
DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

25 FEBRUARY 2015

Present -

MEMBERS:

Councillor Lawson (Mayor); Councillors, Adeleke, Adshead, Anderson, Ayling, Mrs Bassadone, Bateman, Bhinder, B Chapman, Collins, Doole, Douris, Elliot, Fantham, Mrs Green, Griffiths, Guest, Harden, Harris, Hearn, N Hollinghurst, R Hollinghurst, Killen, Laws, Link, Mahmood, Marshall, McKay, Peter, Mrs Rance, Reay, Ryan, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Tiley, Tindall, Townsend, Whitman, Williams, C Wyatt – Lowe and W Wyatt-Lowe (42).

OFFICERS:

The Chief Executive, The Corporate Director (Finance and Operations), The Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration), The Assistant Director (Legal Democratic and Regulatory), The Group Manager (Democratic Services), L Collins, P Bowles and K Johnston (Minutes).

The meeting began at 7.30pm.

53. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 14 January 2015 with an amendment from Alan Fantham (Minute 44) were agreed by the Members present and then signed by the Mayor.

54. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

The following Councillors submitted a Declaration of Interest form relating to agenda item 7.6 Budget 2015/16.

1. Councillor Adshead declared a personal interest in agenda Item 7.6 Budget 2015/16. He is a Trustee of the Dacorum Sports Trust.
2. Councillor Anderson declared a personal interest in agenda Item 7.6 Budget 2015/16. He is a Trustee of Hemel Hempstead Day Centre.
3. Councillor Collins declared a personal interest in agenda item 7.6 Budget 2015/16. He is a Member of the Chiltern Conservation Board (Dacorum nominated).
4. Councillor Doole declared an interest in agenda item 7.6 Budget 2015/16.as a Parish Councillor for Nash Mills.

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5. Councillor Guest declared a personal interest in agenda item, 7.6 Budget 2015/16. She is a Member of Warners End Neighbourhood Association Management Committee and Trustee of Warners End Neighbourhood Association.
6. Councillor Hearn declared a personal interest in agenda item 7.6 Budget 2015/16. She is a Trustee of Community Action Dacorum.
7. Councillor Marshall declared a personal interest in agenda item 7.6 Budget 2015/16. She is a Trustee of Hemel Hempstead Day Centre for the Elderly T/A Centre in the park – A Core Funded Charity.
8. Councillor Taylor declared a personal interest in agenda item 7.6 Budget 2015/16. He is the Trustee and Treasurer of the Gadebridge Community Association. Director and Honorary Treasurer.

55. ANNOUNCEMENTS

1. By the Mayor

The Mayor announced RAF Halton will exercise their right to Freedom of Entry to the Borough on 17 May 2015. Further details to follow.

2. By the Chief Executive:

The Chief Executive announced the appointment of James Deane to the post of Corporate Director of Finance and Operations and congratulated him, wishing him well for the future.

Following her marriage last Friday, the Chief Executive announced that she will continue to be known as Sally Marshall professionally but personally she will be known as Sally Marshall-Mills.

3. By the Group Leaders:

Councillor Williams gave apologies for absence on behalf of Councillors G Chapman, Clark, Conway, Flint, MacDonald, and McLean.

Councillors Organ, Wixted and Wood were absent.

4. Members of the Cabinet:

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

The Leader of the Council congratulated the Chief Executive on her marriage to Peter Mills.

He informed Members that he attended the opening of the £800k "Ice Rink" project last Friday and said that there was over 150 people at the skating Ice Rink. He thanked the Officers for all of their hard work and the success of the project.

Chairman

The refurbishment of the new gym has now been completed and the leader of the Council said that he was pleased with all of the hard work that had gone into making it look excellent. The Odeon cinema will also be refurbished increasing it from 8-17 screens.

Questions and answers:

Councillor Hearn made reference to the Dacorum Digest and said that it was of a very high standard. She asked The Leader of the Council to congratulate all of those concerned in making it such a success.

The Leader of the Council agreed with Councillor Hearn that the Dacorum Digest is an excellent publication for residents receiving information about the Council.

