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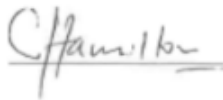
SUMMONS

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Wednesday 23 February 2022

Council Chamber, The Forum

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the Dacorum Borough Council in the County of Hertfordshire to be held in the Council Chamber, The Forum on Wednesday 23 February 2022 at 7.30 pm to transact the business set out below.



**CLAIRE HAMILTON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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

AGENDA

1. MINUTES (Pages 4 - 17)

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 Anderson	Planning and Infrastructure
Councillor Elliot	Finance and Resources
Councillor Griffiths	Housing
Councillor Williams	Corporate and Contracted Services
Councillor Barrett	Environmental Services
Councillor Banks	Community and Regulatory Services

5. MOTIONS (Page 18)

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 19 - 27)

9. COUNCIL TAX DECLARATION 2022/23

Report to follow.

10. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

None.

11. AUDIT COMMITTEE REFERRAL (Pages 28 - 29)

12. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

To consider any proposals for changes to committee membership.

13. CHANGE TO COMMITTEE DATES

To consider any proposals for changes to committee dates.

14. CALL IN AND URGENCY PROCEDURE (Page 30)

Agenda Item 1

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

19 JANUARY 2022

Present -

MEMBERS:

Riddick (Mayor), Adeleke, Allen, Anderson, Banks, Barrett, Bassadone, Beauchamp, Birnie (Deputy Mayor), Chapman, Claughton, Douris, Durrant, Elliot, Freedman, Griffiths, Guest, Harden, Hearn, Johnson, Suqlain Mahmood, Sobaan Mahmood, Ransley, Rogers, Silwal, Sinha, Sutton, Symington, Taylor, Timmis, Tindall, Williams and Wyatt-Lowe (33)

OFFICERS:

The Chief Executive, Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services), Group Manager (Legal and Democratic Services), C O'Neil (Corporate Support Team Leader) and T Angel (Minutes).

The meeting began at 7.30 pm.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 17 November 2021 were agreed by the members present and then signed by the Mayor.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 By the Mayor

None.

4.2 By the Chief Executive

The Chief Executive announced that there will be three by-elections taking place on Thursday the 3rd of February 2022, for the following wards:

Borough Council - Boxmoor Ward
Borough Council - Berkhamsted West Ward
Berkhamsted Town Council - West Ward

4.3 By Group Leaders

Councillor Williams gave apologies on behalf of Councillors Bhinder, Oguchi, Peter, and Independent member Councillor Maddern.

Councillor Tindall gave apologies on behalf of Councillors Barry-Mears, England, Hobson, Hollinghurst, Link, McDowell, Pringle, Stevens, Townsend and Wilkie.

4.4 Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet

Councillor Williams, Leader of the Council

The Leader had no announcements but welcomed questions.

Questions

Councillor Symington made reference to the previous meeting of the Council where a motion was agreed that the Leader would write to the Police and Crime Commissioner (PCC), the Home Secretary, the Prime Minister and the Chief Constable in relation to violence against women and girls. She thanked the Leader for the letters he wrote and circulated and noted there had been one response from the Home Secretary's office. She asked if there had been any further replies to his letter.

The Leader advised he had only received the one response at present, although he said it was unclear whether that reply was from the Home Secretary or the Prime Minister, or whether the one response was to cover both areas.

Councillor Symington asked if the Leader would consider writing another letter asking for a response, given the recent cases against officers in Hertfordshire that would fall under crimes against women and girls.

The Leader confirmed he was happy to write another letter. He added that the PCC and Chief Constable had made some recent announcements on the subject. **Action.**

Councillor Adeleke referred to the relaxation of Covid rules. He asked what plans we had in place for staff returning to work at The Forum and how can we guarantee their safety.

The Leader replied he couldn't give a detailed answer to that question given that the announcement had only happened this afternoon. He felt we had to accept the virus would be around for some time in various forms and acknowledge that working practices had changed. There are more opportunities for remote working and it was unlikely that staff would return to work at The Forum as they did pre-pandemic for some time. He advised the Council would continue to take precautionary measures and have less people in the office to keep everyone safe.

Councillor Banks, Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services

Cllr Banks presented a report on Community and Regulatory services:

REGULATORY SERVICES

Covid-19

The Environmental Health Teams are now focusing its attentions on supporting self-isolation, workplace outbreaks and working with Community Partnerships Teams to support the vaccination programme. It goes without saying, noting the Prime Ministers announcements today, I hope, that we will all continue to play our part to drive down infection rates in order to protect each other, safe guard the NHS and avoid further infections and deaths by committing to vaccinations, respecting space, hand washing and wearing face coverings.

Public Space Protection Order and Littering Enforcement Pilot Contract

In December 394 tickets were issued (one was cancelled), 343 (87%) of these were for littering offences. The remaining 50 were for breach of the Borough wide Dog Control PSPO or the Hemel Town Centre PSPO.

Officers have been working with District Partners to ensure that all wards of the borough are visited frequently, at least monthly for areas of low littering and PSPO complaints.

COMMUNITY

As members are aware an email was sent just before Christmas as a reminder of safeguarding training they can access. Please contact the community safety and safeguarding generic mailbox if you have any concerns or questions.

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board carried out a review of the council's responsibility to safeguard residents at risk. Overall the findings are positive and show the great work across the organisation in the last year to protect our vulnerable residents. In particular they picked out the good practice throughout the pandemic to prioritise residents at greatest risk, ensure staff were supported through schemes like the mental health first aiders and delivery of Covid community grants to ensure local groups could run safely.

