

COUNCIL AGENDA



WEDNESDAY 26 SEPTEMBER 2018 AT 7.30 PM
COUNCIL CHAMBER - CIVIC CENTRE

Membership

Councillor Gbola Adeleke	Councillor Mike Hicks
Councillor Graham Adshead	Councillor Tina Howard
Councillor Alan Anderson	Councillor Isy Imarni
Councillor Anthony Armytage	Councillor Brenda Link
Councillor Julie Banks	Councillor Jan Maddern
Councillor Hazel Bassadone	Councillor Suqlain Mahmood
Councillor Stephen Bateman	Councillor Janice Marshall
Councillor Alex Bhinder	Councillor Peter Matthews
Councillor John Birnie	Councillor Robert McLean
Councillor Christina Brown	Councillor Stan Mills
Councillor Herbert Chapman	Councillor Colin Peter
Councillor Michael Clark	Councillor Roxanne Ransley
Councillor David Collins	Councillor Stewart Riddick
Councillor Elaine Collins	Councillor Tom Ritchie
Councillor Olive Conway	Councillor Goverdhan Silwal
Councillor Terry Douris	Councillor Graham Sutton
Councillor Graeme Elliot	Councillor Rosie Sutton
Councillor Adrian England	Councillor Roger Taylor
Councillor Tony Fethney	Councillor Jane Timmis
Councillor Anne Fisher	Councillor Ron Tindall
Councillor Margaret Griffiths (Deputy Leader)	Councillor John Whitman
Councillor Fiona Guest	Councillor Andrew Williams (Leader)
Councillor Neil Harden	Councillor Colette Wyatt-Lowe
Councillor Penny Hearn	Councillor William Wyatt-Lowe
Councillor Stephen Hearn	

For further information, please contact member.support@dacorum.gov.uk

AGENDA

1 MINUTES (Pages 4 - 14)

To confirm the minutes of the 11 July 2018 meeting of the council

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest

3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To consider questions (if any) by members of the public of which the appropriate notice has been given to the Solicitor to the Council.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive announcements and business brought forward by the Mayor, Leader, and Members of the Cabinet or the Chief Executive.

4.1 By the Mayor:

4.2 By the Chief Executive:

4.3 By the Group Leaders: Any apologies for absence

4.4 Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:

Councillor Williams	Leader of the Council
Councillor Harden	Community & Regulatory Services
Councillor G Sutton	Planning & Infrastructure
Councillor Marshall	Environmental Services
Councillor Elliot	Finance & Resources
Councillor Mrs Griffiths	Housing
Councillor D Collins	Corporate & Contracted Services

5 QUESTIONS

To consider questions (if any) by members of the Council of which the appropriate notice has been given to the Solicitor to the Council.

6 BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

To consider any business referred from the previous meeting

7 CABINET REFERRALS (Pages 15 - 22)

To consider the following referrals from Cabinet:

7.1	CA/080/18	31 July 2018	Medium Term Financial Strategy
7.2	CA/081/18	31 July 2018	Dacorum Single Local Plan 2020-2036: Local Development Scheme
7.3	CA/082/18	31 July 2018	Private Sector Housing
7.4	CA/084/18	31 July 2018	Council Tax Support Scheme

8 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

None.

9 CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

To consider any proposals for changes to committee membership

10 CHANGE TO COMMITTEE DATES

To consider any proposals for changes to committee dates

11 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

To consider passing a resolution in the following terms:

That, under s.100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A Part 1 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during the items in Part 2 of the Agenda for this meeting, because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that, if members of the public were present during those items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Council and third party companies/organisations.

Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, paragraph 3.

Agenda Item 1

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

11 JULY 2018

Present -

MEMBERS:

R Sutton (Mayor), Douris (Deputy Mayor), Adeleke, Banks, Barrett, Bassadone, Bhinder, Chapman, D Collins, E Collins, Conway, England, Fisher, Griffiths, Guest, Harden, P Hearn, S Hearn, Howard, Link, Mahmood, Marshall, Mclean, Pringle, Ransley, Riddick, G Sutton, Taylor, Timmis, Tindall, Williams, (31)

OFFICERS:

The Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration), Legal Governance Team Leader, Group Manager (Democratic Services), S Turner (Minutes).

The meeting began at 7.30 pm.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2018 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:

None.

