**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**BALDOCK & DISTRICT COMMITTEE**
**(Baldock, Arbury and Weston and Sandon Wards)**

**Meeting held at The Community Centre, Simpson Drive, Baldock on 7 November 2005 at 7.30 p.m.**

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

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *Project Co-Ordinator (Community Safety), Principal Planning Officer, Area Planning Officer, Community Development Officer (Baldock Area and Youth) and Committee and Member Services Officer.*

**54. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
No apologies for absence were received.

**55. MINUTES**
***RESOLVED:*** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 26 September 2005 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

**56. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**
No other business was submitted for consideration by the Committee.

**57. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**
Councillor M.R.M. Muir declared a personal interest in Agenda Item 10 – Planning Applications: 76 Icknield Way, Baldock – as the applicant was his next-door neighbour. Councillor Muir reserved his right to speak and vote in this matter.

**58. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
No items were presented for consideration by the Committee under public participation.

**59. CONSIDERATION OF THE IMPLEMENTATION OF 'ALCOHOL FREE' ZONES ACROSS NORTH HERTS**
The Project Co-Ordinator (Community Safety) presented a report of the Head of Policy, Partnerships and Performance to the Committee. This report detailed the policy background to evidencing the need for, and progressing where deemed appropriate, the implementation of alcohol free zones across the District. The purpose of this report was to request the Committee's approval to proceed with consultation with Ward Councillors and the public to ascertain the levels of on-street drinking affecting their local area. He drew particularly drew the Committee's attention to the evidence of events and identified problem areas for Baldock, outlined in paragraphs 4.1 and 4.4.

***RESOLVED:***

(1) That the evidence of the levels on-street drinking affecting the Baldock and District area be noted;

(2) That the proposed consultation to consider the implementation of alcohol-free zones in the Baldock and District area given the evidence presented and in light of the Scrutiny Committee and Cabinet recommendations be approved;

(3) That officers be requested to provide the following information in writing to the Committee within two weeks of the meeting:
   a) the nature and extent of the consultation process;
   b) the ratification process for evidence received from members of the public;

c) the difficulty of making changes to the extent of the zone where required; and
d) the possibility of designating the whole of Baldock as an alcohol-free zone.

(4) That the sum of £600 be allocated from the Committee's Discretionary Budget towards the initial cost of informing the public of a formal consultation taking place by public notice in local newspapers. Such monies should be split proportionally between the Baldock Town Ward £455 (76%) and Baldock East Ward £145 (24%) rounded to the nearest £5.00

***REASON FOR DECISIONS:*** The figures included within the report showed that there was a level of on-street drinking taking place in each of the district's towns, including an element of anti-social behaviour which was drink-related.

**60. CHAMPION NEWS**

The Community Development Officer for Baldock presented a report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services to the Committee, which advised them of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for Baldock since the meeting of the Committee held on 26 September 2005, and brought to their attention some important community based activities that would be taking place during the next few months.

***RESOLVED:***

(1) That the report of the Head of Community Development be noted;

(2) That the actions taken by the Community Development Officer for Baldock to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Baldock communities be endorsed;

(3) That the particular thanks of the Committee be given to the Community Development Officer for Baldock in recognition of the time and effort put into the organisation and smooth-running of the Baldock Fair.

***REASON FOR DECISION:*** To keep members of the Committee apprised of the latest developments in community activities in Baldock.

**61. BALDOCK AND DISTRICT AREA VISIONING UPDATE REPORT**

The Community Development Officer for Baldock presented a report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services which updated the Committee on the progress on Area Visioning projects within the Baldock and District area. The report also presented the Committee with a revised and updated Action Plan detailing the current projects, committed expenditure and seeking their approval on committing the remaining financial balances to further projects and initiatives.

The report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services included two appendices:

a) Appendix 1, which outlined the latest scheme developments and progress with Baldock and District Area Visioning implementations; and
b) Appendix 2, which outlined the latest scheme developments and progress with Baldock and District Area Visioning implementation where North Hertfordshire District Council could have an influence.

