



Public Document Pack
**FINANCE AND RESOURCES
OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY
AGENDA**

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

TUESDAY 17 JULY 2018 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 Howard
Councillor Herbert Chapman (Chair)
Councillor Douris
Councillor E Collins
Councillor Fethney
Councillor Silwal
Councillor Taylor

Councillor Tindall
Councillor Adeleke
Councillor Armytage
Councillor McLean
Councillor Banks (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Barrett

Substitute Members:

Councillors Anderson, Brown, Guest, Ransley, W Wyatt-Lowe, England, Matthews and Pringle

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. ACTION POINTS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 3 - 9)

7. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 10 - 12)

8. FINANCIAL OUTCOMES OF CONTRACT MANAGEMENT OF VOLUNTARY SECTOR (Pages 13 - 42)

9. UPDATE ON UNIVERSAL CREDIT (Pages 43 - 55)

10. COMMUNICATIONS PRESENTATION

Presentation to follow.

Date of meeting	Action point	Responsible for action	Date of action completed	Date chased if not actioned	Final date it needs to be actioned by	Update on Action Point
12/06/2018	presentation from Communications be recorded as an action point and noted in the minutes	M Rawdon	17/07/2018	05/07/2018		Delivered in Julys Meeting.
	The information on the Mount Prison election was not included	J Doyle	17/07/2018	05/07/2018		The turnout at the mount prison was 75%.
	Cllr Wyatt-Lowe requested that underspends always had a narrative. N Howcutt to include in future reports.	N Howcutt	17/07/2018	05/07/2018		Future underspends will have a narrative in the under's section of finance reports.
	There were some concerns raised regarding the presentation of the report, including the paragraph numbering and the changes in the font.	N Howcutt		05/07/2018		Future reports will be submitted in PDF format so that presentation is guaranteed.
	Cllr Wyatt-Lowe queried the lease terms and using a	N Howcutt		05/07/2018		Email to Cllr Wyatt-Lowe and the chair explaining the rationale and decision making on the development of CRM system in house.

Minute & page Number

	<p>developer for the CRM system while relying on an in house designer.</p>					
	<p>Cllr Tindall said that despite the recruitment difficulties he would like the condition of the greens and verges explained. N Howcutt advised that this report was the Quarter 4 outturn when there would not have been a lot of grass cutting. Cllr Tindall requested a report be presented at the next meeting.</p>	<p>Member Support? ??</p>				<p>Has been responded to by N.Howcutt</p> <p>Item on the future SPAE agenda</p> <p>The clean safe and green performance is scrutinised by the Strategic Planning and environment scrutiny panel and this request has been shared with the David Austin to raise with the scrutiny chair. If a report is presented to the SPAE scrutiny committee then a summarised position will be reported to the F&R scrutiny group. A subsequent email has been sent to Cllr Tindall to clarify this point.</p>
	<p>Cllr Tindall enquired if the action taken in DBC v Ryan Bailey, where the applicant withdrew the appeal on the day, had resulted in any costs for Dacorum</p>	<p>M Brookes</p>			<p>05/07/2018</p>	

	Cllr Armytage would like clarification on the Town and Parish Council work that had been undertaken	J Doyle				Sharon collins has responded (day after the last meeting)
	Cllr McLean asked if there was statistics available on absences and the staff who were allowed to work flexibly versus those who not.	M Rawdon				Most of the front line services fall under the environment services group (Refuse and Recycling, Clean, Safe and Green) where working flexibly is limited. The average days lost per FTE for 2017/2018 was 12.4 as opposed to the corporate result of 10 days per FTE.
	Cllr Wyatt-Lowe suggested that there is a lot you can do in terms of wellbeing for alleviating musculoskeletal problems and also do we rely on GP's to sign people as fit for work, could we use an independent assessor to get people back to work. M Rawdon	M Rawdon				In 2017/2018, there were 99 instances where a staff member needed a GP certificate initially. This does not include where staff had visited their GP on further occasions within an absence spell, so this number would be higher (approximately 150). There are reservations in using an independent assessor (GP) for all certifying sickness absence, these include: 1. The associated costs of the GP and administration time, the negative impact this may have on staff having to see a different GP and the practical issues of the independent GP not having medical records. The Council has an occupational health physician (OHP) who is employed for one day per month under our occupational health contract and I will instruct

	<p>replied that we have an Occupational Health Practitioner who we use to challenge the medical advice and supports staff back to work. It sounds expensive but M Rawdon would be willing to explore the options.</p>					<p>my HR team to ensure that where appropriate we seek an independent assessment via this process as quickly as we can and for the team to consider the business case for extra OHP time when it could increase the speed of an employee returning to work i.e. not having to wait up to one month for an independent assessment.</p>	
	<p>Cllr Tindall asked about hot-desking and how often tests were carried out on the keyboards and chairs to ensure there aren't any pressures. M Rawdon confirmed that every new member of staff will do a self assessment, there are people trained to help. M Rawdon said it could be picked up as part of the Return to Work interview.</p>	<p>M Rawdon</p>				<p>The current process is that Corporate Health and Safety receive details of new starters and send a link to the individual to complete. Display Screen Equipment (DSE) workplace assessment. Once completed the results are uploaded to the portal and the results are calculated i.e. as a percentage and are categorised as low/medium/high risk. The relevant DSE trained assessors are then notified of the percentage result/category and will review the assessment accordingly. This could result in a discussion with the individual on the assessment results and adjustments made to the workstation. In the move to the Forum, all staff completed a DSE assessment. Beyond this process, managers should address any staff concerns relating to the desk set up by visually checking/speaking to their team and monitoring staff absences through return to work interviews. If there are further concerns, another DSE assessment can be</p>	

						undertaken and corporate H&S are often used to provide a further advice. In the past we have also used an professional external company to provide a further review to ensure we are providing the correct adjustments.
	The Chairman asked that the information clarifying the commentary be circulated before the next meeting and it can be discussed at the July meeting	M Rawdon	ASAP			See separate Document attached (can be found in the action points)

Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Customer Service Performance – Commentary clarification

Further to the scrutiny committee on 12 June 2018, please see below clarification on the commentary for the customer service performance.

CSU10 – The approver comments included the phrase ‘*slightly up from last quarter*’. The terminology should not have used the word slightly. Apologies if Members felt misled.

CSU10 - Call Handling: Average wait time	362 Second(s) Target: 210	294.67 Second(s) Target: 210	198 Second(s) Target: 210	0 3 1	No Comments Approver Comments: Slightly up from last quarter, mainly due to the increase in demand from Council Tax and Rent increase as well as a huge increase (1,737 more contact) in email/social media contact compared to the same quarter last year. This contact requires the CSU to respond.	A project is underway to review the CSU service and this will be focussing on: KPIs, channel shift strategies, staff structures, staff training, recruitment and current operations.
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CSU11 – The updater comments are not accurate as we are further away from the target. Please accept my apologies for the error.

CSU11 - Call Handling: Abandoned Call Rate	27.44% 10768 / 39242 Target: 20	26.09% 9250 / 35456 Target: 20	21.49% 8556 / 39808 Target: 20	0 4 0	Updater Comments: For the quarter we are closer to the target, but we are hoping that with the actions in place this is not a regular issue. Approver Comments: A project is underway to review the CSU service and this will be focussing on: KPIs, channel shift strategies, staff structures, staff training, recruitment and current operations.	Over the year we are only 5% over the target. Having said that we will be implementing the below actions to mitigate this being an issue in the future. Fully embedding queue buster software and ensuring our CSRs at Berkhamsted and Tring are also cal
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CSU12 and CSU13 – There was a question raised about the approver comment in CSU13 *'but we are still in target for the average wait time'*. This comment was making reference to CSU12 (see below) and was trying to demonstrate that although the face to face waiting time of more than 20 minutes was amber and over target, the average wait time for face to face is still within target.

CSU13 - Face to Face: Waiting time more than 20 minutes	7.92% 1090 / 13767 Target: 5	7.54% 930 / 12328 Target: 5	5.09% 708 / 13905 Target: 5	0 3 1	Approver Comments: This is higher than previous results, but we are still in target for the average wait time. The review is CSU is looking at what we can do to minimise people waiting to be seen and we will be introducing floor walkers to ensure that customers need to be seen or if they can transact in our fast track area.
CSU12 - Face to Face: Average Wait Time	335 Second(s) Target: 450	317 Second(s) Target: 450	245.675 Second(s) Target: 450	0 0 4	Approver Comments: Under target. No Info

Agenda Item 7

Clerk: tbc – temporary contact Cassy O’Neil (ext. 2313)

Finance and Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee: Work Programme 2018/19

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	Background information
17 July 2018	30 June 2018	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Chairman	
		Financial Outcomes of Contract Management of Voluntary Sector	Assistant Director, Performance, People & Innovation (Alex Care and Matt Rawdon)	Come from CMT
		Communications Presentation	Kelvin.Solely@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Update on Universal Credit	Group Manager, Tenants and Leaseholders Layna.Warden@dacorum.gov.uk	
11 Sept 2018	25 August 2018	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Chairman	
		Budget Monitoring Report	Assistant Director Finance & Resources Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gvo.uk	Come From CMT
		Medium Term Financial Strategy Report	Assistant Director Finance and Resources Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	Cabinet report.
		Leisure Contract KPI's and first quarter performance.	Group Manager Commissioning Procurement and Compliance. Ben.Hosier@dacorum.gov.uk SLM Availability??	CMT Report.
		Quarter 1 Performance Reports (& Quarter 1 Operational Risk Reports)	Assistant Director Finance & Resources Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Legal Governance & Democratic Services	Solicitor to the Council Mark.brooks@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Performance, People & Innovation	Assistant Director, Performance, People & Innovation	
9 October 2018	22 September 2018	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Chairman	

