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**DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**21 FEBRUARY 2018**

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Present:

**MEMBERS:**

Councillor Williams (Leader) Councillors, Adeleke, Anderson, Banks, Barrett, Mrs Bassadone, Birnie, Herbert Chapman, D Collins, E Collins, Douris, Elliot, England, Fethney, Fisher, Griffiths, Guest, Harden, P Hearn, Hicks, Howard, Imarni, Link, Maddern, Mahmood, Marshall, McLean, Mills, Peter, Ransley, Riddick, Ritchie, Silwal, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Timmis and C Wyatt-Lowe

**OFFICERS:**

The Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Finance & Operations), Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer, Group Manager (Democratic Services), K Norval (Communications), C O'Neil (Minutes)

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

**11 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 January 2018 were agreed by the Members present and then signed by the Mayor.

**12 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**13 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

**14 ANNOUNCEMENTS**

**By the Mayor:**

There were no announcements from the Mayor.

**By the Chief Executive:**

There were no announcements from the Chief Executive.

**By the Group Leaders:**

Apologies for absence were submitted on behalf of Councillors W Wyatt Lowe, S Hearn, Matthews, Whitman, Tindall, Conway, Adshead, Brown & Bhinder,

**Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:**

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

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

Wish Cllr Tindall on behalf of the Council a speedy recovery.

Questions:

Cllr England asked the Leader whether there is any update on PSPO? Cllr Williams confirmed it is due to go to scrutiny at their next committee meeting, who will review feedback and to give views on next steps.

There were no further questions.

**Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing**

**Tenant & Leaseholder Services**

A number of tenants attended Road shows hosted by the DBC Housing service and water companies Affinity and Thames. These were very successful with tenants reassured about the changes in April and able to ask questions about payment methods and frequency.

Additionally comprehensive information was provided about the water metering programme and schemes for those on low incomes, leaving those who attended more positive about the move to pay water companies directly.

**Strategic Housing**

The work is nearing completion of full refurbishment to Leys Road temporary accommodation to ensure that the building is fully compliant with Health & Safety requirements.

The service has been undertaking the Star survey, with an excellent response rate being completed by over 40% of tenants online.

Full transfer of the Private Sector team has now taken place, the service is currently reviewing and revising policies/procedures. Preparation has started to resource the PRS team and consider our approach to delivering the new HMO regulations to be introduced shortly.

**Housing Development**

Kylina Court – Works are progressing well on site, concrete frame completed, windows and cladding have commenced along with forming the individual flat units.

**CHAIRMAN**

Swing Gate Lane (Corn Mill Court) – Works are progressing well on site on the new build. A Planning application has been submitted to convert the 3 existing units into 3 houses rather than 2 houses.

Martindale School site – The Planning application has been approved and we are about to issue second stage tenders to 5 Contractors.

Northend and Westerdale garage sites – Planning applications have been approved and we are preparing tenders to find a suitable Contractor. The aim is to be on site late summer 2018.

Stationers Place – We are preparing a revised Planning application to deal with challenges around the existing culvert that is at the rear of the site. This will provide approx. 25 / 26 flats. We are carrying out a package of advanced enabling works on site to deal with a number of issues in the ground including boreholes, culverts and relocating some pipes and cables, these works have started on site.

## **Property & Place**

### **Gas Contract - Sun Realm**

The Q1 & Q2 audits for this financial year have been concluded and the combined savings of £218,678 are being reinvested to deliver additional new boiler installations this financial year. The compliance rates remain consistently high with January performance at 99.99%.

### **Management - Osborne**

Overall the key performance indicators for the contract remain positive, however a process mapping review is being undertaken to determine if improvements can be made to the controls and monitoring of more complex areas of work, such as aids and adaptations and small works.

The Q2 audit has been concluded and a gain share saving of £181,000 delivered back to the Council.

### **Compliance**

The Asbestos Management Plan and Legionella Strategy have been completed and will be presented to a forthcoming Cabinet for approval. There has been ongoing work with the Fire Risk Assessor and internal compliance team, to establish an ongoing programme of surveys and remedial works for the medium and low rise blocks within the Borough.

### **Questions:**

Cllr England asked the Portfolio Holder for an update on implementation plans for the Homelessness Reduction Act which will be coming in later this year. Cllr Griffiths advised there is lots of work taking place in the background and there will be a Member Development Session taking place in April, dates were circulated recently by Members Services. More information will be provided as available.

