

MINUTES

CABINET

20 APRIL 2021

Present:

Members:

Councillors: Williams (Chair)
Griffiths
Elliot
Anderson
Banks
Barrett

Officers:	Claire Hamilton	Chief Executive
	Mark Brookes	Assistant Director - Corporate and Contracted Services
	James Deane	Corporate Director - Finance and Operations
	James Doe	Assistant Director - Planning, Development and Regeneration
	Mark Gaynor	Corporate Director - Housing & Regeneration
	Ben Hosier	Group Manager - Procurement and Contracted Services
	Melanie Parr	Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme Lead

Also Attendance:

M Kange (Clerk)

The meeting began at 6.30 pm

CA/20/21 MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 16 March 2021 were agreed by Members present.

CA/21/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no apologies for absence.

CA/22/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CA/23/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was one member of the public present.

CA/24/21 REFERRALS TO CABINET

There were no referrals to Cabinet.

CA/25/21 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Cllr Ron Tindall queried the removal of the future items on the Forward Plan this time around.

He also asked about when the Bury Project and South West Herts Strategic Plan would be coming forward.

James Doe stated that Bury project has been delayed during pandemic and therefore not scheduled at the moment, however a further report on it will be produced at the right time. With regards to the SW Herts Strategic Plan – a report would be going to Strategic Planning and Environment OSC as an information update and once a programme had been agreed, a report would follow in due course. Unfortunately no set timescales at the moment.

Cllr Andrew Williams advised that the items would be brought forward as and when they were ready and therefore the Forward Plan was a work in progress.

The update was therefore Noted.

Claire Hamilton advised that the sub-cabinet future items forward plan was removed following internal discussions because some of the items were a long way off and therefore it was considered better to only reflect the issues that were forthcoming in order to simplify the arrangements. Claire Hamilton advised that if Cabinet felt they would like to see a list of future items, then this would be considered internally as to the best way to present that information going forward.

Mark Gaynor said that a report on Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan was coming to Cabinet on 20th July 2021.

Cllr Margaret Griffith queried the lack of items on the Forward Plan scheduled for May 2021.

Mark Brookes stated that at the moment there are no items and therefore it would be cancelled.

Cllr Andrew Williams stated that he did not think it was necessary to list the future items on the forward plan until we knew what was coming forward and on what date.

The additional Report put forward by Mark Gaynor and the discussion regarding the forward plan were therefore Noted.

CA/26/21 CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY UPDATE

Decision:

Agreed that the Council's Green Community Grants scheme be doubled to £20,000 for 2021/22 (funded from the Climate Emergency Budget)

Agreed that the Council no longer maintain the ISO140001 Energy Management accreditation given the shift to the more comprehensive action being taken on carbon reduction across all services and actions in the Council.

Agreed that the Council notes the progress and actions set out in the report.

Agreed that the Council agrees that the draft Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy be presented to Cabinet in July.

Agreed that the Council agrees that the Council makes an application to the On-street Residential Charge point Scheme and initially uses the Climate Emergency Budget to match-fund.

Advice:

Mark Gaynor and Melanie Parr noted that the report was comprehensive and that there was a focus on the rights things and delivery of the carbon reduction we are looking for. Important to have national and international context and specifically a national one with the 10 point plan and may need to be update with Prime Minister's update today. Very ambitious in respect to carbon reduction and requires a significant shift in terms of action from the government in order deliver and investment and direction required, where reluctant companies may not want to participate and where encouragement may not be appropriate.

The Report itself does cover issues such as ongoing housing and the way to deal with the retrofit of our Council homes and is a longer term process.

Excellent work on community and communications process which Melanie Parr has been focussing on, appended "learning from lockdown strategy" which has helped advice. Ecological emergency and updating of Ecology and Bio-diversity strategy. Happy to take questions rather than run through entire report.

Cllr Julie Banks – Appreciative of reports put forward and huge sense of pride that we are ahead of the game. Criticism in the lack of branding and communication with residents, particularly Cupid Green, Electric Vehicle Charging points and no celebration of what impact we have made or even signposting the good things we have been doing. We are not promoting or speaking out about what we've done. Need signage, website update, notices in and around the Forum.

Mark Gaynor – We have not had the public platform we would like and the report demonstrates the direction we would like to go, including online presence and community group involvements. Accept part of moving forward will involve communication and publicity, communication, consultation, feedback and dialogue with residents. Fair criticism and one we are working on. Expect to see a lot more coming forward.

Cllr Banks – what are the timescales for seeing signs on grass verges, wildflower meadows being celebrated, electric vehicle points and signage being promoted? Perhaps a fanfare at entrance. We should have window stickers available to residents to say they have carbon neutral homes/business. We should consider ideas such as "push a button to donate a tree" and get a Facebook page and/or

website to promote, to let residents see what we are responding to demands on climate change.

Melanie Parr said she is hoping to schedule a large event later in the year, around November to promote the Dacorum Climate Action Network and hopefully have a programme to allow residents to get training and advice on how to make their homes more energy efficient. The Strategy would be coming forward to Cabinet in July.