Councillor Tindall made reference to page 16 item 7.3 The Hemel Evolution: Bus Interchange and Market Square. He expressed his concern over the financial control and where the 1.4 million would be spent.

The Leader of the Council replied that the budget was originally set higher. There is now a £500k acquisition in place for the Town Centre.

Councillor McKay said that he was delighted to see the ice rink re-open as it is the only ice rink in the whole of Hertfordshire.

The Leader of the Council said that it was crucial to save the ice rink for the community.

There were no more questions for the Leader of the Council.

Councillor Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services

Councillor Harden informed Members that the trial of the new I pads was now taking place with 6 Members participating in the trial. He mentioned that the remaining Members would receive their I-pads after the election in May.

Questions and answers:

Councillor N Hollinghurst asked a question regarding the use of the I-pads and expressed his concerns over using them and their security.

Councillor Harden said that the Council was only responsible for the security within the Council and it was each Member's responsibility to make sure that their home broadband was secure. He added that the security on the I-pads was the same that was currently being used on the laptops that Members already have.

Councillor Adshead referred to the major sporting events taking place in Dacorum and said that it was vital that as a Council we push for these events to take place.

Councillor Harden mentioned that all of the sporting events that have taken place so far have proved a great success.

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Councillor Mrs Bassadone expressed her opinion on the trial of the I-pads and said that she was very pleased with the technology and found e mails much easier to manage.

Councillor Harris referred to the women's cycling event and asked the Portfolio Holder if the route would be the same as the men's or if new roads would be added.

Councillor Harden confirmed that the route would be different as the ladies have more miles to cycle on. The Portfolio Holder said that he was pleased to have Hertfordshire County Council on board as they are a great support network.

Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe said that she was pleased to hear of a women's cycling event taking place in the borough. She asked the Portfolio Holder how these events would be monitored and public health improved.

Councillor Harden explained that decorum is now on the map due to hosting these events. The Community are engaged in healthy activities therefore reducing the risk of obesity and helping to promote health and well-being.

There were no more questions for the Portfolio Holder.

Councillor Mrs Laws, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services and Sustainability

Environmental Services

1. Garden waste collection calendars have been delivered and the first collections after the break took place week commencing 16 February, on the same week as the blue lidded bins across the Borough.
2. Winter bulbs have been planted for spring displays which we hope will be as impressive as the summer flowers.

Sustainability

External BSI audits for the continuation of our ISO14001:2004 Environmental Management System Certificate has been undertaken at the Civic Centre, Berkhamsted Civic Centre, Cupid Green Depot and Cemeteries.

A number of additional water meters have been installed across the Council's assets which will help to identify leaks and monitor usage. As a result of these installations water leakage at Gadebridge Park has been identified, work is currently underway to stop these leaks and save the Council money in the long term.

Questions and answers:

Councillor Rance referred to the 2 litter picks on the A41 and the mess that residents look at on a daily basis. She said that this road was used regularly and needed to create a good impression for Dacorum. She suggested that it may be helpful to promote litter picking days in the Dacorum Digest to help widen the help required. Dog fouling was another issue that was raised. Councillor Rance asked if there was anywhere on the Council's website to report this.

Councillor Laws agreed that the A41 needed a tidy up. She informed Members that there would be a litter picking day being held on 9th March to improve the way the A41

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looked. She added that there would be 2 extra litter picking days provided per year along with £40k in extra funding to help look at ways in helping the community. With regards to the dog fouling, Councillor Laws mentioned that any dog fouling can be reported on the Council's website.

Councillor Tindall referred to the dumping situation and asked if there was any way that we could catch the culprits as the cost implication to remove the waste is draining on the system.

Councillor Laws said that the Enforcement Team are in place to try and catch those that dump waste.

There were no more questions for the Portfolio Holder.

Councillor Tiley, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

Councillor Tindall raised a question at the last meeting regarding Council Tax. The Portfolio Holder said that he believed this had been thoroughly dealt with by James Deane. He also highlighted to Members that he was delighted with James Deane's new position within DBC.