The Committee expressed their concern in relation to the report that was commissioned from consultants about potential use of the trapped land created by the Baldock Bypass, as detailed in paragraph 4.3.2 of the report. Whilst the report was circulated to Members at the time, it did not go through the formal process of Committee and Council endorsement, and presentation to the Hertfordshire County Council for consideration and implementation.

***RESOLVED:***

(1) That the progress on Area Visioning made to date be noted;

(2) That the potential to access a central Visioning fund by rural Wards be noted;

(3) That the unallocated revenues Visioning monies in the sum of £10,615 be allocated to rural Visioning projects, to be split and rounded to the nearest £5.00 as follows:

a) Arbury Ward: £ 5,945 (56%)
b) Weston & Sandon Ward: £ 4,670 (44%)

(4) That, in view of the lower expenditure from Visioning funds to rural Wards in the last two years, any additional projects that the rural Wards may need additional funding for will be considered by the Baldock Town and Baldock East Wards for a grant from their discretionary budgets;

(5) That any monies allocated to the Baldock and District area from the Baldock Bypass project be considered for allocation to both rural and urban wards in the area;

(6) That an update on the Babtie Consultant's report in relation to the potential use of land associated with the development of the Baldock Bypass be brought to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 12 December 2005.

***REASONS FOR DECISIONS:***

(1) This report was part of the implementation and review process for Area Visioning, in which Area Committees were advised of progress and were asked for their comments.

(2) The Area Committee was also in a position to commit resources from its Development Budget and its allocation of Area Visioning funds to implement its priorities for action.

**62. ANNUAL GRANTS AND DEVELOPMENT DISCRETIONARY BUDGET 2004/05**

The Community Development Officer for Baldock presented a report of the Head of Community Development and Cultural Services to the Committee, which set out the budgetary situation for the Committee, together with one additional grant application that had been received.

***RESOLVED***: That the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget be noted.

***REASONS FOR DECISION:***

(1) The report was intended to apprise Members of the financial resources available to this Committee. It drew attention to the current budgetary situation, assisted in the effective financial management of the Committee's budget and ensured actions were performed within the Authority's Financial Regulations and the guidance contained in the Grants procedure;

(2) The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

**63. GRANT APPLICATION – BALDOCK BOWLS CLUB**

***RESOLVED:*** That the sum of £1,500 be awarded to the Baldock Bowls Club as a financial contribution toward the renewal and installation costs associated with the provision of a heating system for the group's Clubhouse. Such monies will be allocated from the following discretionary budgets:

a) Baldock East Ward: £ 360 (24%)
b) Baldock Town Ward: : £1,140 (76%)

***REASON FOR DECISION:*** The awarding of financial assistance to voluntary organisations and the use of discretionary spending allows the Committee to further the aims and strategic priorities of the Council.

**64. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

***RESOLVED:*** To determine the applications as set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control as submitted to the Committee in the following schedule:

**SCHEDULE**

| Reference Number | Description of Development and location | Decision |
|---|---|---|
| **05/00840/1** | **76 Icknield Way, Baldock**<br>Change of use from B1 to residential to provide a three storey building comprising 8 x 2 bed flats | **GRANTED**<br>(see (a) below) |
| **05/01228/1** | **Radwell Animal Feeds, The Barn, Great North Road, Radwell**<br>Erection of single storey building for B8 use, following demolition of existing industrial building. Use of associated land as paddock (as amended by drawings received on 24 October 2005) | **GRANTED**<br>(see (b) below) |

(a) ***RESOLVED:***

(1) That, in relation to planning application reference 05/00840/1, planning permission be ***GRANTED*** subject to the conditions set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control.

(2) That an informative be inserted into the Decision Notice for this planning application to ensure that the grass verge areas adjacent to the site be maintained and, where necessary, reinstated to ensure their retention for the benefit of the site and neighbouring properties.

(b) ***RESOLVED:*** That, in relation to planning application reference 05/01228/1, planning permission by ***GRANTED*** subject to the conditions set out in the report of the Head of Planning and Building Control and 6, more specific, highway conditions in lieu of condition 11 of the report.

