
DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

17 JULY 2019

Present:

MEMBERS:

Douris (Mayor) Adeleke, Allen, Arslan, Banks, Barrett, Barry, Mrs Bassadone, Beauchamp, Bhinder, Birnie, Cloughton, Durrant, England, Freedman, Griffiths, Guest, P Hearn, Hobson, Johnson, Mahmood, Mahmood, McDowell, Peter, Pringle, Ransley, Riddick, Rogers, Silwal, Sinha, Stevens, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Timmis, Tindall, Townsend, Uttley, Williams, Woolner and C Wyatt-Lowe (41)

OFFICERS:

The Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration), Corporate Director (Finance and Operations), Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services), Group Manager (Legal & Corporate Services), J Doyle, (Elections Team Leader), K Soley (Communications and Consultation Team Leader), T Angel (Minutes)

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 April and 15 May 2019 were agreed by the Members present and then signed by the Mayor.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 By the Mayor:

The Mayor highlighted two recent events he had been to;

The Armed Forces Day on 29th June, and The Freedom Parade at RAF Halton on 30th June.

He said there would be several events this year to support his Charity, Sunnyside Rural Trust, and asked that as many people as possible support this very worthwhile

Charity.

4.2 By the Chief Executive:

None.

4.3 By the Group Leaders:

Councillor Williams confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillors Anderson, Chapman, Elliot, Imarni, Oguchi, and Independent Member Councillor Maddern.

Councillor Tindall confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillors Bowden, Hollinghurst, Link and Symington.

4.4 Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:

Councillor Williams, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Contracted Services

The Portfolio Holder said he had a couple of things to report.

Firstly he expressed his disappointment with the decision made by the CCG and West Herts at the meeting on 11 July to proceed with the significant investment in the Watford site and the continued centralisation of services in Watford, leaving little or no prospect of investment in the Hemel Hempstead site or little investment in the St Albans site. He said Dacorum's view had remained consistent the last few years and to plough hundreds of millions of pounds in to the Watford site to serve the communities of West Hertfordshire doesn't give the residents of Dacorum the best outcome in terms of health provision going forward. He said although he appreciated that the CCG and West Herts Trust were in a difficult position, they felt the decision was the wrong thing to do so he wanted the objection to that process noted.

The works on the Berkhamsted multi-storey car park commenced formally on the 17 June and is expected to be completed by January 2020. The Moor temporary car park has re-opened but is due for routine maintenance and will be closed 23 July – 5 August.

Following the Council's £1.9m investment in the refurbishment of Tring swimming pool, it re-opened at the end of May in a ceremony conducted by the Mayor of Tring along with a family fun day.

Councillor Pringle highlighted the alarming rise in food banks. She referred to the relocation of Dacorum's food bank and asked if the Portfolio Holder could guarantee that the new premises will be of the same capacity or greater than the current premises, and that the food bank will be fully supported for future needs. Councillor Williams advised he had met with the Chief Executive of DENS twice in the past few months regarding the relocation of their service and they're very happy with the move as the current site needs redevelopment. He gave reassurance that we would fully support them and will work alongside them to ensure their requirements are met. Councillor Pringle then asked if the Portfolio Holder agreed that the rise in food bank use was alarming and suggested reviewing the forecasts to ensure we can deal with this crisis properly. Councillor Williams said he wouldn't have the figures available that DENS would have but he would ensure they had the sufficient capacity that they feel is required.

Councillor Stevens thanked the Portfolio Holder for attending the Parking Forum on 12 June. He asked if the Portfolio Holder would agree that the temporary car park has been an operational disaster and asked how much revenue had been lost during the periods of closure. Councillor Williams advised there hadn't been a direct log of the number of weeks the car park had been closed but he approximated 9 weeks. He said there was no mechanism to record the potential revenue loss as there is no history of that car park to compare it to, also people may have used other car parks instead therefore it wouldn't result in a loss in revenue. He added that car parking income was up 10% in the last two months. Councillor Stevens asked if the Council were paying for the remedial work. Councillor Williams advised that DBC would be paying for the works between 25 July-5 August as it formed part of the requirement under the planning permission to maintain the temporary car park.

