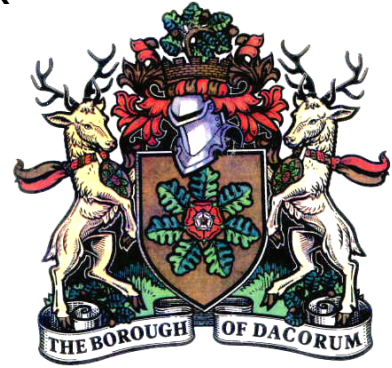


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SUMMONS

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

WEDNESDAY 15 JULY 2020

This meeting of Council will be held remotely via the Microsoft Teams application. Should any members of the public wish to join this meeting, please contact the Assistant Director (Corporate & Contracted Services) by 5pm on Tuesday 14 July.

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the Dacorum Borough Council in the County of Hertfordshire to be held on Microsoft Teams on Wednesday 15 July 2020 at 6.30 pm to transact the business set out below.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Sally Marshall'.

**SALLY MARSHALL
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**Contact: Corporate & Democratic Support
ext 2209**

AGENDA

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 12)

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting of the council.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To consider questions (if any) by members of the public of which the appropriate notice has been given to the Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services).

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

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

4.1 By the Mayor

4.2 By the Chief Executive

4.3 By the Group Leaders: Any apologies for absence

4.4 Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:

Councillor Williams	Leader of the Council
Councillor Williams	Corporate and Contracted Services
Councillor Griffiths	Housing
Councillor Anderson	Environmental Services
Councillor Banks	Community and Regulatory Services
Councillor G Sutton	Planning and Infrastructure
Councillor Elliot	Finance and Resources

5. MOTIONS

Motions to the Dacorum Borough Council Meeting on Wednesday 15th July, 2020.

A. Climate Emergency. Proposed by Cllr. Ron Tindall

This council takes note of the Strategy and Action Plan adopted by the Cabinet at their meeting on 23rd June. In addition, the council welcomes the Climate Change Emergency Statement and the undertaking to work with businesses, community groups and residents to reduce emissions across the Borough.

In furtherance of these decisions and objectives, the council believes that the bringing together of those interested in working with the Council in a public programme of Community Engagement would be beneficial, and asks that as soon as reasonably possible, given the present restrictions imposed because of the health crisis, a series of consultative events are promoted which will engage all sectors of the community, culminating in a Climate Emergency event at which representatives of those community sectors will meet to discuss with the Council the attainment of the Council's objectives by 2030.

B. Overview and Scrutiny. Proposed by Cllr. Adrian England

This Council recognises that scrutiny is an important part of a well-functioning administration where policies, strategy and decisions are tested by members and justified by Portfolio-holders with the support of officers.

Now that the Council is once again in a state of credible balance, and all Councillors have at least one year's experience, Council believes that scrutiny ought rightly to be led by a politically-proportionate group of Chairs and Vice-Chairs.

The council resolves to review Scrutiny and reform Chairmanship of OSCs so that Scrutiny in Dacorum is cross-party, with Chairs and Vice Chairs being drawn proportionately from the recognised political groups of the council, the appropriate amendment to the Constitution to be presented to the Council at their meeting in September.

6. QUESTIONS

To consider questions (if any) by members of the Council of which the appropriate notice has been given to the Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services).

7. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

To consider any business referred from the previous meeting.

8. CABINET REFERRALS (Pages 13 - 17)

To consider the following referrals from Cabinet:

- | | | | |
|-----|-----------|--------------|---|
| 8.1 | CA/046/20 | 19 May 2020 | Provisional Outturn 2019/20 |
| 8.2 | CA/059/20 | 23 June 2020 | Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan |

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE ANNUAL REPORTS (Pages 18 - 25)

10. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

To consider the following proposals for changes to committee membership:

Councillor Allen to replace Councillor Taylor on the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Councillor Allen to replace Councillor England on the Health in Dacorum Committee.

Councillor Tindall to replace Councillor Symington on the Development Management Committee.

11. CHANGE TO COMMITTEE DATES

To consider the following proposals for changes to committee dates:

Move Audit Committee from 30 September to 17 September 2020.

12. CALL-IN AND URGENCY PROCEDURE (Page 26)

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

15 APRIL 2020

Present -

MEMBERS:

Douris (Mayor), Anderson, Banks, Barry, Beauchamp, Bhinder, Birnie, Claughton, Elliot, England, Freedman, Griffiths, Guest, Su Mahmood, Riddick (Deputy Mayor), Rogers, Stevens, Symington, G Sutton, Taylor, Tindall, Uttley, Williams, (23)

OFFICERS:

The Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Finance and Operations), Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration), Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services), Group Manager (Legal & Corporate Services) K Mogan (Corporate and Democratic Support Lead Officer) and T Angel (Minutes).

The meeting began at 7.30 pm.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 26 February 2020 were agreed by the members present and will be signed by the Mayor at the next available opportunity.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor England declared he was an employee of the East of England Ambulance Service Trust.

Councillor G Sutton declared that he ran a small business in the town and was a recipient of a small business grant.

The Mayor declared the firm he was the principal shareholder in had applied for a small business grant.

Councillor Suqlain Mahmood declared he was the Director of a small business based in the Old Town.

Councillor Beauchamp declared he was the Chairman of a Community Association and was a recipient of a small business grant.

Councillor Symington declared she was DBC representative of the Berkhamsted Town Hall Trust and had applied for a grant.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

4. COVID 19 – EMERGENCY CONSTITUTION AMENDMENTS

The recommendation to Council was to approve and amend the Constitution to provide additional emergency decision making powers and agree procedures for the remote conduct of meetings.

