

# NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

## CABINET

Meeting held at Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City  
on Tuesday, 27 March 2007 at 7.30pm

### Minutes

**PRESENT:** *Councillors F.J. Smith (Chairman), T.W. Hone (Vice-Chairman), Tricia Gibbs, I.J. Knighton, Mrs. L.A. Needham, R.A.C. Thake, Sarah Wren and A.D. Young.*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *Chief Executive, Strategic Director of Financial & Regulatory Services, Strategic Director of Customer Services, Head of Financial Services, Head of Planning & Building Control, Head of Housing & Environmental Health, Head of Community Development & Cultural Services, Housing Strategy & Renewals Manager, Planning Control & Conservation Manager, Cultural Services Manager, Corporate Legal Manager, Democratic Services Manager and Senior Committee & Member Services Officer.*

**ALSO PRESENT:** *Councillors M. Paterson (Vice-Chairman of Scrutiny Committee), David Billing, Judi Billing, Paul Clark, J.M. Cunningham, L. Oliver, S.K. Jarvis and 14 members of the public.*

#### **184. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There were no apologies for absence.

#### **185. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting of Cabinet held on 27 February 2007 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

#### **186. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

No other business was submitted for consideration by the Committee.

#### **187. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

#### **188. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

##### **Arts, Museums & Heritage Strategy**

On behalf of a number of local organisations in Hitchin, David Rice, Ellie Clarke and Scilla Douglas had given notice that they wished to make a presentation on the Arts, Museums and Heritage Strategy. The Chairman announced that this would take place immediately prior to the consideration of Item 11 on the agenda (see Minute 198 below).

#### **189. REFERRAL FROM HITCHIN COMMITTEE – 6 MARCH 2007 – RHYTHMS OF THE WORLD FESTIVAL 2006 AND 2007**

Cabinet received a referral from the Hitchin Committee, made at its meeting held on 6 March 2007, in respect of the Rhythms of the World (ROTW) Festival 2006 and 2007 (Minute 110 refers).

Cabinet noted that the organisers of ROTW had encountered delays in the organisation of the 2007 event and were not able to meet with NHDC officers until Legal officers had made a decision as to any prosecution concerning breaches of licensing conditions during the 2006 event. In accordance with the Council's Licensing Policy, a period of 12 months could pass before officers had to decide on a prosecution. The ROTW organisers had considered that this potential for delay would have a marked effect on the organisation of any annual event of cultural and/or community significance.

The Hitchin Committee had acknowledged the concerns of the ROTW organisers in this regard, and had recommended that the Licensing Policy be amended so that a period of three (instead of 12) months could pass before officers had to decide on a prosecution.

At the Chairman's invitation, the Corporate Legal Manager commented that the 12 months period was a statutory time limit (Licensing Act 2003), and therefore that it would not be possible for the Council's Licensing Policy to override it, even if the time limit within the Policy was changed to 3 months.

The Corporate Legal Manager recommended that the Policy should not be amended for the following reasons:

- (1) The Statement of Licensing Policy was intended to apply District wide and should avoid dealing with one aspect of one particular licence;
- (2) The time and cost of undertaking consultation would be unreasonable for such a minor matter, which could be dealt with by informal agreement between the Council and the Festival organisers;
- (3) The proposed amendment was not binding and possibly unlawful if included in the Policy.

**RESOLVED:** That the Statement of Licensing Policy be not amended along the lines recommended by the Hitchin Committee, and that a copy of the Corporate Legal Manager's advice be supplied to all Members of that Committee.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To comply with the requirements of the Licensing Act 2003.

**190. REFERRAL FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 MARCH 2007 – A REVISED LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY**

The Chairman informed Cabinet that consideration of this referral would take place in conjunction with agenda item number 9 (see Minute 196 below).

**191. REFERRAL FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 MARCH 2007 – ADOPTION OF BUILDING CONTROL POLICY**

The Chairman informed Cabinet that consideration of this referral would take place in conjunction with agenda item number 15 (see Minute 202 below).

**192. REFERRAL FROM SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 20 MARCH 2007 – STRATEGIC APPROACH TO PARKING CONTROLS**

The Chairman informed Cabinet that consideration of this referral would take place in conjunction with agenda item number 18 (see Minute 205 below).

