

**NORTH HERTFORDSHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL**

**ROYSTON & DISTRICT COMMITTEE**  
**(Royston and Ermine Ward – Parishes of Barkway, Barley, Kelshall, Nuthampstead, Reed and Therfield)**

**Meeting held at Royston Town Hall, Melbourn Street, Royston  
on 15 March 2006 at 7.30 p.m.**

**PRESENT:** *Councillors W.M. Davidson (Chairman), Mrs F.R. Hill (Vice-Chairman), A.F. Hunter, R.E. Inwood, H.M. Marshall and F.J. Smith.*

**IN ATTENDANCE:** *Head of Financial Services, Head of Policy, Partnerships & Performance, Planning Control & Conservation Manager, Area Planning Officer, Community Development Officer and Committee and Member Services Officer.*

**ALSO PRESENT:** *Richard Boutal (Client Project Manager – Major Projects (Hertfordshire Highways)), County Councillor Drake, Geraint Burnell (Royston Town Centre Manager) and approximately 45 members of the public.*

**CHAIRMAN'S ANNOUNCEMENTS**

The Chairman apologised to the members of the public present for the delay in starting the meeting and the problems accessing the building. He informed them that the item that a lot of them were there to hear, Agenda Item 6 – Royston Rail Crossing – was the first report on the agenda and apologised that the room was quite crowded.

The Chairman informed all those present that the annual Royston Town Meeting would be held on Thursday 30 March 2006 in the Heritage Hall, Royston Town Hall, starting at 7.30 p.m. The Chairman invited all those present to attend.

The Chairman announced that former Councillor Doyle had passed away the previous week at Addenbrookes Hospital. He stated that the funeral would be held on Wednesday 22 March 2006 at the Catholic Church, Melbourn Street, Royston, starting at 10 a.m.

**108. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor P.C.W. Burt.

Councillor A.F. Hunter had also apologised that he would be late. He arrived at the meeting at 7.54 p.m.

**109. MINUTES**

**RESOLVED:** That the Minutes of the meeting held on 1 February 2006 be approved as a true record of the proceedings and signed by the Chairman.

**110. NOTIFICATION OF OTHER BUSINESS**

The Chairman agreed considered of the following additional items of business, submitted by Councillor F.J. Smith:

- (a) Potholes in Royston roads. This item to be taken as Agenda Item 13.
- (b) Bus services to Cambridge. This item to be taken as Agenda Item 14.

**111. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS**

No declarations of interests were made during the meeting.

## 112. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

Mr Alan Day had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding the proposed rail crossing for Royston. Mr Day was speaking on behalf of the Coombelands Estate Residents Association.

Mr Day stated that the principal concerns of the residents had been stated at the meeting on 21 December 2005 when this item was discussed (Minute 79 refers). He expressed again their concern that the crossing, and the access to it, would run directly to the rear of houses, resulting in an increased vulnerability and lack of security for those properties and causing light and noise pollution for the residents. He further stated that, should the plans go ahead, residents were prepared to take every possible course of action to prevent this happening.

The Chairman thanked Mr Day for his presentation and informed him that his comments would be taken into account when considering the report of the Client Project Manager (Major Projects), Hertfordshire Highways, at Agenda Item 6.

Mr Terry Hartga had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding the proposed rail crossing for Royston. Mr Hartga was speaking on behalf of a group of concerned residents living in Green Street, Morton Street and Victoria Crescent.

Mr Hartga questioned the need for a crossing in Royston, stating that it was a large sum of money to be spent just because a small number of people were foolhardy enough to run across the line. He also pointed out that the railway line should be made more secure not less so, especially in times of increased terrorism, and that measures such as visits to schools by the British Transport Police to raise awareness of the dangers of playing on or crossing railway lines could be more effective measures to address the problems.

Mr Hartga reminded the Committee that the results of the consultation exercises had clearly expressed a preference for a footbridge crossing, to be located at the Coombes Hole location. He also stated that the concerns expressed by Mr Day on behalf of the Coombelands Estate residents also applied to residents living in the vicinity of the Green Street/Morton Street site, but to a greater extent as it would be more difficult to secure and protect the properties.