Cllr Adeleke asked, now that tenants are to pay their water direct to utility companies, is there any interim plan in place to help any tenants who are experiencing problems during the transition? Cllr Griffiths advised that Layna Warden – Group Manager Tenants & Leaseholders, has been carrying out work on this, wardens of all the

**CHAIRMAN**

Council's Elderly Persons Dwellings (EPDs) are fully briefed. Tenants can always come to us for advice and we can point them in right direction. Cllr Griffiths encouraged any members who have tenants contacting them with concerns to make contact with Housing, who can assist in signposting to support and advice available.

There were no further questions.

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

### **Community Partnerships**

#### **Community Grant Awards Ceremony**

Following the success of the High Sherriff of Hertfordshire's awards ceremony, the Council is keen to hold a similar event in Dacorum. To host an annual award ceremony to celebrate the projects that have received funding through the Councils community grant fund.

The event will recognise and celebrate the success of the Council's grant funding programme as well as helping raise awareness of the community and voluntary sector. It will also help to develop new relationships and networks as well as demonstrating the Council's commitment to local investment.

The awards ceremony will be an annual event with the first one held on Monday 26 March 2018. Nomination forms have been sent out to community organisations. We received 16 completed nomination forms and these will be assessed by the grants panel, to agree on scoring and decide the winners.

A number of different categories will be recognised:

- Dacorum Compact partnership award
- Equality and diversity
- Community capacity
- Regeneration
- Community event
- Volunteering
- Health and Wellbeing

The winner of each category will receive a small prize (£100) and a certificate and the runner-up will receive a certificate. A small financial reward helps encourage participation and it also helps to send out a positive message about recognition.

The winning organisations will also be able to display a Community Grants Logo, which will help to increase publicity and raise awareness of the work that they do. Case studies of the winning projects will be publicised on our website, in the Digest and Digital Digest, on the big TV in the town centre and through social media.

#### **Sport England Funding Bid**

Currently developing our stage 2 application for the 'Tackling Inactivity and Economic Disadvantage' along with colleagues from Stevenage, Broxbourne, North Herts, Watford and Three Rives councils. Project will act as a 12-week intervention for 'in need' residents consisting of physical activity and classroom based sessions to both activate and educate.

**CHAIRMAN**

## **Active Ageing Project**

Receiving funding from Herts Sports Partnership to deliver seated exercise classes within our Sheltered Housing Schemes. Sheltered Housing Officers will attend a training course held by 'Oomph!' after which they will deliver weekly chair-based exercise classes within their scheme. Currently finalising the terms and conditions of the contract which will be followed by the funding.

## **Sport & Physical Activity Strategy**

The Council is committed to delivering a high quality sporting environment, which enables clubs, users, and the wider community to live healthy and active lives, which is why we are developing a new Sports and Physical Activity Strategy.

Over the past several months we have consulted with a number of stakeholders, including local sports clubs, residents, and Herts Sports Partnership, to help us better understand the needs and priorities of the borough in terms of sport and physical activity. This strategy will focus on a vision for sports and activity across Dacorum and it will look at the role that clubs, the Council and its partners can play to improve provision and opportunity for our residents – from beginners to the elite. The strategy is in its final draft stages and will be shared shortly for further consultation from stakeholders.

## **Public Health District Offer**

In April we are due to begin delivery on phase 3 of the Public Health District Offer, which will be aimed at addressing the key Public Health priorities. We will use the £30k funding to support around three or four projects which will have the best return on investment. Final submission for project proposals is Friday 23<sup>rd</sup> February, so currently working to refine these proposals.

## **Legal**

Obtained two separate 3 month closure orders on properties in Berkhamsted due to criminal behaviour and serious anti-social behaviour (both were on the front page of the local paper).

In relation to the second closure order we also successfully prosecuted the occupant for breaching a Community Protection Order which prohibited him from carrying out further ASB.

## **Democratic Services**

Prepared for and organised the Grovehill Future Local Plan Referendum which took place on Thursday 15 February. This was the first of this type of referendum that the borough has organised and residents of Grovehill cast their vote on whether to adopt the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan – which sets out planning policy for any potential redevelopment of the area up until 2031.

The referendum question was

'Do you want Dacorum Borough Council to use the neighbourhood plan for Grovehill Future to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?' and the result was a 'YES' vote:

On a 15.36% Turnout (Eligible Electorate: 5548); over 600 electors voted 'Yes' (657) to this promising initiative for the Grovehill area.

**CHAIRMAN**

For more information on the Grovehill Future Local Plan, its associated documents, and how to get involved go to [www.dacorum.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning](http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/neighbourhood-planning) pages of DBC's website.