Finally, Mr Mayor the preparations are now underway though not quite finalised for our celebration of the Queens Platinum Jubilee. To give you all an idea

- Thursday 2nd June, 2022: Tree planting ceremony at Adeyfield Square with Civic Dignitaries, Parade of Colours through Riverside to Gadebridge. The Council is planning to host an event in Gadebridge Park with live music, interactive entertainment and the fair. There will be a Beacon Lighting Ceremony.
- Friday 3rd June, 2022: no formal events but plenty of opportunity for residents to get together in their own neighbourhoods.

- Saturday 4th June, 2022: HOTA planning street party in the Old Town. We will be setting up a big screen in Gadebridge Park to watch the entertainment at Buckingham Palace & Fair will still be in Gadebridge Park.
- Sunday 5th June, 2022: In partnership with Riverside we're organising a street party throughout the Marlowes. The Old Town Market will be on (street party themed, I believe) and this will be the national day for street parties – everyone is encouraged to host their own ones in their own neighbourhood.

We are engaging with Parish Councils and partners, looking at how the Old Town Hall can play a part, thinking of a scavenger hunt linking all the key events together, inviting schools to design artwork for marketing of course Comms will be key to promoting and issuing reminders the things like the deadlines for applications for road closures (21st April, 2021) – how exciting!

Questions

Councillor Freedman highlighted one of the negative consequences of the Enforcement action was the criminal masquerading of Enforcement Officers trying to collect on the spot fines and requesting personal information to facilitate dog theft. He asked what communication we were distributing to avoid further criminal activity.

The Portfolio Holder expressed it was such a shame that the masquerading had occurred, and so quickly after launching the pilot in November. She advised the Police were involved immediately and were working alongside our contractors to ensure this behavior isn't ongoing. Communications have publicised the Enforcement Officers uniform so the public have an idea what they should look for. All Enforcement Officers will be wearing badges and will never ask for cash on the spot.

Councillor Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Infrastructure

Cllr Anderson presented a report on Planning and Infrastructure:

Members that regularly keep an eye on planning applications and decisions will have noticed that before Christmas the Council received its first predatory application for major development in the Green Belt with 390 dwellings to be built north of Gadebridge. We also understand that we are likely to receive a second and larger application for 1400 dwellings north-east of Tring next month. The Council will consider those applications according to the proper process so I am not at liberty to express an opinion at present.

The Local Plan task and finish group will resume as soon as there is progress on the Local Plan to report on later this year. It certainly hasn't been forgotten about.

Hemel Place Strategy: Andrew Percival has been appointed as the first Chairman of the Board. Andrew comes to us having done an excellent job of the same role at Stevenage in recent times and we look forward to Hemel Hempstead gaining his experience. The next meeting is scheduled for February. We are looking at how to feed the views of Dacorum members in to the process of Hemel Place Board.

Hemel Gardens Community Project has finished the visioning workshops and is moving on to the next stage. Having completed the first stage the Director, Tom Dewey, is leaving us and will be replaced by Phillipa Zieba.

The South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan for 2038-2050. The last workshop is due to take place next week. The Regulation 18 consultation with the public will take place in spring.

Finally, this does stray slightly into Councillor Elliot's Portfolio but I need to announce that a new round of Additional Restrictions Grants (ARGs) is taking place. Unlike previous rounds we need businesses that have been hit hard such as hospitality etc. to reapply for new grants, it won't be done automatically.

Happy to take questions.

Questions

Councillor Symington understood that Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) as the lead flood authority apparently wrote to all District Councils saying they would no longer comment on planning applications with regards to flood risk. The recommendation from HCC was that all local planning authorities pay for independent consultants to review an application and she queried whether the Portfolio Holder considered this to be the direction that Dacorum should go.

The Portfolio Holder responded he would need to investigate and provide a written response to members. **Action.**

Councillor Allen said several months ago there was correspondence from Sara Whelan requesting the availability of members to attend a presentation about the Station Gateway development but the trail seems to have gone cold. He asked if members could have an update on the development.

The Portfolio Holder replied he would need to investigate and provide a written response to members. **Action.**

Councillor Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

Cllr Elliot presented a report on Finance and Resources:

Financial Services

The Finance service has been extremely busy during December on the development of the 2022/23 budget. As part of that process the service have had to respond to the Local Government Finance Settlement.

The Local Government Finance Settlement for 2022/23 announced prior to Christmas was in line with expectations with a couple of one off benefits including an enhanced New Homes Bonus Allocation and a further freezing of negative Revenue Support Grant (RSG). The Settlement unfortunately provided little indication of the medium term local

government funding levels, although the government has outlined it would like to prioritise funding toward the “levelling up” and funding for Social Care.

The finance service also works closely with the Economic Development and Revenues & Benefits services to support the payments required for Covid business support payments to businesses and test and trace support payments to residents.

Commercial Assets and Property Development

Estates Team

The Estates Team continue to work with Public Health England, the NHS, Herts County Council and other partners on the assessment and delivery of vaccine delivery sites, pop up testing/vaccination sites, and booster jab locations. The work in this area increased significantly in December as the desire for more vaccination sites and testing sites was increased.

The team successfully relocated DENS into their temporary accommodation in Dacre House over December and early January.

Commercial Property Team

Although the last quarter has seen a period when the 100% business rates relief for the retail, leisure and hospitality sector end, along with furlough, the service has managed to work very effectively with leaseholders and the financial performance of the commercial portfolio has been strong in the first 3 quarters of 2021/22 and to date the occupancy levels of the commercial portfolio remain very high.