			CANCEL	
6 November 2018	20 October 2018	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Chairman	
		Parking Contract Performance.	Group Manager Commissioning Procurement and Compliance. Ben.Hosier@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Budget Monitoring Report	Assistant Director Finance & Resources Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gvo.uk	Come From CMT
		Quarter 2 Performance Reports (& Quarter 2 Operational Risk Reports) Budget Monitoring Report	Assistant Director Finance & Resources Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Legal Governance & Democratic Services	Solicitor to the Council Mark.brooks@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Performance, People & Innovation	Assistant Director, Performance, People & Innovation Robert.smyth@dacorum.gov.uk	
Joint Budget 4 December 2018	22 November 2018	**** Joint Budget**** ****2019-2020**** ***** <i>Ideally no further items to be added</i>	Corporate Director Finance & Operations & S.151 Officer James.deane@dacorum.gov.uk	
8 January 2019	22 December 2018	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Chairman	
Joint Budget 5 February 2019	22 January 2019	**** Joint Budget**** ****2019-2020**** ***** <i>Ideally no further items to be added</i>	Corporate Director Finance & Operations James.deane@dacorum.gov.uk	

Clerk: tbc – temporary contact Cassy O’Neil (ext. 2313)

26 March 2019	9 February 2019	Action Points (from previous meeting)		
		Quarter 3 Performance Reports (& Quarter 3 Operational Risk Reports) Budget Monitoring Report	Assistant Director Finance & Resources Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Legal Governance & Democratic Services	Solicitor to the Council Mark.brooks@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Performance, People & Innovation	Assistant Director, Performance, People & Innovation Robert.smyth@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Finance & Resources	Assistant Director Finance & Resources Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	

Items to be scheduled:



Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	17 July 2018
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Update on Voluntary and Community Sector Contract Delivery
Contact:	Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder Community & Regulatory Services Author/Responsible Officer(s) Matt Rawdon (Group Manager – People and Performance) and Alex Care (Community Partnerships Team Leader)
Purpose of report:	1. Update Members on the performance of the Voluntary Sector Contracts.
Recommendations	1. Members note the performance of the contracts and the added value they provide 2. Members promote the contracts / services to their residents
Period for post policy/project review	Formal quarterly meetings are held for each contract.
Corporate objectives:	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> The costs of these services are met within the Council's budgets of 2017/2018 and 2018/2019.
'Value for money' implications	<u>Value for money</u> This report shows the value for money that these contracts provide for both DBC and Dacorum residents.
Risk implications	N/A

Community Impact Assessment	A Community Impact Assessment is reviewed annually
Health and safety Implications	None reported. Health and safety issues would be discussed as part of contract management
Consultees:	N/A
Background papers:	Appendix 1 and 1a: Living Stable Lives Case Studies and Outcome star Appendix 2: Reducing Social Isolation Case Studies Appendix 3: Promoting Healthy Relationships Case Studies
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

1 Introduction:

1.1 Effective from April 2016 the Council implemented a new approach to working with the voluntary sector in response to changes in the market place and best practice.

1.2 After an extensive consultation and engagement process to inform the service specification of each contract, five contracts were tendered on the open market and awarded as follows;

- *Information, Advice and Advocacy* was awarded to Citizens Advice Dacorum
- *Living Stable Lives* was awarded to Westminster Drug Project.
- *Reducing Social Isolation for Older People* was awarded to Age UK Dacorum who work with Centre in the Park to deliver some of the outcomes
- *Supporting the Voluntary Sector* was awarded to Community Action Dacorum who worked with the Volunteer Centre Dacorum to deliver certain outcomes
- *Promoting Healthy Relationships* was awarded to a partnership between Relate London North West and Hertfordshire, and Mediation Herts

1.3 Each contract has specific aims which they are trying to achieve, but the impact of the achievement of these aims has wider implications on the demands for statutory services, such as: anti-social behaviour and homelessness.

1.4 The first year of each contract was used to gather baseline data against which performance indicators and targets could be set for the outcomes, where appropriate. As data started to be gathered the reporting framework needed to be adapted to ensure it was fit for purpose.

1.5 This report is intended to update Members of the Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee on the contracts' delivery and performance over

the past full year of each contract. A summary and overview will be written about each contract.

2. Contracts:

2.1 Information, Advice and Advocacy

Outcome	Management Information
Dacorum residents who access information, advice & advocacy are able to have their issues resolved satisfactorily and are able to resolve similar issues in the future.	As a result of the support from CAB, within their client survey (approximately 2400 annual respondents), 96% stated they had a better understanding of how things worked, enabling them to better support themselves in the future.
The information advice & advocacy offered has a positive impact on people's health and wellbeing.	Also the client survey showed that 96% reported an increase in their confidence and 87% reported an increase in their wellbeing.
The information, advice & advocacy offered improves people's financial circumstances	£2,659,197 of debt for Dacorum residents was written off and £633,251 of income was raised for Dacorum residents through support and advice regarding claiming relevant benefits.
Information advice & advocacy can be accessed by all local people	7472 clients have been helped over the last 12 months either over the phone or face to face.
People have access to further support that is relevant to resolving their issue	CAB are a signposting service as well as an advice service. They have good knowledge and connections of the local area. In addition, they also run a number of additional projects which provide added value to Dacorum residents. Over the last year they have run a crisis intervention project (supporting 313 residents), Public Health project (supporting 50 residents) and an Energy best deal project (supporting 68 residents).
People feel satisfied with the service they receive	The client survey also revealed that: 87% stated improved wellbeing 96% stated improved confidence 96% stated improved understanding of how things worked.
Dacorum Tenants are supported to maintain their tenancy.	212 DBC tenants sought money advice which helped them to maintain their tenancy.

2.2 The contract started in July 2016. The first full year of the contract resolved over 15,300 separate issues for Dacorum residents.

2.3 The most frequently identified issues have been debt, and benefit and tax credit support. Concerns around the roll out of Universal Credit have been discussed at contract monitoring meetings and in more depth at specific cross-organisation meetings set up to identify how different agencies can work together to minimise the impact. Additionally, teams from across DBC have also been meeting to discuss how we will work with residents and other agencies to minimise the impact.

2.4 The move to the Forum for CAB has been successful overall, with a much more visible presence for them and a more favourable working environment; feedback has been positive from both staff and volunteers. Footfall has increased by 10% in the first quarter of 2018/2019.

2.5 The impact of supporting residents with financial worries or concerns cannot be underestimated. There is a clear link between stress regarding finances and debt, and mental health and wellbeing. As can be seen in the figures above, the improvement in residents' wellbeing having had financial issues resolved is critical. By supporting residents with the issues that they present, CAB is not only able to help resolve those issues, but are able to support residents to help themselves to avoid similar situations in the future. This results in less contact for DBC and other statutory services.

3. Living Stable Lives

3.1 This contract began in December 2016 and is targeted solely at private rented tenants and landlords in Dacorum. The overall aim of the contract is to keep tenants in their homes to prevent them from becoming homeless and then requiring statutory support from DBC. The nature of the contract means that the clients supported tend to be some of the most vulnerable.

3.2 The contract was awarded to an organisation outside of Dacorum, but one that was already working in Dacorum through a contract with Hertfordshire County Council. Unlike the other contracts, this contract needed to spend some time raising its profile, building relationships with organisations and clients, and making it clear who the service was aimed at and its desired outcomes.

3.3 This contract provides statistical information in order that it can be monitored to review and analyse its reach. However, due to the nature of the contract the outcomes are better evidenced in case studies and by using 'outcome stars'. These can be seen in appendix 1 and 1a. The contract has supported 88 clients to date.

3.4 Qualitative evidence and analysis can be challenging when dealing with vulnerable clients. The 'outcome star' is a way to identify, at a moment in time, how an individual is feeling about certain areas of their life at that moment.

3.5 As with the other contracts, the benefits of successful support can be experienced by others; neighbours, family and friends and a reduced demand on statutory services.

4. Reducing Social Isolation

Outcome	Management / Outcome Information
Older People and their carers have increased contact with others and feel less isolated. Older people and their carers will feel more integrated with the community.	This outcome is delivered through their Centre in the Park, and Tea and chat clubs. In total there have been 7208 individual visits of the Centre in the Park service and 1175 individual visits to their Tea and Chat Clubs.
Older people and their carers use technology to help with daily tasks.	Age UK Dacorum were running separate clubs for technology support. However, this did not prove to be a good use of resources associated with the contract and so these sessions were incorporated into their Tea and chat clubs which are better attended. This has resulted in older people bringing along their devices and asking for specific help as and when they need it. Age UK Dacorum is working with other organisations to bid for additional funding to support partnership working in digital support for older people.
Older people and their carers are independent and maintain their dignity	This outcome is delivered through their Living Well Service which is evaluated through individual case studies of the residents the service supports. Example case studies have been attached to this report. Please see appendix 2
Older people and their carers have an improvement in their overall quality of life	This outcome is delivered through their Living Well Service which is evaluated through individual case studies of the residents the service supports. Example case studies have been attached to this report. Please see appendix 2
Older people and their carers live in warm, weather tight, safe and secure Council owned properties	This outcome is delivered through their Handyman service. Over the last year 526 jobs have been completed at 214 properties. Security and general repairs are the most common request for the handyman service.

