
DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

17 JULY 2024

Present:

MEMBERS:

Councillor England (Leader) Councillors, Allen, Anderson, Banks, Barry-Mears, Birnie, Bristow, Bromham, Capozzi, Cox, Deacon, Dhyani, Douris, Elliot, Freedman, Gale, Guest, Hannell, Johnson, Link, McAreyve, Mitchell, Patterson, Pound, Pringle, Reynolds, Riddick, Santamaria, Silwal, Smith-Wright, Stevens, Stewart, Symington, Taylor, Timmis, Tindall, Walker, Weston, Wilkie, Williams and Williams

OFFICERS:

Claire Hamilton (Chief Executive), Mark Brookes (Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services), Cassy O'Neil (Democratic Services Manager), Layla Fowell (Assistant Manager Democratic Service)

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the meetings were agreed and signed by the Mayor.

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

The Mayor introduced Dr Keval Shah and invited him to read out the question as submitted;

*'My name is Dr Keval Shah, and I'm a dental surgeon residing in the Borough. I would like to begin my question by very briefly highlighting **two important facts** - The first of these is that the scientific evidence is clear that eating animals has a much higher environmental impact than eating plant foods. With respect to greenhouse gas emissions, water pollution and land use - plant-based foods are consistently more sustainable, and have a much lower carbon, energy, water, land and waste footprint.*

*The second fact is that **Dacorum council has declared an ambitious climate target of being net zero** as an organisation by 2030, and net zero as a borough by 2050. Positive steps have already been made in achieving this goal in many areas and this should be commended, but far more needs to be done.*

*Especially in light of the research carried out by the World Wildlife fund (1) that discovered that **all wildlife is projected to go extinct by 2026** if we carry on consuming the way we are (2). And if the wildlife die, so will the forests and the oceans - both of which are vital for our survival - through the provision of oxygen, the sequestration of excess carbon dioxide, the regulation of the planet's climate and maintenance of the water cycle.*

*Absent in the council's climate strategy is reference around the types of food eaten in the borough, despite the fact that changes in diets are one of the most significant ways that people can reduce their climate impact. **The 2021 National Food Strategy recommends a shift towards a plant-based diet for the health of both people and the planet.** The council has an important part to play in encouraging this shift in the borough.*

***My question, therefore, is** - in light of the climate and ecological emergencies that is threatening survival of all life on Earth, will the council commit to 100% plant-based internal catering? Other councils across the country have made similar commitments - Calderdale, Exeter, Oxfordshire. I believe that such a commitment is a logical next step following the declaration of a climate emergency, and a step that would send a powerful message to residents and businesses across the borough about the importance of a more sustainable diet. I urge the council to seriously consider leading by example and making this commitment.*

***Considering what is at stake**, this is not a big ask at all. But the very least we need to do save the world as we know it, and leave behind a planet that our succeeding generations can hopefully survive on'*

Cllr Allen, Portfolio Holder Climate and Ecological Emergency responded to Dr Shah's question and a subsequent supplementary question.

The full discussion can be viewed via the video minutes.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 There were no announcements from the Mayor.

4.2 The Chief Executive made the following announcements;

A Neighbourhood Planning Referendum in Bovingdon was held on Thursday the 13th of June 2024. I can confirm that there was a 20.4% turnout and the outcome was YES to the question: "Do you want Dacorum Borough Council to use the Neighbourhood Plan for Bovingdon to help it decide planning applications in the neighbourhood area?"

A Parliamentary election was held on Thursday the 4th of July 2024 and we administered the Hemel Hempstead Constituency. I can confirm that there was a 62.33% turnout and the candidate elected was David Taylor of the Labour party.

4.3 The Group Leaders gave the following apologies;

Cllr England gave apologies on behalf of Cllrs C Hobson, S Hobson & C Link

Cllr Mitchell gave apologies on behalf of Cllr Pesch

CHAIRMAN

Cllr Williams gave apologies on behalf of Cllrs Bhinder, Adeleke & Durrant

5 CABINET MEMBER UPDATES

- 5.1 Cllr England – Leader of the Council gave a verbal update which can be viewed via the video minutes.

Cllr Guest addressed the Leader and commented that around beginning of this year we were told we cannot have portrait of HM King for chamber yet because Royal Images were diverted to other enquiries on HM health. Cllr Guest asked; how does that square with an email received a couple of months ago from Premier, a Christian Media organisation that stated that portraits of the king would be available to churches after they had been available to public bodies since February.

Cllr Guest advised she has seen 2 portraits of the king at County Hall and suggested if County Council has a spare and she is able to acquire it, she would hope the Leader would be able to hang this in the chamber.