Councillor Williams said members have had the opportunity to read through the proposed amendments as part of the contingency arrangements whilst we work our way through the current situation in line with the advice given by Central Government. He recognised that some of the restrictions on our current operations are less than satisfactory and using technology overcomes some of that but doesn't enable us to overcome all of the issues that members might have concerns about in the report. He gave a couple of updates following conversations between himself, Councillor Tindall and the responsible officers earlier today, firstly relating to the role of overview and scrutiny in the current arrangements. In order to facilitate the scrutiny process and in light of the possibility of reduced officer availability, the suggestion was that we reduce the workload of scrutiny by taking it down to the core minimum to effectively operate. He said he recognised that caused some concern but we will endeavour to maximise and run scrutiny as normal as possible, however we will ask members to bear in mind that items such as performance reports may be effected by officer availability.

He said the other concern from members was how we take forward Development Management Committee in these current circumstances and recognise that recommendations in the report do in some way restrict the role of ward members and also the involvement of Town and Parish Councillors. With all that in mind Councillor Williams proposed the following additional recommendation:

“That the proposals for Development Management Committee as set out in paragraph 29-36 shall be for an interim period to allow officers time to test the use of remote meeting systems, to develop a meeting protocol and train committee members. As soon as the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Leader of the Opposition and Monitoring Officer is satisfied that remote meetings or meetings with appropriate social distancing can work efficiently with appropriate public participation, the Chief Executive shall be delegated authority to agree to commence remote meetings, or meetings with appropriate social distancing, and the proposals set out in paragraph 29-36 shall cease to operate and the normal constitutional rules in relation to Development Management Committee shall recommence subject to allowing participation by councillors and members of the public by remote access and subject to any other procedural rules agreed by the Monitoring Officer.”

Councillor Tindall thanked The Leader of the Council for the discussions today and for resolving the concerns of his group by coming to an arrangement that he felt satisfied with. He believed it achieves the purpose of maintaining the administration of the council whilst giving as much democracy as we can in these difficult circumstances.

Councillor Guest felt the arrangements for Development Management Committee appear to enable the planning process to take place smoothly and efficiently whilst maintaining the

democratic role in ensuring the applications do go through the process. She said as Chairman of that committee she was happy with the proposals.

Councillor Beauchamp said he understood that site visits would no longer be made by officers and that applicants have been asked to send in photos/videos of the sites. He asked that when we come to review the applications and any photographs and plans etc. that would normally be displayed at the committee meeting would be forwarded to members.

Councillor Williams said he would take on board the comments and will ensure that members have all the information they need in order to reach a decision just as they would if they were present in the room for a normal Development Management meeting.

A vote was held:

22 for,
0 against,
The Mayor abstained

Therefore it was agreed:

1. That Council agree to the changes to the Constitution and procedures as set out in paragraphs 8-44 to the report and authorise the Monitoring Officer to make the required changes to the Constitution.
2. In the event that government guidance changes the Leader of the Council in consultation with the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Opposition shall have authority to agree to reintroduce face to face meetings and suspend either in full or in part these temporary arrangements pending formal agreement at the next available Council meeting.
3. That authority be delegated to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council and the S151 Officer, to draw down funds from reserves in order to finance expenditure that may be required in the Council's response to Covid-19. This expenditure will be reported back to Cabinet and Council at the next available meeting.
4. That the proposals for Development Management Committee as set out in paragraph 29-36 shall be for an interim period to allow officers time to test the use of remote meeting systems, to develop a meeting protocol and train committee members. As soon as the Chief Executive in consultation with the Leader of the Council, Leader of the Opposition and Monitoring Officer is satisfied that remote meetings or meetings with appropriate social distancing can work efficiently with appropriate public participation, the Chief Executive shall be delegated authority to agree to commence remote meetings, or meetings with appropriate social distancing, and the proposals set out in paragraph 29-36 shall cease to operate and the normal constitutional rules in relation to Development Management Committee shall recommence subject to allowing participation by councillors and members of the public by remote access and subject to any other procedural rules agreed by the Monitoring Officer.
- 5. DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCILS PLANNING AND RESPONSE TO COVID 19**

That Council noted the Council's initial and planned response to Covid-19 as set out in the report.

6. ANNOUNCEMENTS

6.1 By the Mayor:

The Mayor thanked everyone for participating and working their way through this very different and remote meeting.

6.2 By the Chief Executive:

None.

6.3 By the Group Leaders:

None.

6.4 Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:

Councillor Williams, Leader of the Council

Questions:

Councillor Tindall thanked all DBC staff on behalf of the Liberal Democrat Councillors for their continuous service under these extreme conditions, in particular those at Cupid Green depot for maintaining essential services. He then referred to the sad resignation of the Chief Executive and asked Councillor Williams if any decision had been made as to when she will leave. Councillor Williams advised that the Chief Executive's resignation was due to take effect at the end of July, however she had agreed to be flexible about that date. He explained that recruitment would be very difficult in the current circumstances but they had appointed recruitment consultants to assist them with the process.

Councillor Uttley referred to the forward plan in the Cabinet agenda for next week's meeting and asked if the Climate Change Strategy was still due to be published on 19 May. Councillor Williams said the report was still on course to go to Cabinet in May. He advised that some of the underlying work had fallen behind slightly due to officers being seconded to other roles. The work to engage a Climate Change officer was also continuing and they hope to interview in early May.

