

MINUTES

Dacorum Borough Council

Strategic Planning and Environment Wednesday 14th March

Councillors:

Neil Harden (Chair)
Jane Timmis
Garrick Stevens
Adrian England
Stewart Riddick
Rob Beauchamp
Rosie Sutton
Nigel Taylor
Anne Foster
Collette Wyatt-Lowe
Fiona Guest

Also in attendance: Julie Banks (Cllr)
Alan Anderson (Cllr)

Officers: (6)

Alex Robinson – Assistant Director Planning
James Doe – Strategic Director – Place
Trevor Pugh – Assistant Director – Neighbourhood Delivery
Keely Mitchell – Trainee Strategic Planning & Regeneration Officer
Diane Southam – Assistant Director Place, Communities and Enterprise Restructure.

The meeting began at 19:30

1 MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting were approved.

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from, Cllr Hearn, Cllr Wilkie and Cllr Rogers

Cllr Guest was a substitute for Cllr Rogers.

Cllr Taylor and Cllr England gave apologies for lateness.

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

5 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO A CALL-IN

None.

6 ACTION POINTS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Noted

7 Q3 PLANNING AND REGENERATION PERFORMANCE REPORT

ARobinson provided the update, noting that this is the first style of the report to consolidate a number of KPIs that were previously reported to the Committee. The new series of KPIs cover an amalgamated metric and planning applications determined within target, enforcement visits taken place against the target, affordable housing completions and retail property completions. There is no data for the quarter on housing or retail property completions. 80% of planning applications were determined within target, against a target of 70%, and 79% of enforcement priority sites were completed against a target of 100%.

Cllr Foster queried why there was no data for housing or retail property completions. ARobinson advised that the data for formal housing completions relies on NHBC submissions that are not always provided in time for the report. On affordable housing, ARobinson confirmed that they would check when the NHBC data is submitted and how this syncs with the report, noting that they are reliant on the NHBC reporting cycle.

Cllr Stevens referred to item 1.8 and the reference to the vacancy rate for council-owned commercial assets being 4.6%. Cllr Stevens asked if they could receive clarification on what this refers to. ARobinson suggested that this is based on a units basis.

Cllr Guest referred to page 19 of the report, paragraphs 1.4 and 1.5, and the reference to the number of planning applications determined within target exceeding the target. Cllr Guest congratulated officers for exceeding this target, particularly given that they are down on planning officers. Cllr Guest noted that the team is working through the backlog of enforcement site visits and asked how the live caseload is being reduced. PStanley noted that cases can be resolved due to the enforcement team finding that there has been no breach, that the breach is minor and it is not worth taking action, or a retrospective planning application has been submitted.

Cllr Guest asked if cases are dropping off due to being resolved. PStanley explained that a live case has to be open and all closed cases will no longer form part of the live caseload data.

Cllr Timmis noted her surprise that the target level of completed enforcement is as high as 79%, noting that another form of prioritisation has been brought in to bring total numbers down. Cllr Timmis stated that there are at least 10 outstanding cases in her ward and that she feels the service is failing. PStanley responded that the performance target in the report

solely relates to first site visits and how quickly the enforcement team are completing these. This will depend on the priority of the case, with priority 1 cases having to be visited within 1 working day, priority 2 cases within 10 working days and priority 3 cases within 15 working days. This is not a performance measure on how many live cases are reaching a resolution within a certain timeframe.

Cllr Timmis commented that a case that was opened in 2016 that has not been dealt with since would come under the 79%. PStanley stated that the 79% in the report reflects the number of cases visited for the first time in time and doesn't reflect the total caseload or speed of resolution.

The Chair asked if the 79% refers to new, live cases. PStanley stated that there could theoretically be a 2020 case that they have not visited before and if it was visited in this quarter then it would be part of the 21% not visited in time.

The Chair queried if there are KPIs regarding cases not visited. ARobinson confirmed that it would be highlighted as a missed case.

ARobinson commented on enforcement, noting that whilst the target doesn't always reflect the full lifecycle of an enforcement case, they also acknowledge the stress the service has been under. The data for June 2021 and September 2022 shows that the number of priority 1 site visits has gone from 60% to 90% in target, priority 2 has gone from 42% to over 60% and priority 3 site visits remain at 80%. The service is improving in this measure, though it is recognised that visiting a site doesn't mean the enforcement case is closed. ARobinson advised that there is an action plan to get the live caseloads reduced as much as possible.

