

\*\*\*\*\*

**DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL**

**MEETING OF THE COUNCIL**

**27 NOVEMBER 2019**

\*\*\*\*\*

Present -

**MEMBERS:**

Douris (Mayor), Adeleke, Allen, Anderson, Banks, Barratt, Barry, Beauchamp, Bhinder, Birnie, Chapman, Claughton, Durrant, Elliot, England, Freedman, Griffiths, Guest, Hearn, Hobson, Hollinghurst, Link, Maddern, So Mahmood, Su Mahmood, McDowell, Oguchi, Peter, Pringle, Ransley, Riddick (Deputy Mayor), Rogers, Silwal, Sinha, Stevens, Symington, G Sutton, R Sutton, Taylor, Tindall, Timmis, Townsend, Uttley, Williams, Woolner (45)

**OFFICERS:**

The Chief Executive, Corporate Director (Finance and Operations), Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services), Group Manager (Legal & Corporate Services), C Oliveri (Communications and Consultation Officer) and T Angel (Minutes).

The meeting began at 7.30 pm.

**1. MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 18 September 2019 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:

The Mayor announced the sad passing of former Liberal Democrat Councillor Geoff Lawrence (1987 – 1995) and one minutes silence was held in remembrance. Councillors Tindall and Williams shared their memories of him.

The Mayor then read the following statement:

“Members will be aware that we are in the Pre-election period and I would therefore like to remind Members that this meeting should not be used to make statements regarding national political issues. If any discussion should overlap into any national political issues, they will be interrupted. I have considered the two motions and two questions on the agenda tonight and have deemed that these are acceptable as they relate to predominantly local issues”

#### **4.2 By the Chief Executive:**

None.

#### **4.3 By the Group Leaders:**

Councillor Williams confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillors Arslan, Bassadone, Johnson and Wyatt-Lowe.

Councillor Tindall confirmed that apologies had been received from Councillor Bowden.

#### **4.4 Council Leader and Members of the Cabinet:**

##### **Councillor Williams, Leader of the Council**

Councillor Williams had nothing to report but welcomed questions.

There were no questions.

##### **Councillor Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services**

Councillor Anderson thanked the Mayor for attending the Best Kept Gardens Competition in Kings Langley which helped Parish colleagues raise over £1,000 for the British Waterways Experience. The money raised was considerably more than in previous years.

The Portfolio Holder presented his update as follows:

#### **ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES**

##### **Waste**

- Roll out of the food waste collection from flats across the borough was progressing well and was on target to be finished by March.
- New RCV's are due to start rolling in early November with rollout of Training for crews and techs planned over the coming weeks.
- The next meeting of the Herts Waste Partnership will be in January and will be a conference. The Leader has or will be invited along. He hoped there would be opportunities to raise some of the waste/refuse collection issues with top level speakers there.
- The refuse collection calendars will no longer be attached to bins. The calendar can be found on the website or can be requested by those without internet access. This has been included in Dacorum Digest. He said it was an expensive and time consuming practice.
- Carried out targeted work for Refill Hertfordshire and now have around 150 Refill Stations in Dacorum, which makes up approx. half of all the Refill Stations in Dacorum.

- Undertook Sustainable Clothes Swaps events in October with over 1,000 items being swapped.
- Held a reusables stall in town to promote both Refill Hertfordshire and Remember your Reusables campaign
- Held a stall in a supermarket for Recycle Week and ran a social media take over day. Launched a Terracycle crisp packet recycling point in the Forum to tie in with Recycle Week

### **Clean, Safe and Green**

- Warners End playing fields now secured access with installation of bollards to prevent traveller incursion
- He has signed off the annual review of the council's environmental management system which analyses the amount of electricity, gas and water we use. It is important we focus on reducing those as part of our sustainability efforts.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

#### Questions:

Councillor England said he welcomed the announcement about the refuse calendars being available on request. He asked if the Portfolio Holder would request that this is advertised via Facebook channels. The Portfolio Holder said he thought that may have already been done but he felt that if someone would see that information on Facebook they probably wouldn't need to request a calendar.

Councillor Tindall welcomed the savings for the refuse calendars. He asked that we ensure any vulnerable persons or those with assisted collections were not overlooked. The Portfolio Holder said they were mindful of those people when the decision was made and hoped that friends, relatives and neighbours would request calendars on behalf of those individuals. Councillor Tindall suggested taking a few copies of Dacorum Digest along to any assisted collections to make those individuals aware of the change. The Portfolio Holder said he would find out if that is possible and let Councillor Tindall know.