Questions and answers:

Cllr Townsend made reference to the litter on the A41. He asked the Portfolio Holder for clarity as he had received information that Herts Highways did not communicate with DBC when they were closing the A41. He asked if we could pursue Herts County Council for the extra costs.

Councillor Tiley confirmed that this information was incorrect.

Councillor Tindall referred to the 1% increase in zero hours contracts within the Council and asked for an update regarding this.

Councillor Tiley said that the statistics showed that in the last year there was a further 1% increase on zero hour contracts. That's a 2.3 increase across the country. This in effect leads to more unemployment. The Portfolio Holder pointed out that these contracts are not acceptable methods of unemployment and DBC should discourage if possible.

Councillor Elliot asked if Councillor Tiley agreed with him that the prudent handling of financing which has allowed Dacorum to be the place to come and work, with unemployment at 1.4% against a national average of 5.7%, demonstrating that the Conservative Party provide the environment for businesses to grow and families to work in a thriving town.

Councillor Tiley agreed with Councillor Elliott and said that he couldn't have put it better himself.

Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Tenants and Leasehold Service

Rent Increase notification - This year's rent increase notification will be slightly different than in previous years. The formal notification of an increase to a tenant's rent (send out at the end of February) will include both the total rent chargeable and the amount of housing benefit that the tenant is entitled to.

This change will reduce the number of letters set out to tenants during the year end process and is also anticipated to reduce the number of enquiries received regarding the benefit entitlement of individual tenants during March.

Text messaging - In March (as part of the rent increase notification) we will also be informing tenants that if we recognise their mobile telephone they can now text message us BAL and they will receive an automated response from us with their rent balance.

We are also working to provide a rent balance to tenants who speak to the automated telephone system when they ring the Council and ask for Housing Rents.

Implementation of the Council new Rent Policy - 2015/16 will see an amendment to the Council's Housing Rents and Other Charges Policy. In practice it means that

- Rents charges where tenants are charged below the 'target rent' level will not be increased by more than Retail Prices Index (in September of the preceding year) plus 0.5% plus £2.00
- Once target rents have been reached rents will not be increased by more than Consumer Prices Index (in September of the preceding) year plus 1% each year.

Tendering the Community Alarm Upgrade and Maintenance contract - The contract to maintain and upgrade the alarm call systems within our 35 sheltered housing schemes is currently out to tender.

The successful awarding of this contract will see implementation of a programme to replace many of the old alarm call system within many of our sheltered schemes. Details of the upgrade programme can be found at the Supply Hertfordshire Portal www.supplyhertfordshire.uk

Strategic Housing

The development programme is still on track, with St Peters Court, Farm Place and The Elms all due for completion end of March 2015.

Dens are working on the plans for the management of The Elms, with first occupation currently planned for early May.

Work has begun on the development at London Road with estimated completion early 2016.

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Property and Place

Summer Court - Works continue to progress well on site with the render currently being applied. Some of the residents are already starting to experience the thermal benefits of the increased wall insulation. The district biomass heating system will be commissioned towards the end of February.

Structural Upgrading of Walkways /Balconies - The project is progressing well with three additional sites completed since the last report to Cabinet. The surgery day on Wednesday morning continues and a respite area at Able House is being maintained 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.

Mechanical and Electrical Contract Tenders - The tenders for the Mechanical and Electrical contracts are in the process of being evaluated, with the exception of the Fire Alarm contract, which has been granted an extension of the tender period. Interviews will take place over the next two weeks and the outcome will be reported to Cabinet in March.

Osborne Total Asset Management Contract - There have been a number of void properties returned in one day, which is benefitting the overall performance of the voids figures.

Additional resources have been recruited to the call centre to reduce call wait times which had been rising since the beginning of January. Two new resident liaison officers have joined the team to support the planned programmes of work and a short presentation, which can be shown to tenants so they know what to expect when having a kitchen and bathroom replaced, produced.

The initial audit was completed and during the next few weeks further work will be done to align Osborne's, accounting systems with the budgets for next year, and complete the details of the Open Book protocol. This work will enable a more efficient method for reviewing the costs, so that any shared savings generated can be reinvested in next year's programmes.