### **Committee Timetable**

The Committee Timetable for 2018/19 is set out in the agenda for tonight's meeting and, subject to Council approval, Member Support will commence populating the website with the agreed dates and times. It is intended to produce an annotated, coloured version which will be sent to councillors in a future edition of Member News.

### Questions:

Cllr Douris referred to the Grovehill Referendum and remembered when a small group led by JDoe arrived at Grovehill Community Centre and kicked off what was then to become Grovehill Futures, which has since developed to the point of the referendum with a very positive outcome. Would like to give congratulations to the Chairman, Mr Devlin, who has worked on this to the Benefit of Grovehill. Cllr Harden agreed with Cllr Douris, a lot of preparation work went into this and added that the work of Mr Devlin and the Community is much welcomed by Council.

Cllr Ransley referred to the Sports Strategy and the terminology used about going from beginner to the highest elite and commented that the elite come from the beginners; grass roots is where they need to concentrate. Also highlighted that it made no mention of disabled, hoping that forms part of the policy? Cllr Harden agreed, absolutely. Also added that the terminology beginner to elite is just trying to represent us saying 'everyone', regardless of ability.

Cllr Guest asked, how is DBC working with HCC to promote sport & physical activity, particularly amongst young people? Cllr Harden advised that there will be a meeting next week, working with Community Action Dacorum and DBC & HCC. Added that Dacorum is a very proactive Council in engagement, working in partnerships that will encourage more people to engage, not just young people but the whole community

Cllr England referred to the Sports Strategy and commented that he is pleased to hear it is coming together. He asked, in consultation, will that include Dacorum Sports Trust and will there be any element of public consultation? Cllr Harden advised there is a list of those we currently engage with, internally and externally, including local clubs. Cllr Harden advised he would find that and forward to Members for their information.

Cllr England advised that it is good to hear about Grovehill, but whilst understanding this is the first time it has been done, that a turnout of 15%, is something we would hope to move up from as we take this on to other area? What is the Portfolio Holders ambition for that? Cllr Harden responded that he cannot refer to numbers, but I am pleased we managed to get a turnout, it is a positive that it was held, and it achieved a positive result.

Cllr Adeleke referred to officers being trained to go into sheltered accommodation to deliver physical training, is that a new role we are setting for officers to become trainers?

Cllr Harden responded that no, they are trained to deliver specific seat/sitting based training only.

There were no further questions.

**CHAIRMAN**

## **Councillor G Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning and Regeneration**

### **Dacorum's Den**

Dacorum Borough Council is launching this year's fully sponsored Dacorum's Den in March. It is the borough's version of the popular TV program Dragon's Den and is a grant giving initiative set up by the Economic Wellbeing Team at Dacorum Borough Council to help local small businesses develop and grow. It allows budding entrepreneurs in Dacorum to get a head start in business with a chance to win up to £1000 grant fund. These businesses can also be mentored by larger companies within the area. Judging takes place on 6<sup>th</sup> July with head judge Sir Mike Penning MP and the sponsors, with the awards on 20<sup>th</sup> July at Shendish Manor. Just a word about the sponsors. Over the years this has run, the value of the project has been so highly valued by the local business community that all grants are now sponsored by our local businesses, including one past winner of the Dacorum's Den, so a big "thank you" to them all.

### **Dacorum's Business Heroes Awards**

In our business community, there are often unsung heroes who go above and beyond in giving back to the borough. Through the fully sponsored Dacorum's Business Heroes Awards, we want to recognise those businesses that really make a difference and have a positive impact on the lives of others – shaping the future of economic growth in Dacorum. Nominations open at the beginning of March with judging on 15<sup>th</sup> June. The awards will be a joint celebration with Dacorum's Den on 20<sup>th</sup> July at Shendish Manor.

The two previous items are good news but now for the "icing on the cake".

The Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassadors are celebrating being awarded 6<sup>th</sup> place in Small Cities for Connectivity and 7<sup>th</sup> place in Small Cities for Business Friendliness, out of the most promising investment locations in Europe 2018/19

Data was collected for 489 locations, made up of 301 cities, 150 regions and 38 LEPs, and cities categorized for: Economic Potential, Human Capital and Lifestyle, Cost Effectiveness, Connectivity and Business Friendliness.

fDi Magazine is a specialist publication which reports on cross-border investment and is read by senior level executives at multinational corporations and others. A bi-monthly publication, fDi Magazine is part of the fDi Intelligence division of the Financial Times.

It states "Ideally located adjacent to junction 8 of the M1 and junction 20 of the M25, providing direct access to the motorway network, Hemel Hempstead is home to over 7,000 businesses with over 83,000 people employed."