4.2 By the Chief Executive:

None.

4.3 By the Group Leaders:

Councillor Williams confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillors Anderson, Armytage, Birnie, Clark, Imarni, Elliot, Fethney, Madden, Mathews Mills, Peter, Silwal, Whitman, and C Wyatt-Lowe.

Councillor Tindall had no apologies,

Cllr Fisher gave apologies for Councillor Fethney.

4.4 Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:

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

Councillor Williams asked if there were any questions.

Councillor Tindall mentioned that there is an organisation who provides statuettes of soldiers to mark the centenary of the First World War and enquired if we are doing anything to commemorate this. Councillor Williams asked Councillor Harden to reply. Councillor Harden confirmed that we are looking to purchase one of these statuettes at a cost of £750 and he is aware that there are grants for Parish Councils or local organisations, but this is in hand. Councillor Tindall thanked Councillor Harden.

Councillor Bassadone was concerned about the attendance at Council. Councillor Williams confirmed that there was a least four Councillors on holiday.

Councillor England commented that the new play park in Gadebridge Park is very popular and wanted to ensure that the splash park would be open by the end of July. Councillor Williams confirmed that it would definitely be open by the end of July.

Councillor G Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Infrastructure

Progress is being made on two important new retail developments for the Borough

Work has started on the former Lucas Aerospace / Aviva site at Maylands avenue for the new retail park, and the first phase is expected to be open by Easter 2019.

The scheme for more retail units at Jarman Park has now been approved and the developers are advising that work will start in early 2019.

DBC have facilitated, with full Business sponsorship the new Dacorum Heroes and continued with the very successful Dragons Den awards. The Heroes awards recognise business that go above and beyond to help employees or the community and the den supports new business ideas to help with future growth plans.

The Heroes have already been judged and the winners agreed by a panel of sponsors and the Dragon's Den will be judged this Friday (6th) by the main sponsors and the local MP Sir Mike Penning.

There will be a winner's presentation for both taking place on July 20th.

Questions:

Councillor Tindal enquired whether the plans for the old Athletics Track site would provide new housing or retail development. Councillor Sutton confirmed that no decisions had been made at this stage.

Councillor Marshall, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

This Friday will be the first **food** collection day in the trial of collecting Food Waste from flats. The trial is for 3 months and 1600 flats are involved – in Berkhamsted, Grovehill and Leverstock Green. The aim of the trial is to determine whether food waste recycling would be successful if provided to flats. Each flat has been supplied with a kitchen caddy, a roll of bags and an informative guide and a communal brown-lidded wheelie bin has been put beside the blocks' refuse and recycling bins.

Regarding installing recycling facilities for blocks of flats in the Borough who currently have no facilities, work on installing the necessary recycling wheelie bins will start this Autumn. The installations will be area by area – members will be advised nearer the time when the bins are being installed in their wards. It is anticipated that the roll-out will be completed by the end of this financial year. There will be lots of info, letters etc. for residents – we are talking about 2953 flats in 663 blocks.

10 tonnes of compost were given away free on the 13 May in 2 hours at Cupid Green (the Compost Giveaway). The Community Payback team helped by loading up car boots with the bags. The compost was provided by D Williams & Co, the company responsible for taking our garden waste and turning into compost. The event is not just about giving away some compost. It is also publicising the message that our garden waste can be used for the benefit of our gardens, that householders can easily create compost and indeed there are offers on buying compost bins on the HCC website. 50 litre bags of compost can also be purchased from household waste recycling centres at £5 per bag.

The new play area in Gadebridge has opened and is well used. The splash park will be opened on Saturday 28 July.

Questions:

Councillor England thanked the Portfolio Holder for her response to the email he sent and he wanted to check how much recycling would be available for each area. Councillor Marshall confirmed that it depends on the number of flats in each block, they won't have a specified bin for each flat but it would work much like a normal house would.

Councillor Fisher asked if the Council had any machinery for cleaning parts of the Marlowes. Councillor Marshall advised that there is a pavement washer which was purchased for the Marlowes and if Councillor Fisher was aware of any specific areas that need cleaning please let her know.

Councillor Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

Provided by Councillor Williams in the absence of Councillor Elliot.