Going forward the customer/business response to Covid Recovery will be key to income performance. The Government’s support for businesses in 20/21 and 21/22 was significant and at present support for 22/23 is unclear. The Government’s Moratorium on debt collection is due to come to an end in March 2022 and it is unknown at this point in time what impact that will have upon income and void levels.

Revenues and Benefits service

Over the festive period the government made several announcements in regards to additional Covid Support that the revenues service had to implement as soon as possible.

The first was the new Omicron Hospitality and Leisure Grant aimed to provide grants of up to £6k per property liable for business rates in the Hospitality and Leisure sectors. These sectors have been deemed hardest hit by the implementation of Plan B restrictions.

The council received final guidance on the 7th January and initiated the scheme in the week commencing 10th January. The government estimates this will provide circa £1.3m of additional business rates support to businesses but present Dacorum estimations are closer to £0.8m to support circa 200 businesses.

The revenues service have also supported the Economic development team to roll out the next phase of the Additional Restrictions Grant (ARG), with this phase focusing on supporting those businesses that won't receive the Omicron Relief grant but are involved in the hospitality and leisure supply chain sectors.

In addition to this the government have announced an additional ARG top up grant and Dacorum is due to receive £345k, the revenues service will continue to support the Economic Development Service in developing a policy for allocating these funds to local businesses impacted by Covid restrictions.

This team continues to play an important role in providing financial support to local residents and having seen numbers of test and trace support applications reduce during November these have then increased significantly to the highest levels experienced in December and January.

The Revenues service is working with the Department for Levelling up, Housing and Communities and software partners to ensure the issuing of the 2022/23 business Rates bills are on time and include the new reliefs for 2022/23.

I would like to express my gratitude to the Council Officers in my team who has shown great professionalism in dealing with residents and businesses –they are the unsung heroes of the Council.

Questions

Councillor Guest said the DBC commercial assets seemed to be doing well in comparison with private landlords. She asked what our occupancy rates were.

The Portfolio Holder recognised that commercial assets at Rossgate were close to Councillor Guest's heart being in her County Division and although there are a few vacant premises there, the Portfolio Holder reassured her that they were seeking to upgrade them and move tenants in as soon as possible. He advised that on average the occupancy rates were 95% which he felt was a fantastic result given the circumstances.

Councillor Guest queried how many void properties we had.

The Portfolio Holder advised there were 30 voids out of our 901 properties.

Councillor Beauchamp asked for more information on the Revenue Support Grants (RSG) mentioned in the Portfolio Holder's update.

The Portfolio Holder explained the RSG were Government grants given to local authorities which can be used to finance revenue expenditure on any service. The amount of RSG to be provided to authorities is established through local government finance settlements.

Councillor Beauchamp sought clarification on the concept of negative RSG.

The Portfolio Holder explained the concept of negative RSG was introduced to enable the government to reduce the level of funding paid to an authority when there was no further RSG left to reduce. The idea was that the negative RSG would net off against the

business rates funding to bring the total authority funding down to a level which in the government's opinion reflected the level of need. In this respect negative RSG was only ever a transitional tool until each authorities needs level funding was captured and baselined within the business rates future funding. The government has previously stated that RSG will cease to exist as a funding stream once a new funding model is rolled out.

Councillor Symington queried how many commercial asset tenants were taking payment holidays.

The Portfolio Holder replied he didn't have the figure to hand but believed it was approximately 20%. He said he would aim to provide an updated figure to members.
Action.

Councillor Allen understood it was the intention to install Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) in the Borough's car parks. He said given that St Johns Road car park was within 500 metres of an electrical sub-station which is one of the key criteria's and he questioned why that car park wasn't on the list to be surveyed and explored further.

Councillor Williams advised the matter fell within his remit so he would provide a response. **Action.**

Councillor Adeleke asked if there was any plan to support local businesses in 22/23 if Government support wasn't forthcoming or was limited.

The Portfolio Holder replied that business rate relief has not directly cost the Council any income as we receive a Government grant to cover this.

Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Cllr Griffiths presented a report on Housing:

TENANT & LEASEHOLDER SERVICES

- Rent Arrears at 4.07% compared with 4.4% last year. Excellent performance given previous 12 months
- Supported Housing survey conducted re: tenants experience during Covid. Positive feedback about the team and the support made available.
- Two families settled via Afghan LES resettlement programme, both doing well. In the process of matching families 3 and 4.

STRATEGIC HOUSING

- Engagement with DLUHC and HCC in relation to co-production for Rough Sleeper Initiative (RSI) 5 bid due end February 2022
- Matched 2nd Afghan LES household to 5 bedroom registered provider property. Matching for 3rd property is currently underway.
- Liaising with Tenant & Leaseholder and Development teams to finalise gearing up proposals for new build site at Consiton Road, Kings Langley.
- Commencement of Allocations policy implementation project following successful recruitment of Project Officer.

PROPERTY & PLACE

- Achieved 100% gas safety compliance in December, which is very positive, as usually a difficult month to gain access.
- Ongoing issues with increased average times to complete non-urgent repairs, which is impacting tenants.
- Osborne are working on an improvement plan to reduce any delays in completing repairs and works to voids properties and have on-boarded additional suppliers to address the issues.
- The stock condition surveys have commenced, but the access rate has been variable due to Covid, so this is being closely monitored.