Mr Hartga concluded by asking the Committee, Royston Town Council and Hertfordshire County Council to think long and hard and to consider the effects of any crossing on the residents living close to the site.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hartga for his presentation and informed him that his comments would be taken into account when considering the report of the Client Project Manager (Major Projects), Hertfordshire Highways, at Agenda Item 6.

Ms Stacey Rawlings had given due notice that she wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 05/01403/1 – Land at Picknage Corner, Picknage Road, Barley. Ms Rawlings informed the Committee that she was the planning consultant for the application, from Bidwells Property Consultants.

Key points raised by Ms Rawlings were:

- The nursery and the offices that are to be included in the building that is the subject of this application are linked and cannot be separated
- Have investigated other potential sites for the nursery but none have been suitable
- This site was chosen as the existing buildings make it part of the village rather than part of the open countryside, minimising the impact of the development, it is not within the conservation area, and it has close links with the village's school
- The Minutes of the Parish Council's meeting indicate that, whilst some concerns were expressed, by majority vote the Council did not object to the application

The Chairman thanked Ms Rawlings for her presentation and informed her that the points she had raised would be considered when the Committee determined the application.

Mr Stephane Hamelin had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding planning application reference 05/01901/1 – Land south of A505 and north-west of Greenfield, Royston. Mr Hamelin was President of Groupe Hamelin, the applicants.

Key points raised by Mr Hamelin were:

- Groupe Hamelin acquired John Dickinson from Spicers (based just 12 miles from Royston)
- As John Dickinson had been for sale for 8 years there were several unresolved problems, one of which was distribution – current lease for logistics centre in Braintree expires in 2008
- Groupe Hamelin want to establish headquarters and logistics centre for John Dickinson for United Kingdom in Royston as 73% of business is within 100 miles radius of town, which is also on main train route to London and in close proximity to airports

Mr Hamelin also showed the Committee an artist's impression of what the proposed development would look like, including the rooflines and views from the A505.

The Chairman thanked Mr Hamelin for his presentation and informed him that the points he had raised would be considered when the Committee determined the application.

Mr Michael Gowen had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding car parking in Royston. Mr Gowen was a local retailer and member of the Royston Chamber of Commerce and Royston Town Centre Forum.

Key points raised by Mr Gowen were:

- Whilst the Council has celebrated its parking enforcement regime as a success because of the penalty tickets issued, it has had a negative impact on trade in Royston as many customers have been driven out to Tesco with its free parking instead
- Outlying villages are poorly served by public transport so residents have no choice but to drive into Royston to do their shopping. With parking charges increasing, most will go to Tesco for free parking rather than coming into the town centre
- Traders worked with the Royston Town Centre Forum to produce the report that was forwarded to the District Council and continue to work with them to try to make it easier for customers to come to Royston and to park, particularly on a Saturday. They are opposed to increases in parking charges, particularly whilst reviews of the situation in Royston are being carried out
- Although parking ticket sales are increasing, footfall is decreasing in the town as most of the parkers are people who work in the town or who use the railway station and cannot park anywhere else because of the lack of parking at the station and the residents' parking schemes in all surrounding roads
- Increasing business rates were driving many small traders out of business, especially as they could not compete with the rapidly expanding Tesco store.

The Chairman thanked Mr Gowen for his presentation and informed him that the points he had raised would be taken into account when considering Items 7 and 12. The Chairman also stated that the Council's Parking Attendants worked to a high standard to ensure that traffic kept flowing in the town centre, and that most people who were ticketed were at fault and deserved to be ticketed as the Parking Attendants were not over-strict. The Chairman also stated that business rates were set by central government, not by the District Council.

Mr Geraint Burnell, the Town Centre Manager for Royston, had given due notice that he wished to speak at the meeting regarding car parking and car parking charges in Royston.

