

Public Document Pack



SUMMONS

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Wednesday 26 February 2020

DBC Council Chamber - The Forum

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the Dacorum Borough Council in the County of Hertfordshire to be held in the DBC Council Chamber - The Forum on Wednesday 26 February 2020 at 7.30 pm to transact the business set out below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "Sally Marshall".

**SALLY MARSHALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**Contact: Corporate & Democratic Support
ext 2209**

AGENDA

1. MINUTES (Pages 3 - 42)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 27 November 2019 and 22 January 2020 (to be circulated separately).

Agenda Item 1

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

27 NOVEMBER 2019

Present -

MEMBERS:

Douris (Mayor), Adeleke, Allen, Anderson, Banks, Barratt, Barry, Beauchamp, Bhinder, Birnie, Chapman, Claughton, Durrant, Elliot, England, Freedman, Griffiths, Guest, Hearn, Hobson, Hollinghurst, Link, Maddern, So Mahmood, Su Mahmood, McDowell, Oguchi, Peter, Pringle, Ransley, Riddick (Deputy Mayor), Rogers, Silwal, Sinha, Stevens, Symington, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Tindall, Timmis, Townsend, Uttley, Williams, Woolner (45)

OFFICERS:

The Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Finance and Operations), Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services), Group Manager (Legal & Corporate Services), C Oliveri (Communications and Consultation Officer) and T Angel (Minutes).

The meeting began at 7.30 pm.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2019 were agreed by the Members present and then signed by the Mayor.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 By the Mayor:

The Mayor announced the sad passing of former Liberal Democrat Councillor Geoff Lawrence (1987 – 1995) and one minutes silence was held in remembrance. Councillors Tindall and Williams shared their memories of him.

The Mayor then read the following statement:

“Members will be aware that we are in the Pre-election period and I would therefore like to remind Members that this meeting should not be used to make statements regarding national political issues. If any discussion should overlap into any national political issues, they will be interrupted. I have considered the two motions and two questions on the agenda tonight and have deemed that these are acceptable as they relate to predominantly local issues”

4.2 By the Chief Executive:

None.

4.3 By the Group Leaders:

Councillor Williams confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillors Arslan, Bassadone, Johnson and Wyatt-Lowe.

Councillor Tindall confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillor Bowden.

4.4 Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:

Councillor Williams, Leader of the Council

Councillor Williams had nothing to report but welcomed questions.

There were no questions.

Councillor Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

Councillor Anderson thanked the Mayor for attending the Best Kept Gardens Competition in Kings Langley which helped Parish colleagues raise over £1,000 for the British Waterways Experience. The money raised was considerably more than in previous years.

The Portfolio Holder presented his update as follows:

ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES

Waste

- Roll out of the food waste collection from flats across the borough was progressing well and was on target to be finished by March.
- New RCV's are due to start rolling in early November with rollout of Training for crews and techs planned over the coming weeks.
- The next meeting of the Herts Waste Partnership will be in January and will be a conference. The Leader has or will be invited along. He hoped there would be opportunities to raise some of the waste/refuse collection issues with top level speakers there.
- The refuse collection calendars will no longer be attached to bins. The calendar can be found on the website or can be requested by those without internet access. This has been included in Dacorum Digest. He said it was an expensive and time consuming practice.
- Carried out targeted work for Refill Hertfordshire and now have around 150 Refill Stations in Dacorum, which makes up approx. half of all the Refill Stations in Dacorum.

- Undertook Sustainable Clothes Swaps events in October with over 1,000 items being swapped.
- Held a reusables stall in town to promote both Refill Hertfordshire and Remember your Reusables campaign
- Held a stall in a supermarket for Recycle Week and ran a social media take over day. Launched a Terracycle crisp packet recycling point in the Forum to tie in with Recycle Week

Clean, Safe and Green

- Warners End playing fields now secured access with installation of bollards to prevent traveller incursion
- He has signed off the annual review of the council's environmental management system which analyses the amount of electricity, gas and water we use. It is important we focus on reducing those as part of our sustainability efforts.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor England said he welcomed the announcement about the refuse calendars being available on request. He asked if the Portfolio Holder would request that this is advertised via Facebook channels. The Portfolio Holder said he thought that may have already been done but he felt that if someone would see that information on Facebook they probably wouldn't need to request a calendar.

Councillor Tindall welcomed the savings for the refuse calendars. He asked that we ensure any vulnerable persons or those with assisted collections were not overlooked. The Portfolio Holder said they were mindful of those people when the decision was made and hoped that friends, relatives and neighbours would request calendars on behalf of those individuals. Councillor Tindall suggested taking a few copies of Dacorum Digest along to any assisted collections to make those individuals aware of the change. The Portfolio Holder said he would find out if that is possible and let Councillor Tindall know.

Councillor Williams, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Contracted Services

Councillor Williams said the Teams were very busy with Election duties and understood everything was running smoothly. He said the Election had made some slight changes to the committee diary over the next few weeks but that is to be expected with all the extra duties.

He advised that everything was on course with the multi-storey car park in Berkhamsted and the planning extensions for The Moor Car Park were making way through the system.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor Tindall expressed his thanks to all the staff involved with the Elections and said he understood it was a pressured time. He asked if we could pass on our congratulations and gratitude for their hard work. The Portfolio Holder agreed he would pass this on.

Councillor Banks, Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services

The Portfolio Holder presented her update as follows:

Environmental and Community Protection:

- The Public Space Protection Orders have gone live across the Borough. Both the Operations & the Anti-Social Behaviour Teams along with the Police have been promoting these Orders, a significant amount of time has been spent informing, education and promoting these orders.
- With reference to Dog PSPO we've delivered early morning and evening patrols with the Enforcement team across Dacorum.
- Turning to the Town Centre PSPO prohibiting cycling in the pedestrian areas, we have completed, 1 Education Day, sent letters to all schools and held 2 Enforcement Days,
- The Environmental Enforcement Team have managed to successfully prosecute two serial fly-tippers.

Members will be pleased to note £2223.56 fine, victim surcharge and cost is the price residents can expect to pay for fly tipping on our door step.

- Air Quality,

Members will be aware that Dacorum borough council has a legal duty to monitor air quality and to address concerns through our Air Quality Action Plan.

We all acknowledge vehicle emissions are a major contributor to local environment quality and climate change.

Although, we have this crucial responsibility to monitor air quality, protecting and safe guarding our residents, the major influence to reduce vehicle pollutants from our roads, rests with Hertfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority.

I hope that Hertfordshire County Council through the management and development of the borough's highway infrastructure fully engages with us and supports our concerns.

The terms of reference have now been set for the Air Quality Steering Group. The first meeting has been held in October 2019.

There is draft planning guidance that has been drafted by the Lead Environmental Health Officer and sent to relevant parties for comment.

We have also submitted a bid to DEFRA for a feasibility study for a Clean Air Zone. This will be determined in early 2020.

The steering group is due to meet in Late January, to be chaired by Interim Assistant Director Bill Buckley whom I welcome warmly.

People and Communities Group

Community partnerships and Leisure

Healthy Hub: It is anticipated that Healthy Hub Dacorum will launch in April 2020.

As Members will be aware this initiative is funded by Public Health, our Healthy Hub based at the leisure centre will provide a one stop shop for Dacorum residents to improve their health and wellbeing.

We plan to hold Healthy Hub Pop-up events, in local community centres or town centres across Dacorum and will provide outreach to rural areas to raise awareness of the services available along with running a number of services on the day.

The Healthy Hub will be promoted through a strong social media. We will be working with a number of partners to deliver this project including Everyone Active, Public Health CAB, and CAD, and we are continuing to engage with other local stakeholders.

- **Hertfordshire Year Of Culture 2020**

We are now seeing some pilot projects roll out, in October we celebrated Herts Heroines, where stories told by our supported housing tenants were performed at Trestle Theatre Company. We took several tenants to see the performance and they were guests of honour. There is a funding bid going in for a full performance in Dacorum next year.

We also held a trial Fun Palace with the library in The Forum. A Fun Palace is a free community cultural event, which brought over 1000 through the doors during the day. We are planning to expand this for next year.

A funding bid is being submitted in December for a skateboarding, music and graffiti art project for young people at the XC centre and we are awaiting the outcome of a cross county dance project bid submitted last month.

January will see the launch of online creative challenges and is the month for encouraging people to 'try something new'. All districts will be highlighting the cultural venues in the area and their programmes, there are activities planned such as intergenerational dance and music workshops at Boxmoor Trust, a Chatter Table event at Centre in the Park addressing loneliness and isolation, and a cultural toolkit for schools.

Customer Services

I please to advise we have recruited a new Lead Officer and another full time Officer have started work with the CSU and the new Payment Kiosks for the Forum have been ordered and should be on line from April 2020 to replace our current kit as this IT is no longer supported.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor England asked if the Portfolio Holder could advise the number of PSPO's patrols undertaken AM and PM, how many DBC staff and other resources were involved, and finally the typical duration of patrols. The Portfolio Holder said she would need to do some investigations and let Councillor England know.

Councillor Freedman said given the level of upset and concern caused to the regular users of the Berkhamsted leisure facilities and loss of local jobs when Everyone Active took the decision to replace staff with an unstaffed vending machine, does the Portfolio Holder agree that it is time to release certain details of the contract to show the public which aspects of the leisure provision the council deem important enough to protect. The Mayor advised that question should have been asked to the Portfolio Holder of Corporate and Contracted Services. Councillor Williams advised he would respond separately to Councillor Freedman.