Councillor Symington advised she was a representative for the Berkhamsted Town Hall Trust and the trustees would like to know what the Council could do to protect this asset. Councillor Williams said we would seek to give any support we could but he couldn't commit to a firm answer at this stage as it depends on the financial support we receive from Central Government. He explained we would have to prioritise charities that are providing immediate support to residents to supply food, mental health support, etc. and we would have to look at the wider sector on a case-by-case basis. Councillor Symington thanked The Leader and said the trustees understood that there was a hierarchy of need.

Councillor Birnie asked if it would still be possible to observe Cabinet meetings if they're carried out remotely. Councillor Williams advised that all members can join the Cabinet meeting via Microsoft Teams if they wished to.

There were no further questions.

Councillor Williams, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Contracted Services

Questions:

Councillor England asked if the Portfolio Holder could share the package details that have been agreed with Everyone Active during the lockdown situation. Councillor Williams said he didn't have any agreement details to hand but he would happily share the information subject to any commercial confidentiality. Councillor England asked if the information could also be made available to the public as it was in the public's interest. Councillor Williams said he could, but again it would be subject to commercial confidentiality.

There were no further questions.

Councillor Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

Questions:

Councillor Tindall asked what the actual expenditure was as of last Friday (10 April) for the Council at the fault of Covid-19 and what financial promise we had from the Government to cover that cost. Councillor Elliot said we were still to quantify any promise from the Government and our main priority is to get aid to businesses and residents and then we will tally that up later. He thanked the council staff that had stepped up and worked long hours to get funds out to residents and businesses. He advised the Council were modelling the possible budgeting pressures of lost income and increased expenditure but as we are only 15 days in to this financial year we are not yet able to quantify the impact.

Councillor Symington referred to the £1.6b that the Government had announced as support and noted that DBC have only been allocated £60k of that. She asked how it was apportioned and what the criteria was for it. Councillor Elliot advised it was based on a Government model but he would need to come back to her on the criteria.

There were no further questions.

Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Questions:

Councillor Uttley noted the increase in homelessness due to Covid-19 for various reasons, one of which is domestic abuse. She asked if we had been able to identify additional accommodation suitable for families or individuals who were victims of domestic abuse. Councillor Griffiths advised that we had used all the stock we had and have unfortunately had to revert to B&B but we were looking at whether we could move people around and also making use of general needs properties. Also Osbourne's have started working on voids to bring them up to standard for families. She said it wasn't a quick fix but we were trying our best with what we had available to service the needs of those in a desperate situation. Councillor Uttley queried the approximate time delay we were looking at and also how many voids we had in the pipeline. Councillor Griffiths said she didn't have the figures to hand but advised that we were using a significant amount of B&B's so that no one is on the streets or in accommodation that is not suitable for them.

Councillor England asked if the Portfolio Holder was satisfied that the flexi care staff and sheltered housing wardens had adequate PPE including eye protection if required since the beginning of the reported cases of Covid-19 in the UK. Councillor Griffiths advised that flexi care staff were administered by the County Council. She said we were following guidance for our own staff and ensuring distancing measures between staff and residents to reduce risk. She said she wasn't aware of an issue with PPE and asked if he was suggesting there was a problem. Councillor England said it was just a factual question.

Councillor England asked how the Council were ensuring continuity of supplies. Councillor Griffiths said she didn't have that information to hand so she would provide a written response.

Councillor Freedman asked if we expected a major impact on the council's investment in its own housing stock or do we only expect a time delay. Councillor Griffiths replied they only expected a time delay at the moment. She advised we had stopped work on all the sites but will commence work as soon as possible as these homes are needed even more than usual.

Councillor England asked for the working definition of essential works with council homes. Councillor Griffiths explained that the majority of work happening now would be urgent works such as gas or electricity works as these are categorised as critical. We are also working on void properties and this is also classed as essential works as people need homes. Councillor England asked what the consequences were for the housing service if lockdown continued after 1st June for example. Councillor Griffiths advised it would be the same as any other business; we are having to put off works that need doing and the longer things are left the more issues we will have. She added that we had 27 bathrooms and kitchens that were already in the process before lockdown but no new kitchen or bathrooms are being undertaken at the moment.

Councillor Griffiths said she would like to thank all the council staff that were going above and beyond to help our residents.

There were no further questions.

Councillor Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

Councillor Anderson expressed his thanks to the staff at Cupid Green depot for doing a fantastic job under the circumstances and were being flexible and taking on additional roles.

Questions:

Councillor England echoed Councillor Anderson's gratitude to the staff in waste services. He then asked where the collected waste was going as he believed that the waste transfer station was closed to the public at the moment. Councillor Williams advised that whilst the household waste sites were closed to the public the Counties transfer station for commercial waste and council collected waste were operating as normal.

Councillor Beauchamp commended the Portfolio Holder for his radio interview this morning and felt he responded well to some very aggressive questioning. He then expressed how wonderful Gadebridge Park was looking at the moment, in particular the walled garden and asked if it was possible to open the gates and create a one-way system so that it can still be enjoyed. Councillor Anderson said he was happy to consider that but wasn't sure if it was feasible with social distancing and how we would police that.

Councillor Stevens asked if we were experiencing a higher level of fly tipping now that the household waste sites were closed. Councillor Anderson advised we had not experienced any increase in fly tipping or littering and suggested that we may have seen a decrease in littering as people are staying at home more. He explained that the Hertfordshire Waste Partnership had done a lot of work county-wide in the last 18 months to tackle the problem with fly tipping and the numbers in Dacorum and Hertfordshire were reducing.