4.1 The contract started in October 2016. This contract's aim is to support older people to feel less isolated which in turn will have an impact on demand for other services.

4.2 Although Management information can be provided for this contract to monitor delivery against the outcomes, this contract is a good example of where the impacts of the contract can be more readily seen through the use of case studies (please see attached).

4.3 Some comments which have been received from service users include:
Mrs C said she was pleased to have made new local friends as her neighbours were out at work all day and she had been feeling lonely since moving but now can look forward to having company on a regular basis (relating to the Tea and Chat club)

4.4 *"It's marvelous what you have done for me. All the piles of paperwork were getting on top of me and I just couldn't seem to make a start on sorting it by myself".*
 (quote from a carer)

4.5 *"I didn't realise how much I had let myself go. I didn't know where to turn. Until AUKD helped me I had no one to ask for help"*

4.6 This contract supports improvements to mental and physical health and wellbeing as well as the practical support which means that the demand on other services is reduced. Unnecessary health and other appointments are reduced, resulting in decreased costs and the freeing up of time for more vulnerable residents.

5. Supporting the Voluntary Sector

Outcome	
There is a raised awareness of the voluntary and community sector within Dacorum	260 different groups have signed up to receive monthly newsletters. 110 new groups joined the Support4Dacorum (S4D) service in 2017/18. Over the past year, S4D has registered a total of 18150 visits to their website and social media.
The voluntary and community sector have improved access for local people	There have been 13 separate events held at the Roundhouse in the centre of town, and since opening on a Saturday, as part of the contract, they have had a total of 712 visits to the Roundhouse. 1078 VCS groups have registered on their community database and they have 468 members of their new Community News Facebook group.
The voluntary and community sector use digital technology to deliver services	In addition to the figures above, 23 groups have joined the Digital online forum set up by S4D.
The Voluntary and community sector create strong partnerships and networks	S4D has made a number of business contacts (358) throughout the year and has started relationships with 83 VCOs.
The voluntary and community sector access a variety of funding opportunities	There are 62 members of their online fundraising forum and 19 groups engaged with S4Ds check and advice service regarding funding applications. 60 groups have reported that they have had success when using online funding platforms promoted by S4D, and 44 organisations have contact S4D for information about local funding opportunities.

<p>The voluntary and community sector can fill and sustain volunteering vacancies</p>	<p>Over the last year there have been 94 new volunteering opportunities, 463 registered as being interested in volunteering, and 380 individual volunteering advice sessions delivered. S4D has made 614 referrals to organisations and a total of 252 volunteering vacancies have been filled. The new volunteering system and training sessions have been accessed by 105 different organisations.</p>
<p>Volunteer brokerage increases and improves the quantity, quality and diversity of volunteering locally</p>	<p>The role the Volunteer Centre / Roundhouse opening on a Saturday has been pivotal in registering 71 young people interested in volunteering and 13 individuals accessing the service on a Saturday morning, specifically for volunteering opportunities.</p>

5.1 This contract started in December 2016. Originally awarded to Community Action Dacorum (CAD) who sub-contracted to the Volunteer Centre Dacorum for the volunteering specific outcomes, the contract is now wholly delivered by CAD who have taken on the responsibilities of the Volunteer Centre. The contract aims to support the voluntary and community sector in Dacorum to be robust and sustainable. This in turn ensures that much needed services remain available to Dacorum residents and prevents unnecessary strain on statutory services.

5.2 Opening on a Saturday has had a positive impact, encouraging those who would not usually seek opportunities, to seek them. For instance, verbal feedback from one resident stated that had they not been open on a Saturday he would not have volunteered, although he had been looking to volunteer for a while, He works during the week and so was unable to come to the centre during the week. Despite the demand and financial benefits from increasing online enquiries and traffic, the services sector still demands face to face interaction, and opening on a Saturday opens up volunteering to audiences that may not otherwise have volunteered.

5.3 Further anecdotal feedback from community groups has found the Saturday morning sessions offered to them to promote themselves at the Roundhouse to be a great way to raise their profile.

5.4 Giving the ever changing and ongoing austerity that particularly the public and voluntary sectors are facing, volunteering continues to play such a critical role in delivering services to vulnerable residents.

6. Promoting Healthy Relationships

Outcome	
Dacorum residents are able to better manage issues affecting their relationships with others	An annual average of 97% of those seen by Mediation Herts feel more able to deal with difficulties affecting their relationship.
Dacorum residents feel better able to cope with future issues that affect their relationship with others	An annual average of 97% of those seen by Mediation Herts feel better able to cope with future issues.
Dacorum Borough Council tenants can better maintain and manage relationships with others	83 clients that Mediation Herts saw over the last year were DBC tenants. Of those, 95% stated that they feel they can better maintain and manage their relationships.

6.1 This contract began in December 2016 and is aimed at ensuring Dacorum residents have good relationships across all aspects of their lives. Although there is management information to evidence the success of the delivery of this contract, impacts seen through case studies can show that the affects on the individuals are far wider and deeper than statistics can indicate. Please see appendix 3.

6.2 The two organisations have come together to work in partnership to ensure that each of the outcomes in the contract can be delivered. The two services offer slightly different forms of support, and as such support different needs of Dacorum residents. Mediation Herts focuses on dispute resolution between two or more parties (and have seen the majority of their cases relating to family issues or issues within the community), whereas Relate London North West and Herts focuses on relationship counselling.

6.3 The benefit of this joint service to Dacorum residents isn't solely in the resolution of the issue presented. The impact of the skills learnt and developed through these sessions equip individuals to deal with issues better in the future.

6.4 Where neighbourly disputes (the most common community issue) have escalated to such an extent that they impact negatively on the immediate community, the support given to the individuals is also of great benefit to them. There can be a reduction in anti-social behaviour, improving the quality of life for all involved and reducing the demand on relevant statutory services.

7. Conclusions:

7.1 The move to a contractual style relationship with the Voluntary and Community Sector in Dacorum has overall been successful. The services that are now being delivered through the contracts have been specifically designed to respond to our residents needs and tackling community issues. The Council can be assured that our money is making a real difference to our residents and that the contracts are playing a key role in the preventative agenda

7.2 By having contractual relationships with the voluntary sector, it enables the Council to have a more robust way of ensuring outcomes are being achieved. This approach ensures that there are evidence led outcomes to which our providers are held accountable to. As a consequence of this robust process our residents will receive a better service from our voluntary sector providers.

Appendix 1

Living Stable Lives Case Studies

Case Study 1

In December 2017, a landlord who rented out private rented accommodation in Flamstead phoned Dacorum Council for advice on issues she had with a tenant. She was informed about Living Stable Lives and told to contact them for support. After speaking to the Living Stable Lives team, the referral was processed. The tenant was 47 years old and during his initial assessment the following issues were identified:

- The white goods in the property were not working properly.
- Security was an issue as the locks on several doors were not secure.
- The tenant had rent arrears of £150.
- The windows were not able to open fully.
- The boiler not working properly.
- The landlord and Tennant were not communicating effectively

As result of the outstanding repairs, the tenant had taken upon himself to withhold the rent payments.

After visiting the property and collecting all the relevant information, the Living Stable Lives worker decided the best course of action was to email both parties outlining their responsibilities. As a result, of this action the landlord agreed to correct some of the repairs.

There was a further problem with the plumber that had been employed to undertake the work. The contractor was unreliable, and the tenants had on several occasions had to wait in for him, but he never showed up. The Living Stable Lives worker spoke to the landlord and in was agreed for the tenant's wasted time he would be compensated the amount of rent arrears that was owing.

However, as the landlord took longer than expected to undertake the other repairs, this caused further disgruntlement from the tenant. The Living Stable Lives worker continued to email the landlord and eventually she agreed to complete all the repairs.

How does this case study evidence the key performance indicators?

- Outcome 1 states Dacorum tenants can manage and maintain their homes in line with their tenancy agreement and as a result feel more secure in their accommodation. Following the work of Living Stable Lives, the tenant has stated that he feels more comfortable in his accommodation and would like to live there for the foreseeable future.
- Outcome 3 states Dacorum tenants have a positive relationship with their landlords and can resolve issues effectively. This is evidenced by the fact the tenant and the landlord now communicate effectively and openly, as and when the need arises.

Case Study 2

In June 2017, a tenant attended the South Hill Centre and self referred himself to Living Stable Lives. The main issues he needed support with were:

- He had received a Section 6A letter stating the landlord wished to evict him.
- He had rent arrears of £2,000.

As the property was rented through the Help to Rent scheme, the Living Stable Lives team did not negotiate directly with landlord, as that part of work was undertaken by council staff.

The flat was a two-bedroom property as the tenant had originally been living there with his child. However, two years ago the child went to live with his mother and since then the tenant had only been receiving benefit equivalent to a one-bedroom property.

At first the tenant was reluctant to make any payments towards his rent arrears. However, in October 2017, by working jointly with the Help to Rent team, Living Stable Lives managed to secure a back payment of housing benefit. This was paid directly to the landlord, so he therefore delayed taking any further action until January 2018 when he decided to go to court to ask for an eviction. During this time, the tenant attended one of the workshops organised by Living Stable Lives. At the workshop he was informed about the importance of managing payments to all creditors when in debt. Immediately following the workshop, the tenant attended Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB) and sought further advice.

