

CABINET AGENDA



**TUESDAY 20 APRIL 2021 AT 6.30 PM
MICROSOFT TEAMS - MICROSOFT TEAMS**

**THIS MEETING OF THE CABINET WILL BE HELD
REMOTELY VIA THE MICROSOFT TEAMS APPLICATION.
SHOULD ANY MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WISH TO JOIN THIS MEETING, PLEASE
CONTACT MEMBER.SUPPORT@DACORUM.GOV.UK BY 5PM ON MONDAY 19TH APRIL 2021**

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 Williams (Leader)
Councillor Griffiths (Deputy Leader)
Councillor Elliot

Councillor Anderson
Councillor Banks
Councillor Barrett

For further information, please contact Corporate and Democratic Support or 01442 228209

AGENDA

1. MINUTES (Pages 3 - 8)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 16/03/21

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 and ask questions in accordance with the rules as to Public Participation.

5. REFERRALS TO CABINET

There were no referrals to Cabinet

6. CABINET FORWARD PLAN (Page 9)

7. CLIMATE CHANGE EMERGENCY UPDATE (Pages 10 - 60)

8. HEMEL HEMPSTEAD PLACE STRATEGY (Pages 61 - 98)

9. BERKHAMSTED SPORTS CENTRE (Pages 99 - 123)

10. EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

To consider passing a resolution in the following terms:

That, under s.100A (4) of the Local Government Act 1972 Schedule 12A Part 1 as amended by the Local Government (Access to Information) (Variation) Order 2006 the public be excluded during the items in Part 2 of the Agenda for this meeting, because it is likely, in view of the nature of the business to be transacted, that, if members of the public were present during those items, there would be disclosure to them of exempt information relating to the financial and business affairs of the Council and third party companies/organisations.

Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, paragraph 3.

11. HIGHBARNNS (Pages 124 - 139)

MINUTES

CABINET

16 MARCH 2021

Present:

Members:

Councillors: Williams (Leader)
Griffiths (Deputy Leader)
Elliot
Anderson
Banks
Barrett

Officers:	C Hamilton	Chief Executive
	N Howcutt	Assistant Director (Finance & Resources)
	F Williamson	Assistant Director (Housing)
	F Hussain	Group Manager (Legal & Corporate Services)
	C O'Neil	Corporate Support Team Leader (minutes)
	M Kange	Corporate & Democratic Support Lead Officer

Also Attendance:

Councillors Tindall and England

The meeting began at 6.30 pm

CA/20/21 MINUTES

Minutes of the meeting held on 9 February 2021 were agreed by Members present and signed by the Chair.

CA/21/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

JDeane & MGaynor sent apologies for absence.

CA/22/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

CA/23/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

CA/24/21 REFERRALS TO CABINET

There were no referrals to Cabinet.

CA/25/21 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

Cllr Anderson requested an item to be added to 20 April meeting;

Title: Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy
Contact: James Doe
Background
Information: To set out proposed arrangements for the development of the Place Strategy for Hemel Hempstead.

The plan was agreed and noted with the additional item.

CA/26/21 HRA BUSINESS PLAN

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that Council approve the updated Housing Revenue Account Business Plan 2021/24

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND that Council to approve the revised development programme budgets as set out in Section 9.3.

It was agreed to delegate approval of the additional grant funding to the Corporate Director of Finance and Regeneration to award grant funding up to £1.4M to support the development of affordable housing units, by Thrive at the two waters site in Hemel Hempstead.

Corporate Objectives

Delivering Affordable Housing.

Monitoring Officer

A stock retained local housing authority must maintain a Housing Revenue Account in accordance with section 74 of the Local Government Act 1989.

Further to section 76 of the 1989 Act, local housing authorities must formulate and implement proposals to ensure that for each financial year the Housing Revenue Account does not show a debit balance.

The annual review provides a robust mechanism to monitor the business plan to ensure that it takes account of the changes in government policy, law and economy and therefore meets the Council's statutory requirements.

Deputy S.151 Officer

There are a number of inflationary assumptions inherent within the Business Plan which are liable to change over the planning period, and which could therefore pose a risk to delivery.

These assumptions are kept under constant review, and this report is the annual update of the HRA business plan. The way in which the Council structures its borrowing will influence the amount of funding available in future years. Borrowing options, together with any implications for the future programme, will be presented to Members in advance.

There is the possibility of unanticipated government interventions that could impact on the HRA business plan in particular the current projections of annual rent increases which are set at is CPI +1% for next 5 years. The Council endeavours to maximise the use of housing grants to deliver affordable homes and in order to do this awards additional grants to registered providers to support affordable homes growth and opportunities for residents. If these grants were not fully utilised by the council the funds would be redistributed by MHCLG, and Dacorum and its partners may incur interest charges.

Advice

Cllr Griffiths introduced the report and welcomed questions.

Cllr Elliott referred to page 4, item 3.2 and commended all the officers involved that the work has been done and hasn't dipped due to COVID during 2020.

Cllr Griffiths agreed the officers have worked very hard under very difficult circumstances, noting that applies across the board in Housing as there has been additional stress across the whole service.

FWilliamson referred to the table in 3.2 advising that the updated figures haven't been included for this financial year, it goes to 19/20. Advising that kitchens & bathroom upgrades were suspended during COVID in occupied properties as it would involve too much traffic within homes and present too great an infection risk; the resource was instead focused on upgrades in void properties.

Cllr Williams referred to paragraph 7.7 of the report, the additional funding to Thrive Homes and asked what difference that makes to the scheme? Does it change what is being officered?

FWilliamson advised that they are setting up a 'rent to buy' model. There are 10 units for shared ownership that have now been moved into this rent to buy model which offers security of tenure for the 5 years rental, after which time they would have the option to purchase the property. Thrive are offering support to cover any legal costs and any stamp duty that would be required to be paid at that time.

Cllr Williams asked, at the end of the 5 years, if they don't exercise the right, can they continue renting?

FWilliamson responded that Thrive have worked the model up to provide security of tenure for that full 5 years. If at the end of that 5 years they were not able to afford to buy, Thrive are working up a process for them to be able to continue to rent.

FWilliamson added that this is an intermediate rent model spanning from our upper earning threshold for social housing (£60k for affordable social rent, as we operate within our Allocations Policy) so households looking at this scheme would be those in the £50k to £80k household income bracket.

Cllr Griffiths asked, if at worst case scenario, no one exercises right to buy, it will make the scheme unviable for Thrive. Is there a chance they could come back and ask for more funding in 5 years' time?

FWilliamson responded no, if the scheme becomes unviable there must be some security of tenure they can provide to those tenants, as we are providing grant funding on the basis of affordable housing, and if that scheme was to become unviable for those housed within it, it would be Thrives risk, not ours. Delegation of authority allows up to 1.4M of additional grant funding but on the basis that we will ask Thrive to sign up to a legal agreement.

Recommendations agreed.

CA/27/21 INDEPENDENT REMUNERATION PANEL 2020 - SCHEME OF MEMBERS' ALLOWANCES FOR DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND:

That Council approves the changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme as recommended by the Independent Remuneration Panel in its report.

Corporate Objectives

The role of Local Councillor is a major part of Dacorum Borough Council's delivery of an efficient, effective and modern Council. As such the remuneration that councillors receive should reflect this central role and assist in attracting the calibre of Council Member the residents of Dacorum deserve.

Monitoring Officer

This report was written in consultation with the Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services) as Monitoring Officer and his comments have been incorporated with the report.

S.151 Officer

The approved 21/22 budget has sufficient budget to fund the proposed overall £2k increase to members' allowances.

Advice

Cllr Williams introduced the report, advising it has been considered at Overview & Scrutiny. It has ordinarily been the case that the Cabinet accepts the recommendations of the IRP and Cllr Williams suggests the same on this occasion.

Cllr Williams invited questions of which there were none.

Recommendations agreed.

CA/28/21 COVID UPDATE

Decision

- (a) That the projected financial impact of Covid-19 for 2020/21 as set out in section 1 be noted.
- (b) That the service updates provided in section 2 be noted.

Corporate Objectives

The financial impact and the Council's response to Covid-19 will impact all of the Council's Corporate Objectives.

Monitoring Officer

The Monitoring Officer continues to monitor the key issues raised by legislative changes and relevant government guidance and ensure that effective policies and procedures are in place to assist services to continue to deliver during the pandemic and subsequent recovery phase.

S.151 Officer

The Financial Implications section of the report have been written by the S151 officer and will continue to be monitored as actual costs become clearer. Members will be regularly updated on the financial implications of Covid-19 as they develop.

Advice

Cllr Williams introduced the report and asked officers if there are any further updates since publication.

NHowcutt advised that from financial point of view it is up to date.

CHamilton, advised that a little more (£20k) funding from National Leisure Recovery Fund has been allocated, in addition so the sum as reported in paper.

There were no questions.

The report was noted.

The Meeting ended at 6.45 pm

CABINET FORWARD PLAN

	DATE	MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION	Decision Making Process	Reports to Monitoring Officer/ S.151 Officer	CONTACT DETAILS	BACKGROUND INFORMATION
9.	25/05/21					
10.	22/06/21	Appointment of a principal Contractor for Mountbatten View		10/06/21	Fiona Williamson, Assistant Director of Housing 01442 228855 Fiona.williamson@dacorum.gov.uk David Barrett, Group Manager Housing Development 01442 228252 David.barrett@dacorum.gov.uk	To be provided
	22/06/21	Provisional Financial Outturn		10/06/21	Nigel Howcutt, Assistant Director Finance & Resources 01442 228662 Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	To be provided
	22/06/21	Garage Strategy		10/06/21	James Deane, Corporate Director Finance & Operations 01442 228278 james.deane@dacorum.gov.uk	To update on the progress of the Garage Strategy Project
	22/06/21	Leisure Contract		10/06/21	James Deane, Corporate Director Finance & Operations 01442 228278 james.deane@dacorum.gov.uk Mark Brookes, Assistant Director Corporate & Contracted Services 01442 228236 Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk	To be provided PART 2
11.	20/07/21	Appointment of a Principal Contractor for Wilstone		08/07/21	Fiona Williamson, Assistant Director of Housing 01442 228855 Fiona.williamson@dacorum.gov.uk David Barrett, Group Manager Housing Development 01442 228252 David.barrett@dacorum.gov.uk	To be provided
		Appointment of a Principal Contractor for Randalls Ride		08/07/21	Fiona Williamson, Assistant Director of Housing 01442 228855 Fiona.williamson@dacorum.gov.uk David Barrett, Group Manager Housing Development 01442 228252 David.barrett@dacorum.gov.uk	To be provided
		Appointment for a Principal Contractor for 6 No Garage Sites		08/07/21	Fiona Williamson, Assistant Director of Housing 01442 228855 Fiona.williamson@dacorum.gov.uk David Barrett, Group Manager Housing Development 01442 228252 David.barrett@dacorum.gov.uk	To be provided
	20/07/21	Medium Term Financial Strategy		08/07/21	James Deane, Corporate Director Finance & Operations 01442 228278 james.deane@dacorum.gov.uk	To review and approve the updated Medium Term Financial Strategy.
	21/09/21	Financial Regulations		09/09/21	James Deane, Corporate Director Finance & Operations 01442 228278 james.deane@dacorum.gov.uk	To approve the updated Financial Regulations.

