

## MINUTES

### HOUSING AND COMMUNITY OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY

8 JANUARY 2020

**Councillors:** Adeleke (Vice-Chairman)  
Mrs Bassadone  
England  
Imarni (Chairman)  
Mahmood  
Pringle  
Arslan  
Durrant  
Johnson  
Oguchi  
Hollinghurst  
Barry  
Freedman

**Officers:**

Mark Brookes	Assistant Director - Corporate and Contracted Services
Alex Care	Community Partnerships Team Leader
Victoria Coady	Commercial Contracts and Supplier Relationship Lead Officer
Claire Foster	Community Partnership and Wellbeing Officer
Matt Rawdon	Group Manager - People
Fiona Williamson	Assistant Director - Housing

**Also Attendance:** Banks  
Griffiths  
Stevens  
Town Councillor White

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

#### **1** MINUTES

The minutes from 03 December 2019 were agreed as correct and then signed by the Chairman.

Cllr Adeleke commence the meeting and confirmed that there is a Town Councillor from Berkhamsted who will be doing some filming tonight. The decision has been checked with the Legal Department and they have advised that this is okay. Cllr

Adeleke asked if any member wished to say anything about it and also asked that the Members agree or disagree that the filming must not be used for political purposes.

P White clarified that the law says that members of the public are able to film public meetings with a view to report on those public meetings and he intends to use it to report on this public meeting, which is allowed within the law.

Cllr Adeleke asked if Members were happy with that.

Cllr Bassadone queried who it was going to be reported to, generally to the public.

P White confirmed it was and maybe some other groups who are interested.

Cllr Oguchi queried the nature of the reporting.

P White advised he was a Councillor from Berkhamsted Town Council and the matter up for discussion this evening is of great interest to lots of Berkhamsted residents and many would like to know the discussions which happens this evening and like to know and understand the discussion points which are made.

Cllr Adeleke asked if the Portfolio Holder wished to add any comments. Cllr Griffiths made a general comment which was to make sure that all Members are happy to be filmed, because they have the right in law, ultimately if that's their request she would like to honour it, but it doesn't bother her.

Cllr Pringle said for clarification, have we sight of the right in law not to be filmed because as I was aware of the recent training, it was made abundantly clear to all who attended that these are meetings that can be filmed and that no stipulations can be put on it.

Cllr Griffiths confirmed that under GDPR and you have the right, certainly in meetings like this. I think that Full Council is slightly different because you are summoned to that meeting. If no-one has a problem with then it's not an issue, but if any particular person in this room does not want to be filmed, I understand they have that right.

Cllr Adeleke asked that the legal expert advise us on this.

M Brookes confirmed that we do have a Code of Conduct on this issue which does allow filming, so unless any Councillor has a particularly strong view on it, then I believe the current position is that filming can be allowed.

Cllr Griffiths said that if any individual has the right to say they don't want to be filmed, not that they have to leave the meeting, or they can't be heard, they can ask not to be filmed.

M Brookes clarified that in an open public meeting there is a right to be filmed so the Member would have to exclude themselves if they didn't want to be part of it.

Cllr Pringle said that we have all taken a free choice to stand as a public representative so I don't think that applies.

Cllr Griffiths understood that, but confirmed that there is a still a right. There are all sorts of reasons that people may not want to be filmed.

Cllr Pringle confirmed that's right but they don't have any legal standing necessarily.

Cllr Mahmood added that in previous meetings the meeting has been recorded, but there is a difference between filming and recording and was there a particular reason for filming rather than recording.

P White said he had the legal text which he is happy to circulate as he understands it's maybe a new thing, so to help people understand the legal background he will share that round. The reason for recording video rather than recording sound is just because if people outside of this meeting are wanting to understand what's happening here, it helps them to see the environment in which these meetings take place and it's part of the transparency regulations in which it's allowed. I apologise that I didn't give the Council any warning.

Cllr Mahmood asked if P White was an independent Councillor for Berkhamsted Town Council. P White confirmed he was a Berkhamsted Town Councillor from the Lib Dem party and his interest is in regards to the concern amongst residents for the potential to build on an area of parkland.

## **2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

There was no apologies received.

## **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 BERKHAMSTED SPORTS CENTRE**

The Sports Centre report was introduced by M Brookes and Members were asked for any questions.

The Chairman read out the recommendations which are as follows:

- That Committee endorse the Minimum Project Requirements as set out in paragraph 2
- To note the governance structure, the consultation strategy and the indicative project timeline.

The Chairman said with that in mind does anyone have any questions.

Cllr Mahmood wanted to clarify if the new centre will be going on the site of the existing centre. M Brookes confirmed that the old centre will remain open until the new site is built, so it won't be on the exact same footprint, it will be within the same site envelope, but we are looking at moving it further down to where the 3D pitches are at the moment and utilising where the existing site is for car parking etc. But that's got to be developed a lot more and there is various ideas which will form part of that.

Cllr Mahmood understood that it was early days, but what we are saying we are going to do is take the building, build one next door and then knock the other one down, so in terms of built area, apart from the extra facilities we can have a very similar footprint to what we started with. M Brookes said that was our thoughts but as the design develops we will come back and consider all the different options.

Cllr Mahmood mentioned that the construction status, demolition always comes with dust and noise and wondered if it would be worth adding that there will be a construction stage and a demolition stage which may impact the local community, so it's something people can look at environmentally as it's quite a nuisance for local residents. Cllr Mahmood noted that Berkhamsted Town Council are a stakeholder who are actively involved, so hopefully the Town Councillors will have an input on the design and the local people, which is good to see. Cllr Mahmood also added that in terms of recommendations we have been talking a lot about climate change, he can see sustainability is mentioned, and in the spirit of recent decisions, it should include sustainability including any climate change initiative which may help give us a greener building and more environmentally friendly place to have fun in.

