

MINUTES

CABINET

24 MAY 2022

Present:

Members:

Councillors: Williams (Leader)
Griffiths (Deputy
Leader)
Elliot
Anderson
Banks
Barrett

Officers: Nigel Howcutt Chief Finance Officer (S151)
Sara Whelan Hemel Place Strategy Programme Manager
Farida Hussain Head of Legal and Democratic Services

Also Attendance:

The meeting began at 7.00 pm

CA/38/21 MINUTES

Cabinet agreed the meetings from the previous meeting

CA/39/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Claire Hamilton

CA/40/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CA/41/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

CA/42/21 REFERRALS TO CABINET

CA/43/21 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

**CA/44/21 HEMEL PLACE STRATEGY UPDATE AND CONSULTATION
LAUNCH**

Decision

1. To approve the public launch of the Hemel Place Strategy
2. Delegated authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to agree details of the Hemel Champions' Programme including the launch Date
3. Delegated authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to agree the approach and timing of community and investor engagement following consultation with the Hemel Place Board

Corporate Objectives

A clean, safe and enjoyable environment
Building strong and vibrant communities
Ensuring economic growth and prosperity
Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need
Climate and ecological emergency

Statutory Officer Comments:

Monitoring Officer:

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

S151 Officer:

The Hemel Place Programme has an approved budget to fund these proposals.

Advice

Cllr Anderson introduced the report, He said that members would be aware that they set up the Hemel Place Strategy as a major exercise to review opportunities for Hemel as a place, working with their partners across the board to look at opportunities post pandemic and planning constraints with the future in mind. It did not have a lot to add to the report apart from thank the officers for the amount of work and effort that had been put into the marketing, and commonplace the consultants that they had commissioned to do that for them.

S Whelan wanted to take Cabinet through the three recommendations on the public launch of the place strategy and the details around the Hemel champions and around the investor engagement consultation with the Hemel Place Board.

In terms of the report itself, it sets the clear direction of travel for Hemel Hempstead. It sets out 10 key themes in para 3.1, the delivery will be really important theme around the Hemel Place Strategy and this would be an action plan which would have the oversight of the Hemel Place Board as well as governance within Dacorum Borough Council. She said the critical thing around the Hemel Place Strategy work would be around flexibility, to adapt the strategy as they were going through.

S Whelan referred to appendix a and advised she had left the members a mini story book and business card so they could see the visuals in real life and that was what appendix a would take them through. They have visuals with the green background, visuals with a blue background and visuals with a purple background, which were more designed for the investor market. They had tested these at UK Reef with positive results. Her thoughts were that the green background visuals would be the overriding visuals that they could take going forward and that clicks in with the theme of Life is Greener.

They were looking at early July for the launch of the Hemel Place work, that would include an open invitation to become a Hemel champion and to attend Hemel Champion type sessions where people would be able to hear a strategic update from Dacorum Borough Council and for Dacorum to hear updates from the community, partners, from all their sectors as well as horizon scanning together. This will really build on the work they have done in the old town for example and being able to understand the priorities from all different sectors of the community and to be able to work together to improve places.

The key aspect around the Hemel Champions will be to educate colleagues as well as teachers of schools.

As second call to action would include engagement with the communities to be able to think about them and be able to ask qualitative questions, such as how they feel about Hemel, their levels of aspiration, what could support them further, what's the best thing about Hemel and what could add more value.

S Whelan concluded that the three recommendations of the report was to be able to seek approval to launch the strategy and then to take forward that consultation with the Hemel Champions, she was happy to take questions.

Cllr Tindall asked if the process was that, the report would go to the scrutiny committee before Cabinet or would it go straight to Cabinet.

SWhelan said that it would most likely go to Overview & Scrutiny, as the report would have a greater level of detail. When items seek permission to launch a strategy they would expect when looking at a consultation to analyse that and have that time with scrutiny before it goes to Cabinet,

Recommendation agreed

CA/45/21 QUARTERLY RISK REGISTER

Decision

To note that the content of the report

Corporate Objectives

A clean, safe and enjoyable environment

Building strong and vibrant communities

Ensuring economic growth and prosperity

Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery

Climate and ecological emergency

Statutory Officer Comments:

Monitoring Officer:

No comments to add to the report.

Deputy S151 Officer:

This is a S151 Officer report. Comments are contained within the body of the report.

Advice

Cllr Elliot introduced the report and wanted to note that point on Cyber-attacks and that it was pleasing to see that the Cabinet office had given them accreditation for another year. He highlighted the continued issues with recruiting and retaining staff, which had been an issue countrywide for many businesses. He was pleased to say that they were on top of that. He was happy to take questions.

Cllr Barrett referred to the risk for social media and that it had gone from 6 to 9, he asked why that was.

N Howcutt explained that the reason was twofold and partly subjective. What they do is try to assess what the actual risk would be, between quarter 2 and quarter 3 they had a change of risk owner. Therefore, from that perspective there was a slightly different nuance to it. Also although the jump was from 6 to 9 it was only a change by one in terms of the likelihood of outcome, this was because reviewing social media was becoming more and more important and the likelihood of risk is beginning to grow, even given the mitigations that they have in place. A lot more of the officers role now was to monitor social media and the feedback from residents. They have more controls in place and they do monitor their own social media extremely tightly, however it is perceived that it has a higher risk now than it had historically and he could not see that changing in the near future.

