

MINUTES

CABINET

29 MAY 2012

Present:

Members:

Councillors:

Terry Douris	Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration
Margaret Griffiths	Portfolio Holder for Housing
Julie Laws	Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Sustainability
Nick Tiley	Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources
Andrew Williams (Chairman)	Leader of the Council

Officers:

Daniel Zammit	Chief Executive
Mark Gaynor	Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration)
Sally Marshall	Corporate Director (Finance and Governance)
Louise Miller	Corporate Director (Performance, Improvement and Transformation)
Steven Baker	Assistant Director (Legal Democratic and Regulatory)
Elliott Brooks	Assistant Director (Housing Landlord)
James Doe	Assistant Director (Planning, Development and Regeneration)
Janice Milsom	Assistant Director (Strategy & Transformation) (Community & Organisation)
Mark Brookes	Group Manager (Legal Governance)
James Deane	Group Manager (Financial Services)
Lisa Devayya	Learning and Skills Officer, Strategic Planning and Regeneration
Pat Duff	Member Support Officer
Katie Warner	Customer Insight Officer

The meeting began at 7.31 pm.

CA/047/12 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 April 2012 were agreed by the members present and signed by the Chairman.

CA/048/12 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

An apology for absence was received on behalf of Councillor Harden.

CA/049/12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CA/050/12 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation

CA/051/12 REFERRALS TO CABINET

There were no referrals to Cabinet.

CA/052/12 CABINET FOUR MONTH WORK PROGRAMME

Decision

That the Cabinet Four Month Work Programme be noted, subject to the following amendment:

26 June 2012

Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Master Plan – report to be moved to the 24 July meeting.

CA/053/12 APPRENTICESHIPS SCHEME FRAMEWORK

Decision

1. That the establishment of an Apprenticeships Scheme at the Council (to be called 'Dacorum Apprentices') and the Apprenticeships Framework, including recruitment from the National Graduate Development Programme be approved.
2. **That Council be recommended to approve a supplementary estimate of a maximum of £331,140 to fund the apprenticeships scheme, to be drawn from the Management of Change Reserve.**

Reason for Decision

To enable an Apprenticeships Scheme Framework to be established at the Council to support and enable the employment of local young people and contribute to the economic regeneration of Dacorum.

Implications

Financial

The cost of establishing the Apprenticeships Scheme is £331,140 if 14 month appointments are made and £303,140 if 12 month appointments are made. The higher level of funding will enable the Council to establish 10 apprentice posts for 14 months and 2 National Graduate Development Programme (NGDP) posts for 2 years. It is proposed that 1 of the NGDP posts could be funded from the HRA which would reduce the level of General Fund revenue reserves required.

A further £50,000 funding is already in the budget for the apprentices being employed through the Employment and Skills Partnership Young People's Employability Fund (point 3.4 of the report)

Value for Money

The posts will be made on nationally recognised paycales and by making these opportunities available working with partner organisations, we will be supporting the

delivery of economic well-being in the local community. The appointment of apprentice posts also supports the delivery of the Council's Workforce Plan.

Risk Implications

A Risk Assessment was completed on 2 May 2012.

Corporate Objectives

Building Community Capacity:

Facilitating pre employment programmes to ensure a steady stream of job ready candidates for new businesses moving to Dacorum and for existing businesses are elements of the Economic Development Strategy.

Advice

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report. The aim was to provide apprenticeships to help young people back into work. The Portfolio Holder was pleased the Council was taking this action and fully supported it.

The Assistant Director (Strategy and Transformation, Community and Organisation) said it had long been the ambition of the Council to establish an Apprenticeship Scheme and this had been developed with Group Managers to offer young people a proper employment experience. The services were ready to receive these people and had roles for them.

After the first year, the Council would look at services to appoint apprentices as vacancies arose.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration asked if consideration could be given within the scheme to offer places to children looked after by County (young people who came from difficult backgrounds). To give them consideration would be a great benefit to them.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Sustainability asked why the apprenticeships were for 14 months rather than 12 months.

The Learning and Skills Officer advised that the 14 month placements were for level 3 apprenticeships, equivalent to A levels. It was probable that most would be level 2 business administration apprenticeships.

Options and Why Options Rejected

No alternative options were considered.

Consultation

Consultation took place with:

Cllr Neil Harden - Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services
Cllr Nick Tiley – Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources
Corporate Management Team
Group Managers.

Voting

None.

