
DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

24 SEPTEMBER 2014

Present -

MEMBERS:

Councillor A Lawson (Mayor); Councillors: Adeleke, Adshead, Anderson, Mrs Bassadone, Bateman, G Chapman, H Chapman, Clark, Conway, Doole, Douris, Elliot, Fantham, Flint, Mrs Green, Griffiths, Mrs Guest, Harden, Harris, Hearn, N Hollinghurst, R Hollinghurst, Killen, Laws, Link, Mahmood, McKay, McLean, Peter, Mrs Rance, Reay, Ryan, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Tiley, Tindall, Townsend, Whitman, Williams, Wood, C Wyatt-Lowe and W Wyatt-Lowe (44).

OFFICERS:

The Chief Executive, The Corporate Director (Finance and Operations), the Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration), the Assistant Director (Chief Executive's Unit), the Group Manager (Democratic Services), P Duff, T Lawson and L Smith.

Before the Council meeting a ceremony took place to grant:

Freedom of Entry into the Borough of Dacorum to the Royal Anglian Regiment;

and to admit three new Honorary Freemen of the Borough:

Heather Allen MBE;
David Furnell; and
Daniel Zammit.

The meeting began at 8.10 pm.

16. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 9 July 2014 were agreed by the Members present and were then signed by the Mayor.

17. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

18. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

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19. ANNOUNCEMENTS

19.1 By the Mayor

The Mayor had no announcements.

19.2 By the Group Leaders and members:

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Ayling, Bhinder, Collins, Macdonald, Marshall and Organ and Wixted.

19.3. Members of the Cabinet:

Councillor Williams, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership and Planning and Regeneration

Work is now well underway in the Marlowes with the range of improvements that we have planned under the Hemel Evolution programme.

The first phase of the work, the upgrade of the access way between Next and Primark is nearly complete.

Work is continuing on the other initial phase of work from Primark to the Residents' Rainbow.

We are continuing to keep residents and businesses informed of the works as they progress in a variety of ways. Early morning drop in sessions have been held at Tikis Café. We have produced a special feature for last week's Gazette. Our contractors, Greenford Ltd, have secured a vacant shop unit, 250 Marlowes, close to Primark which will serve as a public information centre.

Our plans for regenerating and improving Bank Court took a further step forward last week when Cabinet considered the outcomes of public consultation held over the summer. Under these plans, Bank Court will be transformed into an open piazza. To complement the works to the Marlowes Pedestrian area and the Water Gardens. TRO consultation for these works will start on w/c 29 October.

Dacorum Local Planning Framework

Today, we launched our consultation with residents and others on our Site Allocations document.

This is an important document for future development in the borough, and is based on the proposals that we have set out in our now adopted Core Strategy. It sets out in detail the sites and areas where development is expected and encouraged.

Much of the document is dedicated to housing sites, but it also sets out details on locations that will be protected for business and retail development, and the important areas of open space that continue to be protected in our towns and villages.

Additionally, we are seeking views on more detailed masterplans for the six 'local allocations' which we have put forward through the Core Strategy.

Chairman

Public exhibitions will be held at locations within Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, Tring and Bovingdon in mid-October.

The consultation will run for 6 weeks until Wednesday 5 November. Full details of how to get involved can be found on the Council website under the Site Allocations page of the Strategic Planning section. There is also information on the separate web pages we have set up for each of the Local Allocation sites.

Councillor Adshead asked if the Leader of the Council would agree that Council staff and contractors should be congratulated on ensuring there would be ample opportunities for the public and affected parties to be kept informed of what was going on over the next few years whilst this work was completed.

Councillor Williams agreed and said he was pleased the contractor had secured premises in the town centre to enable issues to be resolved as they occurred.

Councillor Tindall referred to Cabinet referral CA/094/14, Jellico Water Gardens Restoration: Update on Parks for People Application and Delivery Project, and asked if the Environment Agency would be consulted to ensure there was a constant water supply when the gardens were completed.

Councillor Williams replied that the Environment Agency had played a significant part in the plans for the Water Gardens and their criteria had been met.

Councillor Flint asked who should be contacted with any questions.

Councillor Williams suggested the Director of Housing and Regeneration could be contacted.