HOUSING DEVELOPMENT

St Margaret's Way	Planning Approval achieved Dec 2021.
Mountbatten View (Paradise Fields)	Appointment of Principal Contractor approved. Mobilising a start on site for April / May 2022.
Coniston Road	On site progressing well. Completion due April / May 2022
Wilstone	Appointment of Principal Contractor approved. Mobilising a start on site.
Bulbourne	Approval to purchase land approved at Sept Cabinet. Tring Town Council (TCC) are not committing to agreeing to sell the site to us until a planning application is achieved. Positive meeting held with Clerk, Heads of Terms and Contract now being progressed subject to TTC approval. Project ready to submit for Planning but waiting for the sale to be agreed.
LA1	Stage 2 design progressing. Resident consultation event held and scheme will be ready to submit for planning Feb 2022.
Cherry Bounce	Stage 2 design completed.
Paradise Depot	Approval to appropriate land achieved at Sept Cabinet. Planning application submitted Dec 2021.
Garage Sites	5 No Planning applications approved at Beechfield, Sleddale, Housewood End Sempill and Dione Road. Demolition commenced. Contractor approved for the new build and in the process of going into contract.
Randall's Ride	Appointment of Principal Contractor approved at Sept Cabinet. Mobilising a start on site April / May. Site due to be demolished shortly. Homes England funding request formally submitted.
Aragon Close RSAP	Homes England funding approved. Planning approval achieved Dec 2021. Contractor instructed. Mobilising start on site Feb 2022.

Questions

Councillor Banks asked if the Portfolio Holder agreed with her that the Community Safety Team and the Homelessness Team working together have had magnificent success with the Tap & Give machines located in The Marlowes. She understood the amount donated so far was £225 and felt this was worthy support for our homeless communities.

The Portfolio Holder congratulated both teams for all the hard work that had been put in and said it gave extra safety and support to those suffering from homelessness.

Councillor Symington advised she had a question regarding the rehoming of Afghan refugees that the Portfolio Holder had referred to in her announcement. She said it was fantastic we had rehomed two families and that we had pledged to help two more families. She questioned if it was possible for Dacorum to change its rules so that we can rehome families from other Afghan Refugee schemes to enable families that are local to be housed in the other two homes we were offering.

The Portfolio Holder advised that any changes to rules would need to go through Full Council as the decision was made through a Motion of this council. She explained they needed to review the options and consideration would be given, however it was difficult to balance the needs of the Refugees with the needs of our existing residents.

The Mayor advised that the sponsored sleep out for the homeless raised £50k. He said this was an incredible achievement for a one-night event.

Councillor Williams, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Contracted Services

Councillor Williams presented a report on Corporate and Contracted Services:

The Chief Executive mentioned the by-elections in her announcements. Services were preparing for those Elections on 3rd February.

Work continues on the Berkhamsted Sports Centre Project. A public consultation will be launched in the second week of February with online presence on our website as well as two in-person sessions subject to any issues that may arise. The in-person events will be drop-in sessions in Berkhamsted and residents will have the opportunity to ask questions and raise their comments.

The latest issue with the Highbarns project is being resolved, subject to not having any unexpected issues arise this should be completed mid-February.

Questions

Councillor Symington referred to a question she asked at the previous meeting regarding artificial grass on the pitches at Berkhamsted Sports Centre. She said the minutes advised the Portfolio Holder would provide an update on the pitches the following week, so did he have an update for them two months later.

The Portfolio Holder didn't remember that being his response but to his knowledge the pitches were part of the ongoing project and consultation. They were looking at the possible relocation of the pitches but he hadn't been advised of any updates from those discussions.

Councillor Harden thanked the Portfolio Holder for the speed in which he responded to his question at the last Full Council meeting and took action regarding the exit of the Water Gardens car park and the pedestrian crossing. He noticed that a mound of soil had been left by the entrance of the car park and he asked if the Portfolio Holder would arrange for the entrance to look more attractive than it does at present.

The Portfolio Holder agreed he would look into the matter.

Councillor Barrett, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

Cllr Barrett presented a report on Environmental Services:

Environmental Projects:

- Our Christmas Tree recycling day was a big success! Over 6400 trees were collected and chipped by our teams. Seven scout groups and the local St Francis hospice were welcomed back after not being able to take part last year. We offered residents wood chippings to take away for their garden.
- We held our second prize draw for our Street Champions volunteer group, of which we now have 530 registered residents. Every volunteer who sent us a picture of their litter pick throughout the last quarter was entered into the draw. We had 9 winners, all of which won a pizza voucher generously donated by FireAway Pizza Hemel. The top two winners also won a litter picking hoop.
- Plans for the first Dacorum 'Nappy Natter' (reusable nappies) on 21 February are well under way, which will include demonstrations and available discounts. The talk will be followed by a reusable nappy swap. We have been making lots of fliers and posters ready for distribution to local baby groups and nurseries soon. Event is live on our website and EventBrite: <https://hertsreusablenappynatter.eventbrite.co.uk>
- Starting promoting our Additional Garden Waste Subscription Service for extra green bins ahead of collections re-starting end of Feb/beginning of March.
- Delivered prize to the winning school from our Monsters on a Mission classroom food caddy competition. The winning school chose to spend their £250 on gardening equipment and are starting a lunchtime gardening club to grow their own food for the school kitchen.

Trees and Woodlands:

- Sat 15th Jan – Friends of Bunkers Park (15 persons on site) planted approx. 450 trees on the site. These comprised 17 fruit trees as part of an informal orchard, with the remainder being a native hedgerow species mix to form a new copse.
- We are due to receive this Fri (21st) our delivery of 95 standard trees for planting in roadside verges and housing areas. Included within the number are 15 trees to be planted within Gadebridge Park. Planting will commence within the next four weeks.
- Whip planting (x500) occurred in Gadebridge Park last month, expanding on last years' planting of the same number.
- Whip planting (x350) occurred in Keens Field last month, replacing plants that failed to establish last year.
- Further planting will occur at Bunkers Park of more native species to expand the new copse, and further whip planting as boundary screening.

