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**DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**15 APRIL 2015**

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Present -

**MEMBERS:**

Councillor Lawson (Mayor); Councillors, Adshead, Ayling, Mrs Bassadone, Bhinder, B Chapman, G Chapman, Collins, Conway, Douris, Flint, Mrs Green, Griffiths, Guest, Harden, Harris, Hearn, N Hollinghurst, R Hollinghurst, Killen, Link, Marshall, McKay, Mclean, Organ, Peter, Mrs Rance, Reay, Ryan, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Tiley, Tindall, Townsend, Whitman, Williams, Wood, C Wyatt-Lowe and W Wyatt-Lowe (40).

**OFFICERS:**

The Chief Executive, The Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration), The Assistant Director (Chief Executive's Unit), The Group Manager (Democratic Services), L Collins and Pat Duff (Minutes).

The meeting began at 7.30pm.

**60. MINUTES**

A minutes silence was given to remember the late Zena Bullmore who passed away on 27<sup>th</sup> March.

An amendment was proposed by Councillor Adshead to a statement made by him in the minutes of the meeting held on 25 February 2015. All Members were in agreement to this amendment and the minutes were signed by the Mayor.

**61. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None.

**62. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**1. By the Mayor**

There were no announcements made by the Mayor.

**2. By the Chief Executive:**

There were no announcements made by the Chief Executive.

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

Councillor Williams gave apologies for absence on behalf of Councillors Adeleke, Anderson, Clark, Doole, Elliott, Fantham, Mahmood and Laws.

Councillors Bateman, McDonald and Wixted were absent.

Councillor Flint brought Members attention to the news that Hemel Hempstead Football Club had won the County Cup.

The Chairman said that he was delighted to congratulate them on winning the cup.

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

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

The Leader of the Council had no announcements to make at this present time.

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

Councillor Williams read a statement on behalf of Councillor Laws.

“We removed over eight tonnes of bulky rubbish and litter from along the A41 during a six day blitz. We had a team of up to 15 staff that picked-up litter from the slip roads, junctions and grass verges of the A41 gradually working their way from the junction with the M25 at Kings Langley through to Tring and back again – covering a total of 26 miles. The central reservation will be cleared later in the summer to coincide with Hertfordshire County Council grass cutting operation. The A41 is cleared at least twice a year.

We joined other local authorities across England in March to launch the new ‘We’re watching you’ dog fouling campaign run by Keep Britain Tidy. The tried and tested ‘We’re watching you’ posters are visible after dark, and use innovative cutting edge materials. The poster was developed after research by Keep Britain Tidy showed that dog walkers are more responsible, and pick up after their dogs, when they think that they are being watched. The research also showed that more dog fouling tends to occur when it's dark, as some dog owners feel that they can't be seen. The campaign targets irresponsible dog owners who do not pick up after their dogs.

Clean Safe and Green and the Dog Warden have worked together to highlight hot spots of dog fouling and have installed the posters in those areas.

The Clean safe and Green team encouraged local people to spring into action and take part in Keep Britain Tidy's Big Community Clean Up Day to welcome spring and celebrate summer being around the corner. In total over 420 people from faith groups, community groups, schools and individuals organised clear up events and picked up 108 bags of litter and 19 bags of recyclable litter such as plastic bottles and cans. Some groups also reported fly tipped material.

The programme for Playground improvement at 17 locations is going well and should be completed in the next week or so.

Environmental Services have produced a Trees and Woodlands Policy guidance document. The policy gives each tree, which Dacorum Borough Council has responsibility for, a 'Life' rating according to its condition and situation which will ensure that when people, trees and property come into conflict there are sound solutions to guide residents, elected members and employees."

Questions and answers:

Councillor Rance highlighted the fact that at the last Council meeting on 25<sup>th</sup> March 2015, she asked the Portfolio Holder to provide posters encouraging the community to keep areas clean within the borough. This had not yet been done.

Councillor Harden confirmed that the posters would be going up very shortly and would provide her with a list of wards involved.

There were no more questions for the Portfolio Holder.