Because of the appointment with CAB it transpired that the tenant had total debts amounting to £8,000 to different creditors and he was then assisted in formulating a debt management plan to manage all his debts. Furthermore, the Living Stable Lives Housing and Support Worker help to secure a discretionary housing payment for the tenant. However, this lasted just three months. The landlord delayed acting, but in January 2018 he decided to issue the papers to the court the court granted possession to the landlord.

In addition to working with the tenant, the Housing and Support worker also worked closely with Dacorum's Housing Prevention team. The plan was that they would assist him in finding the tenant alternative one bedroom private rented flat. However, the tenant was unable to raise the money for the deposit, so this plan never materialised.

During March it has become apparent that the tenant is about to lose his home. However, Living Stable Lives has been in contact with other local housing providers to see what else is available in the area. The team have liaised with the DENS and have supported him in applying for a room. Normally the DENS will not take people with such an amount of debt. However, by undertaking effective joint work with the DENS, it seems very likely that he will be able to access accommodation through this route.

The original accommodation that the tenant was in was never financially sustainable. However, by moving into a room that is more affordable, he is better able to manage his finances. In addition, the tenant has continued to be able to see his son a regular basis and

his debt payments have been put on a manageable footing which will avoid any legal action being taken against him in the future.

How does this case study evidence the key performance indicators?

Outcome 2 states

Dacorum tenants have accomplished life skills and use them to maintain a stable lifestyle. This case links into what is stated in this outcome, by the fact the tenant has achieved the skill of how to be more responsible around his finances and better manager his affairs.

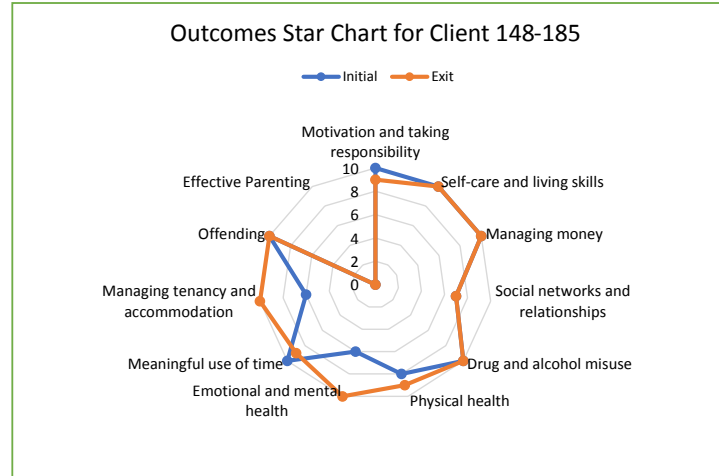
Outcome 5 states

Dacorum tenants can recognise when they are struggling to cope of experiencing significant change and access a clear pathway of support to prevent crisis. In this case, the tenant sought the advice of both LSL and Citizens Advice Bureau, to manage his situation better. By listening to their advice, he has been able to cope with the change and had a clear pathway of support.

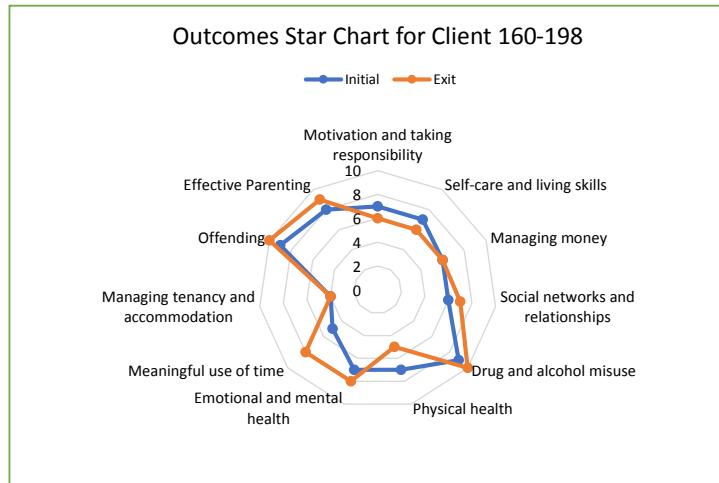
INDIVIDUAL OUTCOME STARS FOR DISCHARGED CLIENTS IN Q4 2017-18

The total number of client discharged in this quarter was 10 .
 However 4 of those clients did not engage towards the end of their
 time with us and therefore it was not possible to complete the
 Outcome star process for them.

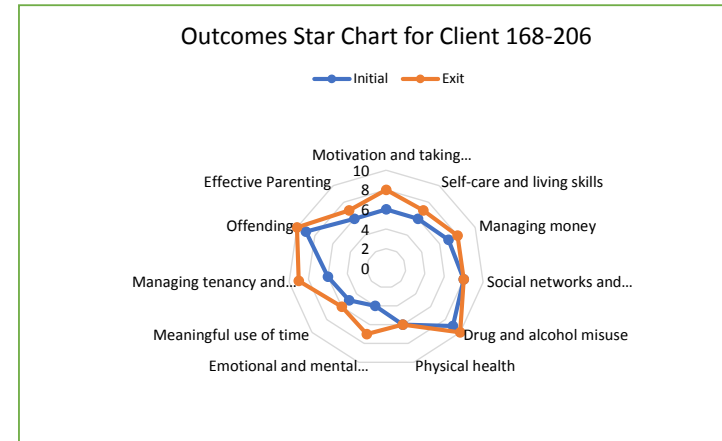
Client: 148-185		
Attributes	Initial	Exit
Motivation and taking responsibility	10	9
Self-care and living skills	10	10
Managing money	10	10
Social networks and relationships	7	7
Drug and alcohol misuse	10	10
Physical health	8	9
Emotional and mental health	6	10
Meaningful use of time	10	9
Managing tenancy and accommodation	6	10
Offending	10	10
Effective Parenting	0	0



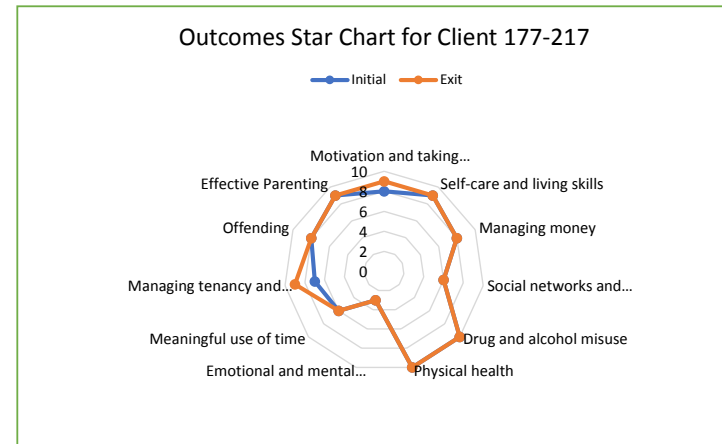
Client: 160-198		
Attributes	Initial	Exit
Motivation and taking responsibility	7	6
Self-care and living skills	7	6
Managing money	6	6
Social networks and relationships	6	7
Drug and alcohol misuse	9	10
Physical health	7	5
Emotional and mental health	7	8
Meaningful use of time	5	8
Managing tenancy and accommodation	4	4
Offending	9	10
Effective Parenting	8	9



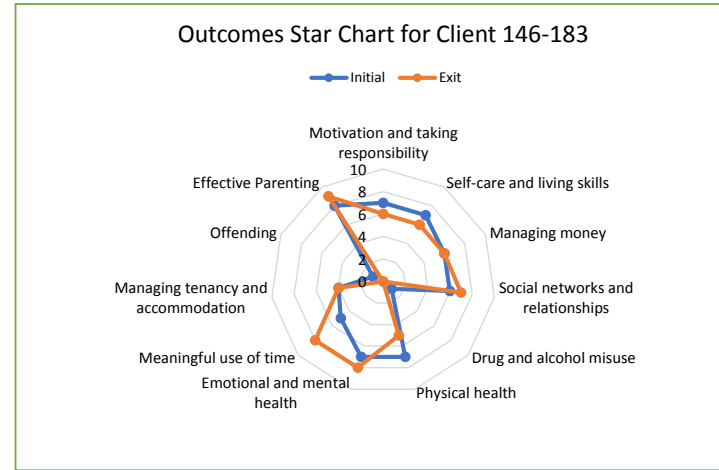
Client: 168-206		
Attributes	Initial	Exit
Motivation and taking responsibility	6	8
Self-care and living skills	6	7
Managing money	7	8
Social networks and relationships	8	8
Drug and alcohol misuse	9	10
Physical health	6	6
Emotional and mental health	4	7
Meaningful use of time	5	6
Managing tenancy and accommodation	6	9
Offending	9	10
Effective Parenting	6	7



