
DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

11 JULY 2018

Present -

MEMBERS:

R Sutton (Mayor), Douris (Deputy Mayor), Adeleke, Banks, Barrett, Bassadone, Bhinder, Chapman, D Collins, E Collins, Conway, England, Fisher, Griffiths, Guest, Harden, P Hearn, S Hearn, Howard, Link, Mahmood, Marshall, Mclean, Pringle, Ransley, Riddick, G Sutton, Taylor, Timmis, Tindall, Williams, (31)

OFFICERS:

The Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Housing and Regeneration), Legal Governance Team Leader, Group Manager (Democratic Services), S Turner (Minutes).

The meeting began at 7.30 pm.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the meeting held on 16 May 2018 were agreed by the Members present and then signed by the Mayor.

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

4.1 By the Mayor:

None.

4.2 By the Chief Executive:

None.

4.3 By the Group Leaders:

Councillor Williams confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillors Anderson, Armytage, Birnie, Clark, Imarni, Elliot, Fethney, Madden, Mathews Mills, Peter, Silwal, Whitman, and C Wyatt-Lowe.

Councillor Tindall had no apologies,

Cllr Fisher gave apologies for Councillor Fethney.

4.4 Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:

Councillor Williams, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Community Leadership

Councillor Williams asked if there were any questions.

Councillor Tindall mentioned that there is an organisation who provides statuettes of soldiers to mark the centenary of the First World War and enquired if we are doing anything to commemorate this. Councillor Williams asked Councillor Harden to reply. Councillor Harden confirmed that we are looking to purchase one of these statuettes at a cost of £750 and he is aware that there are grants for Parish Councils or local organisations, but this is in hand. Councillor Tindall thanked Councillor Harden.

Councillor Bassadone was concerned about the attendance at Council. Councillor Williams confirmed that there was a least four Councillors on holiday.

Councillor England commented that the new play park in Gadebridge Park is very popular and wanted to ensure that the splash park would be open by the end of July. Councillor Williams confirmed that it would definitely be open by the end of July.

Councillor G Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Infrastructure

Progress is being made on two important new retail developments for the Borough

Work has started on the former Lucas Aerospace / Aviva site at Maylands avenue for the new retail park, and the first phase is expected to be open by Easter 2019.

The scheme for more retail units at Jarman Park has now been approved and the developers are advising that work will start in early 2019.

DBC have facilitated, with full Business sponsorship the new Dacorum Heroes and continued with the very successful Dragons Den awards. The Heroes awards recognise business that go above and beyond to help employees or the community and the den supports new business ideas to help with future growth plans.

The Heroes have already been judged and the winners agreed by a panel of sponsors and the Dragon's Den will be judged this Friday (6th) by the main sponsors and the local MP Sir Mike Penning.

There will be a winner's presentation for both taking place on July 20th.

Questions:

Councillor Tindal enquired whether the plans for the old Athletics Track site would provide new housing or retail development. Councillor Sutton confirmed that no decisions had been made at this stage.

Councillor Marshall, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

This Friday will be the first **food** collection day in the trial of collecting Food Waste from flats. The trial is for 3 months and 1600 flats are involved – in Berkhamsted, Grovehill and Leverstock Green. The aim of the trial is to determine whether food waste recycling would be successful if provided to flats. Each flat has been supplied with a kitchen caddy, a roll of bags and an informative guide and a communal brown-lidded wheelie bin has been put beside the blocks' refuse and recycling bins.

Regarding installing recycling facilities for blocks of flats in the Borough who currently have no facilities, work on installing the necessary recycling wheelie bins will start this Autumn. The installations will be area by area – members will be advised nearer the time when the bins are being installed in their wards. It is anticipated that the roll-out will be completed by the end of this financial year. There will be lots of info, letters etc. for residents – we are talking about 2953 flats in 663 blocks.

10 tonnes of compost were given away free on the 13 May in 2 hours at Cupid Green (the Compost Giveaway). The Community Payback team helped by loading up car boots with the bags. The compost was provided by D Williams & Co, the company responsible for taking our garden waste and turning into compost. The event is not just about giving away some compost. It is also publicising the message that our garden waste can be used for the benefit of our gardens, that householders can easily create compost and indeed there are offers on buying compost bins on the HCC website. 50 litre bags of compost can also be purchased from household waste recycling centres at £5 per bag.

The new play area in Gadebridge has opened and is well used. The splash park will be opened on Saturday 28 July.