Key points raised by Mr Burnell were:

- Justification of 40% increase in fees by stating that this is the first increase in 4 years is not enough – this is a huge amount and well above the level of inflation
- He had counted the number of cars with 10 pence tickets between 4 p.m. and 5.40 p.m. the night before the meeting and there were 34 – lots more than the 3.5 suggested by the figures given to justify abolition of this tariff band. The Council should not abolish this tariff band as it is of significant benefit both to those who use it and to traders in the town. If the Council feels there must be alterations to the band, then compromise could be made, such as limiting this tariff band to short-stay car parks or increasing the tariff slightly, but not abolishing it altogether.
- No reference has been made in the report at Agenda Item 7 to the negative issues that were put forward at the consultations with retailers who put forward very strongly their views against the increases in parking charges, yet this is an issue that will very much affect the town
- Good to see in report at Agenda Item 12 that officers had come forward and modified their view. Now call for a working party to be established to keep the joint working process going as there were other issues which needed to be raised and any future developments could be addressed as they arose.

The Chairman thanked Mr Burnell for his presentation and informed him that the points he had raised would be taken into account when considering Items 7 and 12.

The Chairman also informed the Committee that a letter had been received from the Royston Town Council expressing their concern about the proposed increases in car parking charges. The Town Council felt that the economic factors that related to Royston were not the same as those that related to the larger towns of Letchworth Garden City and Hitchin, and that Royston's car parking should therefore be considered as separate from the general car parking policy across the District. The letter also expressed the Town Council's support for the proposals in the Royston Town Centre Forum's report.

### **113. ROYSTON RAIL CROSSING**

The Client Project Manager - Major Projects (Hertfordshire Highways) presented his report to the Committee, which provided responses to questions raised at the meeting of 21 December 2005, together with additional information in relation to the size, shape and appearance of potential crossings of the railway.

The Client Project Manager - Major Projects (Hertfordshire Highways) explained that the purpose of the report was to seek confirmation of the Committee's preferred option from those presented. Feedback from the Committee would form part of a report to be made to Hertfordshire County Council's Transport Panel at its meeting on 30 March 2006, which would be seeking endorsement of a preferred scheme. He stated that, following that endorsement, design development would commence straight away so that the project would progress.

The Committee acknowledged the concerns of residents in the vicinity of both proposed sites, as expressed by Mr Day and Mr Hartga (see Minute 112 above) but agreed that, whilst no solution would be perfect, it was important to provide a railway crossing to stop the current illegal crossings and provide a safer route for pedestrians to access the town centre and facilities such as the leisure centre.

In response to questions from the Committee, the Client Project Manager – Major Projects (Hertfordshire Highways) stated that the cost of construction of a footbridge would be at least £800,000 to £1million, with considerable ongoing maintenance costs. The cost of construction of an underpass would be at least £1.5-2million, with a lower

ongoing maintenance bill. He confirmed that these costs included the provision of appropriate lighting and CCTV connected to the area monitoring station.

At the invitation of the Chairman, County Councillor Drake indicated that he felt that an underpass at the Coombes Hole site would be the most appropriate crossing as the cost would be lower, construction easier, and it would be easier to make the surrounding houses more secure. However, he stated that whatever style of crossing and site was chosen, it was very important that the project went ahead to provide a safe way for people to cross the railway, without anyone getting hurt.

Following discussion, the Committee agreed that the preferred type of crossing would be an underpass as a footbridge would be too intrusive for residents living nearby, wherever the bridge was sited. With regard to the location at which the underpass should be sited, the Committee expressed some concern that siting an underpass at the Green Street/Morton Street location would require a turn in the underpass, rather than the straight-through design preferred for safety reasons. For this reason, consideration was made of whether the underpass should be sited at the Coombes Hole location, which could have a straight-through design but had a lower incidence of illegal crossings than at the Green Street/Morton Street location. However, 2 Councillors indicated a preference for the Coombes Hole location and 4 Councillors indicated a preference for the Green Street/Morton Street location and it was therefore

**RESOLVED:** That it be confirmed that the Committee's preference for a rail crossing for Royston was an underpass to be sited at the Green Street/Morton Street location.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** The Committee's view on a preferred option for a crossing of the railway in Royston was sought to assist the County Council in making a judgement on the best way forward for the project through endorsement of a preferred scheme.