Cllr Pringle noted the inclusion of the splash pool is considered to be an add-on, but isn't essential to the plan and would like to say as someone who lives in Northchurch and uses Berkhamsted, it's in incredibly high demand for children's and babies swimming. When her children were younger, we had to go to Hemel and if there had been a facility it would have been used more, on behalf of people living in the area, that's something we would probably really like to be included. However something that would be of great concern, you use the term the existing building and the envelope which will include the football pitches, there is one version of the proposal where that envelope will be extended into Lagley Meadow where astroturf and sports fields with floodlighting and I would like to raise at this point on behalf of my residents in Northchurch and also neighbouring wards in Berkhamsted, that this is likely to be met with a very high level of resistance from the local community. Cllr Pringle wanted to set that in context, in Berkhamsted, although we are surrounded by idyllic rural settings, that isn't actually part of the town and we actually have a very limited amount of green space for leisure, for dog walking, for recreation in our town and Lagley Meadow is somewhere I pass on a daily basis. In the summer I see multiple families having picnics there, I see people exercising their dogs, it is a very very well used and loved space. To lose that to astroturf would completely change the nature of it. I also imagine that such pitches, because they are right beside a busy road, would require quite high fencing, at the moment there isn't fencing and it's very accessible for children to walk across, it's a well loved and liked area. In the context where we've already temporarily lost our very highly valued moor to the temporary car park and the public reaction to that, she would suggest that this is something that really should be considered a non-starter. The local people in Berkhamsted would object to having Lagley Meadow changed in any way, we need our grassy spaces, we need our free recreation areas and if there is any adaptation required to include

the splash pool, perhaps consideration can be given to building up rather than building out, we could have another floor for example, I don't know if that's feasible within the costing, but I think the local community would much prefer that than have it spread out and take over our meadow.

Cllr England asked about the minimum project requirements that we are being asked to note, seem to me to be very much not substantial, the only one that seems to say anything, is the one which says there should be some green awareness, which obviously is very much appreciated, but the other requirements kind of go without saying and I wonder if there was any thought about making them a bit more specific. M Brookes said there was and the report notes the stage we are at in the project, so they are not necessarily high level at this stage, but we will keep them under continuous review as the project develops and as we get further detail on some of these issues we will develop the MPR's as well. It's kind of a starter at this point and will continue as we go along.

Cllr England suggested that room for population growth should be in there as the Borough will see a lot housing, if we now build a sports centre which is as big as the one now, then we are not going to match up to the needs of the community in the future. Cllr England said that such a project requirement might call into question the site that we shouldn't be putting it somewhere different. M Brookes said that population growth will be something we will be looking at as we planned, whether it needs to go as an MPR is open to debate, but it's definitely something on our radar.

Cllr Freedman mentioned to the Portfolio Holder that he was very glad that this is being presented as an early ideas stage, however he is aware that there are some quite advanced proposals out there, he didn't know how official they are, but there is certainly enough there that get people worried. The first issue is that we are talking about consulting a lot of people including Berkhamsted Town Council and some of the groups, can you give us some assurances that feedback from those groups will be taken on board and will affect the proposals. We do have some negative history in the area of people being consulted on something when proposals are almost finalised and they haven't been able to make any changes. Cllr Griffiths said that obviously we will take into account the responses, otherwise it's a total waste of Council Tax money to do it if you don't take any heed of it. You can sometimes have the effect that because people don't get what they want, they think it hasn't been taken on board, there's been quite a few consultations we have done by this Council and it's changed everything around, in Housing we pulled the whole project from the feedback on the consultation, so I don't agree that it's a done deal when we go out to consultation as from a personal point of view that's a total waste of people's money, also you are between the devil and the deep blue sea, you have to consult with something, you can't consult with a blank piece of paper. If at this stage we were saying it's going to be this, this and this, then we would be getting criticism that you've already decided, so it will develop as consultations are had and meetings like this, but equally when we go to consultation, although it may look like we have an idea, we have to consult on something.

Cllr Freedman wanted to suggest health impact assessments, which are part of what County are doing with their planning processes, this is primarily involved in community health, perhaps even before it's required, we might want to target this as being one of the first buildings that we make a fuss about the health impact

assessment that goes through on a building project, it just seems a very good way to flagship it.

Cllr Freedman commented that he really appreciated that the environmental note is down there as an objective and he would like to flesh out a bit more information, assuming that the structure is going to be anywhere similar to the current structure, there is a huge amount of flat roof that everybody, well a huge amount of Berkhamsted residents keep asking why isn't that covered in solar panels, obviously the reason why is that we don't know how long that building is going to last, so any new building that goes up there, I tell you in advance if there is an area of roof space that doesn't have a solar panel on it, I'll be asking you why and that building footprint could be an energy generating asset. The other thing to push back is astroturf, is a layer of plastic, great we can have some pitches, we want the facilities there, but I think there will be a lot of kickback if it's astroturf, I think we have to look at different things, so possibly put no astroturf in the deliverables, but I'm quite keen to see energy generation asset as one of the key deliverables.

Cllr Griffiths said that it may be possible to use the roof for a netball or basketball court, so we didn't have to put them down on the ground. You might imagine going over the side with football and certainly not golf. People are going to come up with other ideas and that's why it should be open and perhaps fluid at this stage, but I agree with you, we have to utilise the roof, it can't just be a roof with nothing going on.

M Brookes added that we will be doing a full sustainability assessment looking at all the options, getting the appropriate consultants on board who have worked on these projects and there is quite a few examples now of high level sports centres, we are trying to copy them and lead by example.

