

## MINUTES

### CABINET

18 OCTOBER 2016

**Present:**

**Members:**

**Councillors:** Williams (Leader)  
Griffiths (Deputy  
Leader)  
Elliot  
Harden  
Marshall  
G Sutton

<b>Officers:</b>	Sally Marshall	Chief Executive
	Mark Gaynor	Corporate Director - Housing & Regeneration
	James Deane	Corporate Director - Finance and Operations
	Mark Brookes	Solicitor to the Council and Monitoring Officer
	David Skinner	Assistant Director - Finance & Resources
	Elliott Brooks	Assistant Director - Housing
	Ben Hosier	Group Manager - Commissioning, Procurement & Compliance
	Natasha Brathwaite	Group Manager, Strategic Housing
	Steve Barnes	

The meeting began at 8.10 pm

#### **CA/100/15 MINUTES**

The minutes of the meeting held on 20 September 2016 were agreed by the members present and signed by the Chairman.

#### **CA/101/15 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

None received

#### **CA/102/15 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

None received

#### **CA/103/15 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

None received

## **CA/104/15    REFERRALS TO CABINET**

None received

## **CA/105/15    CABINET FORWARD PLAN**

That the Cabinet Forward Plan be noted, subject to the following amendments:

- Defer the Leisure Review Paper (which is scheduled for Cabinet in November) to December.
- The Enterprise Zone report to be deferred to the November meeting.
- The 'Authority Monitoring Report and Local Government Development Scheme Update' - the contact should be James Doe, not James Deane.
- The Committee Timetable 2017/18 is added to the December agenda

## **CA/106/15    HOMELESSNESS STRATEGY REVIEW**

### **Decision**

That the Homelessness Strategy 2016-2020 be adopted.

### **Reason for Decision**

The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with an overview of the proposed Homelessness strategy 2016 - 2020. This includes the approach taken to develop the strategy and an update on national and local trends, key changes in legislation and the council's commitment to achieving a Gold Standard homelessness service.

### **Implications**

Proposals have been made in preparation for the 2017/18 budget, to support recommendations made to further improve the service delivered to customers. These proposals will be subject to the Chief Officer Group assessment and considered through the usual annual budget review process.

### **Value for money**

It is important that we deliver value for money for local people accessing our homelessness support services. Increased demand requires us to explore new ways to improve efficiency within our housing advice and options service so we can target resources to improve service quality, enhance effectiveness and deliver positive outcomes for our clients. We are also committed to 'demonstrating the cost effectiveness of preventing homelessness'. By investing in preventative approaches we can support people to stay in existing accommodation.

### **Risk Management**

Risk Assessment completed.

The intention of this report is to comply with legislation and therefore avoid the risk of

non-compliance. Embedding these new ways of working will now need the full commitment of all officers. A procedure and policy review is underway and involves all frontline officers. Improved communications programme is in place and has been since October 2015

### **Community Impact Assessment**

Community Impact Assessment carried out

Corporate Objectives

Preventing and tackling homelessness contributes to the following 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

### **Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments**

#### **Monitoring Officer:**

No comments to add to the report.

#### **Deputy S.151 Officer**

The proposed strategy will be delivered through approved budgets. Any direct financial implications of any changes will need to be submitted for financial approval through the normal annual budget setting process.

### **Advice**

Councillor Griffiths explained that they had updated the current strategy, which had been to the Overview & Scrutiny Committee (OSC) who were very impressed with it and commended the work Officers had done.

N Brathwaite noted that the OSC had extensive discussions around the challenges and the impact of mental health and homelessness. They had requested 6 monthly update reports in order to monitor progress. The OSC also suggested having a nominated representative on the homelessness forum.

She reassured members that all staff attended mental health awareness training.

Councillor Griffiths said it was fantastic that the OSC wanted to be involved and asked if Cabinet could help with that.

N Brathwaite said that this can be done internally at the forum meetings as these were open to anyone who had an interest.

Councillor Marshall referred to paragraph 4.4 of the report and asked what the connection was between homelessness and assured shorthold tenancies.

