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**DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**19 NOVEMBER 2014**

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Present -

**MEMBERS:**

Councillor Lawson (Mayor); Councillors, Adeleke, Adshead, Ayling, Mrs Bassadone, Bateman, H Chapman, Clark, Collins, Conway, Doole, Douris, Elliot, Fantham, Flint, Mrs Green, Griffiths, Harden, Harris, Hearn N Hollinghurst, R Hollinghurst, Killen, Laws, Link, Mahmood, McLean, Organ, Peter, Mrs Rance, Reay, Ryan, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Tiley, Tindall, Townsend, Whitman, Williams, Wixed, (41).

**OFFICERS:**

The Chief Executive, The Corporate Director (Housing & Regeneration), The Assistant Director (Chief Executives Unit, Monitoring Officer), The Assistant Director (Finance and Resources), The Group Manager (Democratic Services), S Hamilton, S Okiji, P Bowles and K Johnston.

The meeting began at 7.30pm.

**29. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 24 September 2014 were agreed by the Members present and were then signed by the Mayor.

**30. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

Councillor Collins submitted a declaration of interest form relating to agenda item 9 (standard Committee – Localism Act 2011 Re-Appointment of Independent Person and Parish and Town Council Representatives). His wife Mrs Elaine Collins of Berkhamsted Town Council is a representative of the Parish and Town Council on the Standards Committee.

**31. ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**31.1 By the Mayor**

No announcements were made by the Mayor.

**31.2 By the Chief Executive**

No announcements were made by the Chief Executive

### **31.3 By the Group Leaders and Members:**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors Anderson, Bhinder, G Chapman, Guest Macdonald, Marshall, McKay, C Wyatt-Lowe, W Wyatt-Lowe and Wood.

### **31.3. Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:**

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

##### **Marlowes Shopping Zone**

“The regeneration of the Marlowes Pedestrianised Shopping Area is progressing well. Paving of the link from Marlowes to Moor End Road and between Primark and Next, is now complete.

Most of the paving up to the Rainbow Memorial will also be completed by 28 November. Seven new large trees will be installed week commencing 17 November and 24 November.

Our primary aim has been to minimise disruption to shops, residents and visitors whilst taking forward the construction as efficiently as possible in a busy town centre location. With this in mind, we will be pausing work over the Christmas period from 29 November to 6 January. Some minor, localised work which is unlikely to cause disruption may be undertaken during this period in order to stay ahead with the programme.

##### **Gade Zone Regeneration – Public Service Quarter**

Members may have attended the exhibition run by Council Officers and the Council’s selected Development Partner, RG Carter and Endurance Estates, held in the Marlowes Centre on Saturday 8 November.

This was an opportunity to explain to our residents our plans for regenerating parts of the Gade Zone – in particular the land to the south of the Civic Centre down to Combe Street, the former Market Square and Bus Station, and the Marlowes Business Centre/former Gazette building at 39/41 Marlowes.

The planning application to deliver the first phase in the regeneration of the town centre, the new Public Service Quarter building, was submitted to the Council. In the next few weeks, our Development Partner will be submitting a further planning application for the development of the land around the new PSQ building, taking in the Marlowes Health Centre, Magistrates Court and Police Station. This will provide just over 200 new homes, 35% of which will be affordable.

It is expected that the Council will make a decision on the planning applications in the early Spring, with work starting on the new PSQ building in summer 2015.

##### **Water Gardens**

Following the successful award of £2.4million to the Council to carry out restoration of the Jellicoe Water Gardens, work has continued to finalise detailed designs for the work and arrangements for the procurement of contractors to do the work.

The planning application for works to restore the Water Gardens has now been submitted, with the aim of achieving a decision at the Development Control Committee meeting of 18<sup>th</sup> December.

##### **Maylands Business Centre**

The MBC continues to go from strength to strength having now helped 53 businesses grow and succeed. It remains 100% occupied with a waiting list.

To improve capacity for fledgling businesses, work is currently under way to convert one of the light industrial units into four service offices. This is expected to complete in

the next two weeks. The waiting list continues to grow with 24 businesses waiting for offices and units and they have 24 virtual tenants. The Operating Board and the council are also continuing to explore other sites which may be able to increase the offer of new business incubation units to meet the demand.