Now if anybody had any doubts about the economic well-being of Hemel Hempstead and the Borough then I hope this report lays those doubts to rest.

### **Questions:**

Cllr England congratulated the Portfolio Holder on the results, good to see that Hemel Hempstead is being celebrated. There seems to be some consensus about some of the developments in the Two Waters area that are getting media coverage, can the Portfolio Holder give an update on how the Two Waters Development Plan is coming together?

**CHAIRMAN**

Cllr Sutton advised that Planning Officers are looking closely at any applications coming in for this area. Cllr Sutton added that this is a very complex subject, happy to meet to go through in detail.

There were no further questions.

**Councillor Marshall, Portfolio Holder for Environmental, Sustainability and Regulatory Services**

A Christmas Tree Recycling day was held on 7 January with around 4,000 trees being recycled (last year just over 3,000) at sites in Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring. Particular thanks to the scout groups from Berkhamsted, Tring, Potten End, Kings Langley and Gossoms End who collected trees from their local areas for a donation to the scout movement and brought them to the chipping sites.

Garden waste collections start again at the end of February. Due to improvements in the service, there will be an additional round of garden waste collections during 2018 compared with 2017 and, subject to approval of the Budget later this evening, the charges for additional garden waste collection remains the same as 2017 – namely £50 for each additional garden waste bin collected and additional bins can be purchased at £25 per bin.

Work is in hand on promoting the Great British Spring Clean – the national litter picking campaign which will be taking place throughout March is to encourage volunteers – individuals and groups – to litter pick. Cupid Green will provide advice together with bags and litter pick sticks and will, by arrangement, pick up the filled bags. I should add that Cupid Green always ready and willing to help in this manner throughout the year, not just in March.

A fly tipping campaign is set to launch in March, emphasising the environmental impact and the fact that fly tipping is a crime and it is not just the waste carriers who are responsible for the proper disposal of waste, such as that thrown out bathroom suite, but also the owners who gave the stuff to the waste carriers. We need to press home the message of individual responsibility – not something that is readily appreciated. In Hemel Hempstead town centre on the 15 March, there will be a fly tipping installation and photoshoot at which I believe the Mayor will attend. Also an eye-catching, plain speaking fly tipping information leaflet will be circulated to all households in the Borough.

**Questions:**

Cllr England asked the Portfolio Holder if they agree that the A41 in Dacorum has been in an awful mess for months; although I know there is a plan to clean it up next month, is it time for a rethink on the issue of litter being dropped and not able to be picked up because of the cost of the operation needed? Also a fly tipping issue, there are a couple of mattresses by the M25 area.

Cllr Marshall advised that in order to do the litter pick it is essential to have road closures at a cost of £1500 a day. It takes 7 days to complete the litter pick; this is a costly exercise and the council made the decision that it could only afford to do this once a year. It is not just the cost of the lane closures, but the cost of the whole process. Whether more budget should be set aside for this, would be a matter for consideration in future financial years.

**CHAIRMAN**

Cllr Marshall asked for locations of the mattresses in order to arrange to get the matter logged.

There were no further questions.

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

### **Finance & Resources**

#### **Commercial Assets & Property Development**

We are continuing with the demolition of the Civic Centre prior to the re use of the site for housing. The stripping out of asbestos is now well advanced and the physical demolition of the structure is expected to commence during March.

The sales of underutilised garages to release a capital receipt are continuing. We currently have in the region of £6m of sales moving towards exchange. This will increase the supply of homes in the Borough by approximately 60 units as well as providing funds for the Capital Programme moving forward.

We have gained planning permission for the creation of a new cemetery at Bunkers Park which will meet the requirements of the Borough for the next 75 years. We are currently undertaking detailed design work with contractors prior to moving towards a tender phase for the project.

#### **Revenues & Benefits**

As was discussed at the last Audit Committee, I am happy to note that the Revenues & Benefits teams have achieved their best ever results from internal audits.

Both the Council Tax and Business Rates processes were audited, and both achieved the top rating available. Mazars, our Internal Auditors, confirmed that this was the first time that they have ever given the top rating to a Council Tax Service at any Local Authority.

This is a reflection of the continued hard work and dedication of these teams, as they strive to ensure that residents and businesses receive correct bills and benefit assessments promptly.

#### **Finance**

Final budget proposals were presented joint Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 6<sup>th</sup> February and Cabinet on 13<sup>th</sup> February. These proposals will be considered here today by Full Council.