Councillor Allen asked if the Portfolio Holder was aware of the difficulties faced with modern technology when trying to apply for visitor permits with the parking service. He asked what alternatives were in place for those that do not have internet access. Councillor Williams said he was aware and that there were issues with the service initially which were worked through satisfactorily. He said there was the option of paper if an individual was unable to access the service online. Councillor Allen then asked for confirmation that the scratch cards would still be available. Councillor Williams confirmed they would be for those individuals that genuinely didn't have internet access.

Councillor Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

Councillor Williams presented the update on behalf of Councillor Elliot, as follows:

Revenues, Benefits and Fraud

The start of the new financial year has progressed very smoothly with all annual billing for council tax and business rates completed. The process of corresponding to any initial queries was completed in June and the service is now fully focused on income collection.

The council collects business rates, but it is the Valuation Office Agency (VOA) which decides the business rates levels, and members may be aware of the ongoing dispute in regards to ATM machines at shops and supermarkets – the Court of Appeal has ruled that ATMs at shops and supermarkets should not have been put into the Rating List, and therefore should not be liable for the payment of business rates paid since 2010.

In June the Supreme Court has granted leave to appeal to the VOA, although the appeal is unlikely to be heard for 2 years, the Council has made provision for this potential liability.

Financial Services

The Council's draft accounts for 2018/19 were published on the 31st May 2019. This publication was the result of many hours of hard work by the Financial Services team and included contributions from colleagues across the Council. The external audit process for the audit of the accounts is nearly completed. The final set of accounts will be presented at Audit Committee tomorrow night for approval.

A draft of the Council's updated Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) for the period 2019- 2023/24 was presented to the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee in early July. The Medium Term Financial Strategy outlines the Councils required Savings efficiencies over the next 5 years and will go before Cabinet at the end of this month for approval.

Officers have commenced work on the development of savings proposals for the MTFS period, along with other changes required to set revenue and capital budgets for 2020/21 and beyond.

Members will be glad to hear that the vacancies that have arisen within the Transactional Finance team during the last few months have been promptly and successfully recruited to. Three new permanent members of staff have now joined the service.

Commercial Assets and Property Development

The commercial assets portfolio continues to perform well in the midst of very difficult trading conditions. The occupancy of the portfolio remains high at 96% and budgeted income levels are being achieved.

Ex Civic Centre

Following the successful decommissioning and diversion of the UKPN substation situated under the SW Tower, demolition of the tower has commenced and is due to complete by the end of August 2019.

Liaison continues with UKPN and Affinity Water on timeframes to complete the diversion and relocation of utilities situated under the NE Tower which will be followed by demolition of the remaining structure.

We continue to liaise with Bellway Homes, who bought part of the West Herts college site for development at the western end of Dacorum Way and have agreed positioning of the substation so as not to impact on their proposed site entrance. A revised development application has been approved and legal documentation is underway accordingly.

Whilst it is too early to confirm the precise date that the relocation work will be complete, it is likely to be within the next 6-9 months. This has no impact on the cost to the Council, nor will it delay the development of the site as the relocation process will run concurrently with the design and feasibility work of the proposed development, currently underway. Development plans for the old civic centre are expected to be submitted and approved in this calendar year.

Garage Disposals

The sales of underutilised garages to release capital receipts for future council developments are continuing and the Cuttsfield garage site recently sold for Circa £300k to a private developer.

The next phase of the Garage Disposal Strategy is underway and 18 sites are being reviewed by Housing Associations initially to assess viability of the sites for development into additional homes for the borough. Once a garage disposal timetable is finalised members will be informed of the proposed schedule of sales.

Bunkers Park

The construction works for the new cemetery development at Bunkers Park commenced in the middle of June, following extensive archaeological surveys to meet Planning obligations. The construction is expected to be completed at the end of this calendar year to allow the site to be operational by the summer of 2020. This new cemetery will replace the Woodwells cemetery in 2020, once it reaches capacity, and will provide cemetery provision for the next 50 years.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor Tindall asked if the Portfolio Holder could advise whether the Utility companies that caused the delay in the demolition of the Towers would be paying compensation. Councillor Williams believed there was no redress to UKPN for any delays caused by the diversion of utilities and they hold complete control of timeframes.