**193. REFERRAL FROM PERFORMANCE, AUDIT & REVIEW COMMITTEE – 22 MARCH 2007 – RISK MANAGEMENT UPDATE**

Cabinet considered a referral from the meeting of the Performance, Audit & Review Committee held on 22 March 2007, in respect of the Risk Management Update

(Minute 103 refers). It was noted that it was a requirement that any changes to the Top Risks be referred to Cabinet for approval.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the proposed reduced probability score for the Financial Management Top Risk be agreed;
- (2) That the proposed increased probability score for the Community Safety Top risk be agreed.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To allow Cabinet to fulfil its responsibility as “owner” of the Top Risks of Financial Management and Community Safety.

**194. AREA GOVERNANCE AND COSTS OF DEMOCRACY**

The Strategic Director of Customer Services presented a report which aimed to conclude the outstanding issues on Area Governance and Costs of Democracy, following the extensive consultation exercise carried out in late 2006/early 2007 with the Scrutiny Committee, the Area Committees and Performance, Audit and Review Committee (PARC), together with issues raised at the All Member Workshop held on 6 February 2007. The following documents were appended to the report:

- Annex 1 - Cabinet Report 19 December 2006;
- Annex 2 - Consultation with Area Committees – Summary of Responses;
- Annex 3 - Development Control Committee – Proposed Arrangements;
- Annex 4 - Draft Civic Calendar 2007/08.

The report outlined proposals for reducing the number of Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee and PARC meetings to six each per year; a reduction in the number of Area Committees to four of each per year (plus up to two “Public Forums” in each area per year); and the creation of a central Development Control Committee. In terms of greater delegation of decisions to Cabinet Portfolio Holders and officers, it was noted that further work would need to be carried out on this matter, with a view to a report being submitted to the Annual Council meeting on 17 May 2007.

The Strategic Director of Customer Services advised that he had obtained the views of the Chairmen of the Area Committees, Scrutiny Committee and PARC on the report, which were as follows:

**Letchworth Area Committee**

- Letchworth Area Committee had a range of views on the proposals;
- The report recommendations reflected the majority view of Letchworth Area Committee, but it remained of concern that four meetings per year may not be sufficient;
- Continued concern about the capacity of a Single Planning Committee to deal with all of the issues requiring decision and the time required for site visits.

**Royston Area Committee**

- Where still applicable the original comments from Royston Area Committee still stand and generally the proposals to reduce the frequency of meetings for Council, Cabinet, PARC and Scrutiny was supported;
- Support the retention of Royston Area Committee in its present form, but
- Some concern that extra-ordinary meetings of Royston Area Committee may be required in exceptional circumstances;
- Appreciates the facility to hold ‘Public Forums’;
- Pleased with the retention of the Area Community Development Officer;
- However, some uncertainty about how Planning ‘call ins’/Appeals will be dealt with and concern that local knowledge on Central Development Control

Committees may be lacking. This would need careful monitoring as would the ability of the committee to deal with all business in only 12 meetings per year;

- Also some concern that the local visibility of planning decision making may be reduced.

#### **Southern Rural Committee**

- Pleased that the proposed retention of the Southern Rural Area Committee;
- Pleased with the proposed retention of the Area Community Development Officer;
- Supported the creation of a Single Development Control Committee;
- Some concern about the proposed frequency of four formal meetings per annum, but accepted that this would not be proven until the new arrangements had been in place for some time.

#### **Baldock Committee**

- Views originally expressed by the committee still stand;
- Pleased with the retention of Baldock and District Area Committee;

#### **Hitchin Committee**

- Hitchin Area Committee had no unanimous view on the proposals for the establishment of a Central Planning Committee;
- The rules of proportionality on the proposed Development Control Committee would potentially politicise the process, which was currently free of such matters;
- There was a fear that it would be perceived that 'decisions would be taken in private' because of fewer formal meetings of the Area Committee;
- There was support for the retention of the geographical areas which would continue to be covered by each Area Committee;
- Pleased that the proposed deletion of an Area Community Development Officer had been avoided;
- Concerned that the proposed four meetings per year of the Area Committee would not be sufficient as experience suggested that more would be required.