#### **114. BUDGET SETTING 2006-2007 – PARKING CHARGES**

The Head of Financial Services presented the joint report of the Strategic Director of Financial & Regulatory Services and the Strategic Director of Customer Services to the Committee. This report had been presented to the Letchworth, Hitchin and Royston & District Committees to allow them the opportunity to comment on the proposed increases in car park charges following the Council's resolution of 9 February 2006.

The Head of Financial Services drew the Committee's attention to the proposals for new parking tariffs within the Committee's area, which were detailed in Appendix A to the report. These proposals included the abolition of the special tariff band in Royston where car park users paid 10 pence after 4pm, which had been included as only 0.25% of car park users in Royston took advantage of that band. The Head of Financial Services also stressed to the Committee that, whilst a 40% overall increase in parking charges may seem large, this was the first increase in four years.

The Committee expressed their dissatisfaction with the large increase in car parking charges and their concern about the effect that the increases could have on the town centre. Particular concern was expressed about the plan to abolish the 10 pence tariff band as it was felt there was a recognised increase in parking with people using the shops in the town centre during this time.

The Committee also questioned how the overnight parking charges would be policed, and whether that would be a cost-effective exercise. They also agreed that, should the overnight parking charges come into effect, the car parks at the Civic Centre and John Street should be exempted from this charge as they were used by people from many community groups using the facilities at the civic centre and the church in the evenings, many of whom would not be able to afford to pay the parking charges and would thus be considerably disadvantaged. Concern was also expressed that introducing overnight parking charges could result in increased on-street parking in areas surrounding car parks.

**RESOLVED:** That the joint report of the Strategic Director of Financial & Regulatory Services and the Strategic Director of Customer Services be noted.

**RECOMMENDED TO CABINET:**

- (1) That the Committee cannot support a 40% increase in car parking charges at any car park in the town centre due to the negative impact it would have on the viability and vitality of town centre;
- (2) That the Committee supports a small increase in parking charges at the Civic Centre car park due to its use predominantly by workers with day tickets, some of whom were subsidised by their employers, but not at other car parks in the town centre;
- (3) That the special tariff band in Royston for charging 10 pence to park between 4 and 6 p.m. be retained;
- (4) That the 50 pence overnight parking charge be excluded from the Civic Centre and John Street car parks, to allow continued community use of facilities at the Town Hall and church.

**REASON FOR DECISIONS:** To enable the Committee's comments on the proposed parking tariffs to be considered by Cabinet.

**115. CHAMPION NEWS**

The Community Development Officer for Royston presented a report of the Head of Community Development to the Committee, which advised them of the activities undertaken by the Community Development Officer for Royston since the meeting of the Committee held on 1 February 2006, 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 Royston to promote greater community capacity and well-being for Royston communities be endorsed.

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

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

The Community Development Officer for Royston presented a report of the Head of Community Development to the Committee, which set out the budgetary situation for the Committee, together with 1 additional grant application and 1 funding request that had been received.

The Community Development Officer for Royston drew the Committee's attention to the request for funding to replace fencing adjacent to the Burns Road Community Centre, as set out in Appendix C to the report. He further informed the Committee that repairs were required to the fence between Blake Close and the rear of gardens in Swift Close, for which he had been quoted the sum of £326. Repair work was also required to a fence between the Recreation Ground and the Betjeman Road children's play area, at the cost of £200.

The Community Development Officer for Royston further reminded the Committee that the remaining funds in the Committee's budgets must be allocated to projects before the end of the financial year or they would not be carried over into the new financial year. Councillor F.J. Smith suggested to the Committee that, as the District Council was not funding the provision of hanging baskets and planters for the town in 2006, the

