

MINUTES

STRATEGIC PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

22 JANUARY 2019

Present:

Members:

Councillors: Anderson (Chairman)
Birnie (Vice-
Chairman)
S Hearn
Marshall
Matthews
Silwal
Timmis
Tindall

Officers: Sharon Burr Corporate and Democratic Support Officer
Nigel Howcutt Assistant Director - Finance and Resources

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

1 MINUTES

Cllr Anderson asked if anyone had any corrections for the last three sets of minutes before signing. Cllr Matthews said that he sent his apologies for the meeting on 4th December which had not been recorded. Cllr Anderson asked for any comments and Cllr Timmis said that there are a number of acronyms used in the minutes which are not explained to those who may not be familiar for what they stand for so she would like them explained in the first instance.

AP – S. Burr

The minutes of the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on December 4th 2018 were agreed and signed, as were the minutes for the 20th November 2018 and the 23rd October 2018.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies from Cllr Sutton, Cllr Bateman, Cllr Fisher and Cllr Ransley (Cllr Tindall substituting) and Cllr Hicks who is unwell. Cllr Howard who is also unwell and Cllr Riddick due to weather

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

5 **CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN**

None.

6 **ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT SYSTEM UPDATE**

Cllr Anderson said that he would like to confirm – Nigel Howcutt is the Assistant Director for Finance and Resources, not our Environmental Sustainability Officer but he will be presenting the item.

N. Howcutt introduced the report to members, and confirmed he would send the slides to S. Burr to distribute. He also confirmed that at present he is acting as the Environmental Sustainability Officer as well as his Assistant Director role. Nigel explained that he would be going through a review of what the Environmental Management System is, and how it is audited.

N Howcutt said that he would go through what the Environmental Management System is, what ISO 14001, some feedback on the audits that took place in 2018 and what we are looking to achieve over the next three years in accreditation with ISO 14001 then the final point will be an open discussion regarding the future.

AP – N Howcutt, S Burr.

N Howcutt explained that ISO 14001 is an international standard which organisations can sign up to if they choose to and it allows external viewpoints on whether your controls and mitigations are what they consider up to standard. It is not a statutory requirement and Dacorum are one of the smallest Local Authorities signed up to this. Because you are publicly setting some objectives you put yourself forward to say that you can and will achieve those objectives.

There was a discussion regarding Access to Documents which is the one field that we received a non-compliance notice. The documents were there but they were not as easy to access as first thought, so a new system is being implemented so that whether you are in the Forum or not you can get in touch with these folders to get access to that information.

Cllr Birnie asked if it was just staff access or the public and N Howcutt confirmed it was only staff access.

Cllr Timmis asked why a mobile phone could not be used and N Howcutt explained that a mobile cannot access our local drives.

Cllr Anderson confirmed that this was all to do with accreditation for Security of Information.

There was a discussion as to whether there was a liaison with planning when they construct new dwellings and if they are contributing to what was trying to be achieved.

N Howcutt explained that there were 2 aspects to that and that they liaise with planning on the operational sides, so the cemeteries, the playgrounds, Cupid and The Forum. The Energy Efficiency Team which sits in housing liaises with planning on all new housing developments from a DBC perspective. Equally planners will liaise with external developers.

It was then asked whether there was any ability to enforce regarding types of construction etc.,

N Howcutt replied that would be something J Doe could answer.

Cllr Hearn said that he could not see any reference to Commercial Waste on the slide and N Howcutt explained that it is outside Environmental Management Service.

Cllr Anderson said that it was a separate issue which would be raised in the future, that isn't part of the Council's operational footprint which is what we are looking at tonight.

N Howcutt went on to say that we are ahead of the game in single use plastics. In terms of lighting improvements, we have LED lighting in most of our Civic Centres now, Tring still has some that needs to be done. All lights are replaced with LED in Dacorum.

On finishing the presentation, N Howcutt asked for any questions.

Cllr Matthews asked whether Environmental Management covers Council owned buildings such as council flats and houses.

N Howcutt replied that in terms of the Environmental Management Service, it does not. Housing do look at energy efficiency when we are building new stock ourselves. It has to reach and A or a B on the EPC rating. When maintenance is done on older stock we look to improve the energy efficiency and if this is not possible we will try and offload them.

Cllr Matthews asked that if Environmental Management was imbedded in the Council's operation could it be that Housing would be looking at things like water efficiency as well as energy efficiency and monitoring recycling etc more closely.

N Howcutt replied that there were different aspects to that – recycling we look at as the whole borough and that comes under the Waste and Recycling mantra where we are looking to achieve improvements year on year. From the housing perspective they may do more on the Environmental Management Services than he is aware of as it does not fall under this mantra. There are certain green standards that they have to achieve with new builds.

Cllr Timmis asked about the existing stock of council houses and whether there could be incentives to reduce water consumption.

Cllr Anderson explained that following a legal case brought by a tenant against a housing authority regarding them paying the water bill for them, all tenants now have to pay their own water bills directly, so they will be subject to the Water Company's efforts to improve consumption in the same way that home owners are. All new properties now being built have a water meter.

Cllr Birnie said that he is now convinced there is a cost benefit to Environmental Management.

N Howcutt reiterated that the costs now are very minimal.