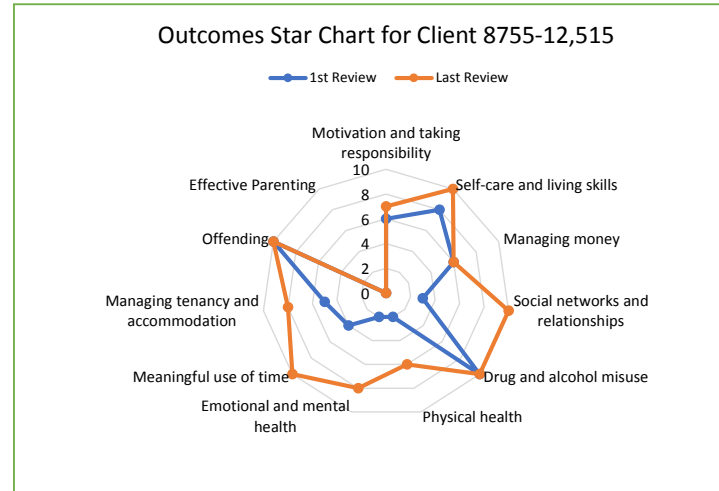
Client: 177-217		
Attributes	Initial	Exit
Motivation and taking responsibility	8	9
Self-care and living skills	9	9
Managing money	8	8
Social networks and relationships	6	6
Drug and alcohol misuse	10	10
Physical health	10	10
Emotional and mental health	3	3
Meaningful use of time	6	6
Managing tenancy and accommodation	7	9
Offending	8	8
Effective Parenting	9	9



Client: 146-183		
Attributes	Initial	Exit
Motivation and taking responsibility	7	6
Self-care and living skills	7	6
Managing money	6	6
Social networks and relationships	6	7
Drug and alcohol misuse	9	10
Physical health	7	5
Emotional and mental health	7	8
Meaningful use of time	5	8
Managing tenancy and accommodation	4	4
Offending	9	10
Effective Parenting	8	9



Client: 8755-12,515		
Attributes	1st Review	Last Review
Motivation and taking responsibility	6	7
Self-care and living skills	8	10
Managing money	6	6
Social networks and relationships	3	10
Drug and alcohol misuse	10	10
Physical health	2	6
Emotional and mental health	2	8
Meaningful use of time	4	10
Managing tenancy and accommodation	5	8
Offending	10	10
Effective Parenting	0	0







Appendix 2

Reducing Social Isolation Case Studies

Case study LW Mar 18

Mrs H (13337)

1.ABOUT THE PERSON	Help Notes
<p>Mrs H is now 70 and is retired. She lives alone in DBC supported housing, having moved from London last summer to be nearer her only son so he could support her more easily. However, this meant that she is removed from all her friends. She is registered as partially sighted. She suffers from depression which affects her inclination to engage in social events and to try new things.</p>	<p>1. Please say a little about the person. If an older person –what is their age? Do they live alone? How is their general wellbeing? Do they have family/friends nearby? If a volunteer – what is their background? Are they a student? Working? Retired?</p>
<p>2. WHAT WAS THE SITUATION</p>	
<p>I met Mrs H when she came along to a Tea and Chat event in her scheme lounge. The following month I knocked for her when she hadn't turned up – she said she was feeling unwell with a bad stomach – she thought this was because she couldn't cook any proper food – as she had no oven, she was only able to heat up ready meals in the microwave. I thought I could help with applying for a grant for a table top cooker (no space in the kitchenette for a full size cooker), but things were not that simple as I was concerned that a wall cupboard over the worktop may be a hazard to any cooker underneath. Eventually her SHO referred her to HCC and her kitchen was inspected.</p>	<p>2. Describe how the person came to be involved in the project or service you are writing about. If an older person - what challenge or issue were they facing and how was this affecting their life? If a volunteer – why did they want to become involved?</p>
<p>3. WHAT DID AGE UK DACORUM DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?</p>	
<p>I applied for a grant for a table top cooker for her before Christmas – unfortunately, due to funding issues we are still waiting for a decision. Similarly there has been no movement yet on kitchen adaptations. Throughout this time I have been in contact with Mrs H and been encouraging her to attend the “blind club” and local coffee mornings.</p>	<p>3. Describe what action Age UK Dacorum / the volunteer took to help. About the service/project.</p>
<p>4. WHAT OUTCOMES WERE ACHIEVED?</p>	
<p>Our involvement with Mrs H is ongoing – at least until the decision is reached on the grant for the cooker – as she now also has support from HertsHelp and I referred her to Herts Vision Loss. Due to the difficulty in getting her to attend a club, she is on the waiting list for one of our befrienders.</p>	<p>4. What was the outcome of the service/project for the older person? If writing about a volunteer – how has becoming involved in volunteering changed their life?</p>
<p>5. QUOTES/FEEDBACK</p>	
<p>“I'm ever do grateful for all you do for me. You're really helpful”. “Sometimes I am feeling all alone then I hear from you and I know how nice and helpful you all are”. “When I call the office</p>	<p>5. Please provide a direct quote from the older person or volunteer in this case study. What did they say about the service, and</p>

and talk to Anne she is really nice to me". "I just didn't know what to do about my broken MonoMouse (text magnifier)" "I really miss cooking in my oven but I just can't afford to buy a new one".

the difference this has made to them?

Case Study Tea & Chat Mrs MC (12191)

1.ABOUT THE PERSON	Help Notes
<p>Mrs C was a widowed lady of 74 when she moved into a supported housing bungalow in Hemel Hempstead, having downsized from a house in a neighboring town. She lives alone with her dog; having no family close by and her friends were left behind in her previous area.</p>	<p>1. Please say a little about the person. If an older person –what is their age? Do they live alone? How is their general wellbeing? Do they have family/friends nearby? If a volunteer – what is their background? Are they a student? Working? Retired?</p>
2. WHAT WAS THE SITUATION	<p>2. Describe how the person came to be involved in the project or service you are writing about. If an older person - what challenge or issue were they facing and how was this affecting their life? If a volunteer – why did they want to become involved?</p>
<p>Mrs C contacted us to ask about attending an active living club but could only leave her dog alone for a maximum of 4 hours and the day of the nearest club was not convenient for her, so our information officer suggested that she try a T&C Club. She noted that Mrs C was chatty but not confident about going by herself, might need a bit of encouragement. She was happy to walk but didn't know the area very well. Luckily she know where I meant when I explained how to get to her nearest venue.</p>	<p>3. Describe what action Age UK Dacorum / the volunteer took to help. About the service/project.</p>
3. WHAT DID AGE UK DACORUM DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?	<p>4. What was the outcome of the service/project for the older person? If writing about a volunteer – how has becoming involved in volunteering changed their life?</p>
<p>She didn't attend the next event despite me leaving a message, then there was a while before the next scheduled event due to various reasons but I persevered with calling her and encouraging her to come along.</p> <p>She eventually attended and was made to feel welcome at hthe supported housing scheme. She has continued to attend regularly.</p>	<p>5. Please provide a direct quote from the older person or volunteer in this case study. What did they say about the service, and the difference this has made to them?</p>
4. WHAT OUTCOMES WERE ACHIEVED?	
<p>The tenants at this scheme(which is physically closer to Mrs C's home than the base for her SHO so she can walk to it) are aa particularly active group and invited Mrs C to join in with their other self-organized activities. This has opened up a whole new local friendship group to her with regular easily accessible social activities, leading to her settling in and feeling at home in her new environment.</p>	

5. QUOTES/FEEDBACK	
Mrs C said she was pleased to have made new local friends as her neighbours were out at work all day and she had been feeling lonely since moving but now can look forward to having company on a regular basis.	

Case study LW 10269 Mr JH

1.ABOUT THE PERSON	Help Notes
<p>Mr H is a retired gentleman, then aged 83, who lived on his own in the same 3 bedroomed semi that he moved into in 1953 when it was new. He originally moved in with his parents and has never moved out or married so was all alone since his dad died in the 90s. He is not in touch with his nephew (closest surviving family). He also has no landline or mobile phone and kept in touch only by sporadic letter with an old army friend who lives in Wales. Nothing much was known about his home life to start with as he referred himself to his local Active Living Club and walked there each week. He is a diabetic and also has heart problems along with long term chronic pain and infection in his left leg.</p>	<p>1. Please say a little about the person. If an older person –what is their age? Do they live alone? How is their general wellbeing? Do they have family/friends nearby? If a volunteer – what is their background? Are they a student? Working? Retired?</p> <p>2. Describe how the person came to be involved in the project or service you are writing about. If an older person - what challenge or issue were they facing and how was this affecting their life? If a volunteer – why did they want to become involved?</p> <p>3. Describe what action Age UK Dacorum / the volunteer took to help. About the service/project.</p> <p>4. What was the outcome of the service/project for the older person? If writing about a volunteer – how has becoming involved in volunteering changed their life?</p> <p>5. Please provide a direct quote from the older person or volunteer in this case study. What did they say about the service, and the difference this has</p>
2. WHAT WAS THE SITUATION	
<p>Mr H was taken ill at the club and when he was taken home by the staff member it was apparent when entering his home that he was not coping well or looking after himself properly. The house was in a very dirty, mouse-infested, cluttered and unhealthy state. We have since discovered that he had not let DBC carry out any improvements or maintenance to the property for many years and evidently had not done any housework or tidying himself. There were clear signs of a hoarding disorder. The club Co Coordinator was helping in his own time but there was simply too much to be done, so I took Mr H on as a Living well client.</p>	
3. WHAT DID AGE UK DACORUM DO TO MAKE A DIFFERENCE?	
<p>We were able to get Mr H the immediate medical help he needed to help him with his conditions and liaise with DBC to get him into respite care following his discharge from hospital. Then we have helped with arranging community meals, a change of GP Surgery, assistance in managing his bank account, and eventually introducing a cleaner / homehelp for when his level of care package was reduced.</p>	
4. WHAT OUTCOMES WERE ACHIEVED?	
<p>Our involvement with Mr H is ongoing. We worked with DBC to get him rehoused in the Supported Housing Scheme of his choice. We also helped him to de-clutter and supported him</p>	

with re-locating his possessions, getting new items as required, packing and moving and unpacking. We take him to his various medical appointments, and we are slowly helping him to sort out his complicated financial and personal affairs.

made to them?

