



Public Document Pack Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Agenda

Scrutiny making a positive difference: Member led and independent, Overview & Scrutiny Committee promote service improvements, influence policy development & hold Executive to account for the benefit of the Community of Dacorum

Wednesday 6 September 2017 at 7.30 pm

Conference Room 2 - The Forum

The Councillors listed below are requested to attend the above meeting, on the day and at the time and place stated, to consider the business set out in this agenda.

Membership

Councillor Gbola Adeleke
Councillor Armytage
Councillor Banks
Councillor Mrs Bassadone
Councillor Barrett
Councillor Conway
Councillor England

Councillor P Hearn
Councillor Fethney
Councillor Imarni (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Mahmood (Chairman)
Councillor Silwal
Councillor W Wyatt-Lowe

Substitute Members:

Councillors Howard, D Collins, Clark, Ransley, Tindall and Link

For further information, please contact

AGENDA

1. MINUTES

To confirm the minutes from the previous meeting

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

To receive any apologies for absence

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest

A member with a disclosable pecuniary interest or a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered -

- (i) must disclose the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent

and, if the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest, or a personal interest which is also prejudicial

- (ii) may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter (and must withdraw to the public seating area) unless they have been granted a dispensation.

A member who discloses at a meeting a disclosable pecuniary interest which is not registered in the Members' Register of Interests, or is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the disclosure.

Disclosable pecuniary interests, personal and prejudicial interests are defined in Part 2 of the Code of Conduct For Members

[If a member is in any doubt as to whether they have an interest which should be declared they should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the start of the meeting]

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An opportunity for members of the public to make statements or ask questions in accordance with the rules as to public participation

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

6. Q1 PERFORMANCE REPORT - BUDGET (Pages 3 - 13)

7. Q1 PERFORMANCE REPORT - HOUSING (Pages 14 - 27)

8. Q1 PERFORMANCE REPORT - RESIDENT SERVICES (Pages 28 - 37)

9. DENS (Pages 38 - 50)

10. SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURES (Pages 51 - 103)

11. UPDATE ON TENANTS INVOLVEMENT ACTIVITIES (Pages 104 - 136)

12. ALLOCATIONS POLICY (Pages 137 - 160)

13. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 161 - 165)



AGENDA ITEM: SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	6 September 2017
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Budget Monitoring Quarter 1 2017/18
Contact:	Cllr Graeme Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources David Skinner, Assistant Director (Finance & Resources) Caroline Souto, Team Leader Financial Planning & Analysis
Purpose of report:	To provide details of the projected outturn for 2017/18 as at Quarter 1 for the: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund • Housing Revenue Account • Capital Programme
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1) That Committee note the forecast outturn position. 2) That Committee note the savings identified following outturn 2016/17, which will be transferred to earmarked reserves subject to Cabinet approval. 3) That Committee note the re-phasing of the capital programme to move slippage identified at Quarter 1 into financial year 2018/19.
Corporate objectives:	Delivering an efficient and modern council
Implications:	Financial and Value for Money implications are included within the body of the report.

Risk Implications	Risk implications are included within the body of the report.
Equalities Implications	There are no equality implications.
Health And Safety Implications	There are no health and safety implications.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	GF – General Fund HRA – Housing Revenue Account

1. Executive Summary

- 1.1 Projected General Fund revenue outturn - a surplus of £322k is forecast on the General Fund revenue account. This includes £400k of ongoing savings identified at outturn 2016/17, which have been factored into base budgets going forward. A budget adjustment to transfer this surplus to earmarked reserves in financial year 2017/18 will be requested at Cabinet 19 September.
- 1.2 Projected Housing Revenue Account outturn – a deficit of £233k is forecast. This deficit will be need to be met from earmarked reserves.
- 1.3 Projected Capital forecast General Fund – variance of £1.2m under budget. A proposal to rephase capital schemes into 2018/19 will be made to 19 September Cabinet meeting.
- 1.4 Projected Capital forecast HRA – variance of £9.6m under budget on new build schemes. Schemes will be rephased into 2018/19 as above.
- 1.5 The report pack contains the following documents:
 - Appendix A – General Fund Summary Spreadsheet
 - Appendix B – HRA Summary Spreadsheet
 - Appendix C – Capital Programme

2. Introduction

- 1.6 The purpose of this report is to present the Council’s forecast outturn for 2017/18 as at 30 June 2017. The report covers the following budgets:
 - General Fund
 - Housing Revenue Account (HRA)
 - Capital Programme

3. General Fund Revenue Account

1.7 The General Fund revenue account records the income and expenditure associated with all Council functions except management of the Council's own housing stock, which is accounted for within the Housing Revenue Account (HRA).

1.8 The current budget is the original budget approved by Cabinet in February 2017, plus the following approved amendments:

Amendments	£000	Approved
2017/18 Original budget - cost of services	20,968	
Funding to support creation of Development Company	200	Council July 2017
2017/18 Current Budget - cost of services	21,168	

1.9 Appendix A provides an overview of the General Fund provisional outturn position. This is in a new format following financial reporting requirement changes for the 2016/17 accounts. The key differences from the previous reporting format are as follows:

- Recharges are no longer included within a “non-controllable” section of the service reporting; instead these are shown on one line in the Transfers between Reserves / Funds section at the foot of the report.
- Capital charges are no longer included in a “non-controllable” section. These do not result in a cash charge to taxpayers.
- Housing Benefit payments and grant income are now shown within Finance and Resources income and expenditure (Transfer Payments and Other Income).
- Investment Property income and expenditure is shown separately on one line of the report. Variances will be reported to Finance and Resources Scrutiny Committee, in line with reporting responsibilities.

1.10 Variances on corporate items

The forecast for Investment Income is showing a deficit of £137k. This is due to the reduction in the Bank of England base rate during 2016/17. This has been amended for future years in the Medium Term Financial Strategy presented to Cabinet in July 2017.

The forecast for grant income is showing a surplus of £60k due to additional new burdens grants which have been received. Included in this is £53k of funding relating to the revenues and benefits service, and an adjustment of £7k to prior year new homes bonus.

1.11 The table below provides an overview by Scrutiny area of the current forecast outturn for controllable budgets within the General Fund.

	Current Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Variance	
			£000	%
Finance & Resources	11,377	11,302	(75)	-0.7%
Strategic Planning & Environment	8,047	8,063	16	0.2%
Housing & Community	1,744	1,632	(112)	-6.4%
Total	21,168	20,997	(171)	-0.8%
Investment Property	(3,736)	(3,843)	(107)	2.9%
Non-controllable budgets	(16,607)	(16,541)	66	-0.4%
Earmarked Reserve movements	(826)	(936)	(110)	13.3%
Contribution (to)/from General Fund Working Balance	(1)	(323)	(322)	

1.12 The following sections provide an analysis of the projected outturn and major budget variances shown by Scrutiny area.

4. Housing and Community

Housing & Community	Current Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Variance	
			£000	%
Employees	2,698	2,741	43	1.6%
Premises	789	801	12	1.5%
Transport	16	18	2	12.5%
Supplies & Services	1,786	1,827	41	2.3%
Third Parties	578	578	0	0.0%
Transfer Payments	5	5	0	0.0%
Income	(4,128)	(4,338)	(210)	5.1%
	1,744	1,632	(112)	(6.4%)

4.1 Income - £210k over budget (5.1%)

Overachievement of income £120k - An additional £120k of income is forecast from Temporary Accommodation due to ongoing increases in demand. This follows a surplus achieved last financial year from Council owned properties managed by commercial assets, which are being used to maximise occupancy and to minimise expensive bed and breakfast provision for Housing. This increase will be factored into the base budget going forward.

A £120k increase to the 2017/18 temporary accommodation income budget will be proposed in 19 September Cabinet, with a corresponding contribution to earmarked reserves.

5. Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

4.2 The HRA is a ring-fenced account relating to the Council's Landlord functions. A guiding principle of the HRA is that revenue raised from rents and service charges must be sufficient to fund expenditure incurred. The forecast outturn position for the HRA is shown at Appendix B.

4.3 The projected HRA balance at the end of 2017/18 is in line with the budgeted balance of £2.9m.

4.4 Dwelling Rents - £120k under budget (0.2%)

A pressure is forecast due to properties owned by the General Fund being used for Temporary Accommodation, rather than as budgeted for secured tenancies.

4.5 Tenants' Charges - £80k under budget (15.2%)

A deficit is expected in relation to the newly de-pooled service charges. Detailed calculations for setting rent and de-pooled charges have now been performed, and a shortfall is anticipated.

4.6 Contribution towards Expenditure - £90k overachievement of income (13.7%)

Additional income has been received for legal work carried out, such as issuing a deed of variation and lifting of restrictive covenants.

4.7 Supervision and Management - £105k over budget (0.9%)

A saving of £140k is expected in premises expenditure in Supported Housing, on building repairs, maintenance and utilities for Elderly Persons Dwellings. This is in line with a surplus reported in this area for the previous financial year.

Underspends are anticipated in salaries due to vacancies within the Housing Cleaning Service (£60k) and Supporting People (£80k).

A pressure of £374k is forecast on the Osborne pension liability, following the triennial pensions review. This is as a result of changes to pension regulations to consolidate bonus payments into pensionable pay.

4.8 Transfer to Housing Reserves - £233k under budget (0.9%)

The overall variance on the HRA is currently forecast to reduce balances by £233k. This will need to be funded from HRA earmarked reserves.

6. Capital Programme

4.9 Appendix C shows the projected capital outturn in detail by scheme.

The table below summarises the overall capital outturn position by Scrutiny area.

The 'Rephasing' column refers to those projects where expenditure is still expected to be incurred, but it will now be in 2018/19 rather than 2017/18, or conversely, where expenditure planned initially for 2018/19 will now be in 2017/18.

A revised capital programme for 2017/18 is being taken to Cabinet, and schemes that are being rephased into 2018/19 will be re-profiled into the correct financial year.

The 'Variance' column refers to those projects which are now complete, but have come in under or over budget and those projects which are no longer required.

	Current Budget £000	Projected Outturn £000	Rephasing £000	Variance	
				£000	%
Housing & Community	1,876	671	(1,205)	0	0.0%
G F Total	1,876	671	(1,205)	0	0.0%
HRA Total	43,310	33,694	(9,282)	(334)	-0.8%
Grand Total	45,186	34,365	(10,487)	(334)	-0.7%

4.10 General Fund Major Variances

There is an overall variance of £1.205m on the General Fund from projects being rephased into the correct financial year as follows:

- Line 120: accelerated spend of £100k on the Verge Hardening Programme. With the future sites having been identified and agreed, the project team have the capacity to deliver more of the programme in this financial year.
- Line 125 and 126: slippage of £1.06m on the Garage Development scheme. It has not been possible to move as quickly as intended on this project, due to a need to carry out a full re-scoping of the project following feedback from Planning.
- Line 127: slippage of £250k on Wood House fit out. As per section 6.3 below, there is a delay to the new build scheme at Wood House, which means that the site will not be complete in 2017/18 to allow for the fit out to take place.

4.11 HRA Major Variances

There is an underspend on the HRA capital programme of £9.6m.

- Line 193: slippage of £2.3m on New Build General. This budget has been set up for the purchase of land for future developments. It is expected that £4m of the budget will be spent this financial year, with slippage of £2.3m.
- Line 194: slippage of £1.5m on Martindale. This project is approximately 12 months delayed, mainly due to extensive consultation and feedback from residents which resulted in significant changes to the design and layout of the scheme before resubmitting for planning approval. The planning application has now been submitted against an original plan to have it submitted last year.
- Line 195: slippage of £2.4m on Wood House. Work did not start on site in November 2016 as originally planned but started May 2017. This was largely due

to two reasons: firstly, protracted contract negotiations and agreeing amendments to satisfy insurance requirements and secondly, the contractor requested further time to check ground conditions and undertake soil testing, to mitigate against the possibility of sink holes. This resulted in a requirement to enhance the foundation design which delayed the start on site.

- Line 196: slippage of £2.7m on Stationers Place. Works have not started on site yet against a planned date of October 2016. This was due to an extensive amount of unforeseen issues in the ground and requirements of the Environment Agency. There are ongoing issues which are being worked through concerning existing utilities, bore holes, culvert repairs, aquifer layers, foul drainage connections and rights of way.
- Line 198: underspend of £334k on Able House. The scheme has been delivered within the overall project budget as the full contingency sum was not required.
- Line 200: slippage of 457k on Swing Gate Lane. This scheme is in 2 parts: firstly, the build of new housing units, and secondly, the conversion of existing buildings into housing. The conversion work will be procured separately once the new build element is complete, and there will be no spend on this element in financial year 2017/18.



Dacorum Borough Council
Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for June 2017 by Scrutiny Committee

APPENDIX A

	Month			Year-to-Date			Full Year		
	Budget £000	Actuals £000	Variance £000	Budget £000	Actuals £000	Variance £000	Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Variance £000
Cost of Services									
Finance and Resources	193	463	270	2,325	1,871	(454)	11,377	11,302	(75)
Housing and Community	124	(44)	(168)	592	22	(570)	1,744	1,632	(112)
Strategic Planning and Environment	506	566	60	2,091	1,905	(186)	8,047	8,063	16
Net Cost of Services	823	985	162	5,008	3,798	(1,210)	21,168	20,997	(171)
Other Items									
Investment Property	(80)	(171)	(91)	(1,793)	(1,787)	6	(3,736)	(3,843)	(107)
Investment Income	(20)	(9)	11	(59)	25	84	(236)	(99)	137
Interest Payments and MRP	80	0	(80)	239	0	(239)	956	956	0
Parish Precept Payments	0	0	0	739	739	0	739	739	0
Government Grants	(277)	(116)	161	(832)	(1,225)	(393)	(3,330)	(3,390)	(60)
Revenue Contribution to Capital	0	0	0	0	0	0	3,124	3,124	0
Taxation (Council Tax and Business Rates)	(1,161)	0	1,161	(3,484)	0	3,484	(13,937)	(13,937)	0
Surplus / Deficit on Provision of Services	(1,458)	(296)	1,162	(5,190)	(2,248)	2,942	(16,420)	(16,450)	(30)
Transfers between Reserves / Funds									
Net Recharge to the HRA	(39)	301	340	(117)	296	413	(3,923)	(3,934)	(11)
Contribution To / (From) Earmarked Reserves	(69)	0	69	(206)	1	207	(826)	(936)	(110)
Net Movement on General Fund Working Balance	(743)	990	1,733	(505)	1,847	2,352	(1)	(323)	(322)

Interpreting this report

Net Cost of Services

This subtotal includes those costs which are directly attributable to specific Council services, excluding recharges and capital items.

Other Items

This subtotal shows corporate costs and income, including grants from central government and taxation.

Transfers between Reserves / Funds

This section shows funding from reserves and from the recharge to the HRA.

Net Movement on General Fund Working Balance

This line shows the increase or decrease to the General Fund working balance



Housing Revenue Account

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for June 2017

	Original Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Forecast Variance £000 %	
Income:				
Dwelling Rents	(54,649)	(54,529)	120	-0.2%
Non-Dwelling Rents	(82)	(82)	0	0.0%
Tenants Charges	(528)	(448)	80	-15.2%
Leaseholder Charges	(487)	(487)	0	0.0%
Interest and Investment Income	(206)	(188)	18	-8.7%
Contribution towards Expenditure	(655)	(745)	(90)	13.7%
Total Income	(56,607)	(56,479)	128	-0.2%
Expenditure:				
Repairs and Maintenance	11,724	11,724	0	0.0%
Supervision & Management	12,053	12,158	105	0.9%
Rent, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	14	14	0	0.0%
Interest Payable	11,643	11,643	0	0.0%
Provision for Bad Debts	300	300	0	0.0%
Depreciation	11,640	11,640	0	0.0%
HRA Democratic Recharges	240	240	0	0.0%
Revenue Contribution to Capital	8,993	8,993	0	0.0%
Total Expenditure	56,607	56,712	105	0.2%
Transfer to / from Housing Reserves	0	(233)	(233)	0.0%
HRA Deficit / (Surplus)	(0)	0	0	0.0%
Housing Revenue Account Balance:				
Opening Balance at 1 April 2017	(2,892)	(2,892)	0	
Deficit / (Surplus) for year	(0)	0	0	0.0%
Proposed Contributions to Reserves	0	0	0	
Closing Balance at 31 March 2018	(2,892)	(2,892)	0	

Scheme	Budget Holder	Original Budget	Prior Year Slippage	In-Year Adjustments	Current Budget	YTD Spend	Projected Outturn	Forecast Slippage	Projected Over / (Under)	
General Fund										
Housing and Community										
Commissioning, Procurement and Compliance										
109	Telephony upgrade & virtualisation	Ben Hosier	0	4,600	0	4,600	0	4,600	0	0
110	Self Service Kiosks	Ben Hosier	0	19,067	0	19,067	0	19,067	0	0
			0	23,667	0	23,667	0	23,667	0	0
People										
114	Capital Grants - Community Groups	Matt Rawdon	20,000	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	0
			20,000	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	0
Residents Services										
118	Rolling Programme - CCTV Cameras	Julie Still	25,000	0	0	25,000	0	25,000	0	0
119	Lift Replacement to Theatre - Old Town Hall	Julie Still	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	0
120	Verge Hardening Programme	Julie Still	350,000	8,397	0	358,397	118,862	458,397	100,000	0
121	Storage Facility at Grovehill Adventure Playground	Julie Still	25,000	0	0	25,000	0	25,000	0	0
			400,000	48,397	0	448,397	118,862	548,397	100,000	0
Strategic Housing										
125	Westerdale (Garage Development)	David Barrett	817,000	(2,839)	0	814,161	2,000	39,161	(775,000)	0
126	Northend (Garage Development)	David Barrett	323,000	(2,994)	0	320,006	2,000	40,006	(280,000)	0
127	Wood House - Office Space Fit Out	David Barrett	250,000	0	0	250,000	0	0	(250,000)	0
			1,390,000	(5,833)	0	1,384,167	4,000	79,167	(1,305,000)	0
	Totals: Housing and Community		1,810,000	66,231	0	1,876,231	122,862	671,231	(1,205,000)	0
	Totals - Fund: General Fund		1,810,000	66,231	0	1,876,231	122,862	671,231	(1,205,000)	0

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CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR JUNE 2017

Scheme	Budget Holder	Original Budget	Prior Year Slippage	In-Year Adjustments	Current Budget	YTD Spend	Projected Outturn	Forecast Slippage	Projected Over / (Under)
Housing Revenue Account									
Housing and Community									
Property & Place									
181 Planned Fixed Expenditure	Fiona Williamson	18,062,000	0	(5,186,813)	12,875,187	3,325,470	12,875,187	0	0
182 Pain/Gain Share (Planned Fixed Expenditure)	Fiona Williamson	0	0	0	0	236,324	0	0	0
183 M&E Contracted Works	Fiona Williamson	0	50,000	600,000	650,000	(95,661)	650,000	0	0
184 Communal Gas & Heating	Fiona Williamson	0	0	2,975,000	2,975,000	(60,196)	2,975,000	0	0
185 DBC Commissioned Capital Works	Fiona Williamson	0	2,142,964	1,611,813	3,754,777	4,101	3,754,777	0	0
186 Housing Asset Management System	Fiona Williamson	0	0	0	0	35,875	0	0	0
		18,062,000	2,192,964	0	20,254,964	3,445,913	20,254,964	0	0
Strategic Housing									
190 New Build - Farm Place Berkhamsted	David Barrett	0	0	0	0	(43,815)	0	0	0
191 Galley Hill / St. Peters Court / The Nokes	David Barrett	0	0	0	0	(37,490)	0	0	0
192 Aspen Court / London Road, Apsley	David Barrett	0	0	0	0	(54,855)	87,487	0	87,487
193 New Build - General Expenditure	David Barrett	6,415,000	0	0	6,415,000	0	4,000,000	(2,327,513)	(87,487)
194 Martindale	David Barrett	1,463,086	41,364	0	1,504,450	22,074	58,086	(1,446,364)	0
195 Wood House	David Barrett	4,206,606	3,215,974	0	7,422,580	421,752	5,043,520	(2,379,060)	0
196 Stationers Place / Apsley Paper Mill	David Barrett	2,951,636	2,069,865	0	5,021,501	0	2,349,570	(2,671,931)	0
197 New Build - Queen Street (Old Tring Depot)	David Barrett	0	0	0	0	(21,250)	0	0	0
198 Able House	David Barrett	0	822,218	0	822,218	189,243	487,818	0	(334,400)
199 New Build - Longlands	David Barrett	0	0	0	0	(31,434)	0	0	0
200 Swing Gate Lane	David Barrett	558,348	1,311,033	0	1,869,381	14,317	1,412,208	(457,173)	0
		15,594,676	7,460,454	0	23,055,130	458,542	13,438,689	(9,282,041)	(334,400)
Totals: Housing and Community		33,656,676	9,653,418	0	43,310,094	3,904,455	33,693,653	(9,282,041)	(334,400)
Totals - Fund: Housing Revenue Account		33,656,676	9,653,418	0	43,310,094	3,904,455	33,693,653	(9,282,041)	(334,400)
Totals		35,466,676	9,719,649	0	45,186,325	4,027,317	34,364,884	(10,487,041)	(334,400)

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Agenda Item 7



AGENDA ITEM:

SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing & Communities Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	6 th September 2017
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	2017/18 Quarter 1 Performance Report & Operational Risk Register - Housing
Contact:	Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Author/Responsible Officer – Elliott Brooks – Assistant Director - Housing
Purpose of report:	1. To Update the Committee on the Performance of the Housing Service Quarter 1 2017/18 2. To inform the Committee of the status of the current Housing Service Operational Risk Register
Recommendations	1. That the Committee note the Performance Report & Operational Risk Register
Corporate objectives:	Affordable Housing
Implications:	<u>Financial</u>
'Value For Money Implications'	All areas of the service are subject to Monthly Budget Monitoring Meetings with the HRA Financial Accountant. Budget Reporting is quarterly to the Committee and 6 monthly to the Tenants & Leaseholders Committee. <u>Value for Money</u> The Housing Service & its costs are reviewed annually through a national benchmarking organisation (Housemark)

Risk Implications	Appendix – Housing Operational Risk Register
Equalities Implications	Equality Impact Assessments are carried out when policies or procedures are amended as appropriate
Health And Safety Implications	Health & Safety is an identified key risk for the Housing Service.
Consultees:	Layna Warden – Group Manager Tenants & Leaseholders Fiona Williamson – Group Manager Property & Place Natasha Brathwaite – Group Manager Strategic Housing David Barrett – Group Manager Housing Development
Background papers:	n/a
Historical background <i>(please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context).</i>	Each year, in consultation with staff and members of the Tenants & Leaseholder Committee a set of performance indicators, which are then approved by the Portfolio Holder for Housing and reported quarterly
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	TLC – Tenants & Leaseholder Committee HRA – Housing Revenue Account

1.0 Introduction

1.0.1 This report details the performance of the Housing Service during the 1st quarter of 2017/18 against performance indicators. The indicators were reviewed at the end of the previous year and some targets have been altered to reflect previous performance or future challenges.

1.0.2 The report also details the Housing Operational Risk Register. These risks have been identified as key in terms of tracking and ensuring all is done to mitigate as far as is reasonably possible.

2.0 Housing Performance Report – 2017/18

2.0.1 Appendix 1 shows performance against the 'Service Critical' performance indicators for the 1st Quarter of 2017/18 and comments related to each.

2.1 Repairs & Maintenance - Osborne

2.1.1 The Osborne 'Total Asset Management' (TAM) contract completed its third full year on July 1st 2017.

2.1.2 The 1st quarter performance report shows that the performance indicators for the Total Asset Management contract are currently either within target or the agreed tolerance.

2.1.3 Close contract monitoring has taken place between the Council and Osborne Property Services in order to achieve this.

2.1.4 The Total Asset Management contract is currently subject to a full end of year review (for 2016/17) which will determine whether Osborne Property Services Ltd are to be awarded a 1 year extension in line with the contract.

2.1.5 The review will make a formal recommendation to be approved by the Assistant Director of Housing in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Housing.

2.1.6 The annual review considers the following Key Strategic Indicators.

2.1.7 The Key Strategic Indicators are:

Key Strategic Indicator	Target Compliance
Performance at or above the target for all KPIs for at least 9 months of the year	Performance at or above the target for all KPIs for at least 9 months of the year
Transparency and control of costs delivered through the management of Open Book records including sub-contractors information available at Quarterly intervals	Open Book format and protocol to be agreed during dialogue and the information to be presented at quarterly intervals in advance of Core Group meetings. Target in year one 95% - from year 2 onwards 100%
Tenant involvement in operational and service improvement activities including meetings, workshops, and customer satisfaction surveys and monitoring of corrective action arising from complaints.	Tenant involvement in operational and service improvement activities including meetings, workshops, and customer satisfaction surveys and monitoring of corrective action arising from complaints.
Delivery of community initiatives to support the	Delivery of community initiatives to

ambitions of the Councils economic, environmental and social sustainability agenda	support the ambitions of the Councils economic, environmental and social sustainability agenda
Delivery of integrated Information Technology solutions to ensure that the business intelligence collected through repairs data, component condition information from operatives, tenant preferences, complaints, satisfaction surveys etc. is collated and shared with the client to develop annual programmes for targeted investment and continually develop the asset management strategy	Delivery of integrated Information Technology solutions to ensure that the business intelligence collected through repairs data, component condition information from operatives, tenant preferences, complaints, satisfaction surveys etc. is collated and shared with the client to develop annual programmes for targeted investment and continually develop the asset management strategy

Some operational and financial aspects of the contract are currently being reviewed through a series of workshops with officers from both the Council & Osborne PSL involved in 'Task and Finish' Groups

3.0 HRA Capital Programme

3.0.1 The Council continues to invest in its current housing stock through the Total Asset Management contract with Osborne Property Services. For the period April 2017 – June 2017 the following works were completed.

- Kitchens – 44
- Bathrooms & level access wet-rooms – 33
- Doors – 190 properties / 236 doors
- Rewires - 1
- Roofs – 5 blocks, 21 individual properties
- 75 properties – 503 windows
- Boilers – 242 (Sun Realm Gas Servicing & Installation contract)

For the 12 month period of April 2016 – March 2017 the numbers of improvements were as follows.

- Kitchens – 246
- Bathrooms – 210
- Doors – 907
- Re-Wires – 14 (significant up-grades to electrical supplies during K & B work)
- Roofs – 50
- Boilers 916

4.0 Housing Operational Risk Register

4.0.1 Appendix 2 details the Housing Service Operational Risk Register for Quarter 1 2017/18 following a quarterly review carried out by the Assistant Director & Group Managers.

H&C OSC QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Housing Landlord

June 2017



Measure	Owner & Updater	Jun 2017 Result	Mar 2017 Result	Jun 2016 Result	Sign Off	Comments
HL05a - Stage 1 Complaints responded to within target for Housing	Elliott Brooks Corvu Admin	62.5% (30/48) Target: 85	95% (76/80) Target: 85	98.51% (66/67) Target: 85	✓ Updater	
PP01 - Percentage of dwellings with a valid Gas Safety Certificate	Fiona Williamson Fiona Kimberley	99.97% Target: 100	99.98% Target: 100	99.97% Target: 100	✓ Updater	<p>Good consistent results we did achieve 100% in May and that is always our target but with a stock of nearly 9,500 properties needing gas certificates this is a good result. 3 properties overdue all in the process and continuing to work for a consistent 100% compliance</p> <p>Owner The team continue to work well with Sun Realm to maintain a high level of compliance</p>
PP04 - Percentage of properties passing QA checks Repairs and voids	Fiona Williamson Ricky Lang	99% Target: 98	98% Target: 98	99% Target: 98	✓ Updater	
PP05 - Percentage of properties passing QA checks Planned works	Fiona Williamson Ricky Lang	100% Target: 98	100% Target: 98	100% Target: 98	✓ Updater	

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Measure	Owner & Updater	Jun 2017 Result	Mar 2017 Result	Jun 2016 Result	Sign Off	Comments
PP10 - Percentage of emergency repairs completed within 4 hours	Fiona Williamson Ricky Lang	100% Target: 99	99% Target: 99	99% Target: 99	✓ Updater	Owner Consistently high levels of satisfaction. There is some additional work being carried out with the tenant inspectors so that they are able to have confidence in the figures and approach.
PP12 - Percentage of non-urgent repairs completed within target	Fiona Williamson Ricky Lang	98% Target: 98	98% Target: 98	90% Target: 98	✓ Owner	The performance has been high throughout the quarter, which has seen a positive impact with a reduction in complaints received in June.
PP13b - Percentage of responsive repairs completed right first time	Fiona Williamson Ricky Lang	86% Target: 78	87% Target: 68	78% Target: 68	✓ Owner	The target has been increased this year and has been exceeded throughout the first quarter. There is still the potential for further improvement to ensure tenants receive an excellent repairs service.
PP15 - Percentage of tenants satisfied with the service planned and responsive works	Fiona Williamson Ricky Lang	99% Target: 90	100% Target: 90	96% Target: 90	✓ Owner	The customer satisfaction has remained consistently high throughout the first quarter of the year.
SH03a - Average Time (working days) to re-let all properties	Natasha Brathwaite Laura Brennan	26.3 Days (3582/136) Target: 30	27 Days (3536/131) Target: 35	25.5 Days (3624/142) Target: 35	✓ Updater	High number of lets again this quarter. Staff have continued to work hard to ensure that despite only having 2 Lettings Officers effort has been made to ensure that viewings and sign ups have been completed within target.
SH04e - % of all properties let in target	Natasha Brathwaite Laura Brennan	75.19% (100/133) Target: 70	76.15% (99/130) No Target	85.26% (81/95) No Target	✓ Owner	

Measure	Owner & Updater	Jun 2017 Result	Mar 2017 Result	Jun 2016 Result	Sign Off	Comments
SH05 - Number of new Affordable Homes completed	David Barrett Amber Rogers	No Data Info Only	29 Dwellings Info Only	3 Dwellings Info Only	✗	
SH07a - Number of new housing advice cases received	Natasha Brathwaite Cynthia Hayford	660 Cases Info Only	709 Cases Info Only	569 Cases Info Only	✓	Updater Again new cases approaching has dropped this quarter but still high as compared to same month last year.
SH10b - % of Homeless applications completed within 33 days	Natasha Brathwaite Cynthia Hayford	63.64 % (21/33) Target: 100	No Data Target: 100	No Data Target: 100	✓	Updater Poor performance in relation to case targets. However service has 1 FTE off on long term sickness, 1 fixed term member of staff also had 1 week sickness during the period, 1 temporary member of staff and 1 FTE remained in place, but 1 FTE had annual leave during the period and the service is also carrying 2 FTE vacancies for, which recruitment is being finalised - expected start date for new Officers September 2017.
SH11b - The number of homeless reviews conducted	Natasha Brathwaite Cynthia Hayford	5 Reviews Info Only	8 Reviews Info Only	8 Reviews Info Only	✓	Updater 3 reviews 2 priority need decisions
SH20e - number of Households on the Housing Register	Natasha Brathwaite Cynthia Hayford	36256 Applications Info Only	35648 Applications Info Only	22641 Applications Info Only	✓	Updater 5603 active and 6634 deferred
SH31 - Number of homelessness applicants in TA for more than 6 months	Natasha Brathwaite Cynthia Hayford	50 Target: 5	No Data Target: 5	No Data Target: 5	✓	Updater Figure remains high as team are waiting for suitable properties becoming available to move clients on. Additionally clients who are under notice due to arrears will not be able to be offered accommodation until arrears are cleared.

