



Council Briefing Note September 2023

PLACE PORTFOLIO – COUNCILLOR SHERON WILKIE

### Planning Services

Significant service achievements since last Council meeting:

- The Public Inquiry into proposals for 1400 new homes at 'Marshcroft' on land East of Tring decision is expected around 15<sup>th</sup> November.
- Two major planning applications have been received for development within Bovingdon. Firstly, an application for 57 dwellings and 59 extra care units (plus outline permission sought for up to a further 129 dwellings) at Grange Farm. Secondly, an application for 43 dwellings on Molyneaux Avenue (the LA6 site).
- Cabinet approved temporary enforcement officer resources to cover a 16 month period. It is expected that this additional resource will be in place at the beginning of October.
- Two graduates through the Local Government Association Pathways to Planning scheme will be placed at Dacorum Borough Council in March 2024
- A bid has been submitted to Planning Skills Delivery Fund for £75,000. This fund is for local authorities to help clear backlogs of planning applications and address skills gaps is hosted by Department for Levelling Up Housing and Communities  
<https://www.gov.uk/guidance/planning-skills-delivery-fund-year-1-guidance-for-applicants>

Strategic or significant operational matters which your service would like full Council to be aware of:

- Proposals are being worked up across the Council, led by the AD for Planning, on dealing with the remaining aspects of the Chilterns Beechwoods Mitigation Strategy. This is to ensure that there is sufficient SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace) to support the delivery of new housing across the Borough)
- Work progresses on the new Dacorum Local Plan and a new timetable is being prepared by Officers to take the Council to the next stage in the process, a 'regulation 18' draft for public consultation.
- Engagement in the ST Albans Regulation 18 consultation which closes on 25<sup>th</sup> September 2023
- The revised South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan Vision and Objectives were supported by Scrutiny on 6 September 2023

### Place and Enterprise

Significant service achievements since last Council meeting:

- Two successful Velodrome events were held on the Market Square in Hemel Hempstead over the summer, funded through UKSPF funding. Additional activities provided by the BID were also funded as part of their summer activities.

Strategic or significant operational matters which your service would like full Council to be aware of:

- Maylands Masterplan contract has been awarded to Cushman and Wakefield. A contract inception meeting was held on 20 September with a partner inception meeting to follow.
- Following approval by Cabinet of the UKSPF Investment Plan proposals, due diligence on applicants was undertaken. Successful bidders have been notified of conditional award of funding with some follow up due diligence being undertaken on two applications. Officers continue to follow government governance reporting requirements.
- The Hemel Town Centre Vision was approved by Cabinet on 18<sup>th</sup> July 2023.
- Applications for Dacorum's Den closed on 1<sup>st</sup> September 2023. 26 applications were received, currently being reviewed. Pitch presentations to the Den will take place on 6<sup>th</sup> October 2023 with an awards event on the 3<sup>rd</sup> November 2023.
- Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassadors has ceased as an organisation due to the subscription model not being sustainable. Businesses have been signposted to the council's newsletter sign up as well as the business email address, both of which are routes to ongoing business support. Officers are working on proposals for a Council Business Engagement Framework to be launched over the Autumn.
- Arrangements are underway for Christmas lights for Marlowes. Hemel Old Town, Tring and Berkhamstead and for the neighbourhood centres. Christmas trees have also been ordered for some locations and options for additional attractions are being considered.

## **Communities Arts and Culture**

Significant service achievements since last Council meeting:

- The Old Town Hall continues to offer a very full and varied programme to our residents. Overall customer satisfaction for events in the last quarter as 96% excellent or good, with the front of house staff receiving 100% excellent or good.
- The Adventure Playgrounds (APG) have seen 16,336 child attendances from April to July with a further 15,466 other users including bookings.
- Funding has been secured for a further year for the Health Inequalities and Healthy Hub programmes.

Strategic or significant operational matters which your service would like full Council to be aware of:

- A proposal for the future approach to Voluntary and Community Sector funding will be presented to Cabinet on 12<sup>th</sup> December 2023 once it has been through appropriate governance.
- For the first time, the Old Town Hall will present a three week show over the Christmas period. 'The Ballard of Rudy' will run from the 5<sup>th</sup> -24<sup>th</sup> December, with schools and group bookings expected to provide the majority of the audience.
- To increase the ability to promote the services the APGs can offer, a micro site has been developed where policies, booking links and activity information is now held in one place.
- A Recycled Art Sculpture project is underway, culminating in an event in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre on 14<sup>th</sup> October to promote National Recycle Week.

## **Hemel Garden Communities**

Significant service achievements since last Council meeting:

- Towpath re-surfacing improvements, Nash Mills to Kings Langley, have been completed.
- Nickey Line re-surfacing from Redbourn Road to Queensway has been completed.
- A Place-making for the future event was held on 17<sup>th</sup> July looking at health and well-being; green infrastructure; and, active and sustainable travel challenges and opportunities.
- Solar Bulk Buy Autumn 2023 was launched at the end of August. The promotion introduces residents to a Hertfordshire-wide group buying scheme for photo-voltaics, battery storage and electric car charging point installation.. The Autumn 2022 programme has resulted in the installation of over 10,000 PVs across Hertfordshire.

Strategic or significant operational matters which your service would like full Council to be aware of:

- St Albans District Council are currently consulting on their Regulation 18 draft Local Plan. The proposals include the Hemel Garden Communities' housing allocations at land East of Hemel Hempstead, employment land and gypsy and traveller site allocations. The consultation has included a series of consultation events, including an event on 8<sup>th</sup> September at Leverstock Green. The consultation closes on 25<sup>th</sup> September and Dacorum Borough Council are a Statutory Consultee.