Councillor Hobson said she was pleased we were looking at air quality as it was very important. She felt there wasn't enough detail in the report and asked who sat on the steering group, where it was reported to and finally where the clean air zones were. The Portfolio Holder advised the steering group was chaired by Assistant Director Bill Buckley, and she attended along with officers from the Environmental Health Team. She then advised that the three areas were London Road, Apsley and Northchurch. Councillor Hobson asked if there was any chance of an independent person being on the steering group. The Portfolio Holder said she would ask the question and let Councillor Hobson know.

Councillor Timmis said she was pleased to see that Dacorum were actively engaging in the Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020. She asked for more information on the fun palace. The Portfolio Holder explained that the fun palace was an initiative in an ongoing campaign for communities at the heart of culture. She advised that families have the chance to share arts, crafts, science, technology, digital, sports, heritage and activities.

Councillor R Sutton asked if the Portfolio Holder would agree that the Marlowes was a safer place now that cyclists can no longer ride through. She asked what action was taken, if any. The Portfolio Holder agreed and explained that officers focused on educating cyclists, however they have issued 8 warning letters and 4 fixed penalty notices.

Councillor G Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Infrastructure

The Portfolio Holder had nothing to report but invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor Guest asked how far along Dacorum was with the aspiration that when a tree must be felled two more are planted. The Portfolio Holder advised that the intention with all new developments was to offer guidelines to ensure this happens. He said they wanted to maintain a green borough and it was a priority.

Councillor Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

The Portfolio Holder presented his update as follows:

REVENUES, BENEFITS & FRAUD

The collection of business rates and council tax remains in line with the council's expectations, and hence the service continues to perform well.

I am pleased to say that for the second year running, the benefits service has received the highest level of assurance from internal audit. This illustrates the continued hard work put in by the team to make sure that benefits awards are accurate and processed efficiently. The revenues team has been carrying out an annual review of single person discounts. This exercise is nearly completed, and has identified about 500 accounts where the discount no longer applies. This directly translates into additional Council Tax income the Council would not otherwise have received.

FINANCIAL SERVICES

The Council's upgraded financial system has been successfully implemented. Processes associated with the system are now part of business as usual. This excellent outcome is the

result of hard work from ICT and Finance colleagues in supporting the organisation through the upgrade.

20/21 Council budget preparations are well underway. A series of budget challenge meetings have taken place involving the Chief Officer Group and Budget Review Group. Draft budget proposals have been published and will be presented before the Joint Overview and Scrutiny on the 3rd of December.

COMMERCIAL ASSETS & PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT

Investment Properties/Commercial Portfolio

The commercial assets portfolio continues to perform very strongly with a 96% occupancy level and with low rent arrears. The portfolio continues to provide a significant net financial return to the councils overall budget.

Garage Disposals

As part of the next phase of the Garage Disposal Strategy, 18 sites were reviewed by Housing Associations to assess viability. Further to that initial appraisal and subject to contract, Heads of Terms have been agreed for the purchase of 7 sites to develop additional affordable homes for the Borough. Solicitors have been instructed on behalf of the respective parties and are working through pre-contract due diligence and enquiries.

Bunkers Park

Following extensive archaeological surveys to meet Planning obligations, construction commenced at the beginning of June, and the construction programme is on schedule and progressing well for completion by end of this calendar year. The cemetery reception and offices building is now completed and the final road laying and landscaping will continue to conclusion.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor Tindall referred to page 11 of the minutes from the September meeting. He felt that the statistics quoted in the last paragraph were misrepresented and asked for that to be corrected. The Portfolio Holder said he would ensure that was actioned.

Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing

The Portfolio Holder presented her update as follows;

TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER SERVICES

- Sheltered housing residents are being offered a more person centred support approach following the introduction of Outcome Star to assist in providing a better understanding of their support needs.
- The Sheltered housing service had its annual review by Erosh (the national consortium for sheltered and retirement housing). The feedback from the assessor, tenants and staff was positive and will now be preparing for a recertification next year.
- The Tenancy Sustainment Team continue to have some positive outcomes: supporting tenants to reduce rent arrears, obtain welfare benefit payments, move to smaller homes and engaging with the mental health and other external support services. Also to address hoarding, they have worked with 2 tenants to clear their homes making them and their neighbours safer and improving the condition of our properties.

STRATEGIC HOUSING

- A dedicated street outreach worker is now in post, working with multi-agency action team, rough sleeping numbers have reduced from 23 to 11 people in the last two months.
- The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol has been in place from 7th November and expected to end on Tuesday 19th November, which will be 12 consecutive nights. So far we have accommodated 12 individuals, total of 26 stays.
- A successful multi-agency stakeholder engagement event was held to assist in formulation of the new Homeless & Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- The PRS (private rented sector) team successfully engaged with partners the Fire Service and Hightown Housing Association, to reduce significant fire risk at approximately 90 units of accommodation in the Town Centre.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

- Corn Mill Court in Berkhamsted is now fully occupied and the residents are very happy in their new homes.
- Work on site progressing well at Magenta Court and Martindale and the two garage sites Northend and Westerdale.
- Eastwick Row planning application approved.
- Coniston Road in Kings Langley, the scheme has been submitted to planning.
- Other sites, St Margaret's, Paradise Fields, and Bulbourne outline designs being completed and considering feasibility for use of off-site construction
- Contractor appointed for development in Gaddesden Row due to start on site in February 2020

PROPERTY AND PLACE

- Consultant in place to progress the action plan and ongoing management of garages. Programmed works are progressing well with Year to date completions;
 - Kitchens - 155
 - Bathrooms – 116
 - Windows – 22
 - Doors – 231
- Fire upgrade projects and external wall insulation projects progressing well
- The electrical testing EICR programme 2017-2019 continues and of the 10115 required tests, 90% have been completed.

Questions:

Councillor Hobson asked what areas the homeless persons were found, and how confident she was that we were reaching everyone that needed help. The Portfolio Holder replied they covered the whole of Dacorum. She then explained that staff scan the areas of Dacorum and each of the individuals that were found have someone working with them.

Councillor Hollinghurst asked if the wooden staircases in Cherry Bounce had been replaced with a non-flammable material. The Portfolio Holder said staff carried out fire assessments on all our properties on an annual basis, however she wasn't aware of that specific case so she said she would provide a written response to him.

5. MOTION

There were two motions to be considered.

The following motion was proposed by Councillor England, seconded by Councillor Tindall, and unanimously agreed with the following amendment from the Conservative Party:

Delete paragraph 2.i and renumber ii and iii as I and ii

Chalk Streams

Dacorum has internationally recognised rare natural chalk streams deserving protection and support, rarity to the point where even the World Wildlife Fund have suggested that they should be given special protection. The existing Dacorum Core Strategy documents acknowledge the importance of this asset in supporting endangered species and it is noted that the quality of these chalk streams is measured according to the amount of water present, balance of the water chemistry and the biodiversity of the water habitats supported by flow. Therefore,

1. This Council

- a. notes with concern the perilous state of the Gade and Bulbourne rivers in respect of vitality and water levels, and
- b. expresses concern about the depletion of water resources by groundwater abstraction and the harm being caused to the ecology and biodiversity of the local chalk streams.

2. This Council

a. instructs officers to:

i. Write to the Dacorum Environmental Forum – Water Group to ask for their comments as to how the Rivers Gade, Ver and Bulbourne could be managed in the future so that they are maintained as healthy and vibrant chalk streams, these comments to be forwarded to the Environment Agency as part of the following letter to the EA,

ii. write to the Environment Agency (EA) to express the alarm of this Council as to the current poor environmental health of these important chalk streams and to ask the EA to explain to the Council how they intend to retain, protect and manage the rivers Gade, Ver and Bulbourne in the future, this explanation to also set out the EA's requirements of Affinity Water and Thames Water to adapt the sourcing of water

iii. Consider the increased water resources that will need to be provided by Affinity Water and Thames Water for the anticipated local increase in housing development, and write to the Planning Inspectorate and the Environment Agency, making them aware of the issues and seeking their advice with regard to the future development

3. This Council, in furtherance of its objects, will

- a. work with all relevant agencies to ensure that the decline in the quality of our chalk streams is halted and reversed, and

- b. undertake to ensure that our Local Plan will be sympathetic to these rivers and that this council will do all that is possible to protect these important ecosystems

Councillors Allen, Claughton, Pringle, Anderson and Beauchamp also spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor Williams supported the amended Motion and said we will be guided by the experts on the matter. He said we would need to seek support from the Environment Agency and looked forward to the feedback for future action.

The following Motion was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Hobson and unanimously agreed with the following amendment from the Conservative Party:

Delete the two references to Virgin as they will no longer be running the service from the 8th December

Rail Services Motion

"This Council regrets the recent very poor standard of rail services provided by LNWR, Southern and Virgin. Dacorum has four rail stations, namely Apsley, Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring, and Dacorum residents have suffered from appalling and lengthy delays, in particular when using the return journeys from London Euston.

This Council requests the Chief Executive to write to LNWR, Southern and Virgin

- a. expressing our dissatisfaction with the present standard of service, and
- b. demanding an explanation regarding recent failures in performance, and
- c. seeking a commitment to an improved service for our commuting residents."