Measure	Owner & Updater	Jun 2017 Result	Mar 2017 Result	Jun 2016 Result	Sign Off	Comments
TL02 - Rent collected as a percentage of rent owed (excluding current arrears brought forward)	Layna Warden Katie Kiely	97.66% Target: 99	99.9% Target: 99	98.92% Target: 99	✓	Updater This is within target but slightly lower than we would like due to a vacant post we are waiting to fill Owner
TL13a - Percentage of Community Alarm calls answered within 1 min	Layna Warden Oliver Jackson	97.88% Target: 97.5	97.66% Target: 97.5	97.81% Target: 97.5	✓	Updater On target
TL15 - Satisfaction with the outcome of medium level ASB cases	Layna Warden Lindsey Walsh	100% (13/13) Target: 75	67% (2/3) Target: 65	100% (10/10) Target: 65	✓	Updater satisfaction levels have remained steady throughout the quarter.
TL41 - Number of tenants who are registered to use My Housing Account	Natasha Brathwaite Jules Stevens	1049 Target: 2750	863 Target: 750	No Data Target: 1750	✓	Updater We currently have 1049 users registered to My Housing Account. Owner
TS02 - % of Tenancy Sustainment cases where rent arrears were reduced	Layna Warden Mandy Peters	73% (11/15) Target: 70	67% (16/24) Target: 70	29% (2/7) Target: 70	✓	Updater Of the 15 cases closed this quarter 11 had reduced or paid any rent arrears in full.

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OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER

June 2017



Housing Landlord - Elliott Brooks					
HL_F01 Failure to closely monitor operational and financial factors affecting the delivery of the HRA Business Plan					
Category: Financial	Corporate Priority:		Risk Owner: Elliott Brooks	Portfolio Holder: Margaret Patricia Griffiths	Tolerance: Treating
Inherent Probability	Inherent Impact	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Probability	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score
2 Unlikely	4 Severe	8 Amber	1 Very Unlikely	2 Medium	2 Green
Consequences		Current Controls		Assurance	
Delivery of the Business Plan would not be achieved if income and financial control is not closely managed		Regular and then formal end of year review of Business Plan in partnership with Finance. Any policy changes or govt announcements that may impact the plan or its assumptions are quickly analysed and reflected into the Business Plan This enables for long term financial viability to always be visible and if there are foreseen issues in certain years programmes can be altered as needed or issues taken to mitigate		HRA Business Plan Signed off by Cabinet	
Sign Off and Comments					
Sign Off Complete New Development Group Manager reviewing New Build element of Business Plan and any significant changes will be presented at October Cabinet					

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OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER

June 2017



HL_F02 Failure to closely monitor operational and financial factors relating to the delivery of the Council's Homelessness Service					
Category: Financial	Corporate Priority: Affordable Housing		Risk Owner: Elliott Brooks	Portfolio Holder: Margaret Patricia Griffiths	Tolerance: Treating
Inherent Probability	Inherent Impact	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Probability	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score
3 Likely	4 Severe	12 Red	2 Unlikely	4 Severe	8 Amber
Consequences		Current Controls		Assurance	
<p>DB S C M H</p> <p>DB Could be open to legal challenge if the service is not fit for purpose due to lack of resources for this statutory service. Health & Safety risks for clients if not provided with TA and left to sleep rough. Increase in homeless presentations would have severe impact on budget.</p>		<p>Monthly financial monitoring with Group Manager and accountant, team leader monitors weekly B & B spend, and monthly reporting of stats including numbers of cases seeking Housing Advice and presentations as homeless.</p>			
Sign Off and Comments					
<p>Sign Off Complete</p> <p>Homeless Reduction Bill passed as an Act - Resources allocated to prepare and deliver additional responsibilities - Plan for use of resources recently agreed at July Cabinet - Internal Project Manager being considered for implementation</p>					

Failure of the Total Asset Management Contractor to deliver the five strategic objectives					
Category: Financial	Corporate Priority: Affordable Housing		Risk Owner: Elliott Brooks	Portfolio Holder: Margaret Patricia Griffiths	Tolerance: Transferring
Inherent Probability	Inherent Impact	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Probability	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score
3 Likely	4 Severe	12 Red	2 Unlikely	4 Severe	8 Amber
Consequences		Current Controls		Assurance	

OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER

June 2017



Inability of the contractor to secure contract extensions and associated costs of managing the collation and interrogation of repairs data and stock condition information. Reputational issues in respect of the anticipated benefits to stakeholders not being realised. Operational consequences if the gas servicing and installation contract secures contract extensions due to the co-location of the operational teams. Additional costs and time to procure a new contract.	Regular contract review through a matrix of operational, financial and strategic core group meetings, with early warning mechanisms and agreed actions to address any areas of poor performance. Monthly monitoring of key performance indicators to identify any trends which could impact upon the achievement of the key strategic indicators.	Strategic Core Group Minutes Key Performance Indicators
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Sign Off and Comments

Sign Off Complete

Current review of year 16/17 taking place

HU103 Failure to adopt a service specific best practice approach to Health and Safety (Housing Landlord)

Category: Infrastructure	Corporate Priority: Safe and Clean Environment	Risk Owner: Elliott Brooks	Portfolio Holder: Margaret Patricia Griffiths	Tolerance: Treating	
Inherent Probability	Inherent Impact	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Probability	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score
3 Likely	4 Severe	12 Red	2 Unlikely	4 Severe	8 Amber
Consequences		Current Controls		Assurance	
Death or injury to staff; residents or contractors' staff; reputation; litigation and charges of corporate manslaughter.		Service specific H & S procedures applied to sheltered housing service covering service users and staff eg. fire safety and lone working; clear landings policy and procedures; estate inspections schedule.. Corporate H&S policy under review. Ongoing training for staff in key areas. Directorate Health & Safty Committee Quarterly at DMT		All Risk Assessments / Notes of meetings available for review	

OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER

June 2017



Standing Items on Team Meeting Agendas Quarterly Housing Fire Safety Group attended by Fire Service	
Sign Off and Comments	
Sign Off Complete New Compliance & Risk Team Leader recruited - focus currently on FRA's and asbestos management	

HL_R01 Failure to identify the needs and risks of residents living in sheltered housing and ensure that they have access to support appropriate to their needs					
Category: Reputational	Corporate Priority: Affordable Housing	Risk Owner: Elliott Brooks		Portfolio Holder: Margaret Patricia Griffiths	Tolerance: Treating
Inherent Probability	Inherent Impact	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Probability	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score
3 Likely	4 Severe	12 Red	1 Very Unlikely	4 Severe	4 Green
Consequences		Current Controls		Assurance	
Appropriate Support to individuals living in sheltered accommodation and if not given there is risk to health and wellbeing of some of our most vulnerable residents		Supported Housing Operational Procedures. Partnership working with other agencies. Effect use of SPRINT – sheltered housing IT system. This allows for more robust record keeping and management of visits and support plans Line management structure within supported housing including performance management structure (1:1s and appraisals).		Supported Housing Officer Procedures	

OPERATIONAL RISK REGISTER

June 2017



Sign Off and Comments

Sign Off Complete

Internal Review of the services' structure taking place due to concerns relating to recruitment and retention of SHO's

HL_R03 Failure to Deliver the Council's New Build Programme

Category: Reputational	Corporate Priority: Affordable Housing	Risk Owner: Elliott Brooks	Portfolio Holder: Margaret Patricia Griffiths	Tolerance: Treating	
Inherent Probability	Inherent Impact	Inherent Risk Score	Residual Probability	Residual Impact	Residual Risk Score
2 Unlikely	4 Severe	8 Amber	1 Very Unlikely	4 Severe	4 Green
Consequences		Current Controls		Assurance	
Reputational and financial impact with public and HCA regarding grant allocations and due to the high profile of the project		Monthly Financial meetings to monitor budgets, Fortnightly AD update, monthly project group, seconded team concentrating solely on development. This allows full debate on key issues and involves legal, finance, procurement at the early stages of any discussions		All Schmes have project worksheets updated fortnightly	

Sign Off and Comments

Sign Off Complete

New GM recruited - full review of financial reporting and scheme management taking place - may involve more resources being requested to deliver the full programme

Agenda Item 8



AGENDA ITEM:

SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing and Community Overview & Scrutiny
Date of meeting:	6 th September 2017
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Resident Services quarter 1 performance report, 1/4/2017 to 30/6/2017
Contact:	Cllr Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Resident and Regulatory Services Author/Responsible Officer, Julie Still, Group Manager – Resident Services/David Austin, Assistant Director
Purpose of report:	(1) Monitoring and information
Recommendations	1) That members note the report and identify any areas where they require additional information or reports of specific projects.
Corporate objectives:	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Delivering an efficient and modern council
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> Within existing budgets
'Value For Money Implications'	<u>Value for Money</u>
Risk Implications	
Equalities Implications	
Health And Safety Implications	
Consultees:	Service Team Leaders, Community Safety Co-ordinator.
Background	Service Reports, Police reports (JAG), CorVu, Community

papers:	Safety report from Community Safety Co-ordinator, Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue
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Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Quarter 1, 2017 – 2018

1 Introduction

This is the first quarter performance report for the Residents Services Group which forms part of the wider Neighbourhood Delivery service area and covers the period 1st April 2017 to 30th June 2017.

The services within this group are: -

Neighbourhood Action, Anti-Social Behaviour, Community Safety, The Old Town Hall, Children’s Services, Community Cohesion, CCTV, Adventure Playgrounds, Youth Democracy and Safeguarding children and young people.

If there are any reports for specific areas that members would like to see, please can they inform the Group Manager, Resident Services.

2 Performance Reports 17/18 – Rocket

2.1 Quarter 1 report - See appendix 1

3 Resident Services – 1st Quarter Achievements.

The following achievements are a sample of the projects/work undertaken by this group of services during the first quarter of 2017/18.

4 Community Safety Partnership – First Quarter Summary April 2017 – June 2017

4.1 Crime & Anti-Social Behaviour Data

	All Dacorum	Position in County (10 Districts)per 1000 population	Position in County (10 Districts)per 1000 population (Same Period last year)	Highest Performing CSP	Lowest Performing CSP
All Crime	+15% 2675	5 th	6 th	Three Rivers	Stevenage
Burglary Dwelling	154 (new recording procedure)	7 th	10 th	Stevenage	Watford
Vehicle Crime	+23% 283	7 th	9 th	North Herts	Broxbourne
Violent Crime	+21% 718	5 th	5 th	Three Rivers	Stevenage

Criminal Damage	-4.1% 353	5 th	5 th	East Herts	Stevenage
Anti-Social Behaviour	+29.5% 909	5 th	8 th	North Herts	Stevenage

4.2 Good performance figures placing Dacorum in the middle of the county with the exception of Burglary and vehicle crime categories.

4.3 Following the Grenfell Tower fire, through the CSP the local Fire & Rescue Command team have been working closely with DBC around an assessment of local high rise properties.

4.4 19th August – A Community Safety Event will be taking place in The Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead. Invitations sent out to local partners and agencies to participate

5 Anti-Social Behaviour

5.1 Reports of anti-social behaviour to the Police for the first quarter of 17/18 show an increase of 19.5% across the Borough which equates to 215 incidents.

5.2 The key areas of concern relate to rough sleepers, begging and drug use within the town centre and 3 injunctions were obtained which have the power of arrest attached to them to prevent individuals causing harassment alarm or distress to members of the public. A breach of an injunction by one of the individuals resulted in a custodial sentence.

5.3 During this quarter the Council's Anti-social Behaviour team delivered a wide range of actions which included:

- Visit to Luton Council enforcement team – sharing good practice and observing how they deal with a range of enforcement issues.
- Drafted Community Protection Notice (CPN) procedures and issued a number of CPN warnings.
- Obtained 3 injunctions with powers of arrest attached – and a prosecution of a breach of one of the injunctions.
- Issued 7 Acceptable Behaviour Contracts (ABC's) and Town Centre patrols over Easter holidays to deal with town centre cycling issues.
- 2 Silver Street meetings, 2 Stay Safe safer streets events with Police and increased the number of Dacorum Borough Council staff that are police accredited.

6 Quarter 2 – 2017/18 priorities for ASB: -

- 6.1 Work with other Dacorum Borough Council services on the use of Community Protection Notices
- 6.2 Work with other services to address the concerns about cycling and skateboarding in the town centre.
- 6.3 Work with partners to address reports of aggressive begging and drug use.

7 Neighbourhood Action and Verge Hardening

- 7.1 There were 7 Neighbourhood Action steering group meetings during this quarter across all of the Neighbourhood Action areas. Action plans were agreed at these meetings.
- 7.2 On Sunday 14th May at Cupid Green playing fields the Dacorum Cycle Hub was officially opened with 275 people attending and making use of the facilities. There was a range of opportunities from Dr Bike health checks and simple fixes through to entries for Go Ride Racing and the onsite café did a healthy trade.
- 7.3 During this quarter the budget for the 17/18 programme of additional parking provision under the Verge Hardening project has been allocated and the works scheduled as follows: -

Location	Number of Spaces provided	Total Cost	Start Date	Finish Date
Jocketts Hill	10	£36,121.94	03/04/2017	24/04/2017
Shrubhill Road	10	£27,948.31	24/04/2017	08/05/2017
Parkwood Drive	11	£23,987.40	08/05/2017	17/05/2017
Middleknights Hill	10	£27,984.71	17/05/2017	25/05/2017
Saturn Way (near the Heights)	10	£43,541.74	12/06/2017	23/06/2017
Marchmont Green	8	£23,370.66	23/06/2017	03/07/2017

8 Quarter 2 2017/18 priorities

- 8.1 Continue Verge Hardening project in areas identified for 2017/18

- 8.2 Commence Gadebridge Splash Park and Play area project
- 8.3 Hold the start of the penultimate leg of the Tour of Britain on 9th September 2017

9 Adventure Playgrounds

- 9.1 The Easter Holidays were well attended at the Adventure Playgrounds and the first quarter saw over 21,000 attendances across the 4 sites and over 800 attendances at the youth sessions.
- 9.2 Grovehill Adventure Playground continues to have good attendance at their soft play sessions for toddlers and the building is heavily booked with very little free time.

9.3 Quarter 2 2017/18 priorities

- 9.4 Full safety inspections of play structures
- 9.5 Repairs as identified by inspections
- 9.6 Half Term and Summer Holiday schedules

10 CCTV

- 10.1 During this quarter there were 497 incidents captured on the Dacorum Borough Council system.
- 10.2 The busiest area is Hemel Hempstead Town Centre where 235 of the incidents were captured.
- 10.3 During this quarter there have been 2 additional CCTV systems installed at Dacorum Housing schemes which are monitored.
- 10.4 The business case for the Community Control Centre to be accredited as an Alarm Receiving Centre (ARC) has been prepared and is being assessed.

11 Quarter 2 2017/18 priorities CCTV: -

- 11.1 Increase customer base and income.

12 Old Town Hall

- 12.1 The Old Town Hall introduced an e-list satisfaction survey following the introduction of the new website. The survey covers a range of areas such as the new website, the variety of the programme, staff helpfulness, value for money and the booking system. For the first survey the HP1 postcode area was the focus. See appendix 3
- 12.2 There was also a solid start to the year with attendance levels at 63% which is 2% above target.
- 12.3 Private hires continue to be steady and ensure a great community use of the Old Town Hall. We have a programme of arts and host a range of

services from Hartbeeps (music group for infants, toddlers and their mums) to Lets Dance and our older residents as well as hosting Herts Inclusive Theatre (integrated theatre group for young people).

13 Quarter 2 2017/18

- 13.1 Manage major maintenance works to roof and lift replacement at the Old Town Hall
- 13.2 Launch of Autumn programme

14 Safeguarding, Domestic Abuse and Prevent

- 14.1 During this quarter there were 56 Safeguarding concerns recorded which resulted in 32 safeguarding children referrals and 20 safeguarding adults at risk referral to Herts County Council. In addition to this there was 1 Prevent enquiries/referrals
- 14.2 Dacorum Borough Council received 52 safeguarding enquiries from Herts County Council's Children's Services.
- 14.3 Training was provided for Officers and Members regarding legislation under the Modern Slavery Act 2015 by DS Duncan Montague from Operation Tropic. This training gave an overview of the signs to be aware of in regard to human trafficking and modern slavery as well as how to report concerns.
- 14.4 The ASB team Leader has delivered Domestic Abuse training to 60 staff. The training included specialist DASH (Domestic Abuse Stalking and Honour) assessment for front line staff who deal with victims on a regular basis.
- 14.5 A survey was completed with the Council's contractors and their approach to safeguarding practice and procedures.

15 Quarter 2 Priorities 2017/18 Safeguarding

- 15.1 Continue delivering training for front line staff in domestic abuse and safeguarding
- 15.2 Review response from contractors to the recent survey.
- 15.3 Meet with contract managers to discuss feedback from contractors on safeguarding duties.

H&C OSC QUARTERLY PERFORMANCE REPORT

Neighbourhood Delivery

June 2017



Measure	Owner & Updater	Jun 2017 Result	Mar 2017 Result	Jun 2016 Result	Sign Off	Comments
ASB01 - Number of reports of incidents of anti social behaviour across the borough	Julie Still Nicola Lobendhan	1284 Reports Info Only	878 Reports Info Only	1070 Reports Info Only	✓	Updater
ASB04 - ASB Service requests responded to within target	Julie Still Morgan Steel	94% Target: 98	99% Target: 98	94% Target: 98	✓	Updater Owner Heavy workloads in Housing and ASB Teams contributes to the below target outcome
ASB05 - ASB - Cases closed within 60 days compared to the previous year	Julie Still Morgan Steel	60% Info Only	72% Info Only	86% Info Only	✓	Owner A number of complex and longer term cases have concluded during this period but the time taken to bring a case to court continues to be considerable and will extend the amount of time it takes to <u>conclude a case.</u>
CSP01 - Number of Community Triggers received that meet criteria	Julie Still Nicola Lobendhan	0 Info Only	0 Info Only	0 Info Only	✓	Owner There were no Community Triggers recieved in this quarter
CYP01a - Number of children attending Adventure Playgrounds	Julie Still Pat Fox	21291 Attendances Info Only	15189 Attendances Info Only	18319 Attendances Info Only	✓	Owner A steady start to the year with an increase in attendance on the previous year
CYP01b - Number of young people attending Youth Clubs at Adventure Playgrounds	Julie Still Pat Fox	877 Attendances No Target	783 Attendances Target: 0	532 Attendances Target: 0	✓	Owner A steady increase in numbers attending the Youth clubs

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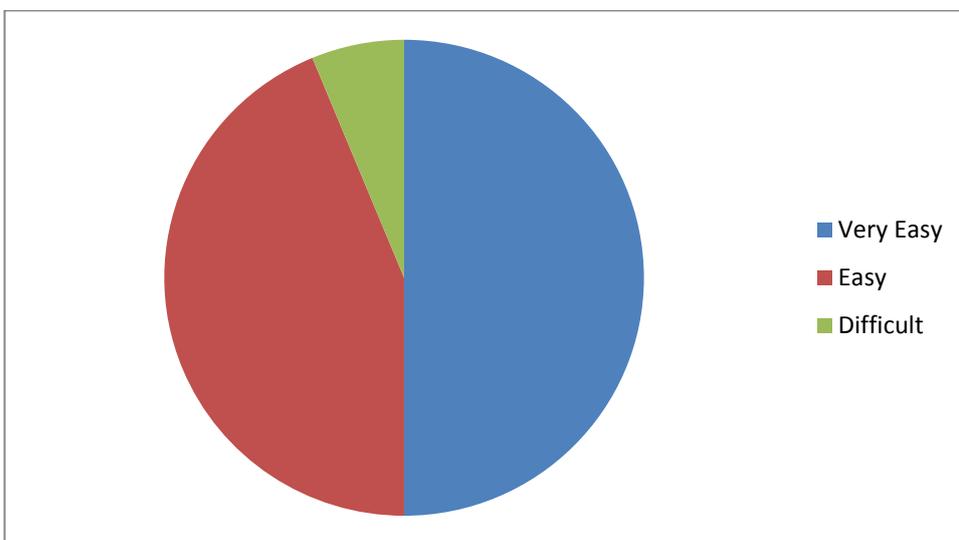
CYP02 - Number of young people involved in Community and Youth	Julie Still Pat Fox	827 People No Target	189 People Target: 0	No Data Target: 350	✓	Owner Good attendance at events
LYN01 - number of Love Your Neighbourhood events	Julie Still Nicky McIntyre	20 Info Only	No Data Info Only	No Data Info Only	✓	Owner Low numbers attending the steering group meetings this quarter
OTH01 - Average attendance at the Old Town Hall theatre	Julie Still Sara Railson	63% (63/100) Target: 61	71% (71/100) Target: 75	74.5% (74/100) Target: 0	✓	Owner A solid start to the year with good attendance
OTH02 - Old Town Hall User Satisfaction	Julie Still Sara Railson	94% Target: 75	No Data Target: 0	No Data Target: 0	✓	Owner Good results to the new electronic surveys.
OTH03 - Number of private hire bookings of the Old Town Hall	Julie Still Sara Railson	49 Bookings Info Only	68 Bookings Info Only	35 Bookings Info Only	✓	Owner For information only
SG02 - Number of concerns resulting in safeguarding children referrals	Julie Still Nicola Lobendhan	32 Referrals Info Only	No Data Info Only	No Data Info Only	✓	Owner There was a rise in referrals during the last quarter.
SG03 - Number of concerns relating to Adults at Risk recorded	Julie Still Oliver Jackson	7 Info Only	No Data Info Only	No Data Info Only	✓	



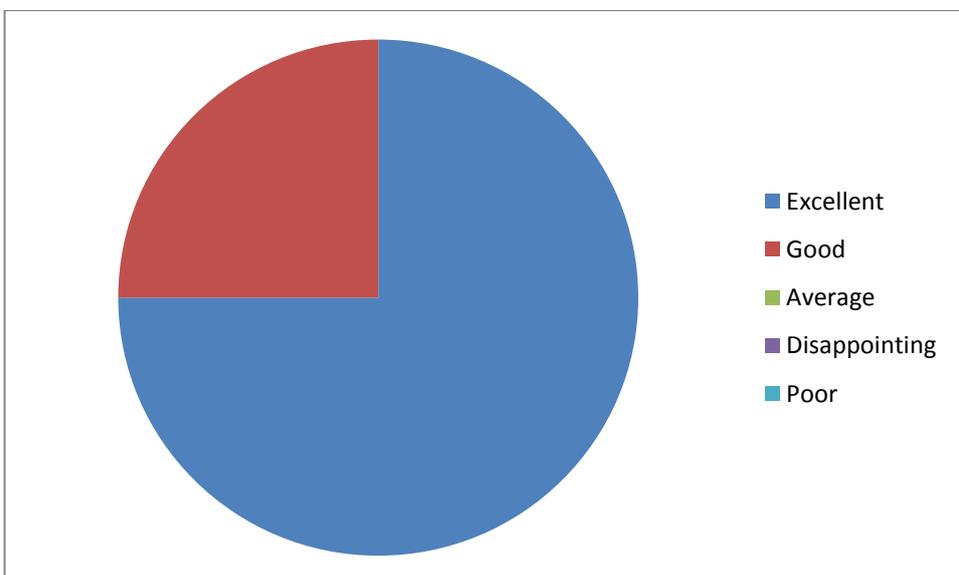
E-list Survey Results May 2017

Data is from a selection of 200 current top attenders and spenders living in HP1.

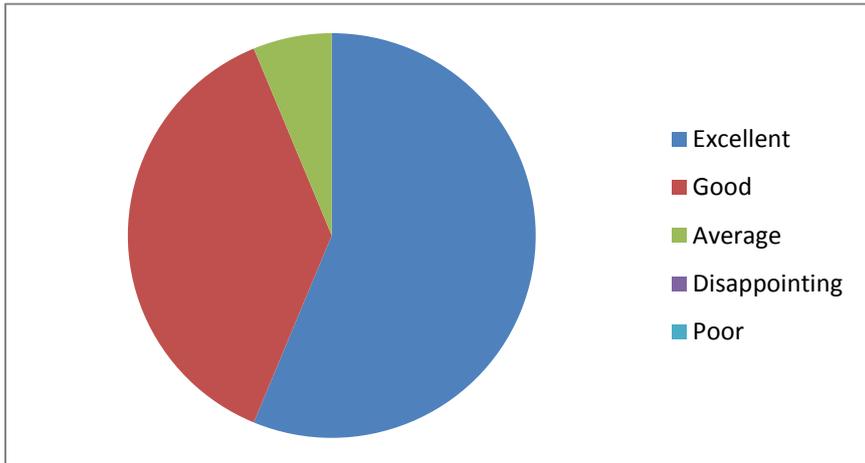
1) How easy is it to access the information you need via our website?



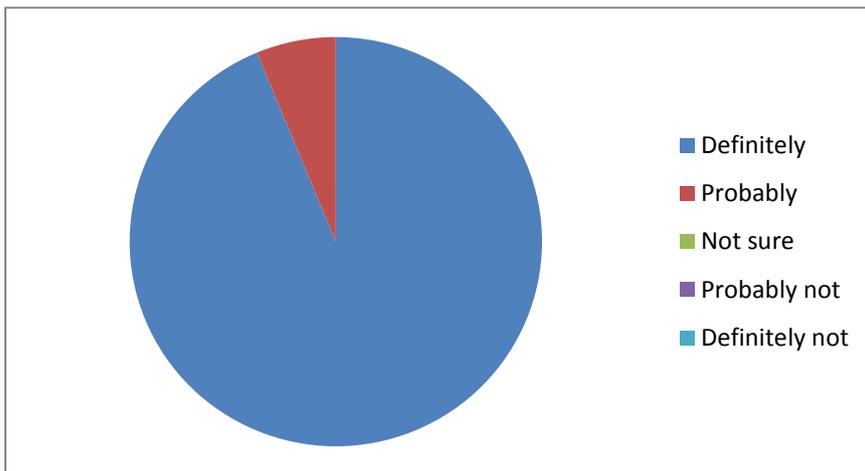
2) Which word best describes the helpfulness of staff at The Old Town Hall?



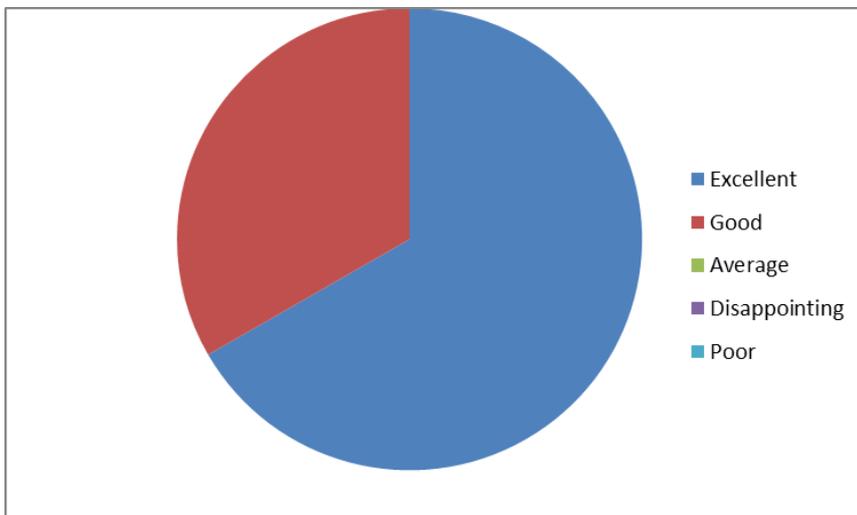
3) How would you rate the variety in our programme of events?



**4) Do you agree with the statement that:
"events at The Old Town Hall are good value for money"?**



5) Which word best describes our online booking system?





AGENDA ITEM:

SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny
Date of meeting:	6 September 2017
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	HOMELESSNESS REVIEWS
Contact:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Natasha Brathwaite – Strategic Housing Group Manager
Purpose of report:	To update Housing & Communities OSC on the performance of the Elms contract, managed by DENS.
Recommendations	That the Housing & Communities OSC to note the report.
Corporate objectives:	Affordable Housing
Implications:	<p><u>Customer service</u></p> <p>The aim of the contract is to improve outcomes for single homeless clients, reduce the cycle of repeat homelessness and eradicate street homelessness by working in partnership with DENS.</p> <p><u>Value for money</u></p> <p>The tender for the contract was awarded to DENS on the basis that they met the requirements set out from the scope of the bid and the Council's vision for the Elms Emergency accommodation. By having a more proactive partnership approach to preventing homelessness, this will help manage any impact on Council services, caused by continuing housing demands and rise in homelessness, thus reducing expenditure to meet demand, for example reducing B&B usage.</p>
Risk Implications	All staff employed at the Elms have received the Council's

	essential training in line with the contract, this has included high profile training for Domestic Abuse & Safeguarding and Prevent. The contract is closely monitored by the Contract Manager to ensure effective performance and the risks presented are considered to be low.
Equalities Implications	Legislation and guidance states that all homeless clients should be given access to information and services to assist them in resolving their own housing difficulty; this will become increasingly more important with the introduction of the Homelessness Reduction Act. The Council and DENS have formed a strong partnership through close management of the contract to ensure that the service provided is joined up and clients are provided with appropriate advice and assistance to secure accommodation. Where clients are prevented access to the Elms due to immigration or other health & safety restrictions, appropriate advice and intervention measures are taken to prevent risk and street homelessness wherever possible.
Health And Safety Implications	Due to the type of service provision and the transient nature of the client group, health & safety implications are present when managing such accommodation; these include exposure to complex and unpredictable behaviours. The Council and DENS have ensured that through close monitoring, partnership working with key agencies including the Police and prompt action all relevant steps are taken to ensure the safety of staff and members of the public.
Consultees:	<p>Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing</p> <p>Elliott Brooks – Assistant Director Housing</p> <p>Tracy Vause – Strategic Housing Team Leader</p> <p>Wendy Lewington, DENS Chief Executive</p> <p>Sean Fitzgerald – The Elms Manager</p>
Background papers:	Appendix 1 – DENS report
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

Background

1. Prior to the completion of the Elms, Dacorum Borough had 14 bed spaces of night-shelter provision available to assist single homeless clients. With single homelessness and rough sleeping increasing, in addition to growing pressures on local charitable organisations as well as the Council, there was sufficient statistical information to evidence a need for an increase in provision. The brand new modern development, The Elms, built by the Council, includes residential space, IT suite, library and a communal garden in Redbourn Road, Hemel Hempstead. The emergency temporary accommodation has been developed through the Government's Places of Change Programme with £850,000 central government funding.
2. On the 18 December 2014 the contract for the delivery of The Elms was awarded to DENS, with a formal contract commencement date of 1 May 2015 and phased occupation of the building commenced. DENS were demonstrated expertise in a wide range of areas through their tender and this included extensive experience of running the DENS Night Shelter, Day Centre, Rent Aid, Foodbank and Equipped to Change programme. DENS have a strong understanding of working on the frontline to tackle homelessness and poverty by giving people the chance to build a better future.
3. The Group Manager Strategic Housing is the 'Contract Manager'. The Contract Manager monitors that the Supplier (DENS) is meeting all its obligations set out in the contract. The Council expects that DENS will ensure effective communication and cooperation with the Contract Manager. This contract is reviewed on a monthly basis by the Operational Manager (Strategic Housing Team Leader) and DENS Hostel Manager. Where there is underperformance or non-compliance, the Contract Manager will follow the Remediation Process set out in the terms and conditions of the Contract. Throughout the second year, the Contract Manager has monitored DENS against their mobilisation plan and key milestones. Regular monitoring of the contract includes:
 - Key Performance Indicators (KPIs);
 - Formal monthly meetings (recorded in writing) to review performance information and assess compliance with the Service Requirements;
 - Quarterly Audits;
 - Assessment of income and expenditure against DENS business plan;
 - User satisfaction; and
 - Risk management.