### **Councillor Williams, Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Contracted Services**

Councillor Williams said the Teams were very busy with Election duties and understood everything was running smoothly. He said the Election had made some slight changes to the committee diary over the next few weeks but that is to be expected with all the extra duties.

He advised that everything was on course with the multi-storey car park in Berkhamsted and the planning extensions for The Moor Car Park were making way through the system.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

#### Questions:

Councillor Tindall expressed his thanks to all the staff involved with the Elections and said he understood it was a pressured time. He asked if we could pass on our congratulations and gratitude for their hard work. The Portfolio Holder agreed he would pass this on.

### **Councillor Banks, Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services**

The Portfolio Holder presented her update as follows:

### **Environmental and Community Protection:**

- The Public Space Protection Orders have gone live across the Borough. Both the Operations & the Anti-Social Behaviour Teams along with the Police have been promoting these Orders, a significant amount of time has been spent informing, education and promoting these orders.
- With reference to Dog PSPO we've delivered early morning and evening patrols with the Enforcement team across Dacorum.
- Turning to the Town Centre PSPO prohibiting cycling in the pedestrian areas, we have completed, 1 Education Day, sent letters to all schools and held 2 Enforcement Days,
- The Environmental Enforcement Team have managed to successfully prosecute two serial fly-tippers.

Members will be pleased to note £2223.56 fine, victim surcharge and cost is the price residents can expect to pay for fly tipping on our door step.

- Air Quality,

Members will be aware that Dacorum borough council has a legal duty to monitor air quality and to address concerns through our Air Quality Action Plan.

We all acknowledge vehicle emissions are a major contributor to local environment quality and climate change.

Although, we have this crucial responsibility to monitor air quality, protecting and safe guarding our residents, the major influence to reduce vehicle pollutants from our roads, rests with Hertfordshire County Council as the Highway Authority.

I hope that Hertfordshire County Council through the management and development of the borough's highway infrastructure fully engages with us and supports our concerns.

The terms of reference have now been set for the Air Quality Steering Group. The first meeting has been held in October 2019.

There is draft planning guidance that has been drafted by the Lead Environmental Health Officer and sent to relevant parties for comment.

We have also submitted a bid to DEFRA for a feasibility study for a Clean Air Zone. This will be determined in early 2020.

The steering group is due to meet in Late January, to be chaired by Interim Assistant Director Bill Buckley whom I welcome warmly.

### **People and Communities Group**

#### **Community partnerships and Leisure**

**Healthy Hub:** It is anticipated that Healthy Hub Dacorum will launch in April 2020.

As Members will be aware this initiative is funded by Public Health, our Healthy Hub based at the leisure centre will provide a one stop shop for Dacorum residents to improve their health and wellbeing.

We plan to hold Healthy Hub Pop-up events, in local community centres or town centres across Dacorum and will provide outreach to rural areas to raise awareness of the services available along with running a number of services on the day.

The Healthy Hub will be promoted through a strong social media. We will be working with a number of partners to deliver this project including Everyone Active, Public Health CAB, and CAD, and we are continuing to engage with other local stakeholders.

- **Hertfordshire Year Of Culture 2020**

We are now seeing some pilot projects roll out, in October we celebrated Herts Heroines, where stories told by our supported housing tenants were performed at Trestle Theatre Company. We took several tenants to see the performance and they were guests of honour. There is a funding bid going in for a full performance in Dacorum next year.

We also held a trial Fun Palace with the library in The Forum. A Fun Palace is a free community cultural event, which brought over 1000 through the doors during the day. We are planning to expand this for next year.

A funding bid is being submitted in December for a skateboarding, music and graffiti art project for young people at the XC centre and we are awaiting the outcome of a cross county dance project bid submitted last month.

January will see the launch of online creative challenges and is the month for encouraging people to 'try something new'. All districts will be highlighting the cultural venues in the area and their programmes, there are activities planned such as intergenerational dance and music workshops at Boxmoor Trust, a Chatter Table event at Centre in the Park addressing loneliness and isolation, and a cultural toolkit for schools.

