



# Hitchin Town Hall/North Hertfordshire Museum Project Board

Minutes of Project Board Meeting held at North Herts District Council Offices

**20 December 2010**

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Present: Councillor Tricia Cowley, Councillor Paul Clark, John Robinson, Lynn Saville, Ros Allwood, Neal Charlton, Morag Norgan, David Leal-Bennett

Apologies: Councillors Knighton, Hone, Grindal

Circulation: Those present, Councillors Hone and Grindal, Lois Stewart

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## **1. Welcome & Introduction**

JR welcomed everyone to the meeting and advised that apologies of absence were received from Councillors Hone and Grindal. JR advised that Councillor Knighton had requested that although he is a member of this Board, no papers are circulated to him until the Trust had formally considered and decided on the Hitchin Town Hall proposal.

In addition, JR introduced Morag Norgan from Hitchin Initiative to the Board who would act as a senior supplier and David Leal-Bennett who would act as Hitchin Initiative's technical advisor.

## **2. Minutes of the Last Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting were noted and agreed.

## **3. Council Decision on Hitchin Town Hall/North Hertfordshire Museum**

The Board noted Council's decision on 11<sup>th</sup> November 2010 as:

### **RESOLVED:**

- (1) That officers be instructed to take forward the scheme outlined by Hitchin Initiative and proceed to negotiate the necessary arrangements and consents to use Hitchin Town Hall as the North Hertfordshire District Museum and as a community venue;
- (2) That officers, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Community Engagement and Rural Affairs, be instructed to report to the Hitchin Gymnasium and Workmans Hall Trust and seek its agreement to proceed on this basis.

The revised PID 3 (Project Initiation Document) was agreed, although it was noted that this will change as the scheme develops.

In addition the Board were advised that the Hitchin Town Hall Trust were scheduled to meet on 10<sup>th</sup> January 2011 to make a decision in principle subject to registration of the land and registration with the Charity Commission. To assist with this work, work was currently underway to conduct a 'public benefit test' which in turn would be presented to the Charity Commission. Once this had been submitted, the Trust were scheduled to meet on 3<sup>rd</sup> February 2011 to take a formal decision.

There was some discussion as to whether formal registration with the Charity Commission was required and JR confirmed that this was the course of action that had been decided by the Trust but that this was outside the scope of this project although was, clearly, central to the delivery of the project. MB advised that the Community Builders Project would require certain criteria/terms to be met before any decision in principle could be made in terms of the awarding of the grant on 18<sup>th</sup> January 2011. To assist with this, it was agreed MN requested that:

- A chronology and work plan be developed in terms of Hitchin Town Hall Trust and:  
Action: JR/LS to develop this and report as part of the overall project plan
- Approval for the disposal of the property be in place before 31<sup>st</sup> March 2011.

DLB requested sight of the legal advice provided in relation to the Charity Commission and it was agreed that a link be sent to him.

Action: SN to forward link

In order to be clear about Community Builders requirements, it was agreed that MN would forward a copy of the latest correspondence with the Community Builders and forward a copy of the grant application to NHDC as soon as possible. In addition, JR requested that the Community Builders confirm in writing, their timeframe for information in relation to this project.

Action: MN

MN noted that NHDC and Hitchin Initiative may need to consider alternative options if the Initiative's grant/loan application was not agreed.

Action: Note

#### **4. Current Project Issues**

- **Update on Short Term Project Plan**

The project plan for the design phase was reviewed and NC advised that he was aiming to get the Stage 3 design proposals despatched by 24<sup>th</sup> December 2010. It was noted that these could be formally signed by JR as Project Executive under delegated authority in consultation with Councillor Cowley and Portfolio Holder. Work would then commence on Stage D of the design process.

It was agreed that the plan be further developed to include key dates relating to Hitchin Town Hall Trust decisions i.e:

- Meeting of the Trust to take decision in principle
- Charity Commission registration
- Land registration
- Meeting of the Trust to take a formal decision

Action: SN to update plan

It was also noted that MN provide key dates in relation to the Community Builders timeline.

Action: MN

The Board noted that management agreements including operational considerations would need to be considered in general terms as a precursor to tasking the Operations/Management Project Team. JR and MN agreed to initiate this before the new year.

Action: SN to arrange meeting

- **Sketch Plans**

The plans were reviewed and noted that plans had been amended since the last Design Team. It was noted that a further iteration of these plans was now with NHDC and that further, minor, design changes would be authorised by the Project Executive. Copies of the current versions are attached to these minutes for information.

## **5. Date of the Next Meeting**

It was agreed that a meeting be arranged w/c 7<sup>th</sup> February 2011

Action: SN

John Robinson  
**Strategic Director Customer Services**

20<sup>th</sup> December 2010