

# Public Document Pack



## **SUMMONS**

### **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**Wednesday 14 April 2021**

#### **Microsoft Teams**

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the Dacorum Borough Council in the County of Hertfordshire to be held via Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 14 April 2021 at 6.30 pm to transact the business set out below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Claire Hamilton', with a horizontal line underneath.

**CLAIRE HAMILTON  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

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

## **AGENDA**

- (a) Portfolio Holder Action Point Responses (Pages 3 - 8)

**FULL COUNCIL**

**ACTION POINTS FOR PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Action point</b>	<b>PH responsible for action</b>	<b>Response / Investigation Ongoing</b>
24/02/21	<p><b>Item 3 – Public Participation</b></p> <p><b>Question 2 from Graham Bright to Councillor G Sutton:</b> On the question of the £76m identified for new infrastructure, I saw that in the report and welcome that but my only concern about that is that it represents not what it would cost to implement the infrastructure but rather what is being made available from developers towards the infrastructure which are two different things. Can Councillor Sutton confirm that is the case?</p> <p><b>Response from Councillor G Sutton:</b> I will come back to you on that so I can confirm the correct breakdown with the responsible officers.</p>	Cllr Williams	<p>The draft Infrastructure Delivery Plan identifies costs of c£76m in association with proposed development at Tring. I can confirm that this relates to the <u>cost</u> of the infrastructure. Please note that this may be subject to change as the IDP develops as the new Local Plan progresses. The Council will be collecting contributions from developers via s106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy, but the full cost of what is required (in any area of the Borough, not just Tring) may be met through both developer funding and input from service providers, and where necessary, external funding sources.</p>

24/02/21	<p><b>Item 4 – PH Announcements</b></p> <p>Councillor Freedman said, as highlighted by the recent DBC booklet concerning the current consultation, Councillor G Sutton confirmed that Council leafleting incurs an acceptable number of voids, i.e. missed deliveries. He asked what level of voids was deemed acceptable and further asked what advice could be given to residents who are repeatedly excluded from DBC distributions?</p> <p>The Leader said he didn't have access to the contract during this meeting so couldn't advise on the acceptable void level or to what service level agreement we've got with the delivery company. He advised he would need to submit a written response.</p>	Cllr Williams	<p>The email sent from Cllr Sutton, dated 13 February, states <i>“It is widely accepted that leafleting on this scale does incur a small margin for voids, which takes into account factors such as property access, missed properties and delivery delays due to weather conditions. To mitigate against this, we also procured an additional 1,000 copies which were made available to members on request, to support their constituency work. Any missed property, for which we received a full postal address, was sent a copy”</i>.</p> <p>Therefore we do not have a figure for “acceptable number of voids”, as stated by Cllr Freedman, but understand that there will be a small undefined number of voids. Cases of missed delivery were addressed on a case by case basis to ensure the most effective resolution. Extra copies of the summary document were made available to Councillors (who requested them) for their constituents, and copies were also posted directly to residents who contacted the strategic planning team.</p>
24/02/21	<p><b>Item 4 – PH Announcements</b></p> <p>Councillor England picked up on the point regarding tree planting and referred to Keens Field being a site where a number of trees have been planted, commenting that he had cause to talk to the tree officer and in the course of that he mentioned that it is normal for there to be loss through thinning of two thirds of the</p>	Cllr Anderson	<p>In respect of planting small trees (whips) in blocks, it is generally assumed that 2/3 won't make it to maturity. This ratio has been used for decades within forestry and landscaping when trees are planted close to each other.</p> <p>Of the 2/3, some will be lost due to a natural failure to establish or disease, some will be damaged by wildlife (rabbits, squirrels, and deer), others may be vandalised.</p> <p>Our aim is to end up with a healthy block of trees, and that will involve several thinning processes where we take out unhealthy / damaged species, that then give space / light / nutrient to the surrounding plants.</p>

	<p>original trees that are planted, so when as a Borough we think about the number of trees that we plant, do we talk about the number we expect to reach maturity or the number that go into the ground in the first place?</p> <p>Councillor Anderson responded that he would have to investigate and provide a written response.</p> <p>Councillor England commented that he would forward a copy of the email that refers to the Portfolio Holder.</p>		<p>Our role in carrying out artificial thinning actually occurs naturally but over a much longer period. Two examples of why we should carry out thinning are Grovehill and Bunkers Park. Very different settings, but more trees than required were planted in both areas. In Bunkers Park, almost every new tree established well so we now have over-stocked woodlands – too dark, no ground flora, and poorer biodiversity. In Grovehill, we now have a lot of issues with the safety of trees and their impact on properties due to a lack of historical thinning.</p> <p>Thinning during the first twenty or so years means we end up with a healthier mature tree stock. The pluses are that mature trees are better climatically / environmentally than small trees, therefore (using your numbers) 400 big trees are better than 1200 small trees. But thinning won't happen straightaway as we need to wait for establishment to occur and then vigorous growth to kick in. Probably no need to consider thinning for ten years minimum, but we'd inspect every approx. three years.</p>
24/02/21	<p><b>Item 4 – PH Announcements</b></p> <p>Councillor Barry asked; at what stage in the roadmap are skate parks due to reopen?</p> <p>Councillor Banks responded that she would check that information and respond in writing.</p>	Cllr Banks	<p>I am advised by officers that the skate board park in Gadebridge opened 2<sup>nd</sup> March and Berkhamsted was around 8<sup>th</sup> March.</p>
	<p><b>Item 4 – PH Announcements</b></p> <p>Councillor Rogers referred to Bennetts End community Centre and advised they have been providing day care for the children of keyworkers, asking Portfolio Holder;</p>	Cllr Banks	<p>Although strictly a question for Herts County Council, (Education) I can confirm schools will begin their return on 8 March when all primary schools will reopen. The position for secondary schools is slightly different they will start back from 8 March but in a staggered manner to enable testing, with all students, most likely back in the classroom by 12 March.</p>