remaining funds could be allocated toward providing these. The Community Development Officer confirmed that the cost of the existing schedule of provision, including watering and maintenance, was £11,482, but it was noted that the Royston Town Council was encouraging local businesses to contribute toward providing baskets as well.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the current expenditure and balance of the Development Budget be noted;
- (2) That the sum of £1,651 be allocated from the Committee's Discretionary Budget for the provision of replacement fencing adjacent to Burns Road Community Centre;
- (3) That the sum of £326 be allocated from the Committee's Discretionary Budget for repair and support work on fencing at Swift Close / Blake Close, Royston;
- (4) That the sum of £200 be allocated from the Committee's Discretionary Budget for repair work on fencing between the Recreation Ground and the Betjeman Road children's play area, Royston;
- (5) That the remaining sum of £9,225 in the Committee's Discretionary Budget be allocated toward the provision of planters and hanging baskets in the town centre for 2006, such provision to be in conjunction with the Royston Town Council and local businesses. A report detailing the costs and proposals for provision should be brought to the meeting of the Committee to be held on 26 April 2006.

**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.

**117. GRANT APPLICATION – YOUNG PEOPLE OF THE YEAR**

The Community Development Officer for Royston drew the Committee's attention to the grant application for a financial contribution towards a Young People of the Year Award 2006 competition for the Royston area. The details of this application were set out at Appendix B to the report.

The Community Development Officer for Royston informed the Committee that, whilst officers had been supportive of this application in principle, difficulties had arisen as grant criteria set by Cabinet clearly stated that grants could not be issued to commercial organisations or individuals, both of which applied in this instance. Following discussions with other organisations such as Connexions, the applicant had established a voluntary organisation to run the competition. However, the Community Development Officer for Royston informed the Committee that as setting up a constitution would take a few more days, the Committee would be unable to grant funds directly to the organisation at the meeting and so his recommendation was that the Committee agree the grant in principle and authorise the Chairman and Vice-Chairman to agree the release of the money once the constitution process was satisfactorily completed.

**RESOLVED:** That the sum of £1,000 be awarded to Young People of the Year as a financial contribution toward the administration costs of running a Young People of the Year Award 2006 competition in the Royston area, subject to the completion of the constitution process to the satisfaction of the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of the Committee.

**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.

**118. PLANNING APPLICATIONS**

The Committee heard the following oral representations:

- Ms Stacy Rawlings with regard to planning application reference 05/01403/1 – Land off Picknagge Corner, Picknagge Road, Barley.
- Mr Stephane Hamelin with regard to planning application reference 05/01901/1 – Land south of A505 and north west of Greenfield, Royston.

Details of these representations can be found above at Minute 112.

**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**

<b>Reference Number</b>	<b>Description of Development and location</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>05/01403/1</b>	<b>Land off Picknagge Corner, Picknagge Road, Barley</b> Erection of single storey office building (class B1), single storey day care nursery (class D1), associated car parking and infrastructure and creation of new vehicular access off Picknagge Road (as amended by additional supporting information report and plans 507.100.02A; 507.100.03A; 507.100.04A; 507.100.05A received 19 January 2006 and 507.100.03B received on 24 February 2006)	<b>REFERRED TO LICENSING &amp; APPEALS COMMITTEE</b> (See (a) below)
<b>05/01901/1</b>	<b>Land South of A505 and North West of Greenfield, Royston</b> Erection of industrial building for purposes within use class B8 (warehouse storage and distribution) and B1 (offices) and ancillary facilities, provision of service yard, 132 car parking spaces, new vehicular access, access road, landscaping (including earth bunding) and all associated infrastructure.	<b>REFERRED TO LICENSING &amp; APPEALS COMMITTEE</b> (See (b) below)
<b>05/01915/1HH</b>	<b>Sells Close House, High Street, Barley</b> Two storey rear extension, rear conservatory, single storey side extension and replacement chimney following demolition of existing single storey rear extension (as amended by plan nos SCP04K and SCP05, received on 1 March 2006)	<b>GRANTED</b> (As per report)
<b>06/00032/1</b>	<b>Hay Farm, Police Row, Therfield</b> Change of use of existing agricultural grain store to commercial storage unit (Class B8)	<b>GRANTED</b> (See (c) below)
<b>06/00043/1HH</b>	<b>The Barn, Shaffenhoe End, Barley</b> Single storey link extension between dwelling and barn.	<b>GRANTED</b> (As per report)