Questions and answers:

Cllr Adshead said he had been to see Summer Court and was pleased with the works carried out. He asked if there were going to be more works carried out in other areas.

Councillor Griffith's replied that there are future plans but currently is not in a position to confirm their locations or when these will take place.

Councillor Elliot said that it was fantastic news that for the first time in 20 years the Council was building houses in the borough.

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Cllr Hollinghurst asked a question regarding the new technology being used in Housing and asked if it would be useful in speeding up the process for benefits claims and help process resident's claims quicker.

Councillor Griffiths said the technology that she was referring to would be for the tenants to find out their balance of their accounts.

Councillor Taylor said that the new council flats in Gadebridge known as St Peters Court are a fine example of new council homes. He pointed out that they are the first to be built in the borough for 27 years. He pointed out to Members the extremely low costs and said that the electricity bill will be estimated to be no more than £100 per annum.

Councillor Griffiths said that she was delighted to acknowledge this. Under the present government, the Council now has the opportunity to be able to buy houses and spend the tenant's money on the tenant's properties.

There were no more questions for the Portfolio Holder.

56. CABINET REFERRALS

The referrals from Cabinet on 20 January and 10 February 2015 were submitted. It was moved by Councillor Williams, duly seconded and

Resolved:

That the following be approved:

20 January 2015

1. ADOPTION OF ANTI-SOCIAL BEHAVIOUR POLICIES AND PROCEDURES (CA/008/15)

- (a) The adoption of the Council's revised 'Anti-social Behaviour Policy', the 'Policy for Dealing with Anti-Social Behaviour Affecting Tenants and Leaseholders' and the 'Anti-social Behaviour Procedures' as attached to the report.
- (b) The revised scheme of delegation to officers as set out in paragraph 11 of the report.

10 February 2015

2. SENIOR OFFICER PAY POLICY (CA/018/15)

The adoption of the Pay Policy for 2015/16 as set out in appendix 1 to the report.

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3. **HEMEL EVOLUTION: BUS INTERCHANGE AND MARKET SQUARE (CA/019/15)**

£1million additional capital budget for expenditure during 2015/16 for the delivery of the Bus Interchange project.

4. **COMMUNITY INFRASTRUCTURE LEVY (CIL) – ADOPTION OF THE CHARGING SCHEDULE AND ASSOCIATED DOCUMENTS (CA/021/15)**

a) The CIL Charging Schedule is adopted in accordance with Regulation 25 of the CIL Regulations 2010 (as amended).

b) The Regulation 123 list is adopted alongside the Charging Schedule as the basis for allocating CIL funding and as set out in Appendix 2 of the report.

c) The CIL policies on Exceptional Circumstances Relief, Discretionary Charitable Relief, Instalments and Payments in Kind are adopted.

d) The Planning Obligations SPD is un-adopted by the Council on the 1st July 2015.

e) Progress towards the implementation of CIL is noted.

f) The implementation date for CIL is delayed until the 1st July 2015.

g) Decisions over the spending of CIL receipts are taken by Council based on recommendations of an Infrastructure Advisory Group comprising officers and members.

h) Authority be delegated to the Assistant Director Chief Executives Unit to amend the Constitution to allocate specific operational functions required to facilitate the day to day operation of CIL.

5. **NAMING THE PUBLIC SERVICE QUARTER (CA/023/15)**

The Public Service Quarter be officially named 'The Forum'.

6. **BUDGET 2015/16 (CA/024/15)**

General Fund Revenue Estimate

a) **Set a Dacorum Borough Council General Fund Council Tax requirement of £9.826m, and of £10.467m for the combined Borough Council and Parish Councils' requirement for 2015/16;**

b) **An increase of 1.8% in Council Tax for Dacorum Borough Council;**

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- c) The base estimates for 2015/16, as shown in Appendix A of the agenda report, and the indicative budget forecasts for 2016/17 – 2018/19, as shown in Appendix J of the agenda report;
- d) The forecast balances of Revenue Reserves as shown in Appendix H of the agenda report, and approve paragraphs 14 – 31 of the agenda report as the updated Reserves Strategy;
- e) Increase in Fees and Charges for 2015/16 as set out in Appendix I of the agenda report;
- f) The Treasury Management Strategy be adopted for 2015/16, as attached at Appendix K of the agenda report;
- g) The Treasury Management Principles and Practices for 2015/16 be adopted as attached at Appendix L of the agenda report;
- h) This budget paper, when approved by Council, will form part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Capital Programme