Councillor England asked if the Portfolio Holder agreed with him that a new Prime Minister promising to spend money on everything else might not leave anything for properly funding Local Authorities. Councillor Williams said the Prime Minister would have to consider the options before him. He explained that some sectors within Local Government have become extremely challenging and with the autumn spending review approaching, a case would definitely need to be made to ensure the appropriate funding was there to ensure services could be delivered.

Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing

The Portfolio Holder presented her update as follows;

Tenant & Leaseholder Services

- We had £54.36 million of rent and charges to collect in 2018/19 and we successfully collected 100.79% of this amount. This means we managed to reduce the overall amount owed to the council in historic rent arrears and reduced the amount that we need to write off as bad debt. Unfortunately we evicted 10 tenants because of rent arrears – however this is less than previous years which shows that our approach to tenancy sustainment and support is having a real benefit to our tenants and to us.
- This is also a significant achievement considering we now have 666 tenants on Universal Credit and unfortunately 501 of these are in arrears. This is what we were expecting from other Local Authority experiences and we have launched rent surgeries in areas with high numbers of UC claimants – for example Kyna Court so can support tenants from early in the process.
- We successfully recovered £45,119 in recharges in 2018/19. This sends a clear message to tenants that they must leave homes in a good condition and not cause damage to their property and we have seen a considerable improvement in clear landings demonstrating our approach to safety in communal areas is working.
- There are currently 94 ASB cases open of which 32 are high priority and with the corporate ASB team to manage on our behalf. Noise is the greatest reason for the case followed by drugs and verbal harassment. We are in the process of approving a new ASB policy which covers all our duties as a LA including housing, community safety and environmental protection. Once completed a new procedure will be drawn

up using feedback from tenant satisfaction surveys and the work stream review completed early this year.

Strategic Housing

Strategic Housing have continued to work in closely with our partners achieve positive outcomes in service delivery, this has led to:

- Identification of a large unauthorised HMO in, which is currently being assessed under the licencing requirements, landlord is successfully engaging without enforcement
- New information sharing arrangement with Trading Standards in relation to Energy Performance
- Successful recruitment of new Chair and Vice Chair for the Homeless Forum from Hightown Housing Association and DENS
- Successful allocation to all new build properties with Watford Community Housing Trust at Opal Court and Hightown Housing Association at Farm End, Leverstock Green
- Identification help with housing and specialist support provided to a homelessness applicant who was a victim of modern slavery.

Housing Development

Cabinet Report	Approval secured at July Cabinet for: Appropriation of Land from the General Fund for Eastwick Row and Gaddesden, timing to line up with achieving planning approval. Martindale Sales Strategy.
Resource Sept.	Appointed Ian Johnson as Senior PM start date 23rd
Corn Mill Court	Completion Due August 2019.
Martindale commenced.	Foundations are all completed and brickwork
Northend & Westerdale commenced.	Foundations are all completed and brickwork
Stationers Place commenced.	Foundations are all completed and brickwork
St Margaret's Way	On hold subject to brief clarification around a potential supported housing scheme.
Eastwick Row	Positive pre app received, now preparing for full plans application due to be submitted this week. Due to ASBO issues we are looking to demolish garages early ahead of new build.

Pipeline Schemes	Looking at feasibility schemes for Cherry Bounce and Marchmont, LA1, we are now also looking at a feasibility at Paradise Depot to include facilitates for DENS.
Land purchase	Paradise Fields land purchase ongoing although Homes England condition on overage may prevent purchase of all three sites. Architect has produced initial scheme with positive feedback from Planners. Pre app submitted. To avoid any further expenditure the project is on hold until the land is secured.
Gaddesden Row	Full plans application submitted. Parish objecting DB to meet them evening of 15th July
Future Garage Sites	Plan in place to review approx. 10 sites and take through to planning. Looking at Off Site Manufacturing solutions.

Property & Place

Osborne Contract

Year 5 review in progress and progressing well. Draft report has been viewed by HCSOC and being revised ahead of submission to CAB. Following this revisions to contract and delivery will need to be formally recorded and implemented for delivery from April 2020.

