

CABINET REFERRALS (PART 1)

19 October 2021

7.1 CA/076/21 River Gade Restoration and Improvements to Gadebridge Park

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

To approve, subject to Council, a contribution of up to a maximum of £130,000 for Environmental Amenity works as part of the project.

Minutes:

Cllr Anderson introduced the report in Cllr Barrett's absence.

Cllr Birnie referred to the fence, an item which he advised has been discussed in great detail at SPAE OSC and with the Environment Agency also being in favour.

Cllr Birnie expressed that it was a concern that both children and dogs should be protected and commented that the sort of fencing we already have further down the park does not interfere with the view in any way and would be suitable.

Cllr Griffiths commented on the importance of this project, highlighting that this will go ahead whether we encourage it or not and clarifying that as a Council we want to ensure we get all the amenities in the park to make it an excellent scheme. It is important that we are involved in those discussions and able to fund those items to make it an enjoyable environment for our residents.

Cllr Williams agreed with Cllr Griffiths comments, adding that when we are agreeing to our contribution, a decision he advised would go to Council, any agreed payment will be about getting over and above what would have already been put in place following the work by the Environment Agency to the river; to enhance the experience for park users. We are increasing residential provision in the town centre, most of which do not have their own outdoor space, so the more we can do to enhance these public spaces the more provision we are making for everyone.

Recommendations Agreed.

23 November 2021

7.2 CA/088/21 Treasury Management Outturn and Performance Indicators 2020/21

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

That Cabinet recommends to Council acceptance of the report on Treasury Management performance in 2020/21 and the Prudential Indicators for 2020/21.

Minutes:

Cllr Elliott stated that the annual outturn position for the council's treasury activities shows their cash position and how they manage it. He stated that for security reasons, they do not put their cash with foreign organisations, but with the Bank of England. They then look at liquidity and how quickly they can get hold of their cash. He noted they get no return at the moment due to the 0.01% rate, but that it is more important to have security and liquidity in place over a high return. Cllr Elliott passed over to Nigel.

Nigel H added that in the statutory return, the performance figures have gone through the audit process, and all the credential indicators in the treasury management strategy were adhered to this year. He noted that the return on investment was reduced by 70% due to reduction in interest rates, which is something they would like to improve on this coming year.

Cllr Barratt asked how the authorised limit of £410 million was calculated.

Nigel explained they set it, and it needs to match with their capital programme, investment strategy, and whether they can finance that level of borrowing. He noted that they may increase it next year, as about 90% of their borrowing is HRA related, and their HRA programme is expanding, creating the need to borrow more money.

Cllr Elliott added that other councils have gone above that to invest in shopping centres etc, but that is not their strategy. Their strategy is housing.

Cllr Williams asked the council if they agreed recommendations 1 and 2 here. Council agreed.

23 November 2021

7.3 CA/089/21 Budget Monitoring Quarter 2 2021/22

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

- 1. Recommends to Council to draw down an additional £700k from the Economic Recovery Reserve to support Covid- related pressures on General Fund budgets.**
- 2. Recommends to Council the approval of a supplementary revenue budget of £200k in the Waste Services employee's budget, funded from the Savings Efficiencies Reserve.**
- 3. Recommends to Council approval of the revised capital programme to move £13.81m slippage identified at Quarter 2 into financial year 2022/23 as detailed in Appendix C.**
- 4. Recommends to Council the following supplementary capital budgets:**
 - £0.135m for Town Centre Access Improvements project, funded from a capital contribution**
 - £0.9m for Aragon Close Move-On Accommodation, 50% funded from the Department for Levelling Up, Communities and Housing (DLUHC) Rough Sleepers Accommodation Programme.**

- **£0.3m to support development of Move-On Accommodation by Hightown Housing Association at Alexandra Road**

Minutes:

Cllr Elliott noted it had been through scrutiny, and the recommendations were that they draw down from their economic reserve of £700,000 which was set up for pandemic costs, and to put in a budget of £200,000 for extra funding for waste services fleet personnel. There is also a new filming trading account being set up, to identify outflows of the filming industry since they had Spielberg's and Ricky Gervais' programmes there.