DENS provide monthly KPI's in a format that is readily understandable and detailed in graph or pictorial form where appropriate.

The Council will also require the following information (as a minimum) to be provided at each monthly meeting, to be based on the previous Month:

- Total number of clients accommodated in the crash pad;
- Total number of clients accommodated (excluding crash pad);
- Average length of stay (excluding crash pad);
- Number of clients referred by the Council;
- Number of clients referred by other agencies;

- Number of self-referring clients;
- Local connection of clients accommodated;
- Number of occasions that cold weather provisions are put in place, with reasons for initiation;
- Total number of days cold weather provisions are in place;
- Number of, and reasons for, unilateral support plans;
- Number and length of exclusions;
- Number of evictions;
- Details of all evictions and exclusions;
- Numbers of rooms ready to re-let: within 24 hours; within 36 hours; over 36 hours;
- Numbers of clients receiving their initial support plan: within 24 hours; within 36 hours; over 36 hours;
- Number and type of repairs logged;
- Number and type of health and safety incidents;
- Any relevant Force Majeure Events or Relief Events;
- Number and type of incidents of conflict and behavioural management;
- Number of CCTV requests;
- Details of CCTV requests;
- Number of complaints;
- Details of all complaints and compliments;
- Client training feedback;
- Details of active partnership arrangements.

To further assess compliance with the Service Requirements the Council will also carry out quarterly audits of:

- Initial assessments and eligibility checks (including local connection);
- Support plans;
- Client feedback mechanisms;
- Site and premises.

The Council will periodically engage clients in feedback sessions to assess whether DENS are meeting their needs. The Council will also ask clients to say whether they feel they have had sufficient opportunity to be involved in providing feedback and scrutiny through DENS processes.

- DENS will also need to carry out:
- a six monthly continual improvement review,
- an Annual Performance Report, and
- an Annual Equality Impact Assessment
- and provide these to the Contract Manager when they are due.

The continual improvement review is to include:

- new or potential improvements to the Services including the quality, responsiveness, procedures and client support services in relation to the Services;
- the emergence of new and evolving relevant technologies which could improve the Services, and those technological advances potentially available to DENS and the Council which the parties may wish to adopt;

- new or potential improvements to the interfaces or integration of the Services with other services provided by third parties or the Council, which might result in efficiency or productivity gains or in reduction of operational risk; and/or
 - changes in business processes and ways of working that would enable the Services to be delivered at greater benefits to clients.
4. Currently the Strategy Improvement and Engagement team are in liaison with DENS to establish a robust involvement and monitoring programme for 2018, this programme will assist the Council in undertaking a full review of the contract and will help form the basis of a full options appraisal of the Contract and consideration of how the building should be managed after the contract expiry.

Partnership working and service improvements

1. To ensure successful operational management of the Elms, the Council's Operational Manager (Strategic Housing Team Leader) has held fortnightly operational meetings throughout the second year of the contract. Meetings are formally recorded and key actions/issues brought to the attention of the Contract Manager (Group Manager, Strategic Housing) to ensure a prompt resolution. Quarterly Core Group meetings are held to ensure that the contract is appropriately implemented and monitored, this close monitoring and management of the contract has ensured that there have been no contract breaches or major operational issues in Year 2.
2. To ensure effective partnership working the Council and DENS have held a number of joint training events, liaison meetings and forums, which have been held at the Elms.
3. Crucially DENS have been a key partner in the support and delivery of the Council's 2016-2020 Homelessness Strategy and this has led to DENS Chief Executive being nominated as the Chair of Dacorum's Homeless Forum.
4. The Elms has three rooms built to provide vital facilities for disabled clients, which can also accommodate carers. It has become apparent through monitoring client's accommodation during the first two years that this is over resourced and doesn't make best use of the building, the Contract Manager is currently investigating the feasibility of converting two of the disabled units, to provide increased accommodation and more flexible use of the space available.

Challenges

1. One of the main identified challenges is in relation to the increasing complex and challenging behaviour presented by managing the client group that is accommodated at The Elms. Trying to establish support and sustain close partnership working with key services such as mental health, is proving an ongoing challenge for both DENS and the Council, it is also one that the Homeless Forum partners have raised, this is a key area that requires addressing to enable successful move on for clients from the Elms and becomes increasingly more important given future changes such as the implementation of the Homeless Reduction Act. Further details can be seen in Appendix 1.

Performance

1. Delivery against The Elms yearly targets and Key Performance Indicators' are shown in the DENS report in Appendix 1.
2. The following table shows the payments that DENS will make to the Council following the tender:

Charge to DBC	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Total
Payment to the Council annually following tender clarification	£46,691	£70,335	£71,870	£76,155	£78,896	£343,947
Payment to the Council quarterly following tender clarification	£11,672.75	£17,583.75	£17,967.50	£19,038.75	£19,724	£343,947

This payment to DBC reflects an estimate of income and expenditure based on:

- 90% occupancy, a rent of £270 per week per resident which will be fully reimbursed by housing benefit
- A payment charge that is 4% of the received rent income from housing benefits
- The Council's payments team invoice DENS quarterly for the above charges as per the Contract
- Annual monitoring of expenditure is undertaken by the Contract Manager and DBC accountant, to ensure that any increase in expenditure for items i.e. utilities is reflected and amended within the contract.
- DENS are maintaining payments in line with contract requirements.



The Elms Continual Improvement Review August 2017

Annual Equality Impact Assessment

DENS are committed to promoting equality and diversity within its services. The Council and DENS continue to work closely together to ensure that the service provided is joined up and clients are provided with appropriate advice and assessment to secure accommodation.

Where DENS is not able to provide a service due to the immigration status of the client or health or safety restrictions, which can relate to previous offending behaviour of the client, DENS works closely with the Council to ensure the client receives appropriate advice and intervention to prevent street homelessness.

DENS will make adjustments to service provision and provide specialist individual to uphold diversity and equality principles. Examples of this include ensuring a halal diet is available, supporting a transgender resident who is in transition to access appropriate support and providing appropriated facilities for residents to meet with support services.

Performance

DENS strive to constantly improve the service we provide for all our service users.

Client Data: We use Inform as our CRM, which ensures all residents information and support plans are updated in real time and kept safe. This system is used across all DENS services, allowing for a quicker and more informed referral process across our services.



All residents complete Outcome Star within 5 days of entering the Elms and this is reviewed in their key worker session four weekly. Outcome Star is an effective and well recognised tool for measuring distance travelled and is also used to encourage and motivate residents.

Move On: To ensure a more effective and informed referral to our DRA (supported tenancy programme) from the Elms, the DRA Manager and Senior Support Worker, now meets weekly to discuss potential referrals. The Elms Key Workers complete referral forms and ensures all appropriate personal documentation is in place to DRA prior to a vacancy becoming available. To support the Elms residents in transition into to DRA, where possible the key worker will visit the tenant in their DRA property post move out. These changes have resulted in an increase in successful moves to DRA.

The ETC Manager holds a housing clinic every Monday, supporting Elms residents to sign onto the housing register and bid for properties.

Development and Training for Residents: The ETC Manager continues to work closely with Elms staff and residents, providing a range of skills-based courses to support residents with employability, as well as skills to maintain a tenancy. These courses are often run in partnership with other third sector organisations and local groups and include cooking courses, money management run in conjunction with CAP, First Aid, Health & Safety training, and Food Hygiene Level 2.

Support for Residents: In the previous year, we have introduced counselling session for residents, up to 6 sessions per resident. Residents can self-refer or be referred by a staff member, attendance is voluntary. The counselling had been very well received and is regularly accessed by residents. Staff have seen a positive change in behaviour and attitude of and number of residents who attend.



Partnership Working: Partnership working is key to the success of DENS, not only at The Elms, but organisationally.

The Elms Manager meets fortnightly with the Operational Manager, (Strategic Housing Team Leader). Quarterly Core Group meetings are held to ensure the contract is appropriately implemented and monitored. These meetings are attended by the Assistant Director of Housing, Group Leader Strategic Housing, DENS CEO and the Elms Manager.

The DENS CEO is now the Chair of the Dacorum Homelessness Forum.

The Elms work closely with a number of third sector and public sector organisations, including HYH and Turning Point, who manage the Mental Health High Support Needs programme, CGL, Open Door and Druglink. Alcoholics Anonymous, Narcotics Anonymous and Cocaine Anonymous all hold weekly meetings at the Elms.

Service Charges: Service Charge collection is the responsibility of DENS. Residents are informed on a weekly basis what they owe and issued with warning letters if they fail to pay. After 4 weeks of non-payment, residents are evicted if they cannot provide evidence to support their case of non-payment. All debts are kept on file and if a former residents re approaches for accommodation, they will be expected to pay outstanding debts.

Residents or former residents with outstanding debts will not be accepted by DRA.

A hand held card machine will be in place eminently, meaning payments for personal contributions can be taken from residents any time of the day by any member of staff. We expect this to result in small increase service charge payments.

The table below shows personal contributions collected, with total to date listed below.

Month	Collected	Total
September 2016	£3908.60	£3908.60
October 2016	£4272.00	£8180.60
November 2016	£4390.00	£12,570.60
December 2016	£2576.00	£15,146.60
January 2017	£5447.00	£20,593.60
February 2017	£4174.00	£24,767.60
March 2017	£5046.00	£29,813.60
April 2017	£3176.00	£32,989.60
May 2017	£4422.00	£37,411.60
June 2017	£4079.00	£41,490.60
July 2017	£5450.00	£46,940.60

The Elms yearly targets and Key Performance Indicators are listed below:

Occupation Rate	97%
Percentage Of Rooms available within 24 hours	100%
Personal contribution arrears	11%
Housing Benefit arrears	18%
Positive Move on rate	56%
Percentage of support plans up to date	100%
Average Stay	117 Days

Our positive move on rate has been affected by residents that have been evicted, recalled to prison or abandoned their accommodation at The Elms. Anti-social behaviour has been the major factor for eviction; we are currently offered counselling to the residents in an attempt to reduce evictions. Our in house counsellor is supporting residents with anger management and also helping residents to identify triggers in behaviour, and address methods of dealing with stress & anxiety.

Challenges

A significant number of residents have low to medium mental health needs and substance abuse issues. A difficulty faced by the Elms is identifying appropriate and timely support to refer the residents too; both out-reach support and on occasion an appropriate residential service to refer to. Good links have been built with other third sector providers. However the lack of appropriate of mental health support services in the area, impact on The Elms in terms of being able to support residents and being able to successfully move on.

Managing expectations and ensuring appropriated referrals has continued to be an issue, particularly in terms of above. This is improving, due to the relationship built between DBC staff and the Elms. Identifying appropriate move on accommodation continues to be an on-going issue. By the nature of the residents at the Elms, there will always be an issue with residents not paying their personal contribution charges and inappropriate and unacceptable behaviour, resulting in evictions. This tends to be more likely with the younger client group (under 35 years).

For a period of time, the Elms struggle to find a decent, reasonably priced caterer, resulting in a number of changes in caterers. This has now been resolved, with The Elms directly employing a chef. There were on-going issue with the phone provider, leading to significant outage of service. This had now been resolved, with a new provider commencing in September. In the summer months, there has been an increase in residents returning to the Elms intoxicated and displaying unacceptable behaviour. This has been dealt with by increasing the number of hours the security guard works during these periods.

A challenge has been identifying and implementing a plan for income generation from commercial ventures. This has not been possible in year 2. DENS have offered office and meeting space to another national charity, at a discount rate however they did not follow this up. Some of the Elms residents have volunteered in the Furniture Warehouse and coppicing, which are DENS wide enterprise ventures. The DENS Board are aware of this and it will be considered at their September Board meeting.

Planned Improvements For The Third Year:

DENS will be opening an extension of its current Day Centre in October 2017. The 'Open Space' centre will be located at the Hub, along with DENS Central Services, Foodbank and Furniture Warehouse. The space will provide a greater range of personal development courses for service users, including Elms residents, along with a peer listening scheme. There will also be a number of 'drop in' surgeries led by other third and statutory sector organisations, increasing the range of support on offer to our residents.

- Greater volunteering opportunities within DENS, particularly at the Warehouse and improving properties through DRA, will be made available for Elms residents. This will be supported by the ETC Manager.
- The Elms and DRA will jointly run Tenancy Support Training for Elms residents. Completion will be a pre-requisite for referral to DRA.
- Working with Experian to explore programmes available to support Elms residents to open banks/credit union accounts, as well as how to improve their credit rating.
- Increase income from Service Charges, through use of card machine.
- Identify any income generation ventures.
- Continue to work with partners, with a focus on possible development of greater support for residents with mental issues.
- All interview panels for operational staff within DENS will now include someone with direct experience of homelessness.



DENS is aware that introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act in April 2018, will lead to an increase in demand for services within Dacorum. DENS are committed to working with DBC and the Homeless Forum to meet the increase in demand. DENS is currently scoping out how to increase its DRA portfolio, as part of this work.

Customer Feedback

Residents meetings are held monthly and the times of these are advertised widely within the Elms. There is also a suggestion box at the Elms. Residents will complete an improvement questionnaire at the next meeting. Service users will also complete an exit questionnaire when departing The Elms to evaluate their time at The Elms.

Wendy Lewington

Sean Fitzgerald

22nd August 2017



Agenda item:

Summary

Report for:	Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	6th September 2017
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Safeguarding Children and Adults At Risk Policy and Procedure.
Contact:	Councillor Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Resident and Corporate Services Author Julie Still /Oliver Jackson Responsible Officer Julie Still/David Austin Oliver Jackson/Elliott Brooks
Purpose of report:	To seek members views and input on the proposed safeguarding children and adults at risk policy and procedures.
Recommendations	That members note the report and record any views
Corporate objectives:	
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> *Within existing resources
'Value for money' implications	<u>Value for money</u> N/A
Risk implications	
Community Impact Assessment	

Health and safety Implications	
Consultees:	Herts Safeguarding Childrens’s Board Herts Safeguarding Adults Board Stevenage Borough Council
Background papers:	Hertfordshire Safeguarding Policy and Procedures for Children and Adults Hertfordshire County Council Forced Marriage and Honour Based abuse Policy Hertfordshire Female Genital Mutilation Protocol Pathway Care Act 2014
Historical background <i>(please give a brief background to this report to enable it to be considered in the right context).</i>	This single Safeguarding Policy and Procedure document replaces the 2 existing documents that cover safeguarding children and safeguarding vulnerable adults. There has been significant changes in legislation and practice that have been updated in this document.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	HSCB – Herts Safeguarding Childrens Board HSAB – Herts Safeguarding Adults Board

Background

Background

1. Dacorum Borough Council is not a Children’s Services Authority and therefore is does not lead on the Safeguarding of children and young people, it does however, have a statutory duty to work with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) and Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children’s Board under section 11 of Children Act 2004. Similarly HCC has the lead responsibility for ensuring effective arrangements are in place for the safeguarding of adults at risk across the county. Under Section 42 of the Care Act 2014, Dacorum Borough Council have a statutory duty to work HCC to make enquiries where they reasonably suspect that an adult in their area with care and support needs is at risk of abuse or neglect and unable to protect himself/herself.

2. Up until now the Safeguarding Children and Young People Policy and Procedures and the Safeguarding Adults Policy were separate documents.
3. As it was necessary to review both documents due to a range of additions and as there is now a statutory duty placed on housing providers under the Care Act 2014 it was felt appropriate to introduce a joint policy and procedures.
4. The key areas of change relate to the introduction of duty for Housing providers under the Care Act 2014 and changes in legislation, good practice and specific areas of concern such as Child Sexual Exploitation.
5. The revised documents are attached at appendix A and appendix B, the key areas of change are: -
 - a. The addition of procedures to deal with so called honour based abuse, forced marriage, female genital mutilation, Prevent, human trafficking, modern slavery and domestic abuse.
 - b. That safeguarding adults at risk now has a statutory status in line with safeguarding children.
 - c. That there is an increasing expectation for partners to be involved with the delivery of the support and early intervention for safeguarding children and adults at risk.
6. There are additional training requirements to support the new policy and procedures which relate to specific posts in addition to the general level 1 training.
7. In particular, the safeguarding adults at risk area requires consideration for assessing mental capacity at all stages and the Supported Housing Team Leader has appointed a champion within his team to act as a point of contact. This is a key factor especially in assessing matters of self neglect eg. hoarding which is a high priority due to the fire risk.
8. For safeguarding children, there is a multi agency group in the early stages of the implementation of HCC's Families First programme which is an early intervention programme that involves a wide range of partners delivering a wide range of services.
9. Prevent training is ongoing and now available online from the Home Office and also through the Council's online training. To date over 600 individuals have received face to face training from DBC officers.
10. In addition to the above training, staff and members have recently attended training based on Human Trafficking and Modern Slavery.

Appendix A – Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Appendix B – Safeguarding Policy and Procedures, Supporting Appendices



Children, Young People & Adult at risk Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

2017 - 2020

Version Control	Version 1
Status of Policy	Draft
Sponsor	Sally Marshall, Chief Executive
Author/Reviewer	Julie Still / Oliver Jackson
Approved	
Review Date	Full review July 2020 with regular updates for new legislation and practice. Appendices to be updated quarterly

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1. Introduction

Children, young people and adults at risk have the right to participate, have fun and be safe, in the services provided for them and the activities they, or a child's parent, choose for them. ,

Dacorum Borough Council will work with Hertfordshire County Council who is the lead safeguarding agency for children, young people and adults at risk. The Council will also work with Hertfordshire's Safeguarding Children and Safeguarding Adults Boards as required under the Children Act 2004, and the amendments made in to this act in the Apprenticeships, Skills, Children and Learning Act 2009, and in line with the multi-agency policy, procedure and practice for working with adults at risk of abuse or neglect in Hertfordshire (January 2017) and the Care Act 2014.

2. Safeguarding Policy Statement

Dacorum Borough Council is committed to safeguarding children, young people and adults at risk, protecting them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised and provided by, or on behalf of, the Council.

We will endeavour to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe from abuse and suspicion of abuse, reports will be responded to promptly and appropriately. We will act in the best interest of the child, young person or adult at risk and we will proactively seek to promote the welfare and the protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults living in the community at all times.

Dacorum Borough Council will ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and adults at risk through its Safe Recruitment procedures and will take any concern reported by a Member, employee, volunteer grant funded or contracted service provider or child/adult at risk seriously and deal with it sensitively.

Referrals made by a Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service provider or child/adult at risk cannot be anonymous and should be made in the knowledge that, during the course of enquiries, the agency and individuals who made that referral will be made known. This is because individuals may be required to give evidence and on occasion be required as a prosecution witness.

Dacorum Borough Council will not tolerate harassment of any Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service provider or child/adult at risk who raises concerns of abuse and it will be addressed through the most appropriate course of action or under the most appropriate policy.

3. EQUALITY AND DIVERSITY

We will ensure that this policy is applied fairly and consistently to all our customers. We will not directly or indirectly discriminate against any person or group of people because of their race, religion, age, gender, marital status, sexual orientation, disability or any other grounds set out in our Equality and Diversity policy.

When applying this policy we will act sensitively towards the diverse needs of individuals and communities.

When applying this policy we will take the necessary positive action to reduce discrimination and harassment in local communities.

4. Definitions

For the purpose of this document, the phrase children and young people refers to: Any person under the age of 18 years.

When using the term 'parents' in the context of this document it will be in the broadest sense to include parents, carers and guardians.

The phrase adult at risk refers to: - Any person over the age of 18 who is, or may be in need of care services by reasons of mental health or other disability, age or illness and is, or may be unable to take care of him or herself against significant harm or exploitation. (Lord Chancellor's Department, 1997)

Abuse is defined as *"...a violation of an individual's human and civil rights by any other person or persons. Abuse may consist of a single act or repeated acts. It may be physical, verbal or psychological, it may be an act of neglect or an omission to act, or it may occur when a vulnerable person is persuaded to enter into a financial or sexual transaction to which he or she has not consented, or cannot consent. Abuse can occur in any relationship and may result in significant harm to, or exploitation of, the person subjected to it"*. (Department of Health).

Safeguarding children is defined as *"...protecting children from maltreatment, preventing impairment of children's health and development, ensuring that children grow up in circumstances consistent with the provision of safe and effective care and taking action to enable all children to have the best outcomes"* (Working together to safeguard children 2013).

Adult safeguarding is defined by the Care Act 2014 as *"...the process of protecting adults with care and support needs from abuse or neglect"*.

The phrase 'Members, employees, volunteers and grant funded or contracted service providers' is used to refer to all Borough Councillors, employees and people working on behalf of the Council either paid or in voluntary capacity.

Commissioned, contracted or grant funded organisations will be expected to have policies and procedures in place commensurate with the level of contact and involvement with children, young people and adults at risk. As a minimum, any organisation receiving funding from the Council, will be expected to have a statement of policy and procedure regarding safeguarding in place. This needs to be understood by employees and volunteers and available to service users.

Commissioned, contracted or grant funded organisations with minimal contact with children and young people may wish to adopt the Council's Policy (Appendix 7).

The phrase 'contracted service provider' used subsequently in this document will refer to those organisations that have appropriately adopted this policy.

Abuse can be physical, emotional, sexual and mental abuse including bullying and exploitation, forced marriage, honour based abuse and female genital mutilation. In the case of adults or young people aged 16 and over there are additional areas of financial and domestic abuse.

5. Aims

Dacorum Borough Council will promote the welfare of children and young people by:

- Respecting the rights, wishes, feelings and privacy of children, young people and adults at risk by listening to them and minimising risks that may affect them.
- Preventing abuse by adopting good practice and creating a safe and healthy environment to avoid situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.
- Ensuring that Members, employees and volunteers understand the relevant Codes of Conduct and Safeguarding Policy.
- Monitoring accountability and governance through the Council's procedures and through the Community Safety Partnership's Responsible Officers Group and the Council's Community and Housing Overview and Scrutiny Group.
- Raising awareness among members and officers of the safeguarding duty the Council has in relation to the Children Act 2004 and the Care Act 2014 where Hertfordshire County Council has the lead responsibility.
- Ensuring that contracted, commissioned and grant funded services have policies and procedures commensurate with the level of involvement they have with children and young people.
- Responding to any allegations appropriately and implementing the appropriate reporting, disciplinary and appeals procedures.
- Supporting the National Prevent agenda by working with partner agencies to identify and support children, young people and adults at risk who are vulnerable to radicalisation.
- Raise awareness about the forms of abuse and how to keep children, young people and adults at risk safe.

To achieve these aims, Dacorum Borough Council will endeavour to:

- ❖ Ensure that training appropriate to the level of involvement with children and young people and adults at risk is available for Members, employees and volunteers and where appropriate contracted service providers which includes training of staff to raise awareness of safeguarding and specific areas such as but not limited to: Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE); Prevent to identify those vulnerable to radicalisation; Mental Capacity; deprivation of liberties; Forced Marriage; Honour Based Abuse and Female Genital Mutilation
- ❖ Respond appropriately to any concerns reported
- ❖ Develop and implement effective procedures for recording and responding to incidents and accidents
- ❖ Develop and implement effective procedures for recognising, responding, recording and referring any allegations or suspicions of abuse to Hertfordshire County Council and Hertfordshire's Children's Safeguarding Board and the District sub group and provide relevant reports.
- ❖ Promote the welfare and wellbeing of children, young people and adults at risk within services including in the planning of services.
- ❖ Maintain a good level of safe working practice at all times to minimise risk to children, young people and adults at risk that come into contact with Members, employees, volunteers and grant funded and contracted service providers.
- ❖ Support all County and National initiatives to promote the Safeguarding of children, young people and adults at risk.
- ❖ Hold regular Safeguarding and Safe Working Practice meetings with designated officers from across the Council
- ❖ Provide as and when necessary advice and information to increase awareness about keeping safe

6. Scope of the Policy

This Policy and Procedure cover all Members, employees, volunteers and grant funded and contracted service providers (who have appropriately adopted this policy). However, not all Members, employees or volunteers will be working directly with children, young people and adults at risk as part of their duties or activities for or on behalf of the Council. Safe working practices, as detailed in the following procedure, should be used on all occasions where Members, employees, volunteers or contracted services come into contact with children, young people and adults at risk.

It is always important to use safe working practices but there are some areas when using it is of particular importance: -

- ❖ Working in Adventure Playgrounds

- ❖ Working in supported housing
- ❖ School talks and events
- ❖ Work experience placements
- ❖ Community engagement including working with youth councils, diversionary activities and events.
- ❖ Housing visits for repairs, existing or new housing applicants and homeless families
- ❖ Revenue and Benefits home visits
- ❖ Visits to any home for inspections or enforcement purposes. This will include all visits eg: Planning, housing repairs, Regulatory Services and grant applications.
- ❖ Volunteers training and knowledge as required
- ❖ Parks and grounds maintenance
- ❖ Anti-social behaviour – enforcement and diversion projects

This list is indicative only and there may be other occasions when particular importance should be paid to safe working practices.

7. Obligations and responsibilities

Children and young people

Hertfordshire County Council is the lead authority in the county for safeguarding children and young people. The county council has responsibility for deciding where cases meet the threshold (which section of the children's act is this?) and coordinating and leading investigations. Dacorum Borough Council will support the lead authority in meeting these responsibilities.

Section 11, of The Children Act 2004 places certain obligations on the Council and a Hertfordshire wide action plan has been drafted to implement the obligations for safeguarding and the promotion of children's welfare in Dacorum which include the following:

- ❖ To have senior level responsibility for Safeguarding Children and Young People. The Chief Executive fulfils this role at Dacorum Borough Council.
- ❖ To have a senior officer lead for Safeguarding Children and Young People – Dacorum have a team of officers responsible for safeguarding which is led by the Group Manager Resident Services and supported by the Anti-social Behaviour Team Leader.

- ❖ An elected member to champion Safeguarding – Dacorum Borough Council's champion is The Portfolio Holder for Regulatory and Resident Services
- ❖ Information to be available on intranet and the Document Centre on Dennis and the Document Centre – Safeguarding and Domestic Abuse folder accessed by quick links on the front page of Dennis.
- ❖ All corporate, community and team plans must ensure that safeguarding is a key priority.
- ❖ A clear structure must be in place to deal with all issues around safeguarding
- ❖ A clear policy on safeguarding must exist and be supported by procedures.
- ❖ There should be a clear statement on information sharing with partners with regard to safeguarding.
- ❖ There should be an appropriate programme of training for all staff and a full record of training undertaken should be maintained.
- ❖ Safe recruitment procedures/guidance should be followed for the recruitment of all staff.
- ❖ A whistle blowing policy must be in place and staff should be aware of the procedure – there is an existing whistle blowing policy and a copy is available on Dennis.
<http://dennis/Docs/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2FDocs%2FDocuments%2FPolices%20%2D%20Procedures%20%2D%20Sustainability%20Tool%20Kit%2FPolicies>
- ❖ All records relating to children or young people must be stored in a safe and secure place and only named persons should have access to these files.
- ❖ Each service area that is responsible for contracting work out on behalf of the Council must ensure that via the service level agreements or contract that the above provisions of section 11 of the Children Act 2004 are complied with.
- ❖ Each service area and contract manager is responsible for monitoring compliance by contractors of these provisions and an annual review should be undertaken and reported to the Group Manager Resident Services.

Adults at risk

Hertfordshire County Council is the lead authority in the county for safeguarding Adults at risk. The county council has responsibility for deciding where cases meet the threshold of the care act, section 42. Dacorum Borough Council will support the lead authority in meeting these responsibilities.

The Care Act 2014 supplemented by the Care and Support Guidance (Department of Health 2014) requires Local Authorities including District Councils to “...promote wellbeing when carrying out any of their care and support functions in respect of a person. This may sometimes be referred to as “the wellbeing principle” because it is a guiding principle that puts wellbeing at the heart of care and support” (Care and Support Guidance P1)

Section 1 of the Care Act includes protection from abuse and neglect as part of the definition of wellbeing. Wellbeing is defined in the Guidance in a number of ways and includes protection from abuse and neglect.

The Council is required under statute to promote wellbeing in any function and/or service that involves care and support of adults and meet identified needs. Local authority statutory adult safeguarding duties apply equally to all adults with care and support needs regardless of whether their needs are being met by the local authority.

The act guidance enshrines the six principles of safeguarding:

- **Empowerment** – People being supported and encouraged to make their own decisions and informed consent.
- **Prevention** – It is better to take action before harm occurs.
- **Proportionality** – The least intrusive response appropriate to the risk presented.
- **Protection** – Support and representation for those in greatest need.
- **Partnership** – Local solutions through services working with their communities. Communities have a part to play in preventing, detecting and reporting neglect and abuse.
- **Accountability** – Accountability and transparency in delivering safeguarding.

Dacorum Borough Council commits to the principles of *Making Safeguarding Personal* which is about person centred and outcome focussed practice. It is how professionals are assured by adults at risk that they have made a difference to people by taking action on what matters to people, and is personal and meaningful to them.

8. Housing

In discharging a range of duties in the management of their housing stock the Council will have regard to the above obligations and responsibilities.