Commercial Assets & Property Development

The first phase of the demolition of the former Civic Centre is now complete. This involved demolition of the majority of the Civic Centre with the exception of the north eastern and south western corners of the building which contain Affinity Water & UKPN infrastructure. We are working with UKPN and Affinity Water on timeframes to begin Phase 2 which will involve diversion and relocation of utilities followed by demolition of the remaining building structure.

The sales of underutilised garages to release a capital receipt are continuing. We have recently completed the sale of 6 sites to Watford Community Housing Trust for £3.06m. There are a further 5 sites under offer to a Housing Association in the region of £1.85m which is 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 & Fraud

By making use of text messages, and offering an extra instalment date, the revenues team have been able to reduce the number of reminder notices sent to residents by over 15% compared to the same period last year. This also means that less cases are needing to progress to court action, and so fewer residents are having additional costs added to their accounts.

Financial Services

The Council published its draft statement of accounts on 31 May 2018 in line with statutory deadlines. The final audit of these accounts is underway. The final financial statements for 2017/18 will go to Audit Committee later in July for agreement.

A review of performance indicators for May shows that the service continues to deliver above target in the areas of debt collection and payments processing. Investment performance is forecast to be above budget, based on current cash-flow forecasts for the financial year.

The service has undertaken some additional work in the recovery of Housing Benefit debt following a new initiative by the Department of Work and Pensions. It is anticipated that this work will improve debt recovery levels in the cases of individuals where previously limited or no recovery was taking place.

The refresh of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2018-2023 is underway and due for presentation at Cabinet at the end of July.

Questions:

There were no questions raised.

Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Tenant and Leaseholder Services

The draft Sustainable Tenancies Strategy and Income Strategy have been developed and presented to HCOSC for their review and comments. Both will assist in supporting vulnerable tenants to maintain their tenancies and are designed to exhaust all avenues of support before enforcement action is pursued.

Strategic Housing

Strategic Housing has been awarded the NPSS Gold Standard award for Housing Options services, recognising the improvement in delivery of homelessness and housing options services in Dacorum.

The service is continuing to focus on improving housing standards in the borough by way of effective resident engagement about key issues, most recently this has been awareness of private sector housing standards, which supports the delivery of a new Enforcement Policy to be launched during August 2018.

Housing Development

Kylina Court – Works are progressing well on site. The first flat is ready and we are going through the process of agreeing the benchmark quality standard for the site. Completion Nov 2018.

Swing Gate Lane (Corn Mill Court) – Works are progressing well on site. Completion Dec 2018

Martindale School site – Contractor recommended to Cabinet and approved, now in alcatel period and then we will commence pre contract activities with a view to starting on site in the autumn.

Northend and Westerdale garage sites – Adjudicating tender returns, aiming to be on site autumn.

Stationers Place – Revised planning application submitted. We are re pricing the scheme with the Contractor.

New Pipeline schemes, Starting to mobilise these new schemes and appoint consultant support.

Property and Place

Gas Heating - Communal boilers are being replaced at Florence Longman House and Cranford that will increase the efficiency of the schemes. (The warm weather is helping as the heating demand is low at the moment!)

Compliance - Emergency lighting is being installed at all blocks of flats on the Ashlyns estate.

DBC are putting together a programme of works to increase fire detection in homes throughout the borough.

A new Support Officer has been appointed to coordinate the increase in fire safety works

Major Project - The project to convert current offices at Supported Housing Schemes into wheelchair compliant ground floor flats, construct laundry's, offices and refurbish the Communal Rooms at three Supported Housing Schemes has begun. The projects are due to be completed early in 2019/20

Questions:

No questions were raised.

Councillor D Collins, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Contracted Services

Everyone Active has completed its first 3 months of delivering the leisure services contract across the Borough and have received positive customer feedback on the operation of the County Championship at Jarmans Park, New café facilities at Hemel and for new Showers and sauna and other improvements at Berkhamsted.

The upgrade works at Hemel leisure centre commenced in June and will be done in 4 phases

Phase 1 will include the ground floor studio, gym, and new membership lounge.

Phase 2 will include the spin studio, fitness area one and changing rooms.

Phase 3 the first floor studio and Phase 4 the body and soul studio.