## **Customer Services**

I please to advise we have recruited a new Lead Officer and another full time Officer have started work with the CSU and the new Payment Kiosks for the Forum have been ordered and should be on line from April 2020 to replace our current kit as this IT is no longer supported.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

### Questions:

Councillor England asked if the Portfolio Holder could advise the number of PSPO's patrols undertaken AM and PM, how many DBC staff and other resources were involved, and finally the typical duration of patrols. The Portfolio Holder said she would need to do some investigations and let Councillor England know.

Councillor Freedman said given the level of upset and concern caused to the regular users of the Berkhamsted leisure facilities and loss of local jobs when Everyone Active took the decision to replace staff with an unstaffed vending machine, does the Portfolio Holder agree that it is time to release certain details of the contract to show the public which aspects of the leisure provision the council deem important enough to protect. The Mayor advised that question should have been asked to the Portfolio Holder of Corporate and Contracted Services. Councillor Williams advised he would respond separately to Councillor Freedman.

Councillor Hobson said she was pleased we were looking at air quality as it was very important. She felt there wasn't enough detail in the report and asked who sat on the steering group, where it was reported to and finally where the clean air zones were. The Portfolio Holder advised the steering group was chaired by Assistant Director Bill Buckley, and she attended along with officers from the Environmental Health Team. She then advised that the three areas were London Road, Apsley and Northchurch. Councillor Hobson asked if there was any chance of an independent person being on the steering group. The Portfolio Holder said she would ask the question and let Councillor Hobson know.

Councillor Timmis said she was pleased to see that Dacorum were actively engaging in the Hertfordshire Year of Culture 2020. She asked for more information on the fun palace. The Portfolio Holder explained that the fun palace was an initiative in an ongoing campaign for communities at the heart of culture. She advised that families have the chance to share arts, crafts, science, technology, digital, sports, heritage and activities.

Councillor R Sutton asked if the Portfolio Holder would agree that the Marlowes was a safer place now that cyclists can no longer ride through. She asked what action was taken, if any. The Portfolio Holder agreed and explained that officers focused on educating cyclists, however they have issued 8 warning letters and 4 fixed penalty notices.

### **Councillor G Sutton, Portfolio Holder for Planning & Infrastructure**

The Portfolio Holder had nothing to report but invited questions.

#### **Questions:**

Councillor Guest asked how far along Dacorum was with the aspiration that when a tree must be felled two more are planted. The Portfolio Holder advised that the intention with all new developments was to offer guidelines to ensure this happens. He said they wanted to maintain a green borough and it was a priority.

### **Councillor Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources**

The Portfolio Holder presented his update as follows:

#### **REVENUES, BENEFITS & FRAUD**

The collection of business rates and council tax remains in line with the council's expectations, and hence the service continues to perform well.

I am pleased to say that for the second year running, the benefits service has received the highest level of assurance from internal audit. This illustrates the continued hard work put in by the team to make sure that benefits awards are accurate and processed efficiently. The revenues team has been carrying out an annual review of single person discounts. This exercise is nearly completed, and has identified about 500 accounts where the discount no longer applies. This directly translate into additional Council Tax income the Council would not otherwise have received.

#### **FINANCIAL SERVICES**

The Council's upgraded financial system has been successfully implemented. Processes associated with the system are now part of business as usual. This excellent outcome is the

result of hard work from ICT and Finance colleagues in supporting the organisation through the upgrade.

20/21 Council budget preparations are well underway. A series of budget challenge meetings have taken place involving the Chief Officer Group and Budget Review Group. Draft budget proposals have been published and will be presented before the Joint Overview and Scrutiny on the 3rd of December.

## **COMMERCIAL ASSETS & PROPERTY DEVELOPMENT**

### Investment Properties/Commercial Portfolio

The commercial assets portfolio continues to perform very strongly with a 96% occupancy level and with low rent arrears. The portfolio continues to provide a significant net financial return to the councils overall budget.

### Garage Disposals

As part of the next phase of the Garage Disposal Strategy, 18 sites were reviewed by Housing Associations to assess viability. Further to that initial appraisal and subject to contract, Heads of Terms have been agreed for the purchase of 7 sites to develop additional affordable homes for the Borough. Solicitors have been instructed on behalf of the respective parties and are working through pre-contract due diligence and enquiries.

### Bunkers Park

Following extensive archaeological surveys to meet Planning obligations, construction commenced at the beginning of June, and the construction programme is on schedule and progressing well for completion by end of this calendar year. The cemetery reception and offices building is now completed and the final road laying and landscaping will continue to conclusion.