### **Dacorum Local Planning Framework**

Progress on our forward plan for the development of the Borough continues. Consultation on the Site Allocations document and associated draft master plans for the 6 Local Allocations (Green Belt housing sites) closed on 5<sup>th</sup> November. These documents play an important role in setting out the shape of future development within the Borough, not least the supply of new homes, and it is important that residents and local organisations have a chance to influence what they say.

I would like to extend my thanks to everyone who took the time to submit their comments – the response rate was very good. Officers will now read through all of the feedback, and take up any key issues with landowners and infrastructure providers before advising Councillors what changes are required. These changes will be considered by Cabinet and Full Council in early summer 2015, before the Site Allocation document is passed to the Planning Inspectorate for formal examination later next year.

### **Community Infrastructure Levy**

On the 21<sup>st</sup> October 2014 the Council received the report of the Planning Inspectorate on our Community Infrastructure Levy Draft Charging Schedule. The report concluded that our proposed levy charges were appropriate.

This represents a significant milestone towards the adoption and implementation of the Levy. We are now faced with the challenging task of determining the governance arrangements and spending priorities for the levy. The Council remains on course to start charging developers the Levy from April 2015 with a dedicated proportion of the funding being made available to Town and Parish Councils and local neighbourhood areas from October 2015”.

### **Questions:**

Councillor Townsend asked if the Portfolio Holder would extend his thanks to the officers at DBC who turned up at Tring to face a certain amount of public anxiety relating to the LA5 development. He said he was particularly impressed with how officers responded to residents views.

The Leader said he was happy to do this and thanked Councillor Townsend for his comments.

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

“A taxi marshalling scheme was introduced on 1<sup>st</sup> November in Hemel Hempstead, to supervise the new taxi rank outside the Old Town Hall and to direct customers from night outings into licensed taxis and private hire vehicles.

This scheme has been suggested by licensed taxi drivers in the town to improve safety during late night periods and to help ensure the success of the night-time economy in the run-up to Christmas and the New Year.

Marshals are trained licensed security personnel, wearing highly visible uniforms to help to manage crowd control, reduce the risk of disorder arising, enhance security for drivers and help to disperse people from the town quickly and safely. They will be

linked by radio to Dacorum Borough Council's CCTV control room and report any issues that need police attention.

The food festival follow up of Love your Neighbourhood was very successful – Harvest Festival at Woodhall Farm had 250 attendees. The event encouraged residents to make homemade bread & soups made from fresh produce.

Preparations for the week long Love Your Neighbourhood event in Highfield are well on the way – 16<sup>th</sup> to 20<sup>th</sup> February and good support from a whole range of agencies.

Themed days are : -

Making ends meet

Health and Wellbeing

Community Safety

Employment and skills

Information and celebration event on 20<sup>th</sup> Feb.

Neighbourhood Action in partnership with the Police and Crime Commissioner are launching The Young Citizens Academy at assemblies at Hemel Hempstead, Kings Langley and Cavendish schools. Part of Public Services course. This will be a Hertfordshire pilot.

Christmas light switch on events arranged with NA Groups at 5 shopping centres:-

- Thursday 27 November – Rossgate Shops – 3.30pm – 4.30pm
- Friday 28 November – Chaulden Shops - 5.30pm – 6pm
- Saturday 29 November – Henry Wells Sq – 3.45pm – 4.30pm.
- Sunday 30 November – Queens Sq – 3.45pm – 4.30pm
- Saturday 6 December – Stoneycroft - 4.30pm – 5.30pm

The ASB Team obtained the first premises closure in Hertfordshire under new national legislation. This closed a property that was being used for the use of class A drugs which in turn caused anti-social behaviour. The property is now closed for a minimum of 3 months and possession of the property will be sought.

The **Community Trigger** scheme was launched on 20<sup>th</sup> October 2014 giving victims the opportunity to have their cases reviewed if they meet certain criteria.