These works are due to be completed by end of September

The specification for works to refurbish Tring Swimming Pool and associated facilities has now been agreed and works will commence on 6th August. The refurbishment plans include the reception area, associated staff rooms, main changing rooms, viewing gallery and resurfacing of the swimming pool and walkways. The works also include significant mechanical and engineering works and replacement of major plant items which operate the swimming pool. The target date for completion of the works is early January 2019. Everyone Active has been working with clubs affected by the closure to try and allocate times in other facilities which they run. Good news then that Berkhamsted and Tring facilities are being upgraded.

Indigo Park Services continue to deliver the Parking Enforcement contract across the borough. All car parks have had new pay and park machines installed which allow for cash, telephone, chip & pin and contactless payments. Parking enforcement is supported by new technology including vehicles equipped with ANPR CCTV.

Early indicators show that this new enforcement is working. Revenue from parking has increased whilst the revenue from penalty charge notices has decreased.

In Democratic Services the Annual Canvass will commence in the autumn for the next Council elections in May 2019. 67,000 Households will be contacted during August until November to confirm the electors at the property and to compile the Electoral Register. We have also switched to a new electoral registration/management system following a five month detailed tender/recruitment exercise.

On the 8th October 2018 Huber Car Park Systems International will take possession of the Lower Kings Road site and commence the construction of the Multi Storey car park in Berkhamsted. The target completion date is the end of May 2019.

This will mean closure of Lower Kings Road carpark and a temporary carpark being located on the Moor. A planning application is being submitted. Using Cell Pave material the Moor's grass will be protected. On the opening of the MSCP the Moor will revert to an open space once more. At all times the children's play area will continue to be in operation and the temporary carpark fenced off.

The rollout of the new equipment to officers is continuing, and we are looking at technology options for members to be adopted following next year's election.

A second network link, providing improved resilience in our connections between the Forum and the data centres is now physically in place and undergoing testing, after much delay in its supply from BT.

Questions:

Councillor Tindall highlighted the need for parking meters that took into account the seriously dyslexic who may be struggling with the new machines. Councillor Tindall confirmed he had discussed this with the relevant Group Manager but had not received a response yet. Councillor Collins confirmed he would take the comments back.

Councillor Harden, Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services **Performance & People**

Armed Forces Day 2018 – We delivered a successful Armed Forces Day event on June 30th in Gadebridge Park; with Portsmouth Action Field Gun Display Team and Rockwood Dogs Display Team as our arena acts and with Rockabellas and Halton Military Wives Choir on our community stage. The event was attended by the Mayor of Dacorum, the Rt. Hon Sir Mike Penning MP & Deputy Leader of the House of Lords and Minister of State for Defence, the Rt. Hon the Earl Howe PC. It was an honour that our event was selected by Earl Howe. I personally escorted Earl Howe around introducing him to the community stall holders and organisations present.

Promotion of the Armed Forces Day was via social media posts, posters around the Borough, large screen advertising and local paper. Approximately 3000 people attended over the day. Feedback on the day and via social media was very positive.

Consultation continues for the moving the Athletics Track and new Sports Pavilion. Closing date for responses is 17th August.

Environmental and Community Protection

Department has now been fully staffed after a long period carrying vacancies.

Discussions have taken place with Boxmoor Trust, National Trust, Dogs Trust, RSPCA and the Police regarding the possibility of having a Borough wide Public Space Protection Order relating to dog issues.

Further to work being carried out on a Hoarding Protocol with Tennant Services and the Fire Service the team have 3 current cases dealing with Filthy or Verminous properties. One property that has been cleared took 3 men 5 days to do. A re-charge will be placed on the property.

The ASB team successfully obtained premises closure order on a property in conjunction with Hertfordshire Constabulary in relation to a stabbing at the address in St Pauls Road.

The ASB Team agreed four ABC's (Anti-Social Behaviour Contracts) with youths being a nuisance around Stoneycroft Shops.

Questions:

Councillor Taylor highlighted the importance and the need for all Councillors to engage in Member Support Development regardless of political affiliations and would request that the Portfolio Holder endorses this opinion by giving support for all 51 Councillors to be encouraged to attend. Councillor Harden did endorse this and emphasised the training as having the ability to develop our skills to help make us better Councillors.

Councillor England asked what has happened to the verge hardening project. Councillor Harden will request an update from the Group Manager.