Cllr Williams added that the filming account is temporary, to help them see what income they have from filming in the area rather than just adding it into different budgets. This will make it clearer for them to see the benefits and potential benefits that filming is bringing to the borough. In addition to this, it will allow them to offer support to areas where trade is disrupted by filming such as the Old Town. Cllr Williams asked if council agrees recommendations 1 to 5, page 89 and 90. Council agreed.

23 November 2021

7.4 CA/090/21 Berkhamsted Leisure Centre

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

- 1. That Cabinet notes the forecast project costs (detailed in Part II Appendix) and recommends Council approves a maximum drawdown of £550,000 from the Dacorum Development Reserve to proceed with the next project stage (RIBA Stage 3 – Spatial Coordination).**
- 2. That Cabinet notes the approvals strategy set out in Section 2 and recommends that Council approves a maximum drawdown of £425k from the Dacorum Development Reserve to proceed with RIBA Stage 4 (Technical Design).**

Minutes:

Cllr Williams stated that they have been asked to move onto the next stage of this process, into more detailed design and costings.

Mark Brookes presented the updated report to council, in which they have developed site options, preferred facility mix and created an outline cost and revenue business plan. Mark believes this plan will meet the requirements of sporting groups and the public, and is adaptable to changing user demands over time. Subject to cabinet authorising this report, the project will proceed to stage 3, which is public consultation, detailed design development for planning applications, and the first stage of contractor procurement. During this stage, the final position of the 3G pitches, opportunities for residential development and sustainability measures will be worked on. Mark stated that a report to update members will be produced at the end of this stage, with a further report at the end of stage 4, the technical design stage. This stage is where greater clarity will be achieved on contractor costs and revenue projections for the contract with Everyone Active. At this point, members will need to commit financially to the scheme. Mark introduced Richard, a project manager from the consultancy team, and asked for any questions.

Cllr Tindall asked about paragraphs 3.6 and 3.7 on page 116, which pertain to football provision and Langley Meadow, whether these issues will be part of the public consultation.

Mark B responded yes, but they are only trying to improve the Langley Meadow site rather than developing on it, so they will keep the grass pitch, but the discussion around on or off site will be part of the public consultation.

Cllr Elliott asked about page 128, the financial assumptions, and whether the baseline hybrid facility mix is the worst case scenario, and where the figures have come from.

Mark B replied it is a combination of taking existing pre-Covid numbers, national data on income for facilities of this type, and projections for 3 years' time when they hope the recovery will have continued. He assured that they will monitor the recovery on a monthly basis, and report back in the next stage, but they do expect an uplift due to the new facilities that will be provided.

Cllr Elliott asked about the income figure for the spa, and questioned whether the residents of Berkhamsted would use it due to competition in the area with private operations.

Mark B answered that they have mapped out all the competition in the area, and found that actually what they will provide will go beyond what is already in that area. He noted there is a similar spa facility at Westminster Lodge in St Albans, so there is one comparison there.

Richard added that the St Albans facility is Everyone Active as well, and they are also opening another Lifestyle Centre in Amersham, therefore as the same operator will have all 3, the intention is for them to be complementary rather than competing. KKP, the business planner, has been involved in both schemes, which has informed their business projections here.

Cllr Griffiths expressed that personally, she sees it as a facility for the whole of Dacorum, as there is not a spa at the Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre, so the draw is bigger than just Berkhamsted. She believes that it could be marketed for the average person in Dacorum, not as an exclusive club, and she would definitely use it, so declared her interest in this.

Cllr Tindall asked if there was an opportunity for residents of Dacorum to have an annual card or a preferential price to encourage usage.

Mark answered that Everyone Active have a membership where you can use all their facilities, so any Dacorum members would already have access, with an enhanced price for using the spa on top.