

## Notes of Key Decisions/Actions

**Meeting:** Council

**Date:** Wednesday, 13 January 2021

<b>Agenda Item</b>	<b>Decision</b>
<b>1</b> Minutes	The minutes of the meeting held on 18 November 2020 were agreed by the members present and will be signed by the Mayor at the next available opportunity.
<b>2</b> Declarations of Interest	There were no declarations of interest.
<b>3</b> Public Participation	<p>Questions from Graham Bright (Grove Fields Residents Association) to Councillor G Sutton:</p> <p><u>Q1</u>: "There was a lockdown when DBC voted to commence the public consultation and there is currently a lockdown. This alone is a good enough reason to postpone or at the very least extend the end date of the public consultation until a date when the lockdown is lifted and the public can properly engage with the consultation. There is a complete lack of awareness in Tring that there is an ongoing public consultation. I have not received anything through my door about how to engage with the consultation. There are many people in Tring who are now shielding, and engaging with the consultation does not fit within the government's definition of 'essential travel', therefore, the only way to engage is online. Many members of the public in Tring do not have access to the devices, Wi-Fi or the technical know-how to engage online. The current date of the 7th February, does not allow enough time for a fair or equitable access to the public consultation and DBC is opening itself up to judicial challenge.</p> <p>In addition, on the 16 December the government published its response to the local housing need proposals on the consultation on changes to the current planning system. This sets out important changes to the standard method which has been amended so that the 20 most populated cities and urban centres in England (none of which are in Dacorum) see their need uplifted by 35%.</p> <p>Government also said "More broadly, we heard suggestions in the consultation that in some places the numbers produced by the standard method pose a risk to protected landscapes and Green Belt. We (Government) should be clear that meeting housing need is never a reason to cause unacceptable harm to such places." and they went on to say "Within the current planning system the standard method does <u>not</u> present a 'target' in plan-making, but instead provides a starting point for determining the level of need for the area, and it is only after consideration of this, alongside what constraints areas face, such as</p>

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	<p>the Green Belt, and the land that is actually available for development, that the decision on how many homes should be planned for is made. It does not override other planning policies, including the protections set out in Paragraph 11b of the NPPF or our strong protections for the Green Belt.</p> <p>Therefore, there is no logic why DBC should slavishly pursue a plan to build on so much green belt when they should develop a plan based upon 'need' rather than using the standard method figure as a target that must be achieved at all costs.</p> <p>Therefore my question is, can DBC either:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. <i>Extend the end date of the public consultation until 10 weeks after the current lockdown, or</i></li> <li>2. <i>Cancel the public consultation and rewrite the plan in line with the latest central Government guidance?"</i></li> </ol> <p><u>Response:</u> The Council took the decision to extend the consultation to extend the current consultation from the statutory 6 weeks to 10 weeks in recognition that residents may need more time to review and respond to the consultation. The Council has also put in place an extensive publicity campaign to notify residents of the Local Plan consultation. This included:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. an article in the Dacorum Digest (63,000 copies)</li> <li>2. the digital digest (11,400 subscribers)</li> <li>3. newspaper articles – public notice in the Hemel Hempstead Gazette and Online Hemel Today</li> <li>4. a mail-out to those on the Council's Local Plan database</li> <li>5. a permanent virtual exhibition where residents could view documents and leave a message for officers</li> <li>6. a local plan video explaining the consultation</li> <li>7. making arrangements for residents to access the documents (by appointment) at the Forum and to loan documents from Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring library</li> <li>8. Printed copies of the documents to all town and parish councils.</li> </ol> <p>As at 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021 there have been a total of 14,185 hits on the Local Plan website since the start of the consultation. There have been 1,862 individual users access the virtual exhibition viewing a total of 20,295 items.</p> <p>Officers have only received a very small number of enquiries from residents asking for further assistance in accessing the documents. At the time of writing no requests have been made for paper copies of the</p>