- (a) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 05/01403/1, the planning application be **REFERRED TO THE LICENSING & APPEALS**

**COMMITTEE** for determination as the Committee were minded to grant planning permission, contrary to the Hertfordshire County Structure Plan Review 1991-2011 and Policies 6, 12 and 20 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 with Alterations because of the following special circumstances:

- 1) There was a clear community need for provision of nursery school facilities in the village;
- 2) The applicant had explored alternative sites within the village and in the surrounding area but had not found a suitable alternative;
- 3) The proposed location would result in improved road safety for users of the nursery and other road users;
- 4) Replacement of the existing building on the site would result in improved visual amenity when approaching the village of Barley;
- 5) The relocation of the nursery school to the proposed location would result in improved amenities for the area around Spindrift, Picknage Road.

- (b) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 05/01901/1, the planning application be **REFERRED TO THE LICENSING & APPEALS COMMITTEE** for determination as the Committee were minded to grant planning permission, contrary to Policies 6, 12 and 21 of the North Hertfordshire District Local Plan No. 2 with Alterations. The special circumstances put forward by the Committee were as follows:

#### **Policy 6**

The applicant had clearly demonstrated that the business's local links would be strengthened through the relocation of its headquarters and logistics operations for the United Kingdom to Royston.

The Committee thought it extremely likely that the forthcoming Local Development Framework would allocate this land for additional employment space as there was strong pressure for growth in that area. They also concluded that the existing Local Plan was dated and this combined lead to an exception to Policy 6.

#### **Policies 12 and 21**

The Committee felt height and appearance of the building had been designed to ensure that the effect on surrounding visual amenity was minimised. They also felt that the proposed landscaping scheme would soften the appearance of the building, and would therefore not harm the objectives of Policies 12 and 21.

- (c) **RESOLVED:** That, with regard to planning application reference 06/00032/1, planning permission be **GRANTED** subject to the conditions set out in the report of the Head of Planning & Building Control, together with the following additional condition:

*6. Notwithstanding the provisions of the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) Order 1995, the use hereby permitted shall be limited use class B8 (warehouse storage and distribution) and no other use whatsoever.*

*Reason: To accord with the terms of the submitted application and to enable the local planning authority to exercise control over the future use of the building.*

## **119. PLANNING APPEALS**

The Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that no planning appeals had been lodged since the meeting of the Committee held on 1 February 2006.

However, the Area Planning Officer informed the Committee that the following appeals had been determined since the meeting of the Committee held on 1 February 2006:

Appellant	Howan Homes Ltd
Reference number	05/00965/1
Address	8 Newmarket Road, Royston
Proposal	Erection of 3-storey building comprising 5 x 2-bedroom flats, provision of 8 car parking spaces, refuse store and ancillary works.
Decision	APPEAL WITHDRAWN 14.02.2006
Appellant	Mr and Mrs Ovens
Reference number	04/01425/1
Address	25 Priory Close, Royston
Proposal	Outline application: Erection of 3 x 5-bedroom dwellings, access and ancillary works. Replacement double garage to serve existing dwelling (landscaping reserved) (as amended by drawing no. 101 Rev D, received 8 June 2005).
Decision	APPEAL DISMISSED

**120. ROYSTON TOWN CENTRE – OFFICER RESPONSE TO ROYSTON TOWN CENTRE FORUM REPORT MADE TO ROYSTON & DISTRICT COMMITTEE ON 1 FEBRUARY 2006**

The Head of Policy, Partnerships & Performance presented her report to the Committee which detailed the response of officers in the car parks, economic development and financial service areas of the Council to the Town Centre Forum's report, to advise the Committee on the current position.