CSG:

- Recruitment drive starting.
- Staff refresher training completed, it was cancelled last year due to Covid.
- CPC training starting.
- LGV - 4 staff passed theory.
- Project work - Allotment renovations funded by s106 money from new developments has started working closely with estates department.
- Last batch of street nameplates for this financial year processed with install date of approx. end of January.

Waste Services:

- Driver situation appears to have stabilised with one more driver returning on the agency after only a week away.
- Christmas back log went well and the service is now back on the routine schedules. Now planning schedules for April 2022 and beyond. WS have expressed a wish to work the Queens Bank Holiday.
- Refresher training for CSG 95% complete. Refresher training for WS staff ongoing.
- DCPC training to be commenced. Training room now booked up until commencement of garden waste collections.

Questions

Councillor Douris asked for confirmation that the name of the new Cemetery would be Poppy Fields.

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that was correct.

5. QUESTIONS

There were no questions.

6. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

There was no business from the last Council meeting.

7. CABINET REFERRALS

Resolved:

That the following be approved:

19 October 2021

7.1 CA/076/21 River Gade Restoration and Improvements to Gadebridge Park

Decision

To approve, subject to Council, a contribution of up to a maximum of £130,000 for Environmental Amenity works as part of the project.

23 November 2021

7.2 CA/088/21 Treasury Management Outturn and Performance Indicators 2020/21

Decision

That Cabinet recommends to Council acceptance of the report on Treasury Management performance in 2020/21 and the Prudential Indicators for 2020/21.

23 November 2021

7.3 CA/089/21 Budget Monitoring Quarter 2 2021/22

Decision

1. Recommends to Council to draw down an additional £700k from the Economic Recovery Reserve to support Covid- related pressures on General Fund budgets.
2. Recommends to Council the approval of a supplementary revenue budget of £200k in the Waste Services employee's budget, funded from the Savings Efficiencies Reserve.
3. Recommends to Council approval of the revised capital programme to move £13.81m slippage identified at Quarter 2 into financial year 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix C.
4. Recommends to Council the following supplementary capital budgets:
 - o £0.135m for Town Centre Access Improvements project, funded from a capital contribution.
 - o £0.9m for Aragon Close Move-On Accommodation, 50% funded from the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (DLUHC) Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme.
 - o £0.3m to support development of Move-On Accommodation by Hightown Housing Association at Alexandra Road.

23 November 2021

7.4 CA/090/21 Berkhamsted Leisure Centre

Decision

1. That Cabinet notes the forecast project costs (detailed in Part II Cabinet Appendix) and recommends Council approves a maximum drawdown of £550,000 from the Dacorum Development Reserve to proceed with the next project stage (RIBA Stage 3 – Spatial Coordination).

2. That Cabinet notes the approvals strategy set out in Section 2 and recommends that Council approves a maximum drawdown of £425k from the Dacorum Development Reserve to proceed with RIBA Stage 4 (Technical Design).

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE REFERRALS

There were no overview and scrutiny committee referrals.

9. CHANGES TO THE COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

There were no changes to committee membership.

10. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE DATES

There were no changes to committee dates.

11. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

Resolved:

That, under s.100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A Part 1 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during the items in Part 2 of the Agenda for this meeting, because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that, if members of the public were present during those items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Council and third party companies/organisations (item 12).

Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, paragraph 3.

12. PART 2 CABINET REFERRALS

Full details can be found in the Part 2 minutes.

There being no further business to discuss, the Mayor closed the meeting.

The meeting ended at 8:25 pm.

Agenda Item 5

Motion for Council February 23 2022

5.1 Motion one

Proposed by Cllr Jane Timmis and Seconded by Ron Tindall

I move that Dacorum Borough Council strongly opposes Luton Airport's further planned expansion, from 18 million passengers per annum to 32 million passengers per annum by 2040, with the resulting negative impacts of increased noise, emissions and surface transport. This disproportionately impacts the Watling Ward villages in Dacorum, and more widely our Borough and much of Hertfordshire. Given National Climate Change goals, air travel awareness, and noise and environmental pollution levels, it cannot be justified. This cannot go unchallenged and so Dacorum Borough Council will therefore commit to oppose the expansion of the airport at every opportunity.

ITEM 8 – REFERRALS FROM CABINET

15th February 2022

Item 8a CA/07/22 SENIOR OFFICER PAY POLICY

Decision

To set the Council's pay policy for the financial year 2022/23, as required by Section 38 of the Localism Act 2011.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

- (1) That Cabinet recommends to Council that it adopts the Pay Policy for 2022/23 as set out in appendix 1 to this report.
- (2) That Cabinet recommends to Council that authority be delegated to the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Council's Monitoring Officer to approve any amendments to the Pay Policy throughout the financial year 2022/2023, which may be required as a result of legislative changes.

Corporate Objectives:

The Council's policies in respect of pay and terms and conditions support all five of the Council's strategic objectives as part of ensuring that services to the community can be delivered to the required standards and with due regard to economy, efficiency and effectiveness.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

The Senior Pay Policy is required by virtue of section 38 of the Localism Act 2011 and this Pay Policy complies with the statutory requirement and associated guidance.

Deputy S.151 Officer:

No further comments to add to this report

Advice

Cllr Williams advised this was a standard report that comes to Cabinet every year; there was requirement for Council to approve the Senior Officer Pay Policy.