	<p>do you know when the age limit will rise to all children in day care and nurseries?</p> <p>Councillor Banks responded that she does not have exact date to hand so will have to provide as a written response. She added that pre-schools and nurseries have been running through community centre networks and have been given advice through Environmental Health and Health and Safety officers at the Council to assist them in their risk assessments to ensure they are secure under COVID compliance &amp; restrictions.</p> <p>Councillor Rogers referred to advising parents dropping off; what advice are we giving to avoid transmission of virus.</p> <p>Councillor Banks commented that is cross piece working with Health and Safety.</p>		<p>I am able to confirm the community centre network has been engaged with from the very beginning of the pandemic. Community centres have been engaged with by DBC H &amp; S officers and Environmental Health officers to ensure their risk assessments are robust. These risk assessments go hand in hand with the preschools own assessments and have ensured continued safe access for children using community centre venues.</p> <p>You may also be interested to know Revenue teams have also made contacts to ensure centres are aware of grant funding opportunities. Both these contacts have enabled centres to ensure the safe, COVID secure access for their user groups in particular the pre-schools and permissible family centre activities.</p>
24/02/21	<p><b>Item 6 – Questions</b></p> <p><b>Question 4 from Councillor Symington to Councillor G Sutton:</b> Could the Portfolio Holder update members and the public on the progress being made by the Council through working with the Association</p>	Cllr Williams	<p>I can confirm that Officers have been working with APSE to develop the policies contained in the local plan. They worked on the drafting and have been retained to provide ongoing advice as the Plan develops.</p>

	<p>of Public Service Excellence and their specialist energy consultancy to guide their approach?</p> <p><b>Response from Councillor G Sutton:</b> I will certainly take it up with the officers to see where we stand and I will let you know.</p>		
<p>24/02/21</p>	<p><b>Item 6 – Questions</b></p> <p><b>Question 2 from Councillor Allen to Councillor G Sutton:</b> Can you confirm that there is no written, formal or concrete evidence of Gypsy and Traveller opinion relating to LA3 Gypsy and Traveller site?</p> <p><b>Councillor G Sutton response:</b> I will come back to you with a written answer for clarification on that point.</p>	<p>Cllr Williams</p>	<p>I would refer Cllr Allen to the response given by Cllr Sutton, which in short is that the Council engaged with the representative groups of the Gypsy and Traveller community in the planning policy documents that set the basis for the planning and development of LA3, particularly the LA3 Masterplan.</p> <p>This point is critical for the reasons I set out below.</p> <p>I must make it clear that the planning application received by the Council and considered by the DM Committee in November 2019 was made in hybrid form: in short, this seeks full planning permission for a first phase of the residential development of 350 new homes, with the remainder of the development – 750 new homes, the new community hub and the proposed Gypsy and Traveller site being made in outline form only, with details to be reserved for approval at a later stage of the planning and development process.</p> <p>The Gypsy and Traveller site conforms with the provisions of the LA3 masterplan 2017, including the access point to Chaulden Lane.</p> <p>Beyond the more focused investigation of accommodating traffic movements on Chaulden Lane to and from the new Gypsy and Traveller site, which were fully assessed by Herts CC as highway authority, there is little difference between the application details and what was considered in the LA3 masterplan – for which there was engagement with the Gypsy and Traveller representative groups.</p>

		<p>As I explained in my answer, the County Council's Gypsy and Traveller Officer was consulted on the LA3 application and provided support for the proposals. This is the standard approach of the planning service to consult with HCC in the first instance. The Council has met its legal requirements for consultation on this application.</p> <p>To be clear, there was no engagement with the representative groups at the planning application stage, and as the application is made in outline form I consider this is better done at the detailed or 'reserved matters' stage of the planning process when the specifics of the site such as layout and on-site facilities would be considered. That said, the report to DM Committee (consultation responses) records that HCC's Gypsy and Traveller Officer had spoken with members of the Travelling community who were happy with the access arrangements both to Chaulden Lane and the proposed pedestrian and cycle link into the LA3 site.</p> <p>I must stress however that the Council has prepared its requirements for this site in consultation with representatives of the Travelling community, which have been reflected in the planning application proposals.</p> <p>Cllr Allen made reference to Government advice on planning for Gypsy and Traveller sites and I assume he is referring to the Planning Policy for Traveller Sites (PPTS) statement of 2015 from MHCLG. For reference, I provide a link to this document:  <a href="https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457420/Final_planning_and_travellers_policy.pdf">https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/457420/Final_planning_and_travellers_policy.pdf</a></p> <p>I agree this requires early engagement with the Travelling community in relation to the planning of new sites – and this is exactly what the Council has done in both assessing the need for new sites across Dacorum and in setting out the requirements for what is needed on this particular site. Paragraph 7 of the PPTS refers.</p>
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