6. QUESTIONS

Written question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Uttley:

(1) The Climate Emergency was declared on 17th July and notwithstanding the need for planning, there has not, as yet been what could be called an "emergency" reaction.

At the last Full Council, Liberal Democrat Councillors queried the cabinet on climate emergency action taken by the Council and were offered a general confirmation that work was ongoing towards this. For the Council to show that it is taking the climate change emergency seriously, it is important that initial benchmarks and metrics are put in place, so that we can evidence our progress towards net zero.

(2) Therefore, in seeking to ensure that the Council and the public are as well informed as possible, both of:

- A) the current position of Dacorum in relation to Climate Emergency metrics, and
 - B) the actions being taken by the Council as first steps to prevent the Climate Emergency
- this written question tries to identify some important potential routes the Borough could take:
- 3) Carbon emissions data collected by the government for road transport, domestic, commercial, agricultural and industrial emissions show that for the Dacorum area, per capita carbon emissions as calculated in 2017 currently stand at 4.4 tons per annum.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2017>

These metrics, although useful, take a long time to collect and as such do not allow for real time tracking of progress. They also do not include estimates for carbon emissions which relate to individual action, such as that embedded in our dietary and transport choices.

(4) However, this effort from central government could be usefully supplemented by DBC through setting our own metrics, which measure local progress in areas such as:

- A- energy efficiency of council owned properties (improved insulation and use of LED lighting);
- B)- carbon emissions relating to the provision of heat and power to those properties, (switch to efficient equipment, from Gas to Electricity where environmentally economic to do so, and switch to renewable tariffs);
- C)- Waste and recycling (improvements in proportion of waste recycled in the UK, and reductions in overall waste created) ;
- D)- trees (notional CO₂ sequestered by trees in Dacorum, reflecting the net number of trees planted);
- E)- habitat (notional CO₂ sequestered by habitat improvements across Dacorum).
- F)- Carbon emitted by council owned and contractor transport (switching to electric vans, buses and other commercial vehicles);
- G)- Passenger figures for buses on local routes (to train station or town);

(5) we should define metrics (or use those already in place such as SAP for energy rating residential properties) which will allow DBC to take regular stock of and track our progress towards net zero in 2030, with the reasonable expectation that these local improvements would then be reflected in the high level government data for Dacorum.

(6) Therefore will the Leader of the Council explain:

- a. What action is being taken to establish climate emergency metrics such as those listed above?

- b. What structures have been set up to undertake the urgent tasks needed to respond to the emergency?
- c. Whether the Cabinet will support the setting up of a cross-party task and finish group to set the metrics and performance measures.
- d. Whether the Cabinet will agree that these metrics be used by the O&S committees to help the Council maintain momentum in moving towards net zero?
- e. When will the appropriate O&S committees be given the opportunity to consider what steps the council has taken to respond to the emergency?

Councillor Williams said he took the presumption that the question appeared to suggest we hadn't reacted quickly enough to the resolution it passed on 17th July which he took issue with. He also felt that the Council didn't wait until 17th July to take action and felt it would be useful to list some of the steps they had already taken. He drew attention to how energy efficient the Forum and Maylands Business Centre were and how these buildings had been planned for and worked on for several years. We introduced flexible working and considered the environmental impact of people travelling to work. A sustainability regime for the Old Town Hall. Even minor things such as DBC lamppost bulbs being transferred to LED lighting. The Local Plan will incorporate the maximum level of sustainability measures that can be enforced with national guidance. The council house new build programme and making existing council houses more efficient. We are members of the Herts Warm Homes Scheme and Herts Sustainability Forum. Clean, Safe and Green have moved away from petrol powered equipment on to battery operated where possible. We have committed to planting 1000 trees by the end of next year. He has asked officers since July to look at our energy contracts and we are moving towards an entirely renewable green energy provision for our electricity and to provide carbon offset for some of our gas consumption. We buy our electricity 12 months in advance so the change of contracts would be from October.

He then said he would answer each question at a time:

- 6a) We are considering the use of SCATTER (Setting City Area Targets and Trajectories for Emissions Reductions) developed by Manchester University, the Tyndall Company and Nottingham and Manchester City Councils – as the means of establishing both the Council and Borough wide baseline position on CO2 emissions and the metrics to be used going forward.
- 6b) At Officer level the work is being led and sponsored by Mark Gaynor, supported by Mark Brookes and Ben Hosier, and the Corporate Sustainability Working Group is being refashioned to focus on the Climate Emergency. An Action Plan will be put together early in the New Year. This is a priority for every service within the Council. A Climate Change Officer will be appointed in the New Year to bring specific expertise in.
- 6c) he said it wasn't their intention to set up a cross-party task and finish group because they don't feel it is necessary.
- 6d) The metrics established by the baseline work and the Action Plan will be made available to OSCs to ensure both involvement and scrutiny.
- 6e) On completion of the Action Plan in the New Year.

Councillor Uttley referred to the point about changing energy suppliers to green energy and asked if that was for council buildings only or for council properties as well. Councillor Williams advised it would only be for properties that we're responsible for contracting energy for, such as sheltered accommodation and The Forum.

Councillor Uttley referred to the commitment of planting more trees and asked if the Leader agreed that there was a requirement to accelerate our progress in response to the acceleration of the climate emergency. Councillor Williams said he recognised the need to plant more trees than we remove and that in itself was an acceleration of our programme. He said he agreed that we need to accelerate the issue and we are taking the necessary actions.

Councillor Uttley said she was using trees as an example of the acceleration of the issue. She said it appeared that other councils were making more progress than Dacorum with things such as council house schemes but as standard rather than a trial and that is something we should consider as part of our plan. She asked if he agreed that actions such as this but not specifically this would be a good reflection of the acceleration required. Councillor Williams said it was easier to raise the standard on our own stock and plans but for others we need to rely on legislation and will do all we can within the Local Plan to achieve the highest possible standard. He said there will always be people that feel they're not doing enough but he said they would welcome more robust guidance and support through the national planning process to strengthen and improve our environmental standards.

Written question to the Portfolio Holder for Housing from Councillor Tindall:

At a time when the Domestic Abuse Bill is awaiting the reconvening of Parliament to complete its passage to becoming an Act, and with all indications that the cancer of domestic abuse has not weakened in communities across the UK, I should be grateful if you would explain why funding of the Hemel Hempstead Refuge has been withdrawn which will mean it will close its doors to victims seeking help on 20th January 2020.

Councillor Griffiths explained that this relates to a county wide refuge provision that was awarded by HCC to Safer Places. When the contract was awarded Hightown refused to allow Dacorum's refuge building to be adopted as part of the contract, this left us without a Dacorum refuge. We engaged Hightown and agreed to ensure the building remained open, however it was stipulated by Hightown that they would only use the building for low level Dacorum cases. Unfortunately most of our cases are of a high level and we are therefore unable to access, meaning there is no refuge provision being provided in our area. Hightown have been engaging with us regularly and have been in discussions with HCC about alternative use of the building which would provide them with a greater income. Hightown wanted a commitment from DBC for the next two years that we would continue to fund the support worker. Due to low level of numbers assisted through the accommodation, DBC did not feel this was viable to extend. It is important to know that the HCC Safer Places contract are in the process of purchasing the property in the Dacorum area and DBC may move to out of area refuge placements. In line with the Domestic Abuse bill and the new duties are likely to be implemented under guidance, DBC will be in partnership with the Community Safety Team and will be undertaking a review of Domestic Abuse provision in the Borough.

7. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

None.

8. CABINET REFERRALS

The following referrals from Cabinet on 15 October 2019 were agreed:

8.1 CA/096/19 Tring Conservation Area Review

Decision

- 1) the Tring Conservation Area: Character Appraisal and Management Proposals be adopted as:
 - a) Technical guidance for use in development management and to inform the Dacorum Borough Local Plan.
 - b) A material planning consideration for use in the determination of planning applications.

Delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Planning, Development & Regeneration to undertake all steps required for the completion of the 'Locally Listed Buildings' section of the Appraisal, to be attached as an Appendix. This includes the assessment, consultation and adoption of this Appendix.

8.2 CA/097/19 HRA Business Plan

Decision

- 1) The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan be approved
- 2) revised development programme budgets as set out in Section 8.3 of the Cabinet report be approved

The following referrals from Cabinet on 12 November 2019 were agreed:

8.3 CA/105/19 Budget Monitoring Q2 Report

Decision

2. The approval of the revised capital programme to move £3.1m slippage identified at Quarter 2 into financial year 2020/21 as detailed in Appendix C;
3. The approval of a supplementary revenue budget funded from reserves:
 - Supplementary budget of £30k in the Garage service, funded from the Invest to Save reserve, to fund a specialist project manager to lead on improvements to the garage letting process
4. The approval of supplementary capital budgets required to deliver several service changes as set out below:
 - A capital budget of £25k to fund payment kiosks in the Customer Services Unit.
 - Additional capital budget of £400k to deliver the Bunkers Farm project.

- Supplementary budget of £161k in the HRA capital budget Strategic Acquisitions, to fund buy-back of a leasehold property.

8.4 CA/106/19 Council Tax Support Scheme 2020/21

Decision

To not revise or replace the current Council Tax Support scheme for 2020/21.

8.5 CA/109/19 Review of Commissioning and Procurement Standing Orders and Strategy

Decision

To agree the Commissioning & Procurement Strategy (appendix 1) and the revised Commissioning and Procurement Standing Orders (appendix 3).