Councillor Tindall reinforced Councillor Taylor's request for all Councillors to attend Member Development as there are so many changes that Councillors need to be aware of, it is our duty to turn up. Councillor Harden agreed.

Councillor Taylor confirmed that the verge hardening project was very much happening in Neighbourhood Action areas. Councillor Taylor referred Councillor England to a named, appropriate officer to ensure he is included in any updates.

5. QUESTIONS

None.

5a. NOTICE OF MOTION

A motion was proposed by Councillor Tindall and seconded by Councillor England as follows:

“Council affirms the view that the Fire and Rescue Service should remain under the control and democratic accountability of Hertfordshire County Council, rather than being taken over by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Council therefore fully supports the view taken by the County Council in this regard, and its Leader’s submission to the Home Office.”

The Mayor put the motion to vote.

All those present voted to support the motion. There were no votes against.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Home Office in a similar vein, confirming this Council’s opposition to the proposed takeover.”

6. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

None.

7. CABINET REFERRALS

That the following be approved:

24th April 2018

7.1 CA/049/18 FORMALISATION OF THE GROVEHILL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

That Council formally ‘makes’ the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Local Plan following a YES vote at Referendum 15th February.

Agreed.

22nd May 2018

7.2 CA/058/18 FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2017/18

That Council:

- 1. Approve the carry forward of unspent reserve funded budgets from 2017/18 to 2018/19 (see Appendix D of the report to Cabinet, £315k slippage into 2018/19)**
- 2. Approve the use of the Housing Revenue Account surplus to fund an increased Revenue Contribution to Capital**

Agreed

7.3 CA/059/18 AMENDMENTS TO STAFF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

That Council approves the changes to the redundancy multiplier as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

Agreed.

26TH June 2018

7.4 CA/071/18 CONSTITUTION AND PETITION SCHEME REVIEW AND UPDATE

That Council adopt the amended Petition Scheme as annexed at Appendix 1A of the Cabinet report; and include a change in paragraph 5 (The word 'ago' be replaced with 'previously').

Agreed.

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

None.

9. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Cllr Silwal will be leaving the Finance committee and joining Member Development and SPAE.

Cllr Armytage will be joining Licensing.

Cllr Bhinder will be joining Licencing.

The Finance Committee will be reduced by one space.

10. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE DATES

None.

11 CHANGES TO THE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

The referral was presented Councillor Guest on behalf of the Development Management Committee. The changes that are being put forward will enable the Committee to function in a more streamlined and timely manner and therefore improve the quality of decision making. Recommendations 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 were agreed by a majority of Committee Members in response to consultation. As for change 3 the majority of Members who responded to the consultation disagree with this change. So Cllr Guest would not be recommending it for adoption at Council. She proposed changes 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 and Councillor Griffiths seconded the proposals.

Resolved: -

That the recommended changes as agreed by the Development Management Committee on 5th July 2018 be agreed as follows:

1. **If an application is recommended for approval, only objectors can invoke public speaking and then supporters can present their case. Applicants can only invoke speaking rights where the application is recommended for refusal.**
2. **Reduce the Ward Councillor time limit for speaking from 10 minutes to five minutes.**
3. **Change the deadline to register to speak from 12 noon on the day of the meeting to 5pm the day before the meeting.**
4. **Stop members of the public distributing material at the meeting.**
5. **Planning officers must keep their presentations to 5 minutes for major applications and 3 minutes for all other applications.**

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

To consider passing a resolution in the following terms:

That, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the item in Part II of the Agenda for this meeting, because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Council and third party companies/organisations.

(Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3).

13. PART 2 CABINET REFERRAL

Full details can be found in the part 2 minutes.

The meeting ended at 20:15pm

By virtue of paragraph(s) 3 of Part 1 of Schedule 12A
of the Local Government Act 1972.

Document is Restricted

CABINET REFERRALS

31st July 2018

7.1 CA/080/18 MEDIUM TERM FINANCIAL STRATEGY

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That the Revised Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2018/19 – 2022/23 be approved

Corporate objectives

The Medium Term Financial Strategy supports the delivery of all five of the Corporate Objectives.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer comments

No comments to add to the report

S.151 Officer:

The comments were included within the body of the report.