Action: Cllr England to seek an updated position and circulate a written response.

- 5.2 Cllr Allen, Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Emergency referred to his written update, as circulated with the agenda, and invited any questions. There were none.

- 5.3 Cllr Wilkie, Portfolio Holder Place referred to her written update as published as part of the agenda and invited questions.

Cllr Guest referred to the summer holiday schemes that will be held at the Adeyfield and Bennetts End adventure playgrounds and asked why are such schemes not being run at the Chaulden playground and also the Woodhall Farm & Grovehill playground.

Action: Cllr Wilkie confirmed that she would circulate a written Response

Cllr Timmis referred to pg. 12 of the PH report and the statement that the Markyate conservation area character appraisal is to be adopted by Cabinet and asked why, as a Ward Councillor, she was not informed of this.

Action: Cllr Wilkie advised that these are public papers that go through appropriate scrutiny; not sure would ordinarily go to a particular councillor but confirmed she would take that up with officers and will circulate the response

- 5.4 Cllr Tindall, Portfolio Holder People & Transformation referred to his report and invited any questions.

Cllr Douris referred to the PMO and asked the PH for details of some of the benefits of the PMO transformation.

Action: Cllr Tindall confirmed he would circulate a written response.

CHAIRMAN

- 5.5 Cllr Capozzi, Portfolio Holder Corporate & Commercial Services introduced her report as circulated as part of the agenda and invited questions.

Cllr Anderson referred to the parking charges consultation which is ongoing and asked; with respect particularly to his ward in Kings Langley where it is being proposed to introduce changes for the first time, not having been any before, what professional evidence did the PH use to base her decision to introduce charges in a location where there is not a demand for people to use the parking, where they will alternatively go down the road and park somewhere that they do not need to pay at all

Action: Cllr Capozzi advised that as there are multiple elements to that question, a written response will be circulated

- 5.6 Cllr Dhyani, Portfolio Holder Housing & Property Services addressed the Council and took her report as read, inviting any questions that may arise.

Cllr Guest asked; when the Housing Department decided to dig and plant flower beds on the green off Roseheath, why were local residents and Councillors not consulted or even informed first?

Action: Cllr Dhyani advised her understanding that officers had informed people locally but confirmed she would be happy to take this back to officers and seek a written response on what communication has taken place, given the Councillor does not feel she or residents have been informed

- 5.7 Cllr Bromham, Portfolio Holder Neighbourhood Operations referred to his written report and invited questions.

Cllr Mitchell referred to the play park in Gadebridge, referred to in the report as Warners End Valley and asked for confirmation of when the tender will be back (was due end of June) as this location is still not on the list for works this year; but it had been previously down to take place this year and residents had been informed as such.

Action: Cllr Bromham confirmed he would seek details for the specific site and asked for confirmation of the exact location.

Cllr Mitchell clarified this is the park in Gadebridge on the dip, it is actually called Upper Warners End but is referred to in the report as Warners End Valley

6 BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

The Mayor referred the Council to the updated actions list as published with the agenda and advised of one outstanding action for which the response is still in progress and advised an update would be provided as soon as that information is available.

The updated actions were noted.

CHAIRMAN

7 CABINET REFERRALS

The Mayor invited the Leader, Cllr England to introduce the referrals from Cabinet;

7.1 CA/42/24 – Constitutional updates 23rd April 2024

Agreed.

7.2 CA/59/24 – Bovingdon Neighbourhood Plan 18th June 2024

Agreed.

8 OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY ANNUAL REPORTS

The Mayor invited the Chair of Housing and Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee, Cllr Barry-Mears, to introduce the annual reports on behalf of all the Overview & Scrutiny Committees.

Full details can be viewed via the video minutes.

9 WAIVER OF 6 MONTH COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE RULE

The Mayor introduced the item by noting that she was happy to see that Cllr Birnie had been able to join the meeting and therefore this item would no longer require consideration.

The Mayor welcomed Cllr Birnie and thanked him for his attendance, full details can be viewed via the video minutes.

10 CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Mayor invited the group leaders to give any updates to committee membership.

Cllr England advised that;

1. Cllr McAreyve should be removed from the Housing & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee
2. Cllr Smith-Wright is to replace Cllr Pringle as the Vice Chair of Health Committee. Cllr Smith-Wright is also the nominated representative at the Hertfordshire County Council Health Committee

11 CHANGE TO COMMITTEE DATES

There were no changes to committee dates.

The Meeting ended at 8.29 pm

CHAIRMAN