Bypass Manager undertake further representations to the Highways Agency concerning the request for a 'no left turn' from the Baldock lane on the northbound slip of Junction 9 of the A1(M);
- (5) That the Hertfordshire Highways – North Herts District Manager in conjunction with the Hertfordshire Highways – Baldock Bypass Manager undertake traffic surveys in response to concerns of Members about excessive queuing at morning and evening peak hours on the A505 from Letchworth Gate to Junction 9 of the A1 (M) including the rat run of Radburn Way and report back to the next meeting of the JMP to be held on 23 June 2008;

REASON FOR DECISIONS

To allow the JMP express its views and concerns on the ongoing traffic management issues at Letchworth Gate – Junction 9 A1 (M).

Report as presented to North Hertfordshire Highways – Joint Member Panel on 21 April 2008

TITLE OF REPORT: LETCHWORTH GATE AND JUNCTION 9 OF A1(M)

REPORT OF THE TECHNICAL STANDARDS & PROGRAMMES MANAGER,
HERTFORDSHIRE HIGHWAYS

1. PURPOSE OF REPORT

- 1.1 To advise the Panel on the performance of the improvement to junction 9 of the A1(M) (Letchworth Gate interchange), part of the Baldock bypass project, and to advise on current initiatives on its operation. To advise the Panel on the operation of Letchworth Gate, its influence on routing of traffic through Baldock town centre and on possibilities for improvement.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1 At the public inquiry into the bypass in 1995 a scheme was agreed between the Highways Agency (HA) and the County Council to ensure that the queues on the slip roads of junction 9 were no greater after the opening of the bypass than were experienced before. It was also anticipated that some traffic might transfer from the B197 through Graveley to the A1(M). The scheme involved the construction of dedicated south facing slip roads to and from the A1(M) within the existing highway/motorway boundary.
- 2.2 Development of the scheme started in late 2002 and continued until September 2005 when the HA gave approval to the scheme. Detail of the development of the scheme is given in Appendix 1.
- 2.3 The southbound slip was constructed over the period Dec 2005 to Apr 2006 as part of the main works. The works on the northbound off slip road started in June 2006 and in order to give safety benefits to the motorway and reduce traffic delays the dedicated slip road was opened as soon as it could be. This was in advance of the traffic signals controlling the vehicles on the circulatory carriageway causing some uncertainty. The signals became operational in December 2006 and with the westbound traffic on the roundabout stopped at the signals, this provided the opportunity for the traffic exiting the dedicated lane to enter Letchworth Gate more easily. In Oct 2007 work was completed on the traffic calming measures through Graveley and in Nov 2007 alterations to the signals at Coreys Mill were undertaken to help reduce queuing particularly on the s/b off slip to the A1(M).
- 2.4 A number of representations were received in the first few months of operation of the dedicated lane regarding the difficulty of seeing rear and side view oncoming traffic when moving towards and onto Letchworth Gate, along with the almost immediate transition into a single carriageway. These comments were considered by the safety auditors when they carried out the stage 3 (post completion) safety audit in December 2006 and January 2007. The report acknowledged the problem of the difficulty of seeing rear and side view oncoming traffic when moving towards and onto Letchworth

PAPER 2

Gate even though the design complied with HA standards. It was also noted that there were significant numbers of vehicles using the right turning lanes to enter the roundabout and turn left. These vehicles are difficult to see for drivers in the dedicated lane and impeded the exit for vehicles in that lane. Trial alterations to the layout to improve visibility were recommended.

3. REVIEW AND ALTERATIONS

- 3.1 Following the Stage 3 safety audit report a meeting was held in March 2007 between the designers and safety auditors to discuss the recommendation and review options. Arrangements to install a trial alteration were put in place as well as a video survey to assess driver behaviour before and during the trial. Further evaluation of signal/junction layouts was commissioned.
- 3.2 The trial was undertaken over a two week period in April 2007 using traffic cones to realign the route of drivers using the dedicated lane. Following an evaluation of the trial and a review of other options and consulting with the Hertfordshire police and the HA it was decided to carry out relatively minor alterations. The give way marking would be amended and red anti-skid surfacing placed at the end of the lane on the nearside kerb. The aim was to enable and encourage drivers to approach at a greater angle but allow those who were confident of merging to over-run the red surfacing. The alteration was implemented in the first week of August 2007. A complete report of the trial and options considered is included in Appendix 2.