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	<p>documents to be provided and no resident has complained that they have been unable to view a document.</p> <p>In view of the announcement of national lockdown recently, we will now extend the consultation to close on 28 February 2021 to provide an additional three weeks to the already extended period.</p> <p>Turning to your specific questions:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. It is not clear when the current 'lockdown' restrictions will ease and what this will be replaced but. However, it is expected that restrictions will remain in place for some time. As such, the Council does not consider it practical to extend the consultation by an indeterminate period of time. The Council has previously extended this consultation to ten weeks which is significantly more than the statutory 6 weeks required by the Local Plan regulations. However, we do recognise that the recently imposed Lockdown places further restrictions on movement and so the Council proposes to extend the consultation to midnight on 28 February 2021. This would be more than double the required consultation period.</li> <li>2. The current consultation is under regulation 18 of the Local Plan Regulations. This is still a relatively early part of the plan making process. Moreover, this is the first opportunity in 3 years that residents have had an opportunity to have their say on the Local Plan, particularly on the proposed level of growth and sites; all of which will be very useful feedback for Officers. Once the consultation closes we will carefully consider the points made, together with any changes to Government Guidance, before considering what changes to make to the Plan.</li> </ol> <p><u>Q2:</u> "Whilst it is good that a large amount of communication has gone out and only a small number of people have contacted DBC to ask about how to access the information, my concern is that there is still a lack of awareness of the public consultation in Tring. Would DBC consider implementing a mailshot to all households in Tring to raise awareness?"</p> <p><u>Response:</u> From the number of hits the website has had so far it appears we're reaching quite a reasonable proportion. We're discussing this with our communications team at the moment and we will be pushing out more information regarding the Local Plan in the coming weeks. I will make a point of mentioning Tring residents in case there are specific issues in that area.</p>
<p><b>4</b> Announcements</p>	<p><b>4.1 By the Mayor:</b></p> <p>None.</p> <p><b>4.2 By the Chief Executive:</b></p>

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	<p>None.</p> <p><b>4.3 By the Group Leaders: _</b></p> <p>Councillor Williams gave apologies on behalf of Councillors Imarni and Oguchi.</p> <p>Councillor Tindall gave apologies on behalf of Councillor Link.</p> <p><b>4.4 Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:</b></p> <p>(Full details are in the minutes under Announcements of the Leader and Cabinet).</p>
<p><b>5</b> Motion</p>	<p>A motion was proposed by Councillor England and seconded by Councillor Uttley. An amendment to the motion was proposed by Councillor Williams and seconded by Councillor Griffiths which was accepted by Councillor England. Therefore, the substantive motion proposed (as amended) was as follows:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. This Council notes that there are 7859 applications on the Dacorum Housing Register, either waiting for a transfer to housing appropriate for their needs or waiting for the opportunity to be housed by the Council or other registered social housing providers.</li> <li>2. Since 2013, this Council has committed to building new homes for social rent, 300 being provided by the Council itself, working with Housing Associations and others to supplement that figure.</li> <li>3. While welcoming the progress made, the Council notes that we will be given a target by MHCLG to provide opportunities in the new Local Plan for the building of over 16,000 homes in Dacorum over the next 18 years.</li> <li>4. This Council further notes that at current market rates, few of those proposed homes will be affordable by those on the Council's Housing Register, even if a full discount is applied, given the proposed local plan suggests that genuinely affordable' means substantially more than a 20% discount.</li> <li>5. Therefore this Council commits to build on the positive work of previous years and continue work directly to develop homes for social rent and to seek further opportunities with partner registered providers to accelerate the delivery of new social rent homes.</li> <li>6. The Council requests that as work progresses on the development of the draft local plan the task and finish group should look at the targets and definitions of affordable housing with a view to planning a greater</li> </ol>

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	<p>proportion of social rent homes, which should be quantified as at least a range of feasible targets.</p> <p>A vote was held:</p> <p>43 for, 0 against, 0 abstentions,</p> <p>Therefore the motion was carried.</p>
<p><b>6</b> Questions</p>	<p><b>Questions from Councillor Pringle to Councillor Williams:</b></p> <p><u>Q1.</u> Does the Leader of the Council support me in calling for HCC to publish the aggregate statistics of the prevalence of CV19 in Dacorum schools and across the county, given that, as we enter another lockdown, with a new variant of CV19 and R-rate currently out of control, it is more important than ever that our local residents and businesses have a full understanding of the prevalence of CV19 in our communities.</p> <p><u>Response:</u> No, I don't support that. Hertfordshire County Council have released considerable amounts of information through various mechanisms and have enabled people to see infection rates almost on a ward-by-ward basis. In relation to schools, I trust that HCC have released what they feel is appropriate and I do not support the call to ask them to release further information.</p> <p><u>Q2.</u> I completely understand and appreciate Councillor Williams' points about releasing information that could identify individuals, however does the portfolio holder not agree that as we have seen the highest of death rates today it is incredibly important that residents are fully aware of the extent of this virus in every community. Just over a week ago parents were told schools were safe and parents I know relied on that information. I am aware that parents have a misconception about the rates in Hertfordshire schools. Buckinghamshire is doing aggregate numbers, I've seen the correspondence and I only ask that we take similarly responsible steps to represent the fundamental needs of our residents to be kept safe.</p> <p><u>Response:</u> I can only reiterate what I have already said, I do believe HCC are publishing the information through its educational public health route or through more national bodies. The information is out there and I think given that the majority of schools are now closed beyond the February half term the information for school settings is clear. It is not relevant because for the majority of parents their children are off school for the foreseeable future and their return will be a decision based on infection rates and how things can be controlled. It will be a very different scenario when parents need to consider their options towards the end of February and I think we would</p>

