

# Public Document Pack



## **SUMMONS**

### **MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**Wednesday 19 April 2023**

**Council Chamber, The Forum**

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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 19 April 2023 at 7.30 pm to transact the business set out below.

A handwritten signature in blue ink that reads 'Claire Hamilton'.

**CLAIRE HAMILTON  
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

**TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**

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

# AGENDA

**1. MINUTES** (Pages 4 - 26)

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 (Legal and Democratic 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 Barrett	Neighbourhood Services
Councillor Banks	Communities
Councillor Anderson	Place
Councillor Elliot	Corporate Services
Councillor Griffiths	Housing Services
Councillor Williams	Commercial Strategy and Delivery

**5. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING** (Pages 27 - 32)

To consider any business referred from the previous meeting

**6. CABINET REFERRALS** (Pages 33 - 38)

To consider the following referrals from Cabinet:

6.1 CA/33/23 Employee Code of Conduct

6.2 CA/34/23 Constitutional update – Scheme of Delegation and Financial Regulations

6.3 CA/35/23 Housing Revenue Account - Business Plan Update 2023

6.4 CA/36/23 Paradise Design Code – Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

6.5 CA/37/23 Senior Officer Pay Policy

**7. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS**

There are no referrals from Overview & Scrutiny

**8. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

To consider any proposals for changes to committee membership

**9. CHANGE TO COMMITTEE DATES**

To consider any proposals for changes to committee dates

# Agenda Item 1

**DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**22 FEBRUARY 2023**

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Present -

MEMBERS:

Birnie (Mayor), Adeleke, Anderson, Arslan, Banks, Barrett, Barry-Mears, Bassadone Bhinder Beauchamp, Chapman, Cloughton, Dhyani, Douris, Durrant, Elliot, England, Foster, Freedman, Griffiths, Guest, Harden, Hearn, Hobson, Hollinghurst, Imarni, Johnson, Link, Maddern, Sobaan Mahmood, Suqlain Mahmood, Peter, Pringle, Ransley, Riddick, Rogers, Silwal, Sinha, Stevens, Sutton, Symington, Taylor, Tindall, Timmis, Townsend, Williams, Wilkie

OFFICERS:

C Hamilton (Chief Executive), M Brookes (Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services)  
C O'Neil (Corporate & Democratic Team Leader), L Fowell (Acting Corporate & Democratic Support Lead Officer) and J Gowlett (Desktop & AV Support Analyst)

The meeting began at 7.30pm

## **1. Minutes**

The minutes of the previous meeting, 18<sup>TH</sup> January , were accepted as a true record.

## **2. Declarations of Interest**

There were no declarations of interest from members.

## **3. Public Participation**

There were no members of the public present.

## **4. Announcements**

Apologies were noted on behalf of Cllrs Wyatt-Lowe, Oguchi, Allen, McDowell.

## **Portfolio Holders Updates**

### **Cllr Williams – Leader of the Council**

Cllr Williams noted that he was asked to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner and Secretary of State for Energy Security. A reply is still awaited and these will be circulated once received.

## **Cllr Banks – Portfolio Holder Communities**

Cllr Banks advised that the Air Quality Action Plan has been updated and the revocation of the air quality management area at North Church has been approved by Cabinet. It was also confirmed that capital funding has been secured to replace and relocate the real-time air quality analyser. Cllr Banks noted that the Food Service Recovery Plan has been approved. Two unrelated fly-tipping offences have been prosecuted, with both convicted after pleading guilty to the unauthorised depositing of controlled waste in rural locations across the borough, and were collectively ordered to pay fines of £4,630, costs of £3,461 and a victim surcharge of £533. It is hoped that the press release will help deter those who seek to fly tip in the district.

Cllr Banks noted the nomination for Keep Britain Tidy Excellence in Environmental Enforcement Award, and advised that whilst Ben Stephens had narrowly missed out on the main award, the Council congratulated BStephens, the team and Dacorum for its achievements.

Cllr Banks commented on the Golden PawPrint Award that was awarded to DBC for its excellent service provided around stray dogs. It was noted that the Council has responsibilities for the Animal Welfare Act and any concerns should be reported through the Animal Welfare inbox.

Cllr Banks confirmed that the website is being regularly updated with cost of living advice and that Community Action Decorum are running a series of community engagement events in the coming weeks.

Cllr Banks advised that the next round of community grants will be running in April and additional points are being awarded for those looking at cost of living support and the King's Coronation.

On community safety, Cllr Banks noted that all members present have been given hard copies of 'If You See It, Say It', and that electronic copies are also available.

Cllr England asked what the Portfolio Holder is doing regarding the discovery of poor air quality at the junction of Marlowes and Queensway, which has been found to be above the legal limit in 2021 and is now as bad as Lawn Lane and London Road, Apsley.

Cllr Banks reminded members and residents that there are currently only three areas that are above Defra guidelines and that they are working closely with stakeholders and partners, including HCC, to ensure that remedial actions are being taken to bring levels under control.

Cllr England noted that the ASR for 2021 showed readings taken in Marlowes and Queensway were as bad as Lawn Lane and London Road, Apsley, and asked what action the Portfolio Holder had taken when notified of the breach on 21st December 2022 and why she had not asked for it to be reported to SPAE.

Cllr Banks advised that the borough monitors air quality and that partners and stakeholders are alerted, such as HCC, to issues that are being faced. Cllr Banks stated that she was not aware of the information that Cllr England had raised and agreed to confer with officers before responding.

Cllr Pringle commented on the increased dog attacks, particularly in North Church, and what action can be taken to protect dogs and the public. It was noted that people are reporting an increase in dog on dog attacks in and around North Church, and Cllr Pringle stated that her own dog was nearly killed after being attacked by a dog. The impact of this on vulnerable members of society was noted and Cllr Pringle noted that dog on dog attacks can't be reported to the police under the Dangerous Dog Act and that wardens have stated that they have difficulty in gathering evidence. Cllr Pringle asked if a full review of what powers

dog wardens have should be undertaken and provide proper training to ensure they can undertake further action. Cllr Pringle noted that attacks are taking place due to irresponsible owners and that it is only a matter of time before a child is attacked.

Cllr Banks agreed with the comments made and referred to Box Moor Trust's promotion of keeping dogs on leads and away from cattle. Cllr Banks noted that DBC was awarded the Golden PawPrint for its commitment to looking after strays and that the Public Space Protection Order requires that owners must demonstrate that they have a lead and put the dog on the lead should there be an issue. It was noted that the police are limited in what actions they can take and Cllr Banks asked for evidence of any incidents to be sent to the Animal Welfare inbox.

Cllr Pringle commented on areas where similar offences have taken place and suggested that these cases should be investigated as such to check if they are linked.

Cllr Banks stated that incidents need to be reported to allow for any patterns to be identified.

Cllr Guest asked what the definition is of controlled waste.

Cllr Banks explained that controlled waste is items that should be properly disposed of, such as building materials and hazardous items.

Cllr Guest asked if the prosecution of individuals fly-tipping controlled waste is a good deterrent to prevent such incidents happening in future.

Cllr Banks advised that this is why she is keen for successful prosecutions to be advertised locally and in surrounding districts to highlight how unacceptable the behaviour is.

Cllr Bhinder requested information on DBC arrangements with regards to the King's Coronation.

Cllr Banks confirmed that the main events will take place in Gadebridge on 6th and 7th May 2023. A large screen in Gadebridge Park will broadcast the coronation on 6th May and there will be additional family entertainment. On 7th May there will be stalls in Gadebridge Park and on the Old Town High Street with a live screening of the coronation concert from Windsor.

The Mayor queried if there are plans to advertise coronation events more widely.

Cllr Banks confirmed that events will be advertised across social media and other communication channels.

Cllr Maddern noted the antisocial behaviour in Bunkers Park and asked what action can be taken.

Cllr Banks acknowledged the antisocial behaviour reports associated with Bunkers Park and confirmed that she would report back on this separately.

**ACTION: Cllr Banks to report back to Cllr Maddern on antisocial behaviour in Bunkers Park.**

#### **Cllr Anderson – Portfolio Holder Place**

Cllr Anderson reported on the housing moratorium, confirming that DBC is continuing to work through the backlog of residential applications, and once developers have agreed the financial contributions involved, councillors have collected £73,000 for council-owned SANG.

On Marshcroft Farm, Tring, Cllr Anderson noted the appeal against the refusal of 1,400 homes starts at 10am on 7th March 2023 and is due to end on 12th April 2023. The outcome will have a significant impact on Dacorum and Cllr Anderson reassured members that the Council has put in considerable effort in contesting the appeal.