Cllr Marshall reminded the Committee that it was important to remember that the EMS system and the certification relates to the buildings that are under DBC's control, so you cannot expect it to extend to council housing because that is occupied by individuals who are independent of the council. We can urge people to reduce their water and energy but they are not under our control. She said that a lot of the progress made was due to the persistence and dedication shown by the Sustainability Officers.

Cllr Anderson asked whether there was an opportunity, resource permitting to imbed some of this in the Estates Department where in relation to buildings we own that aren't operational and aren't housing.

N Howcutt replied that a lot of the utility side of this depends on who is paying the bill. He said that where we are paying the bill it was possible to go on line and see the current water electricity or gas usage of any of our operational buildings. When it is a commercial asset and we only charge rent we don't pay the bills and so wouldn't

have access to those utilities. He added that there are other operational assets that have been looked at bringing in to the EMS, so Kyna Court will have some small commercial space that may come online in the management system and also The Maylands, the incubation pods may become part of the EMS system as well.

Cllr Hearn said that he felt it was really important that the planning department looked at energy saving when thousands of houses are going to be built in Dacorum over the next few years.

Cllr Anderson said that it would certainly be something to be discussed at another meeting.

Cllr Birnie asked if letting part of The Forum to CCG would have an effect on the environmental management of the building.

N Howcutt replied that their contract means they will be treating the building in the same way as the present occupants, it is in their terms and conditions that they will use the same facilities he said that per capita it would make the building even more efficient because it will not need more heat or use significantly more energy and the bathrooms are run from rainwater so it will become more energy efficient per person.

7 LUTON AIRPORT UPDATE

Cllr Anderson said that he had received an email from the Committee Clerk the afternoon before, which said the James Doe would be unable to present reports at the meeting. Cllr Anderson added that because of this his intention had been to cancel the two items concerned, but Cllr Timmis as a member of the airport consultative committee has some information for the meeting on the subject.

Cllr Timmis explained that she had not been able to prepare anything but as she had been at a meeting on Monday, a lot of what had been discussed was fresh in her mind. She said that Luton Airport are looking to expand hugely at the moment they have approximately 18 million passengers a year and they are planning to have 36 million by 2040 at the latest. She explained that there is a lot of money going into expanding the facilities on the airport, including 'The Dart' which is a people transporter. They are also building a new multi-storey car park. A huge section of land behind the airport, previously a park has been bought and more development is being planned on that land, although some of the land will be utilised as a new park.

Cllr Timmis went on to say that the reason she is on Committees, including the Consultative Committee is that her ward will be significantly affected by the changes. 70 percent of flights using a narrow pathway between Flamstead and Markyate when taking off. Cllr Timmis said that they were hoping to achieve more of a shared take-off by aircraft taking off at a steeper trajectory and respite routes, these are alternative routes that can be used from time to time so different areas are impacted. This will be subject to the Airspace Modernisation Strategy. It is hoped that some of the present restrictions preventing planes taking off steeply will be removed. There is also a government consultation on aviation which is on the government website and that expires April 11th 2019. Cllr Timmis said that she would be attending a meeting of the St Albans Air Traffic Working Group the following week, to which James Doe is also invited, this meeting incorporates Herts County Council and many other representatives. Cllr Timmis said that she feels there is not enough support from Dacorum. Luton is the only airport owned by the Borough Council – Luton Borough Council own the airport but do not run it.

Cllr Anderson explained that Luton is the only airport in the country that is not governed by national legislation.

Cllr Hearne asked whether there had been a discussion about the use of larger aircraft requiring a longer runway. Cllr Timmis replied that they (Luton Airport) have

said that they can use the existing runway efficiently and would not be looking to build a second one. She added that she does not think much larger aircraft have been suggested as most of their flights are short haul which do not use the bigger planes.

A discussion regarding Luton Airport purchasing properties in Breachwood Green and the link between that and further expansion of the airport followed.

Cllr Matthews asked whether transport links had been looked at and Cllr Timmis replied that they had, including expanding the access roads, putting in new bridges etc., it is a huge issue as it would affect the M1. The hope is that people will use public transport including The Dart.

Cllr Tindall asked whether the group discussed disabled facilities. Cllr Timmis explained that there was a disabled representative on the passenger group.

Cllr Anderson said that when he looked at Google Earth it concerned him that there was scope for a second runway and it seemed an obvious thing to do. Did Cllr Timmis think they genuinely were not looking to build a second runway? Cllr Timmis said that they were adamant they are not going for a second runway.

Cllr Anderson asked if the Committee would be happy for him together with Cllr Timmis to have a discussion with Cllr Sutton to express the view that they would like to strengthen Dacorum's opposition to what is happening at the airport.

It was agreed with the Committee that Cllr Anderson have delegated responsibility to liaise with Cllr Sutton and James Doe.

8 WORK PROGRAMME

There is a budget meeting on 5th February 2019 and then the 12th March is the last meeting of the year for this Committee and there are 8 items on the Agenda.

Cllr Anderson proposed that with the Committee's approval he wanted to make both the Assistant Directors aware that if a report is not produced before the meeting, then that item will not be taken at the meeting. It would have to be received on the Friday before the meeting. He added that there would be times when just a presentation was sufficient but if there is a report to look at they would like to see that information prior, including any slides.

Cllr Marshall suggested that an item may be able to be brought forward from the March Agenda.

AP -SB – James Doe and Dave Austin to be invited to include a report.

The Committee agreed.

The meeting finished at 20:55

The Meeting ended at 8.55 pm