Agenda Item 7



Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	20 April 2021
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Climate and Ecological Emergency Progress Update
Contact:	Councillor Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Contracted Services Author/Responsible Officer – Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration
Purpose of report:	The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Council's work to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergency, to indicate next steps and approve key actions.
Recommendations	That Cabinet: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Agrees that the Council's Green Community Grants scheme be doubled to £20,000 for 2021/22 (funded from the Climate Emergency Budget) 2. Agrees that the Council no longer maintain the ISO140001 Energy Management accreditation given the shift to the more comprehensive action being taken on carbon reduction across all services and actions in the Council. 3. Notes the progress and actions set out in the report.. 4. Agrees that the draft Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy be presented to Cabinet in July. 5. Agrees that the Council makes an application to the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme and initially uses the Climate Emergency Budget to match-fund.
Period for post policy/project review	The Strategy and Action Plan will ultimately be reviewed in 2030 but it is proposed that there should be an annual 'state of the environment' report made to Cabinet and Council setting out the progress made in the previous 12 months and measured against the baseline carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas position together with the specific targets and actions for the forthcoming year. In addition there will be periodic reporting to both Cabinet and the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

<p>Corporate objectives:</p>	<p>The Council’s Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan will help to support all 5 corporate objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <i>Safe and clean environment:</i> e.g. contains actions relating to the quality of existing environments and design and layout of new development that promote security and safe access; • <i>Community Capacity:</i> e.g. provide a framework for local communities to be better informed and involved in climate emergency mitigation; • <i>New and Affordable housing:</i> through both direct delivery and setting improved sustainability requirements in new homes would help to reduce both the cost of energy and water and the carbon dioxide (CO2) emissions the homes would produce; • <i>Dacorum delivers:</i> fulfilling the zero carbon pledge will make a huge contribution to local sustainability and assist in the national target to reach zero carbon as a nation by 2050; • <i>Regeneration:</i> the strategy and action plan will provide improvements to air quality, biodiversity, and opportunities for cycling and walking as well as major economic potential for ‘green’ businesses. • <i>Climate and Ecological Emergency:</i> the strategy and action plan is focused on meeting the Council’s pledge to be zero carbon on its own emissions by 2030 for Scopes 1 and 2, and 2050 for Scope 3
<p>Implications:</p> <p>‘Value for money’ implications</p>	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>All expenditure on tackling the Climate and Ecological Emergency is currently drawn from the £100,000 budget for 2021/22 or from existing service budgets. It is likely that the corporate budget will need topping up from the existing reserve as actions move forward.</p> <p>The financial implications of achieving the strategy are not as yet fully costed but will be factored in to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and subsequent budgeting. Some areas will procure and use alternative products, materials and services which may be more expensive, others adapt ways of operating, and for others such as the regulatory services the cost will fall to the private sector. One clear factor is that failure to act will have both financial and societal impacts which will be far more damaging and expensive.</p> <p>In the longer term the bulk of expenditure will be identified for consideration within the Service and Budget Plans for each service in future financial years though a central budget will still be required.</p> <p><u>Value for money</u></p>

	<p>The aim of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan is to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's activities and whilst in procurement the Council will seek value for money through intelligent procurement and tendering a critical part of the value for money assessment must be the degree to which the expenditure acts to reduce net CO2 and other greenhouse gas emissions.</p>
Risk implications	<p>A Risk Assessment will be completed and added to the Council's Strategic Risk Register though this will be in conjunction with the completion of the Strategy. The larger individual projects will incorporate risk factor assessment in the project management delivery plan. It is proposed that inclusion of the Climate and Ecological Emergency be incorporated into the Corporate Strategic Risk Register.</p>
Community Impact Assessment	<p>As a whole the work on the Climate and Ecological Emergency is very demonstrably aimed at protecting the future of all residents. It will be proposed to incorporate a full community consultation process once the Strategy and Action plan is approved.</p> <p>A Community Impact Assessment will be required for any significant actions which impact on service delivery arising from the service specific changes which will emerge.</p>
Health and safety Implications	<p>Failure to act on the climate and ecological emergency would be damaging to the health and safety of all who work and live in the Borough. Action is required to mitigate the impact of our changing climate and day to day weather – flooding, drought, excessive temperatures and so on. There would also be severe impacts on air quality, ecological well-being and overall quality of life</p>
Monitoring Officer Comments:	<p>The report provides a comprehensive update on the measures being taken or considered by the Council to tackle climate change and other ecological issues. There are no direct legal implications arising from the report but these will continue to be monitored as individual projects and proposals are considered for approval.</p>
Deputy S.151 Officer Comments:	<p>The proposed increase in the Green Community grants allocations to £20k and the proposal for applications to the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme will be funded through the existing climate and ecological budgets.</p> <p>If these schemes escalate or if future climate proposals exceed the approved budget levels additional member requests for funding will be required.</p>
Consultees:	<p>Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 23 March 2021</p>
Background papers:	<p>Cabinet Report Climate Change Emergency Strategy and Action plan 19/5/20, and 23/6/20, 20/10/20</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations	<p>CO2 Carbon Dioxide APSE Association for Public Service Excellence HRA Housing Revenue Account</p>

used in this report:	CSG Clean Safe and Green MTFS Medium Term Financial Strategy EPC Energy Performance Certificate PV Solar Photovoltaics BREEAM Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method PSH Private Sector Housing PRS Private Rented Sector HMO House in Multiple Occupation CAVAT Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees AQAP Air Quality Action Plan AQMA Air Quality Management Area LDS Local Development Scheme (Local Plan) LGA Local Government Association DCN District Council Network
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Executive Summary

The report sets out the progress being made and actions taken to work towards the Council's stated objectives to be net-zero carbon as a Council for Scopes 1 and 2 emissions by 2030 and Scope 3 (largely emissions from our Council housing) by 2050. The report covers:

- **The governments planned approach**
- **The work of the sub-groups**
 - **Housing and Built Environment** with a particular focus on the approach that will be taken in retrofitting the housing stock. The report also covers new build and work on and use of grants
 - **Community and communications.** The report details the outcome and use of the findings of the lockdown survey, the success of the Green Community Grant scheme, the plans for a Dacorum Climate Action Network and the intention to work with Parishes and Town Councils, some of which already have established groups to work with. It recommends that the Green Community Grant Scheme budget for 2021/22 be doubled to £20,000 to reflect the interest shown.
 - **Sustainable transport.** This includes work on establishing an electric vehicle chargepoint plan, working with specialists Field Dynamics and Energy Savings Trust, and an application being made for the On-Street Residential Chargepoint Scheme which can deliver works for 25% match funding. It also looks at the potential for rapid charging service stations.
 - **Planning** where the focus is on the inclusion of a Carbon and Biodiversity offset fund in the Local Plan (via an SPD) whereby developers that cannot meet their required level of carbon have to pay the cost to DBC.
 - **Environmental Services** – detailing progress on tree planting, biodiversity improvements such as wildflower meadows and research on the best approach to future tree planting and biodiversity improvements.
 - **Corporate work.** The draft Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy be presented to Cabinet in July for approval. There is a recommendation to cease the use of ISO14001 reporting and accreditation as this has been overtaken by climate change action and data collection.

1. Background

- 1.1 Cabinet received and approved a report on the draft strategy and action plan on 20 October 2020. This confirmed the Council's commitment to achieving net zero carbon for the Scope 1 and 2 emissions resulting from its service delivery and operations by the end of 2030. It also agreed a net zero position on the Scope 3 emissions arising from the 10,250 Council homes it provides by 2050 recognising that given its cost, current budgets, financial restrictions and the absence at this point of reliable and affordable alternatives to gas this will be a longer process.

2 United Kingdom – The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution

Of direct importance is the government's new plan for carbon reduction and promotion of sustainability and associated business opportunities. There is a link below for the full document. The plan has been broadly welcomed though the level of investment committed at £12B is felt to be a start only and not adequate to deliver the promises made in the plan. The reports can be viewed via :

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/the-ten-point-plan-for-a-green-industrial-revolution>

The headlines of the plan are set out below and Appendix One provides the government's intended approach.

1 Offshore wind

Producing enough offshore wind to power every home and supporting up to 60,000 related jobs.

2 Hydrogen

Working with industry to aim to generate 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 for industry, transport, power and homes.

3 Nuclear

Advancing nuclear as a clean energy source and developing the next generation of small and advanced reactors.

4 Electric Vehicles

A ban on new cars and vans powered wholly by petrol and diesel being sold in the UK from 2030 and an acceleration of the infrastructure required to transition to electric vehicles.

5 Public Transport

Making cycling and walking more attractive ways to travel and investing in zero-emissions public transport.

6 Greener maritime

Supporting maritime and airline industries to become greener through research projects for zero-emission planes and ships.

7 Homes and public buildings

Making UK homes, schools and hospitals greener and more energy efficient, including a target to install 600,000 heat pumps every year by 2028.

8 Carbon capture

Becoming a world-leader in technology to capture and store harmful emissions away from the atmosphere, with a target to remove 10MT of carbon dioxide by 2030.

9 Nature

Protecting and restoring the UK's natural environment, including by planting 30,000 hectares of trees every year.

10 Innovation and Finance

Developing the technologies needed to turn the UK into the world's number one centre for green technology and finance, creating the foundations for years of economic growth.

Unfortunately there was very little new investment for tackling the climate emergency announced in the recent budget which seems like an opportunity missed.

3 Officer Climate Groups: Progress Report

3.1 Housing and Built assets

3.1.1 New Build

Current work includes:

- Reviewing previous projects and capture lessons learnt.
- Capturing benefits / performance of our current schemes. See updates on Bingham Mews and Coniston Road below
- Work to establish a DBC standard for new builds going forward. - this includes delivering projects at a higher performance level than Building Regulations and targeting Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) B.
- Reviewing our Design Guide and Employers Requirement to identify possible improvements including materials specified.
- Reviewing current Energy & Sustainability Strategy with a view to update it to reflect the increase in sustainability required and reviewing the Project Management Handbook to further embed carbon reduction and sustainability.

Improvements coming through Building Regulations are tracked – we are currently reviewing the forthcoming changes to Part L of the Building Regulations (Conservation of Fuel and Power) and the outcome of the second consultation of the Future Homes Standard.

Reviewing Building Research Establishment Environmental assessment Method (BREEAM) standard to see how we can adopt. Improvements coming through Building Regulations are tracked – we are currently

reviewing the forthcoming changes to Part L of the Building Regulations (Conservation of Fuel and Power) and the outcome of the second consultation of the Future Homes Standard.



Built by our team, the homes back onto open fields and are designed to complement the neighbouring council properties to the side. New residents have recently moved into a small development of three two-bedroom homes for social rent in West Dene, Gaddesden Row designed to complement the neighbouring properties. They are also highly energy efficient - these super-insulated homes come with photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps to deliver an off-gas heating system using renewable energy.



4.1.1a Coniston Road development update

Work has started on this village development of ten 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom homes, including a fully compliant wheelchair house, all for social rent in Kings Langley.

Project managed by our team, the homes back onto open fields and are designed to complement the neighbouring council properties to the side. They are also energy efficient - these highly-insulated homes come with photovoltaic panels and increased insulation to the fabric above the current building regulation requirements, in addition each home will have an external 32amp power supply to the front or side of the house to allow the connection of up to 7kw wall chargers for an electric vehicle.

Our contractor, Bugler Developments Ltd is registered with the Considerate Contractors Scheme and provides a monthly newsletter to the surrounding

residents, keeping them updated on progress during the construction period.

The homes should be ready for letting in the summer of 2022.

4.1.2 Existing homes

4.1.2a Green Homes Grant Vouchers

Green Homes Grant vouchers can subsidise energy saving measures such as insulation and renewable energy technologies across all tenures of housing. The Government scheme has now been ended having only spent c.5% of the initial budget.

- We have responded to over 25 Green Homes Grant enquiries from private residents via email and telephone.
- We have promoted the Green Homes Grants scheme via social media, our website, newsletters and the Dacorum Digest.
- Green Homes Grant vouchers will contribute to the cost of loft insulation in 50 council tenants' homes

4.1.2b Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery 1 and 2

The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery funding is for local authorities to directly control the roll out of Green Homes Grants for low-income households across all tenures of housing.

- We applied for Green Home Grant Local Authority Delivery 1a funding as part of a consortium led by Watford Council. Unfortunately, the bid was not successful.
- Dacorum has been allocated approximately £0.4 million via the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 2, which needs to be spent by December 2021.

4.1.2c Energy Company Obligation Funding

We support vulnerable private residents in applying for Energy Company Obligation funded measures such as boiler replacements and provide match funding where applicable via a Disabled Facilities Grant.

- In July 2020 we signed a Service Level Agreement with Yorkshire Energy Solutions. Since then, nine households have received heating repairs/replacement and/or insulation with works in progress at a further eight properties.
- In January 2021, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Energy Foundation, which will allow a network of installers to provide energy company funded grants and scale up the work being completed.