4. STUDY FINDINGS

Northbound Off –slip Road

- 4.1 In October 2002 queues on the northbound off slip road extended back 250 metres in the am peak and as far as the main carriageway (500m) in the pm peak. In 2004 these had extended to 750 metres and in 2006 following the opening of the bypass the queues extended back some 1000 metres. During traffic counts in March 2008 it was observed that the two lanes at the signal onto the roundabout generally cleared on each green phase whilst on the dedicated lane queues extended at times to 12 vehicles but averaged around 6 vehicles .
- 4.2 From the Before and After traffic report on the bypass flows northbound on the B197 through Graveley in the pm peak have reduced by around 200 vehicles. There are also reductions in the southbound direction. These vehicles have transferred to the A1(M) and this can be attributed to the reduction in delay at junction 9. Following the Graveley traffic calming and the retiming of the traffic signals at Coreys Mill Stevenage, traffic counts show further reduction of flow on the B197 through Graveley with vehicles again transferring to the A1(M).
- 4.3 In Oct 2002 the number of vehicles accessing Letchworth Gate from the A1(M) northbound off slip road during the am and pm peak hour was 700 and 770 respectively and similar figures were observed at the start of 2007. In March 2008 the number of vehicles was recorded as 950 and 940 respectively. It is estimated that some 55% of traffic on the northbound off slip turns left into Letchworth Gate. During the am peak 314 vehicles are turning left from the right turn lanes with 93 vehicles in

PAPER 2

the pm peak. It was noted that with the short queues it is sometimes quicker to turn left from here than use the dedicated left turn lane.

- 4.4 A Stage 4 Road Safety Audit shows that in the 3 years prior to the improvement there were 24 accidents on the northbound off slip road at or near its junction with the A505(A6141) Letchworth Gate roundabout. In the 12 months after 3 accidents occurred. One of the 3 accidents could be directly attributable to the new segregated slip lane. The audit recommends that a 36 month Stage 4 Road Safety Audit should be completed at this site to assess if the A1(M) northbound off slip road is in need of any further remedial measures to enable drivers to safely negotiate the measures already implemented.

Southbound On-slip Road

- 4.5 Prior to the bypass construction queues on the A6141 approach from Baldock to junction 9 of the A1(M) extended back some 200m during the am and pm peaks. During the construction of the bypass queue lengths varied considerably as work interfered with traffic flow sometimes reducing the available carriageway to one lane. The southbound dedicated slip road has reduced the queue approaching the circulatory carriageway of the roundabout to 10 vehicles with free flow on the dedicated lane. A Stage 4 Road Safety Audit shows that a total of 4 accidents occurred in the 3 year before period and no accidents in the 12 months after study period.

General Appraisal

- 4.6 The primary objectives of the scheme have been met and it has in many respects proved successful. The queues on the northbound off slip road from the A1(M) which at peak hours extended back for some 500m onto the motorway and created very dangerous conditions with vehicles travelling at high speed have been eradicated. Delays of 10-15 minutes were commonplace and are now only 1-2 minutes at most. Traffic on the A505 from Baldock now flows more freely reducing queues approaching junction 9 and access to the A1(M) southbound via the southbound dedicated slip lane has been improved. Traffic flows through Graveley have reduced in both directions throughout the day.
- 4.7 The minor alterations to the exit of the dedicated lane on the northbound off slip road have improved the situation overall with most drivers approaching the give way at a greater angle but allowing those confident of merging to over-run the red surfacing. However some drivers are continuing to experience problems exiting the dedicated lane and the situation is not helped by those drivers who choose to turn left from the signalled right turn lanes, either to avoid the give way or to jump any queue that develops on the dedicated lane. This action not only brings uncertainty and hesitation by drivers exiting the dedicated lane but also leads to the development of queues in the dedicated slip lane. From the options given in Appendix 2 the imposition of a left turn ban from the right turning lanes is being pursued. This measure has been requested by both members and the public, and the necessary statutory orders were being prepared. However the regulations require that the measure has the support of the Highways Agency and to date this has not been forthcoming. Options involving further signalisation are not recommended both on operational and safety grounds and that

PAPER 2

queuing back down the slip road will increase. It is likely that on this latter ground that the HA would object to any alteration to the signal arrangement.

5. LETCHWORTH GATE IMPROVEMENT

General

- 5.1 Congestion along Letchworth Gate during the peak hours has been put forward as a reason for increased traffic through parts of Baldock town centre following the opening of the bypass. Alterations to improve capacity ranging from widening junctions to full dualling could help relieve any problem. A solution to the layout of the dedicated lane at Junction 9 would be to dual Letchworth Gate and bring the slip lane in on a long merge, or directly onto one of 2 lanes westbound.
- 5.2 A brief study of traffic patterns and conditions occurring along Letchworth Gate and a range of improvements together with the possible effects of such improvements has been undertaken and is summarised below.