Cllr Timmis referred to an example in her ward, noting a barn that was put up on green belt and outstanding natural beauty land. Planning permission was turned down and the barn was still put up. Planning enforcement visited and stated that they had 6 months to take the building down, but it still remains. Cllr Timmis acknowledged the challenges faced by planning enforcement given that officers are being attracted elsewhere, and she confirmed that she has written to the Chief Executive to state that the department requires better funding to deliver its service.

ARobinson advised that they could discuss individual cases offline to set out the steps being taken to resolve these. There is huge demand across the service with a limited pool of officers.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe commented on the importance of getting statistics from other organisations and how this can impact DBC reporting.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe noted item 4 in the report and achieving 80%, stating that this was a strong achievement given the challenges the team is currently facing.

JDoe noted that he will be meeting Cllr Timmis towards the end of the week and that he will be following up the issues in her ward.

Cllr Foster noted that the KPI is currently the only measure to illustrate how enforcement is performing and that there is no other measure. PStanley stated that the KPI is a combined priority 1-3, which were historically separated out, and only relates to first site visits. This has been the only corporate KPI for some time now, and it was noted that the public want to know both how quickly a site is visited and a resolution is found. The 400 Plan was therefore created to help reduce caseloads and allow for an annual proactive focus to look at cases from a specific year. PStanley advised that it is not always easy to measure resolution as enforcement can take many years in some cases so they would need to determine what is meant by resolution. ARobinson agreed, noting that the KPI currently only tells part of the story and that it is difficult to define what success looks like.

Cllr Foster commented on the retail property vacancy KPI and noted that data is not currently recorded by asset type. Cllr Foster asked if the intention is to record by asset type in future. ARobinson explained that the intention is to provide a granular picture of the vacancies, though there is currently limited information available, and further detail will be provided in future.

Cllr Stevens noted the comprehensive return in development management, and whilst there are extensive reports on this, he stated he was not sure whether simplistic returns would help. The Chair suggested that it's challenging to define a successful measure that members would want to see.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe agreed with Cllr Stevens, noting that the reports that come in on development management include a high level of information, and that this illustrates the difficulties getting the resolutions that members want. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe recommended that the Committee receive a version of what the Planning Committee receives.

JDoe referred to the query on retail occupancy figures, stating that this is an area that requires further work, though also relates to item 11 on Hemel Town Centre and that they also need to look to other centers and villages over the coming months.

The report was noted.

8 Q3 ENVIRONMENTAL AND COMMUNITY PROTECTION PERFORMANCE REPORT

TPugh provided the update, noting the number of high-risk food inspections is just under 60% as they continue to work through the backlog, though they are on target to fully recover this by Q2. The number of fixed penalty notices issued by district enforcement for the PSPO is 3,536.

Cllr Beauchamp noted that the report refers to a spatial planning environment and asked if the Committee is spatial or strategic. It was noted that the Committee is strategic.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe referred to a public health panel meeting and noted a discussion regarding health prevention matters. A question regarding air pollution was raised and that the amount of particulates exposes residents to health problems, and Cllr Wyatt-Lowe asked if DBC is doing all it can to push Hertfordshire to address these issues.

Cllr Banks agreed with the comments, noting that their relationship with partners and stakeholders is critical to the work they are doing locally to improve air quality. DBC's main role is to monitor and contribute to meetings, and they are actively participating in a number of forums.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe confirmed that she requested at the panel meeting a possible scrutiny on air quality and the need for more regular reporting to Public Health.

Cllr England noted that the report previously included a breakdown on the types of offences and the locations. The Chair suggested that TPugh look at previous updates to see the level of information provided on district enforcement.

Cllr England asked if there has been any balancing out regarding tackling litter across the borough and not just penalising smokers. TPugh confirmed that he would provide the member with this information and that the highest offence is the littering of cigarette butts, with Hemel Hempstead town centre seeing the most offences. The Chair noted that Hemel Hempstead town centre has the greatest footfall and therefore the greater intensity of enforcement, which can skew the figures.

Cllr England noted that Keep Britain Tidy states that cigarette litter accounts for 70-90% and if DBC is recording over 90% then this suggests they are not being as proportional as they should.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe commented that, going through Hemel Hempstead town centre, the greatest accumulation of cigarette butts is around bins and asked if the bins are designed correctly.

Cllr Beauchamp suggested that the bin design isn't the issue and that people take a 'near enough' approach and throw cigarette butts towards the bin.