4.1.2d Social Housing Technical Assistance Pilot

The Social Housing Technical Assistance pilot, funded by the Greater South East Energy Hub, aims to create a detailed assessment of the current energy performance of Dacorum's Council Housing stock and make recommendations to set it on a path to net zero. Our application to take part

in the Pilot was successful. The data is currently being analysed and report expected after 31 March 2021.

4.1.2e Home Energy Conservation Act Progress Report 2021

Every two years we are required to provide a progress report to the department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on the progress we have made under the Home Energy Conservation Act (1995). New guidance for local authorities was issued by BEIS in February and the next report will be required by 31 May 2021.

4.1.2f Low Carbon Skills Fund and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) was launched in autumn 2020 and offered £1bn grant funding to decarbonise Public Sector buildings. In order to help access this funding, running alongside this there was also a Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF).

The LCSF essentially would pay for any survey work that needed doing which would then provide evidence to access the PSDS. We submitted an application for the LCSF which proposed the surveying of Cupid Green Depot and the near-by Grovehill/Woodhall Farm Adventure Playground. However, due to high demand we were unsuccessful in this round. The delayed response from the LCSF application consequently meant that there was no opportunity to apply for the PSDS.

A second phase of the PSDS has recently been announced and officers will be investigating to see if we will meet the new criteria to put an application in.

4.1.2g Energy Saving Trust

Using housing data, the Energy Savings Trust (EST) are in the process of running a variety of scenarios in order to develop a Home Analytics Report and a Portfolio Energy Assessment Tool (PEAT). The data and reports supplied by EST will provide a wide range of information for every household in the borough, such as the actual and predicted EPC ratings.

The PEAT scenarios can accurately forecast a range of outputs, for example;

- the work that is needed to raise each household's energy efficiency levels;
- how much the retrofit work is expected to cost per household;
- the EPC rating the household could achieve;
- how much it could reduce the household bills by;
- whether the property is likely to be suitable for solar panels;
- what the CO2 emission savings will be per household.

The final report, which is due in April 2021 will present a stock overview of the carbon impact of the current building stock, including regional and national benchmarks. It will also provide a series of decarbonisation

recommendations that Dacorum can use to work towards its EPC goals and carbon reduction targets.

This knowledge will be crucial not only to help plan future housing retrofit schemes but also to use as evidence when applying for government funding. Part of the work has been specifically tailored to fit with the government's Green Homes Grant eligibility criteria.

Using this data will also feed into the communications plan – as part of this we will work to target private households and landlords and signpost them to funding that will be able to support them make their homes more energy efficient.

4.1.2h Retrofitting

Planning and ultimately delivering net zero council housing will not, and currently cannot, happen quickly. There are various reasons for this:

- The scale of the challenge and the finance required to deliver
- The absence of affordable alternative energy sources that don't at this point have a reliability on fossil fuels
- The lack of capacity in the construction sector to deliver at scale existing alternatives such as heat pumps (delivery nationally in 2020 was 35,673 homes). At this rate it would take 85 years to deliver on to every home in the UK.
- The expectation, and need, of significant technical advances in alternative energy provision such as hydrogen, continued greening of the grid and so on. This will take time.

Consequently, the approach we are taking is referred to as 'fabric first'. Making homes more energy efficient and fitting additional changes as they become available.

As indicated above Housing and Regeneration are currently working with the Energy Savings Trust (EST) to develop a number of scenarios or suggested joinery maps to address the climate emergency agenda. These scenarios cover the whole Dacorum regardless of tenure and ownership, however the scenarios will also be broken down to highlight the Dacorum Housing Revenue Account (HRA) portfolio.

Housing will use these scenarios, compelled with some existing data and knowledge, to map and develop a business model/programme to help achieve net-zero aspirations. Consideration is being given at breaking this down further into a phased approach as technology and the energy related industry is changing daily with improved methodology, ie with time more sustainable and logical options will come into the market place with potential addition funding options from central Government. The first phase being considered is a 5 year programme to tackle low performing dwellings within the HRA portfolio with a fabric first approach, this would concentrate on roofs, insulation, windows and ventilation (with the potential of some type of solar intervention). Further phases would hopefully widen the scope as industry and technology moves forward to consider areas such as heating.

Housing are also about to develop a model/specification for a separate more traditional stock condition survey of the HRA portfolio, this would be used in conjunction with the EST data to develop a capital investment model, at this time decisions would need to be made about what can realistically be delivered within a said time frame, hence agreed development of a 30 year business plan for investment.

The 2021/22 financial year in terms of capital investment will concentrate on catching up with delayed projects from 2020/21 due to the Pandemic, however this relies on no further lock downs within the UK. The phased approach to tackle the climate emergency would commence financial year 2022/23.

Some bespoke pre-agreed carbon savings projects will commence earlier as planned on the HRA portfolio, with the possibility of some pilot electric vehicle charging point projects. The stock condition survey exercise, EST data and capital investment programme will go a long way to improving the energy efficiency of the HRA stock. In tandem with this we will develop a robust tenant engagement and behaviour change programme. Our tenants will play a crucial role in achieving our climate change targets and we need to be able to influence factors beyond our direct control, such as energy usage. We will also encourage the (free) installation of Smart Meters. Understanding how a building performs and how an individual's actions can reduce carbon emissions, whilst potentially saving money, is equally important as investing in our stock.

In the private rented sector, we are working with private landlords to ensure minimum energy efficiency standards are met. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the finances of both tenants and landlords. Targeting external funding for this sector will help make the costs of compliance more manageable for landlords.

Over the next 10 years, sustained funding will be required to meet the goal of net zero carbon emissions from private sector housing. Additional staff resources will be required if large scale funding schemes are to be directly managed by Dacorum.

5. Community and Communications

5.1 Learning from Lockdown – Results and Recommendations

During July and August 2020, we ran a six week sustainability survey to help understand how certain behaviours within Dacorum changed as a result of the safety measures brought about by COVID-19.

Several of the lifestyle changes that people made are also essential for helping to tackle the Climate Emergency. We wanted to understand how we can positively embrace these changes within Dacorum, so that instead of going 'back to normal', we move forwards to a better, greener future.

1500 residents took part. The survey was broken down into several key areas; Transport, Cycling, Commuting, Food, Waste and Resources, Energy and Water Use. The survey delivered a number of key findings, for example:

- 9 out of 10 people would like to see fewer cars on the road

- The number of people working from home after lockdown is expected to increase by a third, rather than 'return to normal'. With an increase in flexible working.
- Over a third of people stated that the barrier to them cycling more was road safety concerns.
- Approximately 1 in 5 more residents will be growing food locally compared to 'before lockdown'
- Half of participants told us they would volunteer at a community garden, with 9 out of 10 saying that they would want to buy food from one.
- Half of participants would be interested in using a community fridge.

The report was made available online in November to residents. The Recommendations Report (Appendix Three) has been circulated to staff for input and presented to the Leadership Team. There are a number of actions from the back of this research that will be able to feed into the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan as well as a Communications Plan.

The survey results have also been used by local community groups to provide evidence to support grant applications. One group have been awarded £4000 from an NHS charities grant and credited the survey results for helping to achieve this. Several of applicants for the Green Community Grant also referred to these results to support their projects.

5.2 Communications Plan

As an organisation, the Council is responsible for just 1% of the total emissions within Dacorum as a borough, and we have limited control over the remaining 99%. For this reason, connecting with the local community is crucial so that we can lower the borough's emissions as quickly as possible.

To help with this, we will plan to use the Council's 'spheres of influence' to educate, enable and engage with residents and local organisations. A range of resources, initiatives and campaigns will be put together in a comprehensive Communications Plan. This will incorporate both internal activities as well as local and national campaigns.

One of the immediate key focuses of this plan will be overhauling the content on our website and providing much more information for residents to help them learn more about the Climate and Ecological Emergency and what they can do to help at home.

The Learning from Lockdown survey results provided a great deal of local insight and statistics that can be used when shaping these ideas. Lockdown showed us all the value of social interaction and developing a communications work plan that is full of events, training, presentations and promoting volunteering with community groups will be a significant part of the sustainability work – when it is safe to roll these initiatives out. For example – hosting Repair Café events, supporting the establishment of Community Fridges, a 'Library of Thing's, as well as creating Community Gardens and Orchards too.

Another element of the communications plan would be looking at engaging with staff and residents through surveys. For example, having an annual transport survey would be very useful to help us understand whether active travel campaigns are having an impact.

5.3 Green Community Grants scheme

Providing funding is another method of enabling the local community to reduce their emissions. Several of the initiatives that are highlighted in the Learning from Lockdown survey would involve high levels of officer resources if we were to deliver them internally – e.g. managing a community fridge. However, by encouraging local groups to take on these types of projects, and providing support, funding and resources where possible, these initiatives are able to be delivered more effectively.

In November we launched the first Green Community Grant scheme. This allowed community groups to apply for pots of up to £2000 to help with their environmental projects, with a total pot of £10,000.

The scheme was specifically set up to support projects in our community which benefit the environment, as well as Dacorum's residents. The purpose is to encourage and enable local groups to '*think global and act local*' whilst tackling environmental challenges. In order to apply for funding, proposed Green Community Grant projects needed to demonstrate that they would actively help towards the mitigation of the Climate and Ecological Emergency locally. Projects were required to fit at least one Key Environmental Theme:

- Energy and emissions
- Transport
- Biodiversity
- Waste and consumption

The projects with the greatest environmental impacts scored more highly. Projects also needed to demonstrate that they would be working with local residents on these sustainability issues to engage, enable and/or educate. Projects scored more highly if they could demonstrate that they would meet the following Community Benefits:

Making new connections – such as engaging with people who would not normally be involved in sustainability issues

Being more active – such as encouraging people to get more active than they normally would be, or try a new activity.

Learning – such as developing new skills or delivering a programme of education.

Volunteering – giving people an opportunity to engage with their local community through volunteering

The application window ran from 1 December 2020 – 31 January 2021. In total there were 17 applications and of these, seven were successful. These were (further details set out in Appendix One):

1. **Community Garden and Bike Project, Apex**
2. **Mixed Meadow Grazing Project, Sunnyside Rural Trust**
3. **Allotment wilding project, Chaulden Allotments**
4. **Community Fridge, Viking Fitness**
5. **Planters and local active travel engagement, Boho Boxmoor**
6. **Wildflower verge, Northchurch Parish Council (NPC)**
7. **'56 Club' - Gardening Club, Wigginton Parish Council**

We plan to work closely with the successful groups and help them to promote their projects in order to raise their project's profile, as well as inspire others.

As this initial scheme was a success in terms of attracting interest and some excellent projects, we plan to run the grants annually moving forwards – keeping as £2,000 maximum per group. The current budget of £10,000 is currently provided from the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget. It is proposed to ask Cabinet to consider that for 2021/22 that the budget be doubled (to be funded through the existing budget). A report will be brought to Cabinet in time to consider within the budget setting process 2022/23 whether it wishes there to be a separate budget for this in future years or a corresponding increase to the corporate Climate and Ecological Emergency budget .

5.4 Dacorum Climate Action Network

The development of Dacorum's Climate Action Network (Dacorum CAN) has not been able to move forward due to the pandemic affecting public interaction. However, we are planning to host a launch event in November to coincide with the United Nations Climate Change Conference which is taking place in Glasgow (COP26).

The event would be a presentation and networking opportunity for members of the public to learn about what Dacorum are doing and find out about how they can get involved. We would invite various local environmental groups to have stalls. We will ask that the community groups who have received Green Community Grant funding each do a short presentation about their project, how the funding has helped them, and how people can get involved with them.

As part of this network we also plan to engage with town and parish councils to work together with them on reaching environmental targets.

6. Sustainable Transport

In Dacorum, transport is responsible for 43% of the borough's total greenhouse gas emissions. Focussing on transport will be a key part of the Climate Emergency work. This will involve reducing car use and increasing active travel (such as walking and cycling).

A Sustainable Transport group has been established in order to focus on projects and initiatives that fall under this area. This group will meet quarterly and has two sub-groups – one dedicated to Behavioural Initiatives and another dedicated to Electric Vehicles.