In addition to this there are also requirements under the following legislation: -

- ❖ The Housing Act 1996 as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 section 213A ensures that a housing authority contacts social services (with or where appropriate without consent) when a family with children is ineligible or intentionally homeless. This section also ensures that housing authorities cooperate with social service to provide advice and assistance to help ineligible or intentionally homeless households with children.
- ❖ The Housing Act 2004 gives local authorities powers and duties to take action against bad housing conditions and Environmental Health Officers will assess the impact of health and safety hazards in light of hazards that occupants are vulnerable to and consider safeguarding children as part of this process.

9. Disclosure and Barring Service checks.

Dacorum Borough Council is not a Children's Services Authority, therefore the scope for working directly with children and young people is limited and the majority of direct work takes place within Children's Services in the Adventure Playgrounds

Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks can only be sought where their criteria is met. A list of the relevant posts are maintained and reviewed by Human Resources and, where necessary, the application of a DBS forms part of the safe recruitment process.

There is a group of employees for whom an enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) check is necessary. This relates to services where there is a regulated activity, or regular contact which may be unsupervised such as the officers at Adventure Playgrounds where children and young people are concerned or Supported Housing Officers where vulnerable adults are concerned. All posts are reviewed regularly.

It is a requirement of the Licensing of Hackney Carriages and for Personal Licenses that an enhanced DBS check forms part the application process. Details regarding this are contained within the relevant licensing policies available from the Licensing department at the Council which also contain a range of safeguarding measures.

Contracted, commissioned and grant funded organisations will need to undertake any checks commensurate with the level of their involvement with children, young people or vulnerable adults and have their own safe recruitment procedures.

10. Recognising potential incidences of abuse

It is not always easy to recognise a situation where abuse may occur or has already taken place even for those experienced in working with abuse cases. Dacorum Borough Council acknowledges its' members, employees, volunteers, grant funded and contracted services are not experts at such recognition.

There are however some indicators and areas of specific risk that are identified below and which also link to other policies. Further specific indicators of physical, sexual, emotional and psychological abuse are included in the procedure section of this document.

11. Domestic Abuse

Domestic abuse has been found to be a significant indicator of child abuse. The Adoption and Children Act 2002 identifies a child witnessing the suffering of another, including domestic abuse, in the Children Act 1989 definition of significant harm. Members, employees, volunteers and grant funded or contracted service providers. Dacorum Borough Council has a specific Domestic Abuse Policy that can be found on the Dacorum website.

12. Child Sexual Exploitation

Sexual exploitation is a form of sexual abuse, in which a young person is manipulated or forced into taking part in a sexual act. This could be as part of a relationship which seems to be normal and loving or in return for attention, affection, money, drugs, alcohol or somewhere to stay. In many cases, victims will be 'groomed' by an abusing adult, who befriends them and makes them feel special by buying them gifts or giving them lots of attention. Usually the abuser will have power of some kind over the young person. It may be that they are older or more emotionally mature, physically stronger, or that they are in a position where they are able to control the young person. This type of abuse could happen to any young person from any background. However, certain young people, such as those who are having difficulties at home, regularly go missing or who have experienced care, are more vulnerable.

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB) and Hertfordshire Probation Trust have joined forces with Hertfordshire Constabulary in Operation HALO to identify cases of child sexual exploitation in Hertfordshire and prosecute offenders – see the link for more information.

13. Female Genital Mutilation (FGM)

Female Genital Mutilation (FGM) is illegal in England and Wales under the FGM Act 2003. **It is a form of child abuse and violence against women.** FGM comprises all procedures involving partial or total removal of the external female genitalia for non-medical reasons.

A further amendment to FGM Act 2003 by section 72 of the Serious Crime Act 2015 introduced FGM Protection Orders. An FGM Protection Order is a civil measure which can be applied for through a family court by a range of agencies including Local Authorities. The FGM Protection Order offers the means of protecting actual or potential victims from FGM under the civil law.

Dacorum Borough Council follows the Hertfordshire protocol for FGM.

14. Forced Marriage

In forced marriage, one or both spouses do not consent to the marriage and some element of duress is involved. Duress includes both physical and emotional pressure and abuse.

Forced marriage is primarily, but not exclusively, an issue of violence against females. Most cases involve young women and girls aged between 13 and 30, although there is evidence to suggest that as many as 15 per cent of victims are male. This policy relates to children or young people under 18 years of age.

Forced marriage is a human rights abuse. It can constitute both child abuse and sexual abuse. The United Nations considers it a form of trafficking, sexual slavery, and exploitation. It is not a private, personal, domestic, family, religious, or cultural issue and cannot be justified as such whether a religious or civil ceremony.

A clear distinction must be made between a **forced** marriage and an **arranged** marriage. The tradition of arranged marriages has operated successfully within many communities and many countries for a very long time. In arranged marriages, the families of both spouses take a leading role in arranging the marriage but the choice of whether or not to accept the arrangement remains with the child/ young person.

In Dacorum we will follow the Hertfordshire County Council policy and procedure that should be followed in regards to any concerns about Honour Based Abuse and/or Forced Marriage.

15. Honour Based Abuse

The NCPP (National Police Chief's Council formerly ACPO) definition of Honour Based Abuse is "a crime or incident which has or may have been committed to protect or defend the honour of the family and/or community". It is a form of domestic abuse which is perpetrated in the name of so called 'honour'.

16. Radicalisation and Violent Extremism.

The Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015 requires Local Authorities to ensure that frontline staff should understand the Prevent Strategy and are able to recognise vulnerability to radicalisation, and know where to go to seek further help. Usual safeguarding procedures should be followed. Essential training is available for all staff via the Home Office website and face to face.

17. Capacity and Self Determination

Unless certain prescribed circumstances exist, adults should freely determine their own lives, take risks and make their own decisions. In legal terms, there is a presumption of capacity unless demonstrated otherwise.

Assumptions should not be made about a person's capacity eg. someone with dementia should not automatically be assumed to lack capacity. In some cases, capacity can fluctuate and a person can be deemed to have capacity to take responsibility for some decisions but not others.

There are two aspects to the issue of capacity within the context of abuse. Firstly, making assumptions about a person's capacity and denying them the right to self-determination may, in fact, be abusive. Secondly, where abuse has occurred or is suspected or alleged, the vulnerable person's capacity to understand and make decisions needs to be assessed.

Normally, the capacity of an individual to make key decisions is determined by their GP, Social worker and/or mental health team. Where a referral needs to be made for an assessment of an adult's capacity, then their consent needs to be obtained. If consent is withheld, then a judgement needs to be made with regard to whether the vulnerable person lacks the capacity to make that decision. It is essential that an individual's capacity is considered at all times, if consent is withheld and a referral is

made without considering capacity this would be deemed to be a breach of the Care Act 2014. Advice should be sought from designated safeguarding leads if you are unsure.

Before a safeguarding referral is made to HCC under this policy, the Council will seek the tenant/resident's consent. However, HCC state that "where an overriding public interest or vital interest or if gaining consent would put the adult at further risk, a concern must be raised but the lack of consent and the reason for it must be explicit". This must include the consideration of an individual's mental capacity.

This includes situations where:

- other people or children could be at risk from the person causing harm
- it is necessary to prevent crime
- there is a high risk to the health and safety of the adult at risk
- the person lacks capacity to consent
- the alleged abuser has care and support needs and may also be at risk
- staff, agents or contractors are implicated
- the adult at risk has mental capacity not to give consent but they may be under duress or being coerced
- a court order or other legal authority has requested the information
- where there is a need to take advice prior to notification or referral in relation to modern slavery or human trafficking

The adult at risk would normally be informed of the decision to refer and the reasons, unless telling them would jeopardise their safety or the safety of others".

18. Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

Modern slavery is an umbrella term encompassing slavery, servitude, forced or compulsory labour and human trafficking. Victims of modern slavery are unable to leave their situation of exploitation, controlled by threats, punishment, violence, coercion and deception. Slavery violates human rights, denying people of their right to life, freedom and security.

The Modern Slavery Act 2015 introduced a range of measures to address this hidden crime and the following areas are specific to local authorities: -

Section 52 of the Modern Slavery Act 2015 requires local authorities, along with Police and Gangmasters Licensing Authority, to notify the Secretary of State upon developing reasonable grounds to believe that a person may be a victim of slavery or

human trafficking and in order to meet this requirement it is necessary to train staff frontline staff to recognise the indicators as they may find themselves in situations where they recognise the indicators of modern slavery or human trafficking and should be able to make the required notification.

Section 54 of this act deals with the transparency in supply chains and ethical procurement. It requires organisations with a global turnover in excess of £33 million to produce an annual statement in relation to this. The statement should detail what steps the business has taken to eradicate slavery from its own business and its supply chain or alternatively, because only the statement itself is compulsory, a statement could lawfully state that the business has taken no anti-slavery measures at all.

It is important therefore to recognise that it is not Members, employees, volunteers, grant funded or contracted services responsibility to decide whether or not abuse of any kind is taking place, or if as child or vulnerable adult is at risk, but to report where they have concerns or suspicions, or where an allegation has been made and be aware of what the signs could be.

In addition it is not the role of any Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service to investigate or judge any allegation or concern.

It is everyone's responsibility is to REPORT concerns or allegations to the relevant officer (see Safeguarding contacts list at appendix 1) . The Lead Designated Safeguarding Officers should be advised of all referrals for the purposes of recording and reporting.

19. Responsibility, Monitoring and Review

The Group manager – Resident services will be the lead for the safeguarding of children and young people

The Supported Housing Team Leader will be lead for the Safeguarding of Adults at Risk.

All allegations of abuse will be centrally recorded and the named officers above will be responsible for collating and monitoring referrals and reporting these to the Council's Safeguarding Working Group and the Housing and Community Scrutiny Committee.

This policy will be reviewed on an annual basis.

PART TWO: PROCEDURE

SAFEGUARDING CHILDREN, YOUNG PEOPLE AND ADULTS AT RISK

1. Prevention

1.1 Safe Working Practice

When dealing with children, young people and adults at risk the corporate codes of conduct /customer care standards of behaviour should always be maintained as it is possible to reduce situations where abuse or allegations of abuse may occur.

As a Member, employee, volunteer, grant funded or contracted service provider (in this document this reference relates to those contracted service providers that have adopted this policy and procedure) you should apply best practice and follow these guidelines:-

- ❖ Where ever possible, always be publicly open when working with children and young people.
- ❖ Avoid any situations where you and a child are completely unobserved (encourage an open environment).
- ❖ Never leave children and young people unattended whilst they are in your care;
- ❖ Wear a name badge, employee identification badge and/or uniform to be easily recognised by children, young people and adults at risk
- ❖ You must respect the rights, dignity and worth of every person and treat everyone equally within the context of their activity or the service they undertake with the Council.

Members, employees, volunteers grant funded and contracted service providers should never in the course of their duties:

- ❖ Engage in rough, physical and sexually provocative games or activities;
- ❖ Share a bedroom with a child or young person;
- ❖ Allow or engage in any form of inappropriate physical contact;
- ❖ Allow children or young people to use inappropriate language unchallenged.
- ❖ Make sexually suggestive comments to a child or young person even in fun.
- ❖ Allow allegations made by a child or young person to go unchallenged, unrecorded or not acted upon.
- ❖ Do things of a personal nature that a child can do for themselves.
- ❖ Enter areas designated only for the opposite sex.
- ❖ Solicit personal information other than that required for health and safety reasons, such as data required for registration purposes to attend facilities

or applications for courses etc. on courses. This information must be dealt with in accordance with the requirements of all current Data Protection legislation.

- ❖ Become involved in the administration, prompt, storage or ordering of an individual's medication.
- ❖ Become involved in any financial transaction with, or on behalf of, a child, young person or adult at risk.
- ❖ Provide any personal care to an adult at risk. This includes helping them to get dressed.
- ❖ Take a child young person or adult at risk in their car.
- ❖ Access an individual's property without permission

Occasions may arise where an employee and/or volunteer does things of a personal nature for a child or young person particularly if they are very young or have disabilities. These duties should only be carried out with the full understanding and consent of parents/carers and the child/young person involved.

If a child, young person or adult at risk is accidentally injured as a result of your actions, seems distressed in any manner, misunderstands or misinterprets something you have done, such incidents should be reported immediately to your line manager and documented. In the case of children and young people parents/carers should be informed of all incidents.

All Members, employees, volunteers, grant funded or contracted service providers should be aware that they should not be in a situation where they are ever alone with a child and to always have a responsible adult or other children or young people with them in a group.

To be aware they do not:

- ❖ Spend any time alone with Children and young people away from others.
- ❖ When talking to children on your own ensure you can be seen by others.
- ❖ Take children or young people alone on car journeys, however short.
- ❖ Take children or young people to your home where they will be alone with you.

1.2 Safe working procedures

Good standards of maintenance, hygiene and safety should be maintained at all times within Council buildings where children, young people and adults at risk use and have access to our services.

In order to support its Health and Safety Policy the Council ensures that general safety arrangements are supplemented by comprehensive safe working procedures within each service area.

Such procedures will incorporate an identification of hazards, assessment of risks, and use of personal protective equipment, training, supervision and safe systems of work. These will be regularly reviewed by responsible officers.

1.3 Operational Procedures and Standards

The safety of children, young people and adults at risk taking part in any meeting/activity and/or organised session on Council premises is paramount. If children, young people or adults at risk are attending Council premises or events without the supervision of a parent/carer/guardian, the following practices must be applied: -

- ❖ All children and young people must be supervised at all times by an employee or volunteer who has undergone the appropriate DBS disclosure.
- ❖ Standard risk assessments are conducted prior to the organisation of any meetings, courses or activities.
- ❖ All employees, volunteers, members or contracted services must be aware of the procedure for the arrival and departure at any meeting/activity/course undertaken with the Council and any particular control measures identified in the risk assessment process.
- ❖ Any Supervisor or volunteer working with children, young people or adults at risk should familiarise themselves with the emergency evacuation procedures relevant to the area in which they work and take responsibility for those children and young people should an emergency arise.
- ❖ A DBS checked employee/volunteer must accompany a child, young person or adult at risk should they wish to leave the main group for whatever reason (e.g. first aid).
- ❖ All relevant safety checks must be made on the facilities and equipment prior to the start of each day or session.
- ❖ Parental consent should be sought – see form at appendix 3
- ❖ All emergency contact details/medical information must be kept current for each child or young person.
- ❖ The correct ratio of adults to children and young people should be applied as published in guidelines by Ofsted.

Notwithstanding the above procedures, there will be a need for specific operational procedures relative to each site, service and activity.

1.4 First Aid and accidents

The welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is paramount

For children and young people parental consent for the administration of first aid is not always possible or necessary but without the relevant consent it must be a last resort. See the guidance attached in appendix 6.

For adults at risk first aid should also be seen as the last resort. It is down to the individual as to whether or not they would carry out first aid.

All accidents and incidents must be recorded in accordance with the Councils accident reporting procedures.

1.5 Photography

When taking photographs of any child or young person precautionary measures should be taken and the appropriate authority sought from parents or guardians. Measures and a consent form are contained in appendices 4 and 5.

When taking photographs of any adult at risk, consent should be sought.

1.6 Off Duty Contact

Employees, elected Members, volunteers grant funded organisations and contractors must maintain a professional relationship with children, young people and adults at risk during any off-duty contact, continuing to follow the guidelines and policies set out for contact during work and where relevant should adhere to the ICT usage guidance as detailed in Appendix 7

1.7 Breach of safe working practice and procedures

Dacorum Borough Council takes its responsibility very seriously. Employees who breach any of the code above will result in investigation and may be a matter of disciplinary action which could lead to dismissal and the possibility of criminal investigation where there is evidence of illegal activity. Where an investigation results in dismissal the Disclosure and Barring Service will be informed where relevant.

Volunteers in breach of the above will have their services terminated with immediate effect. Where there is evidence of illegal activity, the volunteer will be reported to the relevant authorities and may face criminal investigation.

If a Member does not adhere to the policy, there may be grounds for reporting their behaviour to the Standards Committee, who may require an investigation under the Member Code of Conduct. Where there is evidence of illegal activity, the Member will be reported to the relevant authorities and may face criminal investigation.

2. Recognise, Respond, Refer

2.1 Recognise - How?

It is not the role of any Member, employee, and volunteer, grant-funded or contracted service provider to take individual responsibility for deciding whether or not abuse is actually taking place. However, there is a responsibility to protect children, young people and adults at risk by referring concerns to the appropriate agency.

This procedure for reporting a concern or allegation informs all Dacorum Borough Council, Members, employees, volunteers, grant funded or contracted service providers (that have adopted this policy and procedures) of the actions they

should take if they have concerns about, or encounter, a case of alleged or suspected abuse of a child, young person or adult at risk.

Recognising a safeguarding concern can also relate to the environment that a child, young person or adult at risk is living in and this is often referred to as neglect. Visiting Officers may have concerns about what they see when carrying out an inspection or home visit to a property or whilst carrying out their duties.

Some of the more obvious signs of abuse, neglect or bullying could be:

- ❖ Unexplained bruising, marks or injuries on any part of the body
- ❖ Bruises which reflect hand marks or fingertips (from slapping or pinching)
- ❖ Cigarette burns
- ❖ Bite marks
- ❖ Constant hunger, sometimes stealing food
- ❖ Constantly dirty or smelly condition
- ❖ Inappropriate dress for conditions
- ❖ Fear of parents or carers being approached for explanations
- ❖ Aggressive behaviour or severe temper outbursts
- ❖ Flinching when approached or touched
- ❖ Reluctance to get changed, for example long sleeves in hot weather
- ❖ Neurotic behaviour e.g. Rocking, hair twisting
- ❖ Being unable to play or withdrawing from social situations
- ❖ Fear of making mistakes
- ❖ Self-harm
- ❖ Sudden or unexplained changes in behaviour e.g. becoming aggressive or withdrawn
- ❖ Fear of being left with a specific person or group of people
- ❖ Sexual knowledge which is beyond their development age
- ❖ Sexual drawings or language
- ❖ Saying they have secrets they cannot tell anyone about
- ❖ Not allowed to have friends or socialise with others
- ❖ Neglect – unacceptable living conditions

2.2 Child Sexual Exploitation

In addition to the above the following signs can be a sign of child sexual exploitation which can take place up to the age of 18 years old.

- ❖ Regularly going missing from home
- ❖ Truancy from school
- ❖ Friends with significantly older people
- ❖ Being collected from home or school by people you don't know
- ❖ Unexplained injuries of bruising
- ❖ Unexplained gifts or money
- ❖ Secretive mobile phone use

- ❖ Sexually transmitted infections
- ❖ Associating with other young people who are vulnerable or are known to be involved in sexual exploitation
- ❖ Drug or alcohol misuse
- ❖ Evidence of sexual bullying or vulnerability through the internet or social networking
- ❖ Self-harming
- ❖ Suicide attempts
- ❖ Overdosing
- ❖ Eating disorders

Tackling Child Sexual Exploitation and 'Say Something If You See Something' are national campaigns. Safeguarding Children and Young People from Sexual Exploitation, HM Government 2009 tells us "Sexual exploitation is not limited to particular geographical areas and all Local Safeguarding Children Boards should assume it is an issue in their area".

2.3 Forced Marriage and Honour Based Abuse

The honour code to which forced marriage and honour based abuse refers to is usually set at the discretion of male relatives and girls or women who do not abide by the 'rules' are then punished for bringing shame on the family. Infringements may include a woman or girl having a boyfriend; rejecting a forced marriage; pregnancy outside of marriage; interfaith relationships; homosexuality; inappropriate dress or make-up and even kissing in a public place. Crimes of honour do not always include violence, it can occur in many forms including:-

- domestic abuse/assault
- Attempted/ conspiracy to commit murder
- Manslaughter
- Procuring an abortion
- Encouraging or assisting suicide
- threats of violence
- sexual or psychological abuse
- forced marriage
- being held against their will

It is very important that you do not speak to any family members if you have concerns about forced marriage or honour based abuse. You should speak to the designated officer immediately

2.4 Female Genital Mutilation

The FGM Act 2003 was amended by the Serious Crime Act 2015 and it introduces a mandatory reporting duty which requires regulated health and social care professionals and teachers in England and Wales to report 'known' cases of FGM in under 18s which they identify in the course of their professional work to the police.

'Known' cases are those where either a girl informs the person that an act of FGM – however described – has been carried out on her, or where the person observes physical signs on a girl appearing to show that an act of FGM has been carried out and the person has no reason to believe that the act was, or was part of, a surgical operation within section 1(2)(a) or (b) of the FGM Act 2003.

Members, employees, volunteers and grant funded or contracted service providers are not subject to this mandatory duty but this policy expects them to follow the duty as a matter of good practice and any concerns should be reported to the designated officer.

2.5 Prevent – Radicalisation and Violent Extremism

Radicalisation is defined as the process by which people come to support terrorism and violent extremism and, in some cases, to then participate in terrorist groups.

Children, young people and adults at risk are vulnerable to exposure to or involvement with groups or individuals who advocate violence as a means to a political or ideological end. Examples of extremist causes that have used violence to achieve their ends include animal rights, the far right and international terrorist organisations such as so called Islamic State (IS).

Children, young people and adults at risk can be drawn into violence or they can be exposed to the messages of extremist groups by many means. These can include family members or friends, direct contact with groups and organisations or, increasingly through the internet. This can put a young person at risk of being drawn into criminal activity and has the potential to cause significant harm.

Work to safeguard children and adults, providing early intervention to protect and divert people away from being drawn into terrorist activity, is at the heart of the revised *Prevent* strategy. Channel is a national programme which forms part of Prevent and further information can see obtained from the link below.

<http://www.acpo.police.uk/documents/TAM/2012/201210TAMChannelGuidance.pdf>

Potential indicators identified in the Channel guidance include: -

- ❖ Use of inappropriate language
- ❖ Possession of violent extremist literature
- ❖ Behavioural changes
- ❖ The expression of the extremist views
- ❖ Advocating violent actions and means
- ❖ Association with known extremists
- ❖ Seeking to recruit others to an extremist ideology

2.6 Financial abuse – Adults at risk

There is no statutory definition of financial abuse; however *No Secrets* published by the department of health defines financial abuse as the following:

“Financial or material abuse, including theft, fraud, exploitation, pressure in connection with wills, property or inheritance or financial transactions, or the misuse or misappropriation of property, possessions or benefits” (DH/Home Office, 2000)

Indicators of financial abuse can include:

- ❖ Missing personal possessions
- ❖ Unexplained lack of money or inability to maintain lifestyle
- ❖ Unexplained withdrawal of funds from accounts
- ❖ Power of attorney or lasting power of attorney (LPA) being obtained after the person has ceased to have mental capacity
- ❖ Failure to register an LPA after the person has ceased to have mental capacity to manage their finances, so that it appears that they are continuing to do so
- ❖ The person allocated to manage financial affairs is evasive or uncooperative
- ❖ The family or others show unusual interest in the assets of the person
- ❖ Signs of financial hardship in cases where the person’s financial affairs are being managed by a court appointed deputy, attorney or LPA
- ❖ Recent changes in deeds or title to property
- ❖ Rent arrears and eviction notices
- ❖ A lack of clear financial accounts held by a care home or service
- ❖ Failure to provide receipts for shopping or other financial transactions carried out on behalf of the person
- ❖ Disparity between the person’s living conditions and their financial resources, e.g. insufficient food in the house
- ❖ Unnecessary property repair

2.7 Modern Slavery and Human Trafficking

There are a wide range of indicators relating to modern slavery and human trafficking which can be found on the link below.

If a member of staff has any concerns about any matter related to slavery they should discuss it with the designated officer as there is a duty for them to notify to home office and a structured procedure to follow.

<http://www.antislaverycommissioner.co.uk/media/1057/victims-of-modern-slavery-frontline-staff-guidance-v3.pdf>

If you have any concerns about any situation or a discussion with a child, young person or vulnerable adult always speak to your Designated Safeguarding Officer or a Lead Safeguarding Officer – see Appendix 1 for contact details. Remember it is not your responsibility to make any decisions

or investigations – it is your responsibility to respond and refer by discussing with a Designated Officer.

3. Respond and refer – How?

To a child, young person or adult at risk disclosing

Children, young people and adults at risk who are being abused will only tell people they trust and with whom they feel safe. By listening to, and taking seriously what a child, young person or vulnerable adult is telling you, you will already be helping to protect them.

Create a safe environment by:

- ❖ Staying calm and not rushing into actions that may be inappropriate.
- ❖ Confirming you understand how difficult it must have been to confide in you and that they have done the right thing.
- ❖ Reassuring the child, young person or adult at risk and stressing he/she is not to blame.
- ❖ Listening to what the child, young person or adult at risk tells you, show you are taking what is being said seriously.
- ❖ Where possible remain in view, do not go somewhere on your own.
- ❖ Be honest and do not make promises you cannot keep. Explain you will have to tell other people in order to stop what is happening;
- ❖ Ensure you are quite clear about what the child, young person or adult at risk says so you can pass it on to the professionals. Use open questions to encourage them to use their own words but do not press for detailed information.

NB The law is very strict and an abuse case can be dismissed if it appears the child/young person has been led or words have been suggested.

Record exactly what the child, young person or adult at risk has said to you, on an incident referral form (Appendix 2) as soon as possible after the incident. As far as possible use the child, young person or adult at risk own words. Stick to the facts and do not give your opinion and record:

- ❖ The individuals name, address, date of birth.
- ❖ The nature of the allegation.
- ❖ A description of any visible bruising or other injuries.
- ❖ Your observations (e.g. a description of the individual's behaviour and physical and emotional state).
- ❖ Exactly what the child, young person or adult at risk has said and what you said. Record the account of what has happened and how any bruising or other injuries occurred.
- ❖ Any action you took as a result of your concerns (e.g. who you spoke to and resulting action, including any contact with your immediate line

- manager, internal protection officer). Where possible include names, addresses and telephone numbers;
- ❖ Sign and date what you have recorded.
 - ❖ The form should then be given to the appropriate designated officer for the safeguarding of children, young people and adults risk in the first instance.
 - ❖ **Do not** take sole responsibility – consult the designated officer in your service area or in their absence one of the designated lead officers should be contacted as detailed in appendix 1.

Where there are concerns regarding child sexual exploitation or radicalisation always discuss with the designated Lead Officers or the Community Safety Partnership Co-ordinator (see Appendix 1 for contact details).

NB: In determining your actions, remember that only experienced and specifically qualified and trained professionals should deal with cases or suspicions relating to abuse. Your role is to recognise, respond and refer to your designated officer. See appendix 1 for contact details.

All referrals must be reported to the Designated Lead Safeguarding Officers in the Resident Services team via the Safeguarding email address – safeguarding@dacorum.gcsx.gov.uk for recording, monitoring and reporting purposes.

4. Allegations against members, employees, volunteers or contracted service providers.

Should an employee, elected member, volunteer or contracted service provider become aware of an allegation (against a colleague) of an incident of abuse taking, or having taken place, it is vital that the following procedures are followed:

- ❖ Take the allegation seriously. It is your duty to consider any allegation to be potentially dangerous to the child/young person or adult at risk and therefore report it
- ❖ Make a written record on an incident referral form (Appendix 2) of any details of which you are aware, as part of your report.
- ❖ Do not approach the alleged perpetrator or the alleged victim yourself.
- ❖ Report the allegation to your designated officer or to the Lead Safeguarding Officer by completing the referral form giving details of the allegation, how you became aware of it and any other relevant details and email it to the safeguarding@dacorum.gcsx.gov.uk mailbox.
- ❖ Referrals to the Hertfordshire Safeguarding team should be made on their form which can be found on the Council's Document Centre under the Safeguarding heading and sent to the Protected Referrals email address.

- ❖ In a case where your manager may be involved, report it to the Lead Safeguarding Officer, Group Manager – Resident Services, directly and/or the Group Manager for People who is the senior officer for Human Resources. It is likely that they will need to get advice and support from the Local Authority Designated Officer (LADO) at Hertfordshire County Council (contact details appendix 1).

Do not judge or investigate. As an employee, elected member, volunteer or contracted service provider it is important not to lose focus of your role. By reporting an allegation quickly, any necessary investigations and/or judgement can then be made by trained professionals;

It is paramount that you maintain confidentiality throughout this whole process. It is extremely important that any allegations are not discussed (unless absolutely necessary and only with specified persons) as any breaches could be damaging to both the alleged perpetrator, the child/young person and to any investigation that may follow.

Once the incident has been reported to the designated officer or Lead Safeguarding Officer they will inform Human Resources and the report will be suitably investigated. The Council's Conduct Procedure will be followed and, where appropriate, other relevant agencies such as the police and/or the Disclosure and Barring Service will be informed

5. Dealing with other allegations

Should an employee, elected Member, volunteer or contracted service provider be informed by a third party that an incident of abuse may be occurring the procedure outlined above will apply. In no circumstances should you attempt to contact the alleged victim or the alleged perpetrator yourself. Your role is to recognise and report any concern to your designated officer or to one of the Lead Safeguarding Officers.

6. ICT including Internet and email

The Adventure Playgrounds have a specific policy on e-safeguarding which relates to the children and young people who are service users which is visible to them and reviewed on a regular basis.

For Dacorum Borough Council systems please refer to Dacorum Borough Council's IT policies and refer any concerns to the designated Safeguarding Officers.

7. Complaints

Complaints about general service issues should be dealt with through the Council's corporate complaints procedures. Any complaint that makes a specific reference to concerns about a specific child, young person or adult at risk and

their welfare should be dealt with through the safeguarding procedure in the first instance. Where it is not clear where the responsibility lies the matter should be referred to one of the designated Lead Safeguarding Officers who will advise. (contact details on appendix 1)

8. Dealing with malicious accusations

Reports found to be malicious about an employee(s) and/or serious and/or persistent abuse of these safeguarding policies and procedures by relevant persons will not be tolerated and will be dealt with through Dacorum Borough Council's Human Resources Policies and procedures. If there is evidence of illegal actions the Police will be informed.

9. Confidentiality

When dealing with any case/suspicion/allegation relating to abuse, confidentiality is of the highest importance as any breaches can have severe consequences and the protection of the persons involved is paramount.

It is important that only those persons who need to know are given the relevant information to protect the rights of the victim and alleged perpetrator. Employees, Members, volunteers and contracted service providers **must not**:

- ❖ Discuss any allegation of abuse of bullying, substantiated or not, with anyone from Dacorum Borough Council other than a designated Safeguarding Officer, Lead Safeguarding Officer or Director.
- ❖ Discuss any allegations of abuse or bullying, substantiated or not, with any member of an external agency, other than as part of a formal investigation.
- ❖ Discuss any allegation of abuse or bullying, substantiated or not, with any other interested party, including parents, carers and relatives of the child, or young person without the express permission of the person with overall responsibility for the investigation. This person may be part of the Hertfordshire Safeguarding Team.

This does not exclude any employee from the need or right to consult with a solicitor, trade union representative or other bona fide legal adviser.

Please make yourself aware of the Council's Whistle Blowing Policy document which is available on the intranet / Dennis.