Questions:

Councillor England thanked the Portfolio Holder for her response to the email he sent and he wanted to check how much recycling would be available for each area. Councillor Marshall confirmed that it depends on the number of flats in each block, they won't have a specified bin for each flat but it would work much like a normal house would.

Councillor Fisher asked if the Council had any machinery for cleaning parts of the Marlowes. Councillor Marshall advised that there is a pavement washer which was purchased for the Marlowes and if Councillor Fisher was aware of any specific areas that need cleaning please let her know.

Councillor Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources

Provided by Councillor Williams in the absence of Councillor Elliot.

Commercial Assets & Property Development

The first phase of the demolition of the former Civic Centre is now complete. This involved demolition of the majority of the Civic Centre with the exception of the north eastern and south western corners of the building which contain Affinity Water & UKPN infrastructure. We are working with UKPN and Affinity Water on timeframes to begin Phase 2 which will involve diversion and relocation of utilities followed by demolition of the remaining building structure.

The sales of underutilised garages to release a capital receipt are continuing. We have recently completed the sale of 6 sites to Watford Community Housing Trust for £3.06m. There are a further 5 sites under offer to a Housing Association in the region of £1.85m which is moving towards exchange. This will increase the supply of homes in the Borough by approximately 60 units as well as providing funds for the Capital Programme moving forward.

We have gained planning permission for the creation of a new cemetery at Bunkers park which will meet the requirements of the Borough for the next 75 years. We are currently undertaking detailed design work with contractors prior to moving towards a tender phase for the project.

Revenues, Benefits & Fraud

By making use of text messages, and offering an extra instalment date, the revenues team have been able to reduce the number of reminder notices sent to residents by over 15% compared to the same period last year. This also means that less cases are needing to progress to court action, and so fewer residents are having additional costs added to their accounts.

Financial Services

The Council published its draft statement of accounts on 31 May 2018 in line with statutory deadlines. The final audit of these accounts is underway. The final financial statements for 2017/18 will go to Audit Committee later in July for agreement.

A review of performance indicators for May shows that the service continues to deliver above target in the areas of debt collection and payments processing. Investment performance is forecast to be above budget, based on current cash-flow forecasts for the financial year.

The service has undertaken some additional work in the recovery of Housing Benefit debt following a new initiative by the Department of Work and Pensions. It is anticipated that this work will improve debt recovery levels in the cases of individuals where previously limited or no recovery was taking place.

The refresh of the Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy for the period 2018-2023 is underway and due for presentation at Cabinet at the end of July.

Questions:

There were no questions raised.

Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing

Tenant and Leaseholder Services

The draft Sustainable Tenancies Strategy and Income Strategy have been developed and presented to HCOSC for their review and comments. Both will assist in supporting vulnerable tenants to maintain their tenancies and are designed to exhaust all avenues of support before enforcement action is pursued.

Strategic Housing

Strategic Housing has been awarded the NPSS Gold Standard award for Housing Options services, recognising the improvement in delivery of homelessness and housing options services in Dacorum.

The service is continuing to focus on improving housing standards in the borough by way of effective resident engagement about key issues, most recently this has been awareness of private sector housing standards, which supports the delivery of a new Enforcement Policy to be launched during August 2018.

Housing Development

Kylna Court – Works are progressing well on site. The first flat is ready and we are going through the process of agreeing the benchmark quality standard for the site. Completion Nov 2018.

Swing Gate Lane (Corn Mill Court) – Works are progressing well on site. Completion Dec 2018

Martindale School site – Contractor recommended to Cabinet and approved, now in alcatel period and then we will commence pre contract activities with a view to starting on site in the autumn.

Northend and Westerdale garage sites – Adjudicating tender returns, aiming to be on site autumn.

Stationers Place – Revised planning application submitted. We are re pricing the scheme with the Contractor.

New Pipeline schemes, Starting to mobilise these new schemes and appoint consultant support.

Property and Place

Gas Heating - Communal boilers are being replaced at Florence Longman House and Cranford that will increase the efficiency of the schemes. (The warm weather is helping as the heating demand is low at the moment!)

Compliance - Emergency lighting is being installed at all blocks of flats on the Ashlyns estate.

DBC are putting together a programme of works to increase fire detection in homes throughout the borough.

A new Support Officer has been appointed to coordinate the increase in fire safety works

Major Project - The project to convert current offices at Supported Housing Schemes into wheelchair compliant ground floor flats, construct laundry's, offices and refurbish the Communal Rooms at three Supported Housing Schemes has begun. The projects are due to be completed early in 2019/20

Questions:

No questions were raised.