- i) The revised Capital Programme for 2014/15, and for 2015/16 to 2019/20, as detailed in Appendix G of the agenda report;
- j) The financing proposals in Appendix G of the report, be authorised subject to an annual review of the financing options by the Corporate Director Finance and Operations, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, during the preparation of the Statement of Accounts.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- k) set dwelling rent increases in accordance with the proposed policy to retain existing rent policy for those tenants below Target Rent, but to implement CPI-linked rental increases for those tenants who are at Target Rent. This results in an average increase of 3.71% which makes the average rent £106.02 per week (based on 52 weeks);
- l) The HRA estimate for 2015/16 be approved as shown in Appendix F of the agenda report.

Terms and Conditions

- m) The continued application of a living wage supplement for all affected employees, be approved in accordance with the Living Wage, for 2015/16; to be reviewed annually thereafter.

Statement by Chief Finance Officer

- n) The statement by the Chief Finance Officer regarding the robustness of the budget estimates and level of reserves as set out in Appendix M of the agenda report be approved

Chairman

Key points of discussion:

Councillor Williams introduced the report and moved the motion to debate.

LIBERAL DEMOCRAT AMENDMENT

An amendment with additions to the expenditure budget (to be funded from the Dacorum Development Reserve) was moved by Cllr Harris.

- £30k for the supply and installation of 51 extra dual litter and recycling bins.

Councillor Tindall seconded the amendment and reserved his right to speak.

Councillor Harris said that whilst canvassing, the Liberal Democrat group have heard many concerns about the state of the Borough and in particular the amount of litter. The proposal will involve residents in the solution by providing recycling receptacles which will help the Council in separating the waste. He said it would involve no extra costs to administer the scheme because it could be incorporated within the existing waste collection service. He said that the proposal would involve all 51 Members nominating the sites for the bins, thus empowering Councillors and giving Back Bench Councillors a reason to be here and give something back to their areas. It will help keep the Borough clean, safe and green and he asked Members to support the motion.

The Leader of the Council said the amendment was not circulated before the meeting and he asked the Mayor for a few minutes to discuss it with his colleagues.

Councillor Mrs Green said it was a shame that the Lib/Dem Group had chosen the very last moment to provide the amendment and she took exception to the comment that it would give Councillors something to do. She said that the Lib/Dem group could not be doing their job as Councillors properly if they have that much spare time.

The Leader of the Council said that after a brief discussion with his colleagues the amendment would not be accepted. He said, if out of a £75m budget this is the best considered suggestion; to enable each Member to place a recycling bin in their area, with no context to the 2000-3000 existing bins, then his recommendation is that this amendment is not accepted.

The Mayor referred to the Rules of Debate 13.9.(b) on 'Right to Reply' (if an amendment is moved, the mover of the original motion has the right of reply at the close of the debate on the amendment, but may not otherwise speak on it)

The Leader of the Council said it was not his intention to stop any debate but to notify the Council of his decision about the amendment before the debate.

Councillor Anderson proposed that with the agreement of the Council, this rule be temporarily waved in order for the debate to continue on the amendment.

Councillor Marshall seconded the proposal, it was agreed by Members and the Mayor allowed the debate on the amendment to continue.

Councillor Douris said he thought this was a shoddy amendment. He said that the

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Lib/Dem group had got their sums wrong yet again. £30,000 was needed for the supply and instillation of recycling/litter bins, but the proposals did not include any costs for emptying and cleaning the bins because it was suggested that the costs can be absorbed into the current plan. However emptying and cleaning 51 extra bins takes time and has a cost.