Traffic conditions

- 5.3 Letchworth Gate is a single carriageway 9 metres wide but narrowed to 7.3 metres by centre hatching and a centre island. Counts in October 2007 show the road carrying over 26,000 vehicles/day, around 2300 vehicles in the peak hours. If considered a rural road the recommended upper level of traffic for a road of this standard is between 13,000 and 21,000 vehicles/day. If treated as an urban road the maximum peak hour flow is recommended as 2600 vehicles /hour. The actual situation lies somewhere between and it is considered that the road is operating around its maximum capacity.
- 5.4 The Baldock bypass Before and After traffic report found that post bypass opening, traffic levels decreased on Letchworth gate by an average 3%, with a greater reduction being measured at peak times. This was attributed to traffic previously seeking other routes between Letchworth and Baldock to avoid congestion on the old A505 may now find it easier to travel on the B656 between the towns. The October 2007 counts show a return to pre bypass levels.
- 5.5 Journey times taken between the St Paul's roundabout in Letchworth and the Firs interchange east of Baldock show that in the pm peak it is on average around 2 minutes slower to travel by the B656 than the new A505. Journey times taken between St Paul's roundabout and junction 10 of the A1(M) show that it is on average around 1.5 minutes slower via the B656 and A507 than the A505 Letchworth Gate and A1(M). Time taken on a journey will be only one factor in choosing a route and where the time savings are not significant, other factors may determine the choice. Queue lengths approaching junction 9 along Letchworth Gate in the pm peak average 58 vehicles but very slow moving queues are observed extending to 95 vehicles. Turning counts taken at the St Paul's roundabout indicate that traffic travelling north on Letchworth Gate in the am peak splits 13% to Hitchin 39%to Letchworth and 48% to Baldock whilst in the pm peak splits 12% to Hitchin 49%to Letchworth and 39% to Baldock. In the am peak traffic travelling east on A505 Baldock Road splits 33% to A505 Letchworth Gate 2% to Letchworth and 65% to Baldock whilst in the pm peak splits 30% to A505 Letchworth Gate 1% to Letchworth and 69% to Baldock.

PAPER 2

- 5.6 On the evidence of the journey times it there does not appear to be any incentive to use Baldock town centre when travelling between St Paul's roundabout and the Firs interchange or between St Paul's and Junction 10 of the A1(M), the optimum route for both journeys would be made via junction 9 of the A1(M). However the increase in traffic on Hitchin Street post bypass indicates the drivers are finding the route through Baldock more attractive. The turning count information indicates that during the peak hours the predominant traffic movement at St Paul's roundabout is to and from Baldock the strategic route, the A505, taking a secondary role. The forthcoming traffic signal scheme at the junction of the B656 and Weston Way Baldock and the Baldock Town centre works should have the effect of making the route through Baldock less attractive than at present. Improvements to Letchworth Gate in particular on the approach to Junction 9 could increase the usage on this route. Only an origin and destination survey of those using the Baldock Town centre may reveal the reasons behind the increases on Hitchin Street. It would be prudent to await the implementation of the Weston Way, Baldock Town Centre Scheme and associated traffic management before considering whether further investigations is required.

Improvements

- 5.7 Minor improvements to Letchworth Gate have been considered as follows:
- Installation of additional signals at the dedicated lane. This is covered in paragraph 4.7 and Appendix 2 where a number of alterations were investigated but not recommended either on the grounds that queue lengths increased or additional safety risks were created, in some cases a combination of these problems.
 - *Widening the exit to Letchworth Gate from the dedicated lane.* Extending the merge of the dedicated slip has been put forward by a number of people/organisations. The problem remains that two lanes have to merge into one and there is the possibility of the vehicle in lane two being forced into the oncoming eastbound traffic. There is also the issue of the proximity of Willian Way with vehicles trying to turn left in to Willian Way conflicting with vehicles joining from the dedicated lane. Some 400 vehicles in the am peak and 200 vehicles in the pm peak make this left turn.
 - *Widening the approach to Junction 9 from Letchworth Gate.* There is a 2 lane approach existing albeit short, little would be gained by extending this.
 - *Dedicated (3rd) lane from Letchworth Gate to A1(M) north.* This would improve capacity but to be effective would need to be accompanied by the widening the approach to two lanes over some 100-150m. The volume of traffic making the turn from Letchworth Gate to the A1(M) northbound has reduced over the years possibly as a result of congestion. A dedicated lane could improve the attraction of this route. The improvement would require land purchase and the agreement of the HA. It would also require alterations to Baldock Lane.

5.8 Major improvements to Letchworth Gate have been considered as follows:

- *Dualling of Letchworth Gate between Junction 9 and the gyratory.* Providing 2 lanes in each direction over the section of Letchworth Gate between Junction 9 and the gyratory could improve conditions and reduce eastbound journey times. It would allow the widening of the exit of the dedicated slip into lane one as mentioned in para 5.7., although again the close proximity of William Way to the exit would make it difficult for traffic to turn left into William Way and closure of this road could be necessary. Dualling would also allow increased capacity on the approach to Junction 9 eastbound with the possibility of a dedicated slip lane onto the A1(M) northbound although this would involve additional land and awkward earthworks. Otherwise the dualling would not require land outside the existing highway boundary but the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation may have an element of control over the roadside verge effects.
- *Dualling of Letchworth Gate between the gyratory and St Paul's roundabout.* There is little evidence of congestion causing delays along this stretch of road. However if the adjacent section is dualled the release from constraint of traffic travelling from Junction 9 through towards Letchworth may lead to queuing at St Paul's. There is also the issue of two lanes of traffic on the gyratory trying to access to a single lane towards St Paul's roundabout.