Councillor D Collins, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Contracted Services

Everyone Active has completed its first 3 months of delivering the leisure services contract across the Borough and have received positive customer feedback on the operation of the County Championship at Jarmans Park, New café facilities at Hemel and for new Showers and sauna and other improvements at Berkhamsted.

The upgrade works at Hemel leisure centre commenced in June and will be done in 4 phases

Phase 1 will include the ground floor studio, gym, and new membership lounge.

Phase 2 will include the spin studio, fitness area one and changing rooms.

Phase 3 the first floor studio and Phase 4 the body and soul studio.

These works are due to be completed by end of September

The specification for works to refurbish Tring Swimming Pool and associated facilities has now been agreed and works will commence on 6th August. The refurbishment plans include the reception area, associated staff rooms, main changing rooms, viewing gallery and resurfacing of the swimming pool and walkways. The works also include significant mechanical and engineering works and replacement of major plant items which operate the swimming pool. The target date for completion of the works is early January 2019. Everyone Active has been working with clubs affected by the closure to try and allocate times in other facilities which they run. Good news then that Berkhamsted and Tring facilities are being upgraded.

Indigo Park Services continue to deliver the Parking Enforcement contract across the borough. All car parks have had new pay and park machines installed which allow for cash, telephone, chip & pin and contactless payments. Parking enforcement is supported by new technology including vehicles equipped with ANPR CCTV.

Early indicators show that this new enforcement is working. Revenue from parking has increased whilst the revenue from penalty charge notices has decreased.

In Democratic Services the Annual Canvass will commence in the autumn for the next Council elections in May 2019. 67,000 Households will be contacted during August until November to confirm the electors at the property and to compile the Electoral Register. We have also switched to a new electoral registration/management system following a five month detailed tender/recruitment exercise.

On the 8th October 2018 Huber Car Park Systems International will take possession of the Lower Kings Road site and commence the construction of the Multi Storey car park in Berkhamsted. The target completion date is the end of May 2019.

This will mean closure of Lower Kings Road carpark and a temporary carpark being located on the Moor. A planning application is being submitted. Using Cell Pave material the Moor's grass will be protected. On the opening of the MSCP the Moor will revert to an open space once more. At all times the children's play area will continue to be in operation and the temporary carpark fenced off.

The rollout of the new equipment to officers is continuing, and we are looking at technology options for members to be adopted following next year's election.

A second network link, providing improved resilience in our connections between the Forum and the data centres is now physically in place and undergoing testing, after much delay in its supply from BT.

Questions:

Councillor Tindall highlighted the need for parking meters that took into account the seriously dyslexic who may be struggling with the new machines. Councillor Tindall confirmed he had discussed this with the relevant Group Manager but had not received a response yet. Councillor Collins confirmed he would take the comments back.

Councillor Harden, Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services **Performance & People**

Armed Forces Day 2018 – We delivered a successful Armed Forces Day event on June 30th in Gadebridge Park; with Portsmouth Action Field Gun Display Team and Rockwood Dogs Display Team as our arena acts and with Rockabellas and Halton Military Wives Choir on our community stage. The event was attended by the Mayor of Dacorum, the Rt. Hon Sir Mike Penning MP & Deputy Leader of the House of Lords and Minister of State for Defence, the Rt. Hon the Earl Howe PC. It was an honour that our event was selected by Earl Howe. I personally escorted Earl Howe around introducing him to the community stall holders and organisations present.

Promotion of the Armed Forces Day was via social media posts, posters around the Borough, large screen advertising and local paper. Approximately 3000 people attended over the day. Feedback on the day and via social media was very positive.

Consultation continues for the moving the Athletics Track and new Sports Pavilion. Closing date for responses is 17th August.

Environmental and Community Protection

Department has now been fully staffed after a long period carrying vacancies.

Discussions have taken place with Boxmoor Trust, National Trust, Dogs Trust, RSPCA and the Police regarding the possibility of having a Borough wide Public Space Protection Order relating to dog issues.

Further to work being carried out on a Hoarding Protocol with Tennant Services and the Fire Service the team have 3 current cases dealing with Filthy or Verminous properties. One property that has been cleared took 3 men 5 days to do. A re-charge will be placed on the property.

The ASB team successfully obtained premises closure order on a property in conjunction with Hertfordshire Constabulary in relation to a stabbing at the address in St Pauls Road.

The ASB Team agreed four ABC's (Anti-Social Behaviour Contracts) with youths being a nuisance around Stoneycroft Shops.