The decision to award the Year 4 extension (year 9 addition) to contract has been further deferred awaiting completion of a final data reconciliation.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor Freedman referred to the Rent and Other Charges Policy which he believed would be coming before the Overview and Scrutiny Committee in September. He thanked the Portfolio Holder and her Officers for introducing a protection against excessive annual increases for tenants and asked if it was possible for the Committee to have early sight of methods of calculation of that restriction, and the impact of those calculations. Councillor Griffiths said she would ensure it formed part of the scrutiny report but no early sight would be given.

Councillor Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

Councillor Williams presented the update on behalf of Councillor Anderson, as follows:

Environmental Services

- Flats Food Waste Project planning is going well and we are on track to begin the roll out in September.
- Additional Garden Waste Service – had around 780 subscriptions already this year (we had 750 total last year so surpassed this despite the £5 increase)

- Schools have now been provided with additional recycling bins to increase their capacity for those that needed it. We will be doing a push on schools in September in the new academic year.
- Compost Giveaway successfully carried out in May where we also gave residents seeds too.
- Refill Hertfordshire scheme launched to encourage people to refill their reusable bottles on the go. Nearly 150 Refill Stations signed up in Dacorum already and DBC is supporting other Herts local authorities to sign up their own locally.
- Throughout July we are promoting Refill and the 'Reusables' campaign that we first ran in January to encourage the reduction of single-use plastic as this ties in with the international campaign Plastic Free July. County Show – the theme was the Reusables campaign.
- Worked in coordination with Ringway litter picking the A5 while they cut the grass. While Ringway had traffic management in place on the A41 we sent 2 HGV sweepers to remove detritus.
- Joint effort with the events committee on delivery of preparation/maintenance for Armed Forces day/ RAF parade.
- 70,560 bedding plants, planted.
- 1 green flag park judged, two mystery shopped.
- New bee houses and insect biomes put up / Part of Keens field turned into a butterfly meadow.
- D-day boards installed at Gadebridge Park, Boxmoor war memorial and Tring memorial garden.

Councillor Williams invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor Cloughton asked if the Portfolio Holder agreed with the Governments proposals to require Local Authorities to consult publicly before felling street trees. Councillor Williams said he wasn't aware of the proposals but felt that we shouldn't have to consult if there was risk to individuals and/or if we know a tree was damaged or diseased. He agreed we should be consulting if for some reason we were felling trees for cosmetic reasons but he hoped that wouldn't be happening. Councillor Cloughton asked what the Portfolio Holder would be doing to restore the trust of residents in his Ward that if a tree is removed unnecessarily it will be replaced with new one. Councillor Williams said if he was referring to particular tree then it would be helpful to have something in writing. He explained he did follow most social media channels that discussed matters relating to Dacorum and was disappointed that there was no trust in the Council. He gave reassurance that we would only be removing trees when necessary and we also have a programme to replace them where possible. He added that if Councillors ever wanted more information they could speak to the Woodlands Team and they would be more than happy to help.

Councillor Woolner said although the Council should be applauded for the 'plastic free' initiative, does the Portfolio Holder think it is appropriate that in the last quarter of 2018/19 only 36% of plastics recycled in the Borough was recycled in the UK and the remaining 64% was sent to Indonesia. She said assuming that it was disposed of appropriately in Indonesia, the carbon footprint alone to transport it there was environmentally irresponsible. Councillor Williams said ideally we would recycle 100% of our waste in the UK but there isn't the capacity or the market. He said the company they used was reputable and they sell on to reputable brokers within the waste industry. He advised they are working through the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership to ensure that other Countries are dealing with waste properly. He felt the only real solution to reduce the export of plastics was simply to use less and they will do everything they can to reduce single use plastics. Councillor Woolner suggested we should begin to investigate how these plastics can be processed entirely within the UK and lead by example to other Councils. Councillor Williams explained that currently there isn't the facilities or the market to recycle 100% of our plastics in the UK and the only alternative to exporting it was to landfill or incinerate it which isn't acceptable. He accepted that more could and should be done but for now we have to accept it and rely on the reputable companies we are using to deal with it properly.

Councillor Wyatt-Lowe said DBC had a long tradition of supporting the environment and asked for reassurance that we will continue to do this but double our efforts. Councillor Williams said it had taken a number of years to improve our environmental footprint but this had become more of an international focus and we will up our efforts to do more.