Route Hierarchy

5.9 There are implications for the road network should an improvement to Letchworth Gate be implemented as this could induce further traffic onto the A505 Hitchin to Letchworth corridor. The A505 from Royston to the A1(M) is classified as a County Primary route. The A505 to the west of the A1(M) is an "A" road whilst the A602 from junction 8 to the west (Hitchin) is a County Primary route and the strategic east west route would be A505/A1(M)/A602. Should the A505 Letchworth Gate be improved to dual carriageway the case could be made to improve the remainder of the A505 to Hitchin and upgrade this to County Primary route status.. Thus the strategic implications would need to be considered alongside a review of the relative hierarchy of the routes between the Baldock Bypass and A505 west of Hitchin. The Hertfordshire Infrastructure Implementation Strategy Study is the appropriate vehicle to consider this.

6. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 The implementation of a left turn ban at the top of the northbound off slip road would require a Traffic Regulation Order.
- 6.2 Any dualling or substantial improvement at Letchworth Gate could require planning permission and /or compulsory purchase orders together with side road and traffic regulation orders.

PAPER 2

7. FINANCIAL AND HUMAN RESOURCE IMPLICATIONS

7.1 Any minor works in the short term can be funded from the bypass budget.

7.2 Any long term major improvement would need to be prioritised for funding against other major schemes within the county and then accepted by the Eastern Region for funding within the Regional Funding Allocation.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

8.1 Details of the design alterations will be provided to the North Hertfordshire District Council and Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

9.1 That the Panel notes the update information.

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

10.1 To assist the District Manager in providing information.

11. CONTACT OFFICERS

11.1 Barry Anderson, Team Leader, Hertfordshire Highways.

12. BACKGROUND PAPERS

12.1 Minutes of meeting dated March 07.

12.2 Baldock bypass Before and After Study

12.3 Letchworth Gate Interchange Capacity report 1994 HCC

12.4 Letchworth Gate Junction 9 Review 2003 URS/Carillion for HA

12.5 Letchworth Gate Junction 9 Assessment 2005 MP for HCC

12.6 Highways Agency DRMB Advice junction design

12.7 Stage 4 Safety Audit

12.8 Letchworth Gate Improvement Traffic and Technical Detail

PAPER 2

13. APPENDICES

Appendix 1 Background to Design Development

Appendix 2 Review, Trial, and Alterations

Appendix 3 Scheme Plan

APPENDIX 1

**A1(M) JUNCTION 9 LETCHWORTH GATE IMPROVEMENT
BACKGROUND TO DESIGN DEVELOPMENT**

- 1.1 The requirement of the Highways Agency (HA) for the Letchworth Gate improvements, made at the 1995 public inquiry, was to ensure that queuing on the northbound off slip road of the A1(M) did not increase as a result of the extra bypass traffic. A layout for the interchange agreed by the two highway authorities was put forward and recommended by the inspector. The principle of further grade separation was ruled out.
- 11.2 Following the approval given in 2002 to construct the Baldock bypass, the HA's consultants reviewed the original design in light of current highway design standards and traffic conditions. Traffic flows had increased in the years since the inquiry and peak hour queues stretched some 500 metres back onto the motorway resulting in delays of up to 15 minutes and creating injury accidents. Of the 54 injury accidents in 5 years at the whole Letchworth Gate junction and its approaches, 19 were at the top of the northbound off slip road. The reviews considered various layouts including partial and full signalisation and the conclusions were:
- The 1995 design would not meet current design standards.
 - Alterations to improve congestion could not be carried out within the existing boundaries.
 - A solution could not be found to meet all capacity, operational and safety objectives without the dualling of Letchworth Gate or further grade separation at the interchange – for which there were no statutory powers or funding.

As there could not be an ideal solution, primary objectives were set to improve the layout to cure the pre-existing slip road safety and queuing problems and to accommodate the extra bypass traffic. In 2004 the scheme was passed over to HCC to investigate further.

- 1.3 HCC's consultant, Mouchel, recommended an option using dedicated lanes to new standards published in late 2003 set out by the Highways Agency (HA) but with signals controlling the northbound off slip road. It concluded that this was the only layout that would reduce significantly the queues occurring and those predicted following the opening of the bypass, as required by the HA, without major alterations to the interchange and Letchworth Gate. The design was based on traffic using the dedicated lane having free access to Letchworth Gate except during the green signal phase on the westbound arm of the roundabout. Safety audits were carried out in conjunction with representatives of the HA and the police and the recommendations implemented. It should be noted that the design originally had a taper merge into Letchworth Gate and this was changed to the current give way layout as a result of safety audit recommendations. The scheme was finally given approval by the HA in September 2005.