Cllr Freedman confirmed he was very and curious to know who we have consulted with to get the list of provisions that have been considered within the space and in particular because the ones that has been seen has a much smaller pool, a lot of floorspace given over to other things like a spa. Berkhamsted is not short of spas so why would the Council be prioritising a spa, he didn't think there was anyone who was short of going to a spa facility. I surprises me that we have prioritised that over things like the swimming pool.

M Brookes said that we haven't prioritised anything at the moment, all we've really done is some block planning to see what we can fit on the site, we are working to blank canvas entirely on this. A spa is option, it's something we'll look at, whether there is a business case for it and a market for it in the area, but at this stage nothing is really set down, these are just thoughts and we will develop them as we go through the consultation process.

Cllr Adeleke mentioned the internal project project board that has been set up and asked who this body is made of and how much the current employees involvement will they have with the project, also what is the guarantee that there will not be a repeat of what happened in Hemel Hempstead of these people losing their jobs. M Brookes confirmed the project board is led by Cllr Andrew Williams and Cllr Banks, from a Portfolio Holder perspective, to cover off the two aspects in terms of sports development as well as the contractual services in terms of management of the facility and then there is a mix of officers from across the Council, all the disciplines

including Matt's team, from a sports development perspective, so we have a broad range of officers and Councillors on that Board. In terms of the Everyone Active who currently run the Sports Centre, there will have to be a renegotiation of the contract, to look at their continued running and how long that goes on for that site and we will be looking at the terms for that, but again it's very early stage. In terms of staffing, we are not expecting there to be any real changes, the size of the facility is relatively similar to what we have at the moment. Everyone Active have now been on board for 18 months so they have made a lot of the changes they needed to make operationally so we are not expecting there to be any massive changes as a result of this.

Cllr Adeleke asked again how much involvement have the staff got with the current plan. M Brookes said we've already met to look at this indicative facility mix, just to get some thoughts to see if there were major omissions, but as the project develops and as we go through the stakeholder consultation, we will continually referring back to the project board who will monitor and agree key deliverables. It's very early stages, we've only had one meeting so far, but as time goes on it will be much more frequent.

The Chairman clarified that Cllr Adeleke wanted to know is that it's not that long ago we had a similar situation with the Hemel site and one of the main concerns there was that there wasn't enough expertise within the Council, obviously we have recruited a new member of staff but I don't think this young lady wants to actually do everything, so the question you were directing is, given all the staff that they are there day in day out, that know the facilities, they know the users, how much involvement are they going to have in terms of ensuring there is enough expertise or have you got other people covering that. M Brookes advised that we will have sports consultants, but we need to procure them as we are still at the feasibility stage at the moment. We have an internal team, we have Victoria who manages the contract with Everyone Active, Everyone Active will be a stakeholder, so we will be talking to them throughout the process to make sure the facility meets up with what they think, the current user demand, so we are getting everybody we feel who has the relevant experience to take this forward.

Cllr Adeleke said in layman's language he is talking about the shopfloor workers. V Coady said they wouldn't necessarily be involved at this early stage in the consultation, this is for contract managers. Cllr Adeleke confirmed he was not talking about their involvement in the Board, that is clear, I'm talking about what happens to their jobs in 2023. V Coady said that there is a TUPE process but the view at the moment, again very early stages, is that they would just stop working in one leisure centre and move into the new facility. The leisure centre will be equal sized or possibly bigger depending on how the consultation develops, so there is not any anticipation at the moment that any staff would change in numbers.

The Chairman raised a declaration of interest as she is Chairman of Dacorum Sports Trust, they are not listed as a stakeholder but I do notice there is a TBC so declaring it in case they do become one at a future stage.

Cllr Barry asked about Everyone Active keeping the contract because it links to accessibility and inclusivity obviously we want everyone to be able to use these sports facilities, it's currently £43 per month and for a lot of people that is something to back away at, and was wondering if that sort of thing considered inclusivity,

obviously I know it needs to make money, I'm not saying that, but if we want people, younger people as well, although I did read we had very low number of young people on average with the rest of the county, if we want people to be using these facilities, there needs to be an incentive and that costs more than a phone contract for some people. Cllr Barry added that in terms of toilets and things if being gender neutral, could be a consideration for accessibility. M Brookes said yes on both points, there is a balance with the pricing that has to be struck and it's something we look at and any variation to the existing contract. One of the project requirements is to create an environment which is inclusive and accessible to all users so that will be something we will consider as part of the plans.

Cllr England queried how strategic has this decision and process been, particularly with the loss of Lagley Meadows, we've been hearing in the discussions that we've had about the strategy and action plan, that actually sports and activity very much includes the green spaces and now here we are talking about possibly losing one, and secondly if we are hiring in sports consultants to advise the Council on what we should be doing around sports provision, does that not strike you as a little bit odd, this is really directed to the Communities Portfolio Holder, a little bit odd considering when we had a relationship with the DST we were getting all that in for the bargain. M Brookes replied that Lagley Meadows is something we need to consider, but we are looking at all options for the site, but there's no plans to redevelop Lagley Meadow. We are going to look at all the options for the site to make sure we don't miss anything off and all options will be before the public and stakeholders to look at and we'll take on board any feedback. In terms of the sports consultants, we use them to help with some of the stakeholder consultation to make sure we go out and talk to all the clubs, get all the feedback from the users that we need to hear from, so they do have an important role to play and give us that additional capacity to go out and make sure we are meeting everybody and getting all the comments we need to. That does help us to develop the strategy, this matter has already been to Cabinet in terms of the options for the site and this was certainly the preferred option because it gives a site for the next 40 years and one that can be flexible enough to adapt to all the different user demands. I think we have been quite strategic but we still have to keep developing that and making sure we take on board all the comments.