5. QUOTES/FEEDBACK

“I didn’t realise how much I had let myself go. I didn’t know where to turn. Until AUKD helped me I had no one to ask for help”

Appendix 3

Promoting Healthy Relationships Case Studies

Case Study – Mediation Herts

Managing Future Issues

This case involved neighbours with issues over noise and parking. One party took exception to the other's complaints, making the other party feel intimidated.

The mediators visited each party to discuss their issues which followed in an agreement to attend a joint meeting.

Due to the feeling of intimidation, one party would only agree to attend the joint meeting if it could be conducted as a shuttle mediation.

The meeting culminated with an agreement. The parties would take measures to manage the noise and to use consideration when parking in the future. The parties agreed to use more respectful behaviour towards each other.

Following the meeting, the parties now felt able to discuss any issues that may arise in the future face to face.

Case Study Mediation Herts

Signposting

This case involved a father and his young teenage son. The parents were separated.

Due to the conflict in their relationship, the son had refused to have any contact with his father which appeared to be having an effect on the child's schooling and attendance.

When the mediator went to visit the parties individually, it came to light that the main reason for the conflict was that domestic violence was involved.

The son had allegedly been dragged down the stairs, had his arm twisted behind his back (which had only just healed after being broken) and was locked out in the garden by his father. The child's mother was unaware of this.

We had to make a safeguarding referral in respect of this and the social services investigated the incidents.

Nevertheless, the parties resolved to attend to a joint meeting and an agreement was reached.

Case Study Mediation Herts

Agreement

This case involved a dispute over a boiler that had been fitted by party 2. The parties were uncle and niece.

The parties were visited by the mediators and discussed their issues. A joint meeting was arranged.

The parties reached an agreement at the end of the meeting where party 2 offered a refund for the work to be paid in monthly instalments.

Case summary – Relate

Don and Jen (details changed to protect anonymity)

Don and Jen, self-referred for couple counselling to Relate as they were struggling to deal with their new 'sober relationship' since Don had given up drinking alcohol eighteen months ago.

In the initial session we explored how Don had become aware of the damage his drinking had caused his relationship. He spoke with remorse of having being verbally aggressive towards Jen when he was drunk. Jen spoke of how she had chosen to keep quiet and had avoided speaking to Don when he was drunk. The couple had lived in the shadow of Don's drinking and now that he was sober, they had been left without any idea as to what a 'normal' relationship looked like.

In line with our protocols and procedures regarding potential DV, the couple were seen individually in order to thoroughly assess the balance of power in the relationship. After the interviews and consultations with a supervisor, it was agreed that the work could continue with careful monitoring.

The aim of the work was agreed and in subsequent sessions was the theme of our conversations: what was different now and what else needed to be different in order to get their relationship 'back on track'.

For example – and with a focus on communication styles – neither told each other when they were anxious or upset. Don would notice physical changes in Jen, and ask her what was wrong, and he expressed his guilt and shame that he had made Jen act in this way. However, as Jen was also unable to communicate how she felt, especially when Don was drunk, the cyclical pattern continued.

Conversations were facilitated around how Don's reliance upon drink had evolved. These revealed that the more pressure he felt to be the 'perfect' husband- the more of a failure he felt and how he had used alcohol to comfort himself. The more he did this – the more distance grew between them as Jen would then withdraw from him – thus increasing Don's sense of failure.

We worked together on making nonverbal communication verbal within the couple relationship and discussed how this could create a different atmosphere – one where feelings were expressed and were real and not imagined – or 'mind reading' as we came to call it in session.

This was a pivotal moment in the work as we identified that this process provided a bridge from the old relationship to the new one they were now jointly creating. Further exploration revealed how they had both held unrealistic expectations of each other and of their relationship, some of which had been based upon looking at social networking sites and images.

The work also looked at what had been lost by the couple when the drinking ceased as Don had initially felt unsupported without drink to turn to when he felt stressed or anxious and Jen had lost being the decision maker in the relationship when Don was not sober enough to make choices.

The couple were invited to review their progress at the last session and they both spoke of how counselling had changed the path of their relationship. With an improved communication style and realistic viewpoints, both felt more understood, supported and equipped in their relationship and hopeful that Don could maintain a healthier relationship with alcohol.



Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	17 July 2018
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Universal Credit
Contact:	Cllr Margaret Griffith, Portfolio Holder for Housing Cllr Graeme Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Finance & Resources Authors: Layna Warden, Group Manager (Tenants and Leaseholders) Chris Baker, Group Manager (Revenues, Benefits and Fraud)
Purpose of report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To inform members of the current status of Universal Credit in Dacorum. 2. To inform members of the potential financial impact of Universal Credit implementation. 3. To highlight the potential impact to residents and tenants considering evidence from current Dacorum cases, neighbouring authorities and partner organisations 4. To set out Dacorum Borough Council's approach so far and going forward
Recommendations	That members consider the report and make comments as felt appropriate.
Period for post policy/project review	12 months from date of report
Corporate objectives:	Affordable Housing Building Community Capacity
Implications:	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>Universal credit is a significant financial risk for a number of departments within the council, specifically Housing. With welfare benefits going directly to tenants instead of being paid directly to the housing service, it is predicted that rent arrears will rise.</p> <p>As the roll out continues, there will eventually be a reduction in the workload of the benefits team, although the details of the roll out plan have not yet been decided. There will also be a reduction in the administration grant provided to Dacorum by the Department for Work and Pensions (DWP). DWP has</p>

	<p>stated that it will contribute to redundancy costs linked to the introduction of Universal Credit if certain conditions are met.</p> <p><u>Value for money</u></p> <p>Evidence drawn from pilot areas and where Universal Credit roll out is further advanced suggests it is unlikely that the aims of increasing employment and promoting responsibility will outweigh the financial cost to the Council in increased expenditure and loss of income through unpaid rent and charges.</p>
Risk implications	<p>A significant risk to the Council's ability to collect rent from its own tenants.</p> <p>A likely increased pressure on the homeless and advice teams due to refusal of private landlords to accept Universal Credit claimants.</p> <p>Potentially additional evictions from existing tenants who move on to Universal Credit where landlords are unwilling to accept Universal Credit claimants.</p> <p>A potential increased pressure on the community and voluntary sector for services offered by Citizens' Advice Dacorum and the Foodbank.</p>
Community Impact Assessment	Community Impact Assessment carried out
Health and safety Implications	There are no health and safety implications
Consultees:	<p>Mark Gaynor – Director (Housing and Regeneration)</p> <p>Nigel Howcutt – Assistant Director (Finance and Resources)</p> <p>Fiona Williamson - Assistant Director (Housing)</p> <p>Housing & Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p> <p>Finance & Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee</p>
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>CTS – Council Tax Support</p> <p>DBC – Dacorum Borough Council</p> <p>DWP – Department for Work and Pensions</p> <p>HB – Housing Benefit</p> <p>HRA – Housing Revenue Account</p> <p>UC – Universal Credit</p>

1. Introduction and executive summary

- 1.1. This report sets out the current situation of Universal Credit (UC) on a national basis and more specifically for Dacorum. It highlights some of the concerns of the system and what this means for residents, for other agencies and partners and for DBC as a stock retaining Local Authority. It finally sets out the approach being taken by the Council to reduce the risk of UC implementation on our residents, voluntary sector partners and ability to provide a quality service.
- 1.2. UC is currently in a transitional phase, both within Dacorum and across the country.
- 1.3. Dacorum is at the end of the national rollout schedule. Four postcode areas are currently affected, with the majority of the borough expected to be open for new UC claims between September and December 2018.
- 1.4. Full transfer of existing benefit claims to UC will take place between 2019 and 2023, but no further information about which people or areas will be migrated at which point within that timescale are known at present.
- 1.5. The overall impact of this change is unknown, but current expectations include:
 - 1.5.1 an increase in housing rent arrears.
 - 1.5.2 an increased pressure on support services.
 - 1.5.3 an increased demand on homelessness services, if arrears in the private sector go up.
 - 1.5.4 a potential increase in demand for new accommodation, if private landlords don't let to UC claimants.
 - 1.5.5 a possible financial pressure within the benefits service, if DWP reduce the current admin grant of c £440,000 more quickly than the actual work goes down.
 - 1.5.6 a possible financial pressure if redundancies are required within the benefits service – there may be funding available from DWP to support this, but it is not yet confirmed.

2. Universal Credit – how it works

2.1. Universal Credit is a key part of the Government's welfare reform programme. When the concept was introduced in 2010 it received cross party support with its aim to simplify the benefits system for those of working age and incentivise employment. It signifies a considerable change to the benefit system, to combine six existing means-tested benefits into a single monthly payment. The benefits being replaced ("legacy benefits") are:

- Income support
- Jobseekers allowance
- Employment & support allowance
- Working tax credit
- Child tax credit
- Housing benefit (HB)

- 2.2. This change intends to reduce complications of the benefit system for applicants and smooth the transition into employment. It was also intended to reduce the Department for Work and Pensions' (DWP) costs of administering all the above benefits and increasing employment. The DWP's most recent estimate is that an additional 200,000 people will enter work under UC.
- 2.3. There have been considerable concerns about its ability to achieve this. With the programme re-set in 2013, it was intended to be rolled out to all working age people by 2017. This was revised again last month to a target date of March 2023. Whilst the intentions of UC are generally supported, the actual implementation has proved damaging both for recipients and local authorities. A recent report by the National Audit Office showed that despite recent improvements, one-fifth of new claimants in March 2018 did not receive their full entitlement on time.
- 2.4. The roll out is designed in two main phases. First "natural migration", followed by "managed migration". We are currently in the natural migration phase, which only affects those who have a change of circumstances, live in an area where UC can be claimed, and would need to make a new claim for one of the legacy benefits. This phase is due to be completed in December 2018.
- 2.5. Starting in 2019, and currently planned to last until 2023, DWP will start the managed migration process, moving people to UC even if they don't have a change in their circumstances. No information has yet been provided about how this will be undertaken.
- 2.6. As it combines six legacy benefits, it is difficult to predict the numbers that will arise, but it is estimated that around 1,000 households in Dacorum will be receiving UC by April 2019.