Cllr Anderson noted the Community Infrastructure Levy ("CIL"), advising that last week's Cabinet agreed to release a small proportion of the Council's core CIL funding so it can be spent on local infrastructure improvement projects. Cabinet considered recommendations from the Infrastructure Advisory Group on the bids for this funding and Cllr Anderson advised that the process would be discussed as part of the agenda.

Cllr Anderson advised that the Council has been notified that London Luton Airport Ltd is due to submit a development consent order for the expansion of the airport later this month. Officers are working with other host authorities to coordinate objections during the determination process.

Cllr Anderson stated that the Economic Recovery Plan is continuing. Cllr Anderson noted that it has been confirmed by the government that the Council is receiving £1.76m over 3 years from the UK Shared Prosperity Fund, and the Council is working with partners, including the voluntary sector, on the spending plan. Following the news regarding Amazon, it was noted that work continues with partners to address this.

On the Place Strategy, Cllr Anderson confirmed that the Council and its partner are continuing to analyse results from the Hemel Place Survey and the different narratives for Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Town for the various stages for development.

For the Hemel Hempstead Old Town Strategy, Cllr Anderson confirmed that phase 2 of improvements is continuing and arrangements are being put in place for the Coronation as well as for Armed Forces Day on 24th June.

Cllr Wilkie asked the Portfolio Holder if he agrees that the DBC's justification to build on green belt land for the local plan will now be used as evidence against them in the appeal for Marshcroft development.

Cllr Anderson stated that he did not agree as Regulation 18 consultations are not set in stone and the period will be used to demonstrate what the targeted house building will do to the local area and gather evidence to contest the plan. It has been made clear another Regulation 18 will be undertaken and government guidance will be used to reign back on green belt development.

The Mayor clarified that it is not the policy of the Council to approve building on green belt land at this stage. Cllr Anderson stated that it is the Council's policy to minimise the amount of green belt development as much as possible.

Cllr Wilkie asked if the King's Council for Marshcroft have 22 witnesses and are using quotes from the local plan to build on green belt land.

The Mayor noted that the local plan is still in draft.

Cllr Anderson acknowledged the comment and referred to his previous response.

Cllr Pringle asked why the Portfolio Holder and majority party unanimously refuse to rewrite and reconsult when they had the opportunity to do so following the proposed motion of February 2021.

Cllr Anderson asked for clarification on the question.

Cllr Pringle asked the Portfolio Holder why he and the majority party had voted down a motion to do what they are now committed to do, namely to rewrite and reconsult on the local plan, when such a motion was put to the Council in February 2021.

Cllr Anderson stated that he did not accept the interpretation of the debate.

Cllr Pringle asked the Portfolio Holder to review the minutes of February 2021 and to report back on this at the next full Council.

Cllr Anderson confirmed that he would re-read the minutes and stated that it would be beneficial to establish what the debate was about as the administration has not refused to support anything that would materially reduce the amount of green belt development.

Cllr Symington commented on the Place Strategy, noting that it is excellent that Dacorum has funded some consultancy to bring forward these strategies, and asked what role the strategies will play in the future development of Dacorum.

Cllr Anderson noted his support of the place strategies as they allow communities to consider their areas and what improvements can be made. Cllr Anderson stated that representatives in Tring are looking to take advantage of the strategy and advised that they allow people to show leadership in getting improvements for their communities.

Cllr Symington asked if the Portfolio Holder is prepared to commit funds to allow individual communities to develop these strategies.

Cllr Anderson stated that they will first need to establish where strategies are going though this will be considered in future.

Cllr Stevens commented on the consultation regarding the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill and asked if the Council has made a response to it.

Cllr Anderson confirmed that an update on this will be sent to all members.

Cllr Hollinghurst noted the draft local plan and asked the Portfolio Holder why it was discovered they had not adequately addressed the place strategies for Hemel Hempstead and Tring, amongst other places, several years ago.

Cllr Anderson stated that he did not accept there was an omission and commented on the criticism made by the opposition when the Chilterns beechwood issue arose, though it was only by following Regulation 18 that they were able to commission the report that provided the issue and how to resolve it.

Cllr Hollinghurst thanked the member for the answer and stated that he had not mentioned the Chiltern Beechwood.

#### **Cllr Elliot – Portfolio Holder Corporate Services**

Cllr Elliot commented that the finance service has continued on the 2023-24 budget and council tax declaration. Formal approval of the budget and proposed council tax levels will be presented to Council



later in the evening, and is the culmination of several months of hard work by the Finance team in conjunction with the budget holders to ensure strategic and operational requirements are financially supported. Draft budget proposals were presented to Joint Overview Scrutiny in February. The finance service has also been working closely with commercial project leads and external commercial experts to develop the final business cases to shape the future commercial portfolio.

Cllr Elliot noted that the Revenue and Benefits team continues to work effectively in costing out the 2023-24 annual council tax and business rates bill. Following the production of the government's 2023-24 business rates revaluation and the schedule of business rates relief, the process has been more complex, though the service will continue to achieve the standards timetabled. The Council is not responsible for setting business rate relief, the relief has been welcomed in how it is helping support the local economy of Dacorum.

Cllr Elliot noted that the Benefits team has been carrying out the annual uprating of benefit awards and working closely with housing colleagues to ensure new rates are included with information regarding rents from April. The legal team continues to support the core Council service delivery and key corporate strategies to support legislative frameworks in place and is assessing options for shared services with neighbouring Hertfordshire authorities.

Cllr Elliot advised that election preparations are underway with all polling stations booked and over 350 roles being filled. Awareness for photo ID in polling stations has begun and the online voter certificate application website went live on 16th January 2023 for those who do not have ID. The notice for election will be published on 21st March with poll cards distributed on 22nd March. Due to additional information to explain voter ID requirements, poll cards will be A4 and in an envelope when delivered.

Cllr Elliot advised that the People and Transformation team is making good progress with successful appointments with 2 key roles. The HR team have been supporting key senior appointments across the Council, and the recent recruitment success will be enhanced by the new Market Forces Policy, which was recently approved. New KPIs have been approved and form a key element of the new performance management framework to ensure that DBC is an evidence-driven Council. The new complaints policy has also gone live and is already having a positive impact.

Cllr Elliot noted that the Communications team have been busy supporting major pieces of work, including the Garden Waste Programme, and planning for the King's Coronation.

Cllr Tindall commented on the polling cards being delivered in envelopes due to voter ID information and suggested that any messages inside may not be read until too late, which may be an issue for younger voters who may not have a driver's licence or passport. Cllr Tindall asked if messaging will be put on the outside of the envelope to note that voter ID will be required.

Cllr Elliot suggested that voter ID enhances democracy and referred to regular communication regarding voter ID. Cllr Elliot stated that he has found most people are aware of voter ID whilst out canvassing and suggested that young people should be able to submit for voter ID easily. Cllr Elliot suggested that the size of the envelope should alert residents to the fact that it is different this time.

Cllr Tindall suggested that Cllr Elliot be less complacent, noting that it will be staff who are manning the polling stations that will suffer the most, and asked again that they consider marking the outside of the envelope regarding the need for voter ID.

Cllr Elliot agreed to consider this further.

Cllr Ransley noted that not all residents have access to a computer and asked what arrangements are made for those who do not have voter ID.

Cllr Elliot commented that most communities have a community centre and those without voter ID, a phone or Internet access can go to the community centre to contact the Council.

Cllr England asked if the withdrawal of the £230,000 annual AFM money for waste services for recycling could have been avoided if the Portfolio Holder had made a stronger case to HCC.

Cllr Elliot advised that this was a HCC policy.

Cllr England stated that he was aware of the policy and was present when they were told that none of the local authorities had made their argument. Cllr England asked if the Portfolio Holder has made any arguments to HCC on behalf of DBC as to what innovations the AFM money could have been spent on.

Cllr Elliot confirmed that this was budgeted for as it was anticipated that this money would be withdrawn.

Cllr Barry-Mears asked if the Council can look to expand what is accepted as voter ID, particularly for younger residents.

Cllr Elliot suggested that residents contact the Council and noted that younger residents can apply for free voter ID online.

Cllr Pringle asked the Portfolio Holder how entitled and out of touch he appears in failing to recognise the isolation in which some families live where they limit the amount of data used on mobile phones. Cllr Pringle noted those in marginalised communities who need to vote to ensure that their voice is heard and that they should not make generalisations about young people.

Cllr Elliot noted that there are community centres and libraries that people can access to get voter ID via the Internet for free.