Cllr Guest referred to the 2,666 PSPOs that have been paid and 870 tickets were cancelled, some of which are due to being referred to prosecution. Cllr Guest noted that 327 were prosecuted through the single justice procedure and asked for clarification on what this is. The Chair advised that this is a way of ensuring that the individual doesn't have to go before the court and acts in a similar way as an on-the-spot fine. Cllr Guest asked if this refers to all cases referred to prosecution. The Chair suggested that if there is no challenge to the case then most will go through the single justice procedure.

The report was noted.

ACTION: TPugh to provide further reporting on district enforcement.

9 Q3 ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Chair advised that there was no report. It was noted that neither officer had been made aware that the individual report should be produced, though the report has now been produced and will be circulated to members post-meeting.

On the 5 KPIs, the following was noted:

- Fly-tips collected within the timescale of 7 days is 91.7% against a target of 95%.
- Graffiti removal within 7 days is 91.9% against a target of 95%.
- 313 bins were missed per 100,000 bins collected.
- Recycling is 49%.
- 109kg of residual waste per household.

Cllr Timmis noted the charging of a fly-tipper in her ward and advised that she has received a report from a resident stating that there has been a major fly-tip in the middle of a lane. Cllr Timmis noted that she has also recently seen further fly-tipping and asked if they are seeing an increase in cases. TPugh noted that there is a relatively high number of fly-tips in Dacorum, though he was unsure if they could state that numbers are increasing. TPugh added that DBC does more enforcement around fly-tipping compared to any other council in Hertfordshire.

Cllr Timmis referred to the 313 missed bins and asked if this is due to crews changing. TPugh advised that the figure is for justified missed bins, noting that the figure of 320 for February breaks down to 112 grey bins, 106 blue, 12 green and 90 kerbside caddies.

Cllr Timmis commented on the green bins, noting that residents have stated that they have not received the leaflet and that bins were not collected. TPugh explained that they were let down by the leaflet distributors, though there were other methods of communication, and they are organising for more leaflets to be delivered as well as putting bin hangers onto bins.

Cllr Beauchamp commented on residual waste and asked if this refers to black bin waste or a combination of all bins. TPugh confirmed that this refers to black bin waste.

Cllr Foster asked how many residents registered for green bin collection after the first collection took place. TPugh confirmed that he could provide this figure, though there is currently around 14,000 subscriptions. TPugh added that they have reached their assumed number and are now above this.

The Chair queried the process to remove graffiti from private properties. TPugh stated that they notify the owner of the property and that they are asked to remove it or pay the council to do so.

Cllr Stevens provided an anecdotal report regarding a green bin out for collection without a sticker. Cllr Stevens stated that the owner knew the cost but was unsure of how to register and asked how they can encourage residents to phone up to register, noting that it is much easier to sign up online. TPugh advised that customer services have received a high level of calls, which has led to delays. There has been funding for an additional member of the team for the period, though two additional members may have been preferable.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe commented on green bins and the intention to encourage people to compost more of their own rubbish at home. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe asked how much effort has been put into raising the profile of composting. TPugh advised that they continue to run

campaigns and offers around composters, though the message may be lost in the wider reaction to the charges.

Cllr Taylor asked how long it currently takes for a green bin collection to be registered. TPugh advised that it should be received within 10 days following payment. Cllr Taylor asked if people could pay online and the lorry could be notified on a one-off basis that the resident has paid. TPugh advised that this could be done, though they want to make it clear for collectors that bins should not be collected if they don't have a sticker. TPugh referred to the level of publicity regarding green bin collections and that the terms and conditions state that a sticker must be on the bin before it is collected.

Cllr Stevens challenged the view regarding composting at home, noting that the amount of space that people have to compost is decreasing. Cllr Stevens noted that he has tried composting and has now abandoned food composting as it attracted rats. It was suggested that if gardens are decreasing then a smaller composter would be required.

Cllr England reflected that the Council is disrespecting residents by introducing the green bin subscription too quickly, noting that they know they will upset residents by doing it this way.

The Chair queried the current registration figures for green bin subscriptions. TPugh confirmed that they have already gone beyond the anticipated registration figures. The Chair acknowledged the teething issues and suggested that the registration figures show that the scheme has been successful.

Cllr Timmis noted that registrations were challenged due to putting out the leaflet distribution to a private company as a result of Royal Mail being on strike. Cllr Timmis commented that the first collection is over winter, when there will be less waste, and that she was unsure if rolling out the scheme more slowly would have resolved the issues.

Cllr England asked which company had distributed the leaflets and if it was the same company that had distributed the Local Plan draft several years ago. It was agreed that this could be looked into.