3. Current National Situation

- 3.1. There are currently almost 1 Million residents in receipt of UC. Depending on their post code and personal circumstances, residents could be either under "live service" or "full service". The main rules and claiming processes differ between the two services as below:
 - 3.2. *If living in a Universal Credit live service postcode*
 - Only single applicants or couples without children who were jobseekers would have to apply for UC live service.
 - Anyone not meeting those conditions would still have to apply for the six legacy benefits
 - Those in receipt of UC live service have to manage their UC account over the phone
 - 3.3. From 1st January 2018, new claims have been suspended for all claimants in a live service area. These claimants are now directed to the legacy benefit system.

3.4. *If living in a Universal Credit full service postcode*

- Anyone who would need to make a new claim for any of the six legacy benefits would have to apply for UC full service whatever their personal circumstances.
- Applicants have an online UC account to manage their claim.

3.5. Even when the UC full service rollout has concluded, there remain a number of exceptions, mainly linked to the ongoing development of the UC software and regulations. These include:

- Families with three or more children, who will not be able to make a claim for UC until January 2019 at the earliest.
- People who are severely disabled, for whom no date has yet been given for when they will be able to apply for UC.
- A number of categories of rent costs which will continue to be paid by HB, even though the tenants will also be claiming UC, examples are temporary accommodation and specialist supported accommodation.

3.6. DWP's current plan is for there to be a five year period of bulk migration from all of the existing benefits between 2019 and 2023. Draft regulations are currently being consulted on, but there remains no information about how the process will be organised.

4. Recent Changes

4.1. In his Autumn budget the Chancellor of the Exchequer introduced a package of measures designed to address some of the criticisms of UC

- From the end of November 2017 a Freephone helpline replaced the previous number which could cost 55p a minute depending on an individual's phone contract
- From January 2018 applicants can receive an advance of 100% of their likely award, to be paid back over 12 months (this was previously 50% to be repaid over six months)
- From February 2018 the seven waiting days have been scrapped – this means that applicants will need to wait only five weeks to receive their first payment rather than the previous six weeks.
- From April 2018 tenants in receipt of Housing Benefit at the time they make a claim for UC are entitled to a two week 'run on'. This is designed to smooth the transition between the two benefits. HB will continue to be paid for temporary accommodation

4.2. While these concessions will certainly mitigate some of the problems experienced by new UC claimants, there is still considerable concern that these did not go far enough to reduce the impact of UC on child poverty, unemployment and debt. One particular problem remains in the five week wait for the first payment. For example if the tenant is renting from within the private sector there are mandatory grounds for eviction after only eight weeks of arrears accruing.

5. Dacorum Claimants

5.1. Dacorum is predominantly currently covered by the UC live service. With the roll out linked to Jobcentres there are a few residents in specific post codes which have recently started to receive the full service. As of 14th December 2017 there were 560 claimants linked to Hemel Hempstead Jobcentre (live service) with another 65 linked to St Albans Jobcentre (full service).

5.2. The current timetable for the roll out to full service is:

Full service date	Areas	Postcode sectors	Jobcentre
1 November 2017	Markyate, Flamstead	AL3 7, AL3 8	St Albans
24 January 2018	Kings Langley, Chipperfield	WD4 8, WD4 9	Watford
September 2018 (provisional)	Berkhamsted, Northchurch, Tring		Aylesbury
October 2018 (provisional)	Ashridge, Little Gaddesden		Luton
December 2018 (provisional)	Hemel Hempstead, Nash Mills, Leverstock Green, Bovingdon, Holtsmere End		Hemel Hempstead

5.3. The exact post codes that will be included in the areas from September 2018 onwards are still unknown and therefore subject to change. DWP has usually provided them three months before the full service date. The postcodes linked to each Jobcentre so far have been different from those for the live service roll out and this may mean that Berkhamsted goes live in December along with Hemel Hempstead, which demonstrates the difficulty in predicting the impact over this coming year. Overall the council are preparing for all new claimants to be expected to apply for UC from December 2018.

5.4. After December it is expected that there will be a gradual increase in the number of UC claims as and when residents' circumstances change. While it is difficult to identify the numbers of new claims we estimate that by April 2019 an additional 750 residents in private and housing association accommodation and 250 DBC tenants will have moved to UC.

6. Risks of Universal Credit to Dacorum

6.1. A significant challenge is being able to accurately identify the impact on the Council. Regular changes and delays to implementation of UC have affected the ability to predict the impact of UC on local residents and services. The Council can learn from other authorities and carry out modelling to get an estimate of the impact but this doesn't give an accurate assessment of the financial risks.

6.2. Areas which can be reliably predicted are: increased rent arrears within the HRA and greater need for tenancy sustainment work; a likely increase in

homelessness where landlords cease to let to UC tenants and any additional evictions through arrears – this at the same time as the Homeless Reduction Act is live with additional responsibilities for the Council; increased pressure on the voluntary sector.

6.3. Risks to the Housing Service – HRA

- 6.3.1 One of the biggest risks is that tenants will directly receive the housing element of UC, whereas HB is awarded as a direct credit to the rent account. When UC roll out has completed this will affect about 2,900 council tenants. A recent phone survey on claimants conducted by GSR on behalf of the DWP identified that just over a third were experiencing housing payment arrears and that for 44 percent, the situation had deteriorated between two surveys carried out.
- 6.3.2 Rent arrears for DBC tenants will significantly increase. Alongside the 1% rent reduction which continues until April 2020, this adds further pressure to the HRA Business Plan and ability to invest in both new homes and improvements to existing stock, as well as the ability to provide a quality housing service.
- 6.3.3 The Housing team do not know exactly which tenants are in receipt of UC unless they or the DWP notify them directly. The exact figure of those on UC is unknown but it is believed to currently be 66 tenants.
- 6.3.4 As of May 2018, the impact on arrears for each tenant currently on UC is significant with over 88% of these tenants in rent arrears. This is slightly higher than other housing providers who have reported an average of 67%.

Average rent balance of all tenants in receipt of some Housing Benefit	£41.18
Average rent balance for tenants on Universal Credit	- £737.42

- 6.3.5 Based on the above it is projected that at the point of full roll out in 2023, the amount owed in rent payment by those on benefits will increase.
- 6.3.6 Peers such as St Albans and Welwyn and Hatfield have already had a larger roll out of UC in their areas and both have decreased their rent collection targets in line with this. It is likely that the DBC Housing service will do the same in April 2019. If there is an increase of 0.5% to existing arrears balances, that would mean an increase of approximately £270,000 in arrears.
- 6.3.7 Experiences by wider Social Housing Providers supported this concern with some reporting rent arrears increasing from 2.76% for those on HB to 13.96% for those on UC. The general trend experienced is that arrears will hit a peak after 6-10 weeks but they will lower slightly as tenants get used to this method of payment, however they will never return to the original level due to the 5-week delay in payment.

- 6.3.8 There will also be an increase in irrecoverable bad debt and evictions which is a concern for further homelessness. We have already had Debt Relief Orders for 2 tenants causing their arrears to be written off. We have increased the bad debt provision from £300,000 to £700,000 to manage this change.
- 6.3.9 It is very clear from the initial cases that UC claimants require more support, advice and time from Housing staff than those claiming HB. This increases the workload and pressure for Officers in this team. To manage this risk an additional resource is being considered on a spend to save basis to work solely with UC claimants and ensure swift payments. An upgrade to the Rent Accounting module of the Orchard Housing IT system will also enable higher risk accounts, such as those tenants in receipt of UC, to be flagged first ensuring higher risk tenants are targeted.

6.4. Impacts to Corporate Services - General Fund

6.4.1 Revenues and Benefits

- 6.4.2 The Council's Revenue and Benefits team currently pays HB to approximately 5,800 working age tenants (in council, other social and private sector housing). It also pays HB to about 2,800 tenants of pension age. The transfer to UC will gradually reduce the working age caseload, but the short term impact of the ending of new UC live service claims has been an increase in claims from January 2018. The Council remains responsible for awarding Council Tax Support (CTS) to those with low incomes, whether or not they receive UC.
- 6.4.3 It has been difficult to manage staff resources with continuous delays in full UC roll out. When experienced officers have left the service it was initially difficult to replace them as the available pool of employees shrunk due to the uncertain future. The DWP now recommend that councils fill gaps using fixed term contracts or temporary resource in order not to mitigate the potential costs of redundancy. This has an impact on the amount of capacity within the service, due to the requirement to pay a premium for temporary resource and yet stay within the planned budget.
- 6.4.4 DWP provides funding to the Council towards the cost of processing HB awards. This admin subsidy is about £440,000 for 2018/19, and will be reduced in line with DWP projections of reduced workload as the roll out and migration projects proceed. This is on top of ongoing reductions of around 6% each year as part of central government's efficiency savings. There is a risk that this will cause a financial pressure to the Council, if the actual reduction in workload does not follow the DWP projection.
- 6.4.5 Although DWP have indicated that they will make a contribution in some circumstances, there is no confirmation that they will meet the full costs if any redundancies arise from the HB workload reduction.
- 6.4.6 The Council will be reviewing how Discretionary Housing Payments (DHP) are processed due to the administrative changes between UC and HB. Where a tenant receiving HB asks for additional help, there is

already a lot of information available as part of the HB claim. There is a lot less information available when the tenant receives UC. However, if a tenant is waiting for a UC decision, we are not able to pay DHP to them.