The first **Silver Street** meeting took place at Great Sturgess sheltered housing scheme and along with the ASB Team, Police, Crime Prevention Officer and Fire Service, Trading Standards attended to deliver Community Safety messages about anti-social behaviour, rogue traders, distraction burglars and staying safe.

20 Residents attended and received leaflets with purse bells, lanyards, money wallets, personal attack alarms, torches and night lights and were referred for home safety checks.

You will recall young people presented to last Novembers Council that 2 of their top priorities were:

- for a closer relationship with the police – this has been realised through the Young Citizens Academy
- Easier access to the arts and the theatre – this has been realised through reduced price tickets to events at the Old Town Hall for 16 – 25 year olds

Get set, go Dacorum - 9 of the 27 projects due this coming year have now been launched. Highlights are the Stronger Together Football sessions for ethnic minority groups, female sessions at Sportspace for Year 11 Adeyfield Students and the Woodhall Farm family project which is full - additional work will be taking place in Woodhall to run an additional session for people on the waiting list”.

Questions:

Councillor Adshead referred to the Christmas light switch on events arranged with Neighbourhood Action Groups and asked if The Portfolio Holder would pass on his congratulations to the community officers involved.

The Portfolio Holder agreed to pass on the thanks

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

**“Summer Court** - Works to refurbish Summer Court are well underway. Windows have been replaced in all of the flats and new doors have also started to go in. Externally all of the tiles have been removed and the External Wall Insulation has started to go on, this will greatly increase the thermal performance of the walls and help our tenants to save on their fuel bills. The district biomass heating system will be in place early next year with all of the works due to finish by the end of February.

This scheme will reduce our carbon emissions and provide an alternative fuel source to gas. Additionally we are increasing the value of our asset and helping our tenants stay out of Fuel Poverty.”

**Structural Upgrading of Walkways / Balconies** - The contract to upgrade the structural integrity of the balconies and walkways has commenced, and the contractor, Thomas Sinden, have established a site office at Able House.

There is a 64 week programme from November 2014 to February 2016 with Little Road and Stoneycroft due to be finished before Christmas.

The single balconies are being programmed in and residents will be notified in December where they fall on the programme. Due to the design the balconies at Fletcher Way are to be removed and replaced with Juliette balconies

There is a surgery day each Wednesday morning and a respite area at Able House in case residents would like to get away from the noise.

**Longlands** - The project to upgrade the block of flats at Longlands, to provide external wall insulation and 6 new build properties on the roof is currently being mobilised with the site office being set up. The project programme is 44 weeks due to finish early November 2015 and there has been ongoing consultation with the residents on the final designs. A dedicated resident liaison officer will be based on site to address any issues and support the residents.

**Tenancy Sustainment Team** - A newly formed Tenancy Sustainment Team has been established to work with prospective and existing tenants, to understand their needs and give them the skills to help maintain their tenancies.

Identifying vulnerable tenants when they first move into their homes will be crucial to prevent problems from developing or escalating and this is achieved through 1-2-1 support and Tenancy Sustainment Information Sessions. Internal teams and external agencies will also be able to refer individuals and families to the Tenancy Sustainment Team. The team will use all of their resources to really understand the needs of the tenant and work with them on any underlying issues to more successfully manage their tenancy. This more targeted and intensive approach is aiming to reduce neighbour

nuisance, rent arrears and disrepair to our homes. It will also prevent duplication and ensure we are providing the best services to tenants.

### **Osborne Total Asset Management Contract**

The contract has now been fully mobilised and the Service Provider, Osborne, are delivering all repairs, work to empty homes and planned programmes of work. The Service Providers teams are working closely with the Council's officers who are co-located at Osborne's office, which enables prompt resolution of problems. The Out of Hours call centre was mobilised successfully on the 31<sup>st</sup> October and all calls will be handled by the team based in the offices on the Maylands Industrial Estate.

The contract is Open Book and the first audit of actual costs will be undertaken later this month.

### **Strategic Housing**

The New Build programme is continuing well – The Elms hostel scaffolding has come down this month and work is progressing well internally. The management provider is to be confirmed at Cabinet next week, a press release will be issued the following day.

