

NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LETCHWORTH COMMITTEE

**Meeting held at Council Offices, Gernon Road, Letchworth Garden City
on 8 November 2006 at 7.30p.m.**

MINUTES

- PRESENT:** *Councillors M. Paterson (Chairman), Simon Bloxham (Vice-Chairman), J.M. Cunningham, Gary Grindal, T.W. Hone, David Kearns, Lorna Kercher, Lawrence McNamara, Elliot Needham, Mrs Lynda Needham and Diane Proudlove.*
- IN ATTENDANCE:** *Simon Ellis (Principal Planning Officer), Barrie Jones (Head of Financial Services), Andrew Graham (Community Development Officer) Tim Stephen (Community Development Manager), Ian Gourlay (Senior Committee & Member Services Officer) and Tim Hobman (Committee & Member Services Officer)*
- ALSO PRESENT:** 28 members of the public, Clerk of Letchworth Garden City Town Council.

CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS

The Chairman welcomed all those present to the meeting.

54. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Monica Bloxham, Melissa Davey and David Levett.

55. MINUTES

RESOLVED: That the Minutes of the meeting held on 2 October 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

In respect of Minute 48 – North Hertfordshire Highways Partnership Joint Member Panel (JMP): Discretionary Budget for 2006/07 and 2007/08, the Committee was advised that three/four projects relating to repairs to verge damage had been identified. The JMP would continue to progress verge schemes, but would need to prioritise such projects. Members were asked to consider this matter and refer suitable projects to the temporary NHDC/NHHP Liaison Officer (Head of Planning and Building Control). Members requested the Liaison Officer to supply them with a copy of the priorities list, together with details as to who had prioritised the three/four initial schemes.

56. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS

No other business was submitted for consideration by the Committee.

57. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

Councillor Lorna Kercher declared a prejudicial interest in Agenda Item 6 – Planning Applications: Ascot Industrial Estate, Icknield Way, Letchworth Garden City – in view of her role as a member of the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation Board. Councillor Kercher left the meeting for the duration of this item.

Councillor Mrs L. A. Needham declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6 – Planning Applications: Ascot Industrial Estate, Ickniel Way, Letchworth Garden City – in view of her role as the Council’s representative on the Letchworth Garden City Heritage Foundation Board. Councillor Needham remained in the meeting for the duration of this item, but elected not to speak or vote on the matter.

Councillor David Kearns declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6 – Planning Applications: Land north of 1-11 The Parade, Southfields, Letchworth Garden City – as he was a member of the steering group for this project. Councillor Kearns remained in the meeting for the duration of this item and elected to speak and vote on the matter.

Councillor Simon Bloxham declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 6 – Planning Applications: Land north of 1-11 The Parade, Southfields, Letchworth Garden City – as he was a member of the steering group for this project. Councillor Bloxham remained in the meeting for the duration of this item and elected to speak and vote on the matter.

58. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Nigel Baker had registered to speak as an objector in respect of planning application 06/02032/1 – Land at 39 Pasture Road, Letchworth.

Mr Stephen Geach had registered to speak as the applicant in respect of planning application 06/02101/1 – Land north of 1-11 The Parade, Southfields, Letchworth.

59. PLANNING APPLICATIONS

The Committee heard an oral presentation from Mr Nigel Baker in respect of Planning Application 06/02032/1, 39 Pasture Road, Letchworth Garden City.

Mr Baker thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address the meeting with his and other residents’ concerns about the planning application and made the following comments:

- There was an over-intensification of development by virtue of four houses being proposed on the site of one existing property.
- The development would have a detrimental effect on the form, landscape and character of the immediate vicinity.
- The four dwellings would still be highly visible when viewed from the Green Belt. This was in spite of the fact that the siting of the dwellings had been amended from an earlier application, in that they were now proposed to be sited 15 metres (as opposed to 5 metres) from the Green Belt boundary.
- The footprint of the proposed properties had been reduced from an earlier application, but the properties were now ‘squeezed’ into the middle of the site.

Also Mr Baker stated that he would have liked to have commented on the following, but was unable to do so due to time constraints:

- The proposed development would cause a loss of amenity to surrounding residents.

The Chairman thanked Mr Baker for his presentation.

The Committee also heard an oral presentation from Mr Stephen Geach in respect of Planning Application 06/02101/1, Land north of 1-11 The Parade, Southfields, Letchworth.

Mr Geach thanked the Committee for the opportunity to address the meeting and made the following comments:

- Funding had been secured for the scheme, however as a condition of the grant, works must be completed by the end of March 2007.

- Hertfordshire Highways had been less than forthcoming in their processing of the application to permanently block up Pelican Way, but that the grant money would still be available should this part of the project not take place.

The Chairman thanked Mr Geach for his presentation.