The revenue position for the third quarter of 2017/18 indicates that the Council's financial performance is in line with available budget. Early indications are that this position has been held going into the final quarter of 2017/18.

The service is looking ahead to the closure of accounts for 2017/18 and publication of these accounts by 31 July 2018.

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Questions:

Cllr Maddern referred to Bunkers Park Cemetery; raised at DMC recently about the road going into Bunkers Park, this will now be tarmacked. Would like to request that tarmac is extended into the car park as there is a similar problem with the surface there. Cllr Elliot confirmed that they are well aware of the road issues and potholes and the request will be considered.

There were no more questions.

**15 QUESTIONS**

None

**16 BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING**

None

**17 CABINET REFERRALS**

The referrals from Cabinet on 30 January 2018 were submitted. It was moved by Councillor Williams, duly seconded and

Resolved:

That the following be approved:

**30 January 2018**

**7.1 CA/016/18 Regulation of cosmetic body piercing and skin colouring**

1. To apply sections 14 to 17 of the Local Government (Miscellaneous Provisions) Act 1982, as amended by section 120 of the Local Government Act 2003, throughout the Borough of Dacorum, so as to require persons carrying on the practice of acupuncture; or the business of tattooing, semi-permanent skin colouring, cosmetic piercing or electrolysis to be registered with the authority; and
2. To make byelaws under section 14(7) and 15(7) of the 1982 Act in connection with such registered persons and premises, to replace and update existing byelaws in respect of acupuncture; tattooing; and ear piercing and electrolysis.

**7.2 CA/018/18 Use of right to buy one for one replacement funding**

The supplementary Capital budgets funded by "one for one" receipts for the Affordable Housing Development fund as follows:

2017/18	£3,375,000
2018/19	£4,870,000
2019/20	£1,629,000
2020/21	£625,000
2021/22	£42,000

**18 CABINET REFERRAL; BUDGET REPORT**

**CHAIRMAN**

The referral from Cabinet on 30 January 2018 was submitted. It was moved by Councillor Williams, duly seconded and

**Resolved:**

That the following be approved:

**CA/025/18 Budget Report**

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

Cllr England responded;

I would like to thank Officers for once again managing to perform the task of presenting a balanced budget, in the context of downward income pressure which now sees the end of the RSG in 2018/19.

The Liberal Democrat Opposition Group opted not to submit an alternative budget, as this would have been academic, creating significant extra work for Officers, in circumstances where it would simply have been voted down.

The Central Government corset is getting uncomfortable for all levels of Local Government.

- Rents are being reduced at the behest of Central Government, by 1% a year.
- Council Tax setting is closely restrained by Central Govt limits and a Referendum clause (cost £80k), which means that after 2.99% (£345k extra revenue) getting a serious step forward would require at least 5% - at which point it becomes easy to argue that the increase is too steep and cuts result.
- The New Homes Bonus is down by £1m this year - nearly 10% of Council Tax.

Chief Finance Officer James Deane has done well to steward those funds carefully, as we see that Govt reserves the ability to squeeze up the 0.4% baseline in future.

The PR claim that the increase is moderate is risible - The party of low taxation is increasing Dacorum's Council Tax by the maximum allowed, short of a referendum: 2.99% and all without (since 2015) going to the people in a substantial or truly indicative way, to see what they think of the priorities. The Referendum lock is prohibitive; also, unsurprisingly, controlled by Tories at Westminster.

What we want to hear is a frank acceptance that Local Government is being underfunded at all levels by the Conservative Central Government.

And let's have a willingness to give real voice to local people over their priorities – earlier in the next budget planning process.

Will it be like this next year in 2019, three months from Borough Election Day? Dacorum has elections only every four years, so next year will be judged more closely than this year. I wonder if the Council Tax will be increased by the maximum next year, when a de-facto referendum follows?

Indeed I propose we ought to address this and inject a proper degree of regular and consistent accountability to each annual budget - by electing Wards in thirds.

Some local budgetary choices have been made:

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It is good to see that The Old Town Theatre (£419k), Adventure Playgrounds (£486k) and Recreation (£1.3m) are at least retaining some funding; In scrutiny I supported the attempts to re-think how the Adventure Playgrounds are used in winter months after and before the half-terms.

Perhaps Neighbourhood Action can use them to co-ordinate better local organising in areas which don't have Parish or Town Councils?

Also good to see HMO Licences going up 18.6%.

I see that Weddings and Funerals are getting expensive in 2018/19, well above inflation. Maybe the Forum Register Office will be quieter than usual?

