

## SUMMONS

### MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 17 APRIL 2013

### COUNCIL CHAMBER, DACORUM CIVIC CENTRE, HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

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You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the Dacorum Borough Council in the County of Hertfordshire to be held in the Council Chamber, Dacorum Civic Centre, Hemel Hempstead on Wednesday, 17 April 2013 at 7.30 pm to transact the business set out below.

#### PART I

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**DANIEL ZAMMIT**  
**CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

**Contact: Jim Doyle ext 2222**  
**Pauline Bowles ext 2221**

## **AGENDA**

### **1. MINUTES**

To confirm the minutes of the meeting of the Council on 27 February 2013 (Appendix A Pages 9-25).

### **2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest.

### **3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

To consider questions (if any) by members of the public of which the appropriate notice has been given to the Assistant Director (Legal, Democratic & Regulatory).

### **4. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

To receive announcements and business brought forward by the Mayor, Leader, and Members of the Cabinet or the Chief Executive.

4.1 By the Mayor:

4.2 By the Chief Executive:

4.3 By the Group Leaders: Any apologies for absence

4.4 Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:

Councillor Williams	Leader & Community Leadership
Councillor Harden	Residents & Regulatory Services
Councillor Mrs Laws	Environmental Services & Sustainability
Councillor Tiley	Finance & Resources
Councillor Douris	Planning & Regeneration
Councillor Mrs Griffiths	Housing

### **5. QUESTIONS**

To consider questions (if any) by members of the Council of which the appropriate notice has been given to the Assistant Director (Legal, Democratic & Regulatory)

### **6. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING**

To consider any business referred from the previous meeting.

### **7. CABINET REFERRALS**

To consider the following referrals from Cabinet:

<b>Minute No.</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Title</b>	<b>Yellow Pages</b>
7.1 CA/039/13	26 March 2013	Authorisation of Virement	26
7.2 CA/044/13	26 March 2013	Housing Allocations Policy	27
7.3 CA/047/13	26 March 2013	Top Tier Review	29
7.4 CA/048/13	26 March 2013	Pension Policy	31

## 8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

None

## 9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES REVIEW 2012/13

The Constitution requires that the Overview & Scrutiny Group make an Annual Report to the Council on the work of their committees.

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### **STRATEGIC PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW 2012/13**

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The committee held nine meetings during the year, and considered the following matters.

#### **June 2012**

Quarterly Performance Report - 2011/12 Q4

Financial Outturn Report - 2011/12 (Provisional)

Clean, Safe & Green Annual Review 2011/12

Waste Services Annual Review 2011/12

Community Infrastructure Levy (the new system for managing developer contributions)

Affordable Housing SPD (the council's planning policy for delivering affordable housing)

#### **July**

Allotments Review (piloting association management & improving the council's management)

Localism Act - Planning System Implications

#### **September**

Local Food Strategy Review

Quarterly Performance Report - 2012/13 Q1

Financial Outturn Report - 2012/13 Q1

Building Control Service Provision (an update)

#### **October**

Trees Service Review

Environmental Management System (improving the council's environmental sustainability)

Maylands Gateway (economic development at the key, southern gateway)

#### **November**

Financial Outturn Report - 2012/13 Q2

Community Infrastructure Levy - Provisional Draft Charging Schedule

Quarterly Performance Report - 2012/13 Q2

Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan (final report)

#### **January 2013**

Budget 2013/14 (scrutiny of various provisions in the budget)

#### **January**

Financial Outturn Report - 2012/13 Q3

Quarterly Performance Report - 2012/13 Q3

Dacorum Development Programme (an update)  
Annual Monitoring Report (Development Outturn) & Infrastructure Delivery Plan (an update)

**February**

Budget 2013/14 (more scrutiny of provisions included in the budget)

**March**

Public Participation (receipt of petition re Jocketts Field Play Area)  
Waste Strategy - Task & Finish Group Findings  
Parking Service - Improving Customer Service  
Proposed Expansion of London Luton Airport (the council's response)  
Section 106 Obligations (Developer Contributions) - Annual Review

If the Leader of the Opposition or anybody else requires any more detail, then the agenda reports and minutes of these matters/debates are freely available on the council's website.

I am pleased members have taken a more active role in scrutinising the council's services when the committee has considered the quarterly performance reports, and there has been more task & finish work this year, e.g. overseeing the drafting of community infrastructure levy charges.

I would like to thank the Vice-Chairman, the committee, and members of staff for their support. I would also like specifically to thank Michelle Anderson for taking the minutes of our meetings.

We haven't developed a full work programme for 2013-14 yet, but the committee oversees/scrutinises the following council duties/matters:

- Strategic Planning (Local Development Framework)
- Development Control - Performance Only
- Building Control
- Economic Development
- Refuse Collection/Recycling
- Streetcare (Litter/Street Cleansing/Landscaping/Grounds Maintenance)
- Parking Management (Offstreet Car Parks, Onstreet Enforcement, Parking Zones)
- Environmental Strategy (Climate Change Mitigation)

and if anybody would like to participate in our meetings, then they would be most welcome.

Councillor Alan Anderson,  
Chairman, Strategic Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee.

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## **FINANCE & RESOURCES OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REVIEW 2012-2013**

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During the Council Year 2012/13 the Finance & Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee met on eight occasions including two joint meetings with all Scrutiny Committees to discuss the 2013/14 Budget requirement.

As to be expected, with the wide variety of topics to discuss, we experienced several lengthy and in depth discussion ranging from:-

Performance Reports  
Revenue Outturn Reports  
Risk Management Updates  
Complaints Reports  
Hemel Hempstead Street Market "Draft Tender" Report  
Revenues and Benefits  
Sportspace  
Etc. etc.

I thank members of the Committee for their full involvement in the discussions that took place and for their, at times, very searching questions. I should also thank all the officers who attended for the thorough way in which members questions were answered either at the time or in writing. I am sure that no stone has been left unturned in the scrutiny of the Borough's finances during this Council year.

As well as thanking Councillors Nick Tiley (Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources) and Councillor Neil Harden (Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services) for their regular attendance and input, I would also like to thank all the Council officers who have attended and all from the Member Support team who compiled the agendas and took, at times, difficult minutes and turned them in to "Plain English"

Councillor Graham Sutton  
Chairman Finance & Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee

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## **HOUSING & COMMUNITY OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REPORT 2012/13**

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With the new housing regime of self-financing, the first meeting of the year considered the draft Housing Revenue Account Business Plan and the Council's Housing New Build Programme. Other housing matters put before the Committee were the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document, Housing Needs, review of the DBC's tenants working relationships with the Council, private sector leasing, the results of the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) together with the improvement plan to meet the concerns expressed by tenants and leaseholders, the planned maintenance programme for the housing stock, under-occupation of Council housing, the Housing Strategy for 2013-2018 and performance of housing service contractors, in particular, the gas servicing contract.