RESOLVED: That the following applications, as set out in the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control, be determined as indicated below:

SCHEDULE		
Reference Number	Description of Development and location	Decision
06/01726/1	Land at Ascot Industrial Estate, Icknield Way. Erection of 8 no. B1 light industrial units and associated infrastructure following demolition of existing industrial buildings.	GRANTED (see (a) below)
06/02029/1	Land at west part of former Norton School, Norton Road, Letchworth. Erection of 14 no. affordable housing units consisting of 2 no. three bedroom houses, 4 no. two bedroom houses, 4 no. two bedroom flats and 4 no. one bedroom flats and associated infrastructure.	GRANTED (see (b) below)
06/02032/1	Land at 39 Pasture Road, Letchworth. Outline planning application: Four detached dwellings following demolition of existing dwelling and formation of new access (scale, appearance and landscaping reserved).	REFUSED (see (c) below)
06/02101/1	Land north of 1-11 The Parade, Southfields, Letchworth. Change of use of car park to public amenity area including the provision of recreational facilities for children, creation of garden areas, lighting, street furniture, parking areas and ancillary works. Closure of Pelican Way to vehicular traffic.	GRANTED (see (d) below)

- (a) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to application 06/01726/1, planning permission be **GRANTED**, as per the conditions detailed in the report, and with the following additional condition:

17. Prior to the commencement of development full details of secure cycle storage facilities across the site shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Such works shall thereafter be carried out in complete accordance with the approved details or particulars prior to the first occupation of the development hereby permitted.

Reason: To ensure the provision of cycle storage facilities on the site in the interests of sustainable transport.

- (b) **RESOLVED:**
(1) That, subject to the applicant entering into a planning obligation under Section 106 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, to ensure that all 14 of the proposed dwellings are affordable housing to secure a 25% share of all housing proposed on this site as affordable; securing appropriate contributions towards Library, childcare, youth services and sustainable transport measures; ensuring the transfer of all

public amenity and play space land to Council control along with financial contributions towards the management and maintenance of the space and offsite improvements; and the supply of Fire Hydrant provision across the site, planning application 06/02029/1 be **GRANTED** planning permission subject to the conditions detailed in the report, and with the following revised condition and additional informative:

9. The existing 2m high close boarded fence on the western boundary of the application site, and the existing hedgerow on the southern boundary of the site shall be retained and maintained to the satisfaction of the Local Planning Authority throughout the period of construction and thereafter.

Reason: To maintain the privacy and security of neighbouring residents.

Informative: The applicant is advised that Bats maybe roosting within the School buildings on the site. A licence will be required from English Nature to carry out any works which may disturb this species or their habitat under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

(2) That the Head of Planning and Building Control be requested to seek from the applicant an additional financial contribution towards the provision of Vehicle Activated Signs in Norton Road.

(c) **RESOLVED:** That planning application 06/02032/1 be **REFUSED** planning permission for the following reason:

In the opinion of the Local Planning Authority, the siting of development proposed in this application would have a significantly detrimental effect on the character, form and extent of the landscape and open space pattern in this locality. The resultant plot sizes would be considerably smaller than surrounding plots, leading to a higher intensity of development than is characteristic of the surrounding area. Moreover, the proposed siting suggests that development would be conspicuous from within the Metropolitan Green Belt, the boundary of which adjoins the application site which would therefore prejudice the visual amenity of the Green Belt. As such the proposal directly conflicts with Policy 21 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 - with Alterations and undermines the objectives of policies 1 and 2 of that document.

(d) **RESOLVED:**

(1) That, subject to no objections from Hertfordshire County Council (Highways), application 06/02101/1 be **GRANTED** planning permission, subject to the conditions set out in the report.

(2) That the Head of Planning and Building Control be requested to write to Hertfordshire Highways expressing the Committee's extreme dissatisfaction with the manner in which the Highways comments on this application had been handled.

60. PLANNING APPEALS

The Principal Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following two appeals had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee held on 2 October 2006:

Appellant	Mr. and Mrs. D'amico
Address	48 Howard Drive, Letchworth
Description	Two storey side and rear extension to provide self contained annexe, detached double garage, following demolition of existing and alterations to existing cross over
Reference	06/00780/1HH
Procedure	Written Representations

Appellant	T-mobile (UK) Ltd.
Address	Land at the Longabout, Letchworth Gate, Letchworth
Description	Telecommunications installation comprising 1 no. monopole 15m high, with 3 no. antennae, radio equipment housing and ancillary development
Reference	06/01584/1TD
Procedure	Written Representations

The Principal Planning Officer advised Members that the two appeals lodged in relation to 75 Broadway never reached the Planning Inspectorate as they had been sent to the wrong address. The applicant's agent did not inform the Principal Planning Officer of this error until after the 2 October Committee Meeting. Since there never were any appeals in relation to this scheme planning permission and conservation area consent have been issued for this development in line with the Committee resolution.