There were no further questions.

Councillor Banks, Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services

Councillor England said he understood that the calls to customer services were being taken remotely due to lockdown and asked if there had been an increase or decrease in calls. Councillor Banks advised there had been an increase and gave an example; in January we received an average of 1,647 calls per week, as we went in to lockdown the calls increased to over 2,500.

Councillor Symington returned to the issue of maintenance of football pitches, particularly those in Berkhamsted and Tring. She asked that as there were people in the community that would be happy to help maintain public spaces, is it possible for the council to relax restrictions on football clubs using volunteers to help maintain their pitches. Councillor Banks said the issue was around liability and the health and safety of the chemicals used on the pitches. She advised there are meetings planned with the stakeholders but as they're currently furloughed they're unable to enter any discussions about the pitches. Councillor Symington said they had been assured that no council staff had been furloughed. Councillor Banks clarified that the stakeholders from the football association had been furloughed, not DBC staff.

Councillor Tindall thanked the members of staff that had been volunteering to come in to The Forum to assist with the opening and distributing of mail and were carrying out a valuable service for our residents. Councillor Banks agreed with Councillor Tindall and thanked him for his comments.

Councillor England asked if the Portfolio Holder agreed that community centres were not able to stand alone on their reserves and what level of support does she think they will need from DBC to continue to enrich the community if lockdown continues. Councillor Banks declared an interest as she was employed by both Grovehill and Woodhall Farm community centres. She explained that all community centres in Dacorum were registered charities and as part of the charitable status they need to hold reserve funds. She understood that they held at least three months of reserves so it wasn't an immediate issue. If lockdown continues the community centre network will have difficulties, however the council will be making grant payments through the small business rates scheme and Councillor Banks will be encouraging the community centres to make those applications.

Councillor Birnie referred to a previous question about football pitches and asked if the same applied to cricket fields. Councillor Banks advised it applied to any open spaces that DBC have responsibility for.

There were no further questions.

Councillor G Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Infrastructure

Councillor G Sutton thanked DBC staff for their hard work under the circumstances and he felt extremely proud of them.

Questions:

Councillor Symington noted in the report that the Council were anticipating that developers may be seeking variations on s106 monies and requirements. She asked what the indications were for that and how we will assess those requests. Councillor G Sutton advised that we will be pursuing the developers to get as much revenue as possible but we may have to be flexible. He explained that no two developments are the same so we would need to look at individual case as it comes up and find the correct solution.

Councillor Birnie recalled that as part of the South West Herts Strategic Plan there was a *South West Herts, Your Future* questionnaire circulated. He said it was scheduled for February/March and asked if we had any results. Councillor G Sutton advised it had been delayed as it wasn't a priority so it would be picked up in the future. Councillor Birnie asked if we had any idea of the scale of results. Councillor G Sutton said he didn't know but he would find out and let him know.

There were no further questions.

7. QUESTIONS

None.

8. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

None.

9. CABINET REFERRALS

None.

10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

None.

11. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

None.

12. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE DATES

The following changes to committee dates were agreed:

- Move Housing & Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee from 2 March 2021 to 3 March 2021.
- Move Standards Committee from 4 March 2021 to 25 March 2021.
- Cancel the additional Council meeting that was scheduled for 17 June as it was no longer required.

13. CALL-IN AND URGENCY PROCEDURE

The Council noted the following two urgent Portfolio Holder Decisions:

- PH/002/20 - Business Rates Retail and Pubs Discount 2020-21
- PH/004/20 - Covid-19 Support for Businesses

The meeting ended at 8.55 pm.

Cabinet referrals

19 May 2020

CA/046/20 PROVISIONAL OUTTURN 2019/20

Decision

That the report be noted and:

1. The movement on earmarked reserves as set out in section 9 of the report be approved
2. The capital slippage into financial year 2020/21 as set out in Appendix C of the report be reviewed and approved

Resolved to recommend:

- 3. The approval of a supplementary capital budget of £300k in 2020/21 to complete works to the Berkhamsted multi-storey car park**

Corporate objectives

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery.

Deputy Section 151 Officer

This is a Deputy S.151 Officer report

Monitoring Officer

No comments to add to the report

Advice

Councillor Elliot introduced the report to members. The report summarises the financial performance in 2019-20 and details other minor accounting changes. The final audited accounts will be presented to the Audit Committee for scrutiny and approval in September prior to final publication. The General Fund shows an overall balanced budget with small variances in different services areas as outlined in the report. The Housing Revenue Account has an in year surplus of £884k and the Capital Programme is broadly on track and there is a projected rephrasing of £0.4 million into the 2020/21 General Fund. Due to the current crisis with Covid-19, next year may show a very different set of accounts with many challenges up ahead.

Councillor Birnie referred to page 11, paragraph 4.2 and asked for further details about the £115k of additional insurance costs relating to uninsured losses.

N Howcutt explained that the council undertakes its own insurance provision for minor claims and for significant claims, the council has external insurance. For the small claims, this is covered from reserves which is far more cost effective than having external insurance for all eventualities because of the large premiums.

Councillor Birnie asked if the £115k was multiple small claims or one claim.

N Howcutt confirmed that this total was made up of all insurance claims under £10k.

Councillor Birnie then referred to page 31, paragraph 5.1 relating to the vacancy pressure within the Clean, Safe and Green team. He asked if it would be better to increase the budget for staff vacancies in this team.