The report was noted.

ACTION: TPugh to provide further information on green bin collection registration.

ACTION: To look into whether leaflet distribution company have been used by DBC in the past.

10 PARADISE DESIGN CODE

ARobinson introduced the item, noting that the Committee has previously seen the draft and that it has been out to consultation, receiving 23 consultation responses. The report is now the final design code and the Committee is being asked to inform Cabinet of its views on the documents. ARobinson confirmed that, once adopted, the design code will provide a detailed set of design requirements for the Paradise employment site, which was allocated under the site allocations DPD for mixed-use development a number of years ago.

Cllr Guest asked how much weight the new design code will have in determining planning applications compared with the current SPD. A Robinson explained that there are a hierarchy of plans and the DPD document will sit alongside the core strategy with the SPD being a subsidiary document that provides more detail on the site. It will be a material consideration when determining a planning application and will get the requisite level of weight alongside other planning considerations.

Cllr Guest asked how the new design code compares to what currently exists. A Robinson advised that the existing documents won't change and will maintain their current weight, and the new document provides additional detail to the policies. The new document code doesn't have more weight, though provides additional detail and clarification by expanding on the existing policy.

Cllr Guest referred to page 31 of the report, paragraph 1.3, on the consultation running from 28th October 2022 for 4 weeks, closing on 28th November 2023, and asked if it should read 2022. It was confirmed that this was incorrect and could be updated.

Cllr England congratulated the officers on the work. This was supported by a number of other members.

Cllr Timmis asked if the design code only relates to the Paradise area and will not roll out to other parts of Dacorum. A Robinson confirmed that this is purely the defined area, as set out in the document. K Mitchell noted that it also sets out parameters regarding height.

Cllr Timmis commented that a number of trees are deciduous and that buildings will look more austere in winter months. K Mitchell confirmed that new codes have been included on tree planting and that the details of this will be detailed planning provisions.

Cllr Timmis commended the suggestion that apartments should have their own green space.

A comment was raised that there are other design codes for other areas across the borough. K Mitchell noted that they are one of the first to adopt a design code using the national guidance.

Cllr England asked if the design code doesn't imply anything for any other part of Hemel Hempstead. This was confirmed.

Cllr England queried the maximum size of a design code area. K Mitchell stated that there isn't a maximum size and all design codes must be based on analysis. K Mitchell noted that the design code applies to the site, though they have drawn objectives from the Hemel Garden Community Spatial Vision, and other design codes in the area will likely build on similar principles with similar objectives.

A Robinson noted that government are looking to move the planning system more into design codes to provide clarity, though it is challenging to have a checklist that complies given the level of subjectivity. A Robinson referred to the parameters set out as well as the level of discretion in assessment on a case-by-case basis.

ARobinson advised that the direction of the Local Plan is to see more design codes come forward with the strategic growth sites as it helps provide residents with a greater understanding of what will happen and it's also a good opportunity for residents to be involved in shaping developments as they come forward.

JDoe commented noted that the design code has been a useful exercise and has given officers a level of new skills that can now be rolled out to other design codes.

On the size of area, JDoe agreed that there is no predefined limit, and noted that one output from the Maylands study will be a design code for the whole of Maylands, which will be much larger than Paradise.

The Chair asked if the site will have restricted parking. K Mitchell confirmed that it would need to comply with the parking SPD. The Chair noted that standalone areas often have restricted parking, which doesn't deter people from having cars and instead impacts the areas outside of the restrictions. ARobinson advised that they are looking to not change any parking standards and the parking SPD will need to be complied with. The design code provides guidance on how to layout car parking within the development.

Cllr Stevens commented that, once adopted, it will become a master plan for the area. KMitchell advised that it will set the parameters for design, and rather than a master plan that states what does where, it acts as the middle stage between a design guide and master plan. ARobinson added that there is complexity with the Paradise site due to the multiple ownerships and they therefore can't provide a specific master plan, though they can provide guidelines on how it can comply.

ARobinson advised that anything that comes forward will still require planning permission, and if a developer wishes to deviate from the design code then the local authority has the ability to refuse applications.

Cllr England asked if councillors on Development Management would need an in-depth understanding of the design code. ARobinson stated that, once adopted, the design code will form part of supplementary guidance that is already in place and Committee members will need to be briefed on the design code. This will be offered as part of the normal cycle of planning training, though when applications come forward, officers will explain to members how the application does or doesn't comply with the design code. KMitchell noted that appendix B sets out the compliance checklist, which developers will need to fill out if they have scheme on the site.