Cllr Banks added that from what she's seen of the paper presented this evening and from briefings that she's had, Berkhamsted Sports Centre at the moment is an old building, it doesn't really meet a lot of the modern idea around sports facilities. There will be some upheaval, because you can't make omelettes without cracking eggs and she is really pleased to note Cllr Mahmood's supporting comments around our concern about the environment and the impact on climate change, just to make sure that our buildings are efficient and give back, whether it be through energy efficient systems or solar panels to give back. Cllr Banks understood that in the sporting community it's something that is being really well received at the moment as a pen picture of what could happen and interestingly, noting your comments about residents views, she knew that the feedback from sporting community she has had is they are looking for as much astroturf as they can find, so that they can participate in sports activities around the year and not be subject to the seasons, so there's a balance that needs to be struck and she absolutely accepts that, but this is a good first paper and welcome the discussion that we've had.

Cllr England wanted to point out that according to the action plan that's also on the agenda tonight, we don't have the results of the Watford and Three Rivers District

Council led survey into indoor facilities, we have the outdoor facilities part, or at least that's been completed, although we haven't seen it yet, but the indoor part of things is said to be delayed for some time and that seems to imply it's going to be like a long time, which basically means we will build a whole new sports centre without having done the survey to establish what kind of indoor facilities we need in that sports centre, so I think we need to stop and think about that. Cllr England said his final question would be is he correct in thinking that the funding to build this sports centre is going to come from housing development or has he got that wrong. M Brookes said that the funding hasn't been firmly established yet, as to where it's paid for, the full budget is yet to be considered. Cllr Griffiths said it was fair to say that any housing on there would not cover the cost of this, it's going to fall on the general fund.

Cllr England asked for an answer on the survey question. Cllr Banks said that he comment would be that's exactly why this is an early paper and that will be part of the consultation process and didn't think it would delay, we will seek advice and guidance from it. M Brookes said that Knight, Kavanagh and Page, who are the appointed consultants did an early study, which I believe is the one that they are working on updating, have advised based on that study, but acknowledge obviously what's developing, so we can take to Council the advice we are given on that.

Cllr England queried if they are doing a survey on the whole area in Watford and Three Rivers and Dacorum, the purpose of that is to decide strategically what kind of facilities we need, then we'd be mad to do this sports centre before we got that. M Brookes confirmed that before we come out of the ground on this project, it'll probably be 18 months to 2 years, so he didn't know the exact timing for the study but I imagine it's going to be a long time before that and as I said I think it's the same consultants as well and we'll certainly seek some clarification and get that feedback.

Cllr England said it would be good to go to Cabinet before that. Cllr Griffiths confirmed if they are able to feedback in before we go to anything definite because the consultation itself might throw all sorts of things in, this is a very indicative general timetable, which is saying looking at development and design business plan after the consultation, September to December, but the consultation might throw up a lot, which basically says nobody likes it, nobody likes what's been suggested, in which case September to December has just been blown out of the water, because you are effectively a whole year behind. M Brookes clarified that the report to Cabinet is seeking the funding to carry out further studies and site investigations and the start of the stakeholder consultation. Cllr Griffiths said that the consultation isn't planned until October 2021 to July 2023 and even with the best intention we all know that will slip.

Cllr Freedman asked for confirmation following Cllr Adeleke's question with regards to Everyone Active, so it sounds like there's no way that anybody else would be running this for us, it sounds like your comment on TUPE of staff, you mentioned earlier we would need to renegotiate, what would happen is there any contingency on what would happen if we don't reach an acceptable renegotiation. M Brookes said if the re-negotiation breaks down we would have to find a new provider, so we'd have to re-procure for that site, that's to stand alone outside of the existing contract. As I say we haven't opened those discussions formally, we are a long way off reaching that stage.

Cllr Freedman said would it be a right of refusal, we'd go to Everyone Active first and we'd only go to anybody else if we were unable to get satisfactory renegotiation. M Brookes advised we are in a ten year contract for providing leisure facilities across Hemel and Berkhamsted, but in the original contract this was always contemplated as an option of a new centre, but it was on the basis that it would have to be re-negotiated at that time, in relation to Berkhamsted. If we didn't reach an agreement, the fall back would be that we would have to go out and re-procure.

Cllr Hollinghurst wanted to remind officers of the value of ground source heating. Any building that is surrounded by playing fields or grassy areas of any sort or even a flower garden can provide heat from ground source. Three Rivers House, the background heating there is almost entirely derived from the WWI memorial garden opposite, there is plenty of scope in Berkhamsted for ground source heating and it's especially useful if you have a swimming pool because the low level background heating can be provided in major part by the ground source. However if you go and wrap the whole of the surroundings in sheets of plastic, like plastic football grounds that is going to insulate the earth, you'll lose the sun's heat, so ground source please, but bear in mind if you put astroturf around it won't work. The other thing is the lights, I strongly believe that we should minimise our artificial lights during times of natural darkness, I would hope that we would not allow lighting after 10 o'clock at the absolute maximum. People from Tring have historically used that sports centre and will continue to do so because the facilities in Tring are going to be limited by the schools use, and would like Tring Town Council to be a consultee. The final point on the matter of housing and its contribution towards this project, surely Cllr England had been referring to CIL rather than houses on the site, because with the huge amounts of building that's going to take place within the Borough, that will generate a lot of CIL and some of that quite justifiably could be used to finance at least part of this project. M Brookes said the ground source heating will be considered as part of the environment considerations and we will be procuring some environmental consultants who will look at all the options, we're not saying we are committing to it, but we will consider all the options. Lights after 10pm, that will be a planning matter when we get to that stage, we are some way off that at the moment and Tring Town Council as consultee will be fine, we can include them in some form. Also CIL contribution we will speak to the planning team to see if there is any possibility of that route.