J Deane said the vacancy factor comes from balancing budgeting experience with what experience has shown in the past. The council budgets on a post by post basis and experience shows that at the end of the financial year, the council comes in at 5% under budget. This process gives an easy way to show what is a realistic saving over the year when taking all vacancies across the council into account.

Councillor Birnie asked if the external auditors were comfortable with this approach.

N Howcutt confirmed they were comfortable with this approach because it is part of the budget setting process and uses sound reasoning to justify. It is also reviewed every year.

Recommendations agreed.

23 June 2020

CA/059/20 CLIMATE CHANGE STRATEGY AND ACTION PLAN

Decision

1. That the approach to the development and delivery of the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action plan as set out in the report be approved.
2. That the Climate Emergency Statement in Appendix 4 be approved

Resolved to recommend:

3. **The creation of a budget for the Climate Emergency of £75,000 in 2020/21 and authority be delegated for its expenditure be made to the Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration and the Assistant Director Corporate and Contracted Services in consultation with the Leader be approved**
4. That an annual review of the progress of the Strategy and Action Plan be made to Cabinet each year and an update be provided to Cabinet in September 2020 on initial progress
5. That a training and development programme for both staff and Members be delivered in 2020/21
6. That a 'Climate Emergency impact statement' be incorporated into Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny reports

Corporate objectives

The Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will help to support all 5 corporate objectives:

- *Safe and clean environment*: e.g. contains actions relating to the quality of existing environments and design and layout of new development that promote security and safe access;
- *Community Capacity*: e.g. provide a framework for local communities to be better informed and involved in climate emergency mitigation.;
- *New and Affordable housing*: through both direct delivery and setting improved sustainability requirements in new homes would help to reduce both the cost of energy and water and the carbon dioxide (CO₂) emissions the homes would produce;
- *Dacorum delivers*: fulfilling the zero carbon pledge will make a huge contribution to local sustainability and assist in the national target to reach zero carbon as a nation by 2050;
- *Regeneration*: the strategy and action plan will provide improvements to air quality, biodiversity, opportunities for cycling and walking as well as major economic potential for 'green' businesses.

Monitoring Officer comments

The Strategy and Action Plan will require continual review against the baseline data in order to measure the effectiveness of the agreed actions.

S151 Officer comments

The recommended £75k budget can be funded through draw down from the Climate Change and Sustainability Reserve.

Whilst the Council remains ambitious in the delivery of its Climate Change Action Plan, it should be acknowledged that there may be occasions when financial restrictions prevent the implementation of desirable service changes in the future.

Future recommendations to Members will need to be presented within the context of the Council's broader financial position in order to support evidence-based decision-making.

Advice

Councillor Williams introduced the report and asked for feedback from cabinet members about the comments from overview and scrutiny about their service areas.

Councillor Griffiths said she had concerns over the recommendation from SPAE OSC about increasing rents. This recommendation has not been discussed by H&C OSC and was not happy with the suggestion. The council needs to bring people along and some tenants are already in fuel poverty so increasing rents or forcing them to go all electric in their homes which is often more expensive than gas is not the right thing to do. There are government guidelines on rent increase, there has been a 1% decrease in the last four years which has now finished so the new guideline is the CPI plus 1%. She would not be supporting that recommendation.

Councillor Birnie said that he had some sympathy with what Councillor Griffiths said but said he was guided by the members on his committee. He said he would like to make the point that was brought up Councillor Timmis who is the borough's representative on the London Luton Airport Committee. There is no reference in the strategy about the massive expansion planned at the airport. 70% of western bound flights fly over Dacorum and there would be an increase in road pollution, noise pollution and fuel pollution from aircraft.

Councillor Elliot agreed with the comments made by Councillor Griffiths. He referred to the points about electric charging points and said it was quite costly to install these and the technology is always changing.

Councillor Anderson also agreed with the comments made by Councillor Griffiths. He stated that the council shouldn't get hung up on detail in this strategy or rule ideas either in or out. It is important to look at ideas where possible and the measures the council implements as part of this policy should be realistic, effective, proportionate and cost effective. He said he did not feel that a full on approach to installing electric charging vehicles fit in to that criteria. The council needs to have a flexible strategy to respond to emerging technology. It is important to consult the public but must avoid the mistakes of other authorities whereby people begin to passionately raise ideas that are not realistic. The report as a whole is excellent, and contains generalities under which the council can move forward.

Councillor Banks added support to comments made by the Cabinet and on a well-produced strategy and action plan. She noted that air quality was part of the plan but not specifically London Luton airport. She accepted that communication with residents and empowering them to take steps themselves is a critical part to delivering this strategy.

Councillor Timmis added to Councillor Birnie's point about London Luton airport. The airport's intention is to continue with applying for an expansion which would double its current passenger numbers and generate a significant amount of traffic. Luton airport continue to say that people will travel by train but at the same time, have built massive car parks. This will have a major impact on climate change and hopes that the council will raise its objections against the current application.

Councillor Sutton agreed with previous comments about rent and the electric charging points which he also believed was too early to make a decision on at this stage as the motor industry are working on different options for power. He also raised concerns that if every vehicle was electric whether there would be enough lithium to supply them. The council are using the Local Plan to include ways of making new homes and developments carbon neutral.

M Gaynor said London Luton airport did not feature in the strategy because the council already has a position of opposing the airport expansion. The strategy can be used to look at external factors which may have an effect on climate change inside the borough. There may be an impact from Covid-19 affecting the appetite for the air industry to expand. The electric charging points is not for the borough council to decide on its expansion, the technology falls to the county council and mainly relies on a push from the private sector. There is a requirement in the Local Plan that future developments must provide electric charging points.