APPENDIX 2

**A1(M) JUNCTION 9 LETCHWORTH GATE IMPROVEMENT
REVIEW, TRIAL LAYOUT, AND ALTERATIONS TO NORTHBOUND DEDICATED LANE**

- 2.1 The trial alterations to the layout to improve visibility were undertaken over a two week period in April 2007 using traffic management to realign the route of drivers using the dedicated lane. Video recording of the operation of the junction before and during the trial was taken (and this was augmented by observations by safety engineers.
- 2.2 The video survey revealed that before the temporary layout was in place there was very little queuing even in the peak hour on the dedicated lane, as drivers were able to merge relatively freely into the traffic flow although some uncertainty remained. This was considered an improvement on the situation observed during the safety audit 12 weeks earlier when greater uncertainty on the part of some drivers caused more disruption to flow. Visual monitoring of the trial was carried out by a safety engineer over several days, and his findings indicated that there was substantial queuing at various times of the day on the slip road, sometimes stretching back beyond the first ADS sign (in excess of 250 metres). Prior to the trial, 2 seconds were added to the red light time at the traffic signals for lanes 2 & 3, to deter vehicles turning left from lane 2. However it was observed that there was an increase in vehicles turning left from lane two during the trial period. This was assumed to have been due to the length of queues on the dedicated lane. Using the video recording it was evident that with the temporary layout the majority of drivers paused at the 'give way' line as the temporary layout positioned their vehicles more at a right angle to the traffic flow. Some drivers tried to negotiate the give way without pausing but were inhibited by the deflection imposed by the cones. A number of comments from drivers were made to the effect that they were changing from using their wing mirrors to looking to the right. The substantial queuing observed at various times of the day was considered mostly due to drivers pausing at the give way although the presence of the signs and traffic cones will have contributed and there was concern that the queuing could lead to rear end shunts on the dedicated lane.
- 2.3 The response from drivers using the junction during the trial was mixed. Those that found the slip road difficult to use responded positively to the alteration of the approach angle saying that they were better able to see traffic on the circulatory traffic. Others preferred the unaltered layout saying they were able to better judge the gaps using wing mirrors without having to pause or stop at the give way. It should be noted that there have been no reportable accidents on the slip road since it opened in November 2006 and none occurred during the trial. Several damage only accidents have been logged during November 2006 to March 2007.
- 2.4 As response to the trial had been mixed and from observation concerns regarding queuing and safety had been raised, a review of all options was carried out.
- 1) Investigate a traffic signal layout for signal control of the dedicated slip lane, with secondary signals on the exit from that lane into Letchworth Gate. This would prevent left turns from the right turning lane. Also investigate closing the

PAPER 2

dedicated lane leaving a 2 lane or a 3 lane signalised approach to the roundabout.

- 2) Extend the left turning lane towards Letchworth.
- 3) Dual Letchworth Gate. This option was looked at several years ago and discounted on the grounds of possible objections from Letchworth Heritage, and costs of approximately £4million.
- 4) Provision of a second grade separation, taking right turners direct to the Baldock Bypass (similar to Stansted Airport) this was ruled out at the 1995 Public Inquiry.
- 5) Provide a left turn ban - 'No left turn' at the traffic signals for lane 2 (difficult to enforce).
- 6) Apply red anti-skid material to an area at the end of the current layout, which would tend to deflect vehicles towards a 90° angle at the 'Give Way' line.
- 7) Carry out permanent alterations to the line and angle of approach as per the 'trial layout', altering existing hatching, lining and anti-skid material
- 8) Do nothing.

- 2.5 Option 1 was evaluated using traffic data from the trial. The modelling showed that any variations to the current signal layout would increase queue lengths on the circulatory carriageway of the roundabout blocking the exit to the A1(M) south. Queues for left turning traffic into Letchworth Gate extended back down towards the motorway to varying degrees with the possibility of rear end shunts. Adjusting the green times to avoid the circulatory queues blocking the southbound on slip road would further increase queues on the northbound off slip road and with anticipated growth the situation would continue to deteriorate. Having a signalised three lane approach at the roundabout would again produce queues back on the slip road but would allow drivers to turn left from the centre lane. With only the circulatory and right turning traffic controlled by signals under the current layout there is reserve capacity allowing for further growth on these movements although some queuing might develop on the left turn dedicated lane. Closing the dedicated lane would result in queues back onto the motorway. It should be noted that around 55% of the traffic leaving the A1(M) northbound turns left into Letchworth Gate.
- 2.6 Option 2 was again ruled out on safety grounds due to the possibility of head on collisions as vehicles merge to one lane.
- 2.7 Options 3 & 4 were ruled out on cost and time basis, although with Letchworth Gate considered to be operating at capacity an additional lane into Letchworth may need to be considered in the mid term.
- 2.8 Option 5 was considered as a possibility and can be implemented independently from the other options. It may deter some drivers and indicate to the drivers the problems they cause by turning left across the exit of the dedicated lane. The Hertfordshire police have indicated they would not object to the implementation of the ban but would not support it due to the difficulty of tracking and prosecuting drivers. Without enforcement the ban will only have a limited effect