Having concerns about the drafting, the Committee considered the Strategic Tenancy Policy at both the December and February meetings and the draft Housing Allocations Policy in the December, February and March meetings.

The Committee has been concerned with the level of support for tenants in sheltered accommodation regarding safety, including the community alarm service. Throughout

the year, the Committee has been receiving reports on the community alarm response times of the Council's contractor and has been pleased to note that response times have improved considerably. The Committee is continuing to monitor the situation and awaits a report on the capacity of each sheltered housing scheme in this regard.

Indeed the whole of the Council's service to its tenants in sheltered housing is under review, in readiness for the changes to the Supporting People grant. Many committee members joined a working group of tenants and housing officers and a report on their proposals is expected in the near future.

Also expected within the next few months are reports on the Council's house building programme and an update on the STAR improvement plan.

Community matters considered by the Committee include housing energy (private and public housing), the Housing Assistance Policy for private sector housing and deprivation data for the Borough, a subject to which the Committee will return in a few months to consider what is and what could be the response of the Council to this data. Neighbourhood Action will also be considered.

The Chairman and Chief Executive of the Dacorum Sports Trust again gave a very interesting presentation in relation to their performance for the previous financial year. Undoubtedly the Borough's citizens are benefitting from the enthusiasm and vision of the Trust and mention must be made here of the success of the XC sports venue in Jarmans Park.

In March, the Team Manager and the Information Advice & Guidance Team Leader for Youth Connexions in this area gave a thought provoking presentation to the Committee. Undoubtedly the organisation does a great deal to support young people to enter into the worlds of further or higher education and employment and the Committee looks forward to gaining a greater understanding of the organisation's work.

As have the Strategic Planning & Environment Scrutiny Committee, the Committee has received regular reports on the Verge Hardening Project

The Committee welcomed the timely opportunities to scrutinise the 2013/14 budget in January and February 2013, despite the difficulties officers encountered in the lateness of the Government's grant announcements.

The Committee, together with the two co-opted members from the Tenants & Leaseholders Committee (Stuart Parker and Mavis Cook) very much appreciate the clear and unequivocal quarterly reports. The successes detailed in those reports are numerous and include a reduction in crime and ASB, improvement in the Old Town Hall audience numbers and success in providing an excellent food safety service.

The Committee trusts that its comments are noted by the Cabinet and assist in their deliberations.

Again, I would like to thank, on behalf of members, the officers who have assisted the Committee in its work. The officers' commitment is much appreciated.

Janice Marshall  
Chair  
Housing & Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee

15 March 2013

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## HEALTH IN DACORUM REVIEW 2012-2013

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During the Council Year 2012/13 the Health in Dacorum Committee met on four occasions and, in carrying out its function, continued to scrutinise the Health Service and associated services within the Dacorum area as well as neighbouring areas where shared services are to be considered.

Our representatives on the County Health Scrutiny Committee have kept us well informed on all health issues and how they may impact on our area. I thank those who have presented their reports to us in a very precise and “understandable” format.

Other items for discussion included – Hertfordshire Health & Wellbeing Strategy – GP Surgery Satisfaction Survey Report – Health and Social Care Commissioning and The Joint Strategic Needs Assessment. These issues have been discussed at length by the committee and I would like to compliment all members for their interest and “searching” questions. I would also like to thank all those who attended our meetings from the local health authorities etc. for their thorough and professional presentations.

New for this year has been the opportunity for Borough Councillors to raise issue that may be of particular concern to their wards. Several points have been raised and discussed.

I am sure that the coming year will see changes in the way this Committee functions, giving us increased opportunities to represent fully the interests of all residents of Dacorum.

I would like to take this opportunity to thank colleagues in the Health Service for their work with the committee and to thank co-opted members for their valuable contributions which have brought increased community representation on health scrutiny issues and an added dimension to the scrutiny process. Also, my thanks go to all Councillors on the Committee for their participation and to Jim Doyle and his team for inviting the right people to attend and, as usual for very accurate and professional minute taking.

Councillor Graham Sutton  
Chairman Joint Health Scrutiny

**10. CHANGES AND APPOINTMENTS TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

To consider any proposals for changes and appointments to membership to serve until the Annual Meeting of the Council on 15 May 2013. Any changes notified beforehand to Member Support will be tabled at the meeting.

	Current Membership		Revised Breakdown
Strategic Planning & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12		10: 2
Finance & Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12		10: 2
Housing & Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee	12		10: 2
Health in Dacorum	5	(Borough Members)	4: 1
Audit Committee	7		6: 1
Development Control Committee	12		10: 2
Appeals Committee	5		4: 1
Licensing & Health & Safety Enforcement Committee	12		10: 2
Appointments Committee	7		6: 1
Periodic Electoral Review Committee	7		6: 1
Not Politically Balanced:			
• Standards Committee **	5	(Borough Members)	3: 1: 1
• Member Development Steering Group	7		5: 1: 1
• Joint Negotiating Committee	7		6: 1: 0

**11. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

To consider passing a resolution in the following terms:

That, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the item in Part 2 of the Agenda for this meeting, because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to:



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**DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**27 FEBRUARY 2013**

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Present -

**MEMBERS:**

Councillor H Chapman (Mayor); Councillors Adeleke, Adshead, Ayling, Mrs Bassadone, Bateman, G Chapman, Clark, Collins, Doole, Douris, Elliot, Fantham, Flint, Mrs Green, Griffiths, Guest, Harden, Harris, Hearn, R Hollinghurst, Laws, Lawson, Link, Lloyd, Macdonald, Mahmood, Marshall, McKay, McLean, Peter, Mrs Rance, Reay, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Tiley, Townsend, Whitman, Williams, Wood, C Wyatt-Lowe and W Wyatt-Lowe (43).

**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), M Anderson, T Coston, L Collins.

The meeting began at 7.30pm.

**43. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 January 2013 were agreed by the Members present and were then signed by the Mayor.

**44. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no Declarations of Interest.

**45. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

Question from Miss Helman to Councillor Griffiths:

What is the council going to do about housing for the homeless?

Answer: We are all very aware that there is a chronic shortage of affordable housing at both a national and a local level, which is why this Council has made increasing the provision of new affordable homes a top priority. We are committed to improving the housing opportunities of local people, particularly those in the greatest housing need.

The Council are working to accelerate delivery of new housing and stimulate the housing market by working with Developers and Housing Associations with a focus on accelerating new affordable housing delivery where possible. An example of the work

the Council has been undertaking with Hightown Praetorian is found at the old Post Office site on Park lane, Hemel Hempstead where 84 new affordable homes are currently under construction. These properties will be available to applicants on the Council Housing register including homeless applicants.