#### **Scrutiny Committee**

A Conservative Member of the Scrutiny Committee made the comment, when this report was first considered, that to change so completely the way we do things for such a small saving (£50,000) was quite inappropriate. We continue to feel that this would be the case.

Regarding the Scrutiny Committee and function specifically, concerns included:

- That a reduced number of meetings of the Scrutiny Committee could mean long agendas and a weakening of the ability of non-Executive Members to question officers and be fully informed of and take part in policy development;
- That increased decision-making by Portfolio Holders was untried and to protect them and to keep decision-making transparent would require an effective Scrutiny Process;
- There was likely to be more requirement/opportunity for the Scrutiny of external/quasi-external bodies, which would be likely to be squeezed out through lack of resources;
- The Committee had found it valuable to invite portfolio holders to each make a presentation to the Scrutiny Committee on an annual basis. This may be difficult to schedule, unless they would be willing to double up, also causing additional pressure on meeting time;
- The report speaks of "the use of informal channels to pre-scrutinise decision making". We had some concern as to what this meant, as it seemed to contradict the principle of Scrutiny that it must be open, transparent and accessible to the public.

## **PARC**

- Views originally expressed by the committee still stand;
- Increasing the role of area committees in the scrutiny process strange when looking at a reduction to 4 meetings a year;
- So far as PARC s concerned I think that we would be able to manage with six meetings a year, but much may depend upon the functioning of the proposed Audit Panel.

Cabinet debated the report, and recommended the following changes:

- There should be a reduction in the number of Area Committees to 6 (instead of four) per year, the make up of which would be agreed between Committee/Democratic Services, Community Development Officers and each Area Committee Chairman, providing a balance between the business of Area Committees and their Community Engagement role;
- The proposed "Development Control Committee should be re-named the "Planning Control Committee";
- The term "regular" should be inserted before each mention of a specific Committee;
- The revised structure should be reviewed in 12 months' time.

### ***RESOLVED:***

- (1) That the number of regular Cabinet meetings be reduced to six per year;
- (2) That the Leader of the Council prepares a revised Scheme of Delegation of executive powers to Portfolio Holders and officers to assist in maintaining a reduced number of meetings.

### ***RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:***

- (1) That, in accordance with its duty to review Standing Orders and the Scheme of Delegation to Officers, Cabinet advises Council that it endorses revisions to the Standing Orders and Scheme of Delegation to officers necessary to effect the changes in the report;
- (2) That, in accordance with the duty regarding the allocation of functions to Committees of the Council, the following be agreed:
  - A reduction in the number of regular Council, Cabinet, Scrutiny Committee and Performance, Audit & Review Committee meetings to six per year, and a review undertaken of their terms of reference;
  - The creation of a central Planning Control Committee;
  - A reduction in the number of regular Area Committees to six each per year, the make up of which be agreed between Committee/Democratic Services, Community Development Officers and each Area Committee Chairman, providing a balance between the business of Area Committees and their Community Engagement role;;
  - Cabinet and Committees of the Council no longer accept reports whose recommendations do not require decision from that meeting under the Scheme of Delegation;
  - Standing Orders be amended to reflect the reduction in the number of meetings;
  - The Head of Legal & Democratic Services prepare revisions to the Constitution to be submitted to the Annual Council meeting on 17 May 2007 for approval;
  - The revised structure be reviewed in 12 months' time.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure effective implementation of the new Area Governance and decision making arrangements.

**195. REPORT OF THE AFFORDABLE HOUSING SCRUTINY TASK AND FINISH GROUP**

Cabinet considered the final report of the Affordable Housing Scrutiny Task and Finish Group. The report had been approved by the Scrutiny Committee at its meeting held on 20 February 2007, and included a number of recommendations which the Group had asked to be considered by Cabinet.