Item 8b CA/10/22 CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY

Decision

1. To provide Cabinet with an update on the work undertaken in phase one of the Council's development of a Customer Strategy,
2. To request the drawdown of £150,000 from the Council's reserves to fund phase two of the Customer Strategy work,
3. To request the drawdown of £180,000 from the Council's reserves to fund a Head of Transformation post for a fixed period of 2 years.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

That Council:

1. Approves the outline plan for phase two implementation and recommends to Council the drawdown from reserves of £150,000 to complete the phase 2 work.
2. Approves the principle of a new Head of Transformation post to lead the on-going transformational change programme, including the Customer Strategy, and recommends to Council the drawdown from reserves of £180,000 to fund the post.

Corporate Objectives

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Monitoring Officer

As noted in the report, a procurement process to be conducted in accordance with the Council's procurement standing orders, must be followed when procuring consultants for the phase 2 work.

S151 Officer

These projects require one-off funding of £330k over the next 2 years to ensure these transformational projects can be delivered.

As the financial requirement is one off in nature and the project aims to deliver change improvements these funds will be drawn down from the Management of Change Reserve.

Advice

JNason introduced the report and advised this report requests that Cabinet reviews and approves the strategy that completes part of phase 1 which is appendix 1, also an outline plan for phase 2 implementation and the funds that are required to complete work and the principle that the Head of Transformation post is recruited to oversee this and other parts of the transformation programme. To summarise the work that had been undertaken to date and the next steps, the draft strategy which they seek to implement across the council. The vision was co-developed with staff and shared with members before Christmas with an activity analysis. The contact points had been mapped for customers across the organisation

and alongside technology that had been assessed. Essentially what phase 2 would do was embed that vision and strategy and work alongside them for requirements and ultimately the procurement of a customer relationship management tool to support with the front line facing services.

Cllr Griffiths said she thought this was a good strategy, which cover all the bases that they'd been looking at for quite a few years and pulling it all together. She would be relived and excited when the council get a CRM system, which they had been talking about for a very long time. She knows that they do already split out so they know how many MP enquiries they get but she requested that in future they would be able to know how many councillor enquiries they get as she thought that would be useful information to feed into the whole of this strategy, looking at complaints or compliments that they are getting. She said that would be a useful tool.

JNason said that she would include that in her piece of work, a CRM system where they can include councillor enquiries as well as MP and FOI's. The idea is that it would capture the background information for officers to respond so that they can then report on management information where it is captured.

Cllr Anderson said that he thought this was a good improvement.

Item 8c CA/11/22 TREASURY MANAGEMENT- MID YEAR REVIEW

Decision

To provide Members with mid-year information on Treasury Management performance for 2021/22.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

That Council accepts this report on mid-year treasury management performance and prudential indicators for 2021/22

Corporate Objectives

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Monitoring Officer:

No comments to add to the report.

Deputy S.151 Officer

This is a Deputy Section 151 Officer Report.

Advice

NHowcutt introduced the report and said it is the statutory report mid-year performance on the treasury performance, advising it had been through scrutiny. Performance is in line with what they had been expecting that revenue monitoring and all statutory prudential indicators had been achieved in year. In terms of their security and treasury governance, they had stuck to their principles based on security and then liquidity and finally yield. They were

seeing improvements in interest rates and some projections increase further in 22/23, overall performance of this service would improve.

Item 8d CA/12/22 BUDGET REPORT

Decision

To present to Cabinet budget proposals for recommendation to Council in relation to:

- Revenue and Capital Expenditure for 2022/23 together with the potential use of reserves
- The setting of the Council Tax for 2022/23
- The Treasury Management Strategy 2022/23
- The Capital Strategy 2022/23
- The level of fees and charges for 2022/23
- Advice to Councillors on the robustness of the Budget proposals and adequacy of balances and reserves as required by the Local Government Act 2003.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

Cabinet recommends Council to:

General Fund Revenue Estimate

- a) set a Dacorum Borough Council General Fund Council Tax requirement of £12.836m, and a provisional amount of £13.851m for the combined Borough Council and Parish Councils' requirement for 2022/23;
- b) approve a Band D Council Tax increase of £5 (2.4%) for Dacorum Borough Council;
- c) approve the base estimates for 2022/23, as shown in Appendix A1, and the indicative budget forecasts for 2022/23 – 2025/26, as shown in Appendix A2;
- d) approve the forecast balances of Revenue Reserves as shown in Appendix J, and approve section 11 of this report as the updated Reserves Strategy;
- e) approve increases in Fees and Charges for 2022/23 as set out in Appendices C3, D3, and E3;
- f) approve and adopt the Treasury Management Strategy for 2022/23, attached at Appendix K;
- g) approve and adopt the Capital Strategy for 2022/23, attached at Appendix L;

h) note that this budget paper, if approved by Council, will form part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Capital Programme

i) approve the Capital Programme for 2022/23 to 2026/27, as detailed in Appendix I;

j) approve the financing proposals in Appendix I subject to an annual review of the financing options by the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, during the preparation of the Statement of Accounts.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

k) set dwelling rents according to the new MHCLG Rent Standard, which provides for a rent increase of CPI+1% (4.1% in total). The average dwelling rents is proposed to be £111.23 in 2022/23 (based on 52 weeks);

l) approve the HRA estimate for 2022/23 as shown in Appendix F.

Employer Terms and Conditions

m) note that the hourly rate of all Council employees continues to exceed the rate proposed by the rates of the Living Wage Foundation, for 2022/23 (to be reviewed annually thereafter).

Statement by Chief Finance Officer

n) approve the statement by the Chief Finance Officer regarding the robustness of the budget estimates and level of reserves as set out in Appendix M.