Cllr Griffiths mentioned with CIL, are you wanting to put in the Town Council's or Borough Council's because there is no other CIL money that the Council get. Cllr Hollinghurst said he was sure Parish and Town Council's will in the future be only to willing to contribute to projects which they consider would benefit their people.

Cllr Stevens said that he was here this evening because of the interest that we are going to have on this project. The report we have in front of us, just wanted to highlight that until we have seen this paper, the Town Council has not been involved in any scoping exercise or discussions prior to this document. We have had a private meeting to be told what is coming down the track, the Town Council was issued with some documents which we showed at a Full Council meeting in November on a strictly confidential basis, so in terms of scoping we are coming at this very late in the scheme, although it might be at an embryo state and didn't want Members to believe that we have been involved in getting to this stage in previous discussions.

Cllr Stevens mentioned page 9 paragraph 4.2 where it's referred to utilising the adjacent Lagley Meadow as part of the 3G pitch, we will have some concerns about this. Some years ago when the Borough undertook an assessment on open spaces in Berkhamsted and the Borough, Berkhamsted was found to be about 70 hectares short of land for public open space. We are planning to build a huge number of new houses in this area and over the years we have not seen anybody come through with plans to add to our public open space and yet we are contemplating building over what is a very popular open space which has got residential properties admittedly adjacent to it. The prospect of having a 3G pitch there is totally wrong. The next thing we are talking about is having high level floodlighting etc like we have in the other major 3G pitches. Consequently I suspect where you've come forward with this idea, the battle we are going to have will be enormous and consequently I'm delighted to know that you will be consulting with us and I can tell you this item is on our agenda at Full Council on Monday and the Borough Council will be receiving a letter from us immediately afterwards.

M Brookes confirmed that the report makes clear you will be part of the full stakeholder consultation, so we will be inviting you to a formal meeting to sit down and discuss the opportunities for the sites. We hope to get those initial invites out in the next couple of weeks.

Cllr Pringle asked if the accessible facilities and inclusivity would include facilities that allow toileting and changing, both wet changing and dry changing, for adults who need to use a hoist because she is aware there is a particular case where there are adults who cannot access in a dignified because they need to be changed by other adults, which involves at the moment lying on the floor in a non-private situation, so if we can aim for the absolute highest facilities in terms of that, I think the community would be very grateful. Cllr Pringle added that another thing we could do in terms of environmental is to collect the rainwater from the roof and use it for flushing toilets and irrigating, hopefully there will be some flower beds and things like that around to make it look pleasant.

Cllr Mahmood commented that it is a sports centre and it's very important we consult existing users, people that don't use it would like to see a lot of meadow and green land, but if you are a sports person you want to use a 3G pitch or something similar, it's important that the sports people of Berkhamsted have the same facilities that we have elsewhere in the Borough, it's a balance and important that we consult with existing users. I'm a strong advocate for climate change but one thing we don't want to do is, if we are building a hospital we want the best facility, if we're building a sports centre we want a state of the art sports facility for the people of Berkhamsted. If they need a 3G pitch it's important that we compensate in other ways environmentally, I'm very anti-plastic but it's in everything we have from the pen to the car, we need to minimise it but equally we want good facilities for the people of Berkhamsted to use, it's no use providing a sports centre that ticks all the green credentials but does not serve its purpose, it will become another white elephant.

The Chairman confirmed that the report had been noted and there have been a number of points for consideration to take back.

## **7                    PHYSICAL ACTIVITY AND SPORTS ACTION PLAN**

M Rawdon introduced C Foster who presented the Physical Activity and Sports Action Plan then asked Committee for any comments.

Cllr England thanked C Foster for a very enjoyable 5K run and mentioned that what's been said is really good and didn't want to take away from that particularly it was good to hear that 790 children, that's the kind of number that I'm really looking for all over this plan, it harps back to what was said in the summer. It's also good that you have a good relationship with DST because they are still around and clearly they are going to continue to be involved in doing some good stuff and we should make use of that. Cllr England mentioned that the figures in the sports strategy, which this document supports, and there is a figure that the number of inactive people in Dacorum was at the writing of the strategy 21.2%, so I checked the most recently available figures, to see what progress we've actually made and was a little bit shocked to find that we've gone backwards, the latest figures, although these are in November 17/18 figures, show that we've gone from 21.2 to 22.1 so the number of completely inactive people in the Borough has actually gone up by nearly 1 percentage point. 1 percentage point on about 20% is a 5% increase in inactivity, that's quite a dramatic figure. The question is looking at the initiatives to reduce inactivity these don't appear to be working yet, is this something which is a work in progress but what really worries me is we do seem to have gone backwards since we created the measuring a certain number of inactive people and then trying to reduce that. If that strategic number is down what are the specific actions in this action plan which we are sure are going to restore and grow activity.

Cllr Banks confirmed that the 5K was a spectacular day, we didn't have the weather, but it was great. She added that she totally agreed with you and you are always going to need to do more, I think one of the issues is your starting point in those figures are old details and appreciates that is the latest figures that are released but they are not current. We are evolving a plan to tap into people where they are at. We are not trying to deliver in gold standard high end sports activities for everyone, some of it is very low key, that's how we will engage with people, the information as you've presented it is disappointing but I think your starting block is old information and I would expect that as later figures become available you will see that we have made significant improvement.