Councillor Marshall said she was disappointed with the amendment. This suggestion was not raised during the OSC process and was only now put forward at the last minute. She said the proposal smacked of political tactics and put the Lib/Dem group in a bad light.

Councillor Rance responded to Councillor Douris's comments on costings and referred him to the second paragraph of the Section 151 Officer Comments: "The emptying of the bins, once installed, could be absorbed into the Council's existing collection rounds and would not therefore require a further increase in the base revenue budget"

Councillor Anderson said he could not support the amendment; there was a lack of evidence to support the claim that these bins are needed and that there is not such a chronic problem that would require such measures.

Councillor Elliot asked if the Lib/Dem group had changed colour and become the new green party.

Councillor N Hollinghurst said the Lib/Dems had always been a green party. He said it was a modest, well-formed amendment and it could be looked on as an interesting experiment to get feedback on the practical use of dual litter bins. He said he was encouraged at the suggestion that this issue could be discussed at an OSC meeting.

Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe said she was offended at the suggestion made by Councillor Harris that backbench Councillors have nothing else to do. She added that this ill-advised, poorly thought out, uncosted proposal is an insult to the integrity of this Council. Clearly there was nothing else to attack if the only amendment to the budget is a request for 51 more litter bins.

Councillor R Hollinghurst said she couldn't believe that other Councillors did not have a litter problem within their ward. She said that within a day of being elected as a Ward Councillor she was contacted about a litter issue. The complaints have continued and it is one of the biggest problems voiced by residents. This very week Wigginton villagers have carried out an organised litter pick. She said she was sorry if other Councillors felt they could not contribute to the tidiness of the Borough.

Councillor McKay asked if constituents would compare and contrast: this Conservative administration that look at the objective requirement of need and work out how to wisely spend tax payer's money or take the Lib/Dem approach to experiment with £30,000 of taxpayers' money.

Councillor Harden said he could only presume that in all the 4 years of being the opposition party, the Lib/Dem group were completely supportive of each budget because they only ever bring up small amendments. Last year one of the two amendments were agreed, but Councillor Harden said he would love to see an alternative budget submitted by the Lib/Dem Group believing there was a chance they could run the administration.

Councillor B Chapman said the amendment was a complete waste of Council time

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and asked if the amendment was delivered late because the Lib/Dems had to find locations for the 51 bins. He said he would like evidence of where the bins would be located and suggested they let the Portfolio Holder know, so that this could be considered in the budget for next year.

Councillor Bhinder agreed that all Councillors have problems with litter but he did all he could to work with his community in Grovehill to improve the situation. He said he was constantly vigilant and litter problems had been declining since he started a community group to put the responsibility on the residents rather than reliance on the Council. He said that there had been particular problems over the last nine months with fly-tipping at the Grovehill shopping area and he praised the Council for actioning prosecutions. He finished by saying he did not need a bin.

Councillor Taylor said he was trying to balance the two sides of the argument. He said he had worked with groups such as Neighbourhood Action and Enforcement Officers to look at litter and dog fouling and this work had already been built into the current budget. He said an enormous amount of time, energy and effort by Officers and Members from both parties had gone into the budget but the Lib/Dem amendment proposal had caused aggravation. A lot of time had also been spent by Members debating the budget, providing lots of opportunities for people to input into the budget.

Councillor Tindall exercised his right to reply and thanked Councillor Taylor for his reasoned approach to the debate. He agreed with Councillor Harden that his group had over the years worked on the basis of presenting one or two items so as not to waste Officers time. He felt that the Chamber was being used to score political points; most of the contributions made by the Conservative group were praise for various projects and could have been delivered at the Group meeting. He said exercising democracy was never a waste of time and commended the amendment to a vote.

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

- £30k for the supply and installation of 51 extra dual litter and recycling bins and declared it to be lost;

7 Voting For, 34 Against and 1 Abstention.

In line with legal requirements, the names of the Members voting for and against the amendment were recorded as follows:

For: Councillor Harris N Hollinghurst, R Hollinghurst, Link, Mrs Rance, Tindall and Townsend (7).

