

Cabinet referrals

19 January 2021

8.1 CA/008/21 DACORUM STRATEGIC SITES DESIGN GUIDE

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

1. **That the draft SPD be adopted.**

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

The process of adopting supplementary planning documents is set out in the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Furthermore the Council is required to comply with its Statement of Community Involvement (SCI) during this process.

Adoption of the draft SPD will raise the design standards of development proposals that are submitted to the Council for determination and will help guide planning decisions made on these.

Deputy S151 Officer

There are no financial implications arising from this report.

Advice

JDoe introduced the report and invited questions.

Cllr Birnie commented that when this was considered at SPAE OSC the public consultation responses were not available. Having now been able to view, he referred specifically to response 20 on pg 260; a consultee noted that the SPD is not specific enough about Dacorum and reads as a general document about design. Cllr Birnie commented that having looked in more depth following this comment he agrees the document may not be specific enough, noting that only 4 of the design examples used in the report were local.

ARobinson acknowledged the point made by Cllr Birnie and commented that of the responses received they were overwhelmingly supportive of the design guide. Officers were reluctant about putting too many Dacorum examples in the document due to concern that developers may come in with a lazy approach and copy what has already been done. This guide aims to take developers through the process of what a good development would look like and seek innovative new design.

JDoe added a further comment that this is a long term document and designs will change over time. He reinforced what had been said by ARobinson that it is important that there is scope of creativity and innovation while reflecting local character.

Cllr Tindall referred to the design examples, commenting that we are looking to gradually have all our developments climate change compliant. With all the various innovations that come about to get our carbon target down, it might be inappropriate to take a lead from some of our designs where some of these were built many years ago before climate change was a consideration.

Recommendations agreed.

09 February 2021

8.2 CA/017/21 BUDGET 2021/22

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

General Fund Revenue Estimate

- a) set a Dacorum Borough Council General Fund Council Tax requirement of £12.406m, and a provisional amount of £13.405m for the combined Borough Council and Parish Councils' requirement for 2021/22;
- b) approve a Band D Council Tax increase of £5 (2.42%) for Dacorum Borough Council;
- c) approve the base estimates for 2021/22, as shown in Appendix A1, and the indicative budget forecasts for 2021/22 – 2024/25, as shown in Appendix A2;
- d) approve the forecast balances of Revenue Reserves as shown in Appendix J, and approve section 11 of this report as the updated Reserves Strategy;
- e) approve increases in Fees and Charges for 2021/22 as set out in Appendices C3, D3, and E3;
- f) approve and adopt the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22, attached at appendix K, noting the proposed changes to counter party limits detailed in section 4.6' (amended)
- g) approve and adopt the Capital Strategy for 2021/22, attached at Appendix L;
- h) note that this budget paper, if approved by Council, will form part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Capital Programme

- i) approve the Capital Programme for 2021/22 to 2025/26, as detailed in Appendix I;
- j) approve the financing proposals in Appendix I subject to an annual review of the financing options by the Corporate Director (Finance & Operations), in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, during the preparation of the Statement of Accounts.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

- k) set dwelling rents according to the new MHCLG Rent Standard, which provides for a rent increase of CPI+1% (1.5% in total). The average dwelling rents is proposed to increase to £104.96 in 2021/22, from its current level of £103.43 (based on 52 weeks);
- l) approve the HRA estimate for 2021/22 as shown in Appendix F.

Employer Terms and Conditions

- m) note that the hourly rate of all Council employees continues to exceed the rate proposed by the rates of the Living Wage Foundation, for 2021/22 (to be reviewed annually thereafter).

Statement by Chief Finance Officer

- n) approve the statement by the Chief Finance Officer regarding the robustness of the budget estimates and level of reserves as set out in Appendix M.
- o) approve Dacorum Borough Council entering into a Hertfordshire Business Rates pool as described in paras 4.10 to 4.15

Monitoring Officer

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

S.151 Officer

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

Advice

Cllr Elliot introduced the report presenting the councils recommended budget for 2021/22, advising that it has been through a comprehensive scrutiny process involving two joint budget OSC meetings, most recently at the start of February.

Cllr Elliot noted that there are two amendments to be made to the recommendations section;

Recommendation f) to be updated to read; 'approve and adopt the Treasury Management Strategy for 2021/22, attached at appendix K, noting the proposed changes to counter party limits detailed in section 4.6'

Also to include an additional recommendation o) to read; 'approve Dacorum Borough Council entering into a Hertfordshire Business Rates pool as described in paras 4.10 to 4.15.

Cllr Birnie asked; on page 114, item 1.6, there is a recommendation for training arrangements, for 'specialised for officers and councillors', commenting that he had never heard of this before and asking if this could be explained?

JDeane confirmed this is a training provision to ensure that all officers handling the Councils assets are suitably trained, along with Audit Committee members.

Cllr Birnie commenting that on reading minutes of Finance & Resources Overview & Scrutiny meeting for this item he noted that that Cllr Simmons referred to sum for 'undisclosed capital projects' where NHowcutt had advised it was a Part 2 item so it would be discussed outside of the meeting. Cllr Birnie asked if any of these items come under the remit of the Strategic Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny (SPAЕ).

JDeane responded to confirm that none relate directly to SPAЕ.

NHowcutt, added that a presentation was given on this last year and he would be able to circulate that if required.

Cllr Williams asked if there had been a recent announcement asked billing authorities to defer billing subject to an announcement as part of the budget.

JDeane responded that there hasn't been a clear instruction issued but that Government have suggested billing authorities might want consider deferring. JDeane advised that in response to this, the team are working on switching first payment date from 1st to 15th of month to allow us to make any necessary changes following budget announcement and still enable us to get the bills out with the correct timescales.

Cllr Griffiths advised she was at a recent meeting of the hospital regarding plans going forward; they are about to enter a consultation with another due in May. Cllr Griffiths suggested to the Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG), with hard to reach people, it might be worth having a chat with all the Councils in their areas as they will be carrying out mass mailing everyone with their Council Tax; maybe CCG could request we include some communication in those bills to reach all households, with CCG paying a contribution to postal costs.

Cllr Tindall advised he is in close contact with director of Public Health in his role of County Councillor and asked the Chair; would you like me to raise this with him as a suggestion as a useful way to communicate?

Cllr Williams responded that the timescale for this to happen would be very tight as billing will be due to go out very soon. Would place an additional strain on our Revenues service.

Recommendations agreed (with the amendments to recommendations as set out).

09 February 2021

8.3 CA/019/21 SENIOR OFFICER PAY POLICY

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND;

- 1) To Council that it adopts the Pay Policy for 2021/22 as set out in appendix 1 to this report.

Deputy Monitoring Officer

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

Deputy S.151 Officer

No further comments to add to this report.

Advice

Cllr Williams advised that it is a requirement for the Council to look at this on an annual basis and make recommendations.

Cllr Williams highlighted a change from previous years in that the Council took a decision 3 years ago to alter the lease car allowances and this comes into effect for this pay policy.

Cllr Williams advised that the pay settlement is not yet agreed, commenting that there is some way to go between unions and employers to come to agreement.

Recommendations agreed.