61. SERVICE AND FINANCIAL PLANNING – SAVINGS AND GROWTH 2007/08 TO 2011/12

The Head of Financial Services presented a report of the Strategic Director of Financial & Regulatory Services to the Committee which sought their views on the provisional savings and growth items as part of the consultation process on Service and Financial Planning for 2007/2008 onwards. The Head of Financial Services confirmed that all feedback from the Committee would be fed back to Cabinet before it set the draft Budget on 19 December 2006.

The following documents were appended to the report:

- Appendix 1 – Savings – Service Options
- Appendix 2 – Savings – Income Increase Options
- Appendix 3 – Growth – Revenue Options
- Appendix 4 – Growth – Capital Options
- Appendix 5 – Cabinet Comments on Savings Proposals (17 October 2006)

The Committee considered the lists of proposed Savings and Growth items, and voted on each issue raised by Members.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the report of the Strategic Director of Financial & Regulatory Services be noted;
- (2) That the following recommendation made by the Committee be considered when formulating the draft Budget:
 - Saving Item Ref. SG15 – Reduction of Area Committee Budgets – Members were opposed to this arbitrary reduction in budgets.
 - Saving Item Ref. SG17 – Discontinue Historic Buildings Grants – Members considered that this budget should be retained and that, if take-up was minimal, any underspend would be transferred to balances.
 - Saving Item Ref. SG18 – The Handyperson/Securing scheme – Members considered that the existing scheme should be retained as it provided a valuable service, particularly to the elderly and vulnerable residents.
 - Saving Item Ref. SG21 – Deletion of Contribution to Dial-a-Ride – Members were opposed to this proposal and felt that the service should be continued as it provided an important service for vulnerable groups.

- Saving Item Ref. SG25 – Introduction of Fees for Pre-Application Planning Advice – Members suggested that this was a counterproductive charge and proposed that it be withdrawn. Further detail would be required regarding the level of the proposed fees to ensure that it did not cost more to collect the fee than the value of the fee itself.
- Saving Item Ref. SG29 – Pest Control Fees – Members were opposed to an increase in treatment charges on environmental grounds and considered that the current fees should remain at the same level.
- Growth Revenue Item. RG8 – Trade Union Funding – Members did not support this item. Further clarity was required regarding the detail of this proposal (i.e. the wording of the proposal was not explicit as to how this additional trade union representation would be provided and also how it would differ from that currently provided).

REASONS FOR DECISION:

- (1) To ensure that all Members were consulted on the proposed savings and growth bids and afforded the opportunity to comment before Cabinet set the draft Budget on 19 December 2006.
- (2) To ensure that the Council was able to adjust its base expenditure downwards to narrow the gap between our 2007/2008 District Requirement figure, as adjusted for anticipated capping limits, and our service spending requirements.

62. CHAMPION NEWS

The Community Development Manager presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which advised them of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for Letchworth Garden City since the meeting of the Committee held on 5 October 2006, and brought to their attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

The Community Development Manager commented on specific sections of the report as follows:

- In respect of section 3.1 – Grange Youth Wing – The sessions were being attended by approximately 20 persons per week.
- In respect of section 3.2 – Jackmans Youth Club – A meeting had taken place at Lannocks School and a Community Project Group had been appointed.
- In respect of section 3.7 – Jackmans Creamery Youth Shelter – This project was awaiting an imminent decision on funding.
- In respect of section 3.8 – Letchworth Arts Centre – Funding of a further £2,990 for a school project had been obtained by the Arts Centre.

The Chairman commented on the excellent work that has taken place in respect of section 3.3 - Mural Project – and requested that the appreciation of the Letchworth Committee be conveyed to all involved.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer to promote greater community capacity and well-being for the Letchworth Garden City community be endorsed;
- (2) That the recommended tree planting schemes, as detailed in Appendix 1 of the report, be approved;

- (3) That the Community Development Officer contact local supermarkets in order to investigate the possibility of the Council acquiring supermarket trolley shelters for reuse as youth shelters when they are periodically replaced by the supermarket.

REASON FOR DECISION: To keep Members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in Letchworth Garden City.

63. ANNUAL GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT DISCRETIONARY BUDGET 2006/07

The Community Development Officer for Letchworth Garden City presented a report of the Head of Community Development & Cultural Services to the Committee, which set out the budgetary situation for the Committee.

In response to a matter raised by a Member, the Chairman commented that he was expecting a report to be submitted to the next meeting of the Committee regarding the use of Area Visioning Funds to improve the paddling pool area of the Letchworth Outdoor Swimming Pool.

RESOLVED:

- (1) That the budgetary expenditure, balances and carry forwards from the Development Budgets and the allocated Visioning Budgets be noted;
- (2) That the following projects be funded from the unallocated portion of the revenue section of the Committee's Area Visioning Programme:
 - December 2006 Carol concert - £1,000
 - Youth concert in December 2006 / January 2007 with a drug and teenage pregnancy education element provided - £1,500

REASONS FOR DECISIONS: The allocation of funds will improve the services provided by local organisations and groups that are available and accessed by members of the community.

The meeting closed at 10.37p.m.

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Chairman