Councillor Williams said that the airport had paused their application but didn't doubt that it would be paused forever but Dacorum and Herts County Council have objections against it. He said there was a huge difference between using electricity at home and electricity to power a car. For example, a house uses 7000kwh a year to power and driving 20,000 miles in a car would use 6000kwh so approximately 80% of electricity used in a house would have to be generated again. In some properties, it would be impractical to own an electric vehicle like in flat developments. He said some ideas like more tree planting and solar panels are more realistic.

Recommendations agreed.

Agenda Item 9

Strategic Planning & Environment OSC Annual Review 2019-20

The committee held 7 meetings covering a variety of topics. The agenda and minutes for each of these meetings are freely available on the Council's website.

The committee regularly scrutinises budget preparations and quarterly reports from other departments in the Council, which is a core part of its role in the democratic process. These are all invariably well presented reports and I would like especially to commend those from the Finance & Resources for clarity and from Environmental Services for the entrepreneurial spirit emanating from Cupid Green.

The Council has been extremely busy preparing the new Local Plan and as a result the committee has dealt with a large number of planning matters. Unfortunately, perhaps because of the extra pressure on Officers that was further exacerbated by the Covid 19 lockdown, some reports only just met or even arrived after the statutory date for publication. This makes proper scrutiny difficult and agenda rescheduling in future a necessary possibility.

In addition to quarterly reports, the principle topics dealt with by the committee were;

Car Parking Planning Policy	18/06/19
Building Control	18/06/19
Air Quality	18/06/19
Economic Development	29/10/19
South West Herts. Joint Strategic Plan	29/10/19
Corporate & Contractual Services	13/11/19
Hemel Garden Communities	28/01/20
Events Policy	28/01/20
Draft Strategic Design Guide	22/04/20

Also, The Expansion of Luton Airport and Fly Tipping were matters frequently aired by members and these topics will require further attention from the committee later this year.

I would like to thank the Vice-Chairman, (particularly for chairing the meeting for which I was unavailable), the Committee, Portfolio Holders and Officers for their support.

I would also like specifically to thank Sharon Burr for taking the minutes of our meetings.

Councillor J R Birnie

Chairman, Strategic Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee
03/07/2020

Finance and Resources Overview Scrutiny Committee Review 2019-2020.

The first round of 2019/20 Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee (F&R OSC) meetings started during **June 2019** with the quarter 4 provisional financial outturn and quarterly performance reports for the previous financial year.

Eleven Committee Members were present at this first committee meeting of 2019/20 season. The portfolio holder introduced the provisional financial outturn report and announced a balanced outturn position for the general fund and with an HRA underspend.

For the general fund capital budget slippages against the Housing Grant Payments to housing associations, Berkhamsted MSCP and Tring swimming pool were reported. For the HRA the slight delay on Stationers Place was cited, and the close to £0.5M gain-share payment from Osbornes was reported. It was also reported that the External Audit had raised no issues.

The OSC members scrutinised matters relating to the garage stock survey, recycling, reduction in commercial waste income, variances, staff vacancies, third party related transactions, and slippage on the HRA new build.

Nest on the agenda were the 'Performance Reports' which make the Committee agenda on a quarterly cycle.

The Quarter 4 Finance & Resource Performance was reported as being robust. Committee scrutiny enquired about the Universal Credit roll out preparedness, council tax collection returns, and risks covered by technical accounting adjustments.

The Q4 Corporate and Contracted Services Performance Report's scrutiny covered community use of the Tring swimming pool, Berkhamsted MSCP budget and progress, health and safety breaches, and CCTV coverage.

The Q4 Performance, People & Innovation Performance Report brought up discussion on rise in musculoskeletal injuries, staff well-being, and staff management training.

The Performance of the Leisure Contract in Part 2 concluded the proceedings of the evening, with a request made that where possible such reports should be included in Part 1.

Eight committee members attended the **July 2019** meeting where the 'Medium Term Financial Strategy' (MTFS) was on the Agenda. The committee scrutinised the assumptions made for this 4-year forward looking road-map document and provided feedback on the recommendations. The MTFS is a key financial planning document for the General Fund run services, provides a reference point for corporate decision making in the Council, and assists with the annual budget setting process.

The council tax setting process and the government rules for councils with or without social care responsibility and related council tax increase was discussed and clarified. The savings-led approach was queried, especially its impact on services going forward. The Corporate Director explained that savings help the Council guard against possible uncertainties, and help to prepare for the worst, whilst giving sufficient flexibility on Council finances management. The impact of this approach on the Revenue Support Grant was questioned and the Director responded by saying that there was an expectation that the legacy revenue support grant and business rates baseline funding are most likely to be streamlined as part of the fair funding review.

The role of business rates in future self-financing was queried by the Committee and clarified by Officers. The mitigation measures were queried, for example, if the business rates target of £60M could not be achieved. The Director for Finance whilst accepting the challenges being currently faced by retail businesses locally, felt that initiatives like the Council's Business Improvement Centre and the investment in our town centre of the last couple of years are measures which have helped.

The current status of the Dacorum Asset Register was queried. The Officers explained that the Asset Management Strategy is scheduled to be updated during this financial year with a view to maximising the revenue returns from the Council's commercial assets whilst at the same time promoting greater local community use of the community assets. The Committee were reassured that this will be achieved by the commercial assets team who monitor the situation on monthly and annual basis and are on the look-out for potential opportunities to maximise return.