Cllr England advised that the figures also show that at the same time the comparative figures for the south east have improved, so Dacorum has worsened but the figures for the south east have improved, which makes me glad that we've still got the relationship with DST because I believe that was an important part of Dacorum having its own approach to local sports. If we are in the same boat as Watford, St Albans and Three Rivers with Everyone Active, then we've got to make sure that the non-Everyone Active stuff is where we are getting our marginal improvement from, because otherwise we'll always going to be lagging behind the rest of our local region. M Rawdon would be keen to understand where the figures come from, if we could and confirmed we have a quarterly meeting with all the key stakeholders and DST are a part of that, the relationship is really good, but within that project board we are looking at how we can make a difference together. For us it's not that we are working in insolation, we are working with our key sports stakeholders to understand how we can improve, this is work in progress, it's a five year strategy, as you can see in the action plan, there is some significant important projects, not just about numbers but also supporting the demographics in our society that may need additional support in terms of becoming more physically active and being a part

of a sport. It is a work in progress and he is personally is very proud of the team in terms of the action plan that we put together with a resources that we have.

The Chairman would also be interested to understand where the figures have come from, because I think there has been some quite exciting new initiatives in the report here and also my role as Chair of Dacorum Sports Trust, they are very happy with the way the relationship is building but in particular thinking outside and where you're partnering with Police and doing things at XC to help prevent crime etc, that was something the Borough wasn't hot on up until recently. I know London Borough's have been doing it for a while and I can't understand if you're doing things like that, why there's a drop in activity, because surely those types of things would mean that people who wouldn't ordinarily be participating in sport now are, so it would be good to identify if there's a particular group within Dacorum that is affecting those figures.

Cllr Mahmood said there was lots of initiatives in there which is good news, it's a very active group, he did find that Yoga classes are missing, it's very good if you can cycle and run, but there is very little things to do with mental health or if people aren't as active. The other thing really lacking is that there is no initiative to reach the hard to reach communities and he would be more than happy to help in any way if required. Otherwise there is a lot happening which is great and a testament to the Officer, she has done a lot to develop areas and they need to be looked at, we've got so many communities in the town, they just need to be engaged in the process. C Foster replied that with regards to Yoga with the action plan, there's only so much you can put on the action plan, it would be pages and pages long, but there is a lot of yoga going on, we are working closely with Everyone Active on the outreach programme, which is in the community, so they go to local community centres, town halls and village halls, to run various sessions and there's lots of independent organisations that I'm building relationships with, who also offer such activities, such as Boxmoor Yoga who will be part of our wellness event, there is a lot of that going on, you just can't always display everything. If there is more we can do to promote local organisations I would be happy to do that. With regards to the mental health, one the latest projects is the healthy hub, we are building a really close relationship with Mind and will be setting up some activities specifically focussing on mental health. It's a really important audience to target which is increasing in priority, that's definitely something we are looking to work with this year. Finally part of the harder to reach community groups, definitely think this is very important, throughout the action plan, some are touched with regards to the disabilities and the anti-social behaviour, we are really trying to work with, thinking outside the box, the likes of the Police and the Fire Service to really engage with the right people. Part of the Everyone Active outreach programme, they have to engage with some harder to reach groups as well, so there is a lot of work going on, but can't display it all, but if that's what you would like to see I can definitely include more of that.

Cllr Adeleke wanted to commend your efforts, compared to where we were years ago and where we are today, I think done incredibly very well. Cllr Adeleke admitted he had not attended any of it, but it was mentioned earlier on, I did see some people come last in the race. Cllr Adeleke asked about press coverage and if we can look into improving that, because everything I've seen is what I've read in the local paper about what is going on, so it would be good if we could improve it a bit, advertise events on the big screen in the town. Cllr Adeleke also raised knife crime and asked for more information on what we do, also how much involvement with these groups at present, how much of your activities do you take to the school platforms. M Rawdon

replied that press coverage is always a very difficult one, we often provide articles to the press and they don't seem to want to publish good news stories, which is disappointing, but we will continue to try. We have used the TV screens in town, we have launched our social media platform in terms of Active Dacorum and that links into our DBC social media platform as well, however we are always looking to continue to improve that.

A Care also mentioned an initiative that we are taking on board at the moment was to create a leaflet which would be electronic but will also go out to schools to say over the holidays and coming months this is what's coming up, but it will also look back to say over the last term we said we were going to do and we did 5 pop ups and 790 children were able to attend, so that's in progress at the moment.

C Foster added that the Sporting Chance project, what that looks like is I'm working very close with Herts Sports Partnership who initially had some of the funding for these sessions, my role is to go out to local sports clubs and have that relationship to say we're interested in running a session, is it something you want to engage with this type of audience, to bring them into your sports club or run a session. We then organise a session and find a date and time, then we work with the likes of YC Herts Family First and teams within DBC on a referral basis. So it's not just a turn up and play session, we are working on referrals to make sure we target the correct audiences needed for these sessions, so we can use sports and intervention and engage with them.

Cllr Johnson also thought it was a very useful report and wanted to look at the Fit, Fed and Read programme which is aimed at children on pupil premium, he would like to know how we identify those children who may themselves not know they are pupil premium children and will you be looking at both primary and secondary pupils. C Foster said this project is on a referral basis, so we work closely with the primary schools, if the children are eligible for free school meals is one of the main indicators and we talk to the parents, with help from other partners, like Families First, to make sure we are getting the right people on the programmes. Some of the challenges to that is actually retaining the students, getting them to come back every day, but we found when the pupils are attending throughout the summer and Easter holidays, that it's been really beneficial and when they go back to school they have maintained their skill levels rather than a reduction, which is expected across the holidays.

Cllr Banks advised that she visited the Fit, Fed and Read programme in the summer and it was an amazing experience to see a number of young people who perhaps had some difficulties in their lives, but one interesting anecdote, that was a real shame, was that I was speaking to a couple of young people whose attendance had been a little bit erratic and the reason that they hadn't come in was because their Mum couldn't get up to get them there for a 10am start. Your heart goes out to these people when they don't have the support at home, we're trying to help within the wider community, but it was really quite sad poignant moment. I'm hoping that programme will continue and we will learn lessons from that and it's around transport and getting the children to the centres.