10. Sharing of information

Employees, Members, Volunteers, grant funded or contracted service providers may be anxious about the legal and ethical restrictions on sharing information, particularly with other agencies. However, the sharing of information for the purposes of safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and adults at risk is essential. In many cases it is only when information from a range of sources is put together that a risk of harm can be seen.

The main restrictions on disclosure of information are:

- ❖ Common law duty of confidence
- ❖ Human Rights Act 1998
- ❖ Data Protection Act 1998

Each of these areas needs to be considered separately. Other statutory provisions may also be relevant but in general the law will not prevent you from sharing information with other practitioners if:

- ❖ Those likely to be affected consent
- ❖ The public interest in safeguarding the child or young person's welfare override the need to keep the information confidential
- ❖ Disclosure is required or necessary under a court order or other legal obligation.
- ❖ It is for the prevention or detection for crime and disorder.

Sections 27 and 47 of the Children Act 1989 enables local authorities to request help from specified authorities (other local authorities, education authorities, housing authorities, NHS bodies) and place an obligation on those authorities to co-operate. A request could be for information in connection with an s17 assessment or an s47 enquiry. Neither provision would require an unjustified breach of confidence. But an authority should not refuse a request without considering all the circumstances.

Clause 45 of the Care Act 2014 focuses on 'supply of information'. This relates to the responsibilities of others to comply with requests for information from the safeguarding adults' board.

The statutory guidance to the Care Act emphasises the need to share information about safeguarding concerns at an early stage; information-sharing agreements or protocols should be in place.

Designated adult safeguarding managers in the local authority and its partner agencies are responsible for ensuring that information shared about individuals alleged to have caused harm is in accordance with human rights, data protection and confidentiality requirements.

Section 115 of the Crime and Disorder Act 1998 enables any person to disclose information to a relevant authority for any purposes of the Act if they would not otherwise have the power to do so. Relevant authorities include local authorities, NHS bodies and police authorities. The purpose of the Act broadly covers the prevention and reduction of crime and the identification or apprehension of offenders.

All copies of the Safeguarding Reporting Form (appendix 2) must be sent to and retained by the Lead Designated Safeguarding Officers. These documents must be stored securely to ensure confidentiality and will be retained in accordance with Retention Policy Periods as defined in the organisations retention schedule. No other copies should be kept.

11. Dealing with the Media

All enquiries from the media regarding specific Safeguarding issues must be dealt with through one of the Lead Safeguarding Officers and the Team Leader – Communications and Consultation or Group Manager, People. See appendix 1 for the contact list.

12. Safe Recruitment, Contracts, Grants and Commissioning.

All recruitment and selection activity is required to comply with the Council's Recruitment and Selection Code of Practice and the Disclosure and Barring Service Policies.

It is the policy of the Council that no person shall work or volunteer to work with children and young people within or on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council who has been convicted or who has received a formal Police caution concerning an offence against children.

There is a list of posts for which Disclosure and Barring checks are required and under no circumstances should an employee commence work until the checks have taken place. Disclosure and Barring (DBS) checks are also compulsory for volunteers where the criteria are met.

The Council also has a duty to protect any young people who undertake work, whether temporary, part time or full time for the Council. Students and schoolchildren under 18 years including those engaged in work experience are covered by the Health and Safety at work regulations.

For all contracted, commissioned, grant funded services, a risk assessment will be taken regarding the availability and the implementation of appropriate safeguarding policies and procedures. Contracts and grants will be awarded when the Council is assured that satisfactory checks have been undertaken where appropriate. This will form part of the contract/tender/application process.

In addition to the initial checks, ongoing monitoring of continued compliance will be made and information relating to the following areas will be required on a regular basis: -

- Numbers of referrals to Hertfordshire County Council call centre/protected referrals
- Numbers of staff who have/have not been trained or had refresher training
- Details of training provided – is the training approved by Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children's Board
- Have a safe recruitment policy

13. Induction and training

Before a new employee starts their employment with Dacorum Borough Council they will be asked to read the Safeguarding Policy and Procedures and sign to acknowledge this.

Basic Safeguarding Awareness training will be provided as compulsory training for all employees as part of the formal induction process – this training is available as an e learning package on DORIS.

This will also apply to volunteers, grant funded and contracted service providers where this policy is adopted or agreed as agreed as part of the contract/grant/commissioning process.

Safeguarding and the Promotion of Welfare of Children and Young People training will be provided to all staff that have any level of interaction with children and young people within their job role. Safeguarding adults at risk training will be provided to all staff who have a level of interaction with adults at risk.

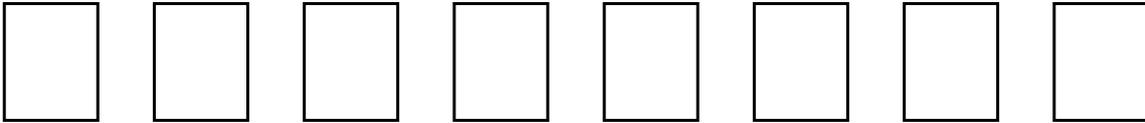
All front line staff will attend the Workshop Raising Awareness of Prevent training and all relevant services will receive training to raise awareness of indicators of modern day slavery and how to make the appropriate notification.

Employees, volunteers, contracted service providers and members whose work brings them into significant contact with Children, young people or adults at risk will undertake the relevant level of Child Protection and safeguarding training which should be identified by team leaders and lead officers at appraisals. Advice on this can be given by the Designated Lead Officers.

Managers, Team Leaders, Employees and volunteers should be aware of their role and responsibilities under these procedures and be aware of the need to keep the training up to date. If there are any queries or if any advice is required regarding the level or type of training, please consult the Designated Lead Officer for advice

14. Review

This policy and procedures will be updated annually and fully reviewed every 3 years. The next full review will be January 2020 or in response to changes in good practice or legislation.



DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING POLICY

DECLARATION

Dacorum Borough Council is fully committed to safeguarding the well-being of children, young people and adults at risk and promoting their welfare.

Working as an employee, volunteer or contracted service provider of Dacorum Borough Council, or representing Dacorum Borough Council as an Elected Member, it is important that you have taken the time to thoroughly read the Safeguarding Policies and Procedures documents.

By being made aware of the policy it is our intention to ensure that we all are proactive in providing a safe and secure environment for the children, young people and adults at risk in our community.

.....

Declaration:

Having read and understood Dacorum Borough Council's Safeguarding Policies and Procedures documents, I accept the principles therein.

Signed: _____

Name (please print): _____

Position in organisation: _____

Date: _____



Safeguarding Policy and Procedures

Appendices

- | | |
|---|--------------------------|
| 1. Safeguarding contacts | pages 1,2 & 3 |
| 2. Referral form | pages 4 & 5 |
| 3. Parental Consent form | Page 6 |
| 4. Photographic /Image guidance | Page 7 & 8 |
| 5. Photographic / Image consent form | Page 9 & 10 |
| 6. First Aid Guidance | Page 11 |
| 7. ICT – Professional Responsibilities | Page 12 |

For those working with children and young people

- | | |
|--|----------------|
| 8. Template for minimum standards | Page 13 |
|--|----------------|

Appendix 1

Safeguarding contacts

Designated Lead Safeguarding Officers:	Telephone/ Ext
<u>Children and Young People</u>	
Julie Still, Group Manager – Resident Services Julie.still@dacorum.gov.uk	01442 228453 / 2453
Nicola Bryant, ASB Team Leader Nicola.bryant@dacorum.gov.uk	01442 228377/ 2377

Adults at Risk

Oliver Jackson, Team Leader, Supported Housing Oliver.jackson@dacoru.gov.uk	01442 228229/2229
Julie Still, Group Manager – Resident Services Julie.still@dacorum.gov.uk	01442 228453 / 2453
Nicola Bryant, ASB Team Leader Nicola.bryant@dacorum.gov.uk	01442 228377/ 2377

These officers are responsible for giving advice to reporting officers and dealing with reports or concerns about the protection of children, young people and vulnerable adults in the appropriate way.

<u>Group/Service Designated Safeguarding Officers:</u>	<u>Tel ext:</u>
Natasha Brathwaite, Group Manager, Strategic Housing	2840
Cynthia Hayford, Strategic Housing Team Leader (People)	2061
Craig Thorpe, Group Manager, Environmental Services	2027
Lindsey Walsh, Team Leader, Tenants and Leaseholders	2462
Mandy Peters , Team Leader Tenancy Sustainment	2156
Tracy Aldridge-Jones, Environmental Health Officer	2857
Gill Grace, Lead Officer, Bennetts End Adventure Playground and Lead for Safeguarding at Adventure Playgrounds	01442 242301
Hannah Morell, Lead Officer, Chaulden Adventure Playground	01442 213864
Matt Stedman, Lead Officer Woodhall & Grovehill Adventure P/ground	01442 215872
Danny Taber, Lead Officer, Adeyfield Adventure Playground	01442 242852
Nicola Bryant, Team Leader, ASB	2377

Madeleine Green , Solicitor Advocate	2620
Andy Linden, Commissioning, Procurement & Compliance Team Leader	2263
Anne Stunell, Human Resources Team Leader,	2089
Liz Hine, Property and Place	2646
Elaine Hopkins, Team Leader, Revenues, Benefits & Fraud	2291
Kelvin Soley, Team Leader, Communications & Consultation	2504
Emma Lee, Team Manager, CSU	3400
Alex Care Team Leader, Partnerships, Policy and Innovation	2743
Linda Dargue, Insurance & Risk Lead Officer, Finance	2320
Paul Newton, Team Leader, Planning	2380
Fiona Bogle, Team Leader, Planning	2520
Andrew Howard, Lead Officer, Building Control	2428

These officers should be first point of contacted within the individual service areas for guidance, advice or support. If they are unavailable then you should contact one of the Lead Safeguarding Officers who are listed above.

**Kelvin Soley, Team Leader – Communications and Consultation
2504**

Local Authority Designated Officer - Tony Purvis, Child Protection Statutory Review and Performance Team.

County Hall, Peggs Lane, Hertford, SG13 8DF.

01992 556979

07920 283106

tony.purvis@hertfordshire.gov.uk

anthony.purvis@hertscc.gcsx.gov.uk

Senior Management Team for safeguarding are:

Sally Marshall – Chief Executive

Sally.Marshall@dacorum.gov.uk

01442228000

Julie Still

01442 228453 / 2453

Group Manager - Resident Services

07786505251

Julie.still@dacorum.gov.uk

Oliver Jackson, Team Leader Supported Housing

01442 228229 / 2229

Councillor Neil Harden

Portfolio Holder, Resident and Regulatory Services

Neil.harden@dacourm.gov.uk

Useful contacts:

Children Services/ Including out of hours service	0300 123 4043
Customer Service Centre	0300 123 4043
Police (Emergency)	999
Police non emergency	101
Police Child Abuse Investigation Unit	0845 33 00 222
Safeguarding Adult Concerns	0300 123 4042
HALO Referrals via police	101 / 999
Prevent Advice – Dave Moore	ext 2641
Julie Still	ext 2453
Nicola Bryant	ext 2377
Mental Health Team – Single point of access (SPA)	0300 777 0707
	HPFT.SPA@nhs.net

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Children Board (HSCB)

<http://www.hertsdirect.org/services/healthsoc/childfam/childprotection/herts/safboard/>

General enquiries or information, please contact us:

HSCB Office, Room 127, County Hall, Hertford, Hertfordshire. SG13 8DF

Telephone: 01992 588757, Fax: 01992 588201

Childline 0800 11 11

NSPCC 0808 800 5000

Hertfordshire Safeguarding Adults Board (HSAB) 0300 123 4042

<https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/adult-social-services/report-a-concern-about-an-adult/report-a-concern-about-an-adult.aspx>

Appendix 2 - Safeguarding referral form

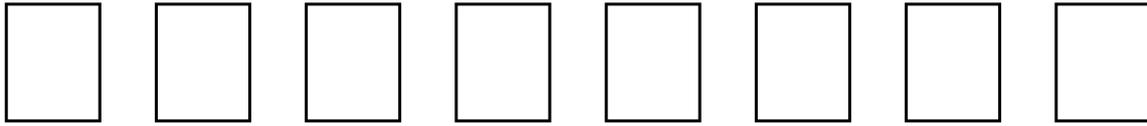
Refer	
<input type="checkbox"/>	<p style="text-align: center;">INFORMATION TO BE PROVIDED WITH A REFERRAL</p> <p>As much of the following information as possible should be obtained, but do not delay referral if you cannot find it. Page one, priority information, page two, secondary information that may be required. The formal HSCB/HSAB Form should be used to make the referral this form is for guidance on the type of information that is required only. Please discuss referrals with the Lead Designated Officers prior to referral. Referral forms can be found on Sharepoint via this link http://dennis/Docs/Documents/Forms/AllItems.aspx?RootFolder=%2FDocs%2FDocuments%2FHealth%20and%20Wellbeing%2FSafeguarding%20and%20Domestic%20Abuse and should be sent to the address of the form and copied to Safeguarding@dacorum.gcsx.gov.uk</p>
<input type="checkbox"/>	

		
Date and time of referral:		Referral made by:
Referral made to:		
Information required	Details	
Full name/s of the child/children, date/s of birth and gender First language of family		
The cause for concern, including details of any allegation, the source, time and location of incident/s		
Child's current location, emotional and physical condition		
Does the child need immediate protection?		
Family address (include any previous addresses if you know the family have recently moved)		
Names of those with parental responsibility		
Parents/carers know of and agree to referral?		

Inform Ofsted of referral	
Special needs of child/other family	

members?	
Names and dates of birth of household members	
Details of child's extended family or community of significance to the child	
Ethnicity, first language and religion of child, parents/carers	
Interpreter/signer/other aid needed?	
Any significant/important recent or past events, background information to referral, e.g drug/alcohol abuse, mental health problems, domestic violence, threats/violence towards professionals	
Details of any alleged perpetrators (if relevant)	
Any known current/previous involvement of other agencies/professionals	

Appendix 3



DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2016

CONFIDENTIAL - Parental/Carer Consent Form

It is essential that this form is completed and returned to the address below as soon as possible.

PERSONAL DETAILS

Name _____ Date of birth _____

Address _____

Postcode _____ Tel No _____

School Attending _____

HEALTH

Emergency Contact _____

Tel No _____

Relationship to child/young person/vulnerable adult _____

Please list any allergies the child/young person/vulnerable adult suffers from

I confirm that the child/young person/vulnerable adult is in good health and I consider him/her fit to participate.

I consent to any first aid treatment required by the child/young person/vulnerable adult during the course of the event.

Please indicate any medication that the child/young person/vulnerable adult needs to take or have administered during the day _____

NB. Please ensure that the child/young person/vulnerable adult has all the relevant medication with him/her on the day including inhaler (if required) and sunscreen.

The information you provide will be used to ensure the safety of all participants and may be shared with other people/organisations involved with the delivery of these activities, if appropriate. By signing this form you are consenting to the Council using the information which you have supplied in the manner stated above.

Signed _____ (Parent/Guardian/Carer)

Date _____

Name (in capitals) _____

Please return this form by _____ to:

Officer: _____ Address: Dacorum Borough Council, Civic Centre, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, Herts HP1 1HH

Appendix 4

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DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2016

MEDIA/ PHOTOGRAPHY/IMAGE GUIDANCE

It is an unfortunate fact that some people have used events as opportunities to take inappropriate photographs or footage of children, young people and adults at risk.

Members, employees, volunteers and contracted service providers should be vigilant at all times. Anyone using cameras or film recorders for or on behalf of the Council must have received completed media consent forms from the parents of children, individuals being photographed or filmed before the activity commences.

If you are providing open access events where children, young people and their families or vulnerable people can come and go as they please and it is impossible to get their permission for photographs and forms signed please/ you must clearly display polite notices informing participants that photographs may be taken and it will be their responsibility to ensure they make themselves known to the photographer (see sample notice below).

When commissioning professional photographers or inviting the press to cover Council services, events and activities you must ensure that you make your expectations clear in relation to child and adult at risk safeguarding.

There are some easy steps to take:

- 1 Check credentials of any photographers and organisations used
- 2 Ensure identification is worn at all times
- 3 Do not allow unsupervised access to children, young people or vulnerable adults one to one photographic sessions
- 4 Do not allow photographic sessions outside of the activities or services, or a child or young person's home
- 5 It is recommended that the names of children, young people or vulnerable adults should not be used in photographs or footage, unless with the express permission of the parent/carer of the child, young person or vulnerable adult.
- 6 Where the event is open access and it is not possible to source permission a suitable notice should be displayed giving polite advice.

POLITE NOTICE

PHOTOGRAPHS

Please be aware that photographs will be taken of the events and activities of the day, for media purposes and by other parents. If you prefer your child/children or any member of your party not to be included in the

**photograph please make yourself
known to the photographer.**

Appendix 5

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DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING POLICY 20165

MEDIA CONSENT FORM

Individuals Details			
Title	Mr <input type="checkbox"/> Mrs <input type="checkbox"/> Miss <input type="checkbox"/> Ms <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/>		
Surname		Forenames	
Address		DOB (if under 16 years of age)	
Details of photographic images			
Date of Images		Location	
Types of Images	Photograph <input type="checkbox"/> Video <input type="checkbox"/> Other: <input type="checkbox"/>		
Description of images (include date taken, if known)			
Use of Images			
Yes	No		
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Release to media	

<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Publicity/promotional material in printed form
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Publicity/promotional material on the internet
<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	Publicity/promotional material in the form of Film/Video/DVD footage

Consent to the use of the images is limited to the following specific purpose/event:

Data Protection

Dacorum Borough Council is a Data Controller for the purpose of the Data Protection Act 1998. This Act regulates how we process personal data about individuals. Photographic images of individuals may, in certain circumstances, be classified as personal data. To comply with the Act, we may require your consent to make use of these images.

In law, if the image is of someone under 16 years of age, that person has the capacity to give consent for that image to be used, if they are of sufficient age and maturity to understand fully, what is involved. However, best practice suggests that where possible, the consent of a person who has parental or guardian responsibility is obtained. This is particularly relevant if the image is a close up shot of an individual or if personal details will accompany the image.

The images to which this consent form relates, will only be used for the purposes you have agreed in the media consent form and will only be retained for as long as required for those purposes. Consent will be valid for a period of five years but this does not remove your right to withdraw your consent at any time, should you wish to do so. Further information on how we process your data or the Data Protection Act on can be obtained by contacting the Council's Data Protection Officer at foi@dacorum.gov.uk

Person Giving Parental Consent (if required)

Title	<input type="checkbox"/>					
	Mr	Mrs	Miss	Ms	Other:	
Name					Relationship	

Declaration

I confirm that I consent to the use of the images of **me*/the above mentioned young person*** as detailed above, being used for the purpose stated. I understand that any images placed on the internet may be accessible by anyone, anywhere with internet access.

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Signature		Date	
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Appendix 6

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DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2016

FIRST AID - GUIDANCE

Under ordinary circumstances, a child or young person can be administered with first aid only if their parent or guardian expressly permits this course of action through the completion of the Parental Consent Form (appendix 3). Incomplete consent forms may prevent the child or young person from being able to participate in an activity.

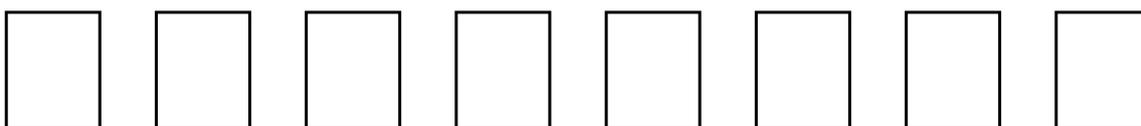
Consent to the administration of first aid to vulnerable adults is more complex. This should be discussed and arrangements/consents agreed before activities are undertaken with vulnerable adults and/or their carers, as part of a risk assessment.

When administering first aid, wherever possible, employees should ensure that another adult is present, or is aware of the action being taken. Parents/carers should always be informed when first aid is administered.

Child welfare is of paramount importance. In certain circumstances, consent forms will not have been obtained for example, open access play days. In such

cases, Members, Employees, volunteers or contracted service providers may undertake first aid as a last resort, following the guidelines above and notifying parents/carers as soon as possible to minimise a child's, young person's or vulnerable adults distress.

Appendix 7



PROFESSIONAL RESPONSIBILITIES for Officers Working with Children and Young People and adults at risk

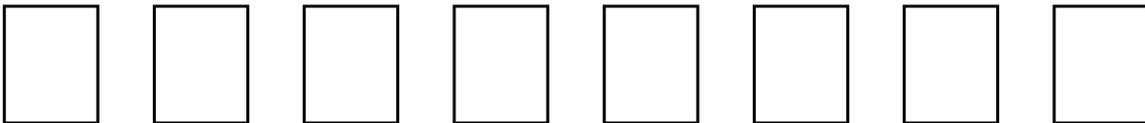
When using any form of ICT, including the Internet For your own protection we advise that you:

- Ensure all electronic communication with children, parents, carers, vulnerable adults, staff and others is compatible with your professional role and in line with setting policies.
- Ensure that staff mobile phones are stored securely at sites where children's services are provided, eg adventure playgrounds and not available for use during opening hours.
- Do not talk about your professional role in any capacity when using social media such as Facebook, Twitter or YouTube.
- Do not put online any text, image, sound or video that could upset or offend any member of the whole community or be incompatible with your professional role.
- Use setting systems and resources for all professional business. This includes your work email address, work mobile 'phone and work video camera.
- Do not give out your own personal details, such as mobile 'phone number, personal e-mail address or social network details to children, parents, carers, vulnerable persons and others.
- Do not disclose any passwords and ensure that personal data is kept secure and used appropriately in line with Dacorum Borough Council Policies.

- Only take images of children and/ or staff for professional purposes, in accordance with setting policy and with the knowledge of Lead Officers.
- Do not browse, download, upload or distribute any material that could be considered offensive, illegal or discriminatory.
- Ensure that your online activity, **both in setting and outside**, will not bring your organisation or professional role into disrepute.

You have a duty to report any safeguarding incident which may impact on you, your professionalism or your setting.

Appendix 8



DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL SAFEGUARDING POLICY 2017

TEMPLATE FOR SAFEGUARDING POLICY AND PROCEDURE

Template for Safeguarding Policy and Procedure (voluntary organisations, commissioned services and contracted service providers are free to use all or any sections of Dacorum Borough Council’s Safeguarding Policy. Below is the minimum acceptable for any organisation receiving funding, contracts or commissioned services from Dacorum Borough Council)

Policy Statement

Children, young people and vulnerable adults have the right to participate, have fun and be safe in the services provided for them and the activities they choose, or their parents/carers choose for them.

(Name of organisation) is committed to safeguarding children, young people and vulnerable adults and protecting them from abuse when they are engaged in services organised and provided by (name of organisation). We will endeavour to keep children, young people and vulnerable adults safe from abuse and

suspicion of abuse will be responded to promptly and appropriately. We will act in the best interest of the child, young person or vulnerable adult at all times.

We will actively seek to promote the welfare and protection of all children, young people and vulnerable adults permanent resident or temporarily living in the community at all times. (Name of Organisation) will ensure that unsuitable people are prevented from working with children, young people and vulnerable adults through using safe recruitment and selection processes.

(Name of organisation) will take any concern made by a service user, employee, volunteer or child/young person/vulnerable adult seriously and sensitively. Concerns cannot be anonymous and should be made in the knowledge that, during the course of any enquiries, the agency that made that referral will be made clear.

(Name of organisation) will not tolerate harassment of any service user, employee, volunteer or child/young person/vulnerable adult who raises concerns of abuse.

Procedure

Any concerns will be brought to the attention of (named senior person) who will report the concern to a Dacorum Borough Council Designated Lead Safeguarding Officer or to Herts County Council Children's Services or Adult services departments.

Those raising the concern must be made aware that the concern will be shared with appropriate people but will be treated in confidence as far as possible.

Officers, employees and volunteers must not discuss the concern except with the designated officer and any agent of the organisation responsible for investigating the concern.

Agenda Item 11



AGENDA ITEM: SUMMARY

Report for:	Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	6 September 2017
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	'Get Involved' – Dacorum Borough Council Tenant Involvement strategy update
Contact:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing Emily-Rae Maxwell – Strategy, Improvement and Engagement Team Leader
Purpose of report:	The purpose of this report is to provide the committee with an update on the housing services progress against the commitments set out in the Tenant Involvement strategy 2016 - 2020. This will include an opportunity to comment on the drafted Community Development Policy.
Recommendations	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1 For members to note the progress of the housing services approach to tenant involvement and review this in line with the commitments set out in the strategy 2 For members to note the success of the services new approach to tenant involvement and how this has contributed to raising Dacorum Borough Council's profile nationally 3 For members to note changes to the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment standard as set out by the Department for Communities and Local Government 4 For members to comment on the Community Development Policy and consider the role of Dacorum as a landlord in shaping Dacorum's communities.
Corporate objectives:	Preventing and tackling homelessness contributes to the follow corporate objectives;

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clean, safe and enjoyable environment • Building strong and vibrant communities • Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need • Delivering an efficient and modern council
Implications:	<p><u>Financial implication</u></p> <p>There are no additional financial implications.</p> <p><u>Value for money</u></p> <p>It is important that we deliver value for money for our tenants. Robust tenant involvement that uses an outcome focused approach to engagement and scrutiny means we can capture where improvements have been made as a result of tenant involvement and any associated costs or savings. Shaping our annual service plans using our tenants' priorities helps us to allocate our resources and deliver what is important within the resources that are available. We will work with our tenants to identify more efficient ways of working, such as moving to digital channels enabling us to maximise the resources available. Sharing resources and skills with partner organisations and exploring opportunities for additional funding will also help us to deliver more for less.</p>
Risk Implications	The Housing Service's Operational Risk Register is presented to the committee on a quarterly basis
Equalities Implications	A community impact assessment was carried out as part of the approval process for the strategy
Health And Safety Implications	There are no direct Health and Safety implications from the strategy.
Consultees:	<p>Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing</p> <p>Elliott Brooks – Assistant Director Housing</p> <p>Natasha Brathwaite – Group Manager, Strategic Housing</p> <p>Emily-Rae Maxwell – Strategy, Improvement and Engagement Team Leader</p> <p>Tenant and Leaseholder Committee Members</p>
Background papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 'Get Involved' strategy 2016 – 2020 • Case study – Digital Skills • Case study – The Great British Spring Clean • Case study – YTI taste off • Draft - Community Development Policy

Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	H&C OSC – Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee SI&E – Strategy, Improvement and Engagement DBC – Dacorum Borough Council TLC – Tenant and Leaseholder Committee YTI – Youth Tenant Involvement
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1 Introduction

- 1.1 In July 2016 the Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee (H&COSC) supported the housing service to shape a new approach to delivering tenant involvement. This led to the approval of the '*Get Involved*' Tenant Involvement strategy 2016 – 2020 by Cabinet in September 2016.
- 1.2 H&COSC agreed to take ownership of the strategy by monitoring the housing service's performance against the four commitments via an annual update.
- 1.3 The purpose of this report is to provide members with the first update since implementing the strategy. This will include actions delivered against each of the four commitments and the achievements of the housing service to date.
- 1.4 This update will also include a draft Community Development policy for members to review and provide feedback on.

2 Overview and Implementation

- 2.1 The vision for the '*Get Involved*' strategy is for our tenants and leaseholders to feel listened to, feel empowered to influence decisions and the opportunity to challenge us.
- 2.2 To achieve this vision, the Strategy, Improvement and Engagement (SI&E) team (previously known as the Policy and Participation Team) worked with tenants to develop four outcome based commitments to be delivered by 2020, these are;
 - Commitment One: All Dacorum tenants and leaseholders have the opportunity to '*Get involved*'
 - Commitment Two: Dacorum Borough Council works in partnership to ensure the housing service is shaped by the needs of our tenants
 - Commitment Three: Young people within Dacorum's tenant population have a voice and a positive influence in their local communities
 - Commitment Four: Dacorum Borough Council's housing service is accountable to our tenants and leaseholders

For a full copy of the '*Get Involved*' strategy, see appendix 1.

- 2.3 In addition to these commitments, the housing service established a new structure for delivering tenant involvement. This was based on three levels of involvement and underpinned by a need to build in flexibility so all tenants could get involved.
- 2.4 The H&COSC played a key role in shaping Level Three – ‘official involvement’ with a specific focus on the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee (TLC).
- 2.5 The former TLC disbanded in July 2016 and attended a celebration event hosted by the Mayor to thank them for their contribution to the housing service. Throughout the summer, the SI&E team focused on recruiting a new TLC and launching the strategy.
- 2.6 H&COSC suggested the new structure for the TLC involved an experienced chair and a councillor presence within the committee. Councillor Isy Imarni volunteered to take the role as TLC chair for the first year and support the team to recruit the new committee. It was also agreed the new TLC should include a membership of 10 tenants, leaseholders and independents with tenants maintaining the majority.
- 2.7 The SI&E team received 23 applications to the TLC and 132 tenants and leaseholders interested in other involvement opportunities.
- 2.8 With the support of Councillor Imarni, the new TLC was recruited in September 2017 and have now completed a full year. This included formal quarterly meetings where committee members received a strategic update of each area within the housing service and the involvement of tenants within this area. The TLC have also taken part in a number of ad-hoc consultation events on topics such as legislation changes and the impact on the housing service, allocations and benchmarking.
- 2.9 Over the course of the year the TLC received one resignation and has since appointed two additional members, both are tenants. This means the membership now includes:
 - 7 tenants
 - 3 Leaseholders
 - 1 independent
 - 1 elected member (chair)

3 Strategy update

- 3.1 To deliver Commitment one: all Dacorum tenants and leaseholders have the opportunity to ‘*Get involved*’ the housing service has:
 - Increased the ways tenants and leaseholders can communicate with the housing service with a specific focus on digital channels.
 - Committed to funding computer and tablet courses for supported housing tenants to help them get online and more digitally active increasing their opportunities to get involved.
 - Worked with tenants and leaseholders to ensure activities and or events are held in venues that are easily accessible and are held at appropriate times of the day so more tenants can get involved.
 - Empowered tenants to give their views on topics outside the housing service’s remit. Examples of this include facilitating a focus group of sports and physical activity

facilities within the borough and a peer assessment of the council conducted by the Local Government Association.

- Increased the services approach to collecting feedback from tenants on a regular basis and in key areas e.g. rent arrears collection, anti-social behaviour, lettings and repairs.

3.2 To deliver Commitment two: Dacorum Borough Council works in partnership to ensure the housing service is shaped by the needs of our tenants

- Worked with tenants and current housing applicants to review the allocations policy and pre-tenancy training offered following on from changes in legislation and demand for social housing within the borough.
- Developed 'Tenant Academy' which allows tenants to access a range of courses to improve their health and wellbeing, employment, education and volunteering opportunities and link to support planning within the service. This will be launched September 2017.
- Worked with Osborne to review the kitchen suppliers and wider market offer and undertook a journey mapping exercise with leaseholders to improve the process for reporting repairs.
- Enabled supported housing tenants to play a key role in the evaluation of the community alarms procurement process.

