
DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

EXTRAORDINARY MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

22 MAY 2012

Present -

MEMBERS:

Councillor G Chapman (Mayor); Councillors, Adeleke, Adshead, Anderson, Ayling, Mrs Bassadone, H Chapman, Clark, Collins, Douris, Elliot, Fantham, Flint, Mrs Green, Griffiths, Mrs Guest, Harden, Harris, Hearn, Laws, Lawson, Link, Mahmood, Marshall, McKay, McLean, Peter, Mrs Rance, Reay, Ryan, Sutton, Taylor, Tiley, Townsend, White, Whitman, Williams, Wood, (38).

OFFICERS:

The Chief Executive, The Corporate Director (Finance & Governance), the Corporate Director (Housing & Regeneration), the Corporate Director (Performance, Improvement and Transformation), the Assistant Director (Legal Democratic & Regulatory), The Group Manager (Democratic Services), L Smith, M Anderson, P Duff.

The meeting began at 7.30pm.

11. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Bateman, Bhinder, Conway, Doole, N Hollinghurst, R Hollinghurst, Lloyd, MacDonald, Organ, Wixted, C Wyatt-Lowe and W Wyatt-Lowe.

12. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no Declarations of Interest.

13. CABINET REFERRALS

The referrals from Cabinet on 24 April 2012 were submitted. It was moved by Councillor Williams, duly seconded and

Resolved:

That the following be approved:

1 SUBMISSION OF CORE STRATEGY (CA/039/12)

- (a) no significant changes are made to the Pre-Submission Core Strategy as a result of representations received; and
- (b) the Submission documents are submitted to the Planning Inspectorate.

Councillor Reay said he was not happy with the decision but understood it was a compromise the Council was forced to make. The Council was under pressure to supply houses as there was a need but there was a shortage of infrastructure and pressure on the landscape. Councillor Reay was pleased that the submission draft had not accepted any amendments by the Berkhamsted Concept, although there were some minor changes. It was difficult to trace these back to the consultation responses and they may have been stimulated by the National Planning Policy Framework which was designed to stimulate economic regeneration.

Councillor Reay believed the aspiration of the plan to build so many homes per year was optimistic. Councillor Reay was prepared, as a compromise, to support this policy with a heavy heart.

Councillor Guest said she had been trying to save the green belt in Hemel Hempstead since 1996 and now the Government was imposing difficult housing targets on the Council.

Councillor Laws arrived at 7.32 pm.

If the Council did not set a high enough level of house building, there was a risk its Core Strategy could be found unsound and this would cost the tax payers a lot of money. An up to date Core Strategy put the Council in a stronger position to fight developers. As windfall sites could now be included, this would mean that green belt land would be put further down the list of land to be used. Councillor Guest would be supporting the motion as the best option to safeguard the green belt.

Councillor White said the Conservatives were reluctantly agreeing to the plans to build a small number of houses. There was an increasing and significant pressure for affordable houses across the borough but the Council was looking at things from a Berkhamsted perspective. There were references in the report about talking to St Albans and one of the most significant pressures on infrastructure in Hemel Hempstead was coming from St Albans wanting to build a large number of properties on the border of Hemel Hempstead putting pressure on the town's infrastructure.

The Council should be looking at how to develop homes that met the needs of the residents of the borough and the people who were going to come and live and work in the borough. 430 properties per year would not meet the level of housing need in the borough and the Council should be concerned about this. The villages were happy to see cramped infill in Hemel Hempstead and the Council had permitted 30 extra units in Adeyfield. If this happened in one of the villages the residents would be up in arms. Extra infrastructure and solutions to the parking problems was needed. The Council needed to think about the impact of these proposals on Hemel Hempstead and about Neighbourhood Plans right across Hemel Hempstead.

Councillor Anderson said the Council was taking a balanced approach to the future of the borough in providing housing and protecting the environment where residents worked and lived.

Councillor Williams said there had been arguments over the Core Strategy over many years regarding the development of potential green belt. This was not without controversies. The Council had to strike a balance between the level of housing need and the protection of the green belt and the Core Strategy did that. It delivered 90% of the Office of National Statistics housing needs which was a more significant amount than neighbouring authorities were delivering. There was an issue about the level of housing proposed in St Albans. If there was a significant build on Dacorum's

boundary, there would be a need for infrastructure but this had not been decided on yet.

The Core Strategy delivered on the Council's key priorities and on housing and growth in the borough. The Conservative administration had delivered more affordable housing than Labour did some years ago and would continue to do so. The Council was aware of the need to deliver affordable housing for residents and Councillor Williams said he was proud of its achievements. It was the case that affordable housing had developed at a significant rate recently. The housing numbers proposed in the green belt were minor and there was a balance between the villages and Hemel Hempstead. The Council had to deliver housing where people wanted to live. Hemel Hempstead was the largest town and took the biggest proportion of the housing. The houses built in Adeyfield fitted in well with the area and the housing proposed for the brown field sites made a better use of the land.

Councillor Williams was happy to support the recommendation. It was a robust plan that sought to strike a balance of a suitable number of housing and protect the green space as best as possible.

2 HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION – PHASE 1 PROPOSALS AND NEW PUBLIC SERVICE QUARTER (CA/046/12)

This referral was considered under Minute 15 (Part 2).

14. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved:

That, under s.100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A Part 1, Paragraph 12 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during the items in Part II of the Agenda for the meeting, because it was likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the public were present during those items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Council and third party company/organisation (Minute 15).

15. CABINET REFERRAL – PART 2

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN CENTRE REGENERATION – PHASE 1 PROPOSALS AND NEW PUBLIC SERVICE QUARTER (CA/046/12)

Full details are in the Part II minutes.

The meeting ended at 8.05 pm.