**RESOLVED:** That the following recommendations of the Affordable Housing Scrutiny Task and Finish Group be referred to the Cabinet Portfolio Holders for Housing & Environmental Health and Planning & Transport, in conjunction with the Heads of Housing & Environmental Health and Planning & Building Control, for further consideration of the implications of the recommendations, and that when completed a report be submitted to a future meeting of the Cabinet:

- (1) That North Hertfordshire District Council lobbies relevant Government Ministers and local Members of Parliament about the obstacles in the way of overcoming the challenge of providing more affordable and high quality housing, in particular the overriding importance of a step change increase in Housing Corporation Grants, without which Authorities which have very few land assets to deploy will not be able to meet the major affordable housing demands revealed by their Housing Needs Surveys;
- (2) That the North Hertfordshire District Council considers fully what can be done to increase the amount and quality of affordable housing in the situation where there is insufficient Housing Corporation Grant. The Council should consider the release of some of its limited land assets for this purpose and should try to work with public sector partners in relation to their local land assets. In particular the Council should set down how in practice it will realise rapidly the aim in the Capital Strategy to apply the Community Benefit Fund, amongst other things, to the provision of additional social housing in North Hertfordshire;
- (3) That North Hertfordshire District Council adopts a stronger and more pro-active position in terms of initiating in good time the production of development briefs, as Supplementary Planning Documents, on significant sites of likely development where affordable housing can be justified and promoted. The Development Team is a vital means for doing this, and it should initiate early discussions with potential and actual developers on the optimal use of these significant sites, in line with the emerging Local Development Framework, and should ensure that local Members and other stakeholders are involved from these early stages;
- (4) That North Hertfordshire District Council and Hertfordshire County Council investigate ways, both locally and through the Department for Education & Skills (DfES), in which housing and home ownership information, relevant guidance and advice can be included in schools' citizenship / PSHE curricula. Similarly, through the DfES, national further and higher education students and student services bodies should be encouraged to provide accessible opportunities for housing and housing finance advice;
- (5) That North Hertfordshire District Council considers replacing the single percentage of affordable housing (40% proposed) at a single threshold site size, with a stepped approach in the Local Development Framework, to promote some affordable homes on the smaller sites.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the recommendations to be fully assessed and costed before a decision was made on their implementation.

## 196. A REVISED LOCAL HOUSING STRATEGY

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Environmental Health presented a report of the Head of Housing & Environmental Health seeking agreement for a new approach to the development of a local Housing Strategy and, as an interim measure, the adoption of a new Action Plan specifying housing related activities for the period 2007/08 to 2008/09. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix A – An updated Housing Strategy Action Plan;  
Appendix B – Proposed Action Plan for 2007-2009;  
Appendix C – Letter from GO-East regarding the future of FFP housing strategies.

Cabinet was advised that the Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 20 March 2007, had agreed the following recommendations to Cabinet:

- (1) That advance planning and development of policy objectives and priorities should be done to ensure rapid progress on the Community Strategy and Housing Strategy Action Plan as soon as Government Guidance is available;
- (2) That the detailed plans should be evaluated through their impact on the community rather than through internal indicators;
- (3) That Cabinet should ensure that a mechanism is put in place to provide continuity in service planning and policy development and implementation during the loss and recruitment of key staff.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That officers do not proceed with the preparation of a new Fit For Purpose (FFP) Housing Strategy to replace the current document that expires imminently;
- (2) That the development of a local Sustainable Community Strategy proceed in accordance with the timetable developed by the Policy, Partnerships & Performance Team, and that this document contain references to a number of other policy documents, including the Local Development Framework, Local Area Agreements etc., with consideration of the incorporation of local strategic housing requirements into this document being made by officers and Members;
- (3) That, in the meantime, the Housing & Environmental Health Service:
  - Continue to monitor and update the 2004-2007 Housing Strategy Action Plan (Appendix A);
  - Extend the above Action Plan for the period 2007/08 to 2008/09, subject to sufficient funding being available and pending the development of a FFP Housing Strategy and/or local Sustainable Community Strategy;
  - Continue to take an active role in the production of the LCB Sub-Regional Housing Strategy;
  - Take advantage of opportunities to jointly consult with stakeholders, including hard to reach groups;
  - Work with other Local Housing Associations to define local housing market areas;
  - Produce a Housing Market Assessment once the final guidance is available;
- (4) That the views of the Scrutiny Committee be noted.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To avoid incurring unnecessary expenditure arising from the production of a strategic housing document that is not in a format approved by the DCLG, GO-East or the Audit Commission; and to ensure that the local housing element of the Council's proposed Sustainable Community Strategy conforms with the LCB Regional Strategy.