The Council has also embarked on its own New Build Programme – phase 1 has been agreed to begin building 71 new Council homes which will be all completed by March 2015. The Council are committed to enabling around 1000 new affordable homes over the next four to five years by working with local housing associations.

The Council are also working on better use of the current housing stock within Dacorum and a new Housing Allocations Policy is currently out to consultation, which will be presented to Cabinet on the 26<sup>th</sup> March. The new policy aims to encourage applicants who are under occupying their current property to move to smaller accommodation to free up their larger family homes which can then be used to help applicants on the Housing register – including the homeless.

There has been a significant and steady rise of households seeking housing advice over the last 12 months. This has resulted in a significant increase of homelessness applications and therefore acceptances which has been largely due to the current economic climate and increased demand for private rented property. The Council raised the temporary accommodation budget last year from £80,000 to £160,000 to help ensure that families who are homeless are adequately housed until a permanent solution is found. The budget for 2013/14 remains at £160,000 and work is on-going to seek additional and suitable temporary accommodation. In October last year a property in Leys Road was returned to us by Hightown following the expiry of a long lease. The property has been updated and now has 8 rooms available for temporary accommodation. We are currently working with our estates team to refurbish general fund properties to also use for temporary accommodation and this work will continue this year to extend the temporary accommodation provision available within the Borough. We have now started work on the delivery of the plans to build a new 33 bed space hostel for single homeless adults on the Redbourn Road which is due for completion in March 2015.

The Council also continues to work on preventing households from becoming homeless, particularly with private landlords. The Council runs a very successful rent Deposit Guarantee Scheme with local landlords and work has recently begun to develop this service further, particularly to benefit homeless households where possible. The Council is also working with the Prison and Probation service to offer prisoners housing advice before they are released, and this will assist with the prevention of homelessness also.

Housing Advice surgeries are operating in local schools, community centres and with Turning Point on a regular basis – again this is to focus on the prevention of homelessness where possible.

It is not within the Councils remit or powers to eradicate homelessness; however we are demonstrating that our actions are meeting the problem head on.

## **46. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

### **1. By the Mayor**

The Mayor made no announcement.

## **2. By Chief Executive**

The Chief Executive confirmed that there would be a By-Election in the Adeyfield West ward on 21 March 2013.

## **3. By the Group Leaders and members:**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Anderson, Conway, Organ, Ryan and N Hollinghurst.

## **4. Members of the Cabinet:**

### **Councillor Williams, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership**

The Leader informed the Council that the purchase of the Court House was completed and DrugLink were to use it temporarily. 39 and 41 Marlowes purchase had also been completed and good progress discussions on other land were taking place.

### **Councillor Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services**

“Youth Democracy – A very successful film workshop was held at the Civic Centre. A leading local film producer spoke, with over 70 students from local secondary schools attending. The project was led by Neighbourhood Action team and supported by Housing and Democratic Services.

The first of 3 pilot projects called Brighter Futures was held at The Heights Hall in Highfield. The project aimed at parents who wanted to return to work and offered a confidence building and practical information programme with the opportunity to progress further to get ready to go back to work. The project was co-ordinated by Resident Services and was very successful and delivered in partnership with Job Centre Plus, West Herts College and part funded by Herts County Council. Two further courses to run before the end of March.

Latest Community Safety Figures:

All Crime Down 12% compared to same period in Previous Year (April – January)

ASB Down 26% compared to same period in previous year (April- January)

The ASB Team along with 261 students from 4 local secondary schools, Cavendish, Longdean, Dacorum Educational Support Centre, and Kings Langley visited the Ben Kinsella anti knife crime exhibition in London thanks to the Billy Dove Memorial fund and money raised by his family and friends.

HCC Youth Connexions are now running projects from the Adventure Playgrounds (Adeyfield, Chaulden and Grovehill) following the success of DBC’s own youth twilight sessions – this doubles the amount of activities available to young people in Hemel Hempstead.

Environmental Health:

Following the success of our partnership as the primary authority for Tesco, I can now confirm we have also become the primary authority for Empire Cinema chain. There is one more national retailer that we hope to secure and if successful I will announce the name at April’s Full Council meeting.”

Councillor Griffiths arrived at 7.37pm.

Councillor Wood explained that the Adventure Playgrounds were very beneficial for the community in Adeyfield and asked the Portfolio Holder if there were any plans to close any of them in the future.

Councillor Harden confirmed there have never been any plans to close the adventure playgrounds and guaranteed that this would continue whilst he was Portfolio Holder. He mentioned that they were improving facilities and services provided. He confirmed the council will continue to promote their usage to the wider community.

Councillor Adeleke asked if there were any plans to open more adventure playgrounds.

Councillor Harden said there were currently no plans.

Councillor Adshead thanked the Portfolio Holder for attending the Dacorum Town Twinning Committee meeting recently.

Councillor Harden replied that it was an enjoyable evening. He was pleased to see so many councillors and residents involved and wished them well with the work they were doing.

Councillor Flint was pleased that there were no plans to close any of the adventure playgrounds. She mentioned the consortium which the community centres and HCC were involved in and noted that those not in the consortium were better off financially. She asked if the option of opting out of the consortium could be looked into.

Councillor Harden noted this would be looked at.

Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe asked if there were any costs involved with the town twinning work.

Councillor Harden replied that there were no costs to the council for this. He said this was giving the community the opportunity to take part and he hoped to see schools and businesses get involved.

## **Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing**

### **Tenant & Leaseholder Services**

#### **Changes to Welfare Benefits**

The team are working to prepare for the introduction of the Social Sector Size Criteria. Approximately 900 households living in Council owned accommodation will have their housing benefit reduced as a result of the changes introduced as part of the Welfare Reform Act 2012.

Each one of the 900 households will be contacted by the Housing Income Team to discuss how we can assist them; either by supporting them to move to smaller accommodation, highlighting that they may be entitled to a discretionary housing payment or by informing the household how much additional rent they will need to pay from 1 April 2013.

The Housing Income Team will form part of the 'Benefit Taskforce' which is comprised of staff from Revenues and Benefits, Housing Options and the Housing Income Team commencing in March – designed to resolve tenant and resident queries prompted by changes to the Welfare Benefit regime.

## **Flexible Tenancy Introduction**

The Housing Tenancy Team are working to prepare for the introduction of the Flexible Tenancy regime from 1 April 2013. The new Flexible Tenancy will be based around the Secure Tenancy which is being updated as part of the introduction of the new agreement.

Consultation with the tenant population on the changes to the Secure Tenancy Agreement is continuing in March with a new Secure Tenancy Agreement being introduced in spring 2013.

## **Property & Place**

### **Balcony surveys update.**

The majority of the properties surveyed are of the flat roof two-storey bedsit type with garages beneath, however some properties are flats with walkways, which are generally of a differing and slightly better form of construction.