6.1 Behavioural Initiatives workstream

The Behavioural Initiatives theme will focus on researching and developing initiatives which will increase active travel (such as walking and cycling) and decrease car use. There are a variety of initiatives to explore both internally for staff, as well as externally to promote to residents and organisations.

Research and recommendations from the Learning from Lockdown survey will help to shape the work plan for this group. A range of cycling initiatives will be explored, including supporting bike confidence classes, rewards-based initiatives and bike-hire schemes. Discussions are underway with an organisation that is interested in using Dacorum for an e-scooter hiring trial, which is backed by the Department of Transport.

6.2 Green Transport Policy

One of the first key objectives for this group will be the creation of a Green Transport Policy for staff. This will aim to enable and encourage staff to reduce their carbon emissions. Various initiatives will be explored, such as car sharing and cycling schemes.

This work will involve relaunching the bike pool scheme. A policy for relaunching this has been drafted and will be reviewed by the Behavioural sub-group.

6.3 Electric Vehicle (EV) Work stream

The Electric Vehicle (EV) theme will focus on the creation of an Electric Vehicle Strategy. The objective for the creation and development of this strategy will be to help guide us in terms of how many chargepoints we need to expect to be putting in, where they need to go, what types we should have, how to manage them, etc.

The government recently brought forward the end date for the sale of petrol and diesel engines to 2030, which adds to the pressure of rolling out sufficient infrastructure now.

Around two thirds of the borough have 'off-street' parking available to them, such as driveways, which means that they can charge EVs at home overnight. However, for 39% of Dacorum's households (approximately 25,000 homes) this is not an option to them - we will need to ensure that there are sufficient plans in place to cope with this rising demand.

The number of ultra low-emission vehicles (ULEVs) registered in Dacorum rose 31% from 2019 to 2020.

6.4 On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) Funding

The government is providing funding for the installation of EV chargepoints through the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS), which we will be intending to apply to in 2021-22.

The scheme supports local authorities with capital costs of procurement and installation of on-street electric vehicle charging points for residential use in areas without off-street parking. This can include council-owned public car parks.

We are liaising with the Energy Savings Trust (EST) who administer the scheme and are able to offer support and advice regarding the creation of both ORCS applications, as well as the EV strategy.

The maximum funding available is for 75% of the capital costs of procuring and installing a chargepoint and this funding previously was limited to £100,000 however this cap has recently been removed. The remaining 25% must be secured via sources other than OLEV funding. Sourcing this 25% of project costs can be delivered through the existing budget though this will leave a relatively small remaining budget.

BP Chargemaster, the organisation that currently manage our existing charge points have offered to pay for this 25% funding if we adhere to their conditions. Their priority is installing charge points in car parks. The maximum amount OLEV will fund per single or double headed chargepoint is £6,500.

Demonstrating value for money in the application is key to securing approval.

Funding will be broadly awarded on a first come first served basis and the project, including installations, should be complete by March 2022. For this reason, this application work will be a priority for the EV sub-group to work on.

Cabinet is asked to consider if a bid should be submitted based on the installation of charge points in Council car parks, which would require 25% match funding for the grant.

6.5 Electric Vehicle Residents Survey

An online Electric Vehicle Residents Survey was launched in February to help us understand the short-term and future needs for residents. The survey takes five minutes to complete and all residents are encouraged to take part, regardless of whether they have an EV already or not.

The creation of a survey such as this was advised by the EST as one of the first steps to take when planning an ORCS application. This is required in order to develop an understanding of where there is a need for EV chargepoints, both now and in the future, as well as provide evidence to support the application to justify that the chargepoints are required.

The survey is live on our website and there is no end date, it will remain a permanent fixture so that we have a consistent method for collecting this type of information from residents. It has been running for over a month and to date there have been over 1600 responses.

6.6 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

6.6.1 Field Dynamics - Jumpstart

In order to support the development of the EV strategy, we are working with a specialist net-zero consultancy called Field Dynamics. They have a new service called 'Jumpstart' which is specifically aimed at supporting local authorities with developing their EV chargepoint plans.

JumpStart is a structured, data-led approach that will build an evidence foundation specifically for Dacorum. This structure will utilise our local knowledge and key national data sets and then be processed through a series of objective analysis sessions. It will give us all the information we need to deliver on these EV challenges to the point of operational hand-off. It will be a constant resource for us to reference to whenever we need objective, data based, accurate evidence to back up our approach.

The information will provide a useful baseline to help guide all future EV work, regardless of whether the chargepoints will be managed by Dacorum BC, Herts CC or external companies.

This information will also be useful for supporting ORCS applications.

6.6.2 Street lights and bollard EV chargepoints

We are currently liaising with EV chargepoint companies that specialise in working with local authorities in order to retrofit street lights or install bollards. This method significantly reduces the capital costs associated with installing EV infrastructure.

Dacorum own over 800 street lights - the majority of the street lights are allocated to estate footpaths, alleyways, garage areas and car parks. Approximately 50 may be suitable for EV residential charging locations – officers are currently assessing this and mapping potentially useful lights.

Through the ORCS funding scheme, council-owned car parks that have public access 24 hours a day are permitted to be used for EV chargepoint installations. 19 of the 28 council-owned car parks could therefore be potential EV chargepoint locations. 5 of these car parks already have EV chargepoints.

We are currently liaising with Hertfordshire County Council to determine whether they would give permission for their street lights to be used in this way.

6.6.3 Plough Roundabout Car Wash

The Council are liaising with a number of organisations who are interested in providing an 'electric forecourt' in the Borough – this would effectively be a rapid charging station. These organisations already have a track record in installation. One has plans for over 100 electric forecourts being built by them over the next five years. and are keen to work within Dacorum and offer at least one, if not two electric forecourts.

The area which is most attractive commercially would be to have a large hub near Maylands so that it is in close proximity to the M1 junction as well as being close by to all of the businesses in the industrial estate who are likely to be switching to EVs faster than residents uptake. Interest has also been shown by the companies with regard to the former petrol garage at the Magic Roundabout (currently a carwash). We continue conversations with these companies.

7 Planning

Officers are undertaking feasibility work that will underpin a new Carbon and Biodiversity Offset Fund for the Council. Once established it will allow the Council to secure funds from developers which will be invested in carbon and biodiversity projects across the Borough.

7.1 Carbon Offset

Carbon offset funds arise when development fails to achieve the required targets for reducing carbon emissions on site, and local authorities are able to use planning policy to collect contributions towards compensatory offsite measures. Typically these are calculated as a set sum for each tonne of carbon the new building will emit. The funds are then used to finance carbon reduction projects within the local authority area. Milton Keynes Council was an early leader in sustainable planning policy scheme and introduced the first carbon-offset local plan policy in 2008, to help achieve its ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030 and mitigate for future greenfield development. Within the first 10 years, the scheme achieved carbon savings totalling over 6,600 tonnes and generated more than £1 million, funding energy-saving projects for local residents. A similar scheme for Dacorum could generate funds to help deliver the priorities of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan.

Officers are now examining several options for setting up the Offset fund, reviewing carbon pricing options and fund administration options and will report to Members in due course.

7.2 Biodiversity Offset

National planning guidance and the forthcoming Environment Bill require development to create a net gain for biodiversity, to be set at 10% above the baseline biodiversity for a site. Where these measures are not achieved onsite, payments can be made to a biodiversity net gain fund equivalent to the cost of achieving the required number of biodiversity units elsewhere.

Officers are considering options for setting up and administering this fund, including whether the fund is separate or joined with the Carbon Offset Fund.

Officers are also considering options to develop a Biodiversity net gain Supplementary Planning Document and we're working with The Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust to utilise the work they have been doing with other authorities in Hertfordshire.

Herts County Council is also leading a baseline biodiversity evaluation of land across Hertfordshire and separately providing advice on opportunities for increasing biodiversity on Dacorum managed green space. Officers have commissioned a local tree assessment and tree planting strategy. This background work will inform the Council's Biodiversity Strategy and identify priorities for allocating biodiversity net gain contributions. Bunkers Park has been identified as a future biodiversity enhancement project.

Officers will continue to develop options for progressing both including further feasibility studies into each.

7.3 Renewable Energy Map

In order to understand the potential for future renewable energy initiatives in the borough, we will be sourcing a consultant to survey the borough and create a report on this for us.

This information will put us in a good position ready for when we are able to establish to the Carbon and Biodiversity Offset Fund and create projects that feed into this.

7.4 Biodiversity

Central government policy developments are beginning to open up new opportunities for increasing biodiversity. The Environment Bill, once passed, will likely mandate a 10% biodiversity net gain from developments. It will be possible to deliver these gains both on the site of the development as well as on off-site locations.

In November, the Agriculture Bill 2020 passed into law. The Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) set out in the bill lays out how farmers

and land managers will in future be rewarded with public money when they provide 'public goods'. These goods could include better air or water quality, improved soil health, or thriving wildlife. The scheme is thus designed to help achieve the aims of the 25 Year Environment Plan and the net zero emissions by 2050 commitment. Trials and tests have already begun ahead of a national pilot to commence in late 2021, and the scheme will be fully rolled out in 2024.

Both of these policy developments represent opportunities for biodiversity improvement, and thought of in conjunction, they open up particular possibilities around ways in which local authorities could work with farmers to enhance biodiversity on farmland (which is not currently defined as a habitat of principle importance in the Biodiversity 2020 **Strategy**).

8. Environmental Services

8.1 Clean, Safe and Green workstream

Climate Emergency Sub-Group – Environmental Services – update

CSG Summary of current projects and progress:

1. Tree planting (Three-year plan): a more detailed update is provided below. This is going to plan with the first batch of mass tree planting in the form of mature whips taken place in Gadebridge Park. This is in addition to specimen trees, which have already been planted as part of the scheme.
2. Northend Orchard: Unfortunately, this project is on hold due to COVID. With the Lock Down planned to be relaxed we will be able to progress this and start to look into the possibility of setting up a community group.
3. Allotments: CSG has completed the clearance works at Windmill Road Allotments and the site is now with the Estates Team. They are now looking to make plots available for the community.
4. Grass cutting of verges: With is underway on a project to map all these areas and to upload this data onto Cadcorp maps. A set of maps has been created showing all the areas we left uncut through the summer. This information now needs to be captured on a new mapping layer on Cadcorp. Work is underway with IT to create the layer, and capture the data/information. Once this has been completed enable us to plan better and resource accordingly. Once this has been completed it will we can look at the possibility of establishing more areas and trying to link them all up to create corridors.
5. Wildflower Areas/Meadows: The update for this is much the same as above with us mapping these and trying to create corridors rather than just having loads of isolated pockets which individual while nice are not practical. Once they are all linked up, we are hopefully that this will create wildlife corridors across the urban landscape.
6. Other projects:
 - Solitary bee project-
For the last 4 years, we have been part of <https://www.masonbees.co.uk/> a project that intends on

increasing numbers of mason bees, as well as other solitary bees (Leaf cutter bees). We will be expanding this project to Tring and Berkhamsted. With houses planning to be installed in Canal Fields Park in Berkhamsted and in the Memorial Garden in Tring and the possible installation of one in Douglas Gardens EPD in Berkhamsted.

- Pollinator friendly planting-More areas being planted (Douglas Gardens, Tring Memorial garden, Gadebridge Park). More housing areas (especially new housing projects) directed towards pollinator friendly planting. A reduction in annual bedding to be replaced with more sustainable, pollinator friendly planting.

8.2 Tree Planting

Throughout January and February over 1300 trees have been planted as part of the Tree Planting Strategy, as well as separate projects. Of the trees planted, 915 were whips (2-3 year old trees) - these were all mixed native species including Hazel, Holly, Cherry, Hornbeam, Blackthorn, Hawthorn and Apple. A fence will be erected to protect the whips from unwanted attention, which can be removed after 5 -7 years. 210 trees were 'small' and 188 were 'standard' (2-3 metres tall).