Cllr Pringle suggested that the Portfolio Holder would not take proactive steps to inform marginalised young people of their right to exercise their franchise and asked why this is.

Cllr Elliot took issue at the member accusing him of not caring for the more vulnerable in society and suggested that the Council has taken all the action it deems necessary in making Internet access available to the wider public.

Cllr Harden asked the Portfolio Holder to confirm whose policy it is for voter ID as it appeared that the opposition were stating that the Portfolio Holder had created it. Cllr Harden suggested that the younger generation are keen to get voter ID.

Cllr Elliot agreed that voter ID is a central government initiative that he fully supports and that it helps ensure democracy is transparent.

The Mayor informed Cllr Hollinghurst that if he continued to intervene then he would be removed.

**Cllr Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing**

Cllr Griffiths wished a happy Founders' Day to all.

Cllr Griffiths noted that the Housing Transformation Improvement Programme ("HTIP") was relaunched via webinar and that resources are being increased to respond to reports of damp and mould, and is increasing resources to improve aids and adaptations delivered. Work has started on the Asset Management strategy, Energy and Environmental Sustainability strategy for social housing, and the Greener Herts Consortium bid wave two funding is expected soon.

Cllr Griffiths advised that rent arrears as a percentage of the annual debt is at 4.2% compared to 4.23% last year. Court cost arrears continue to reduce and are now at 17.6%. Service charges are sense checked against historical errors and are ready for live upload this week. There are currently 140 open cases regarding former tenant arrears, 11 on arrangement, with a total outstanding balance of around £217,000. Proactive engagement with former tenants in some circumstances has negated the need for Jacobs to open case files and interventions.

Cllr Griffiths confirmed that High Town Housing Association is working with the Community Safety Team to address ongoing concerns at Peacock Court development, where several residents have submitted urgent requests to move. A targeted plan is being developed to address the root cause. High Town Housing Association and Housing Needs are looking at reletting the top floor of Lord Alexander House following the completion of roof works.

Cllr Griffiths noted the community alarm monitoring renewal documents will be reviewed by the Commissioning Board in March and community alarm upgrades have started at Gravel Lane. Progress is being made with estate inspection checks with over 30 checks completed each week over the last two weeks and over 60 sessions have been hosted in communal lounges over the last three months. 14,005 tenant contacts were completed in the last three months with 355 referrals forwarded to other agencies. Proactive engagement with the Dacorum Outreach team has positively affected rough sleeping numbers, reducing numbers to three, compared to seven last year. Five warrants were successfully issued regarding housing standards casework.

Cllr Griffiths advised that tall buildings work began on KD Tower and an investigation is due to start, with the officer leading making a proposal for a joint approach with Building Control and the Fire Authority.

Cllr Griffiths confirmed that the 26-room HMO application has resulted in action taken against the Dacorum-based business.

Cllr Griffiths advised that construction activities continue to progress well and grant funding has been approved for High Town for 66 books. Recruitment of the investment team has been completed with a new starter joining in the coming months, and the recruitment of a new head of service has commenced.

Cllr Freedman commented on service charges, noting that in previous years he had spoken about putting a cap on annual rises and asked if this has been considered along with the effect of all service charges on tenants.

Cllr Griffiths noted that there are no new service charges and that they are ensuring charges are in line with what it costs the Council to deliver the service. Whilst a provision has been put for any new service charge being proportionate, this is not what is being referred to.

Cllr Freedman asked for clarification on proportionate and asked if the Council will be managing costs temporarily to minimise impact on tenants.

Cllr Griffiths confirmed that she would provide additional information on this outside of the meeting.

Cllr Maddern advised that she was recently contacted by a resident in Gade Tower followed by an email from the headteacher at Nash Mills School regarding concerns about the mental health and wellbeing of the families who live in Gade Tower and attend the school. Cllr Maddern explained that she visited four flats in Gade Tower and the communal areas this week and stated that describing it as being in a 'shocking state' would be an understatement. Cllr Maddern advised that she is putting together a portfolio and will be meeting there with officers tomorrow. Cllr Maddern asked if Gade Tower is the only block that requires demolition.

Cllr Griffiths confirmed that they are undertaking a stock condition survey on every property over a 5-year period, which will feed into strategic plans for any given area. Cllr Griffiths stated that it is highly likely that Gade Tower is the worst and that she was not proud of this, though there may be issues elsewhere. Cllr Griffiths confirmed they are addressing this proactively and action will be taken.

Cllr Maddern asked if the Portfolio Holder would like a copy of her report once it is complete.

Cllr Griffiths confirmed that she would and acknowledged that officers are also working on this.

Cllr England noted that SPAE was recently informed that air quality is a particular risk to those living adjacent to areas of poor air quality and asked if the Portfolio Holder agreed that the suitability of temporary accommodation in DBC housing in London Road, Apsley, a site of poor air quality, should therefore be reviewed.

Cllr Griffiths asked if the suggestion is to put people into bed and breakfast accommodation instead. Cllr Griffiths noted that housing is being monitored and confirmed that she would not leave someone homeless and have empty properties on the basis of possible air quality issues.

Cllr England confirmed that he was referring to the area covered by the Air Quality Action Plan since 2012 and noted that SPAE were recently informed of the impact for those who live next to a poor air quality area. Cllr England clarified that his suggestion was not to make people homeless and that they should look to house people somewhere safer.

Cllr Griffiths queried if they should instead use the space for permanent accommodation rather than temporary or if it should not be used for housing at all. Cllr Griffiths noted that there is a finite housing resource and that she would not leave properties empty.

Cllr Dhyani referred to the additional resources and asked how they are handling the backlog regarding damp and mould.

Cllr Griffiths noted the additional resources of around £200,000 to respond to damp and mould, both in staffing and remedial repairs. All reported incidents are investigated with actions taken.

Cllr Dhyani asked if Osborne is being used in any of the areas.

Cllr Griffiths noted that they would be used for structural issues and would therefore be using Osborne and other services.

Cllr Freedman commented on the Solar Together scheme that was launched last year and asked if there was any data on the take-up of this.

Cllr Griffiths advised that this was not part of her portfolio and advised that she applied for the scheme and is having solar panels fitted in the coming weeks.

Cllr Freedman asked that he be informed of the take-up when available to assess if it should be considered again in future.

**ACTION: Cllr Griffiths to provide further information to Cllr Freedman regarding service charges.**

### **Cllr Williams – Portfolio Holder Commercial Strategy and Delivery**

Cllr Williams referred to the query regarding solar panels and confirmed that he would provide the update when available.

Cllr Williams confirmed that they have had confirmation that the full grant application has been received for the EV charging programme and they are now in the final stages of agreeing contracts. The grant is for £415,360 and will cover 60% of costs to instal 108 EV charge points in 18 car parks across the borough, and will be part of a £2.7m investment in providing EV chargers.

Cllr Symington thanked the Portfolio Holder for the progress on EV charging and asked when the charging points will be installed and delivered.

Cllr Williams stated that 75% of the funding will come through as a first payment and the installation of chargers will be phased, with some larger charging points requiring planning permission, and one will require a new substation. There will be a report to the next Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee.

Cllr Tindall commented on the published concerns about the cost of heating swimming pools and leisure centres and asked if there was any involvement to appeal to the government to ask for any additional funding.

Cllr Williams advised that they are engaged in discussions with the operator about costs and confirmed he would look into whether any direct applications to government have been made.

Cllr Elliot asked the Portfolio Holder to pass on his thanks regarding the gym refurbishment by Everything Active, describing it as a pristine facility that has been well received by those using it.

Cllr Williams confirmed that the comments would be passed on.

Cllr Stevens queried if alternative methods to heat swimming pools have been investigated, noting that other authorities have commissioned alternative methods to help reduce costs.

Cllr Williams advised that this was looked into previously when refurbishing equipment and that there wasn't equipment robust enough to provide the levels of heating required.

Cllr Stevens suggested that this be investigated again.

Cllr Williams advised that they would not replace working equipment though it will be considered during any refurbishment in due course.

**ACTION: Cllr Williams to circulate take-up figures of solar panels when available.**

**ACTION: Cllr Williams to check if any direct applications have been made to government regarding swimming pool heating costs.**

### **Cllr Barrett – Portfolio Holder for Neighbourhood Services**

Cllr Barrett noted that contractors have commenced refurbishment at the food and garden waste base at Cupid Green and all frontline staff have received annual refresher training. Persistent organic pollutants are now being collected separately from other bulk household items. A new recycling leaflet will be distributed to residents in the coming weeks and artwork is being updated to detail recycling methods. Preparations are underway for the Great British Spring Clean and three litter picking groups have already been arranged with a further 28 volunteers litter-picking as part of Duke of Edinburgh Award activities. Design of new signs for the butterfly bank at Warners End has commenced and two school visits have been completed as well as a community talk delivered to the Wigginton WI regarding recycling.