The Portfolio Holder invited questions.

### Questions:

Councillor Tindall referred to page 11 of the minutes from the September meeting. He felt that the statistics quoted in the last paragraph were misrepresented and asked for that to be corrected. The Portfolio Holder said he would ensure that was actioned.

### **Councillor Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing**

The Portfolio Holder presented her update as follows;

## **TENANT AND LEASEHOLDER SERVICES**

- Sheltered housing residents are being offered a more person centred support approach following the introduction of Outcome Star to assist in providing a better understanding of their support needs.
- The Sheltered housing service had its annual review by Erosh (the national consortium for sheltered and retirement housing). The feedback from the assessor, tenants and staff was positive and will now be preparing for a recertification next year.
- The Tenancy Sustainment Team continue to have some positive outcomes: supporting tenants to reduce rent arrears, obtain welfare benefit payments, move to smaller homes and engaging with the mental health and other external support services. Also to address hoarding, they have worked with 2 tenants to clear their homes making them and their neighbours safer and improving the condition of our properties.

## **STRATEGIC HOUSING**

- A dedicated street outreach worker is now in post, working with multi-agency action team, rough sleeping numbers have reduced from 23 to 11 people in the last two months.
- The Severe Weather Emergency Protocol has been in place from 7th November and expected to end on Tuesday 19th November, which will be 12 consecutive nights. So far we have accommodated 12 individuals, total of 26 stays.
- A successful multi-agency stakeholder engagement event was held to assist in formulation of the new Homeless & Rough Sleeping Strategy.
- The PRS (private rented sector) team successfully engaged with partners the Fire Service and Hightown Housing Association, to reduce significant fire risk at approximately 90 units of accommodation in the Town Centre.

## **HOUSING DEVELOPMENT**

- Corn Mill Court in Berkhamsted is now fully occupied and the residents are very happy in their new homes.
- Work on site progressing well at Magenta Court and Martindale and the two garage sites Northend and Westerdale.
- Eastwick Row planning application approved.
- Coniston Road in Kings Langley, the scheme has been submitted to planning.
- Other sites, St Margaret's, Paradise Fields, and Bulbourne outline designs being completed and considering feasibility for use of off-site construction
- Contractor appointed for development in Gaddesden Row due to start on site in February 2020

## **PROPERTY AND PLACE**

- Consultant in place to progress the action plan and ongoing management of garages. Programmed works are progressing well with Year to date completions;
  - Kitchens - 155
  - Bathrooms – 116
  - Windows – 22
  - Doors – 231
- Fire upgrade projects and external wall insulation projects progressing well
- The electrical testing EICR programme 2017-2019 continues and of the 10115 required tests, 90% have been completed.

### Questions:

Councillor Hobson asked what areas the homeless persons were found, and how confident she was that we were reaching everyone that needed help. The Portfolio Holder replied they covered the whole of Dacorum. She then explained that staff scan the areas of Dacorum and each of the individuals that were found have someone working with them.

Councillor Hollinghurst asked if the wooden staircases in Cherry Bounce had been replaced with a non-flammable material. The Portfolio Holder said staff carried out fire assessments on all our properties on an annual basis, however she wasn't aware of that specific case so she said she would provide a written response to him.

## **5. MOTION**

There were two motions to be considered.



The following motion was proposed by Councillor England, seconded by Councillor Tindall, and unanimously agreed with the following amendment from the Conservative Party:

*Delete paragraph 2.i and renumber ii and iii as I and ii*

### Chalk Streams

Dacorum has internationally recognised rare natural chalk streams deserving protection and support, rarity to the point where even the World Wildlife Fund have suggested that they should be given special protection. The existing Dacorum Core Strategy documents acknowledge the importance of this asset in supporting endangered species and it is noted that the quality of these chalk streams is measured according to the amount of water present, balance of the water chemistry and the biodiversity of the water habitats supported by flow. Therefore,

#### 1. This Council

a. notes with concern the perilous state of the Gade and Bulbourne rivers in respect of vitality and water levels, and

b. expresses concern about the depletion of water resources by groundwater abstraction and the harm being caused to the ecology and biodiversity of the local chalk streams.