Against: Councillors, Adeleke, Adshead, Anderson, Ayling, Mrs Bassadone, Bateman, Bhinder, H Chapman, Collins, Douris, Doole, Elliot, Fantham, Mrs Green, Griffiths, Guest, Harden, Hearn, Killen, Laws, Mahmood, Marshall, McKay, Peter, Reay, Ryan, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Tiley, Whitman, Williams, C Wyatt-Lowe and W Wyatt-Lowe (34)

Abstention: The Mayor (1)

Substantive Motion

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

Chairman

Councillor Hearn said she was pleased to support the budget and delighted that the Borough Council has allocated the sum of £100,000 for the Tring Town Plan. This money will enable Tring Town Council to enhance the town centre at a time when it is endeavouring to encourage business. It will also provide funding for many of the other objectives set out in the Town Plan.

Councillor Collins said he too would be supporting the budget. It enables us to continue with the Hemel Hempstead rejuvenation. He said it was a budget for the long-term future for Dacorum. In Berkhamsted there is a successful town centre with high occupancy rates and a balanced range of shops, services and restaurants. He said this budget supports the biggest need; additional car parking space to sustain this growth. He also thanked the Borough for their element of funding for the refurbishment of the canal tow paths through the town. As regards to the multi storey carpark, he was sure that a sensitive design would be achieved in this conservation area location. He asked if the Lib/Dem Members would speak to the two Lib/Dem members of Berkhamsted Town Council and encourage them both to support the new car park. He finished by thanking the Portfolio Holder for the speedy way that the Borough had passed on the full Council Tax Support Grant to the Town/Parish Councils.

Councillor Harris said he would not be able to support the budget. There is a 1.8% Council Tax increase which he thought excessive in the current times. Watford and Tree Rivers – which are both Lib/Dem run councils, have both put through a 0% increase. He said the reason that it was difficult to put forward amendments was because of the lack of detail in the budget; split by department rather than by item. A breakdown could be requested, but he did not want to waste officer time.

Councillor Adshead said that the Council was being asked to approve a budget that will secure the future of Dacorum in the form of a new town centre for Hemel Hempstead, more homes for families in the Borough, cleaner streets and public spaces, more facilities in community centres, sport and leisure facilities, a new bus interchange, more recycling, improvements to Maylands Business Park and the new Forum building. The Council Tax increase equates to less than £1 per month per household and was well worth it for all the benefits listed. He concluded by saying that he would be supporting the budget and encouraged all members to do the same.

Councillor Elliot referred to the 1.8% increase which he said was an increase of just 1p per day, whilst delivering fantastic services to residents. The Conservative administration did not cut services and that is why the Lib/Dems have never been in power in this Council and never will be.

N Hollinghurst referred to the tow path improvements through Berkhamsted and said that this was in fact one of the 45 projects of the Tring, Northchurch and Berkhamsted Urban Transport Plan. If the Borough Council are contributing to this County Council project, which is mainly funded by S.106 agreements (and will be funded by CIL in future) he asked, why the Council was not also contributing to another socially important matter of supporting bus routes to the villages and suburbs of the towns.

Councillor Reay said that the canal side improvements were put together by the Canal and River Trust. The Borough did agree to commit to a contribution because Berkhamsted Town Council itself made a significant contribution of £20,000.

Chairman

Councillor Douris said that Councillor Harris referred to the Lib/Dem run Watford Council. He said that Watford pay a significantly higher amount Band D Council Tax than we pay in Dacorum. He said that he was delighted to see that the Lib/Dem group must support the 1.8% Council Tax increase because if they didn't agree they would have taken the opportunity to propose a 0% increase.

Councillor Griffiths said that this budget has been through the OSC process at least twice and all Members had the opportunity to speak to officers to find out any details, even line by line; officers would have been legally required to do so. There would also have been the opportunity to come up with the dual litter bin proposal so that it could have been discussed in an open forum. She said she would suggest that if the Lib/Dem group are serious about delivering a 0% Council Tax increase, then a practical budget would need to be delivered by them, not just for this year, but for the future with forward planning. She added that this is a very good budget, it was a shame that the Council Tax has had to go up by 1.8% but she was delighted that the Council was able to continue with the application for the living wage for staff for the coming year.