Cllr Barrett advised that quotations have been received for a new brushwood chipper and the order is now being processed. Discussions are ongoing regarding defining future policy around trees and communal areas, and new gates have been installed along Bunkers Lane and within Bunkers Park. On Clean Safe Green, the A41 litter clearance will take place in early March and there is a recruitment drive for permanent roles and summer temporary roles. A maintenance contract has been agreed for the splash park and quotations have been received to replace the Astroturf.

Cllr Barrett noted that residents at Bennetts End have been met and it has been agreed to create a new wildflower area in early March, and a new gate has been installed. Weekly volunteer days are being held at the Water Gardens and a new apprentice has been taken on to work with the Parks team.

Cllr Freedman asked for reassurance regarding green bin collections, noting that he has signed on for collections and suggested that stickers are rarely placed towards the road. Cllr Freedman asked if officers will check bins and not reject them if they are placed the wrong way.

Cllr Barrett stated that he was confident that operatives will pay attention to which bins do and don't have stickers.

Cllr Barry-Mears noted that she has been asked by residents if there is an update on the number of people who have signed up to green bin collections.

Cllr Barrett confirmed that, to date, 15,883 residents have signed up to the green waste subscription, which is 105.82% of the projected target. This should bring in an additional income of over £700,000 to the Council in this financial year.

Cllr Barry-Mears asked if more would be spent in fuel with lorries covering areas for green bin collections.

Cllr Barrett suggested that they would only be collecting green bins for those who have signed up to the service and therefore they would be spending less.

Cllr England asked if only 650 of 1,000 litter bins have bags in them would be a good way to run a service, and asked what they are doing to respond to the levels of litter being collected by street champions to help Dacorum be tidier across all 25 wards.

Cllr Barrett stated that he did not understand the question. Cllr Barrett apologised for any offence caused.

Cllr Barrett suggested that if the question was referring to there being 1,000 street champions and only 650 having collected equipment, he noted that whilst some haven't collected equipment, they are still active as they are using their own equipment.

Cllr Maddern noted the reporting of re-wilding and referred to an email from the Parish Clerk regarding someone digging up the newly planted re-wilding to look at suitability for a new telephone mast. Cllr Maddern asked if anything could be done to prevent this.

Cllr Barrett stated that the utility services have a statutory right to put masts where they wish.

Cllr Pringle commented that she has a green bin sticker and asked what would happen when the QR code is defaced or weathered.

Cllr Barrett confirmed that stickers will be issued manually and should last the full season.

## **5. Motions**

### **5.1 Motion One**

Cllr Anderson proposed the first motion that was seconded by Cllr England. Cllr Anderson noted that he had been informed that an amendment may be proposed and advised that he would move the main motion though would not accept the amendment that he had been alerted to.

The Mayor noted that any member can propose an amendment at any point and that in the absence of any amendment being proposed then he would need to ask Cllr Anderson to expand on the motion.

Cllr Anderson presented the motion, noting that the main issue around the cost of living crisis has been the effect on retail energy prices. It was noted that those facing increases in average monthly bills of around £6,700 a month, the government grants to households has helped considerably, and Cllr Anderson referred to those who have experienced increases of £200 per month, stating that he has been contacted by residents who have faced this impact. Cllr Anderson noted the profits made by energy companies as a result of high prices and stated that they were now at a level that was no longer acceptable.

Cllr Anderson stated that it is important to note that retail energy prices are used to calculate inflation and that they therefore need to keep prices as low as possible. It was also noted that high energy prices are stifling the economy, and the impact on people and businesses was raised.

Cllr Anderson asked members to support the motion so they could lobby the government to ensure further support for residents.

The Mayor noted the motion to call on the Leader of the Council to write to the Secretary of State for Energy Security and Net Zero, Grant Shapps MP, to ask for his help.

The seconder reserved their right to speak.

Cllr Tindall presented the amendment, noting that he was in agreement with the motion, though there have been calls for action from the government for a considerable amount of time that have been resisted. Cllr Tindall noted that they have been through a winter with high prices when the windfall tax could've been brought in at an earlier date and that they therefore didn't agree with the first half of the statement congratulating the government.

Cllr Tindall asked that members support the amendment to allow for the motion to be supported.

The Mayor asked for the wording of the proposed amendment.

Cllr Tindall advised that the amendment was to remove the first two paragraphs of the motion and to insert 'Despite the government providing welcome support with energy bills during the cost of living crisis caused by Covid, international factors, including Brexit, made worse by the government's disastrous mini-budget in September 2022, energy bills have still risen by 80 to 100%. Also energy prices have fallen away dramatically and energy exploration and production profits have risen sharply. Still the government ignores requests for increased windfall taxes' as the first paragraph. Cllr Tindall stated that the rest of the motion would remain as set out by Cllr Anderson.

The Mayor noted that they would now debate the motion.

Cllr Anderson confirmed that he would not support the amendment.

Cllr England supported the amendment, noting that he wants to support the intention of the motion and ask the Secretary of State to help residents in a relevant way that is adapted to changing circumstances.

Cllr Freedman confirmed his support of the intention of the motion and stated that the current situation is clear evidence of the government's approach to the reviewing of the price cap over the last year has been flawed. Cllr Freedman noted that when energy companies came to the government asking for the cap to be reviewed, they pushed to keep the percentages of revenue splits the same rather than acknowledging with revenue doubling that the amount they needed for profit and investment should be maintained at previous levels. Cllr Freedman agreed that a review of the price cap was required but that he felt it was done in an oversimplified way that benefited larger energy companies. Cllr Freedman suggested that the process of how the price cap is reviewed is vital.

Cllr Pringle spoke in favour of the amendment, noting that businesses and residents require assistance that the motion asks for. Cllr Pringle stated that the amendment is necessary as many residents would find it insulting to congratulate a government that has brought economic chaos through the events of recent years. The mishandling of the economy was commented upon and Cllr Pringle stated that the money lost could have instead been spent on those who needed it. Cllr Pringle acknowledged the international macroeconomic instability caused by the war in Ukraine, though stated that economic instability has also been caused by labour shortages and inflation due to Brexit.

Cllr Taylor supported the amendment, stating that the opposition has had a practice over the last 40 years of privatising all utilities. Cllr Taylor commented on water companies pouring sewage into rivers, the almost collapse of the railway system and the energy market driven by the highest prices. Cllr Taylor stated that the costs of producing solar and nuclear power has not changed. Cllr Taylor noted his surprise regarding Cllr Anderson's motion and suggested that he would no longer be supporting the Party that he has been a member of. Cllr Taylor stated that the motion needs to be amended and should name the people responsible, namely the Conservative government.



Cllr Anderson noted his disagreement with the supporters of the amendment, stating that the majority of people will recognise that the government has been in a difficult situation in recent years. Cllr Anderson commented on the strain on resources caused by Covid and suggested that the government deserves credit for the furlough scheme. Cllr Anderson noted the concerns regarding how much the government could afford to support the public and that there is now an opportunity for the government to provide further support. Cllr Anderson advised that he has not had a conversion and assured members that he would not be converting from the Conservative Party. Cllr Anderson asked members to oppose the amendment.

Cllr Tindall suggested a further amendment, stating that the first two paragraphs be removed from the motion and that the remainder be left to allow the object of the motion to remain without criticising or praising the government. It was confirmed that Cllr Barry-Mears seconded the amendment.

Cllr Anderson raised a point of order and asked that only one amendment be dealt with at a time.

A vote was conducted on the amendment.

Cllr England stated that it was disappointing that an amended or counter amended motion could not be agreed. Cllr England suggested that the letter be specific and transparently candid about all obvious causes, and he stated that governments are the only organisation that can spend money when they need to. Cllr England advised that both sides need to confront and accept that not everything can be attributed their favourite factors and that he hoped the letter would be specific on what they want Grant Shapps to do, that being help for those facing economic disadvantage who are being forced to use pre-payment meters and tariff, and recognition that energy companies did not expect these profits off the back of a war.

Cllr Douris commented on the first two paragraphs of the motion, stating that it was correct that the furlough scheme had helped individuals and businesses during the Covid crisis and that the government had provided welcome support with energy bills during the cost of living crisis. Cllr Douris noted that the second paragraph was also factually correct and that the first two paragraphs form the basis for the further paragraphs and instruction within the motion. Cllr Douris confirmed that he was in support of the motion.