On the basis of our inspections and the information gained from the surveys our immediate focus has been to concentrate on the acrow propping of known areas of risk.

Acrow Props have now been installed to the balcony garage walkways identified as "at risk". It has been agreed with building control that this is an acceptable course of action until such time as a scheme for repair or replacement has been implemented.

Next step is to identify solutions and agree a way forward for each type of area (balconies above garages & balconies on solely residential blocks)

We are continuing to carry out surveys to our balconies to identify any others of different construction types that may be at risk.

## **Your PLACE – Highfield**

Prior to the launch of the 'Your PLACE' asset led pilot, two consultation events were held at different locations in the pilot area of Highfield (Summer Court Green and Phyllis Courtnage House). All residents in the area were invited to speak to a selection of staff from all sides of housing, Clean Safe and Green and resident services. Both events were well attended, especially by DBC tenants. The feedback from the events will inform the priorities for the upcoming Ward Walk in that area, as well as the initial action plan for the pilot.

## **Strategic Housing**

The Housing allocations policy consultation ends on Friday 8<sup>th</sup> March, so if any members have any comments or views please can they contact Isabel Connolly from the Strategic Housing Team.

Councillor Harris referred to the forthcoming changes in benefits and had understood there was a discretionary fund of £30k being made available. He asked how the fund would be accessed by individuals.

Councillor Griffiths advised that benefits were not part of her Portfolio. The Mayor agreed for the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources to respond.

Councillor Tiley said the fund of £30k was a modest amount and he had requested to be kept informed of the demand and use of the funding. He expressed his sympathy to the individuals effected by the changes in benefits and hoped they would be able to find further financial resources to help those in greatest need. He advised he was happy to be accountable for the fund and would ensure the issue was on the agenda for future Portfolio Holder meetings.

Councillor Harris said he had been made aware of plans to remove pictures from the walls of communal areas in sheltered accommodation. He asked the Portfolio Holder to assure him that this information wasn't correct, and if it was, what was the reason for it.

Councillor Griffiths explained that the local fire stations had been undertaking risk assessments in communal areas. She said she had watched a video at a recent TLC (Tenant and Leaseholder Committee) meeting relating to the dangers and obstructions of minor furniture in the event of a fire. She advised it would affect all communal areas and not just in sheltered accommodation.

Councillor Marshall said she could recall a conversation with an individual at a past TLC meeting regarding his experience of a fire and how important it was that communal areas remain clear. She suggested that the video was made available so that everyone could see and understand the importance of the matter.

Councillor Griffiths advised she was hoping to arrange for the video to be made available on the DBC website.

Councillor Rance suggested the video was also made available to all Councillors. Councillor Griffiths agreed.

### **Councillor Mrs Laws, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Sustainability**

The Council has been awarded an internationally recognised standard for its environmental management, making it one of only a few local authorities in the country to receive the accolade.

The standard, ISO 14001, recognises that the Council has put systems in place to help it to understand, manage and reduce the impact that its day to day activities have on the environment. To gain and keep the standard, the Council has set itself targets to reduce the amount of energy it uses and the volume of landfill waste it produces.

Some of the improvements that have already been put in place include:

- The paper the Council uses in its buildings is 100% recycled;
- All confidential waste is recycled, so that the Council gets it back as new paper to be used again;
- The recycling facilities in Council buildings have been doubled and the number of waste bins reduced by half to encourage recycling;
- Car sharing and cycling to work is encouraged to reduce carbon emissions; and

- The Council is looking at ways to make its buildings and operations more energy efficient.

The Electronic data collection system (EDCS) has now been installed into all the refuse and recycling vehicles ready for use with the exception of the trade rounds. Every driver has now been shown the system and is using it on a daily basis to record any problems they face when collecting residents' waste. The in-cab display is also being used as a messaging system between our waste supervisors and the crews out on the road. Some of the collection rounds still require data to be placed onto the system which is something that the Project Officer for the EDCS, has been working on

Last week, Clean Safe and Green team litter picked the stretch of the A41 from M25 to the Tring boundary and back again and they picked up a total of 1.9 tonnes.

Councillor Adshead explained that Gadebridge Park had suffered severe flooding recently and asked Portfolio Holder if she would accept and pass on his thanks to the Clean, Safe and Green Team for their help.

Councillor Laws said she would pass on his appreciation to the team.

### **Councillor Tiley, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources**

The Council will shortly complete the purchase of 39 The Marlowes so that as we decant for the redevelopment, both 39 and 41 The Marlowes can be used jointly. It is being let on a short term basis to local charities and the Gazette.

Councillor Wood asked the Portfolio Holder for an update on the improved public toilets in Adeyfield Community Centre. He asked to what extent the council had been involved with the improvements made.

Councillor Tiley said they had discussed the matter with Adeyfield Community Centre and had come to an agreement. He explained they had agreed to make improvements to the public facilities and provide the Community Centre with upgraded facilities on the condition that they maintained them. He advised that the facilities had cost approximately £90k to upgrade and had taken 18 months but felt they had made substantial and worthwhile improvements.

### **Councillor Douris, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration**

"I would like to spend some moments highlighting what has been achieved in the drive for economic regeneration and investment. Investment doesn't always mean new large organisations taking space within the Borough but the development of new and smaller enterprises which flourish and take on additional staff.

In that context I would mention the success story that is the Maylands Business Centre and I would like to take few moments to highlight the impact that the Centre on the Redbourn Road has had on new business and economic regeneration within the Borough. Some highlights to date:

35 businesses have located at the centre.

5 have moved on to larger premises.

22 new jobs have been created including 1 company which has grown by 8 people.

The meeting rooms are proving a popular and valuable facility both to businesses at the Centre and further afield.

The Maylands Business Centre is now 100% occupied and is running at a profit.

The Centre is not just a building. It provides valuable business advice especially to those in the incubator units and 38 companies have been supported in this way. Additionally, soft skills courses have commenced running from the Centre at affordable rates and these are currently being underwritten by DBC funding. So far the courses have had excellent uptake, and dependant on the evaluation of these, we will continue to offer the courses.

Skills and Training:

I can provide the following update on skills and training.

115 young people have either gone into apprenticeships, employment or further training.

Of these, 9 have been placed with employers through the work of the Employment Skills Partnership and 16 with the Borough Council and the third sector. A programme has been implemented at Palmer & Harvey on the Business Park with 10 enrolled as Driver apprentices, which includes HGV licence training. .

At our Skills event in December over 160 people attended and 80, have since come off income support, as they are now in either into employment or training.

A skills survey has been carried out, identifying local business requirements.

Two main skills events have been hosted/ supported by the Employment Skills Partnership. The ESP is a partnership led by the Council which includes a range of employers throughout the borough, and partners such as Job Centre Plus, the College and the National Apprentice Service.