Councillor Williams said that he was pleased to produce a budget of £70-80m with only minor adjustments. He said in some ways this is a slightly boring budget, but it was a rolling programme of a prudent sensible Conservative Administration who had run this Council for the last 14 years and which had continuing aspirations to run this Council for another 14 years. It knew that it had to balance its books and while raising the Council Tax was a tough decision there is no doubt that whatever happens on 7th May nationally, Local Government will not have more money over the next 5, 10 or even maybe 15 years and we need to raise the money locally to provide local services. The electorate accepts that you cannot have good services without paying for them.

The modest increase is £3.40 per year; under 1p a day on Dacorum's precept will still leave us some 40% below Watford's precept. This budget rolls forward the aspirations of which this Council has been working on over many years. It continues to invest in Hemel Hempstead's evolution, in the Watergardens and Town Centre, in Maylands to attract business to the area and investments in public car parking as well as £295k in resident parking/verge hardening and £100k in carpark refurbishment. Councillor Williams continued by saying that carparks are an asset to this authority and it would not be appropriate to take money from the long-term refurbishment programme to put it into resident parking because the maintenance of the Council's assets is a long-term planned programme to insure they do not deteriorate and continue to meet the needs of the public.

£14m in this budget has been allocated for new housing projects to roll forward the Council's aspirations to deliver at least 300 more homes. He added that he would like to be even more ambitious with this programme and over the next year will be working with member and officers to see if this can be achieved. This budget seeks to invest in services, maintain existing services, invest in our assets, deliver a better economy and to support the aspirations of our residents. He recommended the budget to Council.

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

34 Voting For, 0 Against and 8 Abstentions

For: Councillors, Adeleke, Adshead, Anderson, Ayling, Mrs Bassadone, Bateman, Bhinder, H Chapman, Collins, Douris, Doole, Elliot, Fantham, Mrs Green, Griffiths,

Chairman

Guest, Harden, Hearn, Killen, Laws, Mahmood, Marshall, McKay, Peter, Reay, Ryan, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Tiley, Whitman, Williams, C Wyatt-Lowe and W Wyatt-Lowe (34)

Abstentions: Councillor Harris, N Hollinghurst, R Hollinghurst, Link, Mrs Rance, Tindall, Townsend and The Mayor (8).

Council Tax Declaration 2014/15

It was moved by Councillor Williams, duly seconded and

Resolved:

That the following be approved:

1. Cabinet, at its meeting on 16 December 2014, calculated the following amounts for the year 2015/16 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) 54,637.7 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;
- 2) the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2015/16 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) £148,770,444.44 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) £138,303,485.00 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) £10,466,959.44 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;

Chairman

- (d) £191.57 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) £641,461.85 being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act;
- (f) £179.83 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;

(g) Part of the Council's Area	Band D Equivalent Combined £
Hemel Hempstead	179.83
Aldbury	192.36
Berkhamsted	199.01
Bovingdon	205.74
Chipperfield	214.88
Flamstead	231.82
Flaunden	209.77
Great Gaddesden	198.60
Kings Langley	220.54
Little Gaddesden	205.44
Markyate	216.57
Nash Mills	203.67
Nettleden	204.69
Northchurch	191.05
Tring Rural	200.62
Tring Town	204.50
Wigginton	193.32

(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;

- 3) it be noted that for the year 2015/16 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 in table 3(a);
- 4) That it be noted that for the year 2015/16 Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner 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 in table 3(a);

Chairman

- 5) 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 3b of the report as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2015/16 for each part of the area and for each of the categories of dwellings shown;
- 6) It be noted that in setting the Council Tax for 2015/16 the Council is required to have taken account of the report of the Chief Financial Officer on the robustness of the budget.

57. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

None.

58. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE DATES

Resolved:

1. That the Group Meeting date be changed from 18 May 2016 to 17 May 2016.
2. That the Annual Council Meeting date be changed from 19 May 2016 to 18 May 2016

59. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

None.

The meeting ended at 9.20pm

Chairman