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

Final Council;

Mr Mayor, as this is my final Council meeting I would like to make some comments;

Firstly, with regard to our staff from the most senior to the most junior they are by vast majority great examples of diligent public servants.

Secondly, with regard to Finance, despite the pressures DBC is in "good shape". When we see a chance to do something in line with our objectives we usually can do it.

Thirdly, our assets are working well for us. We will never maximise them because many have social as well as other value. That is as it should be.

Finally a word about our Councillor's, of all political parties, you are splendid representatives of your communities. From the eccentric Alan Anderson who still cannot write his name on the right way up to our unique "double barrelled double barrelled", the Wyatt-Lowes. I have enjoyed all your friendship and will never forget it.

Thank you all so much.

Questions and answers

There were no questions for the Portfolio Holder.

**Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing**

**Tenant & Leaseholder Services**

**Rent Collection Performance** – The successful collection of rent is fundamental to the implementation of the Housing Business Plan. In recent years the rent collection performance has been excellent with the levels of debt being owed by current tenants to the Council being reduced.

In 2014/15 the target was to collect 99.5% of the rent owed by current tenants within the financial year. Over 99.5% of rent has been collected in 2014/15 although the final rent collection figure is not yet available.

The introduction of welfare reforms (with universal credit anticipated to be introduced in the autumn of 2015) and recent economic conditions has made achieving excellent rent collection performance challenging.

**Upgrade of community alarms** – Work to replace the alarm systems within our sheltered housing is due to start in the summer of 2015. The programme will start at Evelyn Sharp House. Many of the alarm systems within our sheltered housing have not been upgraded since the schemes were built.

The replacement of the alarms systems will reduce the ‘stacking’ of calls as the new systems will have significantly more capacity to carry calls.

NB Alarm calls are stacked when multiple calls are passed along the same telephone line. Although the calls of residents are prioritised occasionally not all the called can be passed to the call monitoring contractor simultaneously.

### **Strategic Housing**

The Elms Hostel is now complete with keys formally handed to the Council earlier today. Dens and the Strategic Housing team have been working hard to be ready for the first occupants in early May. A tour has been arranged for all Members on the 14<sup>th</sup> May at either 2pm or 6.30pm; details have been sent out via email.

St Peters Court and Farm Place will be completed in the next 2 weeks with new residents moving in early May also. If anyone would like to visit either of these developments once they are completed please contact Julia Hedger – Group Manager Strategic Housing.

At the other new temporary accommodation facility in Woolmer Drive the works have also been completed now, beds and other furniture are due to be delivered in the next week with the first occupants of the 11 bedrooms moving in early May. This is short term temporary accommodation, similar to the facility at Leys Road.

The rest of the Council new build programme continues as planned. An update will be presented to Cabinet in June.

### **Property & Place**

**Summer Court** – The biomass boiler was commissioned last week and the district heating system is now operational. The render for the external wall insulation has been completed and the scaffold is due to be removed this week, after which the brick slips at ground floor level will be applied. The landscaping work to footpaths and grassed areas will follow on and all work is due to be completed by the end of April.

**Structural Upgrading of Walkways / Balconies** – The contract continues to progress well and the Great Sturgess Road sites are 100% complete. Fletcher Way balconies are in the process of being removed and these will be replaced with Juliette balconies. Ground investigations have been undertaken at 20 sites and the footings cast in preparation for the steelwork to be erected.

At Easter, an updated programme was sent to all residents and a surgery continues to be held on Wednesday mornings, which has been attended by a number of residents. The respite area at Able House continues to be maintained for any residents who would like to get away from the noise.

**Longlands** - The project is progressing well and the original parapet and balconies have been removed in preparation for the external wall insulation and the 6 new build properties, which are due to be craned onto the roof in May.

There has been ongoing consultation with the residents on the final designs and a community evening was hosted by the contractor Keepmoat to provide them with an update on progress as well as a dedicated resident liaison officer will be based on site.