In November, a careers event was held, bringing the unemployed together with local business. In February an event promoting apprenticeships and associated grants to local SME's was held at Shendish. Both of these have had excellent results as I have previously mentioned.

Statistical business data has been gathered on Dacorum's performance. This was combined with a "soft" survey canvassing opinions of business in the borough. The survey results were used to inform the new Economic Development Strategy 2012-15. This information is also being used as a benchmark from which we can measure the effectiveness of the work the team does.

Maylands Partnership:

I would now turn to the work of the Maylands Business partnership. This is a dynamic group comprising Maylands Businesses, The Borough Council and other interested parties.

A Local Sustainable Transport Fund (LSTF) bid was successfully made in partnership with Herts CC. The funding equates to approx. £500k for DBC to spend directly, and a further £3 million being spent in the borough by HCC.

I am pleased to announce, as you may have seen in the Gazette, the introduction of the new Maylands Link bus service running in the morning and evening between the Railway Station and Maylands with an advertised journey time of as little as 12



minutes. The morning service runs from 6.40am from the station and the afternoon service from Maylands at 4 O'clock to 6.45pm. It provides convenient transport thus enabling people to access their place of work using public transport. The initial take up has already proved very positive and there is also a lunchtime service from the Business Park to the town centre for shopping.

A Thursday shopper bus started September 2012 and ran for 3 months leading into the Christmas shoppers' bus which operated again in the run up to Christmas funded by the Partnership.

Finally, I welcome the opportunity for the Council to bid for funding from the Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership Growing Places Fund to develop a new town centre bus interchange which will make the whole process of using public transport far more attractive. We are hopeful that our bid will be successful. Cabinet will be considering further detail at its meeting on 26 March".

Councillor Marshall congratulated the Portfolio Holder on the introduction of the new bus routes, which was a great initiative and she hoped was a success. It was noted that the bus timetable was shown on Intra-link, however the map was not. Councillor Marshall asked when it was expected to be available.

Councillor Douris explained that the map was available on the 'Dacorum – look no further' website and hoped to make it available on Intra-link by the end of the week.

Councillor Adshead was pleased to see a new market tender in Hemel Hempstead. He had met with the operations manager and was hopeful to get a new market and new image.

Councillor Douris was also pleased to see Saunders market and looked forward to the future.

Councillor Reay noted the recent planning application from Luton Airport which Dacorum had been consulted on. He asked the Portfolio Holder for reassurance that the council would be submitting a robust response. He explained that a number of residents in the borough would be affected by night noise.

Councillor Douris reassured Council that a robust response would be submitted.

Councillor Harris asked if the taxi ranks would be taken into consideration when planning the new bus services.

Councillor Douris said that the taxi ranks would need to be considered further and they may have to move to an equally convenient site for shoppers.

Councillor Rance was under the impression that a full environmental impact assessment had not yet been carried out as part of the Luton Airport application. This should have been done and asked the Portfolio Holder to ensure that it had been carried out.

Councillor Douris would look into this and respond to Councillor Rance.

Councillor R Hollinghurst asked if the council would help support improvements to bus services.

Councillor Douris noted that this was a Hertfordshire County Council function and to contact them.

Councillor Wood asked if there would be an impact on the town when the new large supermarkets opened.

Councillor Douris felt there would be a very beneficial impact on the town as more visitors would be here and they could find their way to the neighbourhood areas too.

Councillor Collins congratulated the Portfolio Holder on the successful Maylands start up unit. He asked if any satellite units would be set up in rural Dacorum. Councillor Douris said that they had tentatively discussed this option. Councillor Tiley added that Maylands were currently in contact with Tring Together.

#### **47. CABINET REFERRALS**

The referrals from Cabinet on 22 January 2013 and 12 February 2013 were submitted. It was moved by Councillor Williams, duly seconded and

Resolved:

That the following be approved:

##### **7.1 Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document (CA/020/13)**

Adopt the Affordable Housing Supplementary Planning Document upon adoption of the Dacorum Local Planning Framework Core Strategy with, for the avoidance of doubt, full Supplementary Planning Document Status.

##### **7.2 BUDGET 2013/13 (CA/032/13)**

That Council

- a) set a Dacorum Borough Council General Fund council tax requirement of £9.245m which equates to £9.838m for the combined Borough Council and Parish Councils' requirement for 2012/13 (inclusive of parish precepts of £593k);
- b) set a Dacorum Borough Council, 1.9% Council Tax increase for 2013/14;
- c) set a garage rent increase of £0.25 per week based on a chargeable 48 week year;
- d) approve the revised revenue estimate for 2012/13; original base estimate for 2013/14; and indicative budget forecasts for 2014/15 to 2016/17 as shown in Appendix A of the report;
- e) approve and adopt the Treasury Management Strategy and Annual Investment Strategy for 2013/14 provided at Appendix Di of the report, including the approval of the:
  - Prudential Indicators in section 2
  - Authorised Limits for external debt in section 3.2
  - The borrowing strategy, indicators and limits contained in section 3.4
  - The annual investment strategy, indicators and limits set out in section 4

- The use of the Investment Instruments listed in Appendix 5.3 of Appendix D of the report
  - Treasury Management Principles & Practices (Appendix Dii of the report)
- f) approve increases in Fees and Charges for 2013/14 (in accordance with the Council's Fees and Charges Strategy) and as set out in Appendix E of the report; (please see the website for large print)
- g) approve the forecast balances of Revenue Reserves as shown in Appendix Aiii of the report;
- h) note that this budget paper, when approved by Council, will form part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

#### Capital Programme

- i) approve the revised Capital Programme for 2012/13 and Programme for 2013/14 to 2017/18 detailed in Appendix B of the report;
- j) authorise the funding proposals subject to an annual review of the financing options by the Corporate Director of Finance and Governance, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, during the preparation of the Statement of Accounts to optimise the use of Council resources.

#### Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- k) set dwelling rent increases in accordance with Government guideline rent increase and rent convergence principles. Rent increase for properties not at convergence level, September RPI (2.6%) + 0.5% plus £2 per week and for properties at convergence level, September RPI (2.6%) + 0.5%. Resulting in an average increase of 4.85% (a maximum of £6.26) providing an average rent of £96.73 (based on 52 weeks);
- l) approve the HRA revised estimate for 2012/13 and base estimate for 2013/14 as shown in Appendix C of the report.