- 6.4.7 Residents who are receiving UC will still need to apply to DBC for a means-tested reduction in their council tax under the Council Tax Support (CTS) scheme.
- 6.4.8 The indications from authorities which have already had UC full service roll out are that it can be difficult to encourage these residents to apply for CTS, or to collect council tax from them. It also appears that for those UC recipients who are in low-paid work, there are frequent changes to their monthly UC award amount, leading to an increased time and cost in administering their CTS awards.
- 6.4.9 We will monitor this impact locally as the roll out continues, and in discussion with other revenues and benefits services, so that we can learn from best practice and suggest possible changes to the CTS scheme to address any issues which arise.

6.4.10 Universal Support

- 6.4.11 The Council has agreed with DWP to provide support for those who find digital communication difficult and have other 'complex' needs. The support falls into two categories: helping people set up an online UC account; and personal budgeting support.
- 6.4.12 The Support Protocol Framework sets out what the Council has to ensure is provided. The payment is based on a DWP estimate of the number who will need to receive this help, and with no expectation of any support being required until the full service is put into Hemel Hempstead Jobcentre.
- 6.4.13 Approximately £8,000 has been granted to DBC but without dedicated resources internally and a large responsibility on reporting the full details of those who access these services the intention is for these two services to be outsourced to a community partner. The Personal Budgeting Support will be provided by Citizens Advice Dacorum however so far no organisation has been found to support claimants with making new digital claims.

6.4.14 Homelessness

- 6.4.15 Those living in temporary accommodation will continue to receive legacy benefits and not be forced to receive UC however the numbers of those approaching the Council because they are homeless will increase. If you replicate the rent arrears for other Social Housing providers and the Private rented sector this is a significant concern especially with tenants having less security.
- 6.4.16 The Housing Reduction Act will increase the Councils responsibility for those at risk of homelessness. Coupled with increased evictions due to rent arrears and the refusal of some private landlords to accept those on UC, there will be more pressure on our ability to provide temporary accommodation.

- 6.4.17 Private landlords also reacted to the problems by refusing to accept tenants in receipt of UC with one provider serving S.21 notices on all private tenants in expectation to end tenancies because of rent arrears.
- 6.4.18 Rising private sector rents and changes to the Local Housing Allowance (LHA) rate, without a corresponding increase in housing support, means that the number of households that turn to local government for support will increase.
- 6.4.19 Other services**
- 6.4.20 The above will have a knock on effect on contact through the Customer Service Unit. The number of general enquiries and requests for advice is likely to increase to the services described above as well as contact through the website and social media putting pressure on all services that deal with such enquiries.
- 6.4.21 The Community Partnerships Team currently contributes to a number of contracts with partners who are going to be significantly affected by UC. It is likely the current arrangements might need to be reviewed in light of changing priorities and focus as more residents move to UC.
- 6.4.22 There is considerable evidence of the impact of UC on resident's health and wellbeing. Many reports have highlighted the increase in suicide threats and reliance on families and friends to provide financial support putting pressure on relationships.
- 6.4.23 Any delay in receiving UC along with reduction in award will mean that residents will struggle to pay for services provided by the Council. Council Tax arrears and repayment of any fines and charges may also increase.

7. Additional concerns about Universal Credit

- 7.1. The online forms to apply for Universal Credit are long with many questions ambiguous and confusing and very difficult to complete on a mobile phone or tablet. You need a lot of information to apply and there have been issues with the system crashing mid application. Additionally, Council Tax Support still needs to be claimed separately from the Council.
- 7.2. There is little incentive to increase hours of employment. While the option to undertake some employment is more attractive under this scheme, the taper that reduces the amount of UC as employment increases has been reviewed since the initial implementation and is unlikely to provide an incentive to increase hours of work.
- 7.3. Two people in a household claiming UC will only have one joint claim and one monthly payment into one bank account. This is a serious concern for safeguarding and domestic abuse. Encouraging financial independence is important in supporting victims of abuse. This policy can remove the opportunity to manage benefits like Child tax credit or income support which are more often claimed by women in a household. It can take away

experiences of managing income and make them reliant on a partner in potentially violent and controlling relationships.

7.4. There have been a number of errors and there are a number of problems in communicating with the DWP. There have been numerous examples of claims being incorrectly assessed. Forms and procedures for obtaining information or for applying for APAs (Alternative Payment Arrangements) may change without notice delaying claims and creating confusion for tenants. There have also been considerable delays before the Housing Team are aware that a claim has been made as the primary link with the DWP goes through the Revenue and Benefits Team however an improved relationship is working to improve this.

8. Our current approach

8.1. The corporate approach to UC within the Council has been reviewed and an internal working group has been set up to review the Council's approach and forecast the financial impact to the Council. Efforts will focus on three key work streams:

- Finance, information and performance.
- Communication strategy/Partnership delivery.
- Operational/Implementation delivery

Representatives from all relevant departments will contribute to these areas to ensure a robust and effective project plan for implementation.

8.2. A dedicated page has been created on the DBC intranet site to enable current information to be shared between front line officers already dealing with residents on UC.

8.3. A member briefing session will clarify the current situation and approach at DBC and encourage a two-way process to understand the direct impact on any constituents and reassure of the approach taken across Dacorum.

8.4. A positive relationship has been built with Hemel Hempstead Jobcentre and since the new DWP partnership manager started in Dacorum a number of meetings have taken place between DBC departments and relevant DWP representatives. There is regular attendance at the Dacorum Strategic Network and a monthly meeting between housing, revenues & benefits and the DWP partnership manager has been set up to discuss operational issues. Training for DBC staff will take place by the DWP in September and co-location of staff at The Forum or Jobcentre is currently being considered.

8.5. With a number of different Jobcentres serving the residents of Dacorum it has been difficult to get information about the numbers of claimants in Dacorum not solely in Hemel Hempstead. Additionally, details about the postcodes linked to each job centre and information about the full migration and where Dacorum is likely to sit on this timescale have not been forthcoming. This has been raised with the partnership manager and discussions with other Housing Providers confirm that decisions bigger than a local level are difficult to obtain.

- 8.6. Building effective external partnerships is crucial and UC has been discussed at the Dacorum Strategic Network in relation to the impact this could have on employment, homelessness, drugs and alcohol use and mental health which are key areas of focus. Members from Community Action Dacorum, Citizens Advice, Dacorum Community Trust and Hightown Housing Association have met with DBC representatives to look at partnership working and specific actions around sharing training, resources and information about service impact in the lead up to full service roll out.
- 8.7. The Council will work with other Housing Providers and groups like the Chartered Institute of Housing and National Housing Federation to share the impact and failings of the system to influence changes that meet the wider aims of UC to reduce dependence of the welfare system and incentivise employment.
- 8.8. A key task will be to ensure that there is a sensible approach to data sharing (specifically clarifying how information can be shared without breaching Data Protection and avoiding a narrower approach which will not help residents impacted). This will allow quick identification of circumstances that warrant an early intervention with UC recipients.
- 8.9. The internal working group will ensure appropriate provision of access to information and advice for residents using online services. It is recognised that the Councils role should be a signposting function due to the changing nature of information. The Councils website will ensure that tenants and residents who go to our pages can be linked to those by DWP plus key support agencies such as Step Change and the Money Advice Service.

9. Conclusion

- 9.1. The roll out of UC will have a financial impact on many households moving onto this welfare benefit. There will be an increase in need for advice and support during the process, and this will have a significant effect on the Council and voluntary organisations in the Borough. It is projected that on current roll out proposals over 1,000 residents will be impacted by April 2019 with multiple thousands at the point of full migration in 2023.
- 9.2. Experience from the housing sector as a whole has shown that rent arrears of those on UC are significantly higher than those on HB. Overall evidence from full service areas show there is an increased reluctance for private landlords to accept UC claimants and the level of arrears have increased the pressure on the Councils Homeless and advice teams.
- 9.3. While evidence from the DWP suggestions claimants have increased the total hours they are in employment, there is an increased reliance on the community and voluntary sector for support and advice, food parcels and grants.
- 9.4. A coordinated approach involving a number of departments across the Council aims to reduce this risk through focusing resources to target areas of greatest impact. Implementing task and finish groups will enable outcomes in areas such as delivery of an internal and external communications brief and building effective partnerships with the DWP and the Community and Voluntary sector.

- 9.5. There has been considerable attention on UC at a local and national level causing concern about the impact this will have on the Council and its residents. While steps can be taken to reduce the risk, it should be expected that this will put significant pressure on communities, finance and resources. With limited information at this time best guess judgements will continue to be reviewed in partnership with neighbouring authorities.