**Mechanical and Electrical Contract Tenders** - The contract award has been agreed by Cabinet in March and subject to the conclusion of the leaseholder consultation and Alcatel the contracts will be awarded at the beginning of May and commence on site in July.

**Osborne Total Asset Management Contract** - The first 9 months of the contract were completed at the end of March and the financial audit will be undertaken to establish the level of the shared savings, which will be reinvested in the planned programmes of work this year.

There have been some notable areas of improved performance with 39 void properties returned in one day, which is benefitting the overall performance of the voids figures and reducing the time properties are left empty. Customer satisfaction is currently at 96 % for planned work and 93% for repairs and Osborne continues to work with the tenant representatives on the Housing Maintenance and Environment Committee, to identify areas for service improvement.

The programmes of work for this financial year have commenced on site and feasibility surveys are currently being undertaken.

**Gas Servicing** - The servicing and installation contract has been delivering consistently high levels of compliance and customer satisfaction. Sun Realm are using the repairs information to assist in the development of the annual programme, which is resulting in reduced the number of complete breakdowns, known as Cat 1's.

Questions and answers:

There were no questions for the Portfolio Holder.

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

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Women's Tour would take place on 21<sup>st</sup> June 2015 and the cycle route would take place over 11 different wards.

The cycle route is as follows:

Enters Dacorum at Vale Road Chesham and continues on the Chesham Road.  
Left turn on to the Cholesbury Road and right at Kiln Lane.  
Down Marlin Hill on to Hastoe Lane and in to Tring.  
Right on Park Road and left on Akeman Street.  
Right onto the Highstreet and straight along Station Road to Aldbury.

Up Toms Hill Road for the last of the Queen of the Mountain competition.  
Left toward Ashridge & Ringshall.  
Right onto the Nettleden Road, through Nettleden and all the way to Vicarage Road  
Potton End.  
Through Potton End turning right onto Church Lane and across The Green.  
Left turn onto the Hempstead Road.  
Along Hempstead Road/Berkhamsted Road to Boxted Road.  
Left onto Warners End Road then right down Northridge Way.  
Straight Across onto St. Johns Road through Boxmoor and left on to Station Road.  
Left at the Plough Roundabout along the Leighton Buzzard Road to finish on the  
Leighton Buzzard Road at Gadebridge Park.

The route passes through, or just touches upon 11 different wards starting with,

Northchurch Ward  
Aldbury & Wigginton  
Tring East  
Tring West & Rural  
Tring Central  
Ashridge  
Watling  
Chaulden & Warners End  
Boxmoor  
Town Centre  
Gadebridge

#### Questions and answers

Councillor Harris made reference to the “Love your Neighbourhood” scheme that was running and the post that was now available within that project. He added that the most recent officer was now in Member Support at present but asked whether this placement would now be replaced in Highfield and also rolled out in other areas.

Councillor Harden confirmed that this was a pilot and officers will analyse the data and present their findings before the OSC Committees.

The Portfolio Holder for Finance congratulated Councillor Harden on the cycle route and said that so much had been brought to the Borough.

There were no more questions for the Portfolio Holder.

#### **63. CABINET REFERRALS**

The referrals from Cabinet on 24 March 2015 were submitted. It was moved by Councillor Williams, duly seconded and

#### Resolved:

That the following be approved:

**24 March 2015**

**1. AFFORDABLE HOUSING CLARIFICATION NOTE (CA/032/15)**

1. The Affordable Housing Clarification Note was adopted as a material planning consideration in relevant planning decisions and for use in the preparation of future planning documents; and
2. The authority was delegated to the Assistant Director, Planning, Development and Regeneration to make minor editorial changes to the Clarification Note, prior to its final publication.

**2. SHARED PARENTAL LEAVE POLICY (CA/034/15)**

Council approved the Shared Parental Leave Policy.

**3. REVIEW OF CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES (CA/035/15)**

Council approved the revised Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures.

**64. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS**

None.

**65. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEES REVIEW 2014/15**

Councillor Marshall introduced the Overview and Scrutiny Committee review 2014/15 on behalf of the other Chair's.