Cllr Adeleke asked in this type of situation do you make any efforts to alert Social Services to seek help for these kids. Cllr Banks replied this was interesting point, because it that really neglect or is just because Mum can't be bothered to get up. I'm not suggesting that she's in bed all day, but she's on her school holiday as much as

the kids are and if she wants a lay in, she's just not thinking of the bigger picture, but I do agree with you, that it was a really sad reflection on at least one family, in one ward here in Dacorum. Cllr Banks thought it would be good to explore how we can lay on transport and collect young people and get them onto such a vibrant programme, because the kids that were there were absolutely having the time of their life, they were really enjoying it.

Cllr England said he wanted to be positive about this and knows that he has been critical but wants to be positive and does want to meet with Officers and get into the details of this as he has lots of ideas, but in broad terms he would like to see a how much column, something which identifies how much money is being either attracted or spent so that we can try and put some kind of a number on that and hopefully see that number going up. There also needs to be a where column, because on some cases identified whereabouts in the Borough this was happening, but couldn't in other cases. In some cases the why column, which is the impact/outcome, has incomplete information and it's quite noticeable that Everyone Active, because everything is central, we do this here and we do that there, they tend to be quite well prepared for this kind of output and you can see that in the report, it's clear that there is some kind of formula or EA process being used to make sure that these boxes are populated and I'd like to try and see a levelling up on that if we can find a way of doing it economically. Things like the 790 people, any number that's like that, that gives us a way of saying this line in the report is actually impacting 790 people in a year, then we can very easily see the magnitude of the different activities, again we will come to a figure at the bottom that will say how many people did this action plan focus on this year and that will be a really good thing to make sure that we are heading in the right direction. If we try and grab a time to talk about some of the detailed stuff and then you can tell me if it's all a load of rubbish or if there's any good stuff.

Cllr Durrant mentioned that this year is also the Herts Year of Culture so there's going to be lots of events going on locally as well, in fact it was mentioned about Yoga and they come on my farm and do Yoga with my alpacas, so it's one of the things for example that's going to be done this year, there's lots out there as well to encourage people to take part in.

Cllr Oguchi wanted to know how all these ideas are put together. C Foster said it was a mixture from previous experiences, pilots and what's worked well in other areas and partnership work is key. M Rawdon added that it's important to say that the project board for the key sports stakeholders, a big part of that is ideas around what works and what doesn't, their expertise and obviously we need to keep bring back to the fact that whatever we do links back to the strategy to make sure that what we are trying to achieve its objectives.

The Chairman confirmed the recommendation to note the report and that we had given our feedback.

## **8 HRA BUSINESS PLAN**

F Williamson presented the HRA Business Plan report and asked Members if they had any questions.

Cllr Freedman queried the number of new units for the Borough and how many people would benefit, will they be two person units or family units. F Williamson replied that the 280 units are not even at design stage at the moment. We constantly monitor the demand from allocations team in respect of the people that are on the active housing register, we also take regard for affordable units that are being delivered by registered providers in the area, to make sure that there isn't an over provision of one particular unit type. The only ones that we have detail on are the ones that are currently in the pipeline.

Cllr Freedman mentioned that given the amount that's been borrowed for these units, looking at those requirements that you've seen so far and your expertise in the area of how much these things costs, would you be able to give a rough figure in terms of the amount of people we would expect, what I'm trying to work out is are we talking 280 retirement units or are we talking 280 family units. Most people will understand the amount of people that will be housed rather than units. F Williamson confirmed that we don't have that level detail in the Business Plan at the moment, what we do have is some ongoing work around supply and demand, so you mentioned sheltered schemes and supported housing units and there is a piece of work that is ongoing around looking at supply and demand within that particular area. All of our development pipeline is focussing on general needs properties and that is based on a mix of single person units, through to three bed family homes. We still have a relatively low demand for four and five bed properties and we do have enough within the stock and allowing for another project that we are working, which is moving to properties of a more suitable size for households to try and ensure that we have a suitable number of properties for the demand that's out there.

Cllr Freedman said thank you very and that he was very glad to see that the council seized on being able to access more funds and build more, that's certainly what we should be doing.

Cllr Barry noticed on P5 on 4.1.5 upgrading the stock to adapt to the zero carbon target for 2050 and wondered if we could do it sooner, because that's 30 years away and if we can build an amazing new solar panelled sports centre within the next three, why can't we have all our existing stock be carbon neutral before 2050. F Williamson confirmed that with new build it's included within the design brief, towards carbon neutral but in respect of the existing stock because some of the stock that we own is non-traditional, in terms of it's construction and some we've inherited through Commission for New Towns so we've got some turn of the century Victorian solid wall properties, so it's really a question of trying to ensure that we can implement as many measures as possible to reduce the carbon in respect of those properties. Some are more difficult than others, which is why we've aligned it with the overall carbon reduction target rather than try and be overly ambitious. Our disposals policy does look at those hard to treat properties, when it comes to thermal performance and we are looking at what microgeneration options we have in terms of solar thermal, solar PV, we've got the biomass boiler that we've already commissioned and there is the potential for extending that to other blocks within that development. We are always focussing on what opportunities we have when we are looking at any improvements and certainly with the new build it's actually part of the design brief.