8.6 CA/110/19 New Normal Technology Pilot Projects

Councillor Tindall said he was generally in favour of artificial intelligence for repetitive tasks but can the relevant OSC's be reported back to. Councillor Williams said they would be reporting back to the OSC's.

Decision

The approval to release £93,495 from the Management of Change reserve to fund this work.

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

None.

10. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

None.

11. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE DATES

The following changes to committee dates were agreed:

- Move Member Development Steering Group from 4 December 2019 to 7 January 2020.
- Move Health in Dacorum from 11 December 2019 to 29 January 2020.
- Move Development Management Committee from 12 December 2019 to 17 December 2019.
- Schedule an additional Cabinet meeting to be held on 7 April 2020 (if required).

12. USE OF CAMELOT RFC AS A POLLING STATION FOR THE UK PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION ON 12 DECEMBER 2019

The use of Camelot RFC as a Polling Station for the UK Parliamentary Election on 12 December 2019 was agreed.

The meeting ended at 9.04 pm.

Public Document Pack

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

22 JANUARY 2020

Present:

MEMBERS:

Councillor Williams (Leader) Councillors, Adeleke, Allen, Anderson, Banks, Barrett, Barry, Mrs Bassadone, Beauchamp, Birnie, Herbert Chapman, Claughton, Douris, Durrant, Elliot, England, Freedman, Griffiths, Guest, P Hearn, Hobson, Hollinghurst, Johnson, Link, Mahmood, Mahmood, McDowell, Peter, Pringle, Ransley, Riddick, Rogers, Silwal, Sinha, Stevens, G Sutton, R Sutton, Symington, Taylor, Timmis, Tindall, Townsend, Uttley, Woolner and C Wyatt-Lowe

OFFICERS:

Corporate and Democratic Support Officer, Assistant Director - Corporate and Contracted Services, Corporate Director - Finance and Operations, Corporate Director - Housing & Regeneration, Group Manager (Legal & Corporate Services) and Chief Executive

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

1 MINUTES

There were no minutes available to be signed at this meeting.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 By the Mayor:

"In the lead up to Christmas I attended a number of carol services. On Christmas Day morning I attended two elderly persons care homes, Fire Stations and the Salvation Army.

Last week we had an excellent quiz night. Thank you to everyone that attended to support Sunnyside Rural Trust.

On Monday 27th January at 6pm in the market place there is a Holocaust Memorial to remember all those who have been affected by genocide. Everyone is welcome.

Tring Park presents KIPPS, the new half a sixpence musical in February. It is an exceptional performance and tickets are selling fast.

Finally, the civic dinner will be held on 27 March at Pendley Manor. Please support if you can."

4.2 By the Chief Executive:

None.

4.3 By the Group Leaders:

Councillor Williams confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillors Bhinder, Imarni, Oguchi, and Independent Member Councillor Maddern.

Councillor Tindall confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillor Bowden.

4.4 Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:

Councillor Williams, Leader of the Council

Councillor Williams had nothing to report but welcomed questions.

Questions:

Councillor Tindall said he understood that South West Herts group of local authorities had made some decisions on the Government's housing targets and were making representations to the Secretary of State. He asked for an update if this rumour is true. Councillor Williams believed it was a rumour as he hadn't heard that South West Herts had come to a conclusion. He felt Dacorum's position had always been very clear and we would know more information after the joint meeting on 12 February.

Councillor Stevens said the saga of the multi storey car park in Berkhamsted continues and he read out an email from a resident who was also a member of the parking forum concerning the lack of lighting. He asked for the Leader to investigate the issue. Councillor Williams said he carried out a visit to the site last Wednesday evening at approximately 7pm and confirmed it was dark but there was no electricity to the car park to provide lighting. He agreed he would carry out enquiries and come back to him as soon as possible on the matter.

There were no further questions.

Councillor Banks, Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services

The Portfolio Holder presented her update as follows:

Environmental Community Protection- Operations

CHAIRMAN

As we are all aware fly tipping is a problem for many of our communities. The good news is that the waste enforcement team have purchased 10 new cameras to help fight fly tipping across the borough. These cameras will be used covertly.

These cameras should provide better evidence to aid future prosecutions. In the last month 10 fixed penalty notices have been issued and 5 PACE interviews have been undertaken for littering and fly tipping offences.

Air Quality Management

There is some early indication of improving air quality across our three monitored areas - Northchurch, London Road and Lawn Lane.

We have completed monitoring for 2019, but we cannot produce a full and final dataset until mid-2020. This is because data is subject to validation and ratification. Once this completed, if it demonstrates we are below the objective levels again, we can start to consider revoking some AQMA.

There is no clear reason for this improvement as there has been no change to the local circumstances or evidence of any clear actions. It may be the result of improvements in vehicle technology or individual's behaviours or both. I look forward to reporting back to Council once the 2019 data has been validated.

Food and Health & Safety - Enforcement Activity Update

Following Voluntary Closure of (Dragon Garden) a premises in the Marlowes at the end of November for Food Hygiene Offences. The place re-opened after 2 days with significant improvements to cleanliness. 10 legal notices were served. For food hygiene improvements in training, documented procedures, gas safety, electrical safety etc.). The business has been invited to attend an interview under caution later in January.

Unfortunately officers were obstructed at another premises in the Marlowes (Shirella's Eatery) to check compliance with notices. Officers may now seek a warrant to exercise their powers of entry accompanied by a Police Officer.

A premises in (The Red Lion) Nash Mills have withdrawn their appeal against a noise abatement notice served against them for outside events. The notice is now live. The premise has been a source of complaints over many years despite informal interventions from both Environmental Health and Licensing, the complaints continued. On a positive note, since the service of the legal notice, no new complaints have been received by the Council.

Turning to People and Communities Group Service

Community Safety and Children Services, the adventure playgrounds, I am pleased to inform members -

Grovehill will be replacing all wooden play structures, funded by approved s106 money and 3G Sports Pitches for Adeyfield and Grovehill have seen their Tenders released to Market, looking to award contract in February.

May I remind members - **Annual Staff Recognition Scheme** – has now opened for all staff and Members to nominate staff under various categories such as apprentice of the year, employee of the year, Health and Safety champion?

Community partnerships and Leisure

Mr Mayor I would like to draw the attention of members to Hertfordshire Year of culture 2020

Dacorum raised the HYOC2020 flag outside the Forum to see in Herts Year of Culture in January. The year launched with The January challenge online – 31 days of short creative challenges.

I am pleased to advise DBC, Watford and Three Rivers have been successful in getting £50k of funding for a cross-district intergenerational dance project. To get this level of funding on first application is unusual, so we are really pleased. The strong partnership is likely to have influenced the outcome and I would like to record my thanks to Officers involved in this bid.

We have held the first meeting of the Forum Choir, open (free of charge) to all people working in the Forum (not just DBC). This is being run in partnership with the library and Hertfordshire Music Service; initiated by DBC.

The Old Town Hall

Café – Reviewing options to provide this service in the New Year. We will work alongside new Arts Operation Lead Officer to help shape the future.

Ticket sales and Hires – On target and will surpass last year's numbers.

Customer Services

Fully staffed and all KPIs on achieved in December.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor Beauchamp asked if the Portfolio Holder would agree that the PSPO's were working towards making the Marlowes a safer place for visitors and shoppers and asked for a progress update. Councillor Banks said she was pleased to report that those on patrol had been engaging with individuals and making improvements, however they had also issued 5 warnings, 4 fixed penalties and 1 community protection warning notice.

Councillor Tindall asked if there were any plans to do anything with the rake in the auditorium at the Old Town Hall as it was quite steep and it could prevent people attending. Councillor Banks said she would keep him informed of any progress.

Councillor Guest asked if the Portfolio Holder agreed that the Christmas light switch on events help build community spirit and asked how the business community can be further engaged in such events. Councillor Banks said the events had been a huge success and particularly in her Ward of Grovehill they had involved the local

businesses, Church family, Rotary Club and residents to make it a big public event. She felt confident that this was happening in other Wards.

Councillor Hollinghurst asked if it would be possible to have marked cycle routes so that we can encourage a sustainable mode of transport. Councillor Banks replied works were still in progress on this matter but cycling would always be encouraged and supported by the Council.

Councillor Birnie said they had problems with cyclists in Queens Square in Adeyfield and asked if the Portfolio Holder would look to extend the PSPO's for other areas. Councillor Banks said she had sight of some emails about the issue in Queens Square and had asked officers to look at what steps can be taken for that area.

Councillor Williams, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Contracted Services

Councillor Williams said he was going to mention Berkhamsted Sports Centre but it was subject to a separate Cabinet report this evening. He then expressed his appreciation to the Elections Team for the success of the three Elections held in 2019, one being in December which was a surprise. He said everyone coped really well and the count went very smoothly.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor Stevens asked when the Town Council would be able to have a joint meeting with the Borough Council regarding the consultation for Berkhamsted Sports Centre. Councillor Williams said the consultation and the next stage of the project was approved at Cabinet last week and meeting dates will be agreed mutually. He added that public consultation will commence in the spring.