**Finance**

There was a concern on the Community Infrastructure Levy, however Finance and Resources has led the way on action points.

**Health**

Health OSC have identified resolutions and problems.

**SPAE**

Councillor Marshall highlighted the importance of the quarterly reports and all that was involved in the much improved collection waste services.

## **Housing**

Councillor Marshall said that she can share the praise on the quarterly reports and identifying the issues that are a cause for concern.

### **66. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

None.

### **67. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE DATES**

None.

### **68. HOMELESSNESS REVIEW PROCEDURE**

The Leader of the Council, with the agreement from Members moved item 14, Part 2 Cabinet referral **CA/040/15** to Part 1.

## **Questions and Answers**

Councillor Rance gave Members her end of term speech.

- When I was first elected, 20 years ago, I was a member of a very small minority group. I think we had 4 members. But that didn't matter, because we each had a place on one or more committees. A committee that openly discussed and made the necessary decisions for the smooth running of the Council. And it worked.
- Every Councillor was involved in both the decision making and their own hard work. It was both challenging and satisfying. And, you got to know the other Councillor's, from each political group, quite well.
- By far the biggest change in my tenure has been the abolition of that Committee system and the introduction of the Cabinet and Scrutiny committees;
- Not only does this mean that the majority of Councillors are no longer involved in the decision making process, which is the very reason we all put ourselves forward for the election in the first place, it also means that we don't get to know colleagues as well as we did previously.
- So, as I stand here today, to go through the list of retiring Councillor's I am disappointed that I don't know many of you well enough to say any specific.
- So instead I will read the list of those retiring and simply say, people who do this type of work, do so because they want to help others achieve the best they can do. Don't stop doing that – there are other ways of continuing that help. It has been a pleasure serving with you all and, I have no doubts, that it would have been even better had we still been working under the Committee system!!

Alan Lawson (Adeyfield East)  
Ann Ryan (Grovehill)  
Anthony McKay (Hemel Town)  
Brian Ayling (Apsley and Corner Hall)  
Carol Green (Berkhamsted West)  
Dan Wood (Adeyfield West)



Fiona McDonald (Berkhamsted Castle)  
Geoff Doole (Nash Mills)  
Gill Chapman (Bovingdon, Flaunden and Chipperfield)  
Hilary Killen (Watling)  
Ian Reay (Berkhamsted West)  
Jack Organ (Bovingdon, Chaulden and Chipperfield)  
Joan Wixted (Bennetts End)  
Julie Laws (Berkhamsted East)  
Maureen Flint (Gadebridge)  
Nick Tiley (Ashridge)

- Then there are the Councillor's who are moving from one ward to another which means, that they are standing against other sitting Councillor's

They are:

1. Councillor Lloyd Harris – moving from Highfield to Woodhall Farm where the Conservative Group currently hold both seats. One of those Councillor's will not be returning.
2. Councillor Nick Hollinghurst – Moving from Tring Central to Tring West. Tring West is currently held by one Conservative and one Liberal Democrat. One of those 3 Councillor's will not be returning.
3. And me, moving from Tring Central to Tring East which is currently held Councillor Hearn, so either myself or Mrs Hearn will not be returning.

And, of course, and finally, there are other Political Parties up for election as well and, the loss of even more sitting Councillor's.

So I would just like to say to all those present and re-standing, go into battle and fight fairly and may the best woman (or man) win!!!

The Leader of the Council spoke of previous Councillors that had been elected in the Council and thanked them for all their support within the borough and within the Council. He also thanked all of the officers that have played a very important role within the Council.

Councillor Flint wished all the standing and re-standing Members the best of luck in the upcoming elections.

The Chair also congratulated all of the Councillor's that have been a part of the Council and wished them well for the future and said that he has had a fantastic 8 years.

### Recommendation

Council adopted the revised procedure as set out in Appendix 1 to this report, to be used by the Appeals and Reviews Committee when determining homelessness reviews under section 202 of the Housing Act 1996.

The meeting ended at 8.05pm