

## MINUTES

### STRATEGIC PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

18 JUNE 2019

**Councillors:** Beauchamp  
Birnie (Chairman)  
P Hearn  
Hobson  
Ransley  
Riddick  
Rogers  
Silwal (Vice-  
Chairman)  
Taylor  
Timmis  
Tindall  
Woolner  
C Wyatt-Lowe

<b>Officers:</b>	David Austin	Assistant Director - Neighbourhood Delivery
	Sharon Burr	Corporate and Democratic Support Officer
	James Doe	Assistant Director - Planning, Development and Regeneration
	Nigel Howcutt	Assistant Director - Finance and Resources
	Neil Polden	Environmental Health Officer
	Sara Whelan	Group Manager - Development Management and Planning

#### Also Attendance:

Councillor Alan Anderson  
Councillor Graham Sutton

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

#### **18**            **MINUTES**

The minutes of the last meeting were agreed and signed.

#### **19**            **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies were received from Councillors Barrett and Stevens.

#### **20**            **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest.

**21**                    **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

There was no public participation.

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

None.

**23**                    **BUDGET MONITORING Q4**

N Howcutt presented the report.

Cllr Hobson said that she understood the market has changed and it is good that there is still a small profit, she then asked whether our recyclable waste was all recycled.

D.Austin explained that yes, as a Local Authority we complete a monthly return in terms of the end destination of all our recyclables. We use a company called PS Recycling in St Albans where it is sorted and then the different recycling streams are then shipped out – for example in May the newspaper went to Palm Paper in Kings Lynn, the cardboard went to Calcutta, the plastic bottles and pots went to Indonesia, the steel went to a company in Aylesbury, Aluminium went to a company in Cheshire and the glass went to Scotland and Derbyshire. We have to declare all of this to the Environment Agency.

Cllr Hobson enquired if we had a plan in place if Indonesia closes its doors?

D. Austin said that in the wider scheme of things we are part of a consortium – plastic is typically low weight so as part of the overall basket of income we get is low impact. The end markets do switch quite a lot even month to month we still see shifts from India to Malaysia to Indonesia.

Cllr Timmis Asked whether the council were looking at recycling commercial waste in particular restaurants. Food waste and other commercial waste.

D. Austin said that at present we have a scheme available to 150 commercial waste customers. We will be bring a report to this committee later in the year to look at the options for food waste and other materials and alongside that there is a government consultation called The Resource and Waste Strategy which is also looking into this issue so there will be some plans. We also have a waste management specialist called Plan B who is doing some work with us.

Cllr Anderson explained that as part of the Herts Waste Partnership we have to work as part of a team. It is not ideal that there is any chance our refuse being exported broad, but we have to deal with the realities of the situation. We must focus on trying to reduce that problem as much as possible. He went on to say that he hoped in due course we could look at commercial food recycling but that will also be dependent on the reality of the situation.

Cllr Birnie said that he noticed we had collected £126,000 from CIL and wanted to know how much we pay in collection costs.

J. Doe told him that up to 5% can be spent on administration and currently we have a surplus.

Cllr Tindall enquired whether the new multi-purpose vehicles might mean that we retain more customers.

D. Austin responded that that there is fleet standardisation and this would result in efficiency savings and it will give more flexibility in how we respond to customers.

The Report was Noted.

## **24                    ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES Q4 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

D. Austin introduced the report.

Cllr Timmis asked if the 'Don't be a Tosser' campaign had an impact on litter.

D. Austin replied that cause and effect are difficult to measure but it has raised awareness. He also spoke about the new cameras which will catch those throwing litter from cars, and some prosecutions would be a good deterrent.

Cllr Timmis then asked about fly tipping and whether it costs more to pick it up rather than allow free access to tips and open them for five days a week.

D. Austin replied that it was a challenging area and again it was difficult to know whether it would help as some of the people dumping are very organised and probably would not use the sites.

Cllr Ransley said that food waste and co-mingled waste had gone up and wondered where it was coming from.

D. Austin replied that it was down to growth in households and over all we are doing well.

Cllr Hobson asked whether provision for water fountains would help, and also enquired about grass cutting and tree planting.