N Brathwaite explained that property prices were high as were the monthly rental costs. Private rented properties are becoming less affordable due to landlords letting their properties on the open market, at a significantly higher value than set at the

Local Housing Allowance (LHA) level, therefore on occasion, making it unaffordable for families. Some families have a tenancy come to an end however their deposit can be held for up to 3 months. This can cause issues in then raising a deposit for their next property. This is something the council need to help manage.

Councillor Marshall asked if DBC offered any high value financial incentives as other local authorities did.

N Brathwaite said that the council had a Service Level Agreement with Hightown Praetorian. The landlord forum had been consulted in order to understand their needs for the community and work needed to create an incentive scheme.

Councillor Marshall referred to paragraph 5.5 of the strategy and asked what the enhanced housing toolkit was.

N Brathwaite explained that it can be accessed via the council's website and the 'Moving with Dacorum' section. This then gives people access to questionnaires and toolkits to use.

Councillor Tindall highlighted an issue with a number of tenancies coming to an end with Hightown Praetorian and the families potentially being asked to move on. He asked if the council had any role in helping those families appeal the decision before they are made homeless.

N Brathwaite confirmed that the council had an early notification process and were more than happy to help liaise with the Hightown Praetorian.

Councillor Harden asked if the council achieved Gold standard once the strategy had been implemented and how long did the standard last.

N Brathwaite said that the council had currently achieved bronze standard. The National Practitioner Service was working with the council in order to work on the criteria to achieve Gold standard. The standard would continue to remain as long as the relevant criteria were met.

The Bronze standard gave the council free resources and toolkits, training for staff and organisations such as Dens and Druglink. It also allowed the council to sit on the assessment board for other council's looking to achieve bronze standard.

Councillor Williams asked if there were placements made from other council's would they have a higher allowance if they were placed from London Boroughs.

N Brathwaite confirmed this would be the case; the council would need to monitor this in the future. They needed to ensure that tenants are placed in accommodation that's affordable to avoid reoccurrence of homelessness.

E Brooks noted that although the teams were doing well and doing a great job, the situation was only going to get worse.

The work was relentless with the amount of people coming to the council for help. He said that the Housing Minister had announced that councils would receive more resources to help support those in temporary accommodation, but he was concerned as to how the team could continue the high level of service with little resources.

Councillor Griffiths reminded members that these resources were from the General Fund account and not from the Housing Revenue account.

Councillor Williams noted that sustaining tenancies could be a challenge when ensuring all needs are continually met.

E Brooks agreed and said the needs of individuals was growing.  
N Brathwaite added that the council was also affected when external organisations cut services or resources. For example the previously mentioned Hightown Praetorian tenancies coming to an end, which meant the families involved, would become the council's responsibility.

### **Voting**

None

## **CA/107/15 RISK MANAGEMENT REPORT QUARTER 1 2016/17**

### **Decision**

That the content of this Cabinet report be noted.

### **Reason for Decision**

To provide the Quarter 1 update on the Strategic Risk Register.

### Financial

None identified

### Value for Money

Risk management is closely linked to the Council's commitment to ensure that all resources are used efficiently and forms part of effective financial planning. The Council also needs to ensure that adequate provisions are in place to address anticipated risks but that these are no greater than necessary so that maximum resources are applied to services as required. To this end the Council sets minimum target working balances for both the general fund and HRA and at the date of this report this minimum balances are secured. Budget exercises for 2016/17 have ensured that the minimum balance requirements will also be met for the next financial year.

### **Risk Implications**

Effective risk management is an important factor in all policymaking, planning and decision making.

Failure to manage risk effectively could have serious consequences for the Council leading to increased costs, wasted resources, prosecution and criticism under external assessments

### **Health & Safety Implications**

Not applicable

### **Corporate Objectives**

Dacorum Delivers – Risk management is an essential part of ensuring that the Council meets all of its objectives.

## **Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments**

### **Monitoring Officer:**

An effective risk management strategy is essential for the good governance of the Council and therefore this report and the annexed Strategic Risk Register is appropriate for Cabinet consideration.

### **Deputy S.151 Officer**

This is a section 151 Officer report.

## **Advice**

Councillor Elliot introduced the report and noted that the names of the Portfolio Holders needed to be included.

J Deane would ensure this was done.