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	<p>need to look at the national picture in light of the situation at that time.</p> <p><u>Q3.</u> Does Councillor Williams agree that when we see waves they come in curves and given that this will not go away overnight, I can foresee into the future beyond half term and it is when the students go back to school that we will desperately need this granulated school by school aggregate information. Would he support me in trying to get that information for parents so that they can make informed decisions about the safety of their children? This is not just their right but their duty to exercise parental responsibility.</p> <p><u>Response:</u> I think I have already made my position perfectly clear in that similar line of questioning to the first two questions. I rely on the County Council issuing information that they think is personal to the situation and there is more than sufficient information out there for people to make decisions.</p> <p><u>Q4.</u> Councillor Williams previous answers appear to be premised on the view that he foresees that the virus will recede in an almost perpendicular manner rather than go down a gradual curve whereby schools will resume but the risk will remain. Can he clarify how he sees us coming out of this through a perpendicular drop in the virus or a very gradual decline, such that there will still remain a risk in the schools that parents will need to have full information about.</p> <p><u>Response:</u> I think that's a very scientific question which I'm not qualified to make a judgement on. I think it's very likely that come the end of the lockdown period we will still be in a significant degree of restrictions, maybe a return to the tier system. I'm not in any way making any judgement in any of my answers about how the rate of decline might go because I'm not qualified to make such a judgement. As previous indicated I think we are likely to be in a period of some degree of control for many months to come.</p> <p><b>Questions from Councillor Woolner to Councillor Griffiths:</b></p> <p><u>Q1.</u> In the first lockdown of the Covid-19 crisis, the Government launched a much needed programme of measures, 'Everyone In', to aid rough sleepers over the lockdown period. It appears that the initial work to securing accommodation has wound down, with efforts being concentrated on securing more permanent accommodation.</p> <p>Although lawful restrictions are now in place for this current national lockdown on a par with the virus' initial onset, the 'Everyone In' policy does not appear to have been brought back into action, despite it being the coldest part of the year.</p> <p>Will the Portfolio Holder for Housing &amp; Services please give us her</p>

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	<p>assurance that this is being addressed and arrangements are being made to ensure that the vulnerable don't spend this lockdown outside through the winter?</p> <p><u>Response:</u> The strategic housing service has continued to provide support and access to accommodation for all clients at risk of homelessness and rough sleeping irrespective of eligibility. This service is delivered in partnership to ensure that whenever possible no household slips through the net. It is important to note that there are households that do not accept offers of accommodation or support. Where this is the case support and engagement will continue in line with the ask as all services recognise the importance of safeguarding the individual or household. Whilst the government has not repeated it's ask of March 2020 to bring everyone in, it has since requested that local authorities protect those at risk of rough sleeping. Ministry of housing, communities and local government has confirmed that the ethos behind 'protect' is of the previous ask. This is validated by a further request from the Secretary of State on 8<sup>th</sup> January 2021.</p> <p><u>Q2.</u> I have heard that in the Marlowes in particular there are more homeless on the streets than ever recently. How confident are you that the plans in place are effective? Do you have any numbers of take up of offers?</p> <p><u>Response:</u> I am aware of an increase of rough sleepers in the town centre as are officers and it is important to acknowledge that despite the range of services on offer from strategic housing, DENS and other partners that not all individuals that appear to be rough sleeping accept help from the council. Members should note that those partaking in street activities such as begging are not necessarily rough sleeping or bedding down outside and some have access to accommodation. Others with more complex needs and additional housing related issues may take time to establish the trust with officers before agreeing to come into accommodation. There are also incidents where accommodation is refused because clients do not wish to pay for the accommodation charges which are eligible for housing benefit or to follow the licence conditions and Covid-19 guidance which are requirements for being brought in to accommodation so we can ensure the safety of all residents and staff. I can assure members that all individuals that have been reported to us are all taken seriously and investigated and offered accommodation. Officers are also actively looking for rough sleepers. We are doing the best we can. I don't have the figures but I can get them and circulate to members.</p> <p><b>Questions from Councillor Symington to Councillor G Sutton:</b></p> <p>At the last Council Meeting on 18 November 2020,</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Conservative members of the Council voted to press ahead with the</li> </ul>