D. Austin explained that there is an initiative in place where you can fill your water bottle at participating businesses and water fountains would be looked at. Grass cutting is approximately every 5 weeks and the tree policy is due for renewal next year.

A discussion was had about our involvement with schools and D. Austin assured the committee that we have a great deal of involvement with schools in the area to encourage recycling etc.

Cllr Riddick asked about 18 fixed penalty notices and how many were collected with regards to fly tipping.

D. Austin said that he couldn't comment on the detail but we are very determined when we do get evidence.

Cllr Birnie asked about joint operation in Brook Street and D. Austin replied that he doesn't have details at the moment but will find out and populate the minutes with the information.

The report was noted.

## **25                    ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION Q4 PERFORMANCE REPORT**

E. Walker presented

E Walker confirmed that Fixed Penalty notices for fly tipping are followed up if not paid.

Cllr Birnie congratulated the award winners in Emma's team on behalf of the committee.

Cllr Tindall asked a follow up question about stray dogs and how many were re-homed, re-united or euthanised. Since the meeting E. Walker has been able to confirm the figures – 15 strays were dealt with and out of these 10 were re-united with their owners and 5 were re-homed.

Cllr Tindall also asked about the two reportable accidents in the presentation E. Walker explained that there were two types of reportable injuries the first is the injury itself – eg a broken bone, the second is a seven day injury – meaning that the individual is away from work for 7 days.

Cllr Birnie asked for more information regarding the vermin infestation in Bennetts End and whether it was at a private or business property. He also wanted to know if when that happens would the local councillor be informed. E. Walker replied that it was a mixture of both, and going forward, yes, the local councillor would be informed. Cllr Woolmer asked what a 'hand on vibration' injury was and E. Walker explained it was to do with power tools.

The report was noted.

## **26** **PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION Q4** **PERFORMANCE REPORT**

J. Doe presented.

Cllr Birnie made the point that a lot of the new Councillors probably need some training in dealing with material objections

Cllr Riddick said that it has to be ensured that any objections that were put forward were on purely planning grounds – not emotional or local issues etc., if not we leave ourselves open to the possibility of appeals.

Cllr Wyatt Lowe and Cllr Hobson both supported the need for extra training for all councillors, Cllr Wyatt-Lowe and reiterated that the role of the development management committee is to reach an independent decision.

Cllr Tindall – asked what was happening with the vacant land at Jarmans Park as there was an application passed for additional units plus parking etc.

J. Doe said that the company have not been able to let any units let, but he will continue to monitor.

Cllr Timmis asked a question regarding system performance for uploading complaints, objections etc as it has been very slow for public to use, she also asked about retrospective planning permission and whether the perception is that people are 'getting away' with building and then going for retrospective permission

S.Whelan explained that there had been an issue on the Planning Portal which has now been addressed. S Whelan went on to say that with regard to retrospective planning – it is not illegal but unlawful to carry out works without a planning application or planning permission so it does happen and people push their luck. In terms of handling those applications enforcement would usually go out and complete a site visit. The end assessment would be the same as if it were through a planning application, she added that there are no stats for this and she would see if this could be looked at.

Cllr Birnie asked when the new software was expected and S. Whelan replied that she was expecting it between the 30 September and the 11 October.

The report was noted.

HCC Transport presented by Odette Carter – Transport Strategy and Programme Manager

O. Carter explained that she is on the Transport side not on Air Quality itself.

Cllr Timmis asked why there was no mention of Luton Airport which affects our area.

O. Carter said that this was not her area.

Cllr Taylor asked how people were going to be encouraged on to public transport and asked what was proposed to do this.

O. Carter replied that she replied that she felt the plans did focus on getting people out of their cars and onto public transport, giving an example as the . A414 corridor providing bus priority and cycle provision along the A414.

Cllr Anderson said that a lot of proposals were seen in the consultation that took place last Summer and he felt that it had counterproductive proposals which could potentially make the problem worse, such as promoting the use of bicycles on a dual carriageway. Also there was a draft proposal about closing Kings Langley and Apsley railway stations which has since been 'binned'. He added that he felt we need to focus on finding practical measures.

Cllr Birnie asked how flexible Highways were on local plans to ameliorate air pollution, particularly the Apsley and Durrants Hill blackspot.