Is the Vehicle Replacement Reserve going to invest in Electric Vehicles? (£345k)  
Is there a commitment to scrap Diesel fleet for clean air?

### LOCALISM

What is the authenticity of the Government's virtue-signalling localism agenda if Central Govt holds the purse strings even when it professes not to?

The envelope is set by Government in so many ways – really it is hard to believe there was a Localism Act in 2011!

Even from 2018/19 when we are allowed to keep the Business Rates it is potentially able to be manipulated by Central Government.

DBC already has one of the highest Tax Bases at £11.1m vs £6.7m and Govt assesses DBCs Core Spending Power at almost 50% above the average for Districts, making the Borough a target for future squeeze?

When we have opportunities to increase revenue (and reduce costs) we should always consider them; however when something looks too good to be true - it usually is!

What if commercialism tightens budgets such that we outsource local jobs to places like Leicester? Yes I am talking about Sportspace.

In the short term - which is all we know for sure - ditching DST doesn't even save money. The £225k saved in 2018/19 is outweighed by a (reserve-funded) spend of £375k. Not to mention the contract breakage costs. And of course we've also seen £200k on the flawed tender process, in which over half of all Councillors were unimpressed. Only 24 turned up to vote for it.

The Sportspace example has already shown that it is possible for decisions to be shrouded in Part II confidentiality/sensitivity such that the technicalities cannot be debated before decisions are planned. This weakens decision-making and public trust.

An interesting footnote:

On top of the decision we can see that Health & Safety Compliance is being beefed up by £50k - presumably ongoing? Is this because DBC realised it no longer has Leisure experts who can ensure our swimming pools are safe?

Cllr Taylor commented that as Chairman of Audit he has seen a lot of what goes into the prep of budget. The amount of time, energy and effort that has gone into our budget is considerable, it had some very hard decisions to make, such as how many

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times do we clean A41. I am very proud of what the Council achieves and continues to achieve, I think the budget we are presenting is appropriate today, it's not appropriate to a thesis of factors outside of Dacorum but is for residents in Dacorum. I strongly recommend and I will certainly be voting for it.

Cllr P Hearn congratulated the Portfolio Holder for his presentation and noted her support of the budget.

Cllr Adeleke stated that he would like to join colleagues in congratulating officers for time and effort put into the budget, also the Portfolio Holder for a fantastic presentation. Cllr Adeleke went on to confirm his support of the budget, the figures presented outlined significant investment in front line services which are very welcome. Two areas for clarification, one is question of interest rate; if the Bank of England does go ahead with increase in interest rate, will there be any negative impact on plans? Also, not sure of number of foreign business we have in Dacorum, but will Brexit effect our plans if any business decide to pull out of the area?

Cllr Anderson responded to the general debate and stated that the bottom line is, there is no such thing as a 'free lunch'; we are under pressure and I too would like to congratulate my Portfolio Holder colleague for his presentation tonight. Cllr Anderson went on to state that he understands the reason why the opposition were not able to present an alternate budget, but feels it wrong to criticise others if you are not prepared to do something yourself. Referring to the suggestion that rotating elections every year would improve democracy and the budget process associated; I couldn't disagree more, it is not useful to not know who is on the Council from one year to another. I will be supporting the budget and am grateful for the effort put into it.

Cllr Douris commented that we've heard a great deal of numbers from Cllr Elliot, we haven't heard any alternative numbers from Cllr England or any other opposition group, so I assume when it comes to the vote, as they will not be offering an alternate, they will be supporting our numbers. DBC is a careful, prudent and forward thinking Council, we have maintained our frontline services, we have given good value for money and we will continue to do that. The increase in Council Tax equates to 1.5p per day over a year; how does that compare, I wonder, with other councils in the area. Some Council's, due to timing, haven't got to set their budget yet, so I had a look to see how we compared to last year. Our Band D was £189.83, another local Council to the South West of us was £196.44, then another to the South of us, where they have revolving elections, have a Band D of £254.88. Bottom line is that Dacorum gives good value for money and we are prudent with our money, we care for our residents, we look after them, shame on the opposition for not giving your residents an opportunity to see your budget as alternate to ours.

Cllr Ransley advised that they didn't produce an alternate budget for the reasons referred to by her colleague; it was not fair to get officers to produce more figures when we knew this would not go through. I think Dacorum does very well for the money it has to spend, but I would ask about consultation. My colleague mentioned that 30 people were consulted, that is out of 150,000, and of those consulted 26 people agreed with it, I wonder why we bothered?