Councillor N Hollinghurst asked if the DBC website could be improved as it was not working well currently and it was difficult to link onto different items.

Councillor Williams advised that the website was the responsibility of Councillor Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services.

Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing

CHS Accreditation

Dacorum Borough Council will receive its award from the Centre for Housing Support (CHS) in recognition of the quality of the service delivered to residents of sheltered accommodation owned and managed by the Council on 2 October. The Service is the first in England and Wales to be awarded 3 stars which CHS, an independent organisation, rate as 'outstanding'.

The event will be held in the Bulbourne Room from 12 noon to 2.00 pm. Members are welcome to attend, please let the Supported Housing Team know if you are attending for catering purposes. Supported Housing Tenant Forum, Members, staff and partners will be attending.

Chairman

Tenant and Leaseholder Day

The Tenant and Leaseholder Day is being held this year on 27 September at the South Hill Centre in Hemel Hempstead. In the lead up to the day the conference has been taken 'on the road' and has popped up in various areas across the borough. The events have seen us launch the 'garden on a plate' competition aimed at getting children involved in the day. There are three age categories and the winners will be chosen by the winning entrants of the Sheltered Housing Garden Competition. Having spoken to over 600 tenants and leaseholders at the events, we hope that this will be our biggest Tenant and Leaseholder Day to date.

Animal Action Week

In conjunction with the Council's Environmental Health Service and the PDSA the annual Animal Action Week was held during the first week of September.

At venues across the Borough dogs were given a free health check and council tenants were offered a free micro chipping service for their dog.

The success of the Animal Action Week, plus a number of other initiatives run by the Housing Service in conjunction with Environmental Health, enabled the Housing Pet Policy to retain its Gold Award from the RSPCA for the stance it takes in promoting responsible pet ownership among council tenants.

Strategic Housing

The Council new build programme is progressing well with both Farm Place and The Nokes at Gadebridge all on track to complete by the end of March 2015. The Elms Hostel building also continues and is due for completion in March 2015, also as planned.

The management tender process is nearly complete with the decision to award the contract to the successful bidder being taken by Cabinet at their October meeting.

London Road development was slightly delayed by the electricity substation being moved on site, however these new homes will now be completed towards the end of 2015.

Building at the old depot site at Queen Street Tring will commence early in 2015, with planning permission granted for 5 new homes and the contract being tendered for the work shortly.

Work is underway to review the Housing Allocations Policy since it has been in place for a year in November. The report and its recommendations will be discussed at the Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee early in the new year. If any councillors have any comments to be included in the review please can they email Julia Hedger, Group Manager Strategic Housing.

Chairman

Property and Place

Contract Updates

Sun Realm continues to maintain a high level of compliance for the gas servicing element of the contract with only 4 properties without a current gas certificate as of last Friday. All of these cases are within our escalation procedure.

The installation programme commenced in April and the programme is ahead of schedule, with high levels of customer satisfaction and good levels of quality.

Osborne commenced the delivery of the planned programmes of work and is currently on site reroofing Phyllis Courtnage House. They are undertaking a further piece of work to engage with more of the smaller supply chain companies to assess if they will be able to support with some of the day to day repairs and adaptation works.

The Seaton Road refurbishment project, which included the installation of boilers and external wall insulation, has completed and the Council are in the process of obtaining the grant payments from the Green Deal Cashback and ECO funding.

The contract for the walkway strengthening project is underway with the steel being fabricated ready for installation on site commencing in mid-November.

Procurement Project Update

The procurement of the mechanical and electrical specialist contracts is underway and the notice of intention, to leaseholders, has concluded and the contract notice is due to be advertised next week. Some of the contract lots are being procured jointly between Housing and Building Services.

Councillor Harris asked if the Portfolio Holder would support him by asking Hertfordshire County Council to look at Redbourn Road to ensure a safe road crossing for The Elms.

Councillor Griffiths said that would be a County Council matter and suggested Councillor Harris should speak to Hertfordshire County Council (HCC).

Councillor N Hollinghurst asked when there would be an easy way to report damage to Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) assets such as footways, walls and street lights.