Questions:

Councillor Taylor highlighted the importance and the need for all Councillors to engage in Member Support Development regardless of political affiliations and would request that the Portfolio Holder endorses this opinion by giving support for all 51 Councillors to be encouraged to attend. Councillor Harden did endorse this and emphasised the training as having the ability to develop our skills to help make us better Councillors.

Councillor England asked what has happened to the verge hardening project. Councillor Harden will request an update from the Group Manager.

Councillor Tindall reinforced Councillor Taylor's request for all Councillors to attend Member Development as there are so many changes that Councillors need to be aware of, it is our duty to turn up. Councillor Harden agreed.

Councillor Taylor confirmed that the verge hardening project was very much happening in Neighbourhood Action areas. Councillor Taylor referred Councillor England to a named, appropriate officer to ensure he is included in any updates.

5. QUESTIONS

None.

5a. NOTICE OF MOTION

A motion was proposed by Councillor Tindall and seconded by Councillor England as follows:

“Council affirms the view that the Fire and Rescue Service should remain under the control and democratic accountability of Hertfordshire County Council, rather than being taken over by the Police and Crime Commissioner. Council therefore fully supports the view taken by the County Council in this regard, and its Leader’s submission to the Home Office.”

The Mayor put the motion to vote.

All those present voted to support the motion. There were no votes against.

The motion was carried unanimously.

Council instructs the Chief Executive to write to the Home Office in a similar vein, confirming this Council’s opposition to the proposed takeover.”

6. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

None.

7. CABINET REFERRALS

That the following be approved:

24th April 2018

7.1 CA/049/18 FORMALISATION OF THE GROVEHILL NEIGHBOURHOOD PLAN

That Council formally ‘makes’ the Grovehill Future Neighbourhood Plan as part of the Local Plan following a YES vote at Referendum 15th February.

Agreed.

22nd May 2018

7.2 CA/058/18 FINANCIAL OUTTURN 2017/18

That Council:

- 1. Approve the carry forward of unspent reserve funded budgets from 2017/18 to 2018/19 (see Appendix D of the report to Cabinet, £315k slippage into 2018/19)**
- 2. Approve the use of the Housing Revenue Account surplus to fund an increased Revenue Contribution to Capital**

Agreed

7.3 CA/059/18 AMENDMENTS TO STAFF TERMS AND CONDITIONS

That Council approves the changes to the redundancy multiplier as set out in paragraph 3.2 of the report.

Agreed.

26TH June 2018

7.4 CA/071/18 CONSTITUTION AND PETITION SCHEME REVIEW AND UPDATE

That Council adopt the amended Petition Scheme as annexed at Appendix 1A of the Cabinet report; and include a change in paragraph 5 (The word 'ago' be replaced with 'previously').

Agreed.

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

None.

9. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

Cllr Silwal will be leaving the Finance committee and joining Member Development and SPAE.

Cllr Armytage will be joining Licensing.

Cllr Bhinder will be joining Licencing.

The Finance Committee will be reduced by one space.

10. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE DATES

None.

11 CHANGES TO THE DEVELOPMENT MANAGEMENT COMMITTEE PROCEDURES

The referral was presented Councillor Guest on behalf of the Development Management Committee. The changes that are being put forward will enable the Committee to function in a more streamlined and timely manner and therefore improve the quality of decision making. Recommendations 1, 2, 4, 5 and 6 were agreed by a majority of Committee Members in response to consultation. As for change 3 the majority of Members who responded to the consultation disagree with this change. So Cllr Guest would not be recommending it for adoption at Council. She proposed changes 1, 2 4, 5 and 6 and Councillor Griffiths seconded the proposals.

Resolved: -

That the recommended changes as agreed by the Development Management Committee on 5th July 2018 be agreed as follows:

1. **If an application is recommended for approval, only objectors can invoke public speaking and then supporters can present their case. Applicants can only invoke speaking rights where the application is recommended for refusal.**
2. **Reduce the Ward Councillor time limit for speaking from 10 minutes to five minutes.**
3. **Change the deadline to register to speak from 12 noon on the day of the meeting to 5pm the day before the meeting.**
4. **Stop members of the public distributing material at the meeting.**
5. **Planning officers must keep their presentations to 5 minutes for major applications and 3 minutes for all other applications.**

12. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

To consider passing a resolution in the following terms:

That, under section 100A(4) of the Local Government Act 1972, the public be excluded during the item in Part II of the Agenda for this meeting, because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that if members of the public were present during this item there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Council and third party companies/organisations.

(Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3).

13. PART 2 CABINET REFERRAL

Full details can be found in the part 2 minutes.

The meeting ended at 20:15pm