**65. PLANNING APPEALS**

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following planning appeal had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee held on 26 September 2005:

| | |
|---|---|
| Appellant | Mr J. Evans |
| Reference number | 03/00709/1 |
| Address | 43 Letchworth Road, Baldock |
| Proposal | Outline application (landscaping reserved) for the erection of a two bedroomed detached bungalow |
| Method | Written representations |

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following appeals had been determined since the meeting of the Committee held on 26 September 2005:

| | |
|---|---|
| Appellant | Mr P. Castle |
| Reference number | 05/00238/1HH |
| Address | 42 Station Road, Ashwell |
| Proposal | Timber garage |

| | |
|---|---|
| Decision | Split decision – (permission granted by LPA for a two storey element) appeal dismissed for timber garage |

| | |
|---|---|
| Appellant | Mr J. McNally |
| Reference number | 05/00428/1 |
| Address | Land between Rainbow End and Field Cottage, Treacle Lane, Rushden |
| Proposal | Detached house with double garage |
| Decision | Appeal dismissed |

The meeting closed at 9.17 p.m.

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Chairman

# Baldock Area Committee - A Response To Questions On The Subject Of Alcohol Free Zones

**Q1. The nature and extent of the consultation process?**

A. The Authority has a statutory requirement to 'publish a notice setting out their proposal to designate the locality and (invite) persons to make representations about the proposal'. The date from which the notice is published notes the start of the consultation period, which lasts for 28 days.

The current proposal is to publish the notice in the free local newspaper for the area, on the NHDC website and on display in the reception of the NHDC offices in Gernon Rd.

It is possible to consult on a wider basis, for example leafleting of addresses in the affected area however this is both time and labour intensive and therefore incurs costs. It can be arranged to inform Watch members (Neighbourhood Watch, ShopWatch, PubWatch etc) for the town that the zone is proposed for, which would aid in 'spreading the word'. The consideration of posters in key areas used by the public, for example Tescos or the Community Centre, is also underway. As with Royston, it is also intended that the Authority's website will feature a direct link to the consultation documents.

It is considered that consultation utilising the methods that will already be employed by the authority is sufficient for the purpose. Evaluation of the Royston implementation would help provide an understanding of the success or otherwise of the current consultation approach.

**Q2. The ratification process for evidence received from members of the public?**

A. Reports from members of the public regarding perceived levels of incidents and their locations will require authentication by Hertfordshire Constabulary. Only when there is sufficient evidence of incidents, reported incidents and concerns from residents and partner agencies alike can there be sufficient justification for considering inclusion within the zone. This evidence will be further ratified by the Authority's legal section prior to confirmation of intention to proceed with formal notice, through Council for the final decision to be made.

**Q3. The difficulty of making changes to the extent of the zone where required?**

A. In order to change the extent of the zone, the process would have to begin again from the start i.e. propose area, 28 day consultation etc. A review of the zone's effectiveness must be carried out (as soon as is reasonably practical) after the first three months of the scheme. Considerations for changing the designated area should take place at this time.

**Q4. The possibility of making the whole of Baldock an Alcohol Free Zone?**

A. The Police and Criminal Justice Act 2001 determines a designated public place thus:

*(a) a public place in the area of a local authority; and*
*(b) identified in an order made by that authority*

*and if they are satisfied that there has been-*

*(a) nuisance or annoyance to members of the public or a section of the public; or*
*(b) disorder;*

*has been associated with the consumption of intoxicating liquor in that place.*

With this in mind it is difficult to conceive that it would be possible to prove that *every street* in Baldock is affected by nuisance, annoyance or disorder associated with the consumption of intoxicating liquor. However as it is possible to review the area of a zone, any areas experiencing displacement of the problem, may be covered. It should also be remembered that when dealing with the wider aspect of drunken behaviour on a street, not necessarily whilst in the ownership of an open drink, other legislation such as the Crime and Disorder Act could be applied by the Police.