In addition, Cabinet agreed the following recommendation:

Cabinet **resolved to recommend** to Council that Dacorum Borough Council is to set aside £135k towards the Wendover Canal Trust restoration project. This is made up of a £25k initial payment to the trust and £110k that will be set aside to fund the final £110k once all other funding requirements have been achieved

Corporate Objectives

All of the Council's corporate objectives are reflected in the Budget proposals.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Monitoring Officer:

Under the Council's Constitution it is the responsibility of Cabinet to draw up firm proposals for the Budget, having regard to the responses to the consultation, and to present those proposals to Full Council for approval. Once Full Council has approved the Budget it is the responsibility of Cabinet to implement it.

S.151 Officer:

Comments contained in body of report. Chief Finance Officer Statement contained in Appendix M of the report.

Advice

Cllr Williams said that this had been through scrutiny and asked if NHowcutt had anything to add.

NHowcutt agreed it had been through scrutiny and that nothing notable to add.

Cllr Williams advised that during the scrutiny committees there were proposals put forward by the Liberal Democrat group, at the time he expressed gratitude to Cllr Tindall, during that discussion he noted that he would reflect on those and make its thoughts this evening.

Two of those items were in relation to home insulation from the general fund and creating a specific reserve to support the introduction of an electric fleet. Neither of those they feel it would be necessary to create specific reserves for, they have a fleet reserve and if need be they could vire cross reserves to support that fleet reserve for the purchase of electric vehicles. He had already discussed at length with the Chief Executive about how important his view was that they move towards a different method of powering the commercial fleet vehicles, at this stage electric was being considered by the organisation.

In relation to the insulation of properties, they have had some good news this week that they have received funding from the HRA to create a project in Northend to insulate 4 blocks of flats.

Cllr Williams asked Cllr Anderson to comment on a 3rd proposal from the Liberal Democrats.

Cllr Anderson said that he wanted to propose that a Cabinet proposal goes forward to Full Council. That proposal would be that they grant the Wendover Canal trust £25000 of the £135000 towards the costs and that they hold the remaining £110000 in reserve so they can contribute to the restoration of the Canal as and when the trust achieves the funding elsewhere to complete the project.

Cllr Williams clarified that the proposal is that the £110000 should be in reserve which they could release when they can match funding.

Cllr Anderson agreed and said they could protect the taxpayer against anything going wrong at the same time demonstrating that they are doing what they can to support.

Cllr Tindall thanked Cllr Anderson on what he had proposed, in relation to the other items he would report back to his group and they will reflect on the decision of the Cabinet and they may bring forward an amendment at Full Council depending on the outcomes of their discussion.

Cllr Williams pointed out that this was a recommendation of Cabinet and not a decision and the final decision rests with Full Council. An amendment can be introduced if its felt there would be a forceful difference to the view they had expressed.

Item 8e CA/13/22 Q3 FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE

Decision

To provide details of the projected outturn for 2021/22 as at Quarter 3 for the:

- General Fund
- Housing Revenue Account

- Capital Programme

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

Cabinet considered the budget monitoring position for each of the above accounts and:

1. **Recommends to Council** approval of the revised capital programme to move £5.78m slippage identified at Quarter 3 into financial year 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix C

Corporate Objectives

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Section 151 Officer:

This is a S.151 Officer report.

Monitoring Officer:

No comments to add to the report.

Advice

NHowcutt said that in terms of their financial position they were showing a slight pressure on the general fund with £130000 pressure. In terms of numbers that was less than 1% of their net costs of service, a small issue however they hope to have resolved this between now and year end. Turning to the housing revenue account, he said the current forecast is showing deficit in year, they've had significant changes to capital charges, depreciation as well as some of the losses that the general fund had suffered such as investment income, which had resulted in a bottom line pressure.

The news story in this report was additional capital slippage both in the general fund and in the HRA. At the moment they are looking at those in detail for 22/23 in understanding not only what should be slipped but what would be achievable in 22/23. They have some big challenges in that area at the moment particularly around delays on planning proposals as well as the issues in the construction sector around resource and materials so they are trying to put realistic proposals together that will be achievable for 22/23 including that slippage.

He said that this would go to scrutiny post Cabinet which is unusual but this was because they had budget Cabinet in February.

Item 8f CA/14/22 MEMBERS CODE OF CONDUCT

Decision

To consider adoption of a new Code of Conduct for Councillors

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

That Council approves the annexed Code of Conduct for Councillors

Corporate Objectives

The promotion and maintenance of high standards of conduct by Members of the Council will assist the Council to achieve all of its corporate priorities.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Monitoring Officer comments

This is a report prepared by the Assistant Director, Corporate and Contracted Services in his capacity as Monitoring Officer.

S151 Officer comments

No Further comments to add to this report.

Advice

MBrookes introduced the report and said that this was a new code of conduct for councillors, which was presented for approval before being referred to Council. He was following a recommendation from the government committee on standards in public life, The Local Government Association developed a new model code of conduct that they recommended Councils consider. The aim of the code was to add a level of consistency and national standard expected of local councillors.

The Standards committee has considered the model code on two occasions and the committee had recommended adoption in part. The committee recommended retaining most of the model code in respects of expected behaviours but have recommended that the Council would retain all of the existing provisions in our code in respect of registration and declaration of interest. He referred to appendix B of the code which is with the report. The reason for retaining the existing provision was because they were familiar to members and they felt that the model code provision were unnecessarily confusing. They felt that the existing provisions work well and suggested they were retained.

MBrookes was happy to take any questions.

Cllr Williams said that having an updated code of conduct was a good thing, if it lifts out the LGA rules.