Councillor Griffiths said if a faulty light was reported on the HCC website, if it was a Hemel Hempstead light (marked H) the fault would be directed to DBC (there is a service level agreement). Housing issues would be reported by tenants to Osbornes direct. Faults to other Council assets should be reported to Building Services. If anybody had a problem, the Portfolio Holder said she would be happy to report it.

Councillor N Hollinghurst reiterated that he wanted to see a simple way to report damage to housing assets. Reporting faulty street lights to HCC did not work.

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Councillor Griffiths suggested Councillor N Hollinghurst should speak to the Group Manager Tenants and Leaseholders. Residents should ring Customer Services who would direct them to the correct person.

Councillor Elliott asked if the Portfolio Holder would pass on thanks to Julia Hedger and the team who had dealt with a disabled gentleman by adapting a house in Boxted Road. It had improved his life greatly.

Councillor Griffiths said this had been a difficult case and she was glad the Council had been able to help this person.

Councillor Mrs Rance asked the Portfolio Holder for Housing to ensure the public had one point of contact to report everything. The new telephone system was not good for the public.

Councillor Harden asked if the Portfolio Holder for Housing agreed that the public had opportunities to contact the Customer Services Unit, use the website, use the HCC website and private websites. He was surprised other councillors feel they did not want to go and contact officers to ask questions. There were a number of options available to report issues.

Councillor Griffiths said Customer Services should be contacted.

Councillor Mrs Rance said the public had to wait a long time to get through to Customer Services.

Councillor Tiley, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

The Portfolio Holder did not make a report at this time but he offered to take questions.

Councillor Townsend asked two questions:

1. Regarding Treasury Management, could an update on the returns on investments be given and was the Council comfortable with the risks being taken?
2. Regarding Financial Standing Orders that were reviewed at the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, could the Portfolio Holder look into having a Reserving Policy.

Councillor Tiley agreed he would look into the Reserving Policy and would respond in due course.

Regarding Treasury Management, the Council decided to invest money in short market (overnight money markets with highly rated banks and institutions where better returns could be obtained). The Council was cautious and was risk averse. The Council had not weakened its criteria but took advantage of the money market to get better returns.

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Councillor Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services

On 12 September the borough hosted the greatest sporting event, the Tour of Britain stage finish with 25,000 people attending across the borough. Riders had said how extremely pleased they had been with the crowds who had turned out. There had been a very successful community day in Gadebridge Park and the Portfolio Holder thanked the officers involved in implementing this successful day. There had been a return of £14k from local sponsors and the Portfolio Holder thanked them.

The new improved Old Town Hall and Cellar Club has been re-opened. It has a very sleek entrance and the Council wanted to operate the Old Town Hall as a niche venue.

On 20 September Get Set Go Dacorum was launched at Randalls Park with over 200 people attending the event.

Councillor Adshead asked the Portfolio Holder what he would be planning for 2015.

Councillor Harden said the Council was great at holding community events and he wanted to get the message out that, although savings of £1.5m had to be made, there was still the opportunity to put on great events for residents. The borough had developed stronger links with cycling and sporting communities.

Councillor Tindall asked if the Portfolio Holder could arrange a round Hemel Hempstead bike race covering all streets so that HCC could start filling the potholes.

Councillor Harden thanked HCC who financed the removal of cats eyes and resurfaced all the routes. Potholes can be reported.

Councillor Flint asked if the Portfolio Holder could think about bringing the junior football clubs together, some were now 40 years old and it would be a good sporting event.

Councillor Harden said this would be considered and asked Councillor Flint to email him the details.

Councillor Mrs Laws, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Sustainability

Community Champion Award

Friends of Bunkers Park (Nash Mills) and Michael (Mick) Cox from Hemel Hempstead are this year's Community Champion Award winners. In its sixth year, The Community Champion Awards celebrates those people who go the extra mile to help keep their local area clean, safe and green.

'Bins on tour' roadshow is going well. 20 roadshows over 7 weeks. So far we have received positive feedback to the changes. Many residents are learning about the new bins by talking to the Recycling Advisors and through the

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competitions such as 'Recycle in 30s and win a prize' and 'Guess how many recyclables in the blue lidded bin' as well as the fun #trashyselfie

The Council's first ever social media takeover was on new Recycle for Dacorum on Thursday 21 August. We answered questions from many residents about the new service including the size of the bins, those with problems with space, and concerns regarding capacity.