The Committee agreed the recommendation that it informs Cabinet of its views.

It was noted that this would be ARobinson's last SPAE and members thanked him for his work. ARobinson thanked members for their support.

SWhelan presented the framework, first noting the work on Tring and Berkhamsted, advising that both now have a narrative set in place with engagements started with communities in autumn 2022. Tring has started a steering group that has met 3 times and DSoutham has met with Berkhamsted to look at next steps. SWhelan noted the connecting of communities across the borough with all 3 areas highlighting that working together and connecting the communities will benefit them all.

SWhelan apologised for the town vision document not being included on the agenda and acknowledged that members would need further time to go through this. This is a draft document and is not intended to go to Cabinet until summer, and SWhelan suggested that this item come back to SPAE in June or via a separate briefing in the coming weeks.

SWhelan advised that the town centre vision is aimed at land owners and investors and that there will be opportunities to rephrase this to consider other audiences. The partnership approach is critical and is highlighted early on in the vision as it is a huge strength that investors can invest in a place where there is civic pride and a strong network of businesses. The three main themes of the vision are on businesses, connections and wellbeing, and these follow through into the wider strategy. There is a focus on the pedestrian connections and curating the public spaces, and there are 8 aims around the vision that are deliverable through partnership by focusing on investment and regeneration opportunities. The drivers for change include a lack of sustainable transport, oversupply of retail, lack of culture and leisure facilities, a decrease in employment and reduced footfall.

SWhelan noted the analysis for both sections of the town centre to consider main cycling routes, retail spaces and which areas can be diversified. The history of Hemel Hempstead is also included within the vision to help increase the civic pride and ownership within the community, and being 75 years old, some areas will require renewal and investment. 5 priorities for Hemel Town Centre have been laid out as (1) making Bank Court the heart of the town centre, (2) improve east-west connections, (3) reimagine Waterhouse Street, (4) reconnect the Old Town and New Town, and (5) the Hemel Imaginarium project to focus on meanwhile usage. Zones for opportunities have also been identified for when funding comes in and will have a partnership approach.

On the next steps, SWhelan explained that they are working with the third and private sector to think imaginatively about funding opportunities and resources. The work in progress items around quotes will be completed and the document will be taken to UKREiiF before coming back to SPAE in June, before going to Cabinet in July to ratify the document. Work will also commence with the Hemel Place Board on action plans.

The Chair asked if the Council should be promoting themselves as Hemel or Hemel Hempstead. SWhelan confirmed that they had looked into this and that the resulting conclusion was Hemel Hempstead to external audiences and Hemel for internal audiences. JDoe agreed that it's an important distinction.

JDoe commented on the challenges facing all town centres and noted that this requires a fresh approach to setting their aspirations for Hemel Town Centre. JDoe explained that this is an overarching vision where further levels of detail can be added and he reminded members that they are looking to promote Hemel Hempstead as an investment location as

they are reliant on attracting ambitious investment into the area. Contacts made at UKREiiF last year were very promising and this year they are able to take the document with them.

DSoutham acknowledged the work that SWhelan has put into the document and noted that it is a document that developers and investors will want to see. DSoutham advised that they are not just looking at new inward investors but also existing landowners and encouraging them to stay in the area. DBC doesn't own much land in the town centre and the focus needs to be on promoting what they do have.

The Chair noted the agenda item was Hemel Town Centre Framework. SWhelan confirmed that the title of the document is the Hemel Town Centre Vision.

Cllr Beauchamp congratulated SWhelan and JDoe on their work on the vision and commended the thought process that went into create the document. The town is transitioning from being a retail centre into an experience centre and this is the model that most towns are following. Cllr Beauchamp noted the Japanese company that have taken over Hamilton House with the aim to create a community within the unit and Hemel Town Centre. Cllr Beauchamp commented on the town's potential and that it was positive to see DBC ahead of the game.

Cllr Timmis congratulated the team on their hard work and asked what relation the document bears to the new Local Plan in terms of numbers of houses, etc., noting that they are yet to be consulted on the new Local Plan. SWhelan advised that this is a different way of working and is separate to the Local Plan and planning process that allow the place strategies to be broader than what would be seen in the Local Plan or design code. The place approach for an area may focus on community groups or regeneration opportunities and is much broader than a planning piece, and the vision won't have the same level of detail, such as how many homes there will be or how many schools or parking spaces are required. The vision has helped to define what the Local Plan can look at in the town centre, though the vision is owned by the place of that town centre.