Cllr Alan Anderson – understands rationale for curtailing ISO4001 accreditation, these would be embedded as part of this strategy action plan and wants assurance that this will be the case to keep the processes going as part of this strategy.

Mark Gaynor –the interventions now will be greater than those in ISO4001. Will show how we are moving towards 0 carbon. Need to collect, publish data and show how moving towards the aim of 0 carbon and looking at offset of net 0 to make the difference. Recording and reporting will therefore increase rather than decrease. Happy to accept any comments from Members to take things forward.

Cllr Graham Barratt – Vehicle charging points –Who many do we need? Who is going to pay for it? Where will they be? And how will people have access to them? 39% of residents in Dacorum don't have off-street parking and so where will the charging points be put? Can they be vandalised? How feasible is it to do it? Should we be paying for this?

Mark Gaynor – We have had a meeting with one of the companies to provide the answers to questions. Charging points allowed in car parks providing publicly accessible charging and we will be introducing charging points that way. It is not a simple process and the County will have an input on this, as they own the lamppost etc. Complicated given the number of households.

Melanie Parr – just started working with a consultancy, by 2030 estimated to have around 30,000 electric vehicles and we need to plan for this around infrastructure. Will be looking at where there is a need for the charge points and looking at who will be responsible for implementation. Also looking at destination charging – car parks, work places, shopping malls etc. and not all will cost DBC money.

Mark Gaynor – Shouldn't be a DBC cost solely, however important to get infrastructure in place prior to electric vehicle roll out by Government.

Ben Hosier – Vast majority of users likely to require destination charging. Consultants are looking into all data and whether they can charge on their own property or street and based on number of miles driven.

Melanie Parr – the plan in the meantime is to apply for government funding and put more charge points into our car parks.

Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Don't want all the good work being undertaken undermined if not keeping residents informed and involved. Suggest that we put signage and branding on some of our buildings such as St Peters Court and Kilner Court. A little motif with our climate change promotion displayed.

Ben Hosier – A “Green Plaque” is a suggestion for this.

Cllr Andrew Williams – It is about looking at the right places to promote and the opportunities to do it are widespread.

Cllr Ron Tindall – Happy with the report. What has happened to the power supply to the car parks? A third of people are working from home after Covid and so will there be a need to charge their cars at home instead of outside? This needs consideration.

Ben Hosier – Transfer over a number of EV charge points from HCC, however there are earthing issues and so need to be replaced. Contractors need to undertake investigations before touching them. This is now in process.

Claire Hamilton – We are developing our Corporate Communication Strategy and will be coming forward on the Forward plan in the coming months.

Cllr Andrew Williams – This should be a theme throughout the Council in terms of communication.

Cllr Alan Anderson – On-street charging is impractical and need to get charging times down like filling up at a petrol station is the way forward.

Cllr Williams said see how things go as speed of change will dictate.

James Deane – Looking at pros and cons of different sites at the moment and will be reporting back to Members in due course. Possibility if residents unable to charge cars at home, could need to go to charge cars in Town Centre which will provide dual benefit.

Recommendations Agreed.

CA/27/21 HEMEL HEMPSTEAD PLACE STRATEGY

Approved;

1. The preparation of a Hemel Place Strategy, subject to final approval by Cabinet and Council once further work has been carried out.
2. The establishment of a Hemel Place Board as outlined in the report to oversee the development and implementation of the Place Strategy, and delegates authority to the Leader of the Council to approve the final membership of the Place Board and its Terms of Reference.
3. The proposals as outlined in the report to carry out engagement with key partners, stakeholders and local residents to help shape the Hemel Place Strategy vision and objectives.
4. Endorsing the creation of a comprehensive strategy for the future physical, economic, social and environmental development of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre as an early priority for the Hemel Place Strategy work.
5. The provision of resources to develop the Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy and the related Town Centre Strategy.
6. **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND;**
That Council approves a budget of £500K to be drawn down from the Dacorum Development Reserve as required to fund the work to develop the Place Strategy.
7. To delegate authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Corporate Director (Finance & Operations) to draw down the allocated funds to produce the work set out in this report.

8. To delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to prepare and submit a bid to MHCLG for funding under the Levelling Up Fund programme.

Advice:

James Doe – There are a lot of things coming together for Hemel Hempstead at this time and the existing Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Strategy is in need of a refresh but other critical projects such as Hemel Garden Communities and Two Waters and Apsley Master Plan are really starting to take off with a number of key sites coming forward. Very important Trends around how people will live and work in the future post-Covid will need to be looked at, as well as fundamental structural changes in economy.

The report proposes Cabinet to consider the establishment of Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy to pull all different strands together, drawing upon work already approved under the growth and infrastructure strategy and the Hemel garden community spatial vision, this applies to whole of the town.

To coordinate action across the town and transformative approach across the town. Section 3 of report outlines things it would cover. There is a need for climate change to be underpinned.