#### Council Tax Declaration

- 1) set a Dacorum Borough Council General Fund Council Tax requirement of £9.245m which equates to £9.845m for the combined Borough Council and Parish Council's requirement for 2013/14 (inclusive of parish precepts of £600k) for the reasons set out in paragraph 6 of this report.
- 2) note that the Cabinet at its meeting on 8 January 2013, and at the meeting of 12 February 2013, calculated the following amounts for the year 2013/14 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), as inserted by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011:-
- (a) 53,252.2 being the figure calculated by the Council in accordance with regulation 3 of The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 as its Council Tax base for the year;

- (b) the amounts in Table 1 of this report (Tax Base for each part of the Council's area to which one or more special items relate) being the amounts calculated by the Cabinet in accordance with regulation 6 The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 as the amounts of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in such parts.
- 3) the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2013/14 in accordance with Sections 31A and 31B and Sections 34 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (referred to as "the Act"):-
- (a) £164,376,524.18 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act, taking account of all precepts, and including the amount which the Council estimates as Council Tax deficit which will be transferred in the year from its General Fund to its Collection Fund;
- (b) £154,531,138.00 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act, including the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates and Revenue Support Grant ;
- (c) £9,845,386.18 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2) (a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2) (b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A (4) of the Act as its **Council Tax requirement** for the year;
- (d) £184.88 being the amount at 2) (c) above, divided by 1) (a) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;
- (e) £600,271.74 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act;
- (f) £173.61 being the amount at 2)(d) above, less the result given by dividing the amount at 2)(e) above by the amount at 1)(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates;

<b>(g) Part of the Council's Area</b>	<b>Band D Equivalent Combined £</b>
Aldbury	184.74
Berkhamsted	192.79
Bovingdon	198.52
Chipperfield	207.79
Flamstead	220.02
Flauden	203.55

Great Gaddesden	191.76
Hemel Hempstead	173.61
Kings Langley	213.22
Little Gaddesden	198.70
Markyate	204.86
Nash Mills	197.41
Nettleden	195.62
Northchurch	184.40
Tring Rural	191.99
Tring Town	196.80
Wigginton	186.54

(Band D charge for Parish and District combined), being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 2)(f) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 1)(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in parts of its area to which special items relate;

- 4) it be noted that for the year 2013/14 Hertfordshire County Council have stated the amounts in precepts issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings as set out below

Valuation Band

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
745.89	870.20	994.52	1,118.83	1,367.46	1,616.09	1,864.72	2,237.66

- 5) it be noted that for the year 2013/14 the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire has stated the amounts in precepts issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings as set out below

Valuation Band

A	B	C	D	E	F	G	H
£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
98.55	114.97	131.40	147.82	180.67	213.52	246.37	295.64

- 6) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2)(g), 3) and 4) above the Council in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby set the amounts set out in Table 3 of the report as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2013/14 for each part of the area and for each of the categories of dwellings shown;
- 7) It be noted that in setting the Council Tax for 2013/14 the Council is required to have taken account of the report of the Chief Financial Officer on the robustness of the budget.

- 8) The following determinations are made in relation to the prescribed classes of dwellings in accordance with the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended). These determinations are to take effect from 1<sup>st</sup> April 2013 and to remain in effect until varied or revoked by determination.

**Class A**

Section 11(2) (a) (Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) shall not apply and the discount shall be 0%

**Class B**

Section 11(2) (a) (Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) shall not apply and the discount shall be 0%

**Class C**

1. For any day on or after 1 April 2013 where any dwelling meets the conditions of prescribed Class C and has done so for a continuous period of less than 3 calendar months immediately preceding the day in question: 100% discount
2. For any day on or after 1 April 2013 where any dwellings meets the conditions of prescribed Class C and has done so for a continuous period of 3 calendar months or more immediately preceding the day in question@ section 11(2) (a) (Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended)) shall not apply and the discount shall be 0%.
3. In considering whether a dwelling has been vacant for any period, not exceeding six weeks, during which it was not vacant shall be disregarded.

**Class D**

1. For any day on or after 1 April 2013 where any dwellings meets the conditions of prescribed Class D and has done so for a continuous period of less than 3 calendar months immediately preceding the day in question: 100% discount
2. For any day on or after 1 April 2013 where any dwelling meets the conditions of prescribed Class D and has done so for a continuous period of 3 calendar months or more immediately preceding the day in question: section 11(2) (a) (Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended)) shall not apply and the discount shall be 0%.

Key points of discussion:

Councillor Williams introduced the budget recommendations and reiterated the decision taken by Cabinet on 28 February 2006, CA/148/06 Highfield Youth Facility – Update on Proposals, and explained that the item relating to the Highfield Youth Club was agreed to be removed from the Council's Capital Programme and be replaced with an item to fund the capital costs of up to £150,000 for the refurbishing of Youth Centres across Hemel Hempstead, in accordance with recommendations from the HCC Youth Service.

There was £101k remaining in that budget and the Leader of the Council had asked that the Highfield Youth Club Reserve as mentioned in the budget papers be renamed the Youth Facilities Reserve and the funding be used for the refurbishment of existing facilities.

## **LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AMENDMENT**

The following amendment to the Cabinet recommendations relating to the General Fund Revenue Estimate was proposed by Councillor Rance and seconded by Councillor Harris:

That Council be recommended to:

- a) Set a Dacorum Borough Council General Fund Council Tax requirement of £9.073m which equates to £9.673m for the combined Borough Council and Parish Councils' requirement for 2013/14 (inclusive of parish precepts of £600k).
- b) Set a Dacorum Borough Council 0% Council Tax increase for 2013/14

Councillor Rance introduced the amendments. She explained that new Government legislation was introducing localisation of council tax support schemes, which would be affecting many families in the borough. The council had previously been informed of a £30k fund to support families but these were only those with children under 5 years. Other families would therefore not receive any help and would have to pay more council tax. The Liberal Democrats amended motion would seek to help those families by not raising the council tax at all. They were aware that the savings required were not easy to make, however the savings made from a council tax freeze would be a small amount of money to find. Councillor Rance noted that underspends seen over the years and potentially in the future would contribute to this funding.

Councillor Townsend added that this was a modest proposal. The council tax freeze would still result in £150k funding received and for the next financial year, would not be an issue. He agreed that it would be an additional burden for following years, however it was not a significant amount to save compared to the millions of pounds required. For a relatively small impact on the council's financial position, Councillor Townsend felt that this proposal would make the council more efficient.

Councillor Griffiths felt that the proposal was just putting off the inevitable until future years, which would have a knock on effect on the council's financial position. Council tax had already been frozen for the past few years and therefore something needed to change. Savings required year on year would only get bigger and therefore the council could not afford to put this off for another year. The council had been making cuts over the years and was now leaner compared to a few years ago.

Councillor R Hollinghurst felt it was regrettable for those on lower incomes to have to pay more Council Tax. They would be the worst hit. Their income was low, benefits were low, yet council tax was increasing.

Councillor Marshall said it was an attractive amendment which had been put forward and the opposition had given a good argument for those families who would be affected by a council tax rise. She considered if the council could afford next year's savings if the council tax rise was put off until then. She felt that this would not be possible and therefore regrettably could not support the amendment.