Advice

Councillor Elliott introduced the Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) as the next steps in the council's handling of its funds and preparation for the financial climate of the next few years. He drew attention to the savings already achieved, their contribution to keeping Council Tax at a manageable rate and hinted at possible measures still to come to enable the council to deal with reduced government funding and ensure the tax payer gets value for money. The Council has been prudent in its use of funds and he gave the example of how the Council has used the New Homes bonus effectively.

J Deane, Corporate Director (Finance & Operations) (JD) then took the meeting through some key points regarding successful savings and the need to maintain progress; the recent unqualified Audits; and General Fund assumptions based on current trends. He went on to identify possible risks and how our accounting and practices have been set up to address possible further reductions in central government funding. In financial terms our aim should be sustainable, self-sufficiency in four years.

Councillor Marshall clarified some figures regarding the negative Revenue Support Grant.

Councillor Birnie enquired when the Local Government Finance Settlement is likely to be formally announced and JD suggested that it looks probable it will be November 2018.

The Chair then moved the recommendation set out in the report.

Recommendation agreed.

Voting

None.

7.2 CA/081/18 DACORUM SINGLE LOCAL PLAN 2020-2036: LOCAL DEVELOPMENT SCHEME

Decision

1 RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND;

- A. The adoption of the new Local Development Scheme (2018-2021) and;**
- B. That Council Authorise the Assistant Director - Planning, Development and Regeneration to make any necessary minor and non-consequential changes to the Local Development Scheme prior to its final publication.**

2. Resolved:

A Corporate Growth and Infrastructure Strategy for Dacorum be produced for consideration by Cabinet and Council at a future date.

Reason for decisions

To update members on the progress towards preparing Dacorum's Local Plan and seek approval for an updated Local Development Scheme (LDS).

Corporate objectives

The Council's Local Plan helps support all 5 corporate objectives:

- *Safe and clean environment:* e.g. contains policies relating to the design and layout of new development that promote security and safe access;
- *Community Capacity:* e.g. provide a framework for local communities to prepare area-specific guidance such as Neighbourhood Plans, Town / Village Plans etc.;
- *Affordable housing:* e.g. sets the Borough's overall housing target and the proportion of new homes that must be affordable;
- *Dacorum delivers:* e.g. provides a clear framework upon which planning decisions can be made; and
- *Regeneration:* e.g. sets the planning framework for key regeneration projects, such as Hemel Hempstead town centre and the Maylands Business Park.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer comments

Monitoring Officer:

Preparation of a Local Development Scheme ('LDS') is a statutory requirement. The LDS is a project plan which sets out the timetable for preparation of Local Development Documents (LDDs) that form the Council's Local Planning Framework.

S.151 Officer:

The production and delivery of a single local plan and a local development scheme can be delivered within existing budgets provision.

Advice

Councillor Sutton introduced the item by outlining the issues involved in producing and maintaining the Local Plan and the Local Development Scheme.

The report seeks approval for the Local Development Scheme which sets out the Council's timetable for the production of its new Local Plan.

Members will be aware that the Council undertook the first major consultation on the new Plan in autumn 2017 on the 'issues and options' facing the Borough in terms of dealing with new growth and development to 2036.

Consultation was extensive and included a series of public exhibitions staffed by both Members and officers. The response rate was very high and generated over 23,000 separate comments on the future of the Borough from around 2,000 residents and organisations.

A summary of the key issues arising from the Consultation held last autumn is at appendix 2 of the report to the Cabinet.

As the report explains, there is much further technical work to be done before the Council will be in a position to prepare a full, draft Local Plan which will put forward the amount of development to be planned for in Dacorum, and where the Council considers it best to be located.

The draft LDS is set out at appendix 1 of the report to Cabinet. The timetable proposes ongoing preparation work for the next 12 months before a full draft plan is brought back to Cabinet and then Council for consideration. Regular update reports to Cabinet will be provided over this period.

From here, the intention will be to consult with the public in August/September 2019, leading to the formal submission of the draft Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Housing, Communities and Local Government in February 2020.

The plan would proceed to public examination of the plan by an appointed Planning Inspector in mid-2020, with adoption of the Plan by December 2020.

The plan considers all forms of development, and will set out a vision and strategy for how the Council considers the Borough should be developed to 2036.

To assist this process, the report proposes an additional piece of work – the creation of a new Growth and Infrastructure Strategy – to take a long term look at the future shape of the Borough.