O. Carter said that everything was at concept level at the moment and it could change. She added that in terms of local aspirations for changes there was still the ability to put forward schemes for consideration.

Cllr Ransley asked Whether Bucks County Council was consulted, and do whether we had as strategy with them.

O. Carter said that we did consult with them.

Neil Polden presented the next part of the report for Dacorum Council Cllr Ransley asked a question regarding bus operators who run the old buses, she made the point that without those some parts of our district would be cut off and asked what suggestions there were for dealing with them.

N. Polden said that there may be opportunities to help fund this and that they may perhaps be able to prioritise the buses that travel through those areas, or there may have to be emissions standards put in place. He added that they are talking to the County Council about a whole suite of measures at the moment.

Cllr Birnie said that he felt the Achilles Heel in all of the plan is the Public Transport System.

Cllr Taylor asked a question about the monitoring tubes for air quality and why they were set at around 8 foot in the air which he felt was inappropriate. He also asked whether it was possible for the readings to be shared from 2016 to the present time.

N.Polden said that they can measure at height N. Polden also explained that they have to report annually to DEFRA and the report has to be reviewed and validated so due to pressure of work for DEFRA at the moment this information is only given out when a FOI (Freedom of Information) request is received and he confirmed that he would provide that to Cllr Taylor if he sent such a request.

Cllr Birnie then asked if this data could be made available to the committee.

E. Walker said that it could be submitted but it would not be validated.

There was a discussion about the electric charging point in the Water Gardens and it was felt it would be a good thing if it could be moved from the blue zone and that it was being looked into.

Cllr Timmis asked whether there are mobile monitoring units which could be utilised in the area she represents and added that she felt there should be independent

monitoring of the air quality around Luton Airport. Cllr Timmis wanted the impact that Luton Airport's expansion would have on all the roads locally and she would like this to be recognised in the report.

N.Polden explained that the main cause of pollutant is the cars to and from the airport, and he added that Luton Council produce reports pertaining to this and we can look at their data. He said that he would look at the guidance and the work done both by ourselves and Luton Council. J. Doe added to this that we are monitoring the development of Luton Airport with Luton Council.

Cllr Anderson said that he was keen to investigate options that don't penalise people who don't have access to Public Transport.

Cllr Ransley asked how she could add another area to the three being looked at and N.Polden said that he would send an email to Cllr Ransley to try and set something up.

The report was noted.

## **28**                    **BUILDING CONTROL**

S Whelan presented this report.

There is a recommendation that Dacorum joins Hertfordshire Building Control which is a consortium of Local Authority Building Controls formed in 2013. S.Whelan said that the quality is good and they have proved their resilience.

S. Whelan explained that the 5 members of staff in Dacorum would be tupe over to Herts Building Control.

There was a discussion around the income and expenditure and Cllr Birnie asked for a breakdown which N.Howcutt then went through - £809,000 made up of £600,000 staffing and £200,000 of support costs. Last year we overspent by £160,000 because of the need to employ temporary staff.

Cllr Tindall said that Building Control is a crucial service and he thought he was a good idea to join Herts Building Control.

Cllr Hobson asked who would join the board and S.Whelan answered that it would be Assistant Director level or above.

A question was asked regarding how full staffing would be assured and S.Whelan said that they have developed competencies to go through each point and linked this with Local Authority Building Control and they recruit outside the Local Authority so they don't offer the Local Government pension but do offer a mix of salary incentives and are looking at bonuses, so the structure is attractive.

Part 1 concluded.

## **29**                    **CAR PARKING PLANNING POLICY**

James Doe introduced the officers presenting the report with him as Atholl Moon from Markides who have been working with us to develop the new policy and Andrew Horner and John Chapman who are officers with Dacorum.

J. Doe said that the parking standards in place at the moment are based on the 2004 Dacorum Borough Local Plan and we need to review those standards. The report presented tonight is very comprehensive.

Atholl said that while had been spent investigating car parking in Dacorum and surveys were done and analysis of the census data was used to compile the report. It was concluded that the new standard should move towards a requirement, so a standard is set but it allows flexibility. Hemel Town Centre and surrounding areas and

Berkhamsted were identified as areas where car ownership has changed. For the rest of the area there was no clear evidence that it had Accessibility Zones were recommended and standards were developed on that data. Flexibility was recommended as well with the onus being on the applicant to prove that it should be given.