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	<p>Regulation 18 consultation process for the Draft Local Plan against strong representations by the Liberal Democrats.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• This decision was taken during the second national lockdown and just two days after the announcement of a significant change in central government planning policy in acknowledgement of the difficulties that members of the public may have in responding to the government.</li> <li>• The only acknowledgement of this changed situation was the Conservative agreement to extend the consultation period from 8 to 10 weeks, thus the consultation was scheduled to end on 7 February 2021.</li> <li>• As of 6 January, the United Kingdom has been in a third and even stricter lockdown, one which is overshadowed by a rampant variant of the Covid-19 coronavirus and additional extreme pressures on NHS hospitals; a lockdown expected to last for at least 6 weeks and to be followed by a gradually easing down through the tiers.</li> </ul> <p><u>Q1.</u> Given the difficult conditions in which the Council is having to conduct this Consultation, would the Portfolio Holder:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. Confirm what additional measures have been taken to ensure that all residents of the Borough have access to the version of the Local Plan under consultation, and</li> <li>b. Confirm what amendments, additions or deletions have been made to the Local Plan to comply with the Government changes, and</li> <li>c. Identify how many residents have made representations to the Council having found difficulty in accessing the Local Plan under the restricted Lockdown conditions.</li> </ol> <p>Having regard to these circumstances, would the Portfolio Holder:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>d. Agree that it would be appropriate to extend the Regulation 18 Consultation process to allow for the period of consultation be not less than eight weeks from the end of the Lockdown whenever that will be, in recognition that such an extension would enable full consultation with all residents and stakeholders?</li> </ol> <p><u>Response:</u></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a. The Council put in place an extensive publicity campaign to notify residents of the Local Plan consultation. This included: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• an article in the Dacorum Digest (63,000 copies)</li> <li>• the digital digest (11,400 subscribers)</li> <li>• newspaper articles – public notice in the Hemel Hempstead Gazette and Online Hemel Today</li> <li>• a mail out to those on the Council’s Local Plan database</li> <li>• a permanent virtual exhibition where residents could view documents and leave a message for officers</li> <li>• a local plan video explaining the consultation</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• making arrangements for residents to access the documents (by appointment) at the Forum and to loan documents from Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring library</li> <li>• Printed copies of the documents to all town and parish councils.</li> </ul> <p>As at 12<sup>th</sup> January 2021 there have been a total of 14,185 hits on the Local Plan website since the start of the consultation. There have been 1,862 individual users access the virtual exhibition viewing a total of 20,295 items.</p> <p>b. The consultation commenced on 27 November 2020. No changes have been incorporated to the Local Plan since the consultation commence on 27 November. It should be noted that the current consultation pre-dates the Government's announcement that it will revert back to the previous standard methodology figure of 1,023 homes per year for Dacorum.</p> <p>c. Officers have only received a very small number of enquiries from residents asking for further assistance in accessing the documents. At the time of writing no requests have been made for paper copies of the documents to be provided and no resident has complained that they have been unable to view a document.</p> <p>d: The Council has previously extended this consultation to ten weeks which is significantly more than the statutory 6 weeks required by the Local Plan regulations. However, we do recognise that the recently imposed Lockdown places further restrictions on movement and so we will extend the consultation to midnight on 28 February 2021. This would be more than double the required consultation period.</p> <p><u>Q2.</u> I welcome the small extension of three weeks. Does the portfolio holder accept that as the Dacorum Digest did not show Tring on the map, the residents of Tring might be justified in feeling they were not adequately informed of the impact it might have on their community.</p> <p><u>Response:</u> I have already indicated to Mr Bright and to Councillor Ransley that I will speak to the Communications team to see if there is any issues in getting the information out to residents in Tring.</p> <p><u>Q3.</u> What are you proposing can be done to rectify this? I would welcome a leaflet with a map of those most affected.</p> <p><u>Response:</u> We are working on a simplified version of the Local Plan which will be more readily available as a printed form and more accessible online. Some of the documents are quite lengthy and would require a laptop or desktop computer to access them. It is quite difficult to safely distribute leaflets on a door to door basis with contact being restricted due to Covid-19 so we would have to find another way to get that information to residents.</p> <p><u>Q4.</u> Does the portfolio holder agree that the efficacy and effectiveness of a</p>