- Gadebridge Park
 - 500 whips
 - 15 standard Cherry trees
- Keens Field
 - 415 whips
- Coronation Fields,
 - 30 standard trees – mixed species (Maple, Birch, Cherry, Lime, Rowan)
- Leys Road open space
 - 210 small fruit trees - to extend the area of existing trees within the space that already included some Apple and Cherry species. We've added further Apple and Cherry varieties and included Pear, Greengage and Plum. This will also be fenced in the short term. When available, the fruit can be picked as required by local residents.
- New Bunkers Park cemetery
 - 26 native standard trees
- Verge hardening schemes
 - 12 Standard trees
- Northchurch - funded by Nash Mills Parish Council
 - 3 Willows by the canal
 - 2 replacement trees
- Highway and Housing locations across the borough
 - Over 100 standard trees.

Between now and 2025 another 1000 native whips will be planted in Gadebridge Park combined with 30 more Standard trees, and 2000 whips in Bunkers Park. Highway and Housing tree planting will continue, subject to funding. Informal fruit tree planting will be progressed at Bunkers Park, close to the existing Hazel woodland.

This tree planting has been publicised through a press release. Signage is also in the process of being created which ultimately will be put by tree planting sites to signpost to our website, which will explain the progress being made and the borough's plans in more detail.

8.3 New Trees and Woodlands Policy

The new Trees and Woodlands Policy was recommended for approval by Members at the Strategic Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny committee in February. The policy contains information about the management of public trees and also guidance for residents as to how they can manage their own trees.

The previous policy was published in 2015. The new policy recognises the role that tree management will play within the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. It also introduces the CAVAT (Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees) valuation system, which enables a monetary value to be placed on a tree. Where damage or destruction of public trees occurs, we will seek full compensation from those involved to the full CAVAT value. Residents are therefore advised to check with our Trees and Woodlands team before undertaking any planned tree works.

In addition to the full policy document, a shorter summary document which contains policy statements and answers to common tree issues is also available on the website for residents in the hope that they refer to this before submitting an enquiry to the Trees and Woodlands department.

9. External Workstream

9.1 Biodiversity Baseline

The Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) subgroup on Biodiversity, identified that there is a need to develop the next steps that the group can take together in order to increase biodiversity across the county.

With habitats and wildlife remaining under pressure from pollution, pesticides, and loss of suitable land (amongst other things), there is a clear need to establish where we are as a County with regards to biodiversity.

A county-wide biodiversity baseline is the HCCSP's first step in forming an understanding of where we could develop strategic sites for biodiversity and ensure that gains from developments are maintained within Hertfordshire and as close to the development site as possible. This baseline will act as the foundation of our exploration into maximising these opportunities.

The objectives of the baseline are:

- To establish a county-wide biodiversity baseline to understand the state of biodiversity in Hertfordshire. All land will be surveyed during this baseline assessment, not just council land.

- For areas of land to receive a biodiversity unit score, to allow us to easily illustrate future increases or decreases in biodiversity in the future
- Production of a detailed report from the contractor that carries out the auditing and access to all data collected

Once this work is completed and we have a county-wide baseline and a consistent measuring tool, we can then look towards mapping specific opportunities for increasing biodiversity. Whether we do this work together through the HCCSP on a county-wide basis, or on a more localised basis will be determined in the future.

The cost to each local authority is £4000 and has already been agreed through all members of the HCCSP. The contract is out for tender and should be awarded by the end of June. The finalised reports are expected to be provided within the 2021/22 financial year.

10. Hertfordshire County Council - Green Spaces Audit

Hertfordshire County Council will be using the company CMS to carry out an audit of all the council-owned green spaces in Hertfordshire. We will be able to request that any of our green spaces are included in this, not just large sites, and the information will be provided to us for free. The Sustainable Hertfordshire team are funding this work.

A dedicated team will visit the sites to survey them and suggest ecological improvements that could improve the areas biodiversity. It is expected that most changes will be suggested at the boundaries of existing sites so that recreational activities will not be affected. Suggested changes could include mowing changes, woodland planting, hedgerow planting, pollinator friendly changes, etc. This work will complement the baseline audit that HCCSP are working on. The surveys are expected to be carried out over the summer. It is expected that the information will be ready by autumn/ winter 2021.

10.1 Hertfordshire Tree Canopy Information

Hertfordshire County Council are working alongside volunteers on a desk-based GIS project to map the percentage of tree canopy cover for each ward. They will be providing this information to us for free.

This information will help us to set goals and standards – for example, we could state that we want each ward to have a minimum of 20% tree cover and use this with our tree planting targets.

10.2 External Tree Reports

We have appointed Treeconomics, the biggest urban tree specialists in the sector, to carry out two pieces of work for us. This work will be carried out in 2021-22 Quarter 1.

10.3 Biodiversity Strategy

In order to fully utilise the forthcoming ecological information from the HCCSP biodiversity baseline, the HCC biodiversity audit and canopy cover data, the external tree reports and our internal wildflower mapping work, we will be creating a Biodiversity strategy.

The creation of a dedicated strategy will help us to plan future work and how this could be funded via the Carbon and Biodiversity Offset Fund and the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) income.

It has been highlighted by officers that land availability is a concern and so part of the strategy may be to look at purchasing areas of land. This will be possible through the BNG income.

We will be liaising with Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) in order to create an effective strategy.

As part of the development of this strategy we will be exploring how we can engage with the public on this topic. This could involve community initiatives, working with schools, hosting events, establishing community groups, providing resources, running campaigns, etc. This public engagement work could also include surveying residents to gauge public opinions for activities such as grass cutting.

We will also explore providing additional training and resources to Clean, Safe and Green team members who carry out grounds maintenance but may not be aware of key plant species not to mow – such as orchids.

10.4 iTree Eco Inventory Report

Using a software model called iTree, Treeconomics are able to measure the structure and composition of Dacorum's council-owned trees and urban forests. They then calculate the benefits and ecosystem services they provide, and value them in monetary terms. This inventory will provide estimates of the ecosystem services provided by our trees, including air quality improvement, avoided stormwater run-off and most significantly to our Climate Emergency work, carbon storage. The carbon storage figure will be used to offset part of the borough's carbon footprint and is an important piece of our work to get us to net-zero emissions as an organisation by 2030.

Detailed information on species composition, and pest and disease resilience will also be detailed. The inventory report incorporates CAVAT information, and will help us to have clean data moving forwards. All of which will help to provide an evidence based approach in the development of informed urban forestry programs, management plans and projects.

Hertfordshire County Council have worked with Treeconomics to obtain this data for all of their highways land.

10.5 Tree Planting Strategy - Opportunity Mapping Report

Treeconomics will use a variety of data, including GIS, to identify hotspots for potential new tree planting. Hotspots are typically areas with low tree canopy cover, high levels of pollution, high social deprivation, or with an increased risk of flooding. They will work with us to generate a map, showing those areas most desirable for planting. This report will help us to focus future tree planting in the areas where there is the most need and least tree cover.

The outcome will be a detailed ward by ward report detailing potential and actual plantable space on public and private land and an indexed heatmap of tree planting opportunity. A set of all the GIS layers used to build up the map will be provided.

This information will be highly important, not only to help plan future tree planting work, but also to use as evidence in the event of applying for external funding or working with other organisations, local councils, community groups, etc.

11. Internal Corporate progress

The focus has been on commencing recruitment to the Sustainability Officer agreed by Cabinet and Council in the 2021/22 budget and in providing training and information to staff and also to members in the near future. Further detail is set out in Appendix Two.

11.1 Sustainability Officer

Approval has been provided for the recruitment of a Sustainability Officer who will report to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme Lead Officer. The new role will provide support for the delivery of all future CEE projects and work-streams.

11.2 Staff Update Session

In November, during a virtual staff update session, a presentation was delivered to give all staff members an overview of the Climate and Ecological Emergency work stream. It is envisioned that this update will happen several times a year to increase staff engagement with the work being carried out.

11.3 Carbon Literacy Training (CLT)

Local authority specific Carbon Literacy Training sessions were offered to the Corporate Officers Group, all members of the CEE sub-groups and any other members of staff put forward by COG. This training was to ensure that our key decision makers are sufficiently equipped with an understanding around the causes and impacts of climate change, as well as solutions from a local authority perspective.

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Action Programs. The training is a certificated 8 hour all-day course split into four units. It was delivered via APSE virtually using Teams.

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Unit 3 - Climate Change Action

Unit 4 - Influence from the frontline

In December, over 40 members of staff took on the training, including Dacorum's new CEO. Claire is the first CEO from a local borough council to have received this training. Due to high demand a third date has also been added for April which will bring us up to over 60 staff members trained. As a substantial percentage of the workforce will have been trained, this means we can explore getting the accreditation of a 'carbon literate organisation'.

The Carbon Literacy Project are currently developing a Councillor tailored version of this training and once this is developed we will work with APSE to offer these sessions to Members.

11.4 Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (CEE Strategy)

The Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy (CEE Strategy) is currently being drafted, ready for submission for consideration by the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee on 7 July 2021 and for approval by Cabinet on 20 July 2021.

The intention would be for the CEE Strategy to be publicised, with a programme of community engagement taking place from September. This release date is purposefully scheduled to be ahead of the climate change COP26 talks which are taking place in the UK in November - it is anticipated that leading up to these talks there will be a great deal of public interest in the Climate Emergency and the Council's environmental plans.

ISO 14001 Accreditation Addendum

In order to help manage its Environmental Management System (EMS), Dacorum Borough Council decided to work to gain ISO 14001 accreditation, which it first achieved in 2013.

ISO 14001 accreditation specifies the requirements for an EMS that an organization can use to enhance its environmental performance. ISO 14001 is intended for use by an organization seeking to manage its environmental responsibilities in a systematic manner that contributes to the environmental pillar of sustainability.

Due to the level of internal and external auditing required to meet this standard, maintaining ISO 14001 accreditation is highly time-consuming. It is predicted that this takes up nearly 60 officer days annually. Historically the Environmental Sustainability Officer was responsible for managing the ISO 14001 accreditation, however this officer left Dacorum in 2018 and was not replaced.

ISO14001 Annual Cost.						
	Officers	Hours	Unit cost (per hour)	Total	Saving	Comments
Paperwork and Core EMS Documents.	AD	70	£50	£3,500	Non cashable	
Internal Audits	Various	91	£30	£2,730	Non cashable	Two officers conducting 13 audits a year. Half day audit, half day write up.
External Audit Preparation	AD/Site managers	91	£35	£3,185	Non cashable	
External Audits	Various	98	£40	£3,920	Non cashable	7 audit days a year. EMS lead and site manager attend, so 2 officers at all times.
EMS Mgt meeting/Scrutiny session	EMS officer and others	56	£40	£2,240	Non cashable	OSC yearly, Mgt session annually, Meetings every 2 months
		Days	Unit cost (Per day)			
External Audit Fees		7	£1,020	£7,140	Not budgeted for	
				£22,715		

In 2019, Members supported the declaration of a Climate Emergency - as part of this declaration, Dacorum pledged to become net-zero as an organisation by 2030, as well as support the borough to lower its overall emissions. The Climate and Sustainability Programme Lead Officer was hired in 2020 in order to help work on this ambitious declaration.

In order to guide the delivery of the declaration and pledges, a comprehensive Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan was created which spans through a variety of departments and lists a wide range of actions. This document will be monitored and updated regularly as work progresses. The action plan effectively replaces and greatly supersedes the objectives of the ISO 14001 – which is a small set of around six objectives. The action plan will aim to go further and faster, and would be regularly monitored and updated throughout the year, rather than being reviewed once a year.

Due to the shifting emphasis to carbon emissions, there needs to be an increased focus on measurement of emissions and improving energy efficiency in order to ensure the progressive reduction of emissions. This will need to be monitored and reported on. This is not accounted for under ISO 14001, which renders this accreditation out of date and as such means that it delivers relatively little.

Due to ISO 14001 being so time-consuming and labour-intensive, this drain on officer resources prohibits more meaningful action taking place. Although these are not cashable savings, the savings to officer time, would result in more time that could be allocated to sustainability work. Due to the urgent work of the Climate Emergency, and the need for officer time to be used wisely, it is proposed that we ask Cabinet to consider dropping ISO 14001 accreditation, effective immediately. To confirm, Dacorum's EMS would still be in place, as this is independent of ISO 14001 accreditation.