Cllr Griffiths presumed that them leaving in our piece of the Code of Conduct it does not detract from what the LGA's model code of conduct was.

MBrookes said he does not believe so; the behaviours in the model code will be pretty much presented in the LGA code. He was happy that that was satisfactory, he felt it made sense to retain existing provisions in relation to declarations as members are used to them so it made sense to have a hybrid version.

Item 8g CA/15/22 COMMITTEE TIMETABLE

Decision

To seek approval of the Meeting Timetable for 2022/23

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

That Council approves the Meeting Timetable for 2022/23 as set out in Appendix A to this report.

Corporate Objectives

The various meetings of the Council, Cabinet and Committees support the achievement of the Council's Corporate Objectives.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

Further to Schedule 12 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council is required to determine the date and time of any meetings of its Committees, Sub-Committees and Panels.

Deputy S.151 Officer:

No further comments

Advice

No Further comments

Agenda Item 11

ITEM 11 – REFERRAL FROM AUDIT COMMITTEE

9th February 2022

Item 7 Re-Procurement of the External Audit Function 2023-28

Decision

To recommend to Council that Dacorum opt into the national auditor arrangement scheme, overseen by the Public Sector Audit Appointments (PSAA), for procurement of external Audit appointments for financial years 2023/24 to 2027/28.

Corporate Objectives:

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery.

Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

Monitoring Officer:

Section 7 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014 requires a relevant Council to appoint a local auditor to audit its accounts for a financial year not later than 31 December in the preceding year. Section 8 governs the procedure for appointment including that the Council must consult and take account of the advice of its auditor panel on the selection and appointment of a local auditor.

Section 8 provides that where a relevant Council is a local Council operating executive arrangements, the function of appointing a local auditor to audit its accounts is not the responsibility of an executive of the Council under those arrangements;

Section 12 makes provision for the failure to appoint a local auditor: the Council must immediately inform the Secretary of State, who may direct the Council to appoint the auditor named in the direction or appoint a local auditor on behalf of the Council.

Section 17 gives the Secretary of State the power to make regulations in relation to an 'appointing person' specified by the Secretary of State. This power has been exercised in the Local Audit (Appointing Person) Regulations 2015 (SI 192) and this gives the Secretary of State the ability to enable a Sector Led Body to become the appointing person. In July 2016 the Secretary of State specified PSAA as the appointing person.

Deputy S.151 Officer:

This report is a S151 Officer Report and comments are included in the body of the report.

Advice

Cllr Birnie queried, why do we need to commit to 5 years?

NHowcutt confirmed, but explained that is the core audit fee, what has happened in recent years is that they have started adding additional fees, which has been the case in Herts Authorities. PSAA has driven fees down to a level where external audit companies are

unable to deliver on time as they are unable to get the resources and provide them within timeframe. Driven price down to a point it is unsustainable and undeliverable.

The report therefore sets out that we do not expect the PSAA procurement to come out lower than the current cost of audit, expect them to probably increase and the reason for the 5 year procurement is partly because external audit firms want an extended period of time on commitment to make it sustainable for the training and recruitment on ongoing basis as not enough auditors in sector to deliver. If we go out for shorter time they will not be willing to make the commitment so won't get people bidding. PSAA need to make this attractive to bidders. Going with PSAA gives more comfort than going with a very risky and expensive procurement exercise ourselves.

Cllr Birne queried, have we been using the PSAA over last few years?

NHowcutt confirmed this is a re opt in to an approach we have used before, not a change in approach. PSAA is the government assigned body for doing this, government fund Local Authorities for doing this as they are aware in increase in audit fees. If PSAA go out to procure and the fees go up considerably it is likely that government will be expected to pick up those fees.

NHowcutt added that if we chose not to opt in but are unable to procure our own external audit then the PSAA will allocate us an auditor as they are the government appointment body, so it makes more sense to be in from the beginning and driving that process.

FJump confirmed the main option open to us is to procure these services through PSAA, there isn't really another sensible option open to us and it is the one being taken by most local authorities.

Agreed to recommend that Council agree for Dacorum to opt into the national auditor arrangement scheme asset out in the recommendations of this report to Audit Committee.

Agenda Item 14

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/001/22 – 18 JANUARY 2022

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

URGENT Additional Resilience Grant (ARG) Policy update

Background to report: Dacorum Borough Council has received circa £4m in ARG funding to support local businesses to date circa £3m of these funds have been allocated.

In addition the Council has recently received an additional £345k of ARG for distribution.

This seeks approval for the award of unspent Additional Recovery Grant funds to support businesses in the wake of the introduction of Plan B restrictions and the impact of Omicron.

Decision made and reasons:

The decision to Invest the remaining ARG grant to support the leisure, hospitality and travel businesses which have been worst affected by Plan B restrictions

The aim is to use the residual ARG to support businesses impacted by the emergence of the Omicron variant and the introduction of Plan B restrictions. The government has provided additional business rates relief in the form of the Omicron Hospitality and Leisure relief. The use of the residual £1m of ARG is to support businesses in these sectors that will not be eligible for this relief but are equally impacted by the new restrictions.

After analysing the business data we have collated throughout the Covid period we estimate there are circa 450 eligible businesses that could apply for these grants.

The value of the grant is expected to be between £2 - £3k per business as it is dependent on the number of applications as the grant will be equally apportioned across all successful applicants.

Allocation of ARG has been the subject of three earlier PH Decisions and these are listed below and can be accessed via ModernGov.

Portfolio Holder Decisions:

PH-025-20 Dated 7 December 2020

PH-013-21 Dated 25 May 2021

PH-017-21 Dated 1 November 2021