3.3 To deliver commitment three: Commitment Three: Young people within Dacorum's tenant population have a voice and a positive influence in their local communities

- Facilitated our Youth Tenant Involvement (YTI) group to undertake suicide awareness training with one member of the group going on to become a mentor within Dacorum for other young people.
- Young people accessing the housing service have also taken part in a wide range of community development activities including the 'Great British Spring Clean', creating a mural of LT Gilman Dorr Blake at Gade Tower.
- Encouraged intergenerational activities between supported housing tenants and young people to break down stereotypes and improve relationships e.g. 'The Taste Off' event.
- Supported the YTI Group to raise over £1,000 for Herts Young Homeless by taking part in the 'Sleep Out'.

- 3.4 To deliver commitment four: Dacorum Borough Council's housing service is accountable to our tenants and leaseholders
- Recruited a new TLC committee who receive strategic updates and an update of each group within housing on a quarterly basis as well as holding the council to account on involving tenants in key business decisions.
 - Committed to a full review of tenant led scrutiny and the move to a task and finish group.
 - Supported our Tenant Inspectors to undertake a full review of the Osborne Property Service Limited out of hour's service and make recommendations for improvement.
 - Undertaken consultation with the wider tenant population on key decisions within the housing service such as depooling and more recently water rates.
- 3.5 For examples of events see appendix 2, appendix 3 and appendix 4

4 Tpas PRO Landlord Engagement Standards

- 4.1 In March 2017, DBC became the first housing provider in the country to achieve the Tpas PRO landlord accreditation.
- 4.2 To achieve the accreditation the housing service was required to provide evidence relating to 96 outcomes across six different themes, these were;
- Engagement Strategy
 - Resources for Engagement
 - Information and Insight
 - Influence and Scrutiny
 - Community Engagement
 - Valuing Engagement
- 4.3 To pass, an organisation must receive an 80% pass rate. This can include areas where evidence suggests the outcome has been partially met. Dacorum achieved 100% meaning that as an organisation DBC could demonstrate evidence for all 96 required outcomes. A continuous improvement plan has now been developed to ensure any areas for improvement are delivered on within the second year of the strategy.

- 4.4 The main area for improvement highlighted by the assessment was DBC's approach to tenant led scrutiny. As a result, the TLC and Housing Senior Management Team agreed to take a new approach to tenant led scrutiny known as a task and finish approach. To implement this, the former scrutiny panel was disbanded in June 2017. To establish a new panel, the housing service will be using the same method as the TLC. The new approach will allow for more tenants and leaseholders to get involved in scrutinising the housing service in a focused and structured way. The SI&E team recommend the first area scrutinised is the Housing Service – Service Standards.
- 4.5 Following on from the success of the Pro landlord engagement standards, DBC were asked to run a workshop at both the regional Tpas conference and the National Engagement Conference. The two workshops shared Dacorum's journey to achieving the Tpas Engagement Standard and raising the standards of tenant engagement nationally. This follows the best practice highlighted by Tpas within their assessment of Dacorum.

5 Community Development

- 5.1 The Tpas Engagement Standard emphasises not only the importance of engaging with tenants who access the housing service but encouraging people living in social housing to feel a part of their wider community. To deliver this the housing service have drafted a Community Development Policy. This outlines the housing services approach to meeting the wider strategic aims of the council by working with our tenants and leaseholders, see appendix 5.

6 De-regulation and changes to the National Standard

- 6.1 Within the first year of delivering the 'Get Involved' strategy, the Department for Communities and Local Government amended the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.
- 6.2 This was a result of the de-regulatory measures of the Housing and Planning Act 2016 came into force meaning social housing providers were no longer required to obtain the regulator's consent to undertake disposals, restructures and certain constitutional changes.
- 6.3 To ensure housing providers continued to consult with tenants who would be affected by such decisions, the Homes and Communities Agency proposed changes to the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.
- 6.4 The proposed changes sought to ensure that tenants have a degree of choice and protection and the opportunity to be involved in management of their properties and to be able to hold their landlords to account.
- 6.5 The amendment to the standard listed below and was introduced 14 July 2017;

"2.2.3 Where registered providers are proposing a change in landlord for one or more of their tenants or a significant change in their management arrangements, they shall consult with affected tenants in a fair, timely, appropriate and effective manner. Registered providers shall set out the proposals clearly and in an appropriate amount

of detail and shall set out any actual or potential advantages and disadvantages (including costs) to tenants in the immediate and longer term. Registered providers must be able to demonstrate to affected tenants how they have taken the outcome of the consultation into account when reaching a decision.”

6.6 Previously the standard stated;

“2.2.3 Registered providers shall consult with tenants, setting out clearly the costs and benefits of relevant options, if they are proposing to change their landlord or when proposing a significant change in their management arrangements.”

6.7 This amendment is in line with Dacorum’s ‘Get Involved 2016-2020’ strategy, which outlines the housing services commitment to tenant involvement and required no action at this point.

6.8 The Strategy, Improvement and Engagement team will work with the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee (TLC) to ensure this is appropriately enforced. The full amendment report and updated Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard has now been circulated to TLC members.

6.9 At the recent National Tpas Conference Dacorum outlined the impact of these changes and how to ensure an organisations approach to tenant involvement supports this way of working as part of the workshop, which was delivered to over 40 tenants and housing professionals.

6.10 DBC have also requested this is discussed at the next Taking Part Herts meeting as well as Herts Heads of Housing.

7 Recommendations

7.1 For members to consider the update in full and offer comments on the housing services progress towards meeting the four commitments and approach to delivering tenant involvement.

7.2 For members to note the success of the housing service through the Tpas PRO landlord accreditation.

7.3 For members to review the drafted Community Development Policy and offer any comments on the housing services approach.

7.4 For member to note the changes introduced to the Tenant Involvement and Empowerment Standard.



'Get involved'

Dacorum Borough Council Tenant involvement strategy
2016 - 2020



Foreword

I am delighted to introduce our new 'Get involved' strategy for 2016 – 2020.

This strategy sets out our commitment to working with our tenants and leaseholders so we can continue to find smarter ways to deliver a great housing service.

I have worked with many of our involved tenants and leaseholders and their role is vital in creating long lasting change for the wider community. In a time where the demand for housing continues to increase the need to listen to our tenants and understand how we can support them has become ever more important.

That is why this strategy and new structure for delivering tenant involvement is centred on giving everyone a say.

Councillor Margaret Griffiths

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- 4.4 Setting the standard

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- 6.1 The 'Get involved structure'
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7.0 Get involved

- 7.1 Get involved
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- 7.3 Commitment Two: Dacorum Borough Council works in partnership to ensure the housing service is shaped by the needs of our tenants
- 7.4 Commitment Three: Young people within Dacorum's tenant population have a voice and a positive influence in their local communities
- 7.5 Commitment Four: Dacorum Borough Council's housing service is accountable to our tenants and leaseholders

8.0 Conclusion

1.0 Introduction

2.0 Our vision

1.0 Introduction

Dacorum Borough Council has a long history of working closely with its tenants and leaseholders to make informed decisions. Building strong working relationships with our involved tenants enables us to deliver a sustainable service that meets local housing need.

This four-year strategy sets out how we will continue to work together to deliver a great housing service.

We have defined tenant involvement as *'The involvement of tenants and leaseholders in the management, design and delivery of our services.'*

Within this strategy, we set out a new vision and set of outcome based commitments for tenant involvement. To deliver this successfully, we have worked with over 1,000 of our involved tenants and leaseholders to develop a new structure of involvement activities.

This new structure channels the diverse skills, knowledge, and experiences held within our tenant and leaseholder population, into the core of our service delivery. Through effective governance, customer insight, channel shift and engagement this strategy showcases how we as a landlord will deliver value for money whilst improving our tenants and leaseholders quality of life.

For the purposes of this strategy the term 'tenant' refers to all residents living in Dacorum Borough Council-owned properties or accessing the council's housing service.

This includes; tenants, leaseholders, all family members of tenants living in the property, homeless applicants and those living in temporary accommodation.

2.0 Our vision

To deliver a great housing service our vision is for our tenants to feel listened to, empowered to influence decisions and have the opportunity to challenge us.

This strategy supports the councils corporate vision of *'...working in partnership to create a borough that enables Dacorum's communities to thrive and prosper'*.

Tenant involvement encourages us to reflect on what we are delivering, helping us to work towards more efficient and modern services. As both a local authority and a landlord it is our priority that our tenants live in strong and vibrant communities that enjoy safe and clean environments. Working with our tenants, we can continue to provide good quality affordable homes, particularly to those in need and ensure the economic growth and prosperity of our borough.



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3.0 Tenant involvement

3.1 Tenant involvement

Keeping tenants informed of decisions that affect their housing situation has become a priority for all social landlords including local authorities.

Tenants' roles have continued to grow and in 2012 it became a requirement for every landlord to create a formal scrutiny panel(s). This allows people to highlight opportunities to improve, challenge and scrutinise delivery of housing services and act as representatives for the wider population.

Our responsibility as a landlord is to support tenants to 'Get involved' and create a range of opportunities for involvement.

Increases in demand for housing and limited resources mean smarter solutions to meeting needs are essential.

This strategy emphasises several factors we feel create good quality tenant involvement, these are; communication, customer insight, engagement, innovation, scrutiny and influence.

Through effective communication, we can keep our tenants informed and manage expectation. Customer insight means we can begin to build a better understanding of the social and economic issues affecting our tenants and work in partnership to tackle these. Using innovation such as digital channels means we can improve their experience of our service and learn from the feedback we receive. Robust scrutiny allows us to focus the skills of our involved tenants and use their perspective to drive performance.

The ability to influence is what matters most to our tenant population. All levels of involvement set out within this strategy include the ability to influence. Over the four years of this strategy, we will capture the impact each of our involved tenants had in transforming the housing service.

3.2 Our tenant population

In Dacorum, there are approximately 60,000 properties housing over 147,000 people. Dacorum Borough Council owns over 10,200 of these properties and is responsible for 1,700 leasehold properties. In April 2016, there were approximately 10,000 people on the housing register. This means around 33,500 people are directly affected by the service we deliver.

We know that housing is key to improving a person's quality of life.

Changes in local need such as; an aging population, a rise in homelessness and managing the balance between under occupancy and overcrowding, highlight the demand for a more holistic service.

Through tenant involvement we can achieve this.



4.0 Delivering a great service



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4.1 Delivering a great service

This strategy has been developed to align with all relevant current statutory legislation and best practice guidance.

4.2 Equality and diversity

As a housing service we believe all council tenants should have the opportunity to 'Get involved' regardless of; age, disability, gender, race, religion or belief, or sexual orientation (Equality and Diversity Act 2010) and are committed to being inclusive with our approach to tenant involvement. We recognise that some people and groups within our tenant population find it difficult to have their voice heard. By tailoring our opportunities of involvement we will empower these tenants to have their say.

Using the Chartered Institute of Housing's Equality and Diversity charter we are working with our tenants to review the housing service we offer. Using information and insight we can ensure our tenant involvement opportunities are communicated in the right way to the right target audience. We will ensure wherever possible our opportunities for involvement are reflective of our tenant and leaseholder population.

4.3 Value for money

It is important that we deliver value for money for our tenants. Taking an outcome focused approach to engagement and scrutiny we can capture where improvements have been made as a result of tenant involvement and any associated costs or savings.

Shaping our annual service plans using our tenants' priorities helps us to allocate our resources and deliver what is important. We will work with our tenants to identify more efficient ways of working, such as moving to digital channels enabling us to maximise the resources available. Sharing resources and skills with partner organisations and exploring opportunities for additional funding will also help us to deliver more for less.

4.4 Setting the standard

In the first year of delivering this strategy, the housing service will achieve the National Tenant Engagement Standards developed by Tpas. This strategy aims to fulfil the first standard by building the right foundation for engagement. We will ensure that we have the right resources to deliver effective tenant involvement and work in partnership to develop the skills of our involved tenants and leaseholders so we as a housing service can deliver the right outcomes.

We will commit to gathering, providing and using the right information using customer insight. By pooling together the information from a range of stakeholders will enable us to make informed decisions on how best to support our tenants and deliver a successful and sustainable service.



4.0 continued

5.0 Our commitments



Using this information to underpin our outcomes, we can go on to evidence the impact tenant involvement has for our tenant and leaseholder population.

Through our three levels of involvement we will empower tenants to influence and scrutinise our service and be a key driver of performance and quality management.

The partnership between Dacorum Borough Council and Osborne Property Services as part of the Total Asset Management contract allows us to take a joint approach to delivering community engagement. Through this partnership we can develop grass roots initiatives based on the needs of our tenants which go on to benefit the wider population of Dacorum and build strong and vibrant communities.

Throughout the four years we will use tools such as Social Return on Investment to monitor and capture the value added to the council, our stakeholders, partners and most importantly our tenant and leaseholder population.

5.1 Our commitments

To develop this strategy we included the views of over 1200 tenants and leaseholders, staff and stakeholders. Activities such as focus groups enabled tenants to share their thoughts on involvement.

Through the Survey of Tenants and Residents (STAR) we were able to shape this further by identifying trends within our tenants' satisfaction and experiences of the service.

From this we have developed four outcome based commitments:

Commitment One: All Dacorum tenants and leaseholders have the opportunity to 'Get involved'

Commitment Two: Dacorum Borough Council works in partnership to ensure the housing service is shaped by the needs of our tenants

Commitment Three: Young people within Dacorum's tenant population have a voice and a positive influence in their local communities

Commitment Four: Dacorum Borough Council's housing service is accountable to our tenants and leaseholders

These commitments will underpin this strategy and ultimately enable us to deliver our vision of tenants and leaseholder feel listened to, empowered to influence decisions and have the opportunity to challenge us.



6.0 Delivering tenant involvement



6.1 The *'Get involved'* structure

To deliver tenant involvement in Dacorum, a new structure has been developed. The structure includes three levels of involvement; *Our Tenants, Service Shapers and Official Involvement*. These different levels include a wide variety of involvement activities meaning there is something for everyone. Each level was developed using what we know has worked well and an exploration of new ideas for the future.

6.2 Level One *'Our Tenants'*

'Our Tenants' is about creating conversations and building relationships between the council's housing service and the whole tenant population. Using a range of communication channels such as social media and getting out and about in the community we can keep our tenants informed, share the benefits tenant involvement has for them and begin to build a network of people who want to *'Get involved'*.

6.3 Level Two *'Service Shapers'*

'Service Shapers' then uses a variety of engagement activities to build up a picture of our tenants needs. Within this level of involvement activities such as *'burst groups'* we can introduce topics of interest and capture tenants and leaseholders thoughts and experiences.

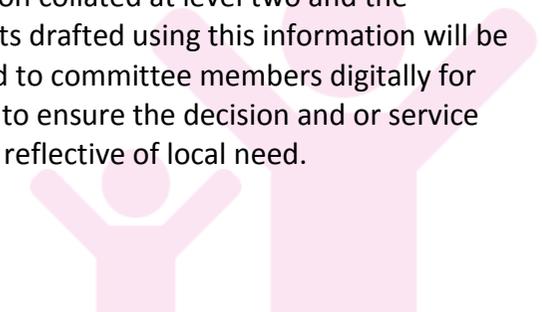
The information and insight captured at level two then informs the development of key documents or decisions.

Other activities within *'Service Shapers'* include *'Youth Tenant Involvement'* and *'Tenant Inspectors'* where individuals within the tenant population can take part in projects that benefit the wider tenant community.

6.4 Level Three *'Official Involvement'*

'Official involvement' is the top level of involvement and requires the most commitment from our tenants and leaseholders. It brings together tenant and leaseholder representatives, local professionals, Councillors and the council's housing staff to regulate, scrutinise and challenge the housing service. This level of involvement includes a Tenant and Leaseholder Committee and Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Panel. All are required to meet on a quarterly basis and review key areas of the housing service.

This top level committee will also be used as a formal part of any consultation process. Information collated at level two and the documents drafted using this information will be presented to committee members digitally for feedback to ensure the decision and or service change is reflective of local need.



6.0 Delivering tenant involvement

Level Three – Official Involvement

Tenant and Leaseholder Committee

Tenants and Leaseholders Scrutiny Panel

Level Two – Service Shapers

Burst Groups

Youth Tenant Involvement

Regular Forums

Tenant Inspectors

Level One – Our Tenants

Tenant Community
Events

Communication
Channels

Pop-Up Housing
Surgeries

Consultation

Roadshows

Workshops

7.0 'Get involved'

7.1 'Get involved'

Dacorum Borough Council recognises that this strategy is about creating the right foundations for an even more active and involved tenant community.

To successfully deliver the four commitments within this strategy the housing involvement team will work with tenants, partner organisations and members of staff to develop a programme of events.

We will create a shared understanding of tenant involvement that both staff and tenants can relate to, using training and campaigns to raise awareness of 'Get involved'.

When involving tenants we will be open, consistent and clear on the reasons for involving them and respect a tenant's choice to be involved.

Working to include the widest possible range of tenants we will help tenants to overcome any barriers to involvement.

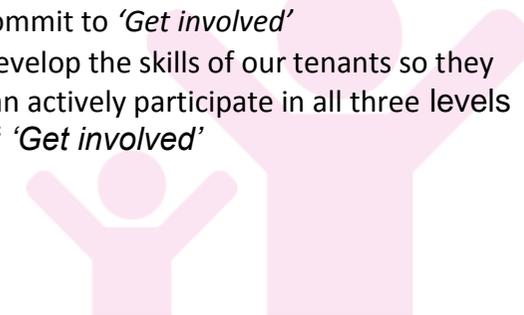
We will value the contribution, expertise and time our tenants give and give feedback on how they have influenced our way of working.

7.2 Commitment One - All Dacorum tenants and leaseholders have the opportunity to 'Get involved'

Commitment one of 'Get involved' looks to improve access for our tenants. By improving access we can also increase the number of tenants influencing our service. This will allow us to capture thoughts and experiences that better represent the wider tenant population.

To achieve this we will:

- Improve our digital channels such as social media to increase opportunities for conversations with tenants
- Ensure all 'Get involved' opportunities are held in appropriate venues and at a time that allows a range of tenants to attend
- Support tenants with specific needs to 'Get Involved' and promote equality and diversity throughout the housing service
- Build opportunities for all tenants regardless of how much time they can commit to 'Get involved'
- Develop the skills of our tenants so they can actively participate in all three levels of 'Get involved'



7.0 continued

7.2 Commitment Two - Dacorum Borough Council works in partnership to ensure the housing service is shaped by the needs of our tenants and leaseholders

Commitment Two of 'Get involved' emphasises the importance of knowing our tenants. Understanding not just the needs of our tenants but what is important to them means we can target both our support and information where it is relevant. The aim is to improve tenants experience by offering a more personalised and tailored service.

To achieve this we will:

- Work with tenants to collect and update information that will allow us to build a better picture of their needs
- Create opportunities for tenants to tell us what is important to them and use this to develop the housing service
- Develop a better understanding of how our tenants prefer to be communicated with
- Use the knowledge we have to target support to tenants that need it
- Work with tenants to develop ideas and services

7.3 Commitment Three - Young people within Dacorum's tenant and leaseholder population have a voice and a positive influence in their local communities

Commitment three of 'Get involved' shows the importance involving young people in the housing service. Through tenant involvement and wider engagement we can empower our young people to have a voice and gain new skills, to support them in the future.

To achieve this we will:

- Help young people to recognise the benefits of being involved and support them to develop new skills
- Be proactive in sharing information about housing and how this affects younger people within our tenant population
- Give young people the tools to prepare for the future so they are equipped to make informed decisions that affect their lives
- Create opportunities with young people to create a feeling of community for our tenants
- Encourage young people to break down barriers that affect our tenant population



7.0 continued

8.0 Conclusion

7.4 Commitment Four - Dacorum Borough Council's Housing Service is accountable to our tenants and leaseholders

Commitment four of 'Get involved' acknowledges our tenants right to understand the decisions we make. It is important to us as a landlord to give our tenants the best service experience possible. With our commitment to continuously improving our service we can use the knowledge, experience and skills within our tenant population to drive the service forward.

To achieve this we will:

- Re-launch the Tenant and Leaseholder Committee to review our performance, the use of our budget and shape our service plans
- Refresh our Tenant and Leaseholder Scrutiny Panel and use the panel to keep tenants at the centre through in-depth reviews of our service
- Demonstrate how we as a Landlord have achieved value for money for our tenants
- Showcase the impact our involved tenants have within the housing service
- Encourage tenants to challenge, shape and improve our service through a range of communication channels.

8.0 Conclusion

Within the 'Get involved' Strategy, Dacorum Borough Council commits to listening to our tenants and working in partnership with them to deliver a great housing service that provides value for money.

Using a range of activities we will create a diverse involved tenant community that helps us to develop a better understanding of what our tenants need. By creating a range of involvement opportunities *'all Dacorum Tenants and Leaseholders have the opportunity to Get involved'*. Through information and listening to our tenants we will *'work in partnership to ensure the Housing Service is shaped by the needs of our tenants'* Improving our digital communication channels and empowering young people to break down barriers we will ensure *'young people within Dacorum's tenant population have a voice and a positive influence in their local communities'*

And finally, by refreshing tenants' opportunities for official involvement we will ensure Dacorum Borough Council's housing service is accountable to our tenants and leaseholders. Through tenant involvement our tenants can live in strong, vibrant communities where they have a voice and feel listened to. Working together, we can continue to provide well managed, affordable homes for those in need and ensure the wellbeing of our tenants.





Case Study 2

Digital Skills workshops 2016

Digital skills workshops

1. Introduction

In line with government recommendations, Dacorum Borough Council is moving to 'Digital by default'.

Enabling our customers to access services online will make us more efficient and save money. During the financial year 2015-16 the council spent more than £240,000 on printing. If we can ensure that most of our customers can access the information they need online, there will be less demand for printed matter and fewer phone calls with simple queries. The housing service has already adopted digital-only sign-ups for all our homes.

2. Background to the project.

Our 2014 STAR survey highlighted that there is higher than the national average digital exclusion amongst Dacorum's tenants, particularly those living in supported housing. The overall figure for all tenants was:

Do you have access to the internet at home?

Yes 1579 (54.8%) No 1279 (45.2%)

We asked another question in the 2016 STAR survey, specifically asking residents how often they accessed the internet for personal use. Around 70% of supported housing respondents said that they **never** use the internet.

The government has identified four main kinds of challenge that people face to going online:

- access - the ability to actually go online and connect to the internet
- skills - to be able to use the internet
- motivation - knowing the reasons why using the internet is a good thing
- trust - a fear of crime, or not knowing where to start to go online

We now provide free wi-fi in our sheltered scheme communal lounges. Unfortunately this has seemingly not encouraged residents to take up publicly-funded IT training, even though many of our supported housing tenants own a tablet or laptop.

Dacorum Communities for Learning (DCfL) is a local voluntary organisation and one of DBC's local partners. We worked with them to organise some training courses and sought participants both from our 'Supported Housing Forum' and at the schemes that would be used as venues. Funded by the Policy and Participation team, the pilot course was open to any of Dacorum's supported housing tenants. Housing Involvement officers put up posters and attended coffee mornings to encourage tenants to sign up for the free sessions and get online.

3. Vision for the project

We hope that participants would reach the end of the course feeling confident to access the internet in a way that younger generations take for granted.

Whilst we hope that they will now feel able to make use of DBC's online services, there are so many more benefits. These are some of the ideas that we gave participants at the start of the course:

Searching the Internet

for information:

- About clubs, groups or hobby interests, restaurants, coffee shops or hotels.
- Finding instructions on how to knit or get an instruction manual that they have lost.
- Finding & contacting friends that you served with in the Armed Forces.
- Finding details & maps of walks locally & nationally.

Other ideas:

- Reading - Books, Newspapers & Magazines
- App called Overdrive that will allow you to access your local library services.
- Play Games & help keep the mind active
- Watch Television & Catch Up TV or listen to the Radio
- Google Earth and Google Maps
- Calendar - to keep track of Doctors/Hospital appointments, birthdays, meetings, travel bookings. Set reminders, write notes and to do lists.
- Local & National Transport
- Weather
- Shopping or Banking

Communication with family or friends:

- Video calling
- Facetime
- Skype
- Social media
- Email

Camera:

Use a device to take and edit photos or video. These can then be printed or attached in an email.

4. Recommendations

Each session lasted two hours, as DCfL felt that this is the optimum time for passing on knowledge whilst maintaining concentration. The courses offered 'total beginner' or 'intermediate' training for using IT equipment to access the internet. We held an introductory coffee morning to assess participants' needs and wants. We found that some residents already owned equipment, so we ran separate sessions for Android and iPads. We offered interpreters for tenants with English as a second language and adapted technologies for those with visual impairment were available. No one took up these offers this time round but we will continue to promote them.



First steps to getting online – DCfL volunteer tutor going through the basics

5. Objectives

- To give tenants confidence to use the internet
- Social wellbeing
- Access home delivery services (bad weather)
- Keep in touch with relatives
- Giving tenants access to DBC's website and particularly 'MyAccount' (logging repairs, rent statement, paying their rent on-line)

6. Outcomes

26 residents took part in the first 7-week course at three different venues. From this pilot, Dacorum Borough Council now has the information to create an innovative and effective Digital Engagement Strategy. Each sheltered scheme that hosted a course was given a Hudl, keyboard and cover for use in the communal lounge.

We asked all participants to complete a survey pre and post-training to give us an understanding of the personal impact of learning new internet skills. The overwhelming response was that they had enjoyed the course, felt confident to get online and were keen to learn more.

We are committed to promoting digital inclusion and will offer more free courses, particularly for older and more vulnerable tenants who are less able to access other training opportunities.

To date 80 tenants have now completed the full digital skills course.



Case Study

The Great British Spring Clean – March 2017

The Great British Spring Clean

1. Introduction

Keep Britain Tidy nationally launched another spring clean event after the phenomenal success of Clean for The Queen in 2016. They had lots of people asking about plans for 2017. So, they announce that they will run a brand new clean-up campaign for 2017, with a view to making this an annual fixture in the calendar.

2. Background to the project.

The aim is to inspire even more people from clubs, communities, schools and businesses across the country to get active and help clean up their neighbourhoods. Keep Britain Tidy are looking to encourage activity throughout the month of March, with a particular focus on registering thousands of clean-up events over the long weekend from **3-5 March**.

3. Vision for the project

As part of housing's Community Development policy this event was identified as an activity to be undertaken by the housing service department, above and beyond those usually expected of a landlord, which positively impact the lives of Dacorum residents. This supports Dacorum's corporate plan 2015 - 2020 as part of "a clean, safe and enjoyable environment" and "building strong and vibrant communities".

4. Recommendations

The recommendations suggested before the start of the project were:

- to choose an area within the borough
- to invite ward Councillors and our involved tenants plus promoting this throughout the general public, local shops and community centres
- booking a community hub to support the litter pick - Leverstock Green Cricket club
- to organise equipment for the day making sure we meet Health & Safety standards
- to produce a Risk Assessment and signing sheet



5. Objectives

The objectives for the event were:

- to encourage the local residents to be active within the community creating community cohesion. (as per 'Get Involved' Strategy 2016-2020)
- to encourage local residents to take pride in the environment around them
- maintaining local environment and protecting wildlife around the area

7. Outcomes

We held the litter pick event on Saturday 4th March 2017 10am - 2pm giving everybody the opportunity for it to held in an appropriate venue and at a time that that allows a range of tenants to be able to attend. The event was attended by 24 local residents which included the portfolio holder for housing Councillor Margaret Griffiths as well as the ward Councillor's, three Dacorum staff and two staff from our maintenance partners Osborne.



We collected refuse bags: 20, recyclable bags: 17 which is a grand total of 37 rubbish bags, also we logged larger items on the Keep Britain Tidy App whilst on site.

Keep Britain Tidy - The totals for this year's Great British Spring Clean are

The clean-up removed an astonishing 513,060 bags of rubbish - enough to fill 70,000 wheelie bins - from our streets, parks, beaches and countryside.

This means that the 303,125 volunteers who took part in our biggest-ever clean-up cleared more than 1,500 tonnes of litter!

As a charity, Keep Britain Tidy depends on the support of its network of volunteers around the country and we would like to say a massive 'thank you' to everyone who supported the Great British Spring Clean.





Case Study

YTI Taste Off Event - February 2017

Youth Tenant Involvement Taste off Event

1. Introduction

Youth participation work has shown us how important relationships are in the health context. Relationships can help make them resilient, but they can also make them vulnerable. Recognising and supporting healthy relationships is central to improving young people's physical and mental health and wellbeing. This can also be applied to older people as well.

Key components of this are strengthening life skills, enhancing self-efficacy, nurturing their creativity and making sure external resources are available when they need to draw on them. It includes acknowledging and building on the positive contribution young people make to society, such as volunteering, working as unpaid carers, and being a source of support to each other.

2. Background to the project.

As a group within the service shapers level of involvement, YTI are committed to having a voice and a positive influence in their local communities. They can also take part in projects that benefit the wider tenant community.

To achieve this we will be:

- helping young people to recognise the benefits of being involved and supporting them to develop new skills
- being proactive in sharing information about housing and how this affects younger people within our tenant population
- giving young people the tools to prepare for the future so they are equipped to make informed decisions that affect their lives
- creating opportunities with young people to create a feeling of community for our tenants
- encouraging young people to break down barriers that affect our tenant population

Having previously been involved with the Youth Action Entertainers, some of the YTI group were keen to take part in further intergenerational work. This also helped to meet our objective in breaking down the barriers between our young people and older tenants. The young people decided to organise a 'Taste Off' event, which allowed the children to be partnered up with an older person and create an old fashioned pudding.

3. Vision for the project

The vision for the event was to encourage inter-generational relations, reduce social isolation for older tenants and encourage the young people to think about other perspectives and empathise. It also encouraged them to think about cooking and understanding how recipes have changed over the years.

4. Recommendations

The recommendations suggested before the start of the project were:

- to carry out taste off event with young people and older people
- to ask local supermarkets to donate ingredients (Sainsbury's)
- to be judged by councillors involved in housing service
- to hold a meet and greet session for the young people to get to know their partner(s) in the weeks prior to the competition

5. Objectives

The objectives for the event were:

- to encourage young people to have a voice and a positive influence (as per the 'Get Involved' Strategy 2016-2020)
- to reduce social isolation amongst older tenants
- to break down barriers between generations
- to engage children from the Syrian refugee families in YTI activities

7. Outcomes

The event was attended by 14 older people and 15 YTI members. Ingredients were donated to us by Sainsbury's which reduced the cost considerably. DBC covered £50.00 towards extra ingredients for the event.

The children created a range of tasty dishes which were later judged by Mayor Robert Mclean, Mayoress Wendy Mclean and Councillor Isy Imarni.