#### 2. This Council

a. instructs officers to:

i. Write to the Dacorum Environmental Forum – Water Group to ask for their comments as to how the Rivers Gade, Ver and Bulbourne could be managed in the future so that they are maintained as healthy and vibrant chalk streams, these comments to be forwarded to the Environment Agency as part of the following letter to the EA,

ii. write to the Environment Agency (EA) to express the alarm of this Council as to the current poor environmental health of these important chalk streams and to ask the EA to explain to the Council how they intend to retain, protect and manage the rivers Gade, Ver and Bulbourne in the future, this explanation to also set out the EA's requirements of Affinity Water and Thames Water to adapt the sourcing of water

iii. Consider the increased water resources that will need to be provided by Affinity Water and Thames Water for the anticipated local increase in housing development, and write to the Planning Inspectorate and the Environment Agency, making them aware of the issues and seeking their advice with regard to the future development

#### 3. This Council, in furtherance of its objects, will

a. work with all relevant agencies to ensure that the decline in the quality of our chalk streams is halted and reversed, and

b. undertake to ensure that our Local Plan will be sympathetic to these rivers and that this council will do all that is possible to protect these important ecosystems

Councillors Allen, Claughton, Pringle, Anderson and Beauchamp also spoke in support of the Motion.

Councillor Williams supported the amended Motion and said we will be guided by the experts on the matter. He said we would need to seek support from the Environment Agency and looked forward to the feedback for future action.

---

The following Motion was proposed by Councillor Stevens, seconded by Councillor Hobson and unanimously agreed with the following amendment from the Conservative Party:

*Delete the two references to Virgin as they will no longer be running the service from the 8<sup>th</sup> December*

#### Rail Services Motion

“This Council regrets the recent very poor standard of rail services provide by LNWR, Southern and Virgin. Dacorum has four rail stations, namely Apsley, Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring, and Dacorum residents have suffered from appalling and lengthy delays, in particular when using the return journeys from London Euston.

This Council requests the Chief Executive to write to LNWR, Southern and Virgin

- a. expressing our dissatisfaction with the present standard of service, and
- b. demanding an explanation regarding recent failures in performance, and
- c. seeking a commitment to an improved service for our commuting residents.”

## **6. QUESTIONS**

Written question to the Leader of the Council from Councillor Uttley:

(1) The Climate Emergency was declared on 17th July and notwithstanding the need for planning, there has not, as yet been what could be called an “emergency” reaction.

At the last Full Council, Liberal Democrat Councillors queried the cabinet on climate emergency action taken by the Council and were offered a general confirmation that work was ongoing towards this. For the Council to show that it is taking the climate change emergency seriously, it is important that initial benchmarks and metrics are put in place, so that we can evidence our progress towards net zero.

(2) Therefore, in seeking to ensure that the Council and the public are as well informed as possible, both of:

A) the current position of Dacorum in relation to Climate Emergency metrics, and

B) the actions being taken by the Council as first steps to prevent the Climate Emergency

this written question tries to identify some important potential routes the Borough could take:

3) Carbon emissions data collected by the government for road transport, domestic, commercial, agricultural and industrial emissions show that for the Dacorum area, per capita carbon emissions as calculated in 2017 currently stand at 4.4 tons per annum.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uk-local-authority-and-regional-carbon-dioxide-emissions-national-statistics-2005-to-2017>

These metrics, although useful, take a long time to collect and as such do not allow for real time tracking of progress. They also do not include estimates for carbon emissions which relate to individual action, such as that embedded in our dietary and transport choices.

(4) However, this effort from central government could be usefully supplemented by DBC through setting our own metrics, which measure local progress in areas such as:

A- energy efficiency of council owned properties (improved insulation and use of LED lighting);

B)- carbon emissions relating to the provision of heat and power to those properties, (switch to efficient equipment, from Gas to Electricity where environmentally economic to do so, and switch to renewable tariffs);

C)- Waste and recycling (improvements in proportion of waste recycled in the UK, and reductions in overall waste created) ;

D)- trees (notional CO2 sequestered by trees in Dacorum, reflecting the net number of trees planted);

E)- habitat (notional CO2 sequestered by habitat improvements across Dacorum).

F)- Carbon emitted by council owned and contractor transport (switching to electric vans, buses and other commercial vehicles);

G)- Passenger figures for buses on local routes (to train station or town);

(5) we should define metrics (or use those already in place such as SAP for energy rating residential properties) which will allow DBC to take regular stock of and track our progress towards net zero in 2030, with the reasonable expectation that these local improvements would then be reflected in the high level government data for Dacorum.