Cllr Maddern noted her focus on what the motion is looking to achieve and that she would therefore support the motion.

Cllr Pringle confirmed she would be publicly abstaining as she stated that they should not be forced to speak misleadingly in front of residents. Cllr Pringle noted the need to acknowledge Brexit and the mini-budget, adding that they had predicted a cost-of-living crisis in 2016 and that they could see the impact that Brexit has had on the labour market.

Cllr Williams advised that they had worded the motion carefully to recognise the support the government has given in response to Covid and the cost of living crisis, and that he didn't feel it congratulates the government. Cllr Williams stated that he does not support excessive taxes on businesses as this can drive investment into other countries, though there could be excessive profits and the government could offset some costs to the public purse by having a more robust windfall tax on energy firms. Cllr Williams advised that his letter to the Secretary of State will not mention Brexit.

Cllr Anderson noted his disagreement with the comments made by the opposition and stated that the motion had nothing to do with Brexit.

A vote was conducted on the motion. The motion was carried with 26 votes in favour, 1 against and 19 abstentions.

## 5.2 Motion Two

The motion was proposed by Cllr Wilkie and seconded by Cllr Barry-Mears.

Cllr Wilkie read out the motion regarding female firefighters and police officers suffering sexist and misogynistic treatment.

The Mayor proposed that members take a 5-minute comfort break.

Cllr Griffiths confirmed that she would be voting against the motion, stating that the Council is not responsible for the Fire Service and that it would therefore have no form of input into personnel records or staffing, and asked how staff could be instructed to act in relation to another organisation's staffing. Cllr Griffiths asked why the motion only spoke about women, stating that this could affect women, men and non-gender specific people, and stated that she could not support a discriminatory policy. Cllr Griffiths commented that public sector organisations have a number of policies and asked how often the Leader of the Opposition has been asked to contact these bodies or if the proposers of the motions have also written. Cllr Griffiths noted that this was the only motion raised by the opposition during their last Council meeting before purdah and asked if they were comfortable with how the administration has run the Council given that there is no motion on what the Council can take as direct action.

Cllr Pringle referred to the motion proposed by Cllr Anderson regarding writing to Westminster, and stated that whilst they can write individually, which many do, there is a further opportunity when writing as a collective Council regarding endemic misogyny within society. Cllr Pringle referred to Cllr Griffiths' suggestion that the motion was discriminatory and advised that this denies that misogyny exists. Cllr Pringle noted that many men are allies of women and will call out misogyny, and noted that there is also internalised misogyny and unconscious bias. Cllr Pringle congratulated Cllr Wilkie for putting the motion before the chamber, stating that they can't ignore that four women are murdered every week and that she was offended by the men she could hear muttering whilst she was talking. Cllr Pringle stated that she would not be silenced on the issue as she has seen the physical and psychological abuse inflicted upon women as well as the double standards applied to women who stand up on the issue. Cllr Pringle began to comment on another woman in the chamber wanting to deny that four women a week are being killed.

Cllr Griffiths raised a point of order, stating that she did not deny that four women a week are killed and asked that the comment be withdrawn.

Cllr Pringle apologised for misspeaking and continued that the denial is that they are immersed in misogyny.

Cllr Pringle stated that she has received misogynistic abuse whilst in the chamber, being told, 'Sit down, woman,' and members speaking over women in particular.

Cllr Beauchamp supported all actions taken against individuals engaging in sexist and misogynist behaviour though he would not be supporting the motion. Cllr Beauchamp stated that the implication that Hertfordshire firefighters and police officers are engaging in such abhorrent behaviour without any evidence of such is offensive and disingenuous to the work that they do within the borough.

Cllr Tindall raised corrections as the Chair of the Dacorum Domestic Abuse Committee and an ex-trustee of the Hertfordshire Domestic Abuse Helpline for 10 years. Cllr Tindall thanked Council staff for the booklet regarding community safety services, including how the borough supports vulnerable people who require help. Cllr Tindall noted the inclusion of the request that DBC provide clear and accessible routes for any

female firefighter or police officer to make a complaint within the motion, and that this service is part of the Council's service. Cllr Tindall noted that the Chief Fire Officer takes the reports very seriously and is actively making sure that there will be no further incidents, and this is why the motion states the support of the actions taken by the Chief Fire Officer as well as acknowledging that they currently don't know what actions the Police and Crime Commissioner is taking. Cllr Tindall confirmed his support of the motion.

Cllr Maddern clarified that she was not offended by hearing people talking whilst she was speaking earlier and that she did not see this as a misogynistic act. Cllr Maddern confirmed she would be abstaining on the motion, noting that whilst she acknowledged the sentiment behind it, this is a County Council issue. Referring to points 4 and 5 within the motion, Cllr Maddern queried how DBC could give clear or accessible routes or assist female firefighters or police officers in the complaints process given that they could go through HCC.

Cllr England asked if they should have a community voice for affected female residents or stand on the sidelines. Cllr England noted that the behaviour raised has been reported as happening against women in the Fire Service and that they could not state that this is not happening in Dacorum. Cllr England stated that the motion was raised to allow members to discuss this on behalf of residents that they represent and asked if the Council unequivocally condemns any such behaviour in Hertfordshire Fire Service and Hertfordshire Police Service and if they agreed with the actions set out within the motion.

Cllr Barry-Mears noted her shock regarding the arguments against the motion and that she was disgusted by some of the responses within the chamber. Cllr Barry-Mears commented on the severity of the situation and noted that residents are working for the services set out within the motion. Cllr Barry-Mears stated that they should stand up for those who have elected them and that she hoped there were not women who looked to some of the men present in the chamber for support.

Cllr Imarni suggested that the Council should consider their community as well as their powers, and that the motion is a key and not often discussed topic that should be taken seriously. Cllr Imarni noted her role as Chair of the Housing OSC and advised that they have recently discussed the Council's approach to domestic abuse and that members have worked closely with officers to ensure that people are kept safe. Cllr Imarni stated that she did not believe that points 4 and 5 within the motion had not been well thought out as firefighters and police officers do not work for DBC and DBC does therefore not manage their complaints procedure. Cllr Imarni addressed comments on the issue not being taken seriously and asked that the minutes from the Housing OSC held two months ago be read to show how seriously the issue was taken. Cllr Imarni stated that policies and intentions need to be written correctly to ensure that a motion can be fully implemented correctly.

Cllr Freedman commented that the Council is an authority and has a voice, and therefore statements about behaviours matter. Cllr Freedman noted his own privilege, stating that whilst he has not personally experienced misogyny, he can still use his voice against it and asked that any tools available, including the Council's voice, be used to also speak out against it. Cllr Freedman noted the high profile cases that have come to light and noted that there is also a pervading culture where these behaviours are acceptable, and any actions or statements by the Council helps push that message to these sub-cultures that this behaviour is not acceptable. Cllr Freedman acknowledged concerns regarding DBC's responsibilities and stated that DBC officers working with someone should be aware of complaints to allow them to look at how they are dealing with the individual. Cllr Freedman stated that DBC can help people know where to go to raise a complaint and ensure that it is part of the holistic view of their situation.

Cllr Wilkie commented that they had opened up dialogue and stated that female firefighters and police officers are Dacorum residents and that members must collectively act as their voice. Cllr Wilkie clarified

that the motion looks to broaden the guidance available and provide tools to those who are already experts within the community. Cllr Wilkie stated that all members had been appalled by the news reports and that she hoped they had all taken the time to view the links included within the motion. Cllr Wilkie advised that she has met with a number of retired and serving officers in recent days and stated that they are aggrieved that their reputations are sullied by the individuals, adding that although a large proportion of those who work in the services are deeply committed to serving their community, this is still a national issue. Cllr Wilkie stated it would be naïve to suggest that there is not an issue within Hertfordshire and noted that residents will come to members with issues when they have nowhere else to go. The motion was described by Cllr Wilkie as a call to arms and asked members to support the motion.

A vote was conducted on the motion. The motion fell with 13 votes in favour, 21 against and 10 abstentions.

## **6. Business from Previous Council Meeting**

No outstanding business was raised from the last meeting.

## **7. Cabinet Referrals**

Cllr Williams referred to 7.1 CA0823, Committee Timetable. This was seconded and agreed.

Cllr Williams referred to 7.2 CA0923, Treasury Management. This was seconded and agreed.

Cllr Williams referred to 7.3 CA1823, Q3 Financial Monitoring Report. This was seconded and agreed.