Councillor G Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Infrastructure

The Portfolio Holder presented his update as follows:

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN CENTRE CHRISTMAS LIGHTS

- Christmas, the Christmas lights switch on was- changed to Saturday (from Sunday in the previous years) and ran until 7pm. All who fed back were positive about these changes – There was an increase in footfall of 2000 people from last year (Marlowes Data)
- Now that the Hemel Hempstead Town Centre BID is in place, the event benefited from its input with DBC, the BID, the Market Operator, Marlowes and The Riverside shopping centres working together to deliver what was a very successful event. It provides a great platform to help us all work together to improve the event year on year.

SOUTH WEST HERTS JOINT STRATEGIC PLAN

- As Members may be aware, this is a joint initiative between Dacorum, St Albans, Hertsmere, Watford and Three Rivers and Hertfordshire County Council to look at the future shape and extent of development that may be needed in South West Herts, and how we can work together to secure the best locations for development and address wider infrastructure needs in the long term, to around 2050.
- Just a reminder that there will be a briefing for all Members on 12 February 2020 in the Council Chamber, starting at 7.30 pm and I would encourage you all to attend.

DEVELOPING SUSTAINABLE TRAVEL IN HEMEL HEMPSTEAD

- Last month, on the 5th December, the Go Smart project, a two year project to promote sustainable travel choices and solutions, was launched at The Maylands Building.
- A partnership initiative between DBC, HCC, SADC and Hertfordshire LEP/Herts IQ, the project is developing solutions to give people choices about their travel as an alternative to single-occupancy car and other vehicle use.
- The project has started looking at improving sustainable transport links between Hemel Hempstead station, the Town Centre and Maylands. It will pilot some innovative solutions working with businesses at Maylands.

CONSERVATION SUCCESS IN LEVERSTOCK GREEN

- Finally, I would like to draw to Members' attention a success story which has brought new life back to Frog Island in Leverstock Green, a grade II listed building which dates from the 17th century.
- The building appears to have been originally a single bay timber framed cottage later extended in the 18th century.
- Used as a summer house in the early 20th century, by 2010 it was in such a poor condition it had to be restored as part of a redevelopment on the site.
- Working closely with the new owner's builder, the Council's Officers agreed a comprehensive scheme of repair. The building turned out to have been in a worse condition than initially thought. The roof had to be completely stripped, cement ceilings, which were causing the roof to sag, removed and replaced with lightweight breathable materials. Walls cleaned and re-plastered, timber repair works, repointing and most of the windows replaced. Working closely with the builder much of the original historic fabric was preserved, the cottage successfully restored and brought back into an ancillary use.
- The photos show the building before, during and after the works and I hope you will agree with me that this is a success story of collaborative working between the site owner and the Council to restore this small but significant part of the rich building heritage we have in the Borough.

CHAIRMAN

- Please don't ask me how the building got the name "Frog Island" but after some extensive research I found reference to it on a website called "Local Drove Roads" the item picks up from a description of a drover's road from Cupid Green Lane:-
- So, disappointment...? No, far from it. CGL would have led, in its drunken fashion, south to Frogs Island in Leverstock Green at the bottom RH corner of Hemel - and there, in the back garden of a modern house, for Heaven's sake, is the most perfect little drovers' annexe. (#4,5) It is C17/18, says Historic England, & was originally the property of the Red Lion, a field away, which used it, according to Barbara Chapman, as "accommodation for ostlers". Well, maybe the odd ostler slept there, but WE know who it was for, don't we?
And I bet the owners of the houses on that field separating the Red Lion from the annexe have gardens with rich soil...
- I think that there may be some reference to "Wild Oats" associated with this quaint little cottage!



Questions:

Councillor Claughton asked what system was in place to monitor and enforce compliance in relation to the requirement to plant more trees. Councillor Sutton advised that they were currently reviewing the trees and woodlands policy and the requirement for new developments to have more trees planted than removed. Councillor Claughton asked what the point of the policy was if it wasn't being

monitored and enforced. Councillor Sutton advised it wasn't policy yet but it was part of the Local Plan.

Councillor Ransley asked why objections weren't made by DBC in relation to the Luton Airport planning site. Councillor Sutton advised that strong objections were made by DBC and he would try and make them available for Councillor Ransley to view.

Councillor Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

The Portfolio Holder presented his update as follows:

Financial Services

The Council Tax base for 2020/21 was approved by Cabinet in December, completing the first stage of the process for the setting of Council Tax for 2020/21.

Growth in the Council tax base has exceeded expectation over the last 12 months, and the latest projections suggest that this trend of accelerated growth will continue into next year. Growth in the tax base leads to growth in council tax revenues for the council, providing additional resources to support front line services.

The second stage of this process is the formal approval of budgets and proposed Council Tax levels for 2020/21

Draft budget proposals were presented to Joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee in early December for comment and feedback. These draft proposals detailed a balanced budget position for 20/21, delivering on the savings target of £780k whilst continuing to protect front line services.

The draft budget papers in December were produced before Central Government released any details on council funding for next financial year, and so were necessarily predicated on assumptions.

On 20 December 2019, the Secretary of State announced the Provisional Local Government Finance Settlement for 2020/21. The announcement confirmed the funding assumptions within the DBC draft budget were accurate, and that no change would be required to the draft budget proposals.

The most significant assumptions that were in the December draft and that can now progress are:

- The council tax referendum threshold for districts is at the higher of £5 or 2% - £5 for DBC
- That negative RSG would continue to be funded by Central Government in 2021 – one-off funding that enables DBC to proceed with the £1.6m contribution to reserves outlined at the Joint OSC in December

The finance team is now in the process of preparing the final budget proposals for consideration in February.

As the Council enters the final quarter of the financial year, the Finance Team is now beginning to focus on the closure of the Council's accounts for 2019/20.

Commercial Assets and Property Development.

Commercial Assets Service.

The service continues to work hard with tenants to strike the challenging balance between the commercial and social implications of its commercial assets.

The very real contribution the Estates team makes to supporting our local communities and shopping parades through a difficult retail environment is demonstrated by its maintaining an occupancy rate in excess of 95% for the council's commercial units, whilst at the same time exceeding a challenging income target of £5m – the Council's largest income stream.

This service is involved in 2 key strategic projects that have continued to progress during December;

1. Bunkers Park Cemetery

Although the wet weather has continued through December the construction programme of the new cemetery at Bunkers Park has continued and is on schedule and progressing well for completion shortly. Final planting will be undertaken in early spring 2020 to benefit from milder drier weather conditions, and then the new cemetery, to be called Poppy Fields, will open in late summer.

2. Garage Disposals

As part of the next phase of the Garage Disposal Strategy, 18 sites were reviewed by Housing Associations to assess viability.

Further to that initial appraisal and subject to contract, Heads of Terms have been agreed with Thrive Homes for the purchase of 7 sites to develop much needed affordable homes for the Borough. Solicitors have been instructed on behalf of the respective parties and are working through pre-contract due diligence and enquiries.

Revenues and Benefits service

The revenues & benefits teams are continuing to work effectively, and are starting preparations for the 2020/21 annual billing and benefit uprating processes.

In the Queens speech prior to Christmas the Government announced a desire to increase in the business rates discount available for retailers from one third to one half of the bill. The exact details of this change have not yet been provided, but the team are hopeful that it will be received in time to be able to include the increased discount on the first bills sent for 2020/21.

We also continue to wait for information about the next phase of the universal credit rollout, which will move people onto UC even if they do not have a change in their circumstances. This is currently scheduled to take place between November 2020 and December 2023, but no information about when this will impact Dacorum residents has been announced.

CHAIRMAN

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor Birnie asked how many dwellings were responsible for the growth in the Band D tax base. Councillor Elliot advised there had been growth over 700 Band D's and projected growth in 20/21 of 1% which equates to 600 properties.

Councillor Adeleke asked how the name Poppy Fields was selected for the new cemetery. Councillor Sutton said there was a request to come up with a name for the cemetery and Councillor Rosie Sutton researched the site; it was covered with Poppies in season so it seemed the most appropriate name for it.

Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing

The Portfolio Holder presented her update as follows;

TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER SERVICES

- Following formal consultation the Anti-social Behaviour team has moved from Environmental and Community Protection to Housing. This will improve the service residents receive and prevent duplication between the teams when dealing with cases involving council tenants. A more detailed briefing will be prepared and circulated to members to clarify the roles and responsibilities of this and the other teams involved in nuisance behaviour across the council.
- Following the rent free weeks the housing income team have continued to perform well under increased pressure from Universal Credit. Over 1100 tenants are now receiving their housing costs directly and while arrears for this group are higher than those on Housing Benefit, the levels have reduced on the last quarter due to persistence from income Officers and the Universal Credit Officer. Former tenant arrears as a percentage of annual debit are also down to 0.73% from 1.35% showing a reduction in the amount owed from tenants who are no longer living in a council property.
- Following analysis of rent arrears, further research has been carried out into what support may be needed by tenants who are 18-25 to sustain their tenancies. A number of tenants were involved in this process and have led to outcomes such as reviewing the advice given prior to being allocated a home and more support to set up utilities, apply for any benefits and adjust in the first few months of a new tenancy. We expect these changes to increase young tenants confidence and ability to maintain independence and sustain their first council home.