CA/054/12 GROWING PLACES FUND

Decision

1. That the Growing Places Fund offer conditions for Spencer's Park as set out by the Hertfordshire LEP be agreed.
2. That a resubmission to the Hertfordshire LEP within the next 6 months for a further £2,000,000 of funding for development on the Maylands Gateway be agreed.
3. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director (Finance and Governance) to agree the terms of, and enter into, the loan agreement with Hertfordshire County Council as the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership's accountable body, necessary to secure the funding.
4. That authority be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration and Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources to accept any further offers of infrastructure funding from the Growing Places Fund provided the conditions remain the same.
5. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration), in consultation with the Corporate Director (Finance and Governance) in respect of any necessary agreements with the Homes and Communities Agency to give effect to, or in consequence of, recommendations 1 and 2.

Reason for Decision

To agree the terms of the Growing Places Fund offer from the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership.

Implications

Financial

No direct funds from the Council's General Fund or Capital Programme are required, as the funding offer comes direct from Hertfordshire LEP by way of a loan. Issues around repayment and management of the funds are contained in the section 151 Officer's comments.

Value for Money

The funding will help drive developments in Maylands creating a catalyst for further future development, without directly impacting on resources held by the Council.

Risk Implications

Preliminary risk assessment completed on 10/05/12 There is a low risk that the investment of the GPF funding in the sites will not realise receipts sufficient to repay Herts LEP. A full risk assessment will be completed upon acceptance of the offer conditions.

Corporate Objectives

The project will help deliver against the corporate objectives of: “Regeneration” & “Dacorum Delivers”.

It will help to drive housing and business growth in Maylands by reducing the risks on developers and help these sites come to the market and be delivered sooner.

Advice

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and said financial details were covered in the recommendations.

The Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration said this offered the Council the opportunity to kick start key investment in Maylands and give quicker delivery of new homes and jobs in that area. This was a modest loan and would help to acquire a lot of private sector investment.

Options and Why Options Rejected

No alternative options were considered.

Consultation

Consultation took place with:

The Homes and Communities Agency
The Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
Hertfordshire County Council
The Assistant Director (Planning, Development and Regeneration).

Voting

None.

CA/055/12 MEMORANDUM OF UNDERSTANDING FOR INFORMATION COMMUNICATION TECHNOLOGY PARTNERSHIP

Decision

1. That the Memorandum of Understanding with Aylesbury Vale District Council (AVDC) be endorsed.
2. That the signing of the Memorandum of Understanding (MofU) be delegated to the Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services, in conjunction with the Corporate Director (Performance, Information and Transformation), to coincide with the signing at AVDC
3. That the improvements made in the ICT service since December 2011 be noted and the procurement of interim day to day ICT management up until the end of December 2012 with the potential extension for a further three months be agreed.
4. That the proposal to review the structure of the current DBC ICT service to ensure the continued delivery of improvements in the Service be noted.

Reason for Decision

To enable progress towards a more formal partnership with Aylesbury Vale District Council for the Information Communication Technology service.

Implications

Financial

None.

Value for Money

None.

Risk Implications

The Risk Assessment was reviewed on 1st February 2012.

Corporate Objectives

Dacorum Delivers:

This is part of the Shared and Out Sourced Services project which will transform service provision offering greater efficiencies. In addition, issues arising over the past year have highlighted weaknesses within the current ICT provision which need to be addressed to enable business continuity and delivery of wider corporate objectives such as the Public Service Quarter project.

Advice

The Corporate Director (Performance, Improvement and Transformation) introduced the report and said it was not a legally binding document but set out the framework with Aylesbury Vale District Council. Members' attention was drawn to page 15 of appendix 1 of the report detailing the ICT Partnership Board. This Board would consist of both officers and members of Aylesbury Vale District Council and Dacorum Borough Council (the Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services and another member plus officers representing the service and the Group Manager of that service).

The Leader of the Council said it was a welcome development of work that the Council had done with Aylesbury Vale District Council.

Options and Why Options Rejected

No alternative options were considered.

Consultation

Consultation took place with:

The Performance Board

John McGinty, Corporate Director Aylesbury Vale District Council

Alan Evans, Head of ICT Aylesbury Vale District Council

Clive Bell, Legal Services Dacorum Borough Council

Voting

None.

CA/056/12 PERFORMANCE AND BUDGET MONITORING QUARTERLY REPORT QUARTER 4 – 2011/12

Decision

1. That the quarter 4 report on targets and performance and progress towards the achievement of the Council's Priorities and Vision be noted.
2. That the financial performance for quarter 4 in respect of key financial performance indicators be noted.

Reason for Decision

To enable the various types of performance, including financial performance, and monitoring information collected to be reported.

Implications

Financial

Key financial performance indicators are included in Part A of the report - Fin 01 to Fin 04. A summary of the Council's financial position for quarter 4, 2011/12 (yearly outturn) is included as a separate item on the agenda.

Value for Money

In order to achieve 'value for money', services must demonstrate economy, efficiency and effectiveness. Performance information enables Members to review how effectively services are performing.