Farm Place and The Nokes are also progressing well with estimated completion March 2015 as planned.

Following the delays at London Road due to the requirement to move the electricity sub-station building work is starting this week.

Work is on-going to tender for the construction of Queen Street in Tring building work is expected to begin in the New Year.

A report was discussed at scrutiny last week regarding the new empty homes team in Strategic Housing. Void times have reduced in the last 6 months with further work identified to continue the improvements required to maximise income and meet the targets set.

The Housing Team have now moved from Unit B to the top floor of the Civic centre if anyone needs to see any of the team in person”.

Councillor Griffiths informed the Council that Bill Wallboy, a long serving and dedicated member of the Tenant and Leaseholders Committee, had sadly passed away.

Councillor Mr Hollinghurst arrived at 7.45.

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

“Prizes have been presented to the winners of our recycling competitions which were held to launch the changes to the borough's bins. More than 1,000 residents went to the seven week 'bins on tour' roadshows at 20 locations across the borough and took part in interactive competitions including take a #trashyselfie and 'guess how many recyclables in the blue lidded bin'. About 600 people tried to guess the number of recyclables in the bin and the closest guess was from Kirsty Beckwith, who guessed 138 - one less than the actual figure of 139, winning the top prize of dinner for two at The Grove. Second prize winner, Denise Steers won a spa evening and a three

course meal for two at Champneys in Tring and the third prize of a Kindle Fire went to Charlotte Barton. All of the competitions were sponsored.

Residents and schools of the borough were given the unique opportunity to design a billboard to launch the new Recycle for Dacorum service. The competition ran from June to October and over 300 people entered from the ages of 3 – 61 years old. The judges were looking for designs that promoted the benefits of recycling and explained the new service changes. The five winners will have their designs used on the side of the new vehicles along with the Council's own billboard posters. The Mayor presented certificates and revealed the new vehicles with billboards attached to the winners Jordi Connor (from the individual category) and school children Tilly Chapman (age 8), Jack Discipline (age 10), and Ysabelle Thomas (age 8) from Kings Langley School and James Woodmore (age 10) from Two Waters School. Jordi Connor and Tilly Chapman were the overall grand prize winners and they each received an iPad mini and Kings Langley School received £100 for their part in the competition".

Questions:

Councillor R Hollinghurst said that Berkhamsted businesses are losing customers due to lack of parking. She said that she understood that money had been budgeted for additional parking in Berkhamsted, and asked what, where and when?

Councillor Laws replied a multi-story car park is proposed in Kings Road and a planning application should come through early in the New Year.

Councillor Harris said that he had noticed in the agenda/minutes from the Strategic Planning Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting that there had yet again been over delivery on income from car park revenues He asked if it was now possible to look again at removing parking charges on Sunday.

Councillor Laws confirmed that parking is looked at bi-annually, so this could be considered at the next report. However it was also reported at that particular meeting that the budget line would increase and therefore a higher budget needs to be achieved.

Councillor Townsend expressed his concerns about the new recycling bins in his ward. Having now three bins, Tring has gone from looking like a very special area to a place with a lot of bins. He asked what plans were proposed to deal with the issues.

Councillor Laws said that the Council have recycling officers who are visiting properties and she would suggest that they visit this area to assess any issues and to see if residents are happy with the new service.

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

"I can report to members that our financial progress this year 2014/2015 is on track. Thanks to Directors, Assistant Directors and Group Managers and their financial support for managing and monitoring this progress with important input from Portfolio Holders.

The Budget Review Group for 2015/2016 and beyond has met 5 or 6 times and will bring a balanced draft budget to our Joint OSC meeting in a couple of weeks. There are no cuts proposed to front line services and some growth items as well as large efficiency savings. All capital requests to the capital strategy steering group will be supported for member's consideration. All members are welcome to the budget presentation, not just OSC members.

Members have been advised that the Council's Group Manager for property, Mike Evans has left DBC to take a similar post at Herts County Council and I record my

thanks for the innovative and valuable work he carried out at DBC. His place has been taken by Nicolas Brown, a Chartered Surveyor, who also comes to us from a commercial background which I am sure will prove valuable to DBC. We wish him well”.