## **197. ADOPTION OF A REVISED PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING RENEWAL POLICY**

The Portfolio Holder for Housing & Environmental Health presented a report of the Head of Housing & Environmental Health seeking the adoption of a revised Private Sector Housing Renewals Policy in order to accommodate changes regarding the funding of mandatory housing adaptations. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix A – Table showing the proposed alterations from the existing to the new Private Sector Housing Renewals Policy;  
Appendix 2 – Proposed new Private Sector Renewals Policy (including proposed alterations over the existing policy).

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That, in accordance with paragraph 4.6.2 of the report, the amendments to the Private Sector Housing Renewals Policy, as contained within Appendix A, and as incorporated into the revised policy document at Appendix B, be adopted, to enable the reprioritisation of financial assistance to the provision of mandatory disabled facilities grants;
- (2) That, in accordance with paragraph 4.6.4 of the report, a revised increase in the annual budget of £920,000 (lower than that approved by Cabinet in December 2006) be agreed, to meet the increasing demand for Disabled Facilities Grants and Home Repair assistance Grants for the vulnerable and to allow continued improvement to the Heat Energy Conservation Act statistics;
- (3) That the Policy be updated to reflect recent changes in organisational structure, published guidance, etc.;
- (4) That the amended Policy be seen as an interim measure, pending the conclusion of the Government's consultation on the future of Disabled Facilities Grants and clarification over status of local housing strategies.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable best use of the Council's capital and staffing resources to meet the increasing demand for grant/loan assistance for the purposes of securing disability adaptations.

## **198. AN ARTS, MUSEUMS & HERITAGE STRATEGY FOR NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE**

On behalf of a number of local organisations in Hitchin, David Rice, Ellie Clarke and Scilla Douglas gave a presentation on the proposed Arts, Museums and Heritage Strategy.

The presenters referred to the fact that the building which constituted the Hitchin Museum had been gifted to the former Hitchin Urban District Council in 1937, for use as a Library/Museum. The building was Listed, was situated in a town centre location, but required some investment to bring it up to modern standards.

The presenters were generally supportive of the aims and objectives of the proposed Arts, Museums and Heritage Strategy, but were concerned at the lack of clarity in the Strategy regarding the future of Hitchin Museum, when contrasted with the positive statements in relation to the future of Baldock, Letchworth Garden City and Royston Museums. In particular, the presenters were concerned with the statement "to explore the re-provision of a first-class museum facility to display NHDC Hitchin and non-Letchworth material". The presenters considered that this conveyed the message that the Museum was to be moved to another site. They presented a series of slides showing how the existing Museum building could be refurbished and extended to improve the facility and retain it on the existing site.

The Chairman thanked the participants for their presentation.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement & Rural Affairs presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services seeking approval of an Arts, Museums and Heritage Strategy for North Hertfordshire. The following document was appended to the report:

Appendix A – Arts, Museums & Heritage Strategy 2007-2012.

The Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement & Rural Affairs acknowledged the comments made during the presentation, but stated that the Strategy was intended to provide a framework for Cultural activities, without dwelling on specific sites in detail. A number of Working Groups would be set up to consider various aspects of the Strategy, including one which would focus on the existing and proposed facilities needed.

Cabinet considered that the wording in the Strategy regarding Hitchin Museum could convey a misleading impression, and agreed to the replacement of the word “re-provision” with “provision”.

**RESOLVED:** That the Arts, Museums & Heritage Strategy, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be approved, subject to the replacement of the word “re-provision” with “provision” in Target 3.6 in the Action Plan, relating to a first class museum facility to display NHDC Hitchin and non-Letchworth Garden City material.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure that the Council has an Arts, Museums & Heritage Strategy, as recommended by the Museums Fundamental Service Review.