Councillor Williams said this was a good amendment and was grateful to have received it in advance. He noted that it would be easy to freeze council tax; however this would be pushing difficult decisions off until the following year. The freezes over the years had equated to £0.5mil and a reduction in government funding. He

concluded to note that the 1.9% rise was prudent to maintain a balanced budget. He said that the rise equated to £3.24 per year for residents.

Councillor Lloyd said the amendment was modest, however felt the opposition needed to look forward and plan for the future. He said relying on underspends, as mentioned previously, was not an option and only a short term fix. A medium to long term plan was needed. He highlighted that the 1.9% council tax increase would equate to around 1pence a day, helping to maintain the services provided.

Councillor Guest recognised that the amendment put forward would have a knock on effect to future budgets. Dacorum had to make savings as part of the national plan. Short term solutions would not work and therefore she would not be supporting the amendment.

Councillor Harris felt that the proposal was not involving a huge amount of money and therefore was a very reasonable suggestion, based on the huge amount of savings that were required. The council needed to help residents and the amendment would do this. He felt that if the substantive motion were carried, residents would see it as increasing the Council Tax but reducing the services.

Councillor Peter felt that Dacorum were very efficient and gave good value for money.

Councillor McKay did not support the amendment as he felt it would only cause a knock on effect for future budgets.

Councillor Rance referred back to her comment about budget underspends and added that this was a result of bad budgeting. She noted that short, medium or long term strategies were not set in stone and could therefore be changed if needed. The amendment was there to help those families on lower income in the borough. A small increase to council tax would affect many people.

The Mayor put the amendment to the meeting and declared it to be lost:

6 Voting For, 34 Against and 3 Abstentions.

At the request of three members of the Council, the names of the Members voting for and against the recommendation were recorded as follows:

For: Councillors Flint, Harris, R Hollinghurst, Link, Rance and Townsend (6)

Against: Councillors Adeleke, Adshead, Ayling, Mrs Bassadone, Bateman, G Chapman, Clark, Collins, Doole, Douris, Elliot, Fantham, Griffiths, Guest, Harden, Hearn, Laws, Lawson, Lloyd, Macdonald, Mahmood, Marshall, McKay, McLean, Peter, Reay, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Tiley, Whitman, Williams, C Wyatt-Lowe and W Wyatt-Lowe (34)

Abstention: Councillors Mrs Green, Wood and The Mayor (3)

### **Substantive Motion**

The council reverted back to the debate on the substantive motion.

Councillor Williams was conscious that the services provided by the council relied on the budgets being set correctly. He explained that the budget had been set without seeing cuts to frontline services. He felt that economic development investment helped



more families out of poverty and the council was proud to invest in the development of the borough.

He did not feel that the amendment was a realistic attempt to set a proper budget as it did not consider a plan for future years.

He concluded to note that the council had to be sure to set a budget which provided services and protected residents and this budget did just that.

The Mayor put the substantive motion to the meeting and declared it to be carried:

34 Voting For, 6 Against and 3 Abstentions.

At the request of three members of the Council, the names of the Members voting for and against the recommendation were recorded as follows:

For: Councillors Adeleke, Adshead, Ayling, Mrs Bassadone, Bateman, G Chapman, Clark, Collins, Doole, Douris, Elliot, Fantham, Griffiths, Guest, Harden, Hearn, Laws, Lawson, Lloyd, Macdonald, Mahmood, Marshall, McKay, McLean, Peter, Reay, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Tiley, Whitman, Williams, C Wyatt-Lowe and W Wyatt-Lowe (34)

Against: Councillors Flint, Harris, R Hollinghurst, Link, Rance and Townsend (6)

Abstention: Councillors Mrs Green, Wood and The Mayor (3)

#### **Council Tax Declaration 2013/14**

The Mayor put the motion to the meeting. It was carried by a majority and the Mayor declared it to be carried.

#### **48. PAY POLICY**

The report was moved by Councillor Williams, duly seconded and

Resolved:

The Senior Officer Pay Policy Statement for the financial year 2013/14

#### **49. UPDATE TO COMMITTEE TIMETABLE 2012/13**

The following change to the 2012/13 Committee timetable was moved by Councillor Williams, duly seconded and

Resolved:

That the Development Control Committee meeting be moved from 21 March 2013 to 27 March 2013.

The meeting ended at 8.58pm.

## **ITEM 7 - REFERRALS FROM CABINET**

**26 March 2013**

### **7.1 AUTHORISATION OF VIREMENT (CA/039/13)**

#### **Decision**

1. That the virements from the Service Area as listed below and detailed in the report be noted:

Housing:

2. **That Council be recommended to approve a supplementary estimate for additional ICT support in 2013/14 of £102,000 to be funded from the Technology Reserve.**

#### **Reason for Decision**

To secure the approval of virements for the purposes specified in the Form (A), as appended to the report.

#### **Implications**

##### Financial

The Scheme of Virements is part of the Council's financial management.

#### **Risk Implications**

There are no risk implications.

#### **Corporate Objectives**

To standardise documentation and authorisation requirements for all virements.

#### **Advice**

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources introduced the report and advised that a new Form A had been circulated to make the virements clearer. Appendix B of the report detailed the request for a supplementary estimate for additional ICT costs for the public service quarter development.

#### **Options and Why Options Rejected**

No alternative options were considered.

#### **Consultation**

There was no consultation.

#### **Voting**

None.

## **7.2 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY (CA/044/13)**

### **Decision**

1. **That Council be recommended to approve the amended draft policy document.**
2. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing, to implement the policy on completion and successful testing of the computer system changes that are required.
3. That authority be delegated to the Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration), in consultation with the Portfolio-Holder for Housing, to agree minor policy amendments.

### **Reason for Decision**

To recommend that Council approve the amended Housing Allocations Policy.

### **Implications**

The minor amendments do not introduce any new implications in terms of finance or value for money. The implications identified in the report for Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2013 still hold.

### Legal

The full draft policy, including minor amendments, will now be sent for review by the Council's legal service, and for external legal advice.

### **Risk Implications**

The minor amendments do not introduce any new risk implications in terms of legal challenge, communications, or system failure. The risk implications identified in the report for Overview and Scrutiny Committee in January 2013 still hold.

### **Corporate Objectives**

Affordable Housing.

### **Advice**

The Leader of the Council said he had received a note from the Chairman of the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee regarding one of the recommendations.

The Group Manager (Strategic Housing) said the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had made a lot of comments and the policy had gone out for public consultation. The responses back were very positive and sensible amendments had been made to the report. The Overview and Scrutiny Committee had asked that the second paragraph of paragraph 4.4 of the draft policy be amended as it could be difficult to evidence a negative - *'Applicants will need to demonstrate that neither they nor their partner has an existing freehold or leasehold interest in a property in the UK or elsewhere.'*

All minor amendments had been outlined in the report.