Looking at the strategy around the Town Centre, the next main part needs to be an early piece of work and considering the impact on retailing post-Covid. We need to tackle key sites within the town centre. See appendices for information on addressing key changes and how to make town centre successful, vibrant and ambitious in the future. Looking at all aspect of life and economy within the town centre such as urban design, need for transport, community and wellbeing issues, as there has been a considerable rise in new residential properties within town centre.

In terms of taking work forward, this will be a major piece of work and needs a lead consultant, specialising in urban futures and ability to fully assess economics of commercial development to pull together all strands as discussed above. We are asking Cabinet to agree to the procurement process to have things moving forward with view to having a full consultancy team in place for June/July this year.

Section 6 of the Report – covers this, for such a Strategy to be successful, it is dependent on an extensive amount of engagement with residents, land owners, developers and business. Consultancy called Thinking Place will look into this aspect. There is a Part II element on cost plan for this work.

Cllr Alan Anderson – supports it and considers it is fundamentally important to do it and whilst extensive investment is required, still needs to be done. In summary happy to support.

Mark Gaynor – Timing of this is crucial and needs to take opportunity to be proactive on economic recovery. Will be a different town centre and need to attract people in, need to have new attractions coming in and systems will make it easier to make that happen. If the Council is on board, private investment will be willing to come on board and hopefully attract potential investment. It is crucial to have vision which is sellable.

Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Happy to support and need to be ahead of the game, this should not be done on the cheap and is a major issue for Dacorum as a whole, not just Hemel. Dacorum has been known for innovation in the past and so need to make sure that we are taking residents with us and not seen as being done to them or wasting money. Important to check with residents and businesses along the process. This is exciting and should be viewed that way.

James Doe – Agrees with need for engagement and this being a platform for investment is crucial. Need to be on the same level as others doing this. Having a Town Centre fit for purpose in the long term. The Town Centre is something we need to keep on top of. This is about taking us onto the next step and needs appropriate resourcing.

Cllr Andrew Williams – Aware that this focusses on Hemel Town Centre and not forgetting that there are other Town Centres in Dacorum, however it is necessary given the situation the Town Centre finds itself in. Not forgetting the impact on retail, this will be different in different places and Hemel Town Centre is different to other centres. Others are largely in Conservation Areas with listed buildings and constraints which would not be possible to undertake this type of project. Consideration of bringing forward an independent Chair on this project.

Claire Hamilton – Creating the right environment for investment. We will foster an environment of excitement in this project and trust in the Council as a good partner, good to do business with and a good curator of the Town Centre. If we can get these conditions right, then it will install confidence and therefore investment will come.

James Doe – other centres are not being forgotten just need a different approach as different constraints to consider.

CA/28/21 BERKHAMSTED SPORTS CENTRE

Noted;

1. The feasibility work for the project and the options for facility mix as set out in Section 5 to allow the next stages of the project to be developed and considered in more detail during the next project stage.
2. (a) the consultation undertaken with stakeholders and the further consultations required, including public consultation, as set out in Section 4. (b) the indicative project timeline at Section 7.
3. The potential forecast project costs for each option (detailed in Part II Appendix) and agree to use £420,000 of the approved project budget to proceed with the next project stage (RIBA Stage 2 – Concept Design).

Agreed;

4. To award the multi-disciplinary consultant project team contract to Faithful+Gould (via the CCS Project Management & Full Design Team Services Framework (RM3741)) with contractual break clauses at the end of each RIBA stage.
5. Endorsed the proposal to provide a further update to Cabinet at the end of RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design), at which point a more detailed level of understanding of the site will have been achieved and a design, cost and business plan developed accordingly.

Advice:

Mark Brookes – As report notes, now concluded stage 1 of the project, extensive early consultation and strong support shown for the project and given valuable insight. Feasibility studies indicate that the site is suitable for development and can meet needs.

The appointment of Faithful and Gould as leading consultants, they stood out as having collective experience on similar projects and creativity.

Detailed design and costs will be reported back to OSC and Cabinet. The report should set out the information but happy to take questions.

Cllr Ron Tindall – In the report paragraph 4.6, it states that the intention is to have wider public consultation. Will they be brought to H&C OSC and F&R OSC before going to wider consultation?

Mark Brookes – noted the comments and will try to build that into the programme.

The member of the public was excluded from this part of the meeting in order to discuss the Part II items.

James Deane – requested a move into Part II to discuss finances.

Cllr Andrew Williams agreed to move to Part II to discuss and then back to Part I for the recommendations.

Cllr Margaret Griffiths – We have had consultation with residents and we have listened to the residents.

Recommendations 1-5 were Agreed.

CA/29/21 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The member of the public was excluded from this part of the meeting in order to discuss the following items:

Appendix – Berkhamsted Leisure Centre Development – Part II item

Recommendations were Agreed.

CA/30/21 HIGHBARNES

This part II item was discussed and the recommendations were Agreed.

The Meeting ended at 7.55 pm