Risk Implications

Failure to meet corporate objectives and performance targets would have an adverse effect on the Council's performance management objectives and the Council's reputation.

Corporate Objectives

Effective service and financial performance supports all five of the Council's Strategic Objectives

Advice

The Portfolio Holder for Housing asked why electric vehicles were not mentioned in the car mileage figures.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Sustainability advised that the Council had not had electric cars for two years. An officer had responded to that question by email.

The Leader of the Council asked if there had been a change of reporting as there were a lot of uncompleted comments.

The Assistant Director (Strategy and Transformation, Community and Organisation) said that this time it had been hoped to have a Q4 performance report and an end of year performance report. All officers updated the Q4 report but some thought the end of year report was the same thing. All the performance information had been reviewed.

Options and Why Options Rejected

No alternative options were considered.

Consultation

Consultation took place with:

The Portfolio Holder for Service and Performance Improvement,
The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources,
The Chief Executive, Directors, Assistant Directors and Group Managers.

Voting

None.

CA/057/12 PROVISIONAL REVENUE AND CAPITAL OUTTURN 2011/12

Decision

1. That the provisional outturn position for the General Fund, the Housing revenue Account and the Capital Programme be noted.
2. That the proposed transfers to and from earmarked reserves be included in the final outturn statements.

Reason for Decision

To enable details of the provisional outturn position to be noted and to transfer to and from earmarked reserves.

Implications

Financial implications were included within the body of the report.

Risk Implications

Risk implications were included within the body of the report.

Corporate Objectives

Corporate Governance.

Advice

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report and drew attention to page 3, paragraph 3.4 – a contribution to Working Balance over the year of £948k. This comprised some under spend, some savings and some cases of income over budget. This meant the Council was managing its resources well and was being

careful in spending the tax payers' money. If Council services were being cut whilst producing under spend that would be a concern but the Council was not cutting services and was still investing modestly. It was a good outturn for the Council and on behalf of the tax payer and would help protect the Council against the problems to be faced in the next 2 – 3 years. The whole team had done a first class job on behalf of the tax payer.

The Corporate Director (Finance and Governance) said there was controllable and non-controllable expenditure. Non-controllable expenditure did not impact on the tax payer (paragraph 3.8 of the report).

In the Medium Term Financial Statement and the budget report that went to Council, it was agreed to have a target working balance. Whilst there was a net under spend, there was an opportunity to make contributions to ear marked reserves.

The key areas of under spend were income generation and other areas such as supplies and services. There was a need to focus on these and trend analysis was being undertaken to reduce these under spend situations and protect the Council from making too many up front savings. Group Managers were currently responsible for their budgets.

Paragraph 6 of the report, balances and reserves, detailed the reserves to mitigate liabilities to enable the Council to move forward with regeneration proposals that would have up front costs over the next 3 years.

Paragraph 6.4 of the report recommended a contribution to the Public Service Quarter Transition Reserve of £1m which was half the amount anticipated would be required over the next 3 years.

There would be continued financial pressures on the Council. There was a new Local Government financing mechanism from next April and this would help the Council. The recommendation to contribute to reserves was a strategy for the future that would enable the Council to continue with its plans.

Regarding the Capital Programme – there would be a report in June asking for re-profiling of the Capital Programme. It was an issue each year that the Council was not delivering the spend on the programme and this needed to be profiled. The spend needed to be put in the appropriate year. Balances set aside waiting to be spent were necessarily invested in the best way. Work was being done with Group managers to take a critical view of the outturn. The report to Cabinet in June would give proposals for a lot of re-phasing.

The Housing Revenue Account had been spent in line with the budget and the same thing needed to be done with the General Fund.

The Leader of the Council said it was a very good report based on good financial management across the year with savings made. There were some difficult situations coming for the Council and this kept us moving in the right direction. It was a good outturn.

Options and Why Options Rejected

No alternative options were considered.

Consultation

Consultation took place with budget managers.

Voting

None.

CA/058/12 REINVIGORATING RIGHT TO BUY: RETENTION OF RECEIPTS FOR REPLACEMENT HOUSING

Decision

That the principle of a formal agreement with the Department of Communities and Local Government for the retention of Right to Buy receipts (as set out in the report) be approved and that authority be delegated to the Corporate Director (Finance and Governance) to sign the agreement.

Reason for Decision

To enable the Council to retain additional receipts arising from Right to Buy in order to support the Council's replacement programme.

Implications

Financial

These are contained within the body of the report.

Value for Money

The resources would be additional and advantageous to the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

Risk Implications

These are dealt with in the report.

Corporate Objectives

Affordable housing.

Advice

The Portfolio Holder for Housing introduced the report.

The Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration) advised that the Government announced, alongside the increase of the maximum discount cap to £75k, there would be the ability for one to one replacement. It was a pledge that for every one sole there would be another social home provided. The scheme had been written up by the Department for Communities and Local Government and the Treasury and was very complicated. It was still unknown what the increase in sales was likely to be. There had been an increase in interest but this had not yet turned into any sales. The additional funding available would only apply to sales over and above what was taken into account in the Self Financing Agreement (15 per year).

The Treasury would get its share before anyone else other than the guaranteed return of £36k per property of the debt that self financing and the 25% that went to the Council anyway.

There should be very little risk to the Council who would decide the number of properties it would provide and may be able to add to the build programme. It would allow the Council to have a genuine one to one replacement scheme and should ensure that it was effectively self funded through the Housing Revenue Account.

Right to Buy sales would need to be closely monitored. Land assembly would have to be looked at to build new homes. The risks were set out in the report and promises could not be made as there was currently too much uncertainty but it was a reasonably good deal for one to one replacement.

The Portfolio Holder for Housing said this was a win win situation for the Council provided all the other criteria were met and would bring money back into the borough to build new homes.

The Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Sustainability asked why it was thought there would be more sales of Council property.

The Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration) said there was a previous discount cap of £34m which had now increased to £75k. A lot of interest was expected initially which could turn into sales.

The Leader of the Council said if the Council received its self financing of £35k back and split the remaining balance, the actual cash sum received for the house would be lower. The Leader of the Council asked, if the Department for Communities and Local Government still wanted 75%, where the additional funding came from.

The Assistant Director (Planning, Development and Regeneration) said this was a big unknown. The level of assumed income was based on the old legislation, 75/25% split. The assumed income level was what would have been achieved with the previous discount cap. The Council would have to sell 25 – 30 homes to unlock additional funds.

Options and Why Options Rejected

No alternative options were considered.

Consultation

Consultation took place with the Chartered Institute of Housing.

Voting

None.

CA/059/12 DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT BUSINESS PLAN

Decision

That the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan be noted and approved.

Reason for Decision

It is a requirement under 'Self Financing' for authorities to publish a Housing Revenue Account Business Plan.

Implications

Financial

The Financial Implications of the Housing Revenue Account Business Plan have been considered in the 2012/13 Budget Papers 7TH February 2012 Cabinet & the Self Financing Report 27th March 2012 Cabinet.

Value for Money

Close monitoring on a monthly and quarterly basis of the Business Plan by both Finance & Housing Officers and a formal annual review will ensure value for money is derived from the Council's HRA Business Plan.

Risk Implications

Appendix C of the HRA Business Plan covers specific identified risks. The Housing Landlord Service Risk Register is reviewed quarterly.

Corporate Objectives

Affordable Housing
Dacorum Delivers
Regeneration.

Advice

The Portfolio Holder for Housing introduced the report and said the Business Plan would be updated constantly.

The Assistant Director (Housing Landlord) said this was a combination of a variety of reports that had gone to Cabinet. This piece of work had involved Housing and Finance for self financing. This would be reviewed regularly on a quarterly basis and updated formally on an annual basis. There had been a lot of support and assistance from a Tenant Group in getting to this stage.

The Portfolio for Housing thanked everyone involved with the project, including staff and tenants.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources said this was a well worked out document. A lot of effort had gone into it from Housing, supported by Finance. It was a good plan for the future of housing and keeping it under review would enable the Council to have an exciting future in Council owned property in Dacorum. It was a major step in a good direction.

Options and Why Options Rejected

No alternative options were considered.

Consultation

Consultation took place with:

Dacorum Tenants & Leaseholders
The Dacorum Borough Council Tenants & Leaseholder Committee
The Dacorum Borough Council Maintenance Focus Group
The Chartered Institute of Housing
The Dacorum Borough Council Housing & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee

Voting

None.

CA/060/12 CAPITAL STRATEGY STEERING GROUP REPORT REQUEST FOR CAPITAL APPROVAL

Decision

That Council be recommended to approve the amendment of the Capital Programme to include the following scheme:

Vehicle Exhaust Extractor Equipment for vehicle hanger at Cupid Green Depot (from capital receipts)	£15,000
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Reason for Decision

To approve capital provisions within the Capital Programme 2011/12-2016/17 and amendments to the Capital Programme approved by Council on 29 February 2012.

Implications

The proposal is in line with the approved budgets, financial regulations and financial projections.

Risk Implications

There were no risk implications.

Corporate Objectives

Capital investment is important to the achievement of the Council's objectives.

Advice

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report

Options and Why Options Rejected

No alternative options were considered.

Consultation

Consultation took place with the Capital Strategy Steering Group.

Voting

None.

The meeting ended at 8.05pm.