STRATEGIC HOUSING

- An additional £69,017 grant has been secured from MHCLG to enable delivery of a PRS Housing stock model report and associated project work
- In the six months since the introduction of the RSI funding to help us tackle rough sleeping, there has been a 50% reduction in rough sleeper numbers across the borough

- We have successfully assessed the first two clients against the Housing First model, properties have been identified in December 2019, with furnishing and move in complete early 2020
- Successful partnership work with Hightown Housing Association has seen 98% occupancy of the latest new build development at Peregrine Court following focussed allocations by the service

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

Kylna Court	Mobilising 12 month defects inspections
Corn Mill Court	Final Account in draft agreement. Car Park open. Final Party Wall works progressing.
Martindale	Progressing well on site. Completion July 2020.
Northend & Westerdale	Progressing well on site. Completion April 2020.
Magenta Court	Progressing well on site. Completion April/May 2020.
Paradise Fields	Close to completing land purchase, design team commenced Stage 2
Gaddesden Row	Contractor approved, Looking to start on site Feb 20
Eastwick Row	Out to tender for Principal Contractor
Coniston Road	Submitted for Planning – Goes to Committee on 30 th Jan
Resource	Reuel Thompspon starting as Lead Officer on 3 rd Feb
Other	Planning 300 new homes delivered event for the Summer

PROPERTY AND PLACE

- Consultant in place and garages management from both customer perspective and DBC management process.
- Garage lets per month are starting to increase up from 16 in July & August to 30 in November

GARAGE	April	May	June	July	August	September	October	November
TERMINATIONS	58	51	48	41	34	63	55	50

COMMENCEMENTS	16	8	3	16	16	22	23	30
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- Programmed works progressing well with Year to date element completions
 - Kitchens 240
 - Bathrooms 212
 - Windows 26
 - Doors 297
- Additional fire upgrade projects and external wall insulation projects on site
 - Electrical testing EICR programme 2017-2019 - Total properties requiring an EICR 10115 properties
 - An EICR has been completed 93% of Total properties and the remainder are in the access process.
 - Remainder are being worked through for both any remedial works and/or EICR
- Over 600 properties have received upgraded smoke alarm installations (LD2 standard)

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor England shared details of a 97 year old individual with mobility problems living on the first floor in Evelyn Sharp House sheltered scheme. He said the lift had been out of service for 14 days now and he asked how this was allowed to happen. Councillor Griffiths apologised to the tenants at Evelyn Sharp House for the inconvenience and gave reassurance that staff at Dacorum were doing all they could to resolve the issue. She said staff had arranged for GP's to go to the scheme and HCC were also aware. She explained that some of the schemes do not have lifts in them as they are not required to, and they will always do what they can to help tenants. She added that lessons will be learnt from this.

Councillor England asked if the Portfolio Holder agreed that a review of the housing risk register was urgently needed. Councillor Griffiths advised that we had a closed system at present but we couldn't change everything immediately and the lift in question was closed protocol. She added that lessons are always learnt and issues will be rectified as soon as possible.

Councillor Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

The Portfolio Holder presented his update as follows:

Thank you Mr Mayor for the enjoyable quiz night and Councillor G Sutton for the questions.

Refuse

CHAIRMAN

The Christmas bank holidays arrangement worked well.

Pleased to report that the Love Food, Hate Waste 2019 challenge worked extremely well and over 90% of participants saying they were more food savvy and changed their behaviours.

Commercial Waste – those on the SPAE OSC in previous years will know we have been losing income in competition with the private sector. We have commissioned experts to help us and officers were currently benchmarking the service prior to drawing up options for improvement which will be presented to the OSC. He has asked officers to include recycling, and food recycling from restaurants.

Vehicle Fleet

The new refuse trucks have arrived and have started doing the refuse rounds. When works have been completed on the VRS later this year, tours of Cupid Green will be organised for members.

CSG

More A41 litter signs to be arranged.

In talks with officers about the Grafitti clearance policy.

The pathways to Grovehill playing field refurbished with hardcore wild flowers.

Good news in regards to trees - 70 new trees planted/will be planted in January and February.

Most council house works involving roofs will now automatically include implementation of swift boxes.

In relation to Chalk Streams, a letter has been sent to the Environment Agency.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor Tindall asked if the commercial waste experts could consider the provision for a full service for businesses at Jarman Park and the rest of the Borough. Councillor Anderson explained that the advice received from the experts was based on our existing service but he was hoping we could consider implementing recycling and particularly food recycling for restaurants around the Borough.

Councillor Tindall asked if it was possible to look at an action plan to charge the telephone companies for the cleaning of their telephone boxes. Councillor Anderson said he was keen to adopt a policy on the matter.

Councillor Uttley referred to the 42 containers of plastic waste that was smuggled into Malaysia and sent back to the UK. She asked if the Herts Waste Partnership had taken steps to uncover whether any of the companies responsible were directly or indirectly part of the supply chain. Councillor Anderson explained that the Herts Waste Partnership compiled a briefing on the HCC website which details what proportion of plastic waste in Hertfordshire is exported. He said he had personally raised the issue

CHAIRMAN

at the meetings of the Herts Waste Partnership and it is something he feels very strongly about. He advised that the Chief Executive, the Leader and himself had been invited to the Herts Waste Partnership annual conference at the end of this month and one of the speakers is the person responsible for recycling so that will be a good opportunity to quiz him.

Councillor Stevens referred to the expansion at Luton Airport and asked if the council had responded to the consultation. Councillor Anderson said it wasn't his portfolio but advised that the council have done or will be sending a detailed submission. He felt we were in a difficult position as we want to support growth but we have to consider the impact on residents.

5 MOTION

The following Motion was proposed by Councillor England, and seconded by Councillor Barry:

1. This Council notes that Universal Credit, the single monthly benefit payment which replaces the six current working age benefits, has now been implemented across most of the country, but has yet to be rolled out to all benefits claimants in Dacorum.
2. This council further notes that within Dacorum the number of people affected is likely to be in the thousands and is concerned that the full implementation of Universal Credit in Dacorum is likely to prove seriously detrimental to the health and wellbeing of those thousands of local residents.
3. In recognition of this and of the fact that the move to full implementation of Universal Credit in other parts of the country has resulted in considerable financial hardship for many of those people moving onto this new system of benefit payments; council requests that before the full roll-out of Universal Credit across the Borough of Dacorum, measures are found to alleviate hardship caused by -
 - a. The five week wait for claimants to receive their benefits.
 - b. Payments going to one named member of a household.
 - c. The rent element of benefit being included in payments to Claimants
4. To support the measures taken to alleviate hardship, the council requests that an additional financial provision be included in the budget for 2020/2021 to provide for hardship payments and/or loans.
5. In addition, Council requests that the Leaders of the Political Groups of the Council write to the Secretary of State for Work and Pensions to urge that amendments to Universal Credit be introduced that will -
 - a. End benefit sanctions as there is no evidence that sanctioning helps people into work.
 - b. Allow all new claimants to apply for Universal Credit in job centres supported by trained job centre staff rather than forcing new claimants to apply on-line.
 - c. Abandon the in-work conditionality for part-time or low paid workers.

CHAIRMAN

d. Increase the overall level to which Universal Credit is funded.

Councillor England read the following statement:

"Universal credit has been in the headlines again and again since it was first announced in 2010.

The UC project has cost many times more than originally predicted and implementation has taken far longer than expected. There are clearly many problems.

We as a Council can do our part to help get to solutions: We know our community best, so on behalf of the residents of Dacorum it's right that we add our voice to the wider lived-experience that the status-quo with the coming of UC in present form is not working as imagined, for our people and needs further changes before it is rolled out to Housing Benefit and Tax Credits transfers here.

As a major stock-holding Authority, Dacorum is a big landlord, facing the full effect of the impact of UC on rent arrears if people lose control of their budgeting.

It is important that we try to use the perspective of a UC Claimant:

The design of universal credit is supposed to "mimic" the world of work, where most people are paid monthly in arrears.

The rationale for introduction of UC was to simplify a complex system of multiple payments, but ten years after the idea was originally presented, the major effect has been to complicate the lives of mostly low-paid, often crisis-hit individuals, who have suddenly lost confidence and are without the resilience they would possess if they were in easier circumstances.

This vision is unrealistic for a poor person who has lost their job and urgently needs support. It also fails to recognise that many low earners are paid more frequently—only half of them are paid every month.

Under the old, multi-benefit system many faced a "cliff edge", (coming off benefits) where people on a low income would lose a big chunk of their benefits in one go as soon as they started working more than 16 hours. OK, that was not great..

But the cliff edge hasn't been re-moved – it has just been moved – to a really hard place!

In the new system, benefit payments are reduced at a consistent rate as income and earnings increase - for every extra £1 you earn after tax, you will lose 63p in benefits.

But cuts the system has been made significantly less generous since it was announced. Originally the gradient was designed to be much more gradual and more sensitive, at 36p in the pound.

People do not calculate decisions this way – we are not like economists; people over-respond to potential losses instinctively, and are under-incentivised by, er, "incentives", or tapering.

Claimants also struggle with a process that has to be done online, with little more than half registering a claim without help. Then they wait five weeks to get their first payment. Many have no savings so request an advance and start off in debt.

By contrast, anyone claiming "old" out-of-work benefits would get help sooner and then receive it every fortnight.

The housing-support component of UC is subject to the same rigid monthly timetable, whereas the benefit it is replacing should be paid within two weeks of a first claim and allows a variety of payment periods.

Recalculated each month, UC injects continuing uncertainty into the lives of those receiving it, making it harder to budget. If their pay is temporarily higher than expected one month, the benefit is cut the next. A similar problem can arise merely from the timing of different pay cycles: if wages come weekly, there are some months when workers get an extra payment of income.