N Howcutt added that they are starting a root and branches review of the Strategic Risk Register, they last did this in November 2019 and since then have had Brexit, Covid and now the war in the Ukraine so now is the right time to review and it may

come with a different outcome. He mentioned that the Cabinet members and other colleagues in the room should have the 15th June in their diaries for the first workshop to look at the strategic risks to start that discussion and look at the process.

Cllr Tindall asked about if there were a task & finish group had been reviewed for the Local plan.

Cllr Anderson said that there has not been a task & Finish group as there has been nothing to report. The understanding was that as soon as there was something to report that body would resume.

Recommendations agreed

CA/46/21 BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT

Decision

1. To approve the new framework for Business engagement in Dacorum.
2. To approved the establishment of a high-level Strategic Hemel Business Board.
3. To approve holding a business event, hosted by the Leader, to launch the Hemel Business Board.

Corporate Objectives

Building strong and vibrant communities
Ensuring economic growth and prosperity

Statutory Officer Comments:

Monitoring Officer

There are no specific powers for local authorities to engage with businesses generally however section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a general power of competence which can be relied upon to implement the proposals in this report. Under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to incur expenditure, which in its opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its residents.

Deputy s151 Officer:

The financial investment to support these proposals are minimal and can be funded through existing approved budgets in 2022/23.

Advice

Cllr Anderson said that the report outlines a proposal for a new framework for the business in Dacorum and asks for our approval to establish a high level Strategic Business Board and to approve holding a business event hosted by the leader to launch the Hemel Business Board. Our Business engagement has worked really well with somethings but somethings have fallen by the wayside and are not working as well so they needed to revamp them. He was happy to take questions.

J Doe recognised there were changes to economic circumstances as Nigel had referred to also in his previous item, as their economic position evolves with things like the Hemel Place Strategy and other things moving forward there is a need for a more strategic oversight of the business engagement. He wanted to draw members attention too appendix one which sets out their current arrangements which do work really well but they cover many different fields. The second point was that they were trying to inform this review through a review of their intelligence which is taken from the economic dashboard which was published last year. So it is getting the right sort of business sectors, the right business representation for this strategic board. He was happy to take questions.

Cllr Barratt referred to a point in the report, which mentions that they had been allocated £1.763.392 by the government from the UK shared prosperity fund; he asked what that could be spent on.

J Doe responded that that was a non-competitive bid, which was good news. It was money that had been allocated to them and what they were required to do in the early part of next month was to submit an investment plan back through to the government ready to set out their proposals. It was largely around the supply side of things like skills and other issues around economic promotion rather than capital works and so on. There was a published prospectus online from the government, they were currently working with other districts, and the County Council as there was an expectation from the government that when you were looking at things like skills developments that you may look beyond traditional district boundaries. That plan was being pulled together and will be submitted in time for the cut off.

Cllr Williams asked if there was 15, 16 17 million across Hertfordshire for this or was there a huge variation on what districts were allocated.

JDoe said that they were different amounts; he could get the figures over however there are different amounts and an amount for county also.

Recommendation Agreed

CA/47/21 HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY AMENDMENT

Decision

1. To approve the capital threshold proposed in paragraph 2.4.

Corporate Objectives:

A clean, safe and enjoyable environment
Building strong and vibrant communities
Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need

Statutory Officer Comments

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

No further comments to add to the legal implications included in the report.

Deputy S151 Officer:

The introduction of the capital threshold limit is not projected to have a negative impact on void levels and hence there is no projected financial impact on the HRA. The introduction of the threshold at £400,000 is in line with local property prices and would appear appropriate to allow the HRA to support vulnerable residents in the borough.

Advice

Cllr Griffiths introduced the report and said that members would recall that in November last year they brought the revised allocation policy to Cabinet it had been through the Tenants & Leaseholders Committee and the Overview & Scrutiny committee. There has been lots of consultation with the tenants and it was all approved, however when they were going through the final detail of the implantation they had at that point removed any limit on elderly person dwelling. They had a large vacancy in there but they had also removed any requirement for any capital money that people may have, therefore there was a zero threshold to qualify to go into sheltered housing. Through a lot of work that had been done through the sheltered housing team and people coming out of the pandemic they now, do not have a large number of voids that they did have.

It had also been thought that they should bring in a limit, it is proposed at £400K, the evidence is all in the report that had been compiled by the officers, and quite a thorough job had been done. She felt it was a very sensible way forward. She said that they could always come back and look at that threshold if it is too high or too low or giving them other issues or exceptions to the policy. She was happy to take questions.

NBeresford wanted to touch on and highlight some key detail. Detailed research had been undertaken in relation to average market value for supported housing properties in the private sector. Market consideration was also given to the rising energy costs, inflation and the overwhelming position with the financial climate in relation to the housing costs level that perspective applicants could have to resolve their own housing need within the private sector market. As mentioned in the report appendices page 94 and 98 provides the narrative to support the context and the decision making process in respect of average market values in Dacorum for general needs accommodation, those are currently sitting at just over £400k.

Our protocol market value of the properties size between one and three bedroom are just over £318K and the average market value for supported housing properties in Dacorum are currently just over £328k. The information contained in the appendices and were the basis of the decision-making has enabled them to set that threshold of £400k. Its felt that was a sufficient level to enable that individual to be able to resolve his or her own hosing needs in Dacorum. The policy dopes make allowance for any

circumstance where they may be an exceptional situation such as a household inability to access the property on the open market that may require extensive adaptations. Letting them access the capital and enabling them to afford that home and resolve their own housing need. She was happy to take questions.

Recommendation agreed

The Meeting ended at 7.57 pm