Councillor Banks, Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services

The Portfolio Holder presented her update as follows:

Environmental and Community Protection

- Air Quality Action Plan has been approved at Cabinet, The Council had a duty to produce Air Quality Action Plans which consider potential ways to reduce Nitrogen Oxide levels. The last plans ran from 2015-2018, and the updated plan approved will run from 2019-2024. The plan covers 12 measures that either directly address air quality, or that propose to look at the feasibility of future measures that could be implemented to address air quality issues.
- Two Public Space Protection Orders will go live on the 29th July. The first is Borough-wide and aims to promote responsible dog ownership. This introduces five enforceable offences associated with irresponsible dog ownership
 - Failing to pick up dog faeces
 - Failing to pick up dog faeces after a request to do so from an authorised officer
 - Failing to carry means to pick up after your dog
 - Failing to put your dog on a lead when requested by an authorised officer
 - Failure to keep your dog out of a fenced play area or more than 3m away from children's play equipment.

The second refers to the town centre area only, introduces two offences,

- Spitting (including discharge of chewing gum) urinate or defecate.
- Cycling

The teams will be running targeted promotional events after the go live date. The signs will be going up in the next few weeks.

- ASB team and legal services applied for a full premises closure order on a property in Warners end at St Albans Magistrates Court. The magistrates granted a 3 month closure order and the property has now been secured. We had previously obtained a 6 month partial closure on the property, which allowed the tenant and her children to remain at the address. Unfortunately the reports of ASB continued during this time. This will give much needed respite for the neighbours who have been complaining about ASB at this location for some time, despite all efforts to get the tenant to engage with professionals in order to change her behaviour, the ASB continued, so this is the best result for the wider community.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor Griffiths asked if the Portfolio Holder was aware that starting this weekend the Worlds Scout Jamboree will take place in West Virginia in America. Over 150 countries will be represented by 45,000 young adults and 5,000 adults; 1,000 of those adults are from the UK, and 7 of those are from Hemel Hempstead. They will be taking postcards of Hemel Hempstead and will be posting them on site so the other people there can see where they are from. She apologised that she didn't know the figures from other areas in the Borough and she only knew of the 7 from Hemel Hempstead as she knew them personally, and also that her and her daughter were 2 of those 7. She said they were doing us a great service and perhaps we could do something for the group afterwards as a thank you for representing us well. Councillor Banks said it sounded like an amazing adventure and she was happy to note that information.

Councillor Barry asked if the Portfolio Holder could explain how we intended to help the homeless who have established themselves in Highfield by the Redbourn Road opposite DENS. She said this is in light of recent CPN's on those removed from the Town Centre. Councillor Banks said she would need to provide a written response. Councillor Griffiths said there was a process in place if anyone comes across a homeless person and agreed she would circulate the emergency helpline number.

Councillor Pringle highlighted the dangerous levels of air pollution in Northchurch and suggested they undertake a full consultation with the local community as well as reviewing road safety. Councillor Banks confirmed Northchurch was one of the three areas in Dacorum with high pollution levels and an action plan was hot off the press. She said they were working closely with officers to find a solution in partnership with the Environment Agency and Herts Highways. Councillor Pringle asked for a guarantee that there will be a full consultation with the local community. Councillor Banks confirmed we will be consulting with residents.

Councillor Beauchamp said although it had taken a long time it was good to see the rough sleepers have been removed from outside WH Smiths in the town centre. Councillor Banks advised that on 5th July the Anti-Social Behaviour team served a CPN and instructed them to clear the area within 7 days and took action to prevent them from reappearing. Dacorum Police also issued CPN's to the three individuals sleeping there to prevent them from moving their belongings elsewhere to form another camp. The Councils Homelessness Prevention and Assessment Team will continue to work with these individuals to ensure they receive appropriate help and

advice to work towards resolving their difficulties. She added that not all rough sleepers are homeless.

Councillor Hobson asked for confirmation that the cycling ban only related to the pedestrian areas. Councillor Banks confirmed it was.

Councillor England asked if the Portfolio Holder agreed with him that moving on homeless people doesn't actually help them and asked what positive steps were being taken to help these people. Councillor Banks reiterated her previous point that the Councils Homelessness Prevention and Assessment Team will continue to work with these individuals to ensure they receive appropriate help and advice to work towards resolving their difficulties.