The top three were as follows:

1st Grace Cooley and Linda Martin - Profiteroles and eclairs

2nd Zanobia Alkaadi and Eileen Conn & Esther O'Riordan - Steamed Syrup pudding

3rd Daniel Orton and Daphne Goodson - Pineapple Upside Down Cake

This intergenerational project brought together two different generations that were able to show that young people and older adults can get along. The positive effect this event has had on our older tenants is priceless and a key example of this was with Leonard Basford. Leonard is a supported housing tenant who suffers with anxiety and lacks confidence to engage outside of his surroundings with other people. This event was good for his health and wellbeing giving him the opportunity to build new friendships and the confidence to engage with a diverse group of people.

It also opened doors for the Syrian children to get involved although restricted with their English; this did not stop them from mucking in and enjoying the activity. This experience has given the children the confidence to join in with the YTI group. Another member of YTI, who suffers with learning difficulties, got on so well with his partner that he bought her flowers on the day of the event which has helped to solidify their friendship.

This event also made an impression on Councillor Isy Imarni who said:

“Thank you for inviting me to the bake-off event held last week, it was fantastic!

“Witnessing the engagement of our elderly tenants with children and teenagers brilliant!

“One resident explained that being new to the borough, she was currently only leaving her dwellings to attend hospital appointments and the event gave her an opportunity to meet new people and use her skills to benefit the borough’s young people. This epitomised the mood in of the event. There was a tangible positive energy at the event and all the delegates left the venue with visible elation.

“Of the events that I have attended during my period as a councillor this is the one that I would celebrate the most and I hope we can repeat this in the near future and hopefully on a larger scale. Additionally it would be great if we could use this template of partnering our elderly residents with the borough’s young people as it worked exceptionally well.”

In future, the young people would like to work with our supported housing tenants again. They would particularly like to encourage them to further their digital skills.





Community Development Policy

(Draft)

Last reviewed August 2017

1.0 Community development policy overview

This policy was adopted by XXX on XXX and is managed and adhered to by XXX. This policy will be reviewed on a XXX basis.

Contents

1.0 Policy overview

- 1.1 Introduction
- 1.2 Aim(s) of the policy
- 1.3 Links to the Council's corporate aims
- 1.4 Equality and diversity
- 1.5 Policy statement

2.0 Community development detail

- 2.1 Economic wellbeing and prosperity
- 2.2 Community cohesion and enjoyment
- 2.3 Local safety
- 2.4 Sustaining tenancies
- 2.5 Working with the voluntary sector

3.0 Links to other corporate strategies and policies

4.0 Legislation

5.0 Supporting procedures

1.1 Introduction

As a housing service within a local authority, we hold a robust understanding of the wide range of issues which can affect the residents of Dacorum through all aspects of their lives. We also understand that housing plays a key role in people's social, emotional and economic wellbeing and as social housing continues to focus on catering to those with complex needs, landlords need to do more to support this.

This policy establishes our stance on achieving social return from investment, and details the activities we engage in which allow us to invest into our local communities as well as our residents.

1.2 Aim(s) of the policy:

The aims of this policy are to;

- Clarify our approach to community development for both staff and residents
- Identify activities undertaken by the housing service, above and beyond those usually expected of a landlord, which positively impact the lives of Dacorum residents

1.3 Links to Council's corporate aims:

This policy supports all five of the council's corporate priorities which are set out in ['Delivering for Dacorum – Corporate Plan 2015-2020'](#).

1.4 Equality and diversity

The council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services and has procedures in place to ensure that all Applicants and Tenants are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

1.5 Policy Statement(s)

We will take action and offer opportunities to improve the economic wellbeing and prosperity of our residents (see 2.1).

We will invest in activities and projects which aim to enhance community cohesion and enjoyment in local neighbourhoods (see 2.2).

We will develop processes and partnerships which aim to enhance the safety of our local area (see 2.3).

We will create opportunities for our tenants to access support to help them sustain successful tenancies (see 2.4).

We will work with and support the voluntary sector where possible and appropriate (see 2.5).

2.0 Community development policy detail



2.1 Economic wellbeing and prosperity

Under the Social Value Act 2012, we are required to consider the wider social, economic and environmental benefits a procured contractor can bring to the local area.

As Dacorum Borough Council's housing service, our biggest contractor is Osborne, who carry out all of our repairs and planned maintenance work. As part of their tender bid and now their contract with us, Osborne provide investment in the local community via the following:

- Providing apprenticeships, work experience and employment opportunities to local residents;
- Making use of a local supply chain and local sub-contractors where possible;
- Forming partnerships with local charities and schools and supporting them with projects beneficial for the local community;
- Working with existing and supporting new social enterprises within Dacorum.

As a housing service, we understand that investing in our tenants is important for improving their economic and social wellbeing. In light of this, we run a Tenant Academy which aims to upskill our tenants in a number of areas. These areas include but are not limited to:

- Budgeting and money management;
- Employment skills;
- Tenancy sustainment;
- Equality and diversity;

- Health relationships;
- Community safety and anti-social behaviour;
- Digital skills and E-learning.

The areas that our Tenant Academy covers is reviewed regularly and changes dependent on identified priorities within our resident population.

2.2 Community cohesion and enjoyment

As a housing service we understand the importance of integrated and tolerant communities. To support this, we run Equality and Diversity workshops across the borough which consist of group discussions and exercises aiming to encourage residents to be accepting of everyone in their community.

In partnership with [Public Health England](#) and [Sunnyside Rural Trust](#) we have built and developed a community orchard in our Leverstock Green ward with the aim of promoting healthy eating and bringing the local community together. The orchard is beneficial for the environment as it attracts local wildlife and also offers educational opportunities for local schools to utilise the area. Regular events are held here to educate the local community of the fruit which grows and how they can use it in their own recipes.

2.0 Community development policy detail



2.3 Local safety

We work in partnership and meet regularly with the police and probationary services, fire and rescue services, health services and Hertfordshire County Council to improve the safety of the Dacorum area. Areas focused on by the partnership include but are not limited to:

- Drug and alcohol related crime;
- Violent crime and criminal damage;
- Road traffic collisions;
- Deliberate fires;
- Managing offenders / re-offending;

A strategic assessment of local issues is collated each year which identifies areas for priority and focus.

2.4 Sustaining tenancies

Whilst applicants are on our housing waiting list, we encourage them to take part in our pre-tenancy training. This training covers:

- Setting up and maintaining a home
- Budgeting and financial wellbeing
- Homelessness prevention

This training is beneficial for tenants who will be moving into a new home as it provides them with knowledge and skills which can support them in maintaining a successful tenancy.

As a housing service, we also commission the [Citizens Advice Bureau](#) to offer advice and support to our tenants regarding money troubles and other issues which may negatively impact on their ability to maintain successful tenancies with us.

2.5 Working with the voluntary sector

We work closely with [Dacorum Communities for Learning \(DCFL\)](#) to provide sessions for our elderly tenants in our supported housing schemes where they can learn to use computers and tablets and be supported when accessing a number of online services. The overall aim is to ensure digital inclusion.

As a service, when appropriate, we will also run fundraising events for approved charities and support staff that are carrying out charitable projects which are considered to positively impact our residents.

3.0 Links to other corporate documents

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and strategies:

-

4.0 Legislation

The legislation listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- Social Value Act 2012
-

5.0 Supporting procedures



AGENDA ITEM: SUMMARY

Report for:	<u>Housing and Communities Overview and Scrutiny Committee</u>
Date of meeting:	5 September 2017
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Housing Allocations Policy Review
Contact:	Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing Natasha Brathwaite – Strategic Housing Group Manager
Purpose of report:	The purpose of this report is to consult with the committee and offer the opportunity to comment on the proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Policy.
Recommendation(s)	1 For members to consider and comment on the proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Policy.
Corporate objectives:	Allocating homes to those most in need contributes to the following corporate objectives; <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A clean, safe and enjoyable environment • Building strong and vibrant communities • Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need • Delivering an efficient and modern council
Implications:	<u>Financial implication</u> Updates to Civica (F.N.A Abritas) will be required to ensure it can be effectively used to administrate the housing register and allocations process. <u>Value for money</u> It is important that we deliver good services and value for money for local people accessing the housing register as well as our existing tenants. The proposed changes to the allocations policy will offer increased value for money by encouraging more effective use of council stock, streamlining staff workload and allowing more efficient use of internal resources.
Risk Implications	The Housing Service Operational Risk Register is presented to the committee on a quarterly basis.

Equalities Implications	This policy has been written in line with the Equality Act 2010, as well as the Councils corporate commitments to ensuring fairness and equal opportunity across all services.
Health And Safety Implications	There are no direct Health and Safety implications through the update of this policy.
Consultees:	<p>Cllr Margaret Griffiths – Portfolio Holder for Housing</p> <p>Elliott Brooks – Assistant Director Housing</p> <p>Natasha Brathwaite – Strategic Housing Group Manager</p> <p>Emily-Rae Maxwell – Strategy, Improvement and Engagement Team Leader</p> <p>Jodi Cooper – Policy, Improvement and Support Lead Officer (Interim)</p> <p>Tracy Vause – Allocations and Lettings Team Leader</p> <p>Staff from across the Housing Service</p> <p>Tenant and Leaseholder Committee Members</p> <p>Housing register applicants and new tenants</p>
Background papers:	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Housing Allocations Policy [Draft] • Consultation Results – Allocations Policy Review
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	DBC – Dacorum Borough Council

1 Introduction

- 1.1 In January 2017 the Housing Allocations Policy was due for review and initial discussions took place with Strategic Housing management to identify suggested areas for alteration in order to improve the allocations process. A number of proposed changes were noted.
- 1.2 Consultations were carried out with new tenants, applicants currently on the housing register, the Assistant Director and Portfolio Holder for Housing, the Tenant & Leaseholder Committee, as well as a number of staff from key teams across the Housing Service.
- 1.3 The results from consultations were collated (see Appendix 2) and were considered when making amendments to the drafted Housing Allocations Policy (see Appendix 1).
- 1.4 The purpose of this report is to summarise the key proposed changes to the Housing Allocations Policy and provide members with the opportunity to comment and give feedback on them.

2 Removal of a deferred register

- 2.1 From April 2018, it is proposed that DBC no longer maintains a deferred housing register.
- 2.2 Administration and management of the deferred register significantly impacts on staff time and workloads as the deferred register currently holds approx. 6750 deferred applicants and application renewals and updates are required for each applicant on an annual basis.
- 2.3 It will be important that effective communication takes place with those currently on the deferred register to ensure that they have an appropriate timeframe to make any amendments to their application if their circumstances have changed.

3 Ensuring that the local connection requirement avoids discrimination

- 3.1 As a local authority, we are required to ensure all our policies are compliant with the Equality Act 2010.
- 3.2 A recent legal challenge to DBC highlighted our Allocations Policy currently discriminates specific community groups such as travellers due to our local connection criteria.
- 3.3 To offset this, the new policy proposes that these cases will be referred Housing Panel for a full review of the applicants housing need and intention to stay within Dacorum.

4 Addressing applicants with rent arrears

- 4.1 As a housing service, we want to encourage positive behaviours towards clearing rent arrears. It is proposed applicants with rent arrears will be required to evidence at least 6 months of regular payments and a *reduction* in their arrears in order to qualify.
- 4.2 Exceptions may be made in circumstances where tenants want to move in order to make rent payments more manageable i.e. downsizing. The tenant will still be required to pay the outstanding arrears.

5 Clarifying our approach to changes in child custody arrangements

- 5.1 In the current Allocations Policy, there is no clear stance around when DBC will consider a child to be part of a household following custody changes. A change in custody may have a direct impact on the number of bedrooms an applicant qualifies for.
- 5.2 To clarify this, the drafted policy now includes the following stance; if child custody has changed due to a court decision then the child will immediately become a member of the household. If custody arrangements are agreed through choice of the parents then proof of the child living in the property for a minimum of 6 months will be required (mirroring documentation required by Housing Benefit also).

6 Reducing the number of offer refusals

- 6.1 Currently housing applicants that are active on the housing register have an unlimited number of bids. This often leads to a number of applicants bidding on properties they then go on to refuse. This has a wider impact on the teams within housing overseeing the housing register and allocations process.
- 6.2 To encourage applicants to take a more informed approach to bidding, it is proposed that the housing service removes the right to refuse a property unless an applicant can provide a valid reason outlining why the property is no longer suitable to their housing need.
- 6.3 It would then be the Housing Panel's responsibility to approve any refusal and allow the applicant to be active on the housing register.
- 6.4 Any applicant that refuses a property and there is no valid reason will not be allowed to bid for six months.

7 Providing direct offers to applicants in Mother & Baby Units

- 7.1 Under the current policy, applications for those leaving Mother & Baby Units are required to go to Housing Panel for approval. Due to the vulnerability of these applicants, these applicants are always approved.
- 7.2 It is proposed that moving forward applicants leaving Mother & Baby Units should instead receive a direct offer of a suitable property. This will speed up the process and reduce pressure on the Housing Panel.

8 Review of the downsizing incentives offered

- 8.1 Currently applicants wishing to downsize are offered 45 points for each additional bedroom they have. These applicants are also able to bid for properties with one bedroom more than required in line with their housing need. This means that a sole tenant in a 3-bedroom house receives 90 points but may only reduce their property size by one bedroom meaning they can bid for a 2-bedroom property.
- 8.2 It is important to note the impact of this on the services ability to meet housing need. Currently two bedroom properties are highest in demand.

- 8.3 It is proposed that moving forward, applicants wishing to downsize will receive points based on the number of bedrooms they would actually like to downsize by. As a result, a downsizing sole applicant wishing to move to a 2-bedroom property will be less likely to finish higher in the shortlist than a household requiring two bedrooms due to only having 45 points as opposed to 90. This approach will ensure that council stock is being used effectively.

9 Pre-tenancy training for transferring tenants

- 9.1 Currently any applicant on the housing register who attends the pre-tenancy training will receive five additional points.
- 9.2 It is proposed that transferring tenants should not receive additional points for attending the course, however transferring tenants with a history of tenancy breaches *will* be expected to attend the course as part of the approval process for the transfer to go ahead.

10 Clarifying our approach to step-siblings sharing bedrooms

- 10.1 The current policy does not state whether stepsiblings should be required to share a bedroom. This has left the service open to challenges on the bedroom criteria when two families become one household.
- 10.2 It is proposed that as stepsiblings are considered 'a household' they should be expected to share a room in line with the general allocations policy. It is however recognised that there may be circumstances where it is not appropriate for stepsiblings to share. It is proposed that the Housing Panel reviews these cases.

11 Our approach to letting village properties

- 11.1 The current policy approach to village connection has been found to limit the flexible use of council stock as often those bidding on village properties do not have the required village connection and therefore the allocation of the property can be difficult.
- 11.2 It is proposed that where a village property receives no bids from applicants with a village connection the property will be direct offered to a suitable household in the first instance.
- 11.3 If there is no suitable household for direct offer, the offer will extend to applicants living or working in the neighbouring parishes before being opened up to the wider applicant population.

12 Allocating two bedroom Supported Housing properties

- 12.1 Although the majority of our Supported Housing properties are 1-bedroom, on occasion a 2-bedroom property may become available. The current policy does not consider applicants for supported housing with an additional household member that is not their partner.
- 12.2 It is proposed that on the rare occasion that a 2-bedroom Supported Housing property becomes available to let, the allocation requires the approval of the Housing Panel and any impact to the wider scheme is considered.

13 Recommendations

- For members to consider all proposals outlined in this report and consider whether they meets the needs of housing applicants and the demands on the housing service
- For members to note the approach taken by the housing service to develop the drafted policy including the involvement of tenants and housing applicants



Housing Allocations Policy

Last reviewed August 2017

1.0 Allocations policy overview

This policy will be reviewed on a **XXX** basis.

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1.1 Introduction

Dacorum Borough Council (DBC) is committed to allocating all social and affordable housing within the borough to those in most need and ensuring people have the best possible chance of sustaining their tenancy. This housing allocations policy sets out how we prioritise applications for council and housing association homes based on a person's circumstances and level of housing need.

To deliver this, we manage a choice based lettings system in Dacorum and households wanting to apply to be on the Council's housing register will need to complete an application form online at [Moving with Dacorum](#). Whilst Moving with Dacorum advertises all social and affordable housing options, this policy only applies to the allocation of council owned homes.

Each housing association within the borough will have its own allocations policy, which may have different rules about who is eligible. These policies should be available on their website or by contacting the housing association directly.

From April 2018, DBC will no longer maintain a deferred housing register. Applicants who are not accepted to the housing register are encouraged to re-apply if and when their circumstances change.

1.2 Aim(s) of the policy:

The aims of this policy are to:

- Offer clear guidance to both residents and staff on how we allocate our properties;
- Ensure we allocate homes appropriately and fairly to those in need;
- Ensure we make best use of local housing stock;
- Set out our approach to eligibility and qualification to Dacorum Borough Council's housing register.

1.3 Links to council's corporate aims:

This policy supports the council's corporate priorities of providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need; and building strong and vibrant communities. Our corporate priorities are set out in ['Delivering for Dacorum – Corporate Plan 2015-2020'](#).

1.4 Equality and diversity

The council is committed to promoting equality of opportunity in housing services and has procedures in place to ensure that all Applicants and Tenants are treated fairly and without unlawful discrimination.

1.5 Policy Statement(s)

Applicants will need to meet eligibility and qualification requirements in order to be active on the housing register (see 2.0).

We will administrate the housing register and allocate homes by adhering to a fair and transparent process (see 3.0).

Points will be awarded to applicants based on their housing need and priority group status (see 4.0).

We will offer priority to applicants who fit specialist criteria (see 5.0).

There are a number of exemptions and exceptions to the guidelines laid out in this policy (see 6.0).

2.0 Eligibility and Qualification

2.0 Eligibility & Qualification

As a local authority, we must adhere to all legal requirements that affect who we allocate social and affordable housing too. We are required to consider an applicant's eligibility at the time of their initial application and again when they have been successful in bidding for a property in order to allocate them a home. If an applicant is found not eligible at any time during this process, the allocation cannot continue and neither a sole nor a joint tenancy can be granted.

Under this policy, an applicant is *not eligible* if:

- They are subject to immigration control (unless covered under the exceptions stated in the Housing Act 1996, Part 6).
- They are prescribed as being 'persons from abroad' as defined in the Housing Act 1996, Part 6.
- They lack mental capacity and are unable to understand the requirements of the allocations policy and/or the obligations of the subsequent tenancy agreement based on the assessment of appropriate medical information submitted as part of their application.

In addition to eligibility, applicants must also meet the criteria outlined within the rest of this policy in order to qualify for the housing register and bid on homes. These qualifications only apply to applicants, not dependents or others in the household. Eligible but non-qualifying applicants will not receive a sole tenancy under this policy; however will be able to enter into a joint tenancy as long as the other applicant is both eligible and qualifying. The qualifying criteria does not apply to applicants who receive an offer through the Housing Act 1996, Part 7 or where an applicant is re-housed in specialist accommodation on the provision of a future move-on allocation through Part 6.

2.1) Age

Applicants must be 18 or over, unless age 16 or 17 and considered as part of a high-risk priority group (see 4.0).

2.2) Local Connection

Applicants must meet the local connection criteria by providing evidence of at least one of the following:

- A 10 year residency within the borough at some point in their lifetime;
- Family connection where an immediate family member (parents, children, siblings) has continuously been a resident within the borough for the last 10 years; or
- Currently in permanent employment within the borough boundary, consisting of 16 hours a week or more, and which has been continuous for the last 24 months.

Certain villages within the borough require additional local connection criteria. Applicants with a connection to the specified village are given priority at the short listing stage (5.2). There are however a number of circumstances, which mean that an applicant will not need to meet the local connection criteria in order to qualify, these are as follows:

- Current council or housing association resident living within the borough;
- Applicants to sheltered housing aged 60 and over or between 50 – 59 when there is a medical or social isolation need recognized by the internal housing panel;
- Members of the armed forces where the application is made within 5 years of discharge (includes bereaved spouses and civil partners leaving service family accommodation following the death of their partner); or
- Existing social housing tenants seeking to transfer from another local authority district in England because they work in the district need to avoid hardship or they need to move to take up an offer of work in the area (see below 'Right to Move')
- Where the requirement of a local connection discriminates against any individual or group e.g. traveler communities (these cases will be assessed on an individual basis by the internal housing panel).



2.0 Eligibility and Qualification

2.3) Right to Move

Applicants applying for housing within Dacorum from another local authority due to an offer of work within the borough must demonstrate a genuine intention to take up the offer. Evidence can include a contract of employment, wage slips or bank statements, tax/benefit information and a formal offer letter.

Any contracts must be for more than 12 months, consisting of 16 hours or more a week. Voluntary work does not qualify for the right to move.

We must also be satisfied that the required move is based on applicant's needs, rather than wishes. Things considered when assessing this include (but are not limited to):

- Distance / time to travel between work and home;
- Opportunities available closer to home;
- Impact on opportunity to improve employment circumstances (e.g. promotion);
- Availability and affordability of transport.

The council may contact the employer to verify an application at the point of joining the housing register or before making an offer.

2.4) Home Ownership

Applicants must not own the freehold or leasehold to any property within the UK and/or internationally. This does not apply to supported housing applicants aged 60 or over.

2.5) Financial Means

Applicants will not qualify if they have the financial means to meet their own housing need. We define this as the applicant and/or their partner having in excess of £60,000 income or £16,000 in savings (except where a lump sum has been paid to a current or former member of the armed forces as compensation).

2.6) Anti-Social Behaviour

Applicants will not qualify where there is evidence that legal or other serious action has been taken against any member of the household due to anti-social behaviour (ASB) within the last 6 months.

Applicants with any of the below legal orders and injunctions will not be considered to qualify:

- ASB order, conviction or injunction;
- Individual support order;
- Class A closure;
- Intervention order;
- Drink banning order or conviction.

In addition, applicants will also not qualify if they or any members of their household:

- Have been evicted on the grounds of ASB in the last 5 years;
- Have held a demoted tenancy due to ASB in the last 6 months; or
- Is a person known to be involved with serious ASB, or to have been involved in the last 6 months, as per the advice of the council's ASB team.

2.7) Rent Arrears

Applicants will not qualify where there is evidence that a member of the household has property-related arrears owed to the council (including council tax), a housing association or a private rented sector landlord, unless six months of regular repayments have been made and these repayments have been shown to

reduce the arrears debt. This includes both current and former arrears. Applicants will also not qualify if they or any member of their household:

- Have been evicted on the grounds of rent arrears from a council or housing association property in the last 5 years; or
- There is an existing notice or a possession order on the property.

Exceptions may be made in certain circumstances, e.g. a current tenant downsizing to make rent payments more manageable, which will be considered at the discretion of the internal housing panel. When exceptions are made, and an applicant with arrears is permitted to move, any debt owed to the council will still be required to be paid.

2.8) Deliberately Worsened Circumstances

An applicant will not qualify if there is evidence that they have deliberately changed their circumstances in order to qualify to and/or receive additional priority on the housing register. This is subject to evidence suggesting that it would have been reasonable for the applicant to remain in their current accommodation.

2.9) False, Misleading or Withheld Information

Applicants will not qualify if they have deliberately provided fraudulent information by:

- Giving false information;
- Not disclosing all information required; or
- Not informing the housing service of any important changes to their situation.

If an applicant is found to have provided any false or misleading information or they have withheld information that is relevant to their housing application their current and any future applications will be suspended. Action may also be taken against the applicant by the corporate anti-fraud team. This may result in prosecution.

2.0 Eligibility and Qualification

3.0 Administration of the Housing Register

2.10) The Household

As part of the application, applicants will need to outline all members of the household.

Any non-dependent children (aged 18 or over) or other adults who are considered part of the household must have lived with the applicant for a minimum of 12 months and continue to do so. Any changes to the household may affect eligibility.

Subject to a review of supporting evidence by the council's independent medical advisor, dependant adults who have joined, or wish to join a household because they are unable to live independently are not required to have lived with the applicant for the minimum of 12 months.

If an applicant receives custody of a child through a court decision, the child is immediately considered part of the household.

Custody arrangements agreed by parents require the applicant to provide supporting evidence of the arrangement, including evidence that the child has been living as part of their household for a minimum of 6 months and any documents required by Housing Benefit to support this claim.

Any child custody arrangements submitted as part of a housing application will be checked throughout the application process and the period of the tenancy.

A child is not part of the household if:

- The applicant has staying contact with the child for less than 50% of the time; or
- In the case of equal contact time, the property will not be the child's main or principle home.

A baby will be considered a household member from the date of birth, and not during the pregnancy.

However, some housing associations will consider an unborn baby as a household member at the point that the mother receives her MATB1 certificate. For this reason, the council will still take a record of the MATB1 and in these cases an applicant may be able to bid for larger housing association properties prior to the birth.

Where the applicant is eligible (see 2.0) but other members of the household are not eligible, they may be considered as part of the application if they are dependent. This applies to both adults and children.

Applicants applying as part of a couple will need to decide who is the primary applicant as both partners will be considered as members of the household and will not be able to hold an active application in both names. These applications are assessed on the primary applicants housing need only.

3.0 Administration of the Housing Register

3.1) Bidding

Applicants who have applied to be on the housing register, are eligible, and qualify can then begin bidding on properties through [Moving with Dacorum](#). Alternative options for bidding include:

- Over the phone on 0300 111 3570;
- By text message to 07786 201131; or
- In person at The Forum, Hemel Hempstead.

Due to the offer of a choice based lettings system whereby applicants pick which properties they wish to bid for, we consider it reasonable to expect that where an applicant has been successful in bidding for their chosen property, that they will accept the offer of that property.

Therefore, successful applicants will only receive one property offer. A refusal of a property will only be considered if the applicant can provide evidence of a valid reason as to why they cannot accept it.

Where an applicant can provide evidence to support their refusal, they will be able to continue bidding on other properties.

Where an applicant cannot provide evidence to support their refusal of a property, their offer can be cancelled and they may be unable to bid on any future homes for 6 months.

3.2) Property Adverts

All properties (except supported housing), advertised through Moving with Dacorum will be made live on any given weekday. They will then remain live for a minimum of three days, closing at one minute to midnight on the final day. Any advert that goes live before midday is classed as the first day of advertising.

We recommended that applicants check for properties a minimum of every three days to avoid missing opportunities to bid.

Supported housing properties are advertised on a weekly cycle and adverts will be live for five days, from one minute to midnight on a Thursday until one minute to midnight on the following Monday.

3.0 Administration of the Housing Register

3.3) Direct Offers

On some occasions, properties will be allocated through a direct offer. A direct offer means that an applicant will not bid on properties but will receive one offer of suitable accommodation.

Direct offers are made by the housing service outside of the choice based lettings system. When making a direct offer the council is required to consider the suitability of a property for all members of the household.

These offers are used as part of our approach to preventing homelessness. Applicants who are given a homelessness status at the point of receiving the full statutory duty will receive one direct offer of suitable accommodation.

In addition to homeless applicants, direct offers may also be used:

- To match applicants requiring complex adaptations to a suitable property;
- For applicants living in Mother & Baby units;
- In the case of hard-to-let properties (advertised at least twice with no suitable bids);
- For applicants in high-risk priority groups (see 4.0) where a sensitive letting is required; or
- For individual cases that would usually fall outside of this policy but have an urgent or high risk housing need (these offers can only be approved by the internal Housing Panel)

3.4) Checks and Assessments

If an applicant is successful in bidding, a full verification is carried out at the point of offer. In some cases, a full verification may be carried out before an offer is made.

Documents required as part of this include (but are not limited to):

- Proof of identity;
- Proof of income and savings;
- Proof of residency of children (Child Benefit);
- Proof of pregnancy (MATB1 Form);
- Confirmation of immigration status and right to work if from abroad;
- Medical evidence; and
- Notice of eviction (if relevant).

Existing tenants seeking a transfer will also need to make themselves available for a home visit.

Applicants can aid this process by ensuring they have accurately reflected their circumstances in their application and by making sure they have all the necessary documents required to evidence their situation.

At the point an offer has been made, if an applicant cannot provide their documentation within 48 hours (unless there are exceptional circumstances), the offer will be withdrawn and the property offered to the next eligible person on the shortlist.

3.5) Renewal and Removal

Applicants are required to confirm their details as part of renewing their application on an annual basis, the council however can ask for confirmation at any point during the application process.

All renewal requests must be completed within 28 days and completed through Moving with Dacorum. Failure to renew an application within this time will result in details being deleted from the register.

If a renewal application is started but not completed, a member of staff will contact the applicant directly to request the missing information.

If this information is not supplied to the council's satisfaction within 21 days then the details will be deleted from the register as above.

Deleted applicants may re-apply at any point and the new application will be considered. It is advised applications are only submitted or renewed if there is a genuine housing need.

Applicants can also be removed from the register for other reasons including, but not limited to:

- At their request;
- Where they no longer meet eligibility or qualifying requirements;
- Where they have knowingly provided false, misleading or incomplete information; or
- Where they have accepted an offer of accommodation.

3.6) Reviews and Appeals

As a housing service, we will provide an open and fair review process, in accordance with legislation, with appropriate support being offered.

Applicants have the right to request a review of decisions made on the following grounds:

- Misadministration of registration;
- Misadministration of shortlisting or points; and
- Misadministration of a renewal or removal from the housing register other than when it was at their own request.

Review requests must be made in writing within 21 days of the applicant being notified of the decision. The review will be conducted by an officer independent from the original assessment.

3.0 Administration of the Housing Register

4.0 Points and Additional Priority

Applicants have the right to request an appeal of the outcome of review decisions. Any appeal request must be made in writing within 21 days of the applicant being notified of the review decision. An appeal investigation will be carried out by the Group Manager for Strategic Housing.

Applicants wishing to pursue their appeal further will need to make their case through the council's [complaints system](#). This will then go through the council's internal complaints process.

3.7 Disclosure of Information and Conflicts of Interest

Information on any housing applicant is confidential and will not be disclosed with any member of the public.

This also applies any information related to applications. Applicants family members will need written permission from the applicant to access any information.

In certain circumstances, disclosure of applicant information to other professionals or services may be necessary. This will only apply in certain circumstances for example to prevent and detect fraud, or where an applicant has particular support needs that need to be met in order to enable them to maintain a tenancy.

In such cases, any information that is disclosed will be shared on a need to know basis. Examples of services include but are not limited to:

- Housing officers or tenancy sustainment officers;
- Corporate anti-fraud team;

- Occupational health officers;
- Doctors or social services;
- Police or probation services; or
- Other local authorities or housing associations.

Councillors, council employees and their close relatives applying to join the housing register must disclose their association with DBC on their application form.

Applications with an association to DBC that are successful in bidding on a property require approval from the Corporate Director of Housing and Regeneration prior to the formal offer being made.

4.0 Points and Additional Priority

DBC allocate points to each applicant on the housing register, these points are reflective of their housing need and are used to bid on a property. Applicants with the highest number of points will be made an offer on the property at the close of bidding (see appendix 1 for a detailed table of points awarded).