PAPER 2

- 2.9 Option 6 was put forward as a low cost minimal alteration solution. The give way marking would be amended and red anti-skid surfacing placed at the end of the lane on the nearside kerb. The aim would be to enable and encourage drivers to approach at a greater angle but allow those who are confident of merging to over-run the red surfacing. The cost is estimated at £6,000 and would involve disruption over 3-4 days.
- 2.10 Option 7 would implement the layout used in the trial but is almost certain to result in much longer queues. The work required would involve laying new antiskid material over half the length of the dedicated lane together with new lane and give way markings. This is estimated to cost £30,000 and would involve some disruption over 10-15 days.
- 2.11 The consensus from the reviewing group including safety engineers responsible for the audits was that minimal alterations should be undertaken bearing in mind the improvement in operation of the junction since its implementation and in the knowledge that no injury accidents had been reported in that time. Option 6 was considered the most appropriate alteration to try to assist all users of the junction.

APPENDIX 3
A1(M) JUNCTION LAYOUT

TITLE: CHAMPION NEWS

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

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

2. 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. ISSUES – PROJECT / ACTIVITY / SCHEME DETAILS

3.1 North Herts Big F.A.B. Event

The event was successful, over 100 attendees, 21 Information Stalls, 16 discussion groups around an Agenda that was drawn up on the day by the participating public.

Main Issues to emerge from discussion group feedback

- a. Public Transport – Lack of Bus Routes
- b. Face to face provision of information
- c. Local Leisure Facilities and Activities
- d. Low cost meeting room hire

The feedback from the discussion groups will be used to draw up the 50+ Development Plan 2009-2012

The feedback has been distributed to partnership organisations, those who can have a decision making influence over the issues raised and anyone else who requested a copy.

3.2 Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme

The Baldock Town Centre Enhancement Scheme started on site on Monday 9th June 2008 as planned. Skanska McNicholas, the contractor, has set up a compound in part of the Twitchell car park.

At present, Skanska, together with the engineers and designers for the project are in discussion with utility companies regarding detailed design issues with underground services in the initial work areas of the programme. This has resulted in Skanska bringing forward other areas of works so as to maintain momentum and to ensure that they are on schedule with the overall programme. A revised phasing programme is available to view on the Council's website and on the notice at the Community Centre.

Skanska and NHDC have been undertaking condition surveys of cellars within the project area to make sure that the cellars do not conflict with the proposed works.

3.3 Clothall Village Hall

Permission has been requested from North Hertfordshire District Council's Building Control to commence demolition of the older Village Hall from Monday 14th July.

In addition, a revised planning application has been submitted to locate the new village hall building further back on the site to enable more space for car parking.

3.4 Baldock Youth Council

In support of the Council's Corporate Plan, the Baldock Community Development Officer is undertaking a feasibility study into the setting up a Youth Council for Baldock. A provisional meeting has been set up to discuss this with the Extended Schools Coordinator for Baldock in late July. It is hoped to initiate the project in the new academic year in September 2008.

3.5 Baldock Town Hall Works

The capital funding of the refurbishment works was approved by Cabinet at its meeting on the 24th June 2008.

A Project Team has been established and a provisional works programme has been developed in line with the time schemes of the proposed Arts & Drama activities coordinated by the Town Hall Arts Group which are due to start in October 2008.

The Group is one of two that has been chosen in North Herts to be part of the Advancing Assets pilot demonstration in conjunction with the Council.

Officers are also advising the Arts project group re securing funding from Awards for All and other matters regarding the programme of activities and the structure and constitution of the group.

Joanna Cherry, one of the project co-ordinators will address the Baldock & District Area Committee, with a project update at the meeting scheduled for 22nd September 2008.

4. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 4.1 Consultation with the respective agencies, organisations and Ward Members has taken place with regards to the projects, activities and events mentioned in Section 4 of this report.

5. RECOMMENDATION

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

6. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATION

- 6.1 That the Committee enforces the actions and policies involved in the tasks and projects undertaken by the Community Development Officer.