Cllr Beauchamp said that Hemel Town has a high density of residential premises for the elderly and for those that are infirm, although they may not be heavy car users there is a high demand for parking there as they will have people coming to visit them. The people moving into the Town Centre will also be very different to existing residents and their requirements for parking may be higher – has that been taken into account?

A Moon replied that they have suggested flexibility to accommodate lower demand for parking on a particular site if you decided that evidence provided showed it was appropriate for that site.

Cllr Birnie made the point that we had lost a large amount of office space in the town centre to development of mainly residential area.

Cllr Wyatt Lowe asked for an explanation of the term 'car free'.

A Moon replied that it meant you could go for very low parking or car free in certain areas dependent on solid evidence being given by an applicant.

Cllr Ransley queried that Tring Zones 1 & 2 don't appear on any map.

Atholl said that they had never seen Tring as somewhere the parking standard should be lowered, so it is not in an Accessibility Zone.

Cllr Hobson pointed out that these were relatively small areas meaning few places for re-development and asked how much difference will it make, she was also concerned with air quality and lowering car use.

J. Doe responded that in town centre areas it would make quite a significant difference because there are still some undeveloped sites. Less so in Berkhamsted. We know that there is a huge pressure for new housing need and we are a green belt borough and can only allow development in the green belt in very exceptional circumstances.

Cllr Tindall asked if the growing number of houses of multiple occupation was being taken into account.

A Moon explained that it was considered as far as possible.

Cllr Taylor said that the reason car ownership had not grown in Berkhamsted was that there was nowhere to physically park, and thought that there should be a case for providing more parking for example in new developments. He added that he feels car parking on the street in Berkhamsted is at saturation point.

A Moon said that he didn't know if there was direct causation between the lower number of cars and the parking as people will walk quite a way to park if necessary. In circumstances where you think there is severe stress you can request that the applicant produce evidence on how their standard would meet those circumstances..

Cllr Birnie asked where the evidence has come from.

A Moon explained that the main evidence came from the 2011 census and was compared to the 2001 and there didn't appear to be a major change in car ownership over that decade.

Cllr Timmis said that she represents an area which is villages and there is a huge parking problem a lot of houses have no garages or driveways. There is also a lack of public transport. The newest development in the Village estimated 1.5 car parking spaces per 2 or 3 bedroom house and this has been inadequate resulting in overspill on the streets.

There followed a discussions about measurements allowed for car parking spaces.

Cllr Wyatt Lowe said that we should be discouraging people from owning cars because of the green issues, and wanted to know if that had played any part in the report.

A Moon said that there was a balance to be struck between car ownership and a shift to a greener way. He gave some examples of other forms of transport and the need for more public transport to support the green initiative

Cllr Birnie asked if we were trying to get more cars off the road and parked on site.

A Moon replied that it is correct wherever possible parking should be directed to be on site rather than off.

Cllr Rogers asked why the census from 2016 had not been looked at and asked a question regarding supermarkets requiring less parking.

A Moon replied that the 2016 census he is not aware that car ownership stats are updated on that but that he would check. A Moon went on that the requirement for parking in Supermarkets used to be quite high but with online sales etc the need had become less with the exception of Aldi and Lidl.

Cllr Tindall asked whether it had been taken into account that Hemel was built between the 50's and 70's and now those families are for whatever reason leaving the incoming families will have different requirements..

A Moon explained that they have had to use the data available at present although they recognise some of that will be happening.

Cllr Silwal asked why houses with 3 or 4 bedrooms had had spaces reduced and A Moon replied again this was based in data available. Cllr Anderson asked if this report was going to allow Development Management to turn down schemes with insufficient parking and James Doe replied that was exactly the intention. The policy is in draft at the moment and flexibility is needed and it has to be balanced with the need for affordable housing.

Cllr Birnie expressed his doubts about zoned parking saying he would prefer a clear cut policy.

Cllr Sutton explained that this an evolving situation we don't yet know what modes of transport will be popular in times to come

J.Doe asked for any specific points to be forwarded to go to next committee. .

The report was noted.

The Meeting ended at 10.00 pm