The Chairman highlighted the following key points from the report of the Royston Town Centre Forum which he asked the Head of Policy, Partnerships & Performance to ensure were implemented by 1 May 2006:

- The Market Place, Angel Pavement and Priory Gardens car parks should offer parking rebates in the same manner as currently implemented in the Somerfield car park.
- High Street parking bays - permitted waiting time should become 30 minutes.
- North end of the High Street - parking bay on the corner facing The Cross - split bay with two 30-minute parking and one loading-only bay.
- Bay at 20/24 High Street – change to 30-minute parking.
- Bay at 26a/28 High Street - change to 30-minute parking.
- Bay in John Street should remain loading-only.
- Bay at 30/32 High Street - 30-minute parking.
- Bay at 54/54a - this should not be tied up all day for loading; some arrangement should be made that can be used for parking when not receiving deliveries.
- As almost everyone has access to the rear of their shops, there doesn't seem to be a loading issue in the middle of the High Street and these bays should remain unchanged (albeit 30 instead of 20 minutes waiting).

The Chairman stated that these changes should apply for Monday to Saturdays.

The Head of Policy, Partnerships & Performance acknowledged the Chairman's request and agreed to work with the appropriate officers to ensure that implementation commenced within the specified time period. However, she explained to the Committee that many of the changes would be subject to alterations to existing Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs), which would require a minimum of 28 days public consultation.

**RESOLVED:**

- (1) That the report of the Head of Policy, Partnerships & Performance be noted;
- (2) That it be noted that consideration of the use of entry/exit barrier car parking schemes had taken place across the District, and would continue to be reviewed as part of the overall service review for car parking provided by the Authority;

- (3) That the progress made to date in supporting the development of the town centre be noted;
- (4) That Council officers and the Town Centre Forum investigate further the potential parking refund scheme outlined at point 4.2 and report back to the Committee;
- (5) That Council officers continue further investigations into the ticket discount scheme outlined at point 4.7 and report their findings to the Committee on completion;
- (6) That work to implement the alterations to parking bays within the town centre as suggested by the Chairman be commenced immediately, to allow implementation as soon as possible;
- (7) That initiatives to develop the town centre should continue alongside any consideration of parking provision.

**REASONS FOR DECISIONS:**

- (1) To ensure Committee Members are kept informed of the issues regarding car parking in Royston.
- (2) To ensure Committee Members are kept informed of ongoing initiatives to promote the Royston town centre as a place to visit.

**121. POTHoles IN ROYSTON ROADS**

The Chairman agreed considered of an additional item of business which had been submitted by Councillor F.J. Smith. This item was considered to be urgent as there were potential health and safety risks should the problems raised not be addressed quickly.

Councillor Smith expressed his concern to the Committee about the condition of the roads in Royston and the number of potholes that there were. Councillor Smith stated that the roads were in the worst state that he could ever remember after a winter and that he believed it was *only* a matter of time before someone was seriously hurt as a result. He therefore **PROPOSED** that the Committee write to the Highways authority to apprise them of the situation and their serious concerns.

**RESOLVED:** That the Committee & Member Services Officer be requested to write to Hertfordshire Highways on behalf of the Committee expressing their serious concerns and dissatisfaction with regard to the current condition of the roads in Royston.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To apprise the appropriate authority of the situation facilitate rectification of current problems with road surfacing in Royston to prevent accidents in the town.

**122. BUS SERVICES TO CAMBRIDGE**

The Chairman agreed consideration of a further additional item of business which had been submitted by Councillor F.J. Smith. This item was considered to be urgent as the changes to which it related would come into effect from 1 April 2006.

Councillor Smith informed the Committee that, under the new free bus travel scheme for people over the age of 60 years that was coming into place from April 2006, free travel passes would only be valid for "local" services, as defined by the Council. In Royston, bus services within the town and to most villages would be included in the scheme but the service to Cambridge would not be. As this was a very popular and well-used service, Councillor Smith **PROPOSED** that the Committee request that officers make appropriate arrangements to ensure that the bus service between Royston and Cambridge was included in those that qualified for free travel for people over the age of 60 years with a valid bus pass.

**RESOLVED:** That the Council's Transport Policy Officer be requested to make appropriate adjustments to the definition of "local services" for the free bus travel scheme for people over the age of 60 years to include the bus service between Royston and Cambridge.

**REASON FOR DECISION:** To ensure that residents in the Royston could continue to benefit from concessionary and free bus travel schemes when using local bus services.

The meeting closed at 11.05 p.m.

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Chairman