Moreover - Transferring onto universal credit from the old system will mean a loss of at least £1,000 a year for 1.9 million adults, and a gain of at least £1,000 a year for 1.6 million adults, according to an April 2019 [report by independent think tank the Institute for Fiscal Studies](#).

Those with the lowest incomes stand to lose the most. Even if there are winners as well as losers, you have to look hard at who they are.

Dacorum's share of those numbers is likely to be 4,000 negatively-affected people (plus employment and demographic churn). (150k pop of Dacorum divided by 68m = 0.0022 = 0.22% of 1.9m)

This all comes back to the choice between incentivising choices – working WITH people or enforcing them. But enforcement costs money and people!

When people are in receipt of benefits, they spend them in the local community, so benefits contribute to the local economy. When income stops for 5 weeks, the local economy is hurt.

What can we do, what should we do, as a Council, (now)? (Motion, points 3 a-c)

Relying on the knowledge we have, I think we need to ask the DWP for the following changes:

A - The five-week wait does not work. (Low paid people are much more likely to be receiving wages weekly) The Liberal Democrats have said we would like to see the Govt reduce the much-criticised five-week wait for claimants to receive their first UC payment to just five days.

B – We should remove the risk of UC being used to perpetrate Domestic Abuse. 21st Century Households are more complex than the system is equipped to meet. People are individual – and economic domestic abuse is enabled by the one person per household rule. If there is an attempt to replicate a self-sufficient working household, at least two people could be earning independently, so why cannot Universal Credit work the same way?

C – (I do appreciate that Dacorum has an Officer focussing on this.)

If we know that rent needs to be paid direct, does that mean we now just do it, like they do in Scotland and Northern Ireland? I accept that there are some mitigating activities being undertaken here in Dacorum, but only when there is already evidence of a concern, so some people could slip through the net. Perhaps the PH can clarify?

(point 4)

If the Government chooses not to address the issues mentioned in part 3 of this Motion, provision needs to have been made in our Budget, to provide hardship payments or loans.

By doing so, we can hope to keep local people positive and bring some balance to this situation.

Will the Council earmark a Reserve for hardship payments – and shouldn't we – in doing so - ask the Government to fund it (because it is patching-up their own surgery?)

There are four more potential “asks” suggested in this Motion. (5 a-d) (Idea was this gave scope for Tories to amend to their strength of requests)

- a. End benefit sanctions as there is no evidence that sanctioning helps people into sustainable work. The CAB is calling for people to be supported, not sanctioned. We all know that the way out of a hole is a helping hand, not a spadeful of dirt..
- b. We should allow all new claimants to apply for Universal Credit in job centres supported by trained job centre staff rather than forcing new claimants to apply on-line. Channel-shift is not appropriate in a crisis and should be applied very sensitively. We could undertake this ourselves, and we should, because our community will be the better for it.
- c. We must, as a critical friend, call on the Government to abandon the in-work conditionality for part-time or low paid workers. This is a new phenomenon of the benefits systems as it relates to Tax Credits, so could mean that if you refuse extra hours.. or do not continually seek extra hours, you could be penalised... (if the taper was put back to the original levels, people would be positively incentivised..)
- d. The nub is: UC is under-funded; Govt needs to Increase the overall level to which Universal Credit is funded.

There needs to be an investment of at least £5 billion in improving the wider benefit system. People are a valuable resource when well-fitted in a role, so actually every successful intervention to help people find their way of contributing, is a win-win.

LDs have argued to prioritise tackling the crisis of child poverty by abolishing the cruel two-child limit for Universal Credit and ending the unfair benefits cap.

Universal Credit hasn't even started to be problematic in Dacorum yet, but it has already increased rent arrears.

It yokes together traditional out-of-work benefits with the more recently introduced tax credits that aim to prop up working incomes. Yet the systems are poles apart in how they operate. Integrating them requires a monthly adjustment of payments that introduces financial instability into the lives of those least able to cope with it.

The fact that UC, where introduced, has coincided with the rising use of food banks and rent arrears is no accident. The new benefit is neither simple nor clear for claimants, and—unlike before—they now have all their eggs in this single baffling basket.”

Councillor Hollinghurst agreed with the points raised by Councillor England. He pointed out that work in today's modern world has changed, people used to be paid weekly. There is now a large GIG economy which is hard for people whose income changes week to week. The economy is going reasonably well at the moment but a

downturn could mean that people employed in the GIG economy find themselves with low level income and we could be faced with a tsunami of UC claims because of the five week wait.

Councillor Pringle thanked Councillor England for a comprehensive presentation of problems caused by UC. Lots of people claiming UC are in work but on a low income. Any one of us could end up on UC, this is not happening to other people, this is all of us. Whatever the intent may have been to introduce UC, it is quite clear from reports that they are actually draconian measures leading to misery and people feel they are being punished for being in poverty. Northchurch had no food bank usage until UC introduced and 19 families now have had to use one. It is not just food parcels but hygiene parcels as well and children are going to school and being bullied for being in poverty. The bravest thing to do is admit that this needs to be amended or changed to help not hinder people.

Councillor Banks said she spent some time in the customer service unit observing the team and how they work. She said she observed 18 calls and 8 were specifically to do with UC. These people seemed to be confident with the process and Councillor Banks said she asked them for their views and not one had a complaint about UC. One gentleman had an issue with going online, but the job centre were able to help. This experience will hopefully balance some of the criticisms. Some of the general public are understanding the process.

Councillor Barry said she supported this motion. This was not a criticism of how Dacorum as a borough has been working with UC as we have a good housing team. It is concerning that since UC has been brought in, food bank usage has increased. Youth workers giving out food vouchers and this should not be their role. The process should be made simpler, currently not thinking about people moving over to UC who have been previously used to regular payments and now having to wait 5 weeks. 5 weeks isn't how people get paid when in employment. The stress of this is causing mental health problems. Councillor Barry said she had friends on UC who have had to use their savings to pay off their rent arrears due to the 5 week waiting. This motion says to make it better and she echoed Councillor Pringle that it could be any of us.

Councillor Williams said he shared some concerns on aspects of Universal Credit. He said we were a large landlord and had over 10,000 properties, some of which will have tenants in receipt of UC. He explained that since the General Election and prior to this Motion he has raised these issues with the Hemel Hempstead MP to ask what the Government is doing to address the issues. He didn't feel it was appropriate for the Borough Council to be budgeting for UC payment support. Whilst he had sympathy for people suffering these issues he couldn't support the motion.

Councillor England said he had attended a climate change conference today and the key thing to come out was how different each local authority is from each other. It is good to see that the Leader is aware and conscious of the issues. We should be asking the government who have introduced this policy, you are causing problem and local authorities can't budget for that problem out of their own resources. It is stressful

to lose a job without having to deal with UC. He said he understood the idea that we want to put some rigour into the process for those that do not take it seriously. He appealed to people in the room that this isn't achieved by sanctioning but by getting alongside people and showing them that they have something to offer to society. If we unlock that, we will be better off as a society. There is an opportunity here as UC has not been fully rolled out in Dacorum. This motion is not suggesting that we do anything, but that we say something and we need to say something.

A recorded vote was held:

18 for (Councillors Hollinghurst, Ransley, Townsend, Pringle, Link, McDowell, Claughton, Allen, Stevens, Taylor, Symington, Barry, Freedman, Woolner, England, Tindall, Hobson and Uttley)

28 against (Councillors Beauchamp, Williams, Sinha, Johnson, Peter, Barrett, Arslan, R Sutton, Bassadone, Timmis, Rogers, Durrant, Silwal, Adeleke, Guest, Wyatt-Lowe, Hearn, Riddick, Douris, Griffiths, Elliot, Anderson, Banks, G Sutton, Birnie, Chapman, Suqlain Mahmood and Sobaan Mahmood).

Therefore the Motion was lost.

6 QUESTIONS

Councillor Pringle asked the following question in writing to the Leader of the Council:

Protection of EU citizens' rights in Dacorum

In view of recent advice to the government, as outlined in House of Commons Library briefing paper No: 8772 (Annex 1 below) and the deadline for EU citizens to apply for settled status being just 18 months away (Annex 2 below), does the Leader agree that it is incumbent on all levels of government to take responsibility for assisting EU citizens who have built their lives in the UK?

Does the leader agree that DBC should be doing all we can to ensure those EU citizens resident in Dacorum can optimise their opportunities of successfully apply for settled status rights.

In particular:

1. Will the Leader ensure that Dacorum Borough Council will take all reasonable and necessary steps to assist EU citizens resident here, particularly the vulnerable, with applications for settled status?
2. In particular, will he pledge to introduce the following measures:
 1. Immediately provide easily accessible information and support to EU citizens on the DBC website. This would include a letter from the Leader to EU citizens outlining in plain language that EU citizens are welcome in Dacorum and the support that they can access in applying for settled status (such as the

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example set by the leader of Vale of White Horse District Council Annex 3) and links to government information.