Cllr Williams referred to 7.4 CA2023, Budget Report. Cllr Elliot commented that when he recommended the budget last year, the country was unknowingly entering a period of significant geopolitical and economic uncertainty. A year on, the Council continues to have many challenges, though is in a much improved position with services back in full operation and the local economy able to fully trade. Economic and financial challenges previously brought about by Covid were significant, though the Council took a proactive and structured response with the creation of the Economic Recovery Reserve to support services, and secured additional funding support. This has meant that the 2023 budget shows reserves increasing and a medium-term strategy to return to pre-Covid reserve levels. DBC has played a key role in the Covid response and Cllr Elliot noted his pride in the Council, whilst continuing to provide its day-to-day services, for being a beacon of stability amidst financial uncertainty.

Looking at support for business, Cllr Elliot stated that the Council has implemented the post-Covid business rates relief schemes and business grant schemes on behalf of central government. Schemes that would ordinarily be designed over a number of months or years have instead been rolled out within weeks. During 2022-23, £7.8m has been awarded in rates relief to over 850 local businesses. Cllr Elliot noted Council staff, particularly those within the Revenue and Benefits team and Economic Development team, and their ability to stay on top of constantly evolving government guidance. This has been helped by the development of the Economic Recovery Board and bringing together of major businesses, stakeholders and the Council to drive forward key requirements to support business growth. The Council has worked closely with its commercial tenants to ensure it does all it can to support them through the pandemic, resulting in occupancy levels remaining high at around 95%. The Council will continue to work closely with public and private sector partners over the coming months to ensure as much as possible is done to help

the local economy during a challenging environment. Over the last 10 years, the Council has saved over £8m whilst also protecting and improving frontline services that are provided to residents.

Cllr Elliot advised that the budget outlines plans to achieve a further £2m through efficiencies and income generation in 2023-24. The medium-term future of local authority finance will remain uncertain until the end of the current parliament, when it is expected that the next government will undertake a local government finance review. The Council has proposed a budget with a strong focus on sustainability and continuing to deliver its corporate priorities into the medium term. Initiatives of over £900,000 have been identified to address medium-term financial strategy saving targets up to 2027. Investment continues in the borough, and despite financial challenges, the Council is in a position to propose a highly ambitious capital investment programme in excess of £330m over the next 5 years to further enhance the services provided to residents. Some areas identified for capital investment include £120m in existing housing stock, £146m in the housing new-build programme, £41m into various ventures, including in leisure services and facilities in neighbourhood areas, £4m into supporting the local community sector to develop community services, and £8.7m into the Council's vehicle fleet for greener vehicles to support the delivery of frontline services.

Looking at council tax, Cllr Elliot noted that the Council is proposing to increase council tax by 2.9% for 2023-24, or £6.27 per annum for a Band D property, equating to 12p per week. Central government is likely to consider each council's ability to raise tax when deciding how much funding to provide in future, and the government is likely to reduce future funding by the amount it expects the council to raise through increasing council tax. Cllr Elliot stated that proposing this increase means that they have done all they can to protect Dacorum's overall funding position for future years.

On housing, Cllr Elliot stated that the Council is proposing an increase in housing rents of 7%. The new government policy cap is over 4% lower than the previous CPI +1% option. Rent increases are below current inflationary levels following historic rent reductions, and the average rent for a council property next year will be £118.62 per week. Cllr Elliot stated that, despite recent enforced rent reductions and below inflation rent proposals for 2023-24, the Council has continued to make housing delivery one of its key priorities and the Council recently completed its 356th new home. The Council has a further 153 new build homes on site at present with a further 145 in pre-planning stages. The Council is also investing in the infrastructure that will enable it to deliver its housing obligations to the most vulnerable in the borough in the best way possible. The Council has been awarded several Homes England grants and has achieved match funding grants of £9m to support the delivery of 101 new homes. In 2022, the Council completed the delivery of its first 8 purpose-built accommodation units to provide additional support for the homeless or those at risk of homelessness.

Cllr Elliot commented that the Council faces significant financial challenges as it plays its role in supporting residents and businesses in a challenging economic environment, though the Council can enter the period feeling confident that it will continue to deliver for its residents. Cllr Elliot personally thanked the Finance team for their support over the last 12 months and stated that he looks forward to working with them for the next year.

Cllr Elliot recommended the 2023-24 budget to full Council. Cllr Williams seconded the budget.

Cllr Tindall noted that it had been a challenging year and commented on the challenge for local authorities as a result of the government's approach to funding. Cllr Tindall stated that, despite the urging of the Local Government Association, they had a 1-year settlement and last-minute notification of funding, which has put additional strain on staff, and stated that there should be 3- or 5-year supplements to allow local authorities to plan and organise finances to the best degree possible. Cllr Tindall paid tribute to officers for their work. Cllr Tindall confirmed that the opposition would be abstaining from producing a separate budget.

Cllr England commented on current food shortages and described this year's budget as the "BLT" budget with Brexit, Long Covid and Trussenomics, as well as government windfall going into the reserves.

Cllr Williams commented on council frustrations regarding short-term funding pots that the government comes up with and the need for a more longer-term funding mechanism. Cllr Williams commended the budget for looking to protect frontline services and acknowledged that the Opposition would refrain from producing a separate budget.

A Recorded vote was conducted on the 2023-24 budget. The budget was approved with 28 votes in favour, 0 against and 16 abstentions.

The recorded vote was as follows.

<b>Voters:</b>	<b>Result:</b>
Cllr Adeleke	for
Cllr Anderson	for
Cllr Banks	for
Cllr Barratt	for
Cllr Barry-Mears	abstain
Cllr Bassadone	for
Cllr Beauchamp	for
Cllr Bhinder	for
Cllr Birnie	abstain
Cllr Chapman	for
Cllr Claughton	abstain
Cllr Douris	for
Cllr Durrant	for
Cllr Elliot	for
Cllr England	abstain
Cllr Foster	abstain
Cllr Freedman	abstain
Cllr Griffiths	for
Cllr Guest	for
Cllr Harden	for
Cllr Hearn	for
Cllr Hobson	abstain
Cllr Hollinghurst	abstain
Cllr Imarni	for
Cllr Johnson	for
Cllr Link	abstain
Cllr Maddern	for
Cllr Peter	for
Cllr Pringle	abstain
Cllr Ransley	abstain
Cllr Riddick	for
Cllr Rogers	for

Cllr Silwal	for
Cllr Sinha	for
Cllr Stevens	abstain
Cllr Su Mahmood	for
Cllr Sutton	for
Cllr Symington	abstain
Cllr Taylor	abstain
Cllr Timmis	for
Cllr Tindall	abstain
Cllr Townsend	for
Cllr Wilkie	abstain
Cllr Williams	for

Cllr Williams referred to 7.5 CA2423, Release of Community Infrastructure Levy Core Funds, and the Cabinet decision to resolve to recommend under 1 and 2. Cllr Williams also noted that recommendation 3, shown as Cabinet agreed, should be a resolve to recommend to Council. Cllr Williams advised that the Cabinet recommendation is to support one of the recommendations from the Infrastructure Advisory Group in relation to releasing £600,000 for playground refurbishments, which will include Durrants Hill Road, Miswell Lane, Woodhall Farm, Warners End Valley Upper, Apsley Lock, Croft Meadow, Tower Hill and Flaunden. Cllr Williams also noted that Cabinet supports the principle of using CIL core funds on Breakspeare School and Long Marston Village Hall, subject to further information being provided by the project sponsors, which will return to Cabinet for a final decision once a further decision has been provided.

Cllr Tindall accepted the amended proposals, though noted that acceptance of the Cabinet referral will take decisions on CIL funds into the meeting rooms of the Council rather than brought to the Council for approval. Cllr Tindall referred to 3.2 on page 239 of the Cabinet report, regarding the Infrastructure Advisory Group making recommendations to Council on how CIL core funds are allocated and determining which CIL core funding should be prioritised. Cllr Tindall accepted that Cabinet is a key part of the process and any recommendations from the IAG should go to Cabinet, and he noted his concern that the Council is releasing its authority to the Cabinet. Cllr Tindall asked the Leader if he would be prepared to accept the deletion of 3.7e on page 240 of the Cabinet report, and asked that all individual members play a part in the distribution of funding.

Cllr Maddern commented on the playgrounds that will be receiving funding and noted that Barnacres had not been listed, which missed out on refurbishments last time.

Cllr Griffiths remarked that it was an anomaly when CIL was set up that spending decisions would come to full Council. Cllr Griffiths stated that releasing the money should come to full Council, noting that not all spending caps will come through to full Council and will instead go through the processes in place to spend this money where all members can attend all OSC and Cabinet meetings. Cllr Griffiths stated that the Leader of the Opposition is welcome to attend Cabinet and speak, noting that there is a process in place.