We have booked 20 school talks on the Recycle for Dacorum service changes. As well as information about the new bins the presentation includes information about the problem with rubbish, a video of the MRF and an explanation of how waste is recycled. The presentation has been very well received by the schools.

We launched the Design, a billboard competition where we asked individuals and schools to be creative and design a recycling message for twelve of our new vehicles for the new Recycle for Dacorum service. For more information, see www.dacorum.gov.uk/recycle We have received some very good entries so far.

Clean Safe and Green worked hard to prepare the route i.e. cut the grass, swept the roads etc. for the Tour of Britain and it was very well received and it looked great on the highlights on ITV4!

Councillor Mrs Rance asked what the Council could do to deter people from dropping litter and allowing dogs to foul without clearing it up. In some local woods there is a lot of litter and dog mess. It is not good. The Council is able to prosecute. What can the Council do to make it a serious issue to make people do something about their own litter and dog mess?

Councillor Laws said this was a country wide problem. Enforcement is the way forward but the person would have to be caught in the act and it is very difficult. The Council visits schools and tries to educate people who litter the streets and parks.

Councillor Williams said he and Councillor McKay had met with officers who were looking at a number of options that would be reported back in due course.

Councillor H Chapman said the Council had a good track record on catching fly tippers using CCTV and suggested this be used to emphasize to people that CCTV could be used for enforcement.

Councillor Laws said she was happy to consider this but would wait to see what officers were suggesting.

Councillor R Hollinghurst asked whether households could have more than one green bin emptied if they paid for it to be emptied when the new refuse collection methods started.

Councillor Laws said from 24 November only one green bin would be collected per house and suggested residents took excess to the local recycling centres. There was no opportunity for a further bin to be emptied.

Councillor Mrs Bassadone said some Leverstock Green residents had said they had not received the refuse collection leaflet and asked why leaflets had

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not been delivered to every property in Dacorum. Other people said they were very happy with the information given at the roadshow.

Councillor Laws said it had been the intention to deliver leaflets to every household in Dacorum and when reports had been received of non-delivery, the company had been sent back to re-deliver them. The new system had been advertised in Dacorum Digest and there would be further information in the bins when they were delivered. There was information on the website and the Council was happy to send recycling officers to any area.

Councillor N Hollinghurst asked the Portfolio Holder if she was aware that HCC has been proposing to reduce the access of the household waste recycling centres by reducing the opening hours.

Councillor Laws said she was aware of this fact and it was being discussed through the Herts Waste Partnership. Berkhamsted would be linked with Hemel Hempstead and there would always be a recycling centre open in Dacorum. People were encouraged to compost and the Council was still offering compost bins at a reduced rate.

20. QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

21. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

There was no business from the last Council meeting.

22. CABINET REFERRALS

The referrals from Cabinet on 22 July and 16 September 2014 were submitted. It was moved by Councillor Williams, duly seconded and

Resolved:

That the following be approved:

22 July 2014

22.1 Jellico Water Gardens Restoration: Update on Parks for People Application and Delivery Project (CA/094/14)

- 1. To reprofile the approved budget of £3,251,827 within the Capital Programme for the delivery of the restoration of the Jellicoe Water Gardens following the second round pass from the Heritage Lottery Fund / Big Lottery Fund as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.**
- 2. To increase the revenue budget by £190k and approve a revenue budget of £548,249 profiled to 2020/21 to support the delivery of the Jellicoe Water Gardens Activity Plan and Management Plan as set out in Appendix 2 of the report, with £276,364 funded from the Dacorum Development Reserve and the balance being grant funded.**

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16 September 2014

22.2 Treasury Management (CA/111/14)

Acceptance of the report on Treasury Management performance in 2013/14 and the Prudential Indicators for 2013/14 actuals.