#### **199. IVEL COURT REDEVELOPMENT SCHEME**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance presented a report of the Head of Financial Services seeking the agreement of Cabinet to, subject to it being surplus to requirements, part of the land at Ivel Court, Letchworth Garden City, be disposed of at discounted value to a partnership of McCann Homes, North Herts Homes and Howard Cottage Housing Association, to be used for the provision of affordable housing and an enhanced Jackman’s Community Centre. The following document was appended to the report:

Appendix A – Existing site plan of the land at Ivel Court, Letchworth Garden City.

One of the Local Ward Members, Councillor J.M. Cunningham, was invited to address Cabinet regarding the Ivel Court Scheme. Councillor Cunningham stated that the current scheme was the fruition of a number of meetings with local residents over a considerable period of time. He considered that the use of the site for good quality affordable housing would alter the public perception of that part of the Jackman’s Estate for the better, as would the refurbishment and enhancement of the Community Centre.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance explained that the proposed meeting of the Community Regeneration Project Board (CRPB) for Ivel Court had not met as planned on 21 March 2007. It was felt that any comments that the CRPB wished to make on the scheme would need to be considered by officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the vacant site at Ivel Court, Letchworth Garden City, as illustrated on the plan attached at Appendix A to the report, be declared surplus to the Council’s requirements;
- (2) That the site be disposed of to a partnership of McCann Homes, North Herts Homes and Howard Cottage Housing Association for the provision of affordable housing at a discounted value to cover the cost of the refurbishment

and enhancement of the Jackman's Community Centre, subject to further negotiations on valuations;

- (3) That the comments of the Community Regeneration Project Board for Ivel Court regarding the scheme be considered by officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the provision of 36 additional affordable dwellings by the two RSLs, with the Authority benefiting from nomination rights to meet local needs, and to enable the provision of an enhanced Jackman's Community Centre

## **200. ORGANISATIONAL DEVELOPMENT STRATEGY**

The Chairman announced that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

## **201. REGIONAL & STRATEGIC PLANNING ISSUES**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning & Transport presented a report of the Head of Planning & Building Control informing Members of the current positions regarding:

- West of the A1(M) at Stevenage and Stevenage Local Development Documents;
- The draft East of England Plan;
- Growth Area Liaison for the Luton conurbation;
- Luton & Dunstable Northern Bypasses;
- London Luton Airport and Stansted Airport;
- Local Development Scheme and Saved Local Plan Policies.

The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix 1 – Schedule of Policies to be saved from North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 with Alterations (April 1996);  
Appendix 2 – Draft Local Development Scheme.

Cabinet acknowledged that the Schedule attached as Appendix 1 to the report was a matrix provided by the Government Office for the East of England for assessing whether to save policies from the existing Local Plan for a period beyond September 2007 or not. The spreadsheet had been filled in for all the policies of the existing Local Plan to indicate the opinion of North Hertfordshire District Council on which policies should be saved and which could be allowed to cease. The Full Council would be required to approve the schedule, but it would be a matter for the Secretary of States for Communities and Local Government to determine which policies would be actually saved.

Cabinet was provided with a revised Local Development Scheme (Appendix 2 to the report), which had resulted from negotiations with GO-East. As well as presenting new timetables, this document summarised the changes to the policies of the old Local Plan which would result if the Secretary of State accepted the schedule in Appendix 1. This revised Local Development Scheme needed to be formally submitted to the Secretary of State, but did not require the additional endorsement of Full Council.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report be noted;
- (2) That the revised Local Development Scheme, as set out at Appendix 2 to the report, be formally submitted to the Secretary of State, subject to any typographical amendments or other amendments which do not alter the general meaning of the document, which may be approved by the Head of Planning and Building Control.

**RECOMMENDED TO COUNCIL:** That the schedule of Local Plan policies that will be presented to the Secretary of State for extension or non-extension, as set out at Appendix 1 to the report, be agreed for submission to Secretary of State, subject to any typographical amendments or other amendments which do not alter the general meaning of the document, which may be approved by the Head of Planning and Building Control, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Transport.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure that Members are made aware of current developments; to safeguard relevant planning policies until such time as the Local Development Framework Policies are adopted; and to ensure that the Council has an up-to-date Local Development Scheme.

## **202. ADOPTION OF A REVISED BUILDING CONTROL POLICY**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning & Transport presented a report of the Head of Planning & Building Control seeking the adoption of a revised Building Control Policy.