Cllr Anderson commented that expenditure needs to be discussed at committee level and noted that members also have the call-in process, and therefore if there is a Cabinet decision on current expenditure then five members have the opportunity to call-in any Cabinet decision. Cllr Anderson stated that they could therefore not remove 3.7e and stated that members have the opportunity to be involved in debates.

Cllr Tindall stated that his request was not an amendment and confirmed that his recommendation was to accept the referral regardless of whether 3.7e is removed.

Cllr England noted that the Portfolio Holder and Chair of the SPAE OSC had stated at Cabinet on 14th February that they would remove the role of ward councillors having oversight of decisions of the IAG. Cllr England stated that the use of £3m of CIL funding would be made before the election and that ward councillors are almost completely excluded from ratifying these decisions. Cllr England stated that Cllr Anderson would be the lead councillor on the IAG and suggested that scrutiny should be opposition-led. Cllr England asked if this is appropriate governance for local infrastructure.

The Mayor stated that it was not a question and answer session and thanked the member for their contribution.

Cllr Williams suggested that Barnacres was pencilled in for removal rather than refurbishment, though he was unsure of progress on this. Referring to Cllr England's comment, Cllr Williams stated that the remaining items would be unlikely to come before Cabinet before the election. Cllr Williams provided an overview of the approval process and stated that there is no part of the Cabinet process that members can't be involved in, and that ward members can be involved in proposals before they are taken to the IAG. Cllr Williams suggested that the referral came from Cabinet and that he was unsure if he has the authority to amend what has been put to Council by Cabinet.

A vote was conducted on the release of CIL core funds. The motion was carried with 39 votes in favour, 1 against and 3 abstentions.

Cllr Williams moved to 7.6 CA2723, Leadership Team (Tier 2) and Corporate Support Restructure. This was seconded and approved.

The Mayor confirmed that the item did not need to be moved to Part 2.

## **8. Council Tax Report**

Cllr Williams presented the report and moved the item. This was seconded and approved.

A Recorded vote was conducted on the report. The motion was carried with 41 votes in favour, 0 against and 2 abstentions.

The recorded vote was as follows.

<b>Voters:</b>	<b>Result:</b>
Cllr Adeleke	for
Cllr Anderson	for
Cllr Banks	for
Cllr Barratt	for
Cllr Barry-Mears	for
Cllr Bassadone	for
Cllr Beauchamp	for
Cllr Bhinder	for
Cllr Birnie	abstain
Cllr Chapman	for



Cllr Cloughton	for
Cllr Douris	for
Cllr Durrant	for
Cllr Elliot	for
Cllr England	for
Cllr Foster	for
Cllr Freedman	for
Cllr Griffiths	for
Cllr Harden	for
Cllr Hearn	for
Cllr Hobson	for
Cllr Hollinghurst	abstain
Cllr Imarni	for
Cllr Johnson	for
Cllr Link	for
Cllr Maddern	for
Cllr Peter	for
Cllr Pringle	for
Cllr Ransley	for
Cllr Riddick	for
Cllr Rogers	for
Cllr Silwal	for
Cllr Sinha	for
Cllr Stevens	for
Cllr Su Mahmood	for
Cllr Sutton	for
Cllr Symington	for
Cllr Taylor	for
Cllr Timmis	for
Cllr Tindall	for
Cllr Townsend	for
Cllr Wilkie	for
Cllr Williams	for

## **9 Cabinet Referrals, Overview and Scrutiny Referrals**

No referrals.

## **10. Changes to Committee**

No changes to committee membership.

## **11. Changes to Committee Dates**

No Changes to Committee dates

## **12. Call In and Urgency Procedure**

Cllr Williams noted the Business Rate Relief paper.

The Mayor closed the meeting at 10:55pm.

**FULL COUNCIL - JANUARY**

**ACTION POINTS FOR PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Action point</b>	<b>PH responsible for action</b>	<b>Response / Investigation Ongoing</b>
18 Jan	<p>Cllr Symington referred to a previously agreed motion, part of which included a letter to be written to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, and asked, in light of events in the Metropolitan Police involving an officer living in Hertfordshire, whether the leader would follow up on this letter and ask what actions are being taken to ensure the same thing can never happen in the Hertfordshire Police. Cllr Williams agreed to do so</p> <p>Cllr Williams to write to the Police and Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire regarding preventative measures taken or planned.</p>	Cllr Williams	Awaiting response.
18 Jan	<p>Cllr Tindall noted that the county is proposing a change to the arrangements for recycling across the ten districts, and wondered whether concerns regarding the impact on the borough had been brought to the attention of the portfolio holder, and if so, whether any decisions or actions had been taken. Cllr Barrett confirmed that the issue had not been brought to his attention, and so nothing had been discussed.</p> <p>-Cllr Barrett to update all councillors regarding the impact of county-proposed changes to recycling arrangements, once details are known.</p>	Cllr Barratt	Response will be sent once details are known.

18 Jan	<p>Cllr England further requested an update on how many Street Champions have registered, and how many have collected their equipment.</p> <p>Cllr Barrett to provide Street Champions update to Cllr England.</p>	Cllr Barratt	<p>Cllr Barratt sent response on 24 Jan 2023</p> <p>Response: I can advise that as of today we have 1009 registered Street Champions, of whom 639 have collected equipment.</p>
18 Jan	<p>Cllr Symington observed that cutting out question preamble leaves the portfolio holder without context, and unable to answer questions. Cllr Griffiths noted that the preamble information could have been sent beforehand. Cllr Symington confirmed that it had been submitted to the legal department, and suggested a revision to procedure as follows:</p> <p>Procedure to be revised, with question preamble sent to both the legal department and the portfolio holder prior to the meeting.</p>	Cllr Williams	Cllr Williams to review suggestion with legal.
22 Feb	Cllr Banks to report back to Cllr Maddern on antisocial behaviour in Bunkers Park.	Cllr Banks	Awaiting a response
	Cllr Banks to go back to Cllr England on the Air Quality on Queensway	Cllr Banks	<p>Cllr Banks Response: Following your question at full council regarding air quality in the Queensway area, I draw your attention to the minutes of the last SPAE OSC. At that meeting officers commented on Queensway, noting that the 2022 report focuses on 2021 data.</p> <p>I understand, Queensway was the only location showing exceedance. Currently we have 3 tubes in areas well below urban background levels being deployed around Queensway, Old Town High Street.</p>

		<p>We would normally expect 3 years of exceedance before Defra would require us to declare an Air Quality Management Area.</p> <p>I can confirm that this is being looked into further to see if we can establish why we saw this exceedance. We will continue to work closely with stakeholders and partners, including HCC, to ensure that remedial actions are taken to ensure good air quality not only in Queensway but across our towns and villages.</p> <p>We have established our areas of poorer air quality are related to traffic density. Highways, is a county council matter and as such I would ask members to join me and the members of the officer led Air Quality Steering group to lobby Hertfordshire County Council, their county councillors to ensure traffic management plans are brought forward at the earliest opportunity.</p> <p>Cllr England Response: Please don't be disingenuous; officers commented on Queensway only because I raised it as a question. This significant new exceedance, albeit an early reading, was in the ASR but excluded from the report to SPaE.</p> <p>My question to you at Full Council was: "What is the PH doing about the discovery of poor air quality at the junction of Marlowes and Queensway, found to be above the legal limit and as bad as Lawn Lane and Apsley London Road?" (NB: In the UK, the law on NO2 pollution – one of the most harmful pollutants – says annual average concentrations cannot exceed 40 micrograms per cubic metre)</p>
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		<p>Your answer is, substantively: “We would normally expect 3 years of exceedance before Defra would require us to declare an Air Quality Management Area.”</p> <p>I hope you would agree with me that harmful air quality – which is linked to premature deaths and severe ill-health, is not something to be laissez-faire about? During your time as Portfolio-holder have there been any other transient exceedances of the regulated limits?</p> <p>You have not answered my supplementary at all, which was: “What action did the Portfolio holder take when notified of the breach on 21st December, and why didn’t she ask for it to be reported to SPaE?”</p> <p>Your answer was: “I am not aware of it. I will confer with officers.”</p> <p>Please will you explain to us whether this is because you simply did not read the email sent to you on 21st December, or give the other reasoning?</p> <p>As County Councillor and SPaE Committee member I have followed-up with Ciaran Corkerry and offered to meet as soon as he is ready, in order to better lobby County Hall.</p> <p>Cllr Banks: Q - What is the PH doing about the discovery of poor air quality at the junction of Marlowes and Queensway, found to be above the legal limit and as bad as Lawn Lane and Apsley London Road?</p> <p>I will continue to work closely with stakeholders and partners, including HCC, to ensure that remedial</p>
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			<p>actions are taken.</p> <p>Q - What action did the Portfolio holder take when notified of the breach on 21st December,</p> <p>A - I can confirm that this is being looked into further to see if we can establish why we saw this exceedance.</p> <p>I will continue to work closely with stakeholders and partners, including HCC, to ensure that remedial actions are taken to ensure good air quality.</p> <p>Q - and why didn't she ask for it to be reported to SPaE?</p> <p>A – I am advised by officers, we would normally expect 3 years of exceedance to ensure it was not just an isolated reading. Knowing that the officer led Air Quality Steering Group has reconvened (officers having been diverted to manage the COVID 19 pandemic) and this matter would be reviewed by those lead officers. I did not judge this to be the right time to bring an incomplete report to SPaE. Incomplete in as much as we have not established this is an ongoing air quality issue and officers have not yet been able to establish why we have seen this exceedance.</p> <p>I have no further comment at this time but assure you and members that once I have an update – I will share it with you all</p>
22 Feb	Cllr Griffiths to provide further information to Cllr Freedman regarding service charges.	Cllr Griffiths	At the last Full Council meeting on 22nd February 2023, you asked for assurance that there was a cap on individual tenants service charge. I can confirm that