Separate from the statutory local plan process, the new strategy will provide the opportunity for the Council to set out high-level objectives for what it wishes to see happen in terms of new homes, jobs and the economy, tourism, transport, parks and open spaces and the digital and technology agendas.

The largest issue will be accommodating new housing growth, and the challenge of doing this will be very high given the Borough's green belt constraints.

The report indicates that using the Government's new standard methodology for assessing local housing need, the starting point for housing growth is at 1,049 new homes per annum – a considerable jump from the target of 430 per annum in the Dacorum Core Strategy which was adopted in 2013.

We are expecting the Government to release new household projection figures in September of this year which are expected to show a fall as population projections released earlier this year by the Office for National Statistics have reduced.

The Government has also indicated that it may revise its standard housing methodology which it first put forward in draft form in September 2017.

Whereas there is no published timescale for the roll out of the revised methodology, it is possible that it won't be confirmed until early 2019 and as such we may not have full clarity on Dacorum's local housing need until then.

Between now and next Spring, Officers will be undertaking a thorough analysis of potential development sites and preparing options for how much new development there should be, and where, for the Council's consideration.

This is necessary to ensure that the process is sound and robustly based on evidence, and importantly in step with our confirmed local housing need level which we may not have until early 2019.

The Government is however clear that progress on Local Plans should progress and under the proposed timetable in front of Cabinet tonight, we are able to do this as clarity on our housing need level emerges over the next few months.

From the technical work that officers are doing now during that period, Members will be in a position next year to consider how to best allocate land for new development against the assessed figure of local housing need.

Cabinet will also note that there is a commitment between the Borough and District Councils in the south western part of Hertfordshire, along with the County Council, to prepare a joint strategic plan to address longer term growth pressures and the provision of strategic infrastructure.

Whereas a new joint plan will provide strategic direction for new development in south west Herts, each of the local planning authorities – Watford, Hertsmere, Three Rivers and St Albans in addition to Dacorum – will continue to prepare individual Local Plans which will confirm exact locations of new sites and the requirements they will make of developers.

This work is at an early stage, and officers will report on progress over the next few months.

Councillor Birnie then enquired about the status of the Grovehill Neighbourhood Plan (GNP): In planning terms how significant is it; and can it have a material effect on planning in the area. J Doe replied that the GNP is significant for individual planning applications and influences the strategic planning decisions for the area and its surrounds.

Councillor Birnie then went on to the composition of the SW Herts Authorities Group and its effectiveness as far as joint cross boundary development is concerned. He has the impression the our neighbouring authorities, particularly St Albans, are not being particularly co-operative and view Dacorum as the primary location for further housing development while opposing employment, business development on their boundaries. Councillor Williams was quick to point out that this is not the case and that all the surrounding authorities, including St Albans, are working in partnership and engaged in a sensible joint approach.

St Albans are in the process of releasing 75 hectares of land for employment use and are anxious to co-ordinate this with the authorities surrounding.

On a related matter, Councillor Tindall suggested that the Plan and any joint operations need to clarify that they relate to 'east of Hemel Hempstead' and not East Hemel Hempstead, which is solely the concern of the Borough Council.

Councillor Marshall then moved on to the timetable and the risk of Central Government delays in announcing its assessment Housing Needs delaying production of the Plan and leaving us vulnerable to pressure from developers. J Doe gave his assessment of the emerging picture; the flexibility of our approach and our ability to respond to and absorb changing criteria. He anticipates that central government decisions on planning and housing needs are due for publication in summer 2019.

The Cabinet returned to the 'duty to co-operate' features of the approach and Councillor Elliot asked who will arbitrate in cross-boundary matters. J Doe made clear that authorities have to be able to demonstrate evidence of robust discussions with their neighbours and produce a statement of common ground. This would be examined by the Planning Inspector in any Inquiry.

Councillor Birnie asked if the current plan is still fit for purpose and if we are at risk of a serious planning challenge due to the protracted length of time it takes to produce a new plan. J Doe reassured the members that we have to be able to evidence that the Council have made every effort to achieve and produce a new plan local plan and not be judged as dragging our feet. Councillor Williams agreed that our current local plan, though old in planning terms, is better than most and still relevant and effective.

Recommendations agreed.

Voting

None.