ISO 14001 is a generic standard that can fit any business or organisation - it is not tailored for local government and very few local authorities in the UK have ISO accreditation. No other Hertfordshire local authorities work to this standard.

APSE have been consulted on this and their advice was as follows:

“It is up to each individual council to manage their own environmental targets in whichever way is more appropriate for them, ISO 14001 accreditation can act as a useful tool and reporting mechanism, however isn't a requirement. We do generally make the point that while data gathering and reporting is important, it shouldn't be overdone at the expense of further action..”

Appendix One: Further Background Information

1 International and National context

1.1 United Nations

Secretary-General António Guterres on December 12 2020 delivered a speech at the United Nations Climate Ambition Summit 2020 taking place virtually with world leaders invited to make pre-recorded statements outlining their new and ambitious commitments.

World leaders should declare a "[climate emergency](#)" in their countries to spur action to avoid catastrophic global warming, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in opening remarks at a climate summit on Saturday. On the fifth anniversary of the [2015 Paris Agreement](#), more than 70 world leaders are due to address the one-day virtual meeting in the hope of galvanizing countries into stricter actions on global warming emissions.

Guterres said that current commitments across the globe did not go "far from enough" to limit temperature rises. "Can anybody still deny that we are facing a dramatic emergency?" Guterres said. "That is why today, I call on all leaders worldwide to declare a State of Climate Emergency in their countries until carbon neutrality is reached."

"So far, the members of the G20 are spending 50% more in their stimulus and rescue packages on sectors linked to fossil fuel production and consumption, than on low-carbon energy," Guterres said. "This is unacceptable. The trillions of dollars needed for COVID recovery is money that we are borrowing from future generations," he said. "We cannot use these resources to lock in policies that burden future generations with a mountain of debt on a broken planet," he added.

China and India vowed to advance their commitment to lower carbon pollution at the summit. President Xi Jinping was one of the first leaders to address the virtual conference and he said China will boost its installed capacity of wind and solar power to more than 1,200 gigawatts over the next decade. Xi also said China will increase its share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to around 25% during the same period.

1.2 European Union

European Union leaders meeting in Brussels on 10 December 2020 agreed to make the currently 27-member bloc carbon neutral by 2050. This equates to a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the next decade by 55% in order to be able to achieve zero carbon by 2050.

The European Green Deal includes:

- A €100bn Just Transition Mechanism to help countries still heavily dependent on fossil fuels and "carbon-intensive processes" to move to renewable energy sources
- Proposals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 50% of 1990 levels or even lower by 2030 - instead of the current target of a 40% cut

- A law that would set the EU "on to an irreversible path to climate neutrality" by 2050
- A plan to promote a more circular economy - a system designed to eliminate waste - that would address more sustainable products as well as a "farm to fork" strategy to improve the sustainability of food production and distribution

2 Community Green Grants: Successful Projects

1. Community Garden and Bike Project, Apex

Project overview: "Community Garden / Get on your bike" is a two-stage project to help Active Dacorum Hub become a 'greener' venue and for Apex and its partner organisations to reduce their carbon footprint.

Stage 1 will be to create a 'Community Garden' outside the Active Dacorum Hub – originally starting with two planters but hopefully growing over time. This would provide an opportunity for the surrounding community to grow local food.

Stage 2 involves installing a shipping container by the Hub which would be multipurpose – it would provide a secure storage space for visitor's bikes as well as community bike hire, an area to host a bike repair scheme, and an area to store community garden equipment.

The shipping container would be stored next to an existing shipping container and modified so that it can harvest rainwater, have a grass roof, living walls and big hotels. Lessons learned from this could then be supplied to the existing shipping containers.

As part of the condition of funding, we proposed that Apex also offer bike confidence classes, which they have agreed to.

2. Mixed Meadow Grazing Project, Sunnyside Rural Trust

Project overview: A 1.5-acre plot of land that will be converted into an area of high biodiversity value through a variety of conservation management techniques – such as grazing and using scythes. Community partnerships with various local groups and schools would be carried out, along with regular volunteer surveying.

3. Allotment wilding project, Chaulden Allotments

Project overview: Working with Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, this group plan to support plot-holders through a variety of educational methods in order to help them learn more about eco-friendly gardening, how to improve the biodiversity of their plots, encourage crop-sharing and improve plot-holders overall gardening knowledge.

The group are keen on establishing a blue-print that can be rolled out to other local allotment groups. The work will involve educational resources and interactive sessions.

4. Community Fridge, Viking Fitness

Project overview: The Community Fridge project will involve a team of

volunteers regularly collecting food from local supermarkets and other food businesses that is still good to eat but would otherwise be thrown away. This food is then brought to a central location and be made available for anyone who wants it.

Food waste is a high source of carbon emissions and so this has a high environmental benefit, as well a strong community-focused one also.

5. Planters and local active travel engagement, Boho Boxmoor

Project overview: There are two elements to this project...

- To install two planters on Boxmoor high street which will provide an opportunity for communal gardening initiatives, as well as improve the aesthetics of the area.
- To have QR code signage in these planters, as well as throughout the local area which will direct towards the community group's website and encourage people to discover a variety of local walks. These routes will be updated regularly in order to tie in with seasonal activities. The aim is to encourage the Boxmoor community to explore the local environment through active travel and learn about its ecology.

6. Wildflower verge, Northchurch Parish Council (NPC)

Project overview: To convert the 700m roadside verge that runs between Dudswell and Cow Roast into a wildflower verge and associated management related to this. This area is maintained by NPC and the project would be in partnership with Sunnyside Rural Trust and involve a number of local volunteers.

7. '56 Club' - Gardening Club, Wigginton Parish Council

Project overview: The goal of the project is to encourage 56 households in Wigginton (10% of the areas population) to sign up to the gardening club. Seeds would be provided to each family that signs up, and information and resources would be shared also. Project plans include educational talks, a seed swap, a produce exchange stand and use of a spare allotment plot for those with no growing space at home.

3 Corporate Progress

3.1 Sustainability Officer

Approval has been provided for the recruitment of a Sustainability Officer who will report to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme Lead Officer. The new role will provide support for the delivery all future CEE projects and work-streams.

3.2 Staff Update Session

In November, during a virtual staff update session, a presentation was delivered to give all staff members an overview of the Climate and Ecological Emergency work stream. It is envisioned that this update will happen several times a year to increase staff engagement with the work being carried out.

3.3 Carbon Literacy Training (CLT)

Local authority specific Carbon Literacy Training sessions were offered to the Corporate Officers Group, all members of the CEE sub-groups and any other members of staff put forward by COG. This training was to ensure that our key decision makers are sufficiently equipped with an understanding around the causes and impacts of climate change, as well as solutions from a local authority perspective.

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The Carbon Literacy Project are currently developing a Councillor tailored version of this training and once this is developed we will work with APSE to offer these sessions to Members.



‘Learning from Lockdown’ Survey: Key Findings and Recommendations

Executive Summary

The ‘Learning from Lockdown’ sustainability survey provided us valuable insights into a range of different areas as to how Dacorum can help mitigate the Climate Emergency locally.

Dacorum will need to use its ‘spheres of influence’ to lead behavioural change through enabling, encouraging, educating, engaging and leading by example. This will require a range of campaigns, initiatives, schemes, policy changes, events and training to help achieve this.

This report outlines the key findings from the survey as well as a range of suggested recommended actions to take and include in the Climate Emergency Strategy that is being developed.

Many of the recommendations involve both potential internal change within Dacorum Borough Council as well as propositions for engaging with local organisations. One key recommendation is for Dacorum to produce a ‘**Green Business Charter**’ (GBC) for local organisations to voluntarily sign up to. This would outline a range of initiatives that local organisations could adopt in order to create a low emission and more sustainable work place. The GBC would provide a useful way of having a cohesive approach on these matters with local organisations, as well as providing support to those who are not sure how to have a positive environmental impact. The GBC would include a pledge of aiming to be a net-zero carbon emissions organisation by 2030. The suggested actions in the GBC would help to provide a pathway for how organisations can get there and be more sustainable overall.

Dacorum’s newly-formed Sustainable Transport group will play a key role in putting together and delivering a work plan. Many recommendations directly relate to areas this group could take forward – for example, establishing an electric car pool scheme for staff, developing an internal Green Transport policy, installing more bike racks and cycle lanes throughout the borough, and many more. Encouraging residents to cycle more will play an important role in reducing the borough’s overall emissions and improving air quality.

A crucial role that Dacorum will play is in developing campaigns and communicating with residents. A Climate Emergency Communication work plan will be developed in order to capture key information and messages that will need to be delivered to residents.

Lockdown showed us all the value of social interaction and developing a communications work plan that is full of events, training, presentations and promoting volunteering with community groups will be a significant part of the sustainability work – when it is safe to roll these initiatives out. For example – hosting Repair Café events, establishing Community Fridges to help reduce food waste, a ‘Library of Thing’s, as well as creating Community Gardens and Orchards too.

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Introduction

In summer 2019, Dacorum Borough Council (DBC), declared a Climate Emergency following a report released by the International Panel on Climate Change that called for an urgent global response and recommended that we have until 2030 to limit carbon emissions in order to avoid catastrophic impacts that global warming of 1.5°C above pre-industrial levels would cause.

During July and August 2020, DBC ran a six week sustainability survey to help understand how certain behaviours changed locally as a result of the safety measures brought about by COVID-19.

Several of the lifestyle changes that people made are also essential for helping to tackle the Climate Emergency. DBC wanted to understand how to positively embrace these changes within Dacorum, so that instead of going ‘back to normal’, we can move forwards to a better, greener future.

The survey was broken down into several key areas: transport and commuting, cycling, food, resources, energy and water use. 1500 residents took part. The full results have been published and are available to read [here](#); it is recommended that this report is read alongside these results.

Dacorum has set a target of getting the council’s operations to net-zero carbon emissions by 2030 – however, DBC is only responsible for 1% of the emissions in the borough. Therefore in addition to this, DBC will need to also work alongside residents, communities and businesses to help them reduce their impacts so as to reduce the emissions of the overall borough as much as possible.

A number of the changes required to reduce emissions can be brought back to behavioural changes. Dacorum will need to use its ‘spheres of influence’ to lead behavioural change through enabling, encouraging, educating, engaging and leading by example. This will require a range of campaigns, initiatives, schemes, events and training to help achieve this.

This report outlines a range of key findings and recommendations based on the survey results which will help shape elements of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan, which is being released in 2021.

1. Respondent Demographic:

1.1 Nearly 1500 residents took part in the survey and 9% of these were Dacorum employees.

1.1.1 This shows that many of the answers provided are relevant for us to consider internally.

1.2 With an average participant age of 54, there was lower engagement across younger age brackets

1.2.1 This should be kept in mind when interpreting the results throughout the report.

1.2.2 When rolling out public consultations or surveys in the future, look for ways to engage with younger demographics. This could include working with schools and colleges, advertising through different social media platforms, etc. To engage with older audiences posters could be used at community centres.

1.3 The population of Dacorum is approximately 155,000 with the population of Hemel Hempstead making up around 63% of this; Berkhamsted 11% and Tring around 9%

1.3.1 As such, the demographic of the participants is suitably represented.

1.4 There were nearly as many retired people who completed the survey as those in work.

1.4.1 This should be kept in mind when interpreting the results throughout the report.

2. Transport and Commuting

Transport is the largest emitter of greenhouse gas emissions in the UK and is responsible for over a quarter of the UK's greenhouse gases. Private vehicle use, especially car use, makes up the bulk of transport emissions.

Climate targets require a reduction in car use by 2030 of between 20% - 60%, depending on the speed of the switch to electric vehicles. In the UK, commuting is responsible for around a fifth of all miles travelled. Changes are needed to make walking, cycling and public transport more attractive to people than driving.

During lockdown, many people began working from home; travelling by car less, walking and cycling more and socialising differently via online platforms such as Zoom.