Questions:

Councillor N Hollinghurst said that one way of mitigate parking problems is to encourage the use of public transport. This Council used to share the costs of supporting public transport with the County Council, but 6 years ago, the support stopped and we are now seeing some of the consequences. Councillor N Hollinghurst asked if the Portfolio Holder would admit that this was a serious mistake at the time and asked if he was able to tell this Council when support for public transport would be reinstated.

Councillor Tiley said he could not admit to any such nonsense. It was a decision that was inevitable in the light of the financial circumstances that the Council finds itself in and he cannot see that the Council can re-entre into subsidising public transport in the foreseeable future.

Councillor Townsend said he was promised details at the last Council meeting on the Council’s Reserving Policy, and as of date has not received anything. Councillor Tiley apologised and asked Councillor Townsend to provide him with a more detailed question via email so that he can provide the relevant information.

Councillor R Hollinghurst said that the Council should take more of an interest in parking problems. The train station in Tring is outside the town and is always full in the week. She said that there should be support for an extra means of transport for getting to and from the station and cycling is not a practical or safe option for many people. Councillor Hollinghurst asked if there was some method of persuading someone to run a minibus service between the town and the station.

Councillor Tiley replied that he is happy to look at this issue because it is a perfectly legitimate question.

Councillor Rance asked a question about the recycling budget. She referred to the new recycling bins; that the bin liners provided with the new waste food caddy were too small and a waste of money. She asked if the Portfolio Holder would consider not wasting money on bin liners that don’t fit the bins and spending the money on something like buses.

Councillor Tiley said that he had not tried the bin liners himself. He said that the bin-liners are not free they are paid for by every council tax payer in the Borough

## **32. QUESTIONS**

None

## **33. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST CUNCIL MEETING**

None

## **34. CABINET REFERRALS**

The referral from Cabinet on 21 October 2014 was submitted. It was moved by Councillor Williams, duly seconded and

Resolved:



That the following be approved:

**OFFICE EXPANSION AT THE MAYLANDS BUSINESS CENTRE CA/126/14**

The release of £32,000 from the Maylands Plus Reserve for the purpose of constructing additional office units at the Maylands Business Centre.

**35. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINEY REFEREALS**

None

**36. STANDARDS COMMITTEE – LOCALISM ACT 2011 RE-APPOINTMENT OF INDEPENDENT PERSON AND PARISH AND TOWN COUNCIL REPRESENTATIVES E**

The report was moved by Councillor Williams, duly seconded and

Resolved:

1. That Rachel Keil be reappointed as the Council's Independent Person for the purposes of section 28 of the Localism Act 2011 for a term of two years.
2. That Councillor Robin McCarthy of Aldbury Parish Council and Councillor Mrs Elaine Collins of Berkhamsted Town Council be reappointed as non-voting co-opted representatives of the Parish and Town Councils for a term of one year.

**37. CHANGES TO THE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

None

**38. CHANGES TO THE COMMITTEE DATES**

None

**39. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

Resolved:

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

1. the financial or business affairs of any particular person (including the authority holding that information). (Minutes 40 and 41)  
Local Government Finance Act 1972, Schedule 12A. paragraph 3.
2. An individual and which is likely to reveal the identity of that individual (Agenda minute 41).  
Local Government Finance Act 1972, Schedule 12A. paragraph 2.

**40. PART 2 CABINET REFERRAL - Highbarns Land Stabilisation Project CA/130/14**

An update on the Highbarns Land Stabilisation Project CA/130/14 was considered.

Full details are in the Part II minutes.

**41. CALL-IN & URGENCY PROCEDURE**

A decision taken by the Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services after consultation with the Mayor on 7 November 2014 (PH/036/14) was reported.

**AUTHORITY TO APPLY FOR A PREMISES CLOSURE ORDER MADE UNDER PART 4, CHAPTER 3 OF THE ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOR CRIME AND POLICING ACT 2014**

Full details are in the Part II minutes.

The meeting ended at 8.07pm.