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	<p>consultation is based on the quality and breadth of access that stakeholders have to the information rather than the period of time given over to that consultation?</p> <p><u>Response:</u> I fully agree. There has been a lot of interest shown and as the consultation reaches its completion I'm sure there will have been a lot more. The last time we had a public consultation we had some extremely valuable results and I'm sure we will finish up with a clear picture and the end of this consultation.</p>
<p><b>7</b> Business from the last council meeting</p>	<p>None.</p>
<p><b>8</b> Cabinet referrals</p>	<p><b><u>Resolved:</u></b></p> <p>That the following be approved:</p> <p><b><u>24 November 2020</u></b></p> <p><b><u>8.1 CA/101/20            Budget Monitoring Q2</u></b></p> <p><b><u>Decision</u></b></p> <p>That the budget monitoring position for each of the above accounts be considered and:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The approval of the revised capital programme to move £2.409m slippage identified at Quarter 2 into financial year 2021/22 as detailed in Appendix C.</li> <li>2. The approval of supplementary revenue budgets as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Supplementary budget of £300k in the Local Development Framework (LDF) budget to fund the costs of producing the Local Plan, to be funded from the LDF reserve.</li> <li>• Supplementary budget of £30k in the Waste Development employee's budget to fund a Recycling Officer post, to be funded from the Management of Change reserve.</li> </ul> </li> <li>3. The approval of supplementary capital budgets as follows: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Additional capital budget of £180k in the Commercial Assets and Property Development budget to fund the costs of completion of the new Bunkers Farm cemetery, to be funded from a contribution from West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee.</li> <li>• Additional capital budget of £210k in the Leisure service to fund a Multi-Use Games Area at The Hemel Hempstead School.</li> <li>• Additional capital budget of £70k to fund audio-visual improvement works at The Forum.</li> </ul> </li> </ol>

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	<p data-bbox="432 259 1054 293"><b><u>8.2 CA/102/20 Covid-19 Impact Report</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="432 338 560 371"><b><u>Decision</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="432 416 1369 483">The approval of £76,000 (over two years) additional funding for Citizens Advice Dacorum.</p> <p data-bbox="432 528 692 562"><b><u>15 December 2020</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="432 607 1366 674"><b><u>8.3 CA/112/20 Treasury Management Mid-Year Performance Report</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="432 719 560 752"><b><u>Decision</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="432 797 1382 864">The acceptance of the Cabinet report on mid-year treasury management performance and prudential indicators for 2020/21.</p> <p data-bbox="432 909 1305 943"><b><u>8.4 CA/113/20 Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="432 987 560 1021"><b><u>Decision</u></b></p> <ol data-bbox="432 1066 1398 1290" style="list-style-type: none"> <li data-bbox="432 1066 1398 1167">1 That the International Holocaust Remembrance Alliance definition of antisemitism be adopted as set out in the report and the illustrative examples that are presented alongside.</li> <li data-bbox="432 1189 1398 1290">2. That the new post for a Diversity and Community Inclusion Officer be included as part of the 2021/22 budget as set out in section 5 of this report.</li> </ol> <p data-bbox="432 1357 1139 1391"><b><u>8.5 CA/115/20 Committee Timetable 2021/22</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="432 1435 560 1469"><b><u>Decision</u></b></p> <p data-bbox="432 1514 1398 1581">The approval of the Meeting Timetable for 2021/22 as set out in Appendix A to the Cabinet report.</p>
<p data-bbox="185 1637 376 1760"><b>9</b> Overview and Scrutiny referrals</p>	<p data-bbox="432 1637 512 1671">None.</p>
<p data-bbox="185 1796 360 1919"><b>10</b> Changes to committee membership</p>	<p data-bbox="432 1796 512 1830">None.</p>
<p data-bbox="185 1955 328 2056"><b>11</b> Change to committee</p>	<p data-bbox="432 1955 512 1989">None.</p>

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dates	
<b>12</b> Call-in and Urgency Procedure	The Council noted the following urgent Portfolio Holder Decisions: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>➤ PH/025/20 - Additional Restrictions Grant – Covid-19 Support for Local Businesses</li> <li>➤ PH/001/21 - Local Restrictions Support Grant (Open) (LRSG (Open)) – Covid-19 Support for Local Businesses</li> </ul>

The meeting ended at 21.30 pm.