7.3 CA/082/18 PRIVATE SECTOR HOUSING

Decision

1. RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND;

That Council approve the Private Sector Enforcement Policy, as set out in the report to Cabinet and attached appendices.

2. Resolved:-

- a) That the proposed approach for the Private Sector Housing Strategy and the focus on regulating the Private Rented Sector and Houses in Multiple Occupation, as set out in the report to the Cabinet and attached appendices, be approved.
- b) That that a review of the Houses in Multiple Occupancy licence fee be reported at a future meeting.

Reason for Decision

To provide Cabinet with an overview of activity undertaken by the housing service since gaining the remit of Private Sector Housing including an overview of key legislative changes. To set out the proposed approach outlined in the policies and terms of reference.

Corporate objectives

The Strategic Housing Service's responsibilities and activity in relation to the Private Rented Sector contributes to the following corporate objectives:

- Clean Safe and enjoyable environment
- Building Strong and vibrant communities

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer comments

Monitoring Officer:

This is an important policy document to aid the decision making process in this area and will also help to keep the public aware of how the Council will decide Private Sector Housing enforcement matters.

S.151 Officer:

A review of the HMO licencing fees is underway as a result of the additional responsibilities being introduced in October 2018 and future approval from cabinet will be sought once these are known.

These fees need to be set to ensure they recover the full cost of delivering this service

Advice

Councillor Mrs Griffiths introduced the item drawing attention to the recent changes in legislation dealing with private sector housing and its impact on Housing and housing finance in Dacorum.

F Williamson, Assistant Director (Housing) (FW) took the Cabinet through the main elements of the report focussing on the potential growth of the number Houses in Multiple Occupation, in Dacorum, from around 44 up to 400 due to the revised definitions and rules in the new legislation. She also highlighted the changes proposed for setting and reviewing fees and charges and the ongoing work to estimate and set the new fees. FW stressed that we have to be seen to have adopted a fair and proportionate, mixed tenure approach.

Councillor Marshall expressed her support for the proposals and is anxious that we agree the fees and charges without delay, so if necessary or possible, bring the fee setting report to Cabinet at the earliest opportunity and avoid costs falling on the Council. FW agreed that the fees should be agreed at the earliest opportunity though there is still a significant amount of investigation required to assess the extent of the task and the resources that it will require.

Recommendations agreed.

Voting

None.

7.4 CA/084/18 COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME 2019/20

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND;

That the Council do not revise or replace the current Council Tax Support scheme for 2019/20.

Reason for decision

To consider whether to revise or replace the existing Council Tax Support scheme for the 2019/20 billing year, and if so, to approve options for consultation. Also to note the requirement to consider revision or replacement of the Council Tax Support scheme for 2019/20.

Corporate objectives

Effective management of the Council's finances supports the Council's vision and all five of its corporate objectives.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer comments

Monitoring Officer:

The Local Governance Finance Act 1992 (as amended) requires that a billing authority (this Council) considers each financial year whether to whether to revise or replace its Council Tax Support Scheme.

This report satisfies that requirement and recommends no revision or replacement to the current scheme be made.

If Cabinet or Council does require revision or replacement of the scheme following consideration of this report further consultation will be required.

S.151 Officer:

This is a S151 Officer report

Advice

Councillor Elliot introduced the item, advising the Cabinet that the current scheme is working well and we are prepared for the roll-out of Universal Credit, though the exact cost and resources it requires have not been finalised as yet. Chris Baker, Group Manager: (Revenues, Benefits & Fraud) (CB) then went on to explain how the current Council Tax Support Scheme is operating and the changes that Universal Credit may entail. Councillor Birnie asked if we are any closer to an estimate of the costs of Universal Credit and was told no new information is available since the report that was considered at the last Cabinet. He went on to ask if we could make comparisons with other authorities who had already undergone the changes. CB advised that is difficult as our experience will be different and it is too early to produce proper estimates without seeing the schemes in operation: we will have the evidence next year and can then budget effectively and implement the scheme fully, at the start of the financial year in April 2020. Councillor Marshall again requested that the officers bring the review at the earliest opportunity. CB did say that the benefit of an early review would be that it could act as pre-planning for the following Council Tax estimates.

The report seeks approval for

Recommendation agreed.

Voting

None.