Councillor G Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Infrastructure

The Portfolio Holder presented his update as follows:

Water Gardens Big Garden Party

- On Saturday 8 June 2019 hundreds of people turned out for our free family event, which celebrated the regenerated Water Gardens in Hemel Hempstead.
- The Water Gardens' Big Garden Party was packed with free family fun, including AmeyZoo with its collection of exotic pets, children's entertainment, nature and craft activities and street performers.
- The Friends of the Jellicoe Water Gardens were on hand to answer questions about Jellicoe's favourite garden and reveal the wildlife of the River Gade.
- There were opportunities for traditional pastimes such as model boating, whilst Hemel Hempstead Library held a story-telling session.

Background

In 2017, we completed a restoration project of the much-loved Gardens, returning them to their former glory. The project was funded by a £2.4 million grant from the National Lottery Heritage Fund and the National Lottery Community Fund, which we topped up with an investment of more than £1 million.

Restoration project improvements included - seven new bridges, flower garden (opposite Bank Court) replanted, widened terrace, restored statues, new signage, renovated balconies, new play area, new lighting and resurfaced paths, environmental improvements including better water quality, planting to support biodiversity, fish passes, and a new building and community garden where volunteers, groups and schools can learn about gardening. The project also supports a programme of events and activities, which take place throughout the Water Gardens.

Kylna Business Centre

- I had the pleasure of opening the Kylna Business Centre at Maylands Avenue, Hemel Hempstead on Thursday 20th June.
- Built in association with the new Council homes in this central location at Maylands, the Kylna Business Centre occupies the ground floor of the Kylna Court residential flats on the corner of Wood Lane End and Maylands Avenue and provides 8 serviced offices ranging in size from accommodating between 4 to 12 people.
- Designed primarily as a move on option from Maylands Business Centre, these modern, high tech offices provide a prime location for growing businesses in the

heart of Maylands Business Park and add to the already robust package of services offered by the Council's Economic Development Service.

- Along with free business advice, subsidised training courses, small grant schemes, networking events and the Maylands Business Centre incubation premises, our officer team provides a nurturing environment for all businesses to thrive and prosper. The first tenant to move in was Think SR, a recruitment company that had outgrown their office space during their stay at Maylands Business Centre.
- All but one of the eight offices are now occupied.

Background

- The business centre part of the overall scheme cost approx. £1.1m
- Rents we charge businesses range from £650pcm for a 4 person office (243 sq ft) up to the largest (774 sq ft) for 12 people at £2100 pcm
- This equates to an annual rental of c£32.50 per sq ft, but
- Rents include all costs except phone calls and franking.
- Businesses sign up for a year at a time, and can be renewed up to 5 years. They can leave on a month's notice.

Dacorum Business Heroes

- The second annual cohort of Dacorum Business Heroes will be recognised at a special awards ceremony at Little Hay Golf Club on Friday 19th July.
- There are six categories of awards, sponsored by local organisations, who each judged their individual category. The winners for 2019 are as follows; Employment Hero – Indigo Tree, Skills Hero – D-Lab, Business in the Community – David Evans MBE of Grass Roots, Environment Hero – Tring Brewery, Retail Hero – Number Twenty, Business to Business – Tring Together. The overall winner will be announced at the awards ceremony.

Background

The event is fully funded by sponsors at no cost to the Council.

Quotes from two of last year's winners are as follows:

Liberty Tea Rooms – Kerry Ann Cooper, Founder (winner of Business in the Community Hero)

“Our award sits in the entrance of the team rooms. Everyone has been hugely supportive, it has been a boost to our morale and winning has helped to promote us and given credibility to what we do. It's been a tremendous honour and a privilege to be presented with this award, it recognises our 65 plus volunteers who give up their time to serve the community.”