If two or more applicants are at the top of the shortlist and are in all other ways equal, a property will be offered to the applicant with the earliest registration date.

4.1) People Who Are Homeless

Part 7 of The Housing Act 1996 distinguishes between people who are homeless with a statutory duty to be rehoused by a local authority and those who are homeless with no statutory duty. This will also reflect the requirements set out by the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017. Applicants who are homeless where we have no statutory duty may receive points. Those who we have a full statutory duty to house will receive a direct offer as stated in section 3.3.

Prior to receiving the full statutory duty decision, applicants will receive assistance to prevent homelessness and to bid through the choice based letting scheme with points awarded for other priority need criteria.

4.2) Insanitary, Overcrowded and Unsatisfactory Housing

As a council, we recognise that tenants in the private rented sector are more likely to be in insanitary or otherwise unsatisfactory dwellings which can lead to potentially harmful health and safety risks. As a local authority, we use the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(HHSRS\)](#), introduced in light of the Housing Act 2004 to formally score and demonstrate the seriousness of hazards in dwellings. To address these issues, we will give additional priority for applicants currently in private rented sector accommodation if the property is found to:

- Lack facilities or have shared facilities; or
- Be in a state of disrepair.

This additional preference will only be given once and will not increase where applicants identify both of the above issues. Points awarded will either be of a 'high' or 'low' category (see Appendix 1) based on the following:

Low:

- Minor disrepair
 - Category 2 hazard from bands D – F under the HHSRS; or
- Sharing kitchen and/or bathroom facilities.

High:

- Major disrepair
 - Category 1 hazard from bands D – F under the HHSRS; or
- Lacking kitchen and/or bathroom facilities.

Both minor and major disrepair will need to be confirmed by a local authority Environmental Health Officer and there must be evidence that the landlord is non-compliant in carrying out the repairs.

As a local authority we recognise that overcrowding in a property can cause stress and have other negative impacts on a household. In light of this, we will give additional priority to those applicants who are overcrowded according to our [bedroom standard](#).

4.0 Points and Additional Priority

Any points allocated to an applicant for overcrowding will reflect the need set out within the bedroom standard. Applicants are advised to read the standard when making an application for further information on the size of property they may be entitled to.

In order to make best use of our available housing stock, we encourage tenants under-occupying their home to downsize to a smaller property, as this is more reflective of the housing need.

Applicants who wish to downsize will receive points based on how many bedrooms they would like to downsize by. This will need to be specified in the application. As a result, the applicant will be limited to the size of property they can bid for.

4.3) Medical and Welfare

We will award additional points on medical grounds when there is evidence that an applicant's current housing situation is having a direct impact on their and/or a household members medical condition. The term 'medical grounds' also covers disability.

Points will be awarded based on four categories (Extreme, high, medium or low) and reflect the level of risk caused by remaining in the current housing (see Appendix 1). Medical cases are assessed by an independent medical advisor who will advise the council on our final decision.

We will also award additional points on welfare grounds, which we define as referring to care and support needs or other social needs that do not require medical care or

support. As with medical, these points are also awarded using four categories that are reflective of the level of risk involved in the applicant remaining in the current accommodation. Where appropriate, we may request information from relevant professionals involved in the applicant's case to assess the level of need. All welfare cases are presented to and assessed by the internal housing panel.

4.4) Moving Due to Hardship

In some cases, we understand that current tenants may need to move within the borough in order to avoid hardship. We consider that hardship may be personal or financial. Due to this, we will allocate points to applicants who need to move within the borough due to hardship.

4.5) Armed Forces

As a local authority, we are required by law to give additional priority to members of the armed forces who have an urgent housing need. Members of the armed forces who qualify to our housing register will receive additional points if:

- They are serving in the regular forces and are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable to their service;
- They formally served in the regular forces;
- They have recently ceased, or will cease to be entitled to reside in the accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of their spouse or civil partner who served in the regular forces and whose death was attributable to that service; or
- They are serving or have served in the reserve forces and are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable to their service.

4.6) Right to Move

As a local authority, we are required by law to give additional priority to applicants who meet the 'Right to Move' qualifying criteria (see 2.3) and so these applicants will receive additional points.

4.7) Other Additional Priority Criteria

The council is also committed to recognising a number of other criteria, and in all cases the additional priority will be awarded as points. The additional priority criteria are as follows:

- Existing tenants of sheltered accommodation who wish to move from a Category 1 to a Category 2 property;
- Existing tenants aged 60 or over in general needs accommodation who wish to move into sheltered accommodation;
- Children in flats without a lift (first floor and above);
- Active applicants on the housing register who have completed a pre-tenancy training course (not including transfer tenants);
- Existing tenants at the end of their flexible tenancy who have been assessed as needing to transfer to meet a change in housing need;

Please note that transfer applicants with tenancy breaches will be required to complete a pre-tenancy training course as part of the approval process for their transfer.

Additional priority criteria have been established in relation to other high-risk applicants who are hard-to-house and may require sensitive lettings. These applicants may include (but are not limited to):

- Care leavers;
- Witness protection cases;
- Move-on from supported housing; or
- Individuals identified through multi-agency group.

Applicants meeting the additional priority criteria are not expected to be frequent or high in number and will always be considered on a case-by-case basis.

4.0 Points and Other Criteria

5.0 Specialist Criteria



4.8) Bedroom Criteria

To ensure homes reflect peoples housing need DBC operates in line with the Governments Code of Guidance 2012 [bedroom standards](#).

Households who fall between the criteria within the standards will be able to bid for properties in two size categories to provide maximum choice.

For the purpose of this policy, the reference to children sharing a room shall be considered to mean siblings or step-siblings, not other relations or non-relations. We understand there may be mitigating circumstances where it is not appropriate for siblings or step-siblings to share a bedroom as required by the standard. These cases including supporting evidence will be reviewed on an individual basis by the internal housing panel.

Exceptions to the bedroom criteria will also be considered if medical evidence is provided to the housing panel showing that a member of the household is unable to share a room or requires an additional room for medical equipment. Prospective adoptive or foster parents will also be considered for exemption at the discretion of the housing panel.

See Appendix 2 for a table identifying possible household make-ups for one, two and three bedroom properties in line with the above bedroom criteria requirements.

Where these cases are approved it is essential applicants consider the affordability of separate bedrooms as the household will be considered under-occupying their home which may affect Housing Benefit entitlement.

Some housing association tenancy agreements may differ from the bedroom standard used within this policy. In these cases, we will restrict the size of the household able to bid for the property based on the details received from the relevant housing association.

5.0 Further Specific Criteria

5.1) Adapted Properties

Due to the low number of properties available in the borough that are suitable to meet the needs of people who have mobility and physical health conditions, we are committed to making sure that people who need adapted properties are prioritised for them.

To do this, we categorise adapted properties and applicants who need adaptations as low, medium or high; and advise that applicants only bid on the properties which are labelled as the category which is suited to their needs. Applicants will then be shortlisted according to their needs with the applicant whose needs best match those of the adapted property being given priority.

There is also a fourth category, 'extreme', for those applicants with very complex needs, where only very few properties would be appropriate for the extent of the adaptations required. In these cases we will make use of direct offers (see 3.3) to allocate appropriately.

5.2 Village Lettings

When shortlisting for village properties, applicants with a local connection (see 2.2) to a specific village (known as village connection) will be considered above applicants without a village connection. Villages where village connection is considered in Dacorum are:

Aldbury, Bovingdon, Chipperfield, Flaunden, Flamsted, Great Gaddesden, Gaddesden Row, Kings Langley, Little Gaddesden, Long Marston, Markyate, Northchurch, Potten End, Wilstone and Wigginton.

Where no bids have been made by applicants with a village connection, the property will be direct offered to a suitable household (without consideration of village connection). In the event that there is no suitable household to receive a direct offer, the offer will extend to applicants living and/or working in neighbouring parishes, before being opened up to the wider applicant population.

5.0 Specialist Criteria

6.0 Exemptions & Exceptions

5.3) Local Lettings Scheme

At Dacorum Borough Council we reserve the right to implement local lettings schemes for new developments or to address issues on existing estates. These are used to ensure that communities are sustainable and contain an appropriate mix of households.

5.4) Supported Housing & Flexi Care

Supported housing properties are designed for people aged 60 and over. Any applications to supported housing where an applicant is below the age of 60 will be required to demonstrate a medical or social isolation need. These applications will be assessed by the internal housing panel.

Supported housing residents benefit from a Supported Housing Officer who can offer differing levels of support as required and/or requested, as well as opportunities to socialise with other residents in their supported housing scheme.

The majority of our supported housing homes are one bedroom, however on occasion a two-bedroom property may become available. In these cases, the allocation of this property will be considered on a case-by-case basis by the housing panel, specifically taking into account the age of any additional household members living with the successful applicant and how this could impact the wider scheme.

We can also offer [Flexi Care](#) supported housing services for older people whose needs are beyond the provision available within traditional supported housing.

6.0 Exemptions and Exceptions

Lettings that are not treated as allocations under this scheme include:

- Mutual exchanges between tenants of the council or housing associations, whether by Deed of Assignment or by commencement of new tenancies (including those arranged via national schemes such as Homeswapper).
- Successions of a tenancy following the death of a tenant;
- Where an introductory tenancy, assured shorthold starter, or probationary tenancy becomes an assured or secure tenancy;
- Where a secure or assured tenancy is granted by court order under Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984, or Children Act 1989; or
- Where a tenancy is demoted by court order or where a demoted tenancy reverts back to secure tenancy status.

Other exemptions may include (but are not limited to):

- A property allocated to a relative or carer of a tenant who has died without a statutory right to succession being present;
- Changes to a tenancy which do not result in a vacancy (e.g. joint to sole tenancy);
- A vacancy is required to enable us to discharge duty to statutorily homeless households;
- The need to re-house an existing tenant temporarily in order to carry out repairs; or
- Any other exceptional circumstances agreed by the Strategic Housing Team Leader and Strategic Housing Group Manager.

In exceptional circumstances the Assistant Director of Housing has authority to award additional priority to applicants and to amend eligibility or qualification criteria. All exceptions such as this will be monitored and reported on to the Corporate Director of Housing and Regeneration.

3.0

Links to other corporate documents

This policy links to and should be read in conjunction with the following policies and strategies:

- Homelessness Strategy
- Strategic Tenancy Policy
- Mutual Exchange Policy

4.0

Legislation

The legislation listed below will be taken into consideration when implementing this policy:

- Housing Act 1996, Part VI and part VII
- Homelessness Act 2002
- Housing Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Welfare Reform Act 2012
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017

Allocations Policy Review – Consultation Results

Introduction

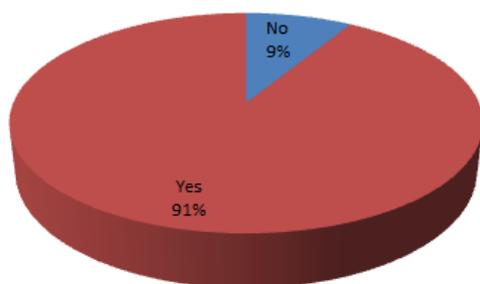
Under the review of the allocations policy, consultations on the proposed changes were carried out via an online survey with applicants currently active on the housing register and new tenants who have recently been through the allocations process, now settled in their new home. Focus groups were also held with staff from across the housing service to gain their thoughts on the proposals. This report covers the results from these consultations.

Survey Results – Active Applicants (Sample size = 46)

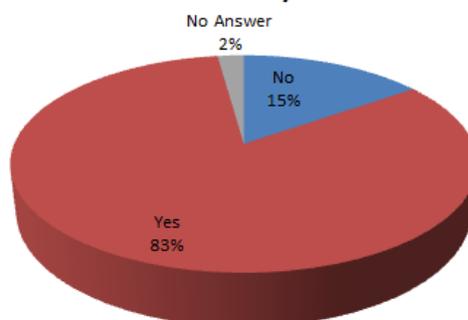
Accessibility of the Allocations Policy

A large majority of the applicants surveyed had read the allocations policy in its current format. Of the 91% who had read it, 11% noted that they were still unclear as to what they were entitled to.

...Have read the current allocations policy?



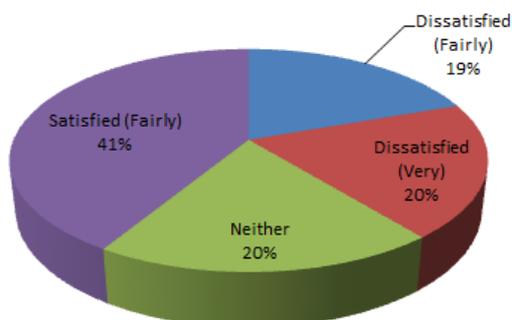
...Were clear on what they were entitled to?



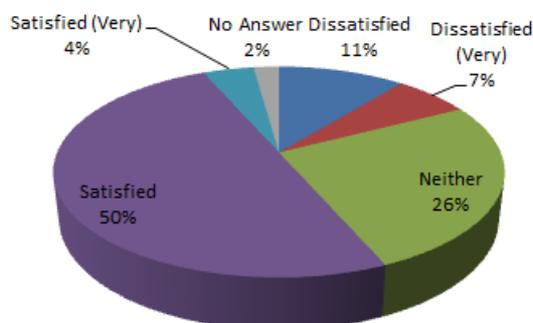
Property Adverts

The survey addressed the properties available on 'Moving with Dacorum' and the way these are advertised by asking how satisfied applicants were with:

...The choice of properties available to bid on?



...Information provided in the property adverts?



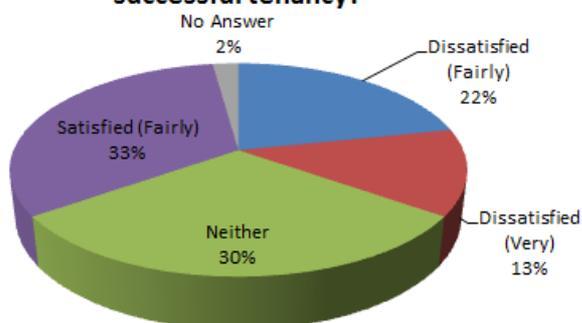
When asked how we could improve the information provided in the adverts, the suggestions made can be summarized as the following:

- More information re. the location of the property (include postcodes)
- Include information about the layout of the property and room sizes
- More photos of the property (internal and external)

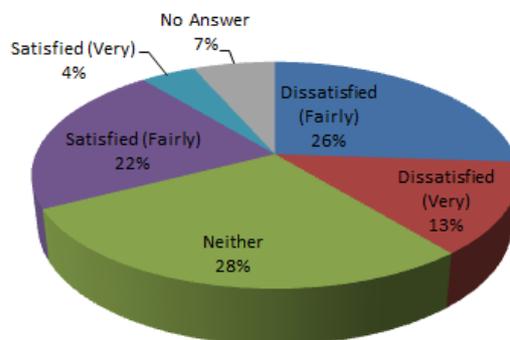
Advice and Information Provided

Applicants were asked how satisfied they were with:

...Access to advice and information on having a successful tenancy?



...Access to alternative options?

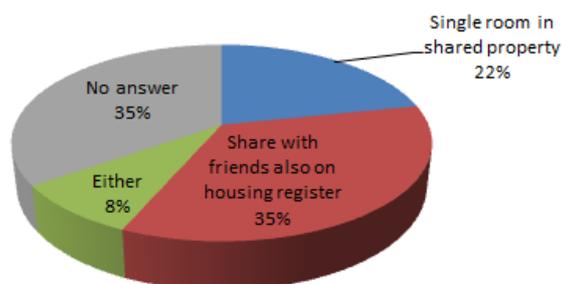


Shared Accommodation

Due to changes in legislation meaning that housing benefit for under 35's is reducing to a single room rate, it may be necessary for the council to consider the use of houses of multiple occupancy in order to provide affordable accommodation for single applicants. Of those surveyed, 50% were single applicants.

Of the single applicants who responded to this survey, the following applies:

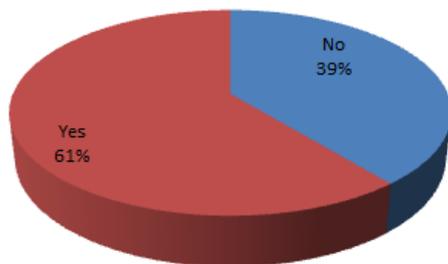
...Would you consider shared accommodation? If so, which type?



Refusing A Property

Applicants were asked whether if successful in bidding for a property, should applicants be allowed to refuse it, the result was as follows:

Should applicants who have successfully bid on a property be able to refuse it?



Additional Thoughts

Respondents to this survey were given the opportunity to make any additional comments regarding the allocation or bidding process. These are summarized below:

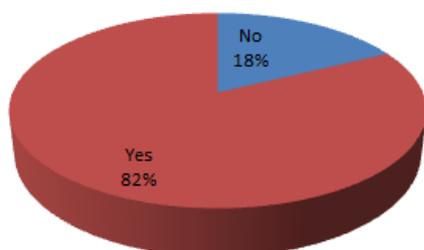
- More support should be offered throughout the process for those suffering from mental illness
- Make the system fairer so that downsizers don't have an unfair advantage
- Make the system more transparent when it comes to direct offers
- Automated messages would be useful, notifying an applicant of successful / unsuccessful bids

Survey Results – New Tenants (Sample size = 17)

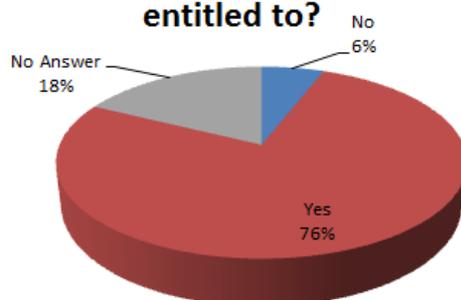
Accessibility of the Allocations Policy

Again, as with bidding applicants, a large majority of new tenants surveyed had read the allocations policy prior to starting the bidding process. Of the 82% who had read it, 6% stated that they were still unclear as to what they were entitled to.

...Had read the allocations policy before bidding?



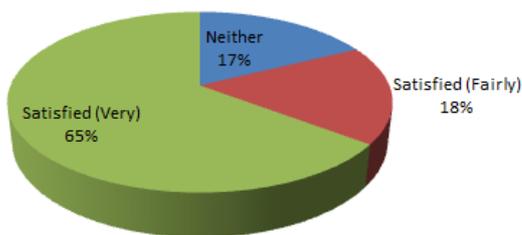
...Were clear on what they were entitled to?



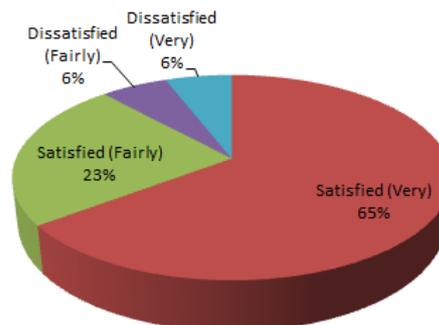
Bidding Process & Property Adverts

The survey addressed the properties available on 'Moving with Dacorum' and the way these are advertised, as well as the bidding process by asking how satisfied those surveyed were with:

...The information provided in the property adverts?



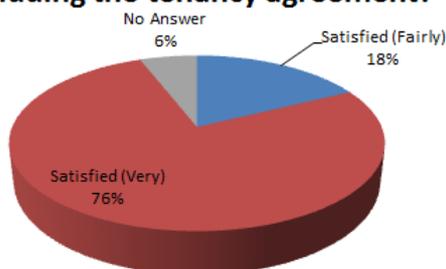
...The ability to choose a property?



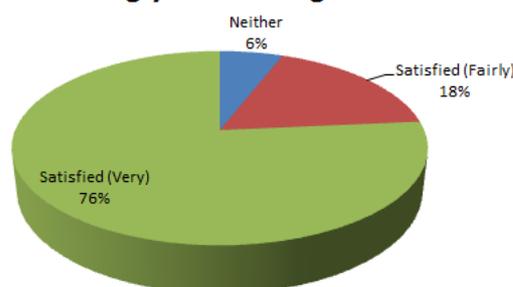
Starting a Tenancy

We asked new tenants about their experience of starting a new tenancy and how satisfied they were with the following:

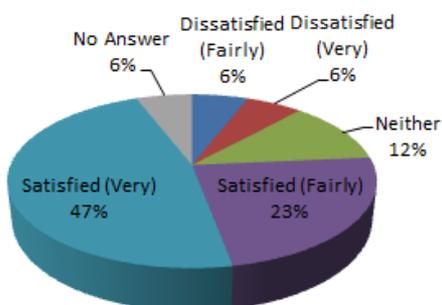
...Your introduction to your tenancy, including the tenancy agreement?



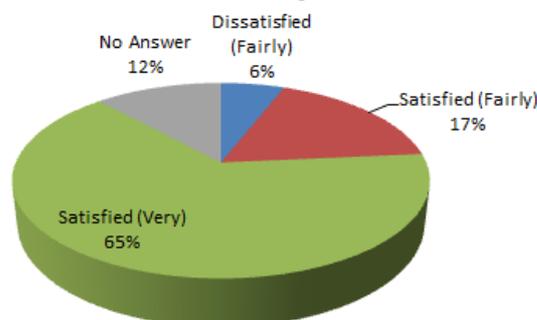
...Meeting your housing officer?



...Any additional support put in place to help you have a successful tenancy?



...Your overall experience of starting a new tenancy?



Refusing a Property

New tenants were asked whether if successful in bidding for a property, should applicants be allowed to refuse it, the result was as follows:

Should applicants who have successfully bid on a property be able to refuse it?



Additional Thoughts

Respondents to this survey were given the opportunity to make any additional comments regarding the allocation, bidding or new tenancy process. These are summarized below:

- Support and advice given was helpful and queries were responded to quickly
- Some dissatisfaction with the lack of choice offered when having to take a direct offer

Staff Consultation

Focus groups were held with staff from across the housing service to gain their thoughts on the proposed changes to the allocations policy. See below table for a summary of these focus groups.

<u>Issue Identified</u>	<u>Proposed Change</u>	<u>Staff Feedback</u>
Applicants not making informed choices when bidding due to option of bidding on unlimited number of properties. This leads to refusals and high workload when shortlisting.	Remove the opportunity to refuse all together. This will encourage more strategic bidding and therefore less bids overall.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • It's important for tenants to be happy in their property, suggest a limit on the number of bids allowed per week instead. • More information about the property would need to be included in the adverts i.e. more photos. • Suggest a slow launch of this change, drop to 2 refusals allowed for a year and then review before dropping to 1 etc. • Consider sheltered housing applicants being exempt.
No clear stance in the policy around when a child is considered to be part of a household due to custody changes.	If custody has been decided by a court then a child should immediately be considered a member of the household. If custody is agreed through choice of the parents then proof of the child living there for at least 6 months should be required (documentation as requested by Housing Benefit).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • All staff involved in the focus group agreed with this proposal.
Transfer applicants are currently able to take part in the tenancy sustainment course and gain 5 extra points.	Anyone who is on the active register as a new tenant and completes the training should receive 5 points. Transfer tenants	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Tenancy officers all agreed that this would be beneficial in reducing ASB and rent arrears. Staff felt that it was important that the course not been

	should not receive points; however those with tenancy breaches should have to complete the course as a compulsory measure.	seen as a tick box exercise for more points, work should be done to ensure applicants are really engaging.
Applications for those living in Mother and Baby units have to go via Housing Panel which can be time-consuming and slow down the process	Remove direct offers as an option. Instead, a high number of points should be awarded at an early stage (e.g. 3 months) in order for applicant to start bidding.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Risk assessments should be carried out first to ensure correct support can be put in place as needed (e.g. tenancy sustainment team referral). Staff were conscious of the need for a clear process for this i.e. would applications need to go via Housing Panel or can it be considered at team level?
No clarification in the current policy around whether step-siblings should be required to share a bedroom.	Non-blood related children should not be expected to share a bedroom; however applicants should be encouraged to consider affordability re. Social sector size criteria.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff generally felt that this should be considered on a case by case basis.
Nothing currently in the policy which prevents under 50's from moving into supported housing accommodation with a family member if it is more than 1 bedroom.	As this is such a rare occurrence, it should be considered on a case-by-case basis. However, clear rules around succession should be in place - succession of the tenancy should be allowed but alternative accommodation will be allocated.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff were conscious that this could cause ASB issues and other tenancy issues once the main applicant passes away. Concerns around the impact on the scheme environment and dynamics if younger people were able to live there. Could potentially make hard to let sheltered housing properties even harder to let.
Nothing in the policy which covers whether or not friends should be allowed to form a household.	Further research needed. How common is this? How much of an appetite for this is there?	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Does give more options for single applicants, especially with the LHA cap. Some staff were concerned about potential impact on tenancy issues i.e. ASB.
Administration and management of the deferred register (application renewals etc.) impacts staff time and workloads.	People should be deleted after 3 years on the deferred register. Those who have been on it for a long time should be written to prior to being deleted informing them that they should contact us if their circumstances change.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Staff felt that there shouldn't be a deferred register at all, as this can give false hope to applicants waiting on it.
Currently if someone has large rent arrears they are able to move if they stick to a payment plan for 6 months. E.g. £3000 arrears, paying back £10 a month for 6 months. Still leaves large arrears.	Rule tightening should be looked into; however this should focus more on payment behavior than actual amounts. If they are in arrears then the tenancy sustainment course should be compulsory.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Some staff felt that applicants with high arrears should only be able to move out of necessity not preference. Consider introducing a % of arrears that applicants will need to pay off before being moved. Some staff felt that individual circumstances can play such a pivotal role that it should be considered on a case by case basis.
Current incentives for downsizing offer 45 points per extra bedroom which means that a sole tenant in a 3 bed house is given 90	Need for a review of downsizing incentives.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider reducing the number of points given for each spare room.

points. They are then able to bid on (and are often top of the list for) 2 bed properties - our biggest need.		
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HOUSING AND COMMUNITY Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme 2017/18

Scrutiny making a positive difference: Member led and independent, Overview & Scrutiny Committee promote service improvements, influence policy development & hold Executive to account for the benefit of the Community of Dacorum.

Meeting Date:	Report Deadline	Items:	Contact details:	Contact Details
Cancelled and moved to July due to the Election	24 May 2017	Quarter 4 Performance Reports (& Quarter 4 Operational Risk Reports) Housing Resident Services Budget Monitoring Financial Report Homelessness Strategy Update on Tenant Involvement Activities safeguarding children and safeguarding adults policies	(PH – M Griffiths, J Marshall, N Harden) E Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing J Still, Group Manager, Resident Services R Baker, Group Manager, Finance N Brathwaite E Brooks Julie Still	Moved from April 2017
5 July 2017	21 June 2017	Quarter 4 Performance Reports (& Quarter 4 Operational Risk Reports)	PH – M Griffiths, J Marshall, N Harden E Brooks, Assistant Director,	

Meeting Date:	Report Deadline	Items:	Contact details:	Contact Details
		<p>Housing</p> <p>Resident Services</p> <p>Budget Monitoring Financial Report</p> <p>Homelessness Strategy <i>will also cover the temporary Accommodation policy and the Homeless Reduction Act.</i></p> <p>Housing Service – Benchmarking report 2015/16</p>	<p>Housing</p> <p>J Still, Group Manager, Resident Services</p> <p>R Baker, Group Manager, Finance</p> <p>N Brathwaite</p> <p>Elliott Brooks and Emily Rae- Maxwell</p>	
6 Sept 2017	23 August 2017	<p>Quarter 1 Performance Report (& Q1 Operational Risk Reports)</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Resident Services</p> <p>Q1 Budget Monitoring Financial Report</p> <p>DENS performance</p>	<p><i>(PH – M Griffiths, N Harden, J Marshall)</i></p> <p>E Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing</p> <p>J Still, Group Manager, Resident Services</p> <p>R Baker, Group Manager, Finance</p> <p>N Brathwaite</p>	<p>Ext: NB -2840</p> <p>Ext: EB -2615 Elliott.Brooks@dacorum.gov.uk</p> <p>Ext: JS – 2453 Julie.Still@dacorum.gov.uk</p> <p>Ext: RB – 2162 Richard.Baker@dacorum.gov.uk</p>

Meeting Date:	Report Deadline	Items:	Contact details:	Contact Details
		<p>performance report and the safeguarding Policy and Procedures report</p> <p>Update on Tenant Involvement Activities</p> <p>Allocations policy OSC</p>	<p>Julie Still</p> <p>E Brooks/Emily-Rae Maxwell</p> <p>N Brathwaite</p>	<p>Moved from august to sept</p> <p>Moved from august to sept</p> <p>Moved from august to sept</p>
11 October 2017	27 Sept 2017	<p>End of year performance report for Osborne and Sun Realm</p> <p>ASB issues in Dacorum</p>	Fiona Williamson	<p>Ext: FW 2855</p> <p>Fiona.williamson@dacorum.gov.uk</p>
8 November 2017	25 Oct 2017	<p>Quarter 2 Performance Report (& Q2 Operational Risk Reports)</p> <p>Q2 Budget Monitoring Financial Report</p> <p>Housing</p> <p>Resident Services</p>	<p><i>(PH – M Griffiths, J Marshall N Harden)</i></p> <p>E Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing</p> <p>J Still, Group Manager, Resident Services</p> <p>R Baker, Group Manager,</p>	<p>Ext: EB – 2615</p> <p>Elliott.Brooks@dacorum.gov.uk</p>

Meeting Date:	Report Deadline	Items:	Contact details:	Contact Details
			Finance	
Joint Budget 5 December 2017	22 Nov 2017	Joint Budget OSC Budget 2017-2018 <i>Ideally no further items to be added</i>	James Deane	EXT JD – 2278 James.Deane@dacorum.gov.uk
24 January 2018	10 Jan 2018	Homelessness Strategy Update on the Asset Management Strategy	N Brathwaite Fiona Williamson	Ext: FW 2855 Fiona.williamson@dacorum.gov.uk
Joint Budget 6 February 2018	24 Jan 2018	Joint Budget 2016-2017 <i>Ideally no further items to be added</i>	James Deane	EXT JD 2278 James.Deane@dacorum.gov.uk
21 March 2018	7 March 2018	Quarter 3 Performance Report (& Q3 Operational Risk Reports) Housing	(PH – M Griffiths, N Tiley, N Harden) E Brooks, Assistant Director, Housing	EB – 2615 Elliott.Brooks@dacorum.gov.uk

Meeting Date:	Report Deadline	Items:	Contact details:	Contact Details
		Resident Services Q3 Budget Monitoring Financial Report	J Still, Group Manager, Resident Services R Baker, Group Manager, Finance	JS – 2453 Julie.Still@dacorum.gov.uk Richard.Baker@dacorum.gov.uk RB - 2162

Items to be scheduled: Dates to be confirmed

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Older Persons Housing Strategy
Temporary Accommodation Strategy

Homelessness Bill (**no date**)