Transport - Key Findings and Recommendations:

2.1 The three most important benefits to participants of cars not being on the road were air quality (65%), less emissions due to the Climate Emergency (55%) and quieter more peaceful roads (51%). Over half of participants were also concerned about safety in general – there was notably more concern for cyclists and pedestrians than children playing in the street. When asked to give additional comments around the benefits of less cars, 43% related to the positive impacts on wildlife.

2.1.1 This information highlights the need for the Climate Emergency work to tie in closely with the Air Quality work that both Dacorum and Hertfordshire County Council are doing. We must ensure that any campaigns and communications stemming from the Air Quality work are included as actions within the Climate Emergency Communications Strategy and have a cohesive approach.

2.1.2 When designing behavioural change communications and campaigns to encourage reducing car use, these key benefits will be heavily used in order to maximise engagement. These could be incorporated into the Climate Emergency Communications Plan.

- One potential behavioural campaign to explore developing could be based around the slogan “*Don’t be idle; walk scoot cycle*” – which encompasses all elements of reducing car use and idling, alongside encouraging active travel. This could be heavily promoted with residents, especially in schools and businesses.

2.1.3 When developing communications relating to Biodiversity, reminding people about the benefits that they witnessed for wildlife from reduced cars could be a useful emotive tool.

2.2 Approximately 9 out of 10 people want to see less cars on roads in the future. Only 2% of participants disagreed with this.

2.2.1 This demonstrates that there is a strong appetite for more people to take up active travel and use public or shared transport. A cohesive Sustainable Transport group needs to be established and create strategies and work-plans that will help to deliver the changes needed.

2.3 Around two thirds of participants work within Dacorum (14% of participants work from home), with many working in various locations both in and outside the borough. Nearly half of participants can travel to and from work in under half an hour. The top three areas for commuting to were Hemel Town Centre (11%), Mayland's Industrial Estate (5%) and Apsley and Corner Hall (3%).

This information demonstrates that walking, cycling, lift-sharing or using public transport to get to work could be feasible for a large number of residents.

2.3.1 Focused campaign work could be done with the companies that are based in Hemel Town Centre, Mayland's Industrial Estate and Apsley and Corner Hall in order to encourage their staff to explore alternative travel options.

2.3.2 These statistics can be used when developing an Active Travel / Sustainable Transport work-plan or strategy. This work could include both behavioural change communications, and initiatives as well as physical changes such as placement of cycle lanes and bike racks.

2.4 Over a third of participants travel outside of Dacorum to get to their place of work. 38% of these travel to London, 32% stay within Hertfordshire, 15% to Buckinghamshire, 4% to Bedfordshire and 4% elsewhere.

2.4.1 When developing a Sustainable Transport work plan, we should collaborate with Hertfordshire County Council to investigate the public transport links currently available and work with the necessary organisations to research and improve links to the most popular areas that people commute to – London, Herts and Bucks.

2.4.2 We should work with residents and businesses to encourage more regular working from home where this is a suitable option.

2.5 The 'methods of commuting' answers indicate there will be an increase in the number of people who will be planning on walking to work (2%), cycling (4%) or using an electric bike or scooter (4%). The number of people using a bus is predicted to stay the same. There will be a decline in those using the train (2%) and driving (5%) – the additional comments indicate that this is mostly because of more opportunities for working from home.

2.5.1 Developing an annual transport survey to help monitor how residents are commuting / travelling would be useful so that we can identify changes and understand where to focus campaigns to help people transition to active or public transport.

2.5.2 Campaigns could encourage people to pledge to / adopt the method of 'walking if their destination is less than a mile, or cycling if it is less than 3 miles'.

- 2.5.3 Infrastructure should be provided to help encourage this in the form of sufficient paths, crossings and cycle racks.
- 2.5.4 The majority of additional comments around commuting methods were to complain about how unreliable, inconvenient and expensive public transport is.
- 2.6 Over three quarters of participants said that they will be using video conferencing such as through Teams or Zoom to reduce the need for external meetings. Before COVID-19, this would have been unheard of and shows how quickly society can adapt when they need to. It is important that this change is harnessed.**
- 2.6.1 As part of an internal Green Transport Policy, Dacorum could encourage staff to use video conferencing as a priority wherever possible rather than have external meetings, conferences and training.
- Within Dacorum hold training sessions or circulate educational materials (such as 'how to' videos and 'hacks') for members of staff to show them how to fully maximise the potential for video conferencing to minimise the need for external meetings.
- 2.6.2 Campaigns and initiatives encouraging local businesses to utilise video conferencing could be developed, highlighting the cost savings for hiring conference centres, catering, business mileage, etc.
- 2.7 Only 1 in 5 participants regularly need a car whilst at work. Another 1 in 5 need a car occasionally with the remaining 58% not needing a car at work at all. It would be anticipated that the rise in external meetings taking place through video conferencing would reduce the number of people who need their own cars occasionally.**
- 2.7.1 Dacorum could consider the introduction of a car and bike pool scheme for those staff members who require transport whilst at work but do not want to commute in with a vehicle. This would help to support people leaving their cars at home in favour of active or public transport. These pool cars should be electric vehicles and e-bikes so that they have as few emissions as possible.
- Research could be carried out as to whether this pool scheme could be made available for residents also.
- 2.7.2 Dacorum could work with local organisations to encourage them to have similar schemes. Especially those with large numbers of employees who are likely to need transport whilst at work. This would be a suggestion for the Green Business Charter.
- Government funding is available for businesses to install EV chargepoints. When promoting these ideas to businesses, Dacorum should raise awareness of and encourage businesses to utilise this funding.
- 2.7.3 These statistics could be used whilst shaping Active / Sustainable Transport communications campaigns – e.g. “Our survey indicated that 3 out of 5 participants do not need a car whilst they are at work.”

2.8 1 in 3 employees would be willing to car share on their commute – with an equal split between ‘Yes’ and ‘Sometimes’. Despite this, there are currently only 4% of people car sharing.

2.8.1 To help raise the number of people sharing journeys, there are car sharing apps and schemes available that Dacorum could partner with to endorse and promote locally both internally with DBC Staff, as well as externally with organisations and residents. This initiative could be included as part of a Sustainable Transport work plan.

- Of those who would be happy to car share, 40% need a car whilst at work – this further supports the need for having a fleet of pool cars available.

2.9 40% of participants would not car share, but also do not need a car whilst at work. Over a third of the additional comments indicate that the key reason for this is due to concerns over flexibility and shift patterns. Around 10% of those who said no to car sharing did so due to needing to do the school run.

2.9.1 In order to encourage these people to take up either car-sharing or active travel, initiatives such as flexi-working and working-from-home could be encouraged. These are important factors in ensuring staff have lower emission commutes because it allows people to use alternative greener methods of travel (e.g. walking or cycling may take them longer, catching a bus or train may mean they arrive past their regular start time), it also allows parents to fit in the school run without having to use their cars as frequently. Additionally, the same journey can have fewer emissions if the vehicle is not caught up, or adding to, traffic congestion by travelling at peak times.

2.9.2 Flexible working and working-from-home is something that Dacorum often embraces well with its own staff, however is not necessarily fully embraced by all managers / departments. This could be addressed within the introduction of an internal Green Travel Policy to empower staff in understanding what their available choices are.

2.9.3 Local businesses could be encouraged to also adopt similar Green Transport policies.

2.9.4 When developing campaigns to promote car sharing to individuals and businesses an emphasis could be put on the flexibility of such schemes. It would be beneficial to partner with an existing app or website that will help to provide people with this proven, flexible and trustworthy approach – with case studies where possible.

2.10 68% of participants were able to work from home during lockdown. 23% stated that they could not do their job from home – this rises to 40% when including those who were furloughed and worked from home ‘sometimes’.

2.10.1 However, when comparing the barriers people gave for not working at home more frequently over 50% said it was because of the type of work carried out. This shows a clear difference and highlights that there is an opportunity for more people to be able to work from home more regularly.

2.10.2 Where suitable, Dacorum could carry out a review of internal processes that might be preventing more home working and find simple ways to alter these in order to improve levels of flexibility and the opportunity for more home working. Such a review could investigate all areas of sustainability around the processes (e.g. paper-use).

2.11 The three other barriers to home working all had an equal number of people (16%) give them as reasons. This included that their employer will not allow home working; no suitable workspace at home; and preferring being around people.

2.11.1 This suggests that more workplaces need to embrace the opportunities that working from home can have both for staff and the environment by reducing carbon emissions and make policy changes where necessary to reflect this.

2.11.2 In the roles for which it would be suitable, optional regular home working could be considered for staff who often do not need a physical reason to be in the workplace. In order to help create an open dialogue between staff and their line managers regarding this area, this discussion could perhaps become part of the internal PDR process to ensure that home working is discussed and agreed upon, at least annually if not more regularly in order to recognise the fact that personal and work situations change.

- These situations can change throughout the year as to whether home working suits staff lifestyles or not can change for a range of reasons – this can depend on a staff member’s living situation, commute, childcare, pet care, having multiple jobs, hobbies, socialising aspects, etc. Commuting or working from home is a personal preference that should be balanced in order to tailor both the best needs for the individual and the organisation as much as possible.
 - For example, one colleague may enjoy coming into the office in the summer as they can cycle in more easily, but would prefer to work from home in the winter. Whereas another colleague may prefer being at home in the summer but their house is expensive to heat all day in the winter and so they would prefer to come into the office for those months instead. It is accepted that the requirements of the service will always be part of such considerations.

2.11.3 Dacorum can further support this by providing any equipment or IT support required to ensure home working can take place.

2.12 For the 17% of people who go into work because they prefer being around people – this suggests that some people may choose to work from home more if there were more community-based groups for them to regularly be involved with.

2.12.1 This highlights the need to develop and/or heavily promote sustainable community groups, classes and regular volunteering opportunities – this social aspect will be an integral part of the Dacorum Climate Action Network when this is launched. For example, making ‘green gym’ volunteering groups available that people can go to on their lunchbreaks or after work.

- Dacorum should not only encourage our own staff to take part, but also encourage local work places to join in and promote it to their staff, as well as promote to residents in general.

2.13 For the 33% of people who do not have a suitable workspace at home and prefer being around people, there does not need to be a choice between simply being at home or in the workplace.

- 2.13.1 Shared office spaces can be rented which could be closer to home and so avoid the commute, whilst also being a professional work space allowing people to concentrate but also socialise and see others. Socialising can play an important part of mental health and so this could be a useful situation for some. Shared office spaces are likely to become more useful as many companies may need or choose to close buildings permanently following COVID for financial reasons.
- 2.13.2 Dacorum could suggest and encourage using shared office spaces to staff who live further away but struggle working from home. This could form part of an internal Green Travel policy.
- 2.13.3 As Dacorum is largely seen as a commuter town (around a third of participants work outside of Dacorum) there could be many residents who would find renting an office space a useful option if they are no longer required to travel to their usual workplaces. Dacorum could support this by:
- Creating and promoting a list of potential offices within Dacorum through the new Climate Emergency website.
 - Potentially own office spaces to rent out to residents. This could become an income stream for the council with the added benefits that there would be lower travel emissions within the borough and that Dacorum would be in direct control of ensuring the office is managed as energy efficiently and sustainably as possible.
 - This could be an especially important consideration for the Hemel Garden Communities work as the additional homes being built are over an hour and a half walk away from Hemel train station and therefore less suitable for encouraging active transport for commuters.
- 2.13.4 Dacorum could encourage local businesses to also embrace home working through the above measures – this could be included within a Green Business Charter.

2.14 Before lockdown 58% (481 participants) worked from home – ranging from once a week to full time. Answers suggest that after lockdown, this will rise to 75% (627 participants). During lockdown 77% (657 participants) worked from home and so there is only expected to be a minimal decrease. There is only a 4% increase in the number of participants working from home a full 5 days a week. The percentage difference in number of days working from home show that most will be working 3-4 days a week at home with a percentage increase of 173 – 194%.

- 2.14.1 This suggests that there will be a significant rise in the number of people who either never worked from home before or only did so once a week. This highlights that this is more of a flexible change to working patterns
- 2.14.2 These results show that lockdown has had a significant difference in sparking a paradigm shift in not only working from home, but also working to more flexible working patterns with an improvement in work/life balance, rather than a permanent new working structure of moving to all staff being at home.