7. CONTACT OFFICER

- 7.1 Claire Morgan (Community Development Officer – Baldock & District Area)
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TITLE: BALDOCK & DISTRICT AREA COMMITTEE DEVELOPMENT & AREA VISIONING BUDGETS 2008/9

REPORT OF THE HEAD OF COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT AND CULTURAL SERVICES

1. SUMMARY

- 1.1 To advise the Committee on the delegated budgets for financial year 2008/09.
- 1.2 To bring to the Committee's attention details of recent application, allocation and commitment of delegated funds for Community initiatives and projects.

2. FORWARD PLAN

- 2.1 This report does not contain a recommendation on a key decision and has not been referred to in the Forward Plan.

3. BACKGROUND

- 3.1 Not Applicable.

4. ISSUES - AND FUNDING DECISIONS TO BE MADE

- 4.1 St Mary's Baldock PCC
Grant request of £250 towards cost of new sound equipment to enable the Church to be better utilised for community events, concerts and performances.
- 4.2 Baldock Guide Association
Request for £2,937.50 to draw up a feasibility study to ascertain the benefits of either refurbishing the existing building or rebuilding a new facility.
- 4.3 Christchurch Summer Play Schemes
Grant request of £300 towards two Holiday Clubs to be based at Knights Templar School from Monday 18th to Friday 22nd August 2008. One club is aimed at children from 5 to 11yrs and one is for young people aged 12 to 14yrs. The clubs are open to all children in the area and will be free of charge.
- 4.4 STATEMENT OF COMMITTEE DELEGATED BUDGETS 2008/09
 - 4.4.1 Appendix 1 – Spreadsheet of Committee Delegated Budgets 2008/09.

- 4.5 Station Road Ashwell, junction with Lucas Lane – JMP 50% matched funding
During consultation for the former Ashwell Village Travel Plan scheme, some support was evident for the provision of a mini roundabout at this junction. Investigation of the work carried out at that time reveals that the feasibility of the proposal had not been established. Feasibility work, including an outline design and Stage 1 safety audit can be carried out during the current year at an estimated cost of £5,500 (£2,750 required as matched funding).

5. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

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

6. FINANCIAL AND RISK IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1 Members are asked to note the information detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, which relates to the Area Committee budget balances for the current financial year 2008/09.
- 6.2 The spreadsheet also details the pre-allocations carried forward from the previous financial year 2007/08 to the current financial year 2008/09.
- 6.3 In addition, the spreadsheet includes the balances relating to allocated Visioning Budgets available within the Baldock & District area.

7. HUMAN RESOURCE AND EQUALITIES IMPLICATIONS

- 7.1 There are no human resource and equalities implications pertinent to this report.

8. CONSULTATION WITH EXTERNAL ORGANISATIONS AND WARD MEMBERS

- 8.1 Consultation with the respective Ward Members has occurred in connection with the pre allocation of funds for Community Initiative & Projects from the previous financial year 2007/08.
- 8.2 Consultation with the respective officers and external agencies/groups has taken place with regard to funding proposals for Area Committee Ward Discretionary Development Funds.

9. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 9.1 The Committee is asked to note the budgetary expenditure, current balances and carry forwards from the Ward Development Budgets 07/08, the Small Area Grants Budget and the allocated Visioning Budgets.
- 9.2 That the Committee notes and acknowledges the pre-allocations of uncommitted Ward Development Discretionary Funds to respective projects and initiatives within each Ward Budget.
- 9.3 That the Committee considers a grant allocation of £250 towards cost of new sound equipment to enable the Church to be better utilised for community events, concerts and performances.
- 9.4 That the Committee considers a funding allocation of £1,000 (max. grant available) towards a feasibility study to ascertain the benefits of either refurbishing the existing building or rebuilding a new facility.
- 9.5 That the Committee considers a funding allocation of £300 towards two Holiday Clubs to be based at Knights Templar School from Monday 18th to Friday 22nd August 2008. One club is aimed at children from 5 to 11yrs and one is for young people aged 12 to 14yrs.
- 9.6 That the Committee considers a funding allocation for referred Hertfordshire Highways project Station Road, Ashwell – total cost £5,500 (£2,750 required as matched funding).

10. REASONS FOR RECOMMENDATIONS

- 10.1 The allocation of funds will improve the services provided by the local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by various members of the community.

11. ALTERNATIVE OPTIONS CONSIDERED

- 11.1 Not applicable.

12. APPENDICES

- 12.1 Appendix 1 – Spreadsheet of Committee Delegated Budgets 2007/08.
- 12.2 Appendix 2 – St Mary's Baldock PCC - Grant form.
- 12.3 Appendix 3 – Baldock District Guide Association – Grant form.
- 12.4 Appendix 4 - Christchurch Baldock – Grant form.
- 12.5 Appendix 5 – Proposed schemes referred by JMP.