Beechwood Fine Foods – Sarah & Toby Murray, Owners (winner of Retail Hero)

" Winning the inaugural Business Heroes Award - Retail category 2018 has meant and continues to mean a lot to us, personally it is the 'pat on the back' that encourages us to go even further; our customers have delighted in our achievement and been so full of praise, they too love being part of something special - and it has also been a very effective marketing tool that has brought our business to the attention of a broader audience"

Dacorum's Den

- Dacorum's Den is now in its eighth year.
- Ten companies pitched to a panel of judges which included the Rt Hon Sir Mike Penning MP and representatives from the sponsor organisations.
- This shows the commitment of our vibrant business community in supporting and recognising some of the great business talent that we have in our Borough.
- Six were awarded grants of between £1,500 and £2,000 to help them develop their business idea. The winners were Big Head Content (videographer), Castaway Cottage (bath products), The Home County Candle Company (luxury scented candles), and Phoenix Entertainment (Entertainers) who wanted the money to buy much needed equipment to improve productivity or offer a new service; and Songwriting 4 Kids and VAP Games who will use the money to reach more customers through improved marketing.
- The business judges also made offers to mentor some of the winners.

Background

The total cost of the Den is £11,000. £9,000 from sponsors and £2,000 from DBC.

The Rt Hon Sir Mike Penning MP said: "I look forward every year to listening to the fantastic ideas that the entrepreneurs of Dacorum bring to us. The diversity and commitment of the bids show why this country has so many successful SME's. I am very proud that Dacorum is leading in the way."

Quotes from previous winners:

Emerald Kitty – 2017 winner

"Since winning Dacorum's Den Emerald Kitty has very quickly seen an increase of business by 200%. We have taken multiple bookings and we are in the process of increase the members of our resident team in order to cope with our new-found demand. We would like to thank the Dacorum's Den for not only the grant money but also the publicity that has come along with it which has got our brand name out to a much wider audience."

Puddingstone Distillery – 2015 winner

"Dacorum Dragons Den provided us with the first opportunity to present our brand and product to an assorted panel of industry leaders and experts whose feedback has provided to be invaluable. The experience, grant we were rewarded and subsequent PR only helped to accelerate our plans for opening the business."

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

Questions:

Councillor Woolner said the residents of Berkhamsted were concerned about the failure of the Council to adopt the Framework Masterplan as part of the September 2013 Core Strategy. She asked why the failure to adopt the Masterplan was not discovered until April 2019 and what reassurances the Portfolio Holder could give to ensure similar failures will not happen again. Councillor G Sutton said he would have to come back to her on the first part of the question. He assured her that the process of the new local plan is currently being considered in its entirety and is also being considered selected task and finish groups so there will be several people involved.

Councillor Stevens said one way to offset carbon emissions was to plant more trees and asked if there were plans to provide guidance to developer's to ensure they plant more trees. Councillor G Sutton said the plan was to ensure sustainability and environmental improvements and these conditions will be taken into consideration. He said it will be at the forefront of any work with the planning department and developers will be advised as such.

Councillor Tindall asked if it was possible to write to the Councillors to explain why the Masterplan wasn't adopted, why that wasn't discovered until 2019 and the consequential effect of that delay. Councillor G Sutton confirmed he would.

5 MOTION

The following motion was proposed by Councillor Tindall and seconded by Councillor Williams:

CLIMATE CHANGE MOTION TO DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

A

To assist and inform the development of the new Corporate Plan for 2020 – 2025, which will outline the council's vision and priorities for the next five years, this Council notes that –

1. The overwhelming weight of scientific evidence pointing to dangerous man-made climate change in terms of CO2 Global Warming, loss of habitat for wildlife leading to a dramatic drop in bio-diversity, alarming consequences of the accumulation of plastic waste across the planet and the continuing unsustainable depletion of natural resources. The harmful effect that such climate change and other human impact on the planet is increasingly feeding back into our lives, eco-systems, erratic rainfall and poor air quality.
2. The Special Report on Global Warming of 1.5C published by the IPCC in October 2018 which describes the enormous harm that a 2C average rise in global temperatures is likely to cause, and advises that limiting global warming to 1.5C may still be possible with ambitious action from national and sub-national authorities, civil society and the private sector.
3. Local residents have been actively involved in environmental initiatives and have organised into campaign groups looking to influence all levels of government policy. DBC recognises that this is a reflection of their concerns about climate change and loss of biodiversity.
4. UK Central Government has announced a target for net zero emissions of greenhouse gas by 2050 for the UK, and Council recognises that if this is to be achieved, immediate action and progress in advance of that schedule is required at all levels of government.
5. Dacorum Borough Council has been working on environmental issues, based upon the "Nottingham Declaration" endorsed by Council in 2000 and in continuing to improve recycling rates.