Further queries and explanation of Dacorum Development Reserve for capital investment, saving targets business case, and the joint budget scrutiny meetings meant that Members were always involved in the process. Also, the reserves structuring, and profiling was questioned, and it was explained that the reserves were constantly under review for future spending needs and are also reviewed during the annual budget setting process.

Following the summer recess, the **September 2019** F&R OSC meeting scrutinised the Quarter 1 Budget Monitoring Report which came with the normal the mix of pressures, surpluses, and slippages.

The impact of charitable status of the Leisure Management Contractor and associated business rates reductions was queried. It was clarified by the Officers that this was beneficial for the Council as the 100% reduction in charity business rates meant that their management fee to the council was reduced, or increased payment to the council was resulting. Either way the arrangement was beneficial for the Council.

The use of Clean, Safe and Green personnel to undertake garden clearance had generated income and the Committee was re-assured that this was not impacting on other normal services that the department undertook, and efficient utilisation of resources was generating this income.

The sourcing of commercial waste vehicles coming from Europe over a period of two to three years and monetary pressure on commercial waste were discussed and clarified to the Committee.

Any additional cost of using Agency Staff were debated. The Committee were reassured that concerted efforts are being made through detailed analysis of roles data, benchmarking, pay, and specialist skill needs and recruitment methods were all things being reviewed, and this process will be helped by the HR system due for implementation at the start of 2020.

The quarter 1 Performance reports were reviewed at this meeting. On Finance and Resources Performance the Committee were keen to hear about Universal Credit processing, CIL, timely payment of invoices and risks clarifications in KPI reporting.

The quarter 1 Corporate and Contracted Services Performance discussions centred on customer satisfaction KPIs, garages survey and sales, Member training and success of the legal department on recent cases.

On the quarter 1 Performance, People and Innovation Report had a futuristic feel to the discussions as the Committee queried the officers on robotics adoption, use of Apps to improve the recruitment

process, harnessing artificial intelligence to improve performance, IT security and current staff sickness figures.

The September meeting was also given an update on the Parking Enforcement Contract, where terms and duration of the contract and break clauses, parking in Water Gardens car park, contractors performance and KPIs, financial management of the contract and electric vehicle charging points were discussed.

The **October 2019** meeting had two agenda items that were discussed in depth and at length.

The first report was an update on Commissioning and Performance Strategy and Standing Orders (the rules and regulations). An important policy that covers public money spend with third parties, ensures robustness of financial process, whilst at the same time outlining the future direction to satisfy the criteria set and agreed in the Medium-Term Financial Strategy. The various themes of this important strategy were covered in the agenda papers.

The role of the Local Government Association and its National Procurement Strategy and how effectively Dacorum were in implementing it was queried, with further questions on level of maturity in each of the areas, officer input time on low value contracts, threshold levels update, categorisation of contracts, evaluating and scoring of DBC performance targets, number of tenders, use of local SMEs, commercial prudence, and inclusion of climate emergency provisions within procurement of council services.

The October meeting was also presented with an update on Financial Regulations. The committee queries revolved around delegated authority for the S151 Officer, ongoing reconciliation of forecast and updated budget figures, transparency of decision making, and the reason for reviewing the regulations annually. This presentation paved the way for a detailed discussion on the commissioning and procurement strategy.

The Budget Monitoring report was first on the agenda at the **November 2019** meeting, and the format of the report was queried with a request to include an executive summary at the start of the report to differentiate from previous quarterly reports. The issues pertaining to core funding, Brexit, lorry fleet fuel costs, agency staff use, and costs and insurance income were all scrutinised and explanations sought. The discussions continued with garages - voids, rent and suitability for use. Vacancies generating underspend in housing finances, tenant charges and buying back of property previously sold Right to Buy were also discussed.

The second quarter Performance Reports provided the quarterly update and addressed items relating to Freedom of Information Requests, temporary agency staff, grievances of local taxi drivers, CCTV, sickness data and ICT matters.

A review of the parking tariffs and charges also took place at this November meeting. The use of annual RPI increases for parking versus the review over a longer period was discussed. The variation of parking charges to suit demand was queried as a possible option, as opposed to using same charges across the Borough. The strategy document was drilled further with a request for further breakdown of charges, option of 1-hour free parking, Parking Forum presentation, commuter use of DBC parking, season tickets issuance, local business beneficial use and discounts, parking charges for electric cars, and climate emergency concerns were asked to be addressed. There was a comment that the charges seemed excessive in some car parks and needed reviewing.

The **December 2019** Joint OSCs meeting covered presentations on Corporate Plan and Budget. This followed by the Committee Meeting to review F&ROSC specific items, or any items not addressed

during the joint presentation. These items covered a wide spectrum of issues, including Universal Credit (again), financial aspects of the caravan storage parking facility and possible future sites, various matters relating to The Old Town Hall, Water Garden electric vehicle charging points, elections costs, and complaints about Netcall telephone contact system.

The first meeting of **January 2020** was cancelled as only one Part 2 agenda item on offer with a view to including it with the February meeting.

The joint OSC Budget presentation of **February 2020** was followed by the Committee meeting covering items specific F&R OSC matters.

The report to the Committee from the Portfolio Holder for the F&R OSC Committee was very upbeat with The Revenue and Benefits service achieving the target rates for council tax and business rates, The Commercial Assets team posting high property rental utilisation, and The Finance Support Team was enabling the fiscal management process to perform efficiently. The Division was well prepared for the ensuing year 2020/21. Little did anyone know of what was waiting around the corner!