Cllr Timmis suggested that investors and developers may be pressurising for the maximum amount that they can get out of it, which may not work alongside the general plan of how the place should work. SWhelan acknowledged this and explained that the vision sets out to engage with landowners and investors to demonstrate that it is a town centre to invest in. JDoe added that the vision is not a planning supplementary document nor a design code or master plan, and it will influence the Council's thinking on what goes into the Local Plan, though this will come back to members after the elections when work has progressed further. JDoe advised that the recommendation for the document is that it's visionary, ambitious as well as open to suggestions, and any regeneration will be safeguarded by the planning process.

Cllr England commended the document and asked to discuss the green connection into the town further. Cllr England suggested that the east-west visibility of opening up Waterhouse Street doesn't happen with the apertures available at the moment and that he would like to see Primark taken down. On the east-west connection, SWhelan stated that the urban analysis appendix sets out the new town architect and design pieces that are the best quality, noting that the front of Primark is wonderful, though the location of it with the narrow

route either side is a challenge, as is the location of Bank Court. SWhelan commented that the challenge is a benefit around Bank Court as it provides a sense of enclosure and they will need freeholders to consider the frontages. SWhelan referred to St. Christopher's Place in St. Albans and in London that is very narrow with festoon lighting. SWhelan suggested that the east-west connections aren't that narrow and could be temporarily dressed with installations to make the area as attractive as possible.

Cllr England suggested that taking this approach would act as a hint to freeholders. SWhelan stated that this should help inspire freeholders and leaseholders to consider other opportunities.

On cycling, SWhelan noted that the vision doesn't have the level of detail on where cycle routes should be though does follow the town centre master plan from 7-8 years ago that did include key cycle routes. SWhelan noted that the route goes parallel to the Marlowes to keep the Marlowes parade cycle-free, and explained that a separate cycle and walking implementation plan is also being formulated, which will be key to identifying where cycle routes should be. Feasibility work is also being done around bike hire schemes.

The Chair commented on the plans around Bank Court and asked if Barclays have been informed that they want to place a restaurant on the site. SWhelan advised that the plans need to be taken out to freeholders so they can understand their current appetite and when leases are up for renewal. SWhelan noted that the team is very small at present, though they are identifying early priorities.

Cllr England suggested that Bank Court be renamed Riverbank Court. SWhelan commented on the importance of history and being authentic to a place's history.

Cllr England noted the murals and sculptures around Hemel and suggested that people should be taken on a tour of these sites. SWhelan advised that one of the first actions they will take this year is using the UK Shared Prosperity Fund to have a meanwhile uses strategy, which will involve a number of partners outside of the Council, and ideas such as a heritage trail have already come out strongly.

Cllr England commented on having a locality budget and being able to use some to move the lamppost that was put in front of one of the murals.

The Chair referred to the artist's impression feature of Hemel, stating that it looks too busy. The Chair also commented on the consultation feedback and suggested that the word clouds don't work, noting that it currently puts 'eat children' together and it also mentions Watford within the cloud. SWhelan stated that the appendix requires the most work and that it has been updated since it was included in the appendix. SWhelan confirmed that they are using AI technology to group the analysis together in a better way and confirmed that it would undergo further work.

The Chair commended the work and enthusiasm from the team around putting Hemel Hempstead on the map and being able to take the vision to UKREiIF.

The Committee noted the report.

12 WORK PROGRAMME

The Chair noted the work programme.

Cllr Timmis noted that A Robinson should be removed from the work programme.

Cllr Timmis asked if water companies could be invited to attend given the plans on reducing water usage and possible hosepipe bans.

LFowell confirmed that there are a number of items to be planned on the previous work programme and noted that the June work programme will be for the next term so is populated only with standing reports. LFowell confirmed that the Hemel Town Centre Vision will be added to the plan.

The Chair asked if they could have a 'to be added' column on the work programme for the next term. LFowell explained that any suggestions could be sent to the Chair and that they would be added as items for consideration.

Cllr Timmis noted that Luton Airport are about to put in for a large expansion and suggested that this should be discussed at SPAE.

The Chair asked that any suggestions be emailed to him with LFowell copied in.

13. Any other business

JDoe commented on ARobinson leaving and reassured members that they are out to advert on his substantive post along with other leadership posts within the Council with a closing date of 3rd April and interviews scheduled for May. An interim AD for planning will start on 20th March and JDoe confirmed that he would circulate details to members as well as liaising with LFowell and the team on putting contact details into the member news.

There being no further business, the Chair closed the meeting.