The Head of Planning & Building Control commented that the revised Policy had been formulated to allow the Building Control Service to develop, and compare favourably with the Private Sector, in what was a very competitive environment. In this regard, the Head of Planning & Building Control stated that there had been difficulties in finalising the report on Building Control Fees and Charges, which was why the report had been withdrawn from the agenda. He therefore asked Cabinet for delegated authority, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Planning & Transport and Finance, to set the Fees and Charges for the Building Control Service.

Members noted that the Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 20 March 2007, had recommended to Cabinet that the proposed revised Policy should be adopted.

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the proposed revised Building Control Policy, as set out at Appendix A to the report, be agreed;
- (2) That the Head of Planning & Building Control, in consultation with the Portfolio Holders for Planning & Transport and Finance, be given delegated authority to approve the Fees and Charges for the Building Control Service.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure the long-term future of the Building Control Service, whilst minimising the net cost of the service to the Council and other stakeholders.

## **203. NEW SCHEME OF CHARGES FOR THE STATUTORY BUILDING REGULATION FUNCTIONS**

The Chairman announced that this item had been withdrawn from the agenda.

## **204. ROYSTON AND NEWNHAM CONSERVATION AREAS - REVIEWS**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning & Transport presented a report of the Head of Planning & Building Control in respect of the reviews of the Royston and Newnham Conservation Areas, following the recent public consultation exercise on these reviews. The following documents were appended to the report:

Appendix A – Front/back covers of Royston Conservation Area documents;  
Appendix B – Map extract showing minor alterations following Royston & District Committee.

The Head of Planning & Building Control advised that the revised Royston Conservation Area, together with supporting documents, had been recommended for approval by the Royston & District Committee. In respect of the Newnham Conservation Area, it was reported that this review had been deferred, pending a

meeting between officers and Newnham & Caldecote Parish Council. Rather than wait until the next Cabinet meeting, it was agreed that the outcome of the review be approved by officers, in consultation with appropriate Members.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the Royston Conservation Area documents, as outlined in the report, and in accordance with the resolution of the Royston & District Committee (Minute 112) made at its meeting held on 14 March 2007, be approved;
- (2) That, subject to the views of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Baldock & District Committee, the Head of Planning & Building Control, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Planning & Transport, be given delegated authority to approve the Newnham Conservation Area documents.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To enable the Council to adopt a Register of Buildings of Local Interest and an up-to-date review of Royston and Newnham Conservation Areas to inform future planning decisions; and to ensure that the Council's statutory duties are carried out and the targets set by Best Value Performance Indicator 219 are satisfied.

**205. STRATEGIC APPROACH TO PARKING CONTROLS**

The Portfolio Holder for Planning & Transport presented a report of the Head of Planning & Building Control, in respect of the development of a strategic approach to parking in the District.

Members noted that the report brought together the work that commenced on Controlled Parking Zones (CPZs); review of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs); Scrutiny Residential Parking Task & Finish Group; and Highways Partnership Agreements.

Cabinet was advised that the Scrutiny Committee, at its meeting held on 20 March 2007, had agreed the following recommendation to Cabinet:

- (1) That other officers involved in dealing with parking issues take account of the work being carried out by officers involved with Traffic Regulation Orders before making decisions on parking matters;
- (2) That Cabinet consider the need for the provision of additional resources to ensure that work on parking controls identified in the report is carried out quickly;
- (3) That innovative means of providing off-street parking be investigated as an adjunct to the work carried out on Traffic Regulation Orders.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the strategic approach to parking controls across the District, as set out in section 5 of the report, be endorsed, and these important areas of work be progressed;
- (2) That officers be instructed to report back to Cabinet on matters of progress in relation to the preparation of the town plans for Baldock and Royston, and the preparation of a joint Parking Report to the North Herts Highways Joint Member Panel as a means of seeking alternative funding;
- (3) That recommendations (1) and (3) of the Scrutiny Committee, as detailed above, be progressed, and recommendation (2) be acknowledged.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To develop a strategic approach to parking in order to take forward each of the issues identified in the report, and to deliver and manage member and public expectations.

The meeting closed at 9.55pm

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Chairman