The February scrutiny looked at services charges, contribution of pensions, car parking charges and commuter parking occupancy durations. The negative impact of savings was queried, and reassurances sought that forthcoming savings had come from rationalisation of service without any negative impact on service. Other items scrutinised included rental income, investments and increase in temporary accommodations costs.

In the forward programme a request was made to look the Allotments policy at future meeting. This is reminder for Members that where they feel an aspect of the Finance & Resources policy or service should be reviewed by the Committee, then this the request should be made.

The February meeting also looked at the performance of the Leisure Contract in Part II of the meeting. The governance, performance, non-achievement of BAME user targets, satisfaction levels and investment and contingencies were discussed.

The **March 2020** F&R OSC meeting fell victim to Covid-19 and did not take place. This concluded the meeting scrutiny cycle for the year 2019/20.

The aim of the Scrutiny Committee is to “promote service improvement, influence policy development and hold the executive to account for the benefit of the Community of Dacorum”. Members are encouraged to call-up any Finance and Resources policy or service update for scrutiny.

The willingness and contribution of Members from both sides of the Chamber, Portfolio Holders and Officers to engage in open and effective scrutiny, helps improve the Finance and Resource service for the benefit of the residents of Dacorum and the Council. This fact is put on record in this annual report. Special thanks go to the Committees Support Officer Trudi Angel, who supported the Committee over the past year by not only facilitating the meetings, but also with her meticulous meeting minute taking. Thank you.

Effective and wide-angled scrutiny results when all Committee Members are present. Please add next year’s committee dates to your diaries to avoid clash with holidays!

F&R OSC is looking forward to 2020/21 season with the help of digital communication tools. and with an eye for climate emergency impact assessment having been considered in the reports coming to the Committee – the new normal.

Councillor Suqlain Mahmood,

Chairman, Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Annual Report of the Health in Dacorum Committee for 2019/20

The Committee looked at Health issues affecting Dacorum with interest, commitment and passion.

The proposed redevelopment of the West Herts. Hospitals Trust (WHHT) estate was considered at length. Committee members were not supportive of proposals by WHHT to focus the majority of services and investment at the Watford site, considering that this would not give an acceptable level of provision for residents of Dacorum. They believed that the only option to provide future emergency and specialist hospital care was at a new purpose-built central hospital on a site suitable for 21st century health care delivery. They felt that a new build would better serve the needs of the wider West Herts population. They also believed that there should be a good range of diagnostics and services within the three main settlements of West Hertfordshire.

The Committee heard a presentation from Herts. Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group on Primary Care Networks.

The Committee considered GP provision in Berkhamsted, an issue raised by the previous Council.

The Committee was informed of the Sustainability and Transformation Partnership (now an Integrated Care System) covering Hertfordshire and West Essex. The idea of the STP was to bring together a system across a geographical area.

The Committee looked at patient transport and how it had been taken over by the East of England Ambulance Service Trust after the previous provider had failed.

At its' meetings the Committee received updates from Herts. County Council's (HCC's) Healthy Scrutiny Committee and HCC Adult Care Services.

At its' meeting on 11th March 2020, the Committee received a presentation from Jim McManus, the Herts. Director of Public Health, on Covid-19 (coronavirus). He was accompanied by C/Cllr Tim Hutchings, HCC's Executive Member for Public Health and Prevention. He explained that restrictions would be coming in to "flatten the peak" of the virus so that the NHS would not be overwhelmed.

Thanks to the Committee's previous Vice Chairman, former Cllr Roger Taylor and to the current Vice Chairman Cllr Alexander Bhinder. Thanks to Cllr Bhinder in his role as Dacorum's representative on HCC's Health Scrutiny Committee and to his predecessor Cllr John Birnie. Thanks to all Committee members and officers for their work.

Chairman
Cllr Fiona Guest

Agenda Item 12

CALL-IN AND URGENCY PROCEDURE

Decisions taken as a matter of urgency under Rule 16 of the Overview and Scrutiny Procedure Rules must be reported to Council, together with the reasons for urgency. Rule 16 provides that the call-in procedure shall not apply where delay in implementing the decision is likely to harm the Council's or the public's interests.

(PH/009/20) – 03 JUNE 2020

**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

LOCAL AUTHORITY DISCRETIONARY GRANT FUND, (LADGF) – COVID-19 SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES

Decision made and reasons:

To formally approve the adoption of the policy based on the principles and criteria detailed within the body of this report to implement a LADGF scheme across Dacorum for the allocation of £1.45m of Government funding.

Approval is sought through PH Decision in order to expedite decision-making and ensure that payments can be made to eligible businesses as quickly as possible.

Authority to make decisions of this type has been delegated to Portfolio Holders by Cabinet decision CA/78/17.

(PH/010/20) – 19 JUNE 2020

**LEADER OF THE COUNCIL
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR FINANCE AND RESOURCES
PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR PLANNING AND INFRASTRUCTURE**

LOCAL AUTHORITY DISCRETIONARY GRANT FUND, (LADGF) – COVID-19 SUPPORT FOR LOCAL BUSINESSES PHASE 2

Decision made and reasons:

To formally approve the adoption of Phase 2 of the Discretionary Grant Funding Scheme based on the principles and criteria detailed within the body of this report.

Approval is sought through PH Decision in order to expedite decision-making and ensure that payments can be made to eligible businesses as quickly as possible.

Authority to make decisions of this type has been delegated to Portfolio Holders by Cabinet decision CA/78/17.