2. Take immediate steps to publicise across Dacorum the risks that EU citizens face if they do not apply for settled status and the steps they should urgently take to do so.
3. Set up an urgent review of services to consider how DBC can further offer support to EU citizens in Dacorum in terms of:
 1. Helping with process
 2. Providing additional resources necessary, such as computer terminals in libraries for those who do not have the app
 3. Fast tracking requests for evidence of residence in Dacorum to support Settled Status applications and training staff to proactively assist such applicants
 4. Training staff to generally support and advise residents making such applications
 5. Commit to providing the funding necessary to reach out to vulnerable groups, such as
 1. providing grants to outreach groups and
 2. ensuring all DBC staff who work with the elderly, the homeless and residents with other vulnerabilities are trained in proactively offering appropriate support and identifying and supporting those at risk of failing to apply for settled status

ANNEX 1

Extract 1 from Briefing Paper No:8772 House of Commons Library Commons Library Briefing, 3 January 2020

"The Home Office is undertaking a range of outreach and communications activities targeted towards EUSS applicants. But it has been estimated that about 30% of EU citizens may struggle with the EUSS application process, whether due to a lack of awareness of the scheme or difficulties making an application or proving their eligibility. They are therefore particularly vulnerable to losing their status and entitlements in the UK. Groups identified include the elderly, people with limited English, children and young people in the care system, homeless people, people who arrive soon before the deadline and people in casual employment.⁸

Another major concern the 3 million have is that the government has rejected calls to issue physical proof of status documents to people who successfully apply to the EUSS. Instead, they receive a digital status"

ANNEX 2

Extract 2 from Briefing Paper No:8772 House of Commons Library Commons Library Briefing, 3 January 2020

2.3 Deadline for applying to the EUSS

Clause 7 allows Ministers to make regulations specifying a deadline for applications to the EUSS. The WA states that the deadline cannot be less than six months after the end of the transition period (therefore, 30 June 2021, unless extended). The government has been criticised for not setting out in any detail its intended approach towards people who miss that deadline.

ANNEX 3

Sample letter from Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council



135 Eastern Avenue
Milton Park
Milton
Oxfordshire
OX14 4SB

An open letter from Cllr Emily Smith to residents and businesses in the Vale of White Horse

Dear Resident

The deadline for the UK to leave the EU has changed, but the country continues to prepare for this event. I am writing to you all on behalf of the Vale of White Horse District Council about issues related to Brexit - in particular we want to make sure affected EU nationals from countries outside the UK who live in our district know what they need to do to protect their rights to remain in the country.

The new deadline to leave the EU is 31 January 2020 at the latest, but it's still not clear exactly when we will leave or how we will leave, especially now there will be a general election in December. We share many of our residents' frustrations about this uncertainty, particularly over the future immigration status of affected EU nationals.

If you live in the UK but are a citizen of another EU country, it's very important you know what you need to do to be able to stay here after we leave the EU. You might need to apply to the government for "settled" or "pre-settled status" in the UK – if you do not do this as soon as possible, you might not be able to stay in the UK in the long term. We have put lots of information on our website to help, including links to the right pages on the government's website. You can find this at www.whitehorsedc.gov.uk/brexit.

If you don't have access to a smartphone or tablet to carry out your identification verification, you can do this at the libraries in Abingdon, Botley, Wantage and Didcot.

Like all of our residents, you make an important contribution to our district and our communities – you are most welcome in the Vale of White Horse, and I want to let you know you have the Council's continued support.

I also want to reassure all our residents that Council officers are working hard on Brexit preparations to make sure our services are not affected.

The Council also remains committed to supporting our local economy and we are here to advise or guide any local businesses that could be affected by Brexit. There's lots of information, guidance and support on our dedicated South and Vale Business Support website at www.svbs.co.uk.

Yours Sincerely,

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read "G. Smith".

Cllr Emily Smith

Leader of Vale of White Horse District Council

The Leader of the Council answered each point in turn:

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DBC has a permanent webpage and this provides a single source of guidance and the most up to date information to leaving the EU. He said he appreciated that you could only find this information if you type 'Brexit' into the search bar so they are looking at ways to make this information more accessible.

He said they were in the process of writing a leaflet to go in with all the new council tax bills for every household in Dacorum. He proposed that we include a section in the leaflet on this subject.

He explained that CSU had computer terminals for residents, as does the Libraries across the Borough.

The nearest assisted verification service for Dacorum residents is located in Vicarage Road, Watford.

The most common document to be requested from us is council tax bills and we aim to have a turnaround of 14 days.

The customer services team have the required information on the EU Settlement Scheme from the Home Office portal. Staff have been advised to work through the guidance with residents.

He advised that we haven't proposed additional funding to support outreach groups as there is sufficient advice available through the system processes and with agencies such as Citizens Advice Bureau.

Information on the EU Settlement Scheme has been provided to our Housing team.

There are 13 members of Dacorum staff that need to apply for this scheme; they have all been advised of this and HR will support them.

The Mayor advised that Councillor Pringle was entitled to three supplementary questions.

Councillor Pringle asked if they would consider investing in a comprehensive review of the website to think of all the terms people would use to search. Councillor Williams said he had already indicated that they would review the website.

Councillor Pringle asked if the Leader would consider writing a letter similar to the letter above written by Councillor Emily Smith to encourage people to apply for the scheme. Councillor Williams advised he didn't intend to write a letter such as the one by Councillor Emily Smith as he didn't feel it served much purpose and felt that the majority of EU residents in Dacorum would already be aware that they are welcome in our community.

Councillor Pringle asked if the Leader agreed that a comprehensive public information campaign warning all citizens of Dacorum of the risk to vulnerable people is required. Councillor Williams replied no and explained that the Government had a comprehensive programme and that is targeted at those citizens that need to apply. He added that there was another 18 months to apply and was positive that the vast majority of people have already applied and that any vulnerable individuals would be supported. He felt that adding the leaflet in the council tax bills would reach every person/household so they would have the information they needed to apply if they hadn't already done so.

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2. Councillor Freedman asked the following question in writing to the Leader of the Council:

The government wants to make it compulsory for voters in England, Scotland and Wales to show photo identification before casting their ballots. They say the legislation will "tackle electoral fraud and protect our democracy."

Elections, including the December General election are carried out by the borough Councils Electoral services team. To quantify the problem that Boris Johnson seeks to solve, I would like more information about electoral fraud in our area.

In the December 2019 General Election in the Borough of Dacorum:

Q.i. How many votes were disallowed because it was found the same voter registration had been used twice?

- A. None.

Q.ii. How many people were turned away from voting due to polling station staff being unconvinced the voter was not who they claimed to be?

- A. None. Full training is provided to polling station staff before each election and handbooks are supplied so they have the necessary guidance and legislation. No Presiding Officers reported having to resort to these procedures.

Q.iii. Of these, how many were turned away because they were unable to produce any ID, and how many because they produced inadequate ID?

- A. Under the current legislation and Electoral Commission Guidance, electors at the polling station are not required to produce any form of Identification.

Q.iv. How many people were turned away from voting due to presenting at a polling office outside of their allocated station?

- A. This information is not recorded. Electors turning up at the wrong polling station would be directed to the correct polling station by the Presiding Officer.

Q.v. How many postal votes were rejected due to multiple votes being received from the same voter?

- A. None.

Q.vi. How many postal votes were rejected due to inability to verify the voters' identity?

- A. 197. These would include missing signatures, missing date of birth, mismatched signatures and mismatched date of birth.

Q.vii. How many postal votes were rejected for any other reason?

- A. 63. This would be for missing ballot papers or missing statements.

Qviii. How many votes were counted that have since been found to have been invalid votes?

A. None. The total number of ballot papers rejected at the count was 207.

Qix. How many invalid (as opposed to intentionally spoiled) votes, either postal or via a polling station were received?

A. All votes cast at the polling station would initially be deemed valid and then included in the count. Any incomplete postal votes would be considered invalid (not spoiled) and would not then have been forwarded to the count.

Qx. What was the total number of valid votes cast across the Borough?

A. 51,272

Qxi. What was the total (%) voter turnout across the Borough?

A. 69.53%

7 BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

None.

8 CABINET REFERRALS

That the following be approved:

10 December 2019

8.1 CA/121/19 Committee Timetable 2020/21

Decision

To approve the Meeting Timetable for 2020/21 as set out in Appendix A to the Cabinet report.

8.2 CA/122/19 Draft Corporate Plan

Decision

The adoption of the Corporate Plan 2020 to 2025.

14 January 2020

8.3 CA/007/20 Treasury Management 19/20 Mid-Year

Decision

The acceptance of the Cabinet report on mid- year treasury management performance and prudential indicators for 2019/20.

8.4 CA/010/20 Berkhamsted Sports Centre

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Decision

That a sum of £65,000 for survey costs to help mitigate potential site risks and develop a more detailed scheme proposal for further approval be agreed.

8.5 CA/011/20 HRA Business Plan

Decision

1. The approval of the updated Housing Revenue Account Business Plan
2. The approval of the revised development programme budgets as set out in Section 8.3 of the Cabinet report

9 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

None.

10 CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

None.

11 CHANGE TO COMMITTEE DATES

None.

12 CONSTITUTION UPDATE

The following update to the Council's Constitution was agreed:

That Council agree to delete paragraph 2.1.3 at page 55 of Part 3 of the Constitution which reads:

"A Member of the Cabinet is excluded from membership of any Regulatory Committee."

And insert a new clause 2.1.3 to read:

"A Member of the Cabinet is permitted to be a member of any Regulatory Committee but shall not attend any committee meeting which is hearing an appeal or review against a decision which is made by a service which falls within their Portfolio"

Councillor Hollinghurst asked for it to be recorded that he didn't agree with the amendment.

The Meeting ended at 9.40 pm