22.3 Budget Monitoring Quarter 1 2014/15 (CA/112/14)

The supplementary budgets set out below be approved. Details for these supplementary budgets are set out in the detail of the report to the Cabinet and have a net nil impact on the General Fund Balance, the HRA Balance and the Useable Capital Receipts Balance:

General Fund Revenue Account

- Reduce use of Pensions Reserve by £745k
- Reduce pensions back-funding budget by £745k
- Increase Pensions Reserve by £273k
- Reduce pensions budget by £273k
- Reduce use of Management of Change Reserve by £15k
- Reduce ICT salaries budget by £15k
- Increase Revenues & Benefits agency staff by £120k
- Increase Revenues & Benefits grant income by £120k
- Increase use of Management of Change Reserve by £32k
- Increase Regulatory Services redundancy budget by £32k
- Increase Planning Income by £14k
- Increase Planning Employee budget by £14k
- Reduce General Fund Revenue Contribution to Capital by £219k
- Increase Waste Services employees budget by £110k and supplies and services budget by £109k

Housing Revenue Account

- Reduce HRA revenue contribution to capital by £1m
- Increase HRA repairs and maintenance budget by £1m

Capital Programme

- Reduce Waste & Recycling Service Improvements by £219k
- Reduce General Fund financing from revenue contribution to capital by £219k
- Reduce HRA Planned Fixed Expenditure by £1m
- Reduce HRA financing from revenue contribution to capital by £1m.

22.4 Garage Disposal Strategy (CA/113/14)

A supplementary budget of £100k to fund the project costs associated with the garage disposal strategy, and for this to be funded from a £100k drawn down from the Dacorum Development reserve.

Chairman

22.5 Medium Term Financial Strategy (CA/114/14)

The revised Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2014/15 to 2018/19; incorporating the following recommendations:

- a) approve the amended timetable for the future revision of the Strategy (as set out in Section 2 on Page 9;)
- b) approve a General Fund saving target of £0.9m for 2015/16 subject to confirmation that potential savings of £1.846m (as set out in section 3.1.3 on Page 14 of the Strategy)
- c) approve a combined four year General Fund savings target of £4.7m over the life of the Strategy
- d) to approve the timetable for identifying and delivering budget savings (as set out in Section 7 on pages 23 to 25);
- e) to approve the risk register identified together with planned mitigations in the Strategy
- f) to approve the key assumptions incorporated in the Medium Term Financial Strategy, (as summarised in Section 11 on Page 35 of the report).

22.6 The Openness of Local Government Bodies Regulations 2014 (CA/115/14)

1. That paragraph 17.4 'Record of Proceedings' of the Procedure Rules for the Council and its Committees contained in Part 4 of the Constitution be amended so as to read as follows –

17.4 Recording and Reporting of Proceedings

Those present may make a written record of the proceedings and while a meeting is open to the public, any person attending is to be permitted to report on the meeting in accordance with the Council's 'Protocol for Members of the Public Wishing to Report on Meetings'.

2. That the Cabinet Procedure Rules contained in Part 4 of the Constitution be amended by the insertion of a new paragraph 6 –

6. Recording and Reporting of Proceedings

Those present may make a written record of the proceedings and while a meeting is open to the public, any person attending is to be permitted to report on the meeting in accordance with the Council's 'Protocol for Members of the Public Wishing to Report on Meetings'.

The existing paragraph 6 shall remain and become paragraph 7.

3. To adopt the 'Protocol for Members of the Public Wishing to Report on Meetings' as set out in this report and that it be included in the Constitution as an annex to the Rules of Procedure in Part 4 of the Constitution.

Chairman

23. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

There were no referrals.

24. CHANGE IN COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

There were no changes in committee membership.

25. CHANGE IN COMMITTEE DATES

There were no changes to committee dates.

26. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

That, under S.100A (4) of the Local government Act 1972 the public be excluded during the items in Part 2 of the Agenda for this 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 these items there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to:

1. The financial and business affairs of other bodies including Dacorum Borough Council (agenda item 12);
2. An individual and which is likely to reveal the identity of that individual (agenda item 13).

(LGA 1972, Part V, Schedule 12A Part 1, Paragraph 3).

27. PART 2 CABINET REFERRAL

Garage Disposal Strategy (CA/117/14)

The decision was made in part 1 of the meeting (agenda item 7.4).

28. APPOINTMENTS COMMITTEE REFERRAL

Resolved

That the recommendation as detailed in the referral be approved.

Full details are in the part 2 decision sheet.

The meeting ended at 9.08 pm.

Chairman