13. CONTACT OFFICERS

- 13.1 Claire Morgan (Community Development Officer - Baldock & District Area)
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- 13.2 Lois Stewart (Group Accountant – Customer Services)
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14. BACKGROUND PAPERS

- 14.1 None.

BALDOCK AREA COMMITTEE BUDGET 2008/09

SUMMARY/ TOTALS	Funding	Allocated	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget					
VISIONING	£2,470	£2,470	£2,470	£0	£0					
SMALL AREA GRANTS	£190	£0	£0	£0	£190					
BALDOCK TOWN	£21,270	£12,430	£556	£11,874	£8,840					
BALDOCK EAST	£11,513	£8,673	£4,053	£4,620	£2,840					
ARBURY	£9,070	£5,810	£0	£5,810	£3,260					
WESTON & SANDON	£6,750	£4,210	£0	£4,210	£2,540					
Total	£51,263	£33,593	£7,079	£26,514	£17,670					

1195

VISIONING	Funding	Year Allocated	codes	Project	Allocated	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget	Comments
Preallocated Funds C/F from 2007/08	£2,470	2005/2006	1453 005 4836	Town Centre Strategy	£2,470	11.04.05	£2,470	£0		
Total	£2,470				£2,470		£2,470	£0	£0	

APPENDIX 1

DEVELOPMENT BUDGETS										
SMALL AREA GRANTS	Funding		Code	Project	Allocated	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget	Comments
Base Budget 2008/09	£190									
Total	£190				£0		£0	£0	£190	

000
4784

BALDOCK TOWN	Funding		Code	Project	Allocated	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget	Comments
Preallocated Funds Brought Forward from 0708	£11,840		102 0327	Baldock Allotment Association - plot for disabled holders at North Rd	£390	26.09.05	£0	£390		
			102 0293	Town Centre Enhancement Works	£4,410	02.04.07	£0	£4,410		
			102 0521	Friends of Baldock Greenspaces	£380	07.08.07	£366	£14		
			102 0296	Town Projects Initiatives	£6,090	17.03.08	£0	£6,090		
			102 0511	Baldock Town Cricket Club	£570	17.03.08	£0	£570		
Base Budget 2008/09	£9,430		102 0509	Herts Action on Disability	£190	02.06.08	£190	£0		
			102 0258	CCTV Camera for The Tene	£400	02.06.08	£0	£400		
Total	£21,270				£12,430		£556	£11,874	£8,840	

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APPENDIX 1

WESTON & SANDON	Funding	Code	Project	Allocated	Date	Spent	Outstanding	Unallocated Budget	Comments
Preallocated Funds Brought Forward from 07/08	£4,210	113 0217	Weston Footpath Lighting Project	£2,250	02.04.07	£0	£2,250		
		113 0550	Sandon Village Hall Chairs	£1,200	17.04.08	£0	£1,200		
		113 0552	Rural Development Projects	£760	17.04.08	£0	£760		
Base Budget 2008/09	£2,540								
Total	£6,750			£4,210		£0	£4,210	£2,540	

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APPENDIX 5

PROPOSED SCHEMES REFERRED FROM NHDC AREA COMMITTEES TO JMP MEETING 21 APRIL 2008 (Version 3 – 10/07/2008)

BALDOCK & DISTRICT COMMITTEE

Proposed Schemes:

Type of Scheme	Location	Details	Raised at Committee, Member Liaison or Individual Member	Proposed officer action and JMP meeting (21/04/08) actions
Road Re-surfacing works	The Tene	Re-surfacing	Baldock Cttee March 08	All sites were included in the feedback from the Joint Member Panel to development of the 2009/10 Integrated Work Programme, to then be reported to the Highway & Transport Panel for the programme to be endorsed by HCC Cabinet next Spring, with feedback to Local Members on agreed schemes in April 2009.
	West Ave	Re-surfacing	Individual Member: Cllr Muir	
	Norton Crescent	Re-surfacing	Cllr Muir	
	Icknield Road East	Resurfacing	Cllr Kirkland	
	Grosvenor Road	Resurfacing	Cllr Kirkland	
	Bygrave Road	Resurfacing	Cllr Kirkland	
Road Safety Schemes	Ashwell St at junction with Claybush Hill	Vehicles speeds into junction and pedestrians on Claybush Hill	Baldock Cttee March 08	HH officers have agreed minor measures relating to road markings with local member. No JMP scheme necessary.
	Junction at war memorial - Lucas Lane/Station Road	Review junction following fatal accident	Baldock Cttee March 08	JMP resolved (Jun 08) to fund a study needed to explore viability of change to roundabout - cost of study £5,500, 50% contribution sought, i.e. <u>£2,750</u> from Baldock & District Committee.
	Weston Way	Traffic calming on Weston Way before the bend to London Rd, vehicles leaving road	Individual Member: Cllr Muir Cllr Muir	HH officers to consider and provide update to October 08 JMP meeting.