CWyatt Lowe commented that she is proud to congratulate the Portfolio Holder about the production of a balanced budget. I can remember how we have struggled to cope with changes in government positions, but we have coped. The last time we had Labour council here, the budget they brought forward was an increase in CT of (approx.) 19%. We are a prudent financially responsible and imaginative authority, we look at things in different ways. I wish the Lib Dems had put forward some alternate

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proposals, it is always good to get officers to look at things from a different angle, there may have been things in it we could use, and we cannot do that if no alternates are proposed. I would like to recommend this budget to you and long may we continue to run this Borough.

Cllr Marshall commented that the exposition on Localism is very well thought out, but with respect it has been a regular whinge of Local Authorities, regardless of the colour of government. It is the role of National Government to run the macro economy and Local Authorities have to accept that. Cllr England referred to the transfer of the leisure facilities and termed it as outsourcing; the transfer of facilities to SLM has been vastly debated by this Council and the advantages of this transfer were crystal clear, as were the financial advantages. We have to look at the whole length of the contract, not just the first year. It is worth noting that SLM have been awarded contracts to run facilities in many authorities, including Lib Dem controlled ones such as Watford.

Cllr Andrews picked up a couple of points, in response to the questions posed by Cllr Adeleke, we will not be impacted by any interest rate increase as we are on fixed rates. With regard the question around Brexit; while the government is committed to localisation of business rates, it has not been set out as a scheme. If it gets to the point there is a scheme, it is likely it will protect us against drop in the local area. Referring to Cllr Wyatt Lowe's comments about the increase in CT and the last budget that Labour was in charge, it was actually 28%. Referring to Cllr England's comments on consultation; the 30 people that were consulted was the same format as undertaken every year, not just a case of us sending out form, but instead sitting in a room having detailed discussion; that cannot be done with a wide audience. I have led this Council since 1999, I did so then as a Leader of the group that had taken control that year with 26 members out of 52. We have always over those years set out our priorities to Dacorum every 4 years, how this is received is reflected by the election results during that time. We have not shy'd away from making decisions about finances, cannot keep kicking the ball down the line, you have to bite the bullet and say we cannot provide these services without the income. We provide great income. Our MTFS states we intend to continue to increase our Council Tax. We have been very prudent in terms of New Homes Bonus, we have taken the view that we should not rely on it to deliver our key services, and we use some of it to provide Capital investment in facilities across the Borough. I am confident we have set a budget that preserves front line services and I fully commend this budget to Council.

### Voting

#### *Names of those voting*

*For: Adeleke, Anderson, Banks, Barrett, Bassadone, Birnie, Chapman, E Collins, Douris, Elliot, England, Griffiths, Guest, Harden, P Hearn, Hicks, Howard, Imarni, Maddern, Mahmood, Marshall, Mclean, Mills, Peter, Riddick, Ritchie, Silwal, G Sutton, Taylor, Timmis, Williams, C Wyatt-Lowe (31)*

Against: None

*Abstained: D Collins (Mayor), R Sutton (Deputy Mayor), England, Fethney, Fisher, Link, Ransley (7)*

The Mayor declared the motion to be carried.

**CHAIRMAN**

## **Decision**

### **General Fund Revenue Estimate**

- a) set a Dacorum Borough Council General Fund Council Tax requirement of £11.094m, and of £11.872m for the combined Borough Council and Parish Councils' requirement for 2018/19;
- b) an increase of 2.99% in Council Tax for Dacorum Borough Council, taking Band D Council Tax to £195.51 for 2018/19;
- c) base estimates for 2018/19, as shown in Appendix A1, and the indicative budget forecasts for 2018/19 – 2021/22, as shown in Appendix A2;
- d) the forecast balances of Revenue Reserves as shown in Appendix J, and approve section 10 of this report as the updated Reserves Strategy;
- e) increases in Fees and Charges for 2018/19 as set out in Appendices C3, D3, and E3;
- f) adopt the Treasury Management Strategy for 2018/19, attached at Appendix K;
- g) adopt the Treasury Management Principles and Practices for 2018/19, attached at Appendix L;
- h) note that this budget paper will form part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

### **Capital Programme**

- i) the revised Capital Programme for 2017/18, and for 2018/19 to 2022/23, as detailed in Appendix I;
- j) the financing proposals in Appendix I subject to an annual review of the financing options by the Corporate Director (Finance & Operations), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, during the preparation of the Statement of Accounts.

### **Housing Revenue Account (HRA)**

- k) reduce dwelling rents by 1% in accordance with government legislation, resulting in an average rent of £101.22 per week (based on 52 weeks);
- l) the HRA estimate for 2018/19 as shown in Appendix F.