The Leader of the Council said the comments made by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been considered but he did not feel it was necessary to remove that

sentence. If somebody applied for housing and then it was found they owned a property, that person could say they had not been asked that question. If the question was not asked, what redress would the Council have?

The Group Manager (Strategic Housing) said the question, 'Do you own a home?' was asked in the housing application form. It was the wording of the question the Overview and Scrutiny Committee did not like. The Group Manager asked if Cabinet was happy with the current wording.

The Leader of the Council said he was happy with the current wording and wanted that covered in the application process somewhere.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources said applicants were not being asked to prove a negative but were being asked to demonstrate the fact. If they did not, the Council could take action later. Cabinet felt it was worth keeping the line in.

Regarding recommendation 3, the Leader of the Council asked the Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration) to ensure that the Chairman of the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee was given a written copy of the suggested changes prior to them being approved.

This was agreed.

The Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration) said the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee had been very helpful and the Chairman would be kept informed.

### **Options and Why Options Rejected**

No alternative options were considered.

### **Consultation**

Consultation took place with:

Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing;  
Councillor Janice Marshall, Chairman of the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee;  
Councillor Mahmood – Vice-Chairman of the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee;  
Dacorum Borough Council Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee;  
Tenants and Leaseholders' Committee;  
Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration);  
Elliott Brooks, Assistant Director (Housing Landlord);  
Andy Vincent, Group Manager (Tenants and Leaseholders);  
Natasha Brathwaite, Housing Advice and Homelessness Team Leader;  
Teresa Wood, Housing Options Team Leader;  
Jack Burnham, Development Manager.

### **Voting**

None.

### **7.3 TOP TIER REVIEW (CA/047/13)**

#### **Decision**

- 1. That Council be recommended to approve the Chief Executive's request to take early retirement on the grounds of the efficiency of the service.**
- 2. That Council be recommended to approve that the post of Chief Executive be retained.**
- 3. That Council be recommended to approve:**
  - a) the reduction of the Top Tier Chief Officer Structure to three posts by the deletion of a Corporate Director post.**
  - b) to convene the Council's Appointments Committee and to commence the recruitment process for a new Chief Executive, restricted in the first instance to inviting applications for the post from the three internal Corporate Directors only.**
  - c) in the event that the Appointments Committee is unable to recommend to Council the appointment of an internal Corporate Director as Chief Executive to immediately make arrangements for the post to be advertised externally and undertake a fresh recruitment process.**
  - d) to delegate to the Leader of the Council-**
    - (i) the authority to approve the appointment of such external advisors as he thinks appropriate for the purpose of providing expert and independent advice and support to the Appointments Committee in the recruitment process and in the design and conduct of a candidates' assessment centre; and**
    - (ii) in exercise of the delegated power in (i) above, the authority to waive the Council's Procurement Standing Orders insofar as they relate to the appointment of consultants for the purposes of expediency.**

#### **Reason for Decision**

To recommend that Council allow the Chief Executive to take early retirement and to commence a process to recruit a new Chief Executive.

#### **Implications**

##### Financial

The General Fund Budget for 2013/14 incorporated savings of £100k from a Top Tier Review. It is estimated that the proposal to reduce the Top Tier Chief Officer Structure to three by the deletion of a Corporate Director post would provide a full year equivalent saving of around £130k and a part year saving of around £55k, therefore to achieve the savings within the budget further efficiencies should be identified.

The estimated cost of the pension strain from the release of the Chief Executive's pension on the grounds of the efficiency of the service is £54,915. The balance on the "Management of Change Reserve" is estimated to be £1.1m as at 31 March 2013 with a further planned use of £176k from the reserve. Therefore, there would be sufficient resource within the reserve to finance a supplementary estimate for the pension strain cost.

### Value for Money

These are included in the Section 151 Officer Comments.

### **Risk Implications**

There are no risk implications arising from this report.

### **Corporate Objectives**

There were no corporate objectives.

### **Advice**

The Leader of the Council introduced the report and said it was part of the Council's budget setting proposal that there should be a saving within the top tier of the Council. The Chief Executive had formally requested to take early retirement. This gave the Council the opportunity to review the top tier structure.

The recommendation was that a Top Tier Review be undertaken with the view to keep the Chief Executive which was an important role within the organisation and that the initial recruitment be ring fenced to the existing Corporate Directors. If it was not possible to recruit internally, this process should move to an external recruitment process which would lead to a redundancy situation for the current Corporate Directors.

Recommendation 3 (d) detailed delegations to the Leader of the Council regarding the appointment of external advisors to support the Appointments Committee and to waive Standing Orders to enable those appointments to be made.

It was hoped the Appointments Committee would meet on 7 May for the interview process with a view to making a recommendation regarding the new Chief Executive at Annual Council on 15 May. The appointment of the Chief Executive and/or officers where the salary exceeded £100k was not at the discretion of full Council.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources drew attention to the Monitoring Officer's comments on page 3 of the report and wanted to emphasise that the Pension Policy was being reviewed under the normal review of policies and procedures.

The Assistant Director (Legal, Democratic and Regulatory) confirmed that was the case. A reference in the policy re-stated what was in the regulations. There was nothing improper there.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources thanked the Chief Executive for his very good work.

### **Options and Why Options Rejected**

No alternative options were considered.

### **Consultation**

There was no consultation.

### **Voting**

None.

## **7.4 PENSION POLICY (CA/048/13)**

### **Decision**

**That Council be recommended to ratify the Pension Policy attached to the report and lodge it with the Council's Pension Administrator.**

### **Reason for Decision**

To formalise the policy on pension discretions following a review of the policy statement in relation to the exercise of a number of discretions under the Local Government Pension Scheme (LGPS) as required by the LGPS (Benefits, Membership & Contribution Regulations 2008).

### **Implications**

#### Financial

To provide a policy statement in respect of pension discretions to enable the assessment of business cases for the application of pension discretions.

#### Value for Money

To ensure the discretions are applied consistently and fairly with the agreed statement.

### **Risk Implications**

The ratification of this policy statement will mitigate the Council as an employer against the risk of being challenged by an employee in respect of applications of the discretions in the LGPS.

### **Corporate Objectives**

Dacorum Delivers.

### **Advice**

The Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services introduced the report and said the Council, as an employing authority, was required to have in place a pension statement. The Pension Policy set out at section 11 of the report the Council's statement on pension discretions.

A review of the Council's pension discretions had been undertaken and no amendments were proposed. There would need to be a further review of this policy in light of the changes to the Local Government Pension Scheme due to be implemented in April 2014.

### **Options and Why Options Rejected**

No alternative options were considered.

### **Consultation**

There was no consultation.

### **Voting**

None.