(6) Therefore will the Leader of the Council explain:

a. What action is being taken to establish climate emergency metrics such as those listed above?

b. What structures have been set up to undertake the urgent tasks needed to respond to the emergency?

c. Whether the Cabinet will support the setting up of a cross-party task and finish group to set the metrics and performance measures.

d. Whether the Cabinet will agree that these metrics be used by the O&S committees to help the Council maintain momentum in moving towards net zero?

e. When will the appropriate O&S committees be given the opportunity to consider what steps the council has taken to respond to the emergency?

Councillor Williams said he took the presumption that the question appeared to suggest we hadn't reacted quickly enough to the resolution it passed on 17<sup>th</sup> July which he took issue with. He also felt that the Council didn't wait until 17<sup>th</sup> July to take action and felt it would be useful to list some of the steps they had already taken. He drew attention to how energy efficient the Forum and Maylands Business Centre were and how these buildings had been planned for and worked on for several years. We introduced flexible working and considered the environmental impact of people travelling to work. A sustainability regime for the Old Town Hall. Even minor things such as DBC lamppost bulbs being transferred to LED lighting. The Local Plan will incorporate the maximum level of sustainability measures that can be enforced with national guidance. The council house new build programme and making existing council houses more efficient. We are members of the Herts Warm Homes Scheme and Herts Sustainability Forum. Clean, Safe and Green have moved away from petrol powered equipment on to battery operated where possible. We have committed to planting 1000 trees by the end of next year. He has asked officers since July to look at our energy contracts and we are moving towards an entirely renewable green energy provision for our electricity and to provide carbon offset for some of our gas consumption. We buy our electricity 12 months in advance so the change of contracts would be from October.

He then said he would answer each question at a time:

6a) We are considering the use of SCATTER (Setting City Area Targets and Trajectories for Emissions Reductions) developed by Manchester University, the Tyndall Company and Nottingham and Manchester City Councils – as the means of establishing both the Council and Borough wide baseline position on CO2 emissions and the metrics to be used going forward.

6b) At Officer level the work is being led and sponsored by Mark Gaynor, supported by Mark Brookes and Ben Hosier, and the Corporate Sustainability Working Group is being refashioned to focus on the Climate Emergency. An Action Plan will be put together early in the New Year. This is a priority for every service within the Council. A Climate Change Officer will be appointed in the New Year to bring specific expertise in.

6c) he said it wasn't their intention to set up a cross-party task and finish group because they don't feel it is necessary.

6d) The metrics established by the baseline work and the Action Plan will be made available to OSCs to ensure both involvement and scrutiny.

6e) On completion of the Action Plan in the New Year.

Councillor Uttley referred to the point about changing energy suppliers to green energy and asked if that was for council buildings only or for council properties as well. Councillor Williams advised it would only be for properties that we're responsible for contracting energy for, such as sheltered accommodation and The Forum.

Councillor Uttley referred to the commitment of planting more trees and asked if the Leader agreed that there was a requirement to accelerate our progress in response to the acceleration of the climate emergency. Councillor Williams said he recognised the need to plant more trees than we remove and that in itself was an acceleration of our programme. He said he agreed that we need to acceleration the issue and we are taking the necessary actions.

Councillor Uttley said she was using trees as an example of the acceleration of the issue. She said it appeared that other councils were making more progress than Dacorum with things such as council house schemes but as standard rather than a trial and that is something we should consider as part of our plan. She asked if he agreed that actions such as this but not specifically this would be a good reflection of the acceleration required. Councillor Williams said it was easier to raise the standard on our own stock and plans but for others we need to rely on legislation and will do all we can within the Local Plan to achieve the highest possible standard. He said there will always be people that feel they're not doing enough but he said they would welcome more robust guidance and support through the national planning process to strengthen and improve our environmental standards.

---

Written question to the Portfolio Holder for Housing from Councillor Tindall:

At a time when the Domestic Abuse Bill is awaiting the reconvening of Parliament to complete its passage to becoming an Act, and with all indications that the cancer of domestic abuse has not weakened in communities across the UK, I should be grateful if you would explain why funding of the Hemel Hempstead Refuge has been withdrawn which will mean it will close its doors to victims seeking help on 20th January 2020.