### **Terms & Conditions**

- m) the continued application of a living wage supplement for all affected employees, in accordance with the rates of the Living Wage Foundation, for 2018/19 (to be reviewed annually thereafter).

### **Statement by Chief Finance Officer**

the statement by the Chief Finance Officer regarding the robustness of the budget estimates and level of reserves as set out in Appendix M.

**CHAIRMAN**

## 19 COUNCIL TAX DECLARATION 2018/19

### Resolved:

- 1) It be noted that the Cabinet, at its meeting on 12 December 2017, calculated the following amounts for the year 2018/19 in accordance with regulations made under Section 31B (3) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended), as inserted by Section 74 of the Localism Act 2011:-
  - (a) 56,743.6 being the figure calculated by the Council in accordance with regulation 3 of The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 as its Council Tax base for the year;
  - (b) the amounts in Table 1 of this report (Tax Base for each part of the Council's area to which one or more special items relate) being the amounts calculated by the Cabinet in accordance with regulation 6 The Local Authorities (Calculation of Council Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012 as the amounts of its Council Tax base for the year for dwellings in such parts;
  
- 2) the following amounts be now calculated by the Council for the year 2018/19 in accordance with Sections 31A and 31B and Sections 34 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (as amended) (referred to as "the Act"):
  - (a) £144,363,422.14 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (2) of the Act, taking account of all precepts;
  - (b) £132,491,726.00 being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A (3) of the Act, including the aggregate of the sums which the Council estimates will be payable for the year into its General Fund in respect of redistributed Non-Domestic Rates and Revenue Support Grant;
  - (c) £11,872,110.38 being the amount by which the aggregate at 2)(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 2)(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the Act as its **Council Tax requirement** for the year;
  - (d) £209.22 being the amount at 2)(c) above, divided by 1)(a) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B (1) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year;
  - (e) **£778,169.14** *being the aggregate amount of all special items referred to in Section 34(1) of the Act;*
  - (f) **£195.51** *being the amount at 2)(d) above, less the result given by dividing the amount at 2)(e) above by the amount at 1)(a) above, calculated by the Council, in accordance with Section 34(2) of the Act as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in those parts of its area to which no special item relates;*

CHAIRMAN

<b>(g) Part of the Council's Area</b>	<b>Band D Equivalent Combined £</b>
Hemel Hempstead	195.51
Aldbury	232.20
Berkhamsted	218.23
Bovingdon	224.07
Chipperfield	246.73
Flamstead	256.53
Flaunden	226.05
Great Gaddesden	214.82
Kings Langley	242.67
Little Gaddesden	225.81
Markyate	233.57
Nash Mills	218.51
Nettleden	218.90
Northchurch	211.07
Tring Rural	236.38
Tring Town	221.68
Wigginton	216.07

(Band D charge for Parish and District combined), being the amounts given by adding to the amount at 2)(f) above, the amounts of the special item or items relating to dwellings in those parts of the Council's area mentioned above divided in each case by the amount at 1)(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 34(3) of the Act, as the basic amounts of its Council Tax for the year for dwellings in parts of its area to which special items relate;

- 3) it be noted that for the year 2018/19 Hertfordshire County Council have stated the amounts in precepts issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings as set out in table 3(a);
- 4) That it be noted that for the year 2018/19 the Hertfordshire Police and Crime Commissioner has proposed the amounts in precepts issued to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each of the categories of dwellings as set out in table 3(a);
- 5) That having calculated the aggregate in each case of the amounts at 2)(g), 3) and 4) above the Council in accordance with Section 30(2) of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby set the amounts set out in Table 3b of the report as the amounts of Council Tax for the year 2018/19 for each part of the area and for each of the categories of dwellings shown;
- 6) It be noted that in setting the Council Tax for 2018/19 the Council is required to have taken account of the report of the Chief Financial Officer on the robustness of the budget.

**CHAIRMAN**

**20 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS**

There were no referrals from Overview & Scrutiny.

**21 CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

There were no changes to committee membership.

**22 CHANGE TO COMMITTEE DATES**

**Resolved:**

That the Committee Timetable 2018/19 be approved and noted.

**24 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC**

There were no items for consideration under exclusion of the public.

**25 CALL-IN AND URGENCY PROCEDURE**

Cllr Williams advised of decision taken under urgency powers relating to the following;

**CA/006/18 - Construction of the Multi-Storey Car Park (MSCP) Berkhamsted – Award of Contract**

The Meeting ended at 8.47 pm