6. District authorities are well placed to lead the vanguard in reducing carbon emissions and protecting biodiversity, as their responsibility for planning policies and housing stock opens up a range of sustainable transport, buildings, household and commercial/community waste and energy opportunities.
7. This Council has control over local policies and services, the Local Plan and particularly the specification of the housing stock.

B.

In recognition of the factors noted above the Council resolves to –

1. Join other councils at all levels of Local Government in declaring a climate emergency that requires urgent planning and action, and commits to work towards reducing carbon emissions across the full range of council activities to net zero by the end of budget year 2029/30, this to include the production of a strategy and action plan to make the activities of Dacorum Borough Council carbon neutral by 2030 in accordance with the IPCC recommendation
2. Evaluate all practical means to reduce then impact of council services on the environment as soon as possible.
3. Work with the established groups of Hertfordshire Public Sector Organisations to review their services and implement measures to reduce their impact on the environment and climate breakdown.
4. Urge the two Dacorum Members of Parliament to impress upon Central Government the need for regulations and resources that will support communities to meet the goal of carbon neutrality by 2030.
5. Ensure the new Local Plan and associated regulations when adopted contains all available measures to cut carbon emissions and reduce the impact on the environment.
6. Having regard for the duties required under the General Fund Account and the Housing Revenue Account, and consider the use of available reserves to introduce improvements to social housing energy efficiency.
7. Implement evolving environmental best practice wherever/whenever there is an opportunity to re-specify services at reasonable and cost-effective intervals.
8. Engage with local residents and businesses, in all sectors of our communities to publicise this declaration and gain their active support in reducing and preventing environmental harms and tackling climate change by making wise, early, significant choices towards achieving carbon neutrality and environmental sustainability.

Councillor Tindall read the following statement in support of the Motion:

'This week we have been celebrating the fiftieth anniversary of the moment when two human beings from our planet stood on the moon and looked at their home from 250,000 miles away.

Tonight we start a journey together to work to help save that planet, our home, from the devastating effects of climate change. It will not be easy, and we shall have to take our communities along with us and hard decisions may have to be made. We have to do this and over the next few years build upon this motion and act to ensure a future for our children and grandchildren.

I am extremely pleased and grateful that we shall be taking this journey together. It bodes well for the success of our journey that regardless of party we shall be working together. Others have been before us. Tonight we join the County Council and other Districts and Boroughs across Hertfordshire in this vital task of saving the planet that looked so beautiful on that day fifty years ago.

I particularly want to thank the Leader of the Council for seconding this motion and commend it to the whole Council.'

Councillors Ransley, England, Guest, Hobson, Stevens, Pringle, Wyatt-Lowe and Taylor made statements in support of the motion.

Councillor Williams said the Council had a good record when dealing with environmental issues and felt we have worked hard to improve our efficiency. He said we had to have a programme which our residents and community agree with but there will always be some may not be as willing to accept change. He said most people are happy with minor changes but it is the bigger changes that will take more convincing and these are the most important and will make the most impact. He felt we would need more support nationally and the Government will need to link up more effectively worldwide. He accepted responsibility as the Leader to ensure this Council takes action upon the points raised but also highlighted that everyone had a responsibility to contribute with small changes and make a difference.

Voting:

The Motion was unanimously supported.

Councillor Tindall thanked everyone for their support for this joint leadership enterprise.

6 QUESTIONS

None.

7 BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

None.

8 CABINET REFERRALS

The following referrals from Cabinet on 21 May 2019 were agreed:

8.1 CA/048/19 Vehicle Repair Shop

Decision

That Cabinet recommend Council approve the additional capital funds required of £60k as outlined in the report to Cabinet in paragraph 3.

9 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

None.

10 CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The following changes to committee membership were agreed:

Appointment of Councillor Nigel Nutkins to the Standards Committee.

Appointment of Councillor Alex Bhinder as Dacorum's Representative on the Hertfordshire Health Scrutiny Committee.

11 CHANGE TO COMMITTEE DATES

None.

The Meeting ended at 9.07 pm