			services charges this year are capped at 7% as per Government guidance on services charges and rents.
22 Feb	Cllr Williams to circulate take-up figures of solar panels when available.	Cllr Williams	Will send when available
22 Feb	Cllr Williams to check if any direct applications have been made to government regarding swimming pool heating costs.	Cllr Williams	Awaiting response



Cabinet Referrals

Full Council 19<sup>th</sup> April 2023

## **CA/33/23 EMPLOYEE CODE OF CONDUCT**

### **Decision**

1. That Cabinet **recommends that Council** approves the Employee Code of Conduct

### **Corporate Priorities**

A clean, safe and enjoyable environment  
Building strong and vibrant communities  
Ensuring economic growth and prosperity  
Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need  
Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery  
Climate and ecological emergency

### **Statutory Officer Comments:**

#### **Monitoring Officer:**

This is a Monitoring Officer report

#### **Deputy S151 Officer:**

Maintaining an accurate and robust Code of Conduct that is enforced and adhered to supports good fiscal management. The code in particular supports the delivery of good value for money, financial probity and reduces the risk of fraudulent activity.

### **Advice**

Cllr Elliot introduced the report as published.

There were no questions.

**Recommendation agreed**

## **CA/34/23 CONSTITUTIONAL UPDATE – SCHEME OF DELEGATION AND FINANCIAL REGULATIONS**

### **Decision**

1. That Cabinet **recommends that Council** agree to the change to the Scheme of Delegation as set out in paragraph 2 of the report.
2. That Cabinet **recommends that Council** agree to the change to the Financial Regulations as set out in paragraph 3 of the report.

## **Corporate Priorities**

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## **Statutory Officer Comments:**

### **Monitoring Officer:**

The proposed changes will ensure that the Constitution remains up to date and reflects relevant statutory requirements.

### **S151 Officer:**

The proposed changes will provide increased consistency and oversight of the housing contracts overseen by the Chief Housing Officer.

## **Advice**

Cllr Elliot introduced the report as published.

Cllr Tindall asked in reference to the voter ID, he said that he was concerned about the staff with the possibility of people getting irate when challenged about ID. He asked if there was a system with assistance from the police so they could get the police to the polling station.

C Hamilton said that they were mindful of the changes and the impact that it could have on staff. They had been in contact with Jason Keane who is the borough commander. He has identified a single point of contact within his team to work with them on Election Day; he will have two roving police cars, one driving around the borough and the other to be on call for any issues. They would also be available at the start of the count to support the opening of the count. There would be a designated number for presiding officers to call if they have any issues that would go straight through to the tasking team to get support at a polling station.

Cllr Anderson asked what the plans were for member's computers after the election.

A Wilkie said that there thinking was that they had plans to issue new and better laptops, however he would come back when they have more details.

Cllr Douris asked if the level of support from the police would extend to the tellers that maybe outside the polling stations.

CHamilton said that anything that happens inside the polling station was the responsibility of the presiding officer and they have the authority to call the police if there is anything that they are concerned about. She said that anyone working at a polling station would undergo training that was longer and more detailed; it would include practical training to test out some of the potential changes in people appearance in relation to ID and what is acceptable.

Cllr Tindall asked if they were planning to give an information sheet to the tellers/party workers across the board who may be in the polling stations.

CHamilton said that this was a good suggestion and they would issue something through the agents

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AGREED**

### **CA/35/23 HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT - BUSINESS PLAN UPDATE 2023**

#### **Decision**

That Cabinet **recommends to Council** the adoption of the HRA Business Plan

#### **Corporate Priorities**

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#### **Statutory Officer Comments:**

##### **Monitoring Officer:**

The HRA business plan is not in itself a statutory requirement but will enable the Council to plan the Housing Service to ensure that relevant statutory requirements are met and appropriately funded.

##### **S151 Officer:**

The HRA business plan details the medium and long-term financial planning required to deliver the housing strategy, the nature of the required horizon scanning over the next 30 years, results in a plan that is likely to evolve over time with significant scope for policy change in that period.

As would be expected with a 30 year plan this plan contains a significant amount of assumptions in regard to; spending commitments, economic outlook, funding assumptions and government policy, hence, will be considered a live plan and reviewed as required, but annually as a minimum.

This HRA business plan, outlined in the attached document, assumes that over the next 10 years the HRA will achieve an income of circa £736m, to fund £363m of ongoing management and maintenance and £370m of capital financing, this represents a balanced financial position over that period.

As part of the ongoing planned maintenance and development of the HRA housing stock the business plan invests £369m in planned maintenance and new build over the first 10 years of the HRA business plan, utilising multiple internal and external funding streams including an additional £111m of borrowing.

The HRA 30-year business plan is financially sustainable but assumes government support going forward to support new government policies and initiatives, such as the decarbonisation agenda. This plan also outlines the need to increase borrowing to support the ambitious capital programme, this leaves little scope based on current projections for additional future borrowing to support the HRA without reviewing the existing medium-term plans.

### **Advice**

Cllr Griffiths introduced the report as published.

Cllr Douris highlighted that there were no Stat comments on this report.

MBrookes said that he would take this up.

CHamilton said there would never be a report without stat comments and that this must be an error.

MBrookes reassured the committee that there were no concerns in the stat comments that he has read.

### **RECOMMENDATIONS AGREED**

## **CA/36/23      PARADISE DESIGN CODE – SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT (SPD)**

### **Decision**

1. That Cabinet **recommends to Council** that the Paradise Design Code Supplementary Planning Document be adopted.
2. That authority to make any changes to the SPD documents, including any necessary to reflect the Cabinet or Council discussion and decision, be delegated to the Strategic Director for Place in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Place.

### **Corporate Priorities**

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### **Statutory Officer Comments:**

#### **Monitoring Officer:**

All relevant legal implications are set out in the report

#### **Deputy S151 Officer:**

There are no direct financial consequences of the adoption of these supplementary planning documents.

### **Advice**

Cllr Anderson introduced the report as published. He praised the officers for the amount of work that got the council to this point.

JDoe added that it had been a useful exercise. This had come off the back of some funding that they were able to bid, apply and were successful in obtaining from central government as part of their national model design code. This was the direction in which the government were seeking to roll design policies locally. There had been some good lessons learnt and this provides a good platform for further such initiatives in the field of urban design elsewhere in the borough for the future.

Cllr Griffiths said she remembered going out with other councillors to help feed their views into this design and it was interesting as it was so new. She appreciated a lot of work must have gone into this and thanked the officers for their work.

## **RECOMMENDATIONS AGREED**

### **CA/37/23 SENIOR OFFICER PAY POLICY**

#### **Decision**

(1) That Cabinet **recommends to Council** that it adopt the Pay Policy for 2023/24 as set out in appendix 1 to this report.

(2) That Cabinet agrees that any amendments to the Pay Policy throughout the financial year 2023/2024, which may be required as a result of legislative changes, can be approved by the Chief Executive in conjunction with the Council's Monitoring Officer

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#### **Statutory Officer Comments:**

##### **Monitoring Officer:**

No comments to add to the report

##### **S151 Officer:**

No further comments to add to this report.

#### **Advice**

Cllr Williams introduced the report as published.

There were no questions.

**RECOMMENDATIONS AGREED.**