Councillor Griffiths explained that this relates to a county wide refuge provision that was awarded by HCC to Safer Places. When the contract was awarded Hightown refused to allow Dacorum's refuge building to be adopted as part of the contract, this left us without a Dacorum refuge. We engaged Hightown and agreed to ensure the building remained open, however it was stipulated by Hightown that they would only use the building for low level Dacorum cases. Unfortunately most of our cases are of a high level and we are therefore unable to access, meaning there is no refuge provision being provided in our area. Hightown have been engaging with us regularly and have been in discussions with HCC about alternative use of the building which would provide them with a greater income. Hightown wanted a commitment from DBC for the next two years that we would continue to fund the support worker. Due to low level of numbers assisted through the accommodation, DBC did not feel this was viable to extend. It is important to know that the HCC Safer Places contract are in the process of purchasing the property in the Dacorum area and DBC may move to out of area refuge placements. In line with the Domestic Abuse bill and the new duties are likely to be implemented under guidance, DBC will be in partnership with the Community Safety Team and will be undertaking a review of Domestic Abuse provision in the Borough.

## **7. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING**

None.

## **8. CABINET REFERRALS**

The following referrals from Cabinet on 15 October 2019 were agreed:

### **8.1 CA/096/19 Tring Conservation Area Review**

#### **Decision**

- 1) the Tring Conservation Area: Character Appraisal and Management Proposals be adopted as:
  - a) Technical guidance for use in development management and to inform the Dacorum Borough Local Plan.
  - b) A material planning consideration for use in the determination of planning applications.

Delegate authority to the Assistant Director, Planning, Development & Regeneration to undertake all steps required for the completion of the 'Locally Listed Buildings' section of the Appraisal, to be attached as an Appendix. This includes the assessment, consultation and adoption of this Appendix.

### **8.2 CA/097/19 HRA Business Plan**

#### **Decision**

- 1) The Housing Revenue Account Business Plan be approved
- 2) revised development programme budgets as set out in Section 8.3 of the Cabinet report be approved

The following referrals from Cabinet on 12 November 2019 were agreed:

### **8.3 CA/105/19 Budget Monitoring Q2 Report**

#### **Decision**

2. The approval of the revised capital programme to move £3.1m slippage identified at Quarter 2 into financial year 2020/21 as detailed in Appendix C;

3. The approval of a supplementary revenue budget funded from reserves:

- Supplementary budget of £30k in the Garage service, funded from the Invest to Save reserve, to fund a specialist project manager to lead on improvements to the garage letting process

4. The approval of supplementary capital budgets required to deliver several service changes as set out below:

- A capital budget of £25k to fund payment kiosks in the Customer Services Unit.
- Additional capital budget of £400k to deliver the Bunkers Farm project.

- Supplementary budget of £161k in the HRA capital budget Strategic Acquisitions, to fund buy-back of a leasehold property.

#### **8.4 CA/106/19 Council Tax Support Scheme 2020/21**

##### **Decision**

To not revise or replace the current Council Tax Support scheme for 2020/21.

#### **8.5 CA/109/19 Review of Commissioning and Procurement Standing Orders and Strategy**

##### **Decision**

To agree the Commissioning & Procurement Strategy (appendix 1) and the revised Commissioning and Procurement Standing Orders (appendix 3).

#### **8.6 CA/110/19 New Normal Technology Pilot Projects**

Councillor Tindall said he was generally in favour of artificial intelligence for repetitive tasks but can the relevant OSC's be reported back to. Councillor Williams said they would be reporting back to the OSC's.

##### **Decision**

The approval to release £93,495 from the Management of Change reserve to fund this work.

### **9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS**

None.

### **10. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP**

None.

### **11. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE DATES**

The following changes to committee dates were agreed:

- Move Member Development Steering Group from 4 December 2019 to 7 January 2020.
- Move Health in Dacorum from 11 December 2019 to 29 January 2020.
- Move Development Management Committee from 12 December 2019 to 17 December 2019.
- Schedule an additional Cabinet meeting to be held on 7 April 2020 (if required).

### **12. USE OF CAMELOT RFC AS A POLLING STATION FOR THE UK PARLIAMENTARY ELECTION ON 12 DECEMBER 2019**

The use of Camelot RFC as a Polling Station for the UK Parliamentary Election on 12 December 2019 was agreed.

The meeting ended at 9.04 pm.