Cllr Adeleke mentioned that on P26 there is a table of improvement works, on the boilers we seem to be quite large numbers, the boilers that we are fitting now are they environmentally friendly. F Williamson confirmed that all of the boilers that have

been installed are condensing boilers at the highest energy performance ratings, so they are all A+ boilers. In terms of the environmental impact Members may be aware that there is a move for all boilers from 2025 onwards to be electric and there is a lot of work going on at the moment looking at the efficiency of gas versus electric boilers. Currently we are installing the highest performing rated gas boilers in our stock. Where we have off gas properties we are looking either ground source heat pumps or air source heat pumps because often in those situations we are replacing very inefficient night storage heaters, so it gives the opportunity for more controllable methods of heating that are more energy efficient.

Cllr Adeleke said that in March 2019 there is 96 homes identified as being non-decent and asked how many of those are still identified as non-decent and what have you done with them. F Williamson confirmed it is a rolling position, a bit similar to the gas servicing position in respect of constantly monitoring and ensuring that we are targeting any properties that fall in to the category of non-decent. The decent homes standard is no longer current and the industry are looking at a replacement standard, looking at the fitness of homes, so there is also a supplementary piece of legislation around the fitness of homes for habitation and that crosses all tenures, but it doesn't set out prescriptive standards similar to the decent homes. The social housing sector are looking at which areas they feel are now priority areas, so you'll appreciate that climate change and environmental impact and the safety of buildings in respect of in particular fire safety have become two areas that are really taking a priority over some of what could be considered nice to have kitchen and bathroom replacements. With respect to the 96 properties, they will have been in the programme for this year financial year, so either the works will have been completed or due to complete within this financial year. But during this financial year other properties will have obviously got to the situation where they would have been classified as non-decent and they will be included in next year's programme, so it's a rolling position. Cllr Griffiths added that non-decent doesn't necessarily mean what concept we might have in our head of non-decent, i.e. no doors, no windows, no bathroom, etc or failing or not working, it's means that there's something in the house has reached what is considered to be at the end of its life, it may be perfectly okay, the non-decent thing if you're not aware of it, almost identifies what we've got .7% housing not decent enough, that isn't what it's saying.

Cllr Bassadone asked if some of the 96 properties elderly people or people who do not want any improvements to the properties and was aware we'd had problems with this in the past, is that still a problem or are we now managing to make them have improvement work. F Williamson confirmed that if it's a health and safety issue or a compliance issue then obviously that overrides their tenant choice, if it's a kitchen or bathroom replacement we still allow tenants to make that decision whether they want the upheaval to have them replaced, but that wouldn't be included in that figure of 96, because the tenant refusal, then classifies the property, for the purposes of reporting, it's not a non-decent property and they are recorded separately as tenant refusals.

Cllr Mahmood queried the rents going back up again, not for the fact that we do have the budget constraints the last three/four years where there was rent reductions for us, on P28 point 4.3 where we sell off high value council homes and wanted to know how these are identified and put them on the market if someone is living inside. F Williamson advised that we have a selected disposals policy which isn't this sale of high value council homes, sale of high value council homes was the Central Government was looking at ways to provide, similar to right to buy scheme in the

housing association sector and in order to do that they were going to provide similar levels of discount and they needed to have the opportunity to be able to fund that from existing social housing stock. Currently we are assuming that this policy is not proceeding because following consultation and a pilot in respect of housing associations that we looking at offering properties for sale for their tenants, take up was very low, so as a result of that there no assumptions made within this business plan that the policy is going to proceed.

Cllr England wanted to go back to 4.1.5 to ask why does the HRA Business Plan refer to 2050 when Dacorum has declared a climate emergency specifically requiring that we try to get to zero carbon by 2030, this policy does not match up to the motion of Full Council. F Williamson said that it's in respect of what we can do and earlier as I explained some of the properties are going to be very difficult for us to actually do anything to get them to zero carbon position. Also when we look at zero carbon, whilst we can look at what we can do to the fabric of the building, to the heating systems which are controlled, the one thing that we can't influence completely is the behaviour of the tenants in respect of the use of the heating and electricity, so it's really to acknowledge that we are working towards doing everything that we can to try and support the climate emergency and that includes an education programme, but it does mean that some properties are going to be virtually impossible for us to get to zero carbon position.

Cllr England said if we are setting a Business Plan, then it should try to achieve what we as a Council has decided to try to achieve, whether or not we achieve that, I accept there may be some difficulties and we might have to have a really serious look at what we do with those properties because are they sufficiently a big enough factor that we can make an exception or not, but the fact is the 2030 is the number and this document doesn't have 2030 in it, it's got 2050 and I think that needs to change. Cllr Griffiths advised that the Plan runs out in 2021, so this was set in place before the Policy was done last year, the commitment was already made in 2017, this is an existing policy and we have an update figure wise, for things that have changed in legislation and all that sort of stuff. It will be updated in 2021 onwards, what we decide to do in that will obviously be a decision for this Council.

F Williamson said that we will take on board the Full Council climate emergency agenda resolution, but also we have baseline position that's being modelled so that we can then demonstrate where we are likely to get the biggest impacts. The Association of Public Service Excellence are doing some modelling around our existing stock level and our existing energy performance of that stock so we can make sure that where we target investment we are increasing the energy performance of those properties to the maximum impact in respect of carbon neutrality.

Cllr Adeleke mentioned that on page 30 point 8.3 the 1% rent reduction, this is the final year of the four year national policy and wanted to know how that affects the Council. F Williamson confirmed that we will be adopting the national formula rent which is CPI+1% in terms of an increase, that will start from 01 April, so tenants will receive information about their rent statements at the end of February/beginning of March, so that they will be aware of what the impact is for each individual household. In terms of the overall impact of the 1% rent reduction, Finance has calculated that as having an impact of £33m over the four year period.

The Chair confirmed the recommendation to note the report.

## **9**                    **WORK PROGRAMME**

There were no changes to the Work Programme.

The Meeting ended at 9.30 pm