Councillor Marshall asked if it was flagged up when a service had a high resignation rate.

J Deane explained that any service with a high turnover of staff would be looked into, as well as any recruitment issues.

M Gaynor added that the council were looking into ways to mitigate these issues for example a Hertfordshire wide support mechanism.

S Marshall explained that there were similar recruitment and retention issues across the county. They were looking into ways to mitigate this and how staff can be shared and utilised in a more efficient way. She noted the high competition now with the private sector, in particularly in areas such as Building Control. She added that the People Strategy currently being developed would look at staff terms and conditions which can be advertised to show potential candidates the added benefits of working for the council.

It was a big fear for the council and one which we would work towards ensuring we recruit and retain good quality staff in all key areas in the future.

J Deane added that they were struggling to recruit Benefits Officers recently, however now they can offer home working and flexible working the team's performance and quality is evident.

M Gaynor concluded to note that this concern was on the agenda of the management team and all were aware of the issue.

## **Voting**

None.

## **CA/108/15 OFF STREET PARKING CHARGES 2017/18**

## **Decision**

1. That Cabinet note but do not agree to the proposed changes to off street parking enforcement arrangements as set out in paragraph 4.1 and 4.2 of the background report and agree to review future parking enforcement arrangements when reviewing the Council's parking strategy.
2. That Cabinet agree to the proposed changes to off-street parking tariffs as set out in tables 3-13 as annexed to the minutes of this meeting.
3. Provide delegated authority to the Assistant Director (Finance & Resources) to agree on any increase in parking tariffs for the Old School Yard car park which is owned by Tring Town Council as set out in paragraph 3.9 and table 9 of the background report.
4. That Cabinet agree that further exploratory work is carried out in support of the Council's future parking strategy, and that a report is presented back on a future parking strategy for consideration by Cabinet:
  - a. On-Street and Off-Street parking provision
  - b. Parking Charges
  - c. Parking Management
  - d. Parking Enforcement
  - e. Supporting the local economy
  - f. Sustainable Transport
  - g. Investment & Accreditation

#### **Reason for Decision**

To seek Cabinet approval to set off-street parking charges for 2017/18 to 2018/19.

#### **Implications**

##### Financial

The proposed increase in tariffs will realise an additional revenue gross income of £152,730 per annum from April 2018.

The cost of implementing these tariff increases will be approximately £20,000 which will cover the cost of the legal processes, consultations, amendments to signs, pay and display machine software, etc.

This will result in an estimated nett income figure of £132,730 per annum

##### Value for Money

The background report demonstrates that the proposed increase in tariffs for off-street car parks are still relatively low when compared to car park charges in comparable towns.

The enforcement of the off-street car parks is currently delivered by Indigo Park Services UK Limited until 2018.

### ***Risk Implications***

The report identifies that there has been no increase in off-street car park tariffs since April 2014.

Should a decision be made to not increase the parking tariffs this will incrementally lead to additional strain on the General Fund and in the future may require large increases to regain their current/previous value in real terms.

### **Health & Safety Implications**

There are no Health & Safety implications.

### **Community Impact Assessment**

Provision has been made for Blue Badge holders to continue to use Dacorum Borough car parks free of charge.

### **Corporate Objectives**

Safe and Clean Environment

Economic Growth and Prosperity

On-Street and Off-Street parking supports a clean, safe and enjoyable environment and supports economic growth and prosperity which are both priorities of the Council's vision.

### **Dacorum Delivers**

The Council's car parks provide an income stream. Optimising income assists the General Fund to achieve a balanced budget.

### Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments

#### **Monitoring Officer:**

The Council is lawfully entitled to charge for the use of its car parks and set appropriate hours of operation and charges for use.

#### **Deputy S.151 Officer**

The proposed charges are consistent with the estimates prepared for the 2017/18+ budget setting process and will support the delivery of the medium term financial strategy.

### **Advice**

Councillor Elliot introduced the report which was to seek Cabinet approval to set off-street parking charges for 2017/18 to 2018/19.

He explained that members had been circulated an amended table 13, which showed revised charges (published as an amended annex).

### **Voting**

None.

The Meeting ended at 8.10 pm