3. Cycling:

Cycling is a highly efficient transport that will be a crucial part of the solution for a low-carbon future. It is one of the simplest lifestyle choices that individuals can make to reduce their carbon footprint. It also has huge benefits for their physical and mental health, finances, air quality and their neighbourhoods.

Cycling - Key Findings and Recommendations:

3.1 Half of all participants own a bike, however 16% of these owners say that their bike does not work. 14% of all participants don't have a bike, but would like one. Approximately a quarter of those who have a bike use theirs for regular travel or exercise, a quarter use it for casual leisure and the remaining half are completely disengaged from cycling regularly.

3.1.1 This suggests that promoting bike repair initiatives such as the governments voucher scheme, bike repair workshops, or signposting to 'how to' videos on Dacorum's Sustainability webpages and social media would be beneficial to residents and could be incorporated into the Climate Emergency Communications Plan.

3.1.2 Dacorum could work with organisations that help to repair old bikes and sell them affordably to the local community in order to support those who may be struggling financially to have one.

3.1.3 If Repair Cafes were held at least annually within Dacorum, people could be encouraged to bring their bikes along and have them fixed there/ learn how to fix them.

3.1.4 This highlights the need to deliver campaigns and initiatives to encourage people to use the bikes that they own, as well as encouraging people to buy one. There are a number of different organisations and initiatives Dacorum could partner with to help with this.

3.2 A third of participants cycled more over lockdown. Half did not change their behaviours. Of those who cycled more, a third of people stated their reasons as being 'exercise'; another third 'safer, quieter roads' and 23% saying that they had more time. 11% said better air quality and only 2% saying because of money.

Exercise was the top answer given by 50% of people when asked what their main reasons were for cycling. 20% used cycling as a way to spend time with friends and family, with another 18% saying that it is better for the environment.

3.2.1 This demonstrates that when running campaigns and initiatives to encourage people to use their bikes more, the best angle to use will be exercise and social fitness with the environment being a secondary reason. Money savings should not be used as a tool to encourage this behavioural change.

3.2.2 Dacorum published a Cycling Strategy in 2009, this could be reviewed and updated where necessary by the Sustainable Transport group whilst working closely with Hertfordshire County Council and any other relevant local organisations.

3.3 Over a third of people said that the key barrier to them being able to cycle more was because they were worried about road safety. Linking this to another question where participants asked what they liked most about having less cars on the road - 51% enjoyed the more peaceful and quiet roads and 43% thought that the streets were safer for cyclists and pedestrians

3.3.1 Safer roads for cyclists is clearly a key factor and looking at ways to improve road safety needs to be a key action in the Sustainable Transport work plan.

- Many additional comments in the survey results provide further information as to where residents would like to see improvements such as bike lanes.

3.3.2 These safety concerns could be highlighted in campaign work and the work done to improve road conditions could be communicated to residents.

3.3.3 An annual borough-wide transport survey could ask residents which areas they are most concerned about to ensure that we are working with the insights from the road-users.

3.4 13% of participants (200 people) said that a barrier for them not riding more is due to lack of confidence. However, looking deeper at the responses from participants who previously answered 'No I don't want a bike', the top two barriers to cycling was road safety (28% - 127 people) and because of lack of confidence (20% - 91 people).

3.4.1 This means that an estimated 1 in 5 Dacorum residents who do not want a bike is because they lack confidence – this could be resolved through increasing access to bike classes, increasing road safety, targeted campaigns.

3.5 When asked about bike classes, 23% of participants – nearly 1 in 4, said yes they would be interested in these. Two thirds of the people who said that they would be interested in bike classes already have their own bike, although 15% of these participants have a broken bike, suggesting that classes should be on bike maintenance as well as riding safely. Interestingly, 7% of people who said they would be interested in classes previously answered that they don't want a bike.

3.5.1 Dacorum could research and partner with cycling organisations to offer and heavily promote (and potentially subsidise) bike proficiency classes to help increase road confidence, then this would be likely to have a significant impact on the number of cyclists in Dacorum.

- Many local councils already offer free cycle training classes – e.g. [Cycle Confident](#) who works with many London boroughs.
- Dacorum should focus promoting these classes and skills to secondary schools to ensure that the younger generation are equipped with the confidence and knowledge to become frequent cyclists.

3.6 8% of participants are put off cycling because there are not suitable shower and changing facilities at work, with another 4% saying that there is nowhere to securely store a bike.

3.6.1 Although these numbers are not overwhelmingly high, they could be lowered if these changes were suggested to businesses in a Green Business Charter.

3.6.2 Dacorum could work with Hertfordshire County Council and the borough's primary and secondary schools to ensure that there are sufficient numbers of bike and scooter racks in order to accommodate a substantial shift to this mode of transport.

- [Cycling UK](#) are working to encourage schools to take up cycling for a range of important reasons including physical and mental health, improved air quality and for environmental benefits. They explain *"if more people cycle at peak times, local roads will be less congested. A significant proportion – around half – of traffic between 8 and 9am is caused by 'education' and by 'escort education' trips (i.e. when the sole purpose is to accompany someone else to education). Although a good many children usually walk to school, over a third are driven and very few cycle (less than 3% or so)."*

3.7 35% of those who said that they 'do not have a bike, but would like one' listed 'I cannot afford a bike' as their reason for not having one. This represents around 6% of all participants.

3.7.1 There are a range of ways that Dacorum can support with this, these should be explored and researched by the Sustainable Transport group with approved ideas being incorporated into the work plan. Potential schemes:

- Rolling out the Beryl Bike short-hire scheme
- Work place 'cycle to work' schemes and bike pools could be embedded in the Green Business Charter.
- Encourage the passing on of second-hand bikes through local reuse networks;
- Encouraging the repairing and resale of old bikes at low prices through a community scheme or organisation – e.g. [Recycle Your Cycle](#)
- Encouraging the sale of more affordable second-hand bikes, e.g. at Reuse Centres.
- Offering a council-led bike hire scheme e.g. Islington's ['Try Before You Bike'](#)
- These initiatives and campaigns could be promoted via the Climate Emergency webpages site.

3.8 Approximately two thirds of people do not think there are enough bike racks in the borough. There were 280 additional comments suggesting where people would like to see bike racks.

84% of participants think there should be more cycle lanes in Dacorum. There were 320 additional comments suggesting where people would like to see cycle lanes.

Roughly two thirds of participants think that there should be more 20mph zones throughout Dacorum. There were 324 additional comments suggesting where people would like to see 20mph zones.

3.8.1 As part of the Sustainable Transport work plan, these additional comments should all be reviewed and researched further with improvements made where necessary, whilst working in cooperation with Hertfordshire County Council and other relevant organisations.

4. 'Resources' – analysis, comments and actions:

Reducing, reusing and recycling are key behaviours that help to reduce greenhouse gas emissions by reducing energy consumption and the amount of resources that go into making products and packaging.

Resources - Key Findings and Recommendations:

4.1 In general people are more likely to give something away second-hand than take – a difference of approximately 15%. The top three methods of second-hand reuse are online (34%), charity shops (30%) and family and friends (23%).

- 4.1.1 Charity shops play a valuable function in the reuse market and is the single most used method of trading second-hand for both giving and finding. However, nearly a third more people give items to charity shops rather than buying items there - this is a concern that these shops may not be able to sell as much as they take on.
- 4.1.2 It could be useful to encourage people into shopping in charity shops more through campaigns encouraging buying second-hand. Dacorum could support this by having an informative list and/or map on our website which shows people where charity shops are and what items they accept.
- 4.1.3 To embed buying second-hand as 'normal behaviour', primary and secondary schools could be encouraged to have more swapping days for items such as clothes, toys, books and electricals.
- 4.1.4 Initiatives to promote the normalisation of the second-hand market could be encouraged. Dacorum already has successfully launched Clothes Swap events in recent years which have proven to be very popular with residents. These should be continued and potentially be run more than twice a year.
- 4.1.5 Online reuse websites and community groups such as on Facebook are viable tools in encouraging reuse and local groups could be promoted more heavily on the Dacorum website.
- 4.1.6 As car boot and jumble sales are the lowest method of reuse and clearly becoming obsolete for both giving and taking these should not be promoted in campaigns.
- 4.1.7 This information breakdown will be useful when shaping behavioural campaigns around 'reduce, reuse, recycle' within the community

4.2 Reuse centres at Household Recycling Centres are primarily used to give away second-hand items rather than find.

4.2.1 If we wanted these to become used more heavily they would need a great deal of promotion and could potentially be a project that we work with Herts County Council on.

4.3 3 out of 4 people would be interested in using a community 'library of things', with additional comments being very supportive.

4.3.1 This is a substantial amount of interest and Dacorum could investigate setting one of these up, potentially in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council.

4.4 1 in 4 people do not have the tools or equipment to repair items that are broken.

4.4.1 This further supports the proposal of initiating a community 'library of things' to help people to repair items they already own as this helps to remove this barrier and so simultaneously reduces the need for resources as well as helping to prolong the life of other items.

4.5 40% of people do not repair something because they do not know how to.

4.5.1 Community Repair events could provide help to fix these items.

4.5.2 Simple repair skill workshops or how-to videos could be promoted to help people repair standard broken things. This can be incorporated into a Sustainable Communications plan.

4.6 23% of participants would replace the item instead if it is affordable to do so.

4.6.1 Behavioural change campaigning is needed to encourage people to think not just of the financial cost of an item, but the value of the resources that went into producing it. The right thing to do is therefore to extend a products lifespan as much as possible – either by repairing it, repurposing it or giving it away to someone who will. By rolling out community events, initiatives and presentations that push these messages this will help to encourage this behaviour change.

4.7 2 out of 3 people would attend a Community Repair event – with 7% of participants telling us they would be happy to help out as a volunteer to fix items.

4.7.1 This demonstrates that there is sufficient interest in hosting events such as these and Dacorum could look at putting these on in future as part of its sustainability community work.

5. Food – analysis, comments and actions:

The food we choose to eat can make up a significant part of our individual carbon footprints.

Growing food locally reduces the carbon footprint of our food by reducing factors such as transportation, storage, and packaging. It also increases resilience for food security which is one of the key risks of climate change. A third of all the food produced in the world goes to waste. This is a huge environmental and social issue and is responsible for 11% of all global greenhouse gas emissions.

Food - Key Findings and Recommendations:

5.1 Nearly half of participants would be happy to use a food sharing app. Just over half of people would also be willing to use a business-to-person food sharing app.

5.1.1 This suggests that these apps could be promoted through campaigns and initiatives not just with people, but with local food businesses also.

5.2 Just under half of participants would be interested in having a local [‘community fridge’](#) to help reduce food waste, with 9% saying that they would be happy to volunteer to help manage a scheme like this.

5.2.1 This demonstrates that there would be sufficient interest in setting these up in Dacorum and we should look into establishing these.

- There are over 100 community fridges in the UK which already run successfully.

5.2.2 Many of the additional comments provided highlighted that the Community Fridge would need to be situated somewhere that is easily accessible, not somewhere you would have to pay for parking to be able to visit it quickly.

5.3 The percentage of participants who grew food before lockdown was 45% and the percentage of those who expect to grow food after lockdown is 66% - an increase of 21% - meaning that two thirds of Dacorum residents will be growing food locally.

5.3.1 This means that approximately 1 in 5 more people are now growing food since lockdown, which proves that lockdown had a significant positive impact in the number of people who wanted to grow their own food locally.

5.4 Interestingly, the number of people who grew food over lockdown rose to 60% and instead of the 'after' results dropping down, they rose to 66% - this shows that those who didn't grow food during lockdown will still be planning to after.

5.4.1 This indicates that these people may have been influenced by the behaviours of friends and family and want to follow their example. This might demonstrate that normalising sustainable behaviours has a trickle-down effect and is worth bearing in mind when forming behaviour changing initiatives and campaigns.

5.5 The data shows that the majority of people grow between 1-5 types of food. However, the split between the number of types of food grown shifted over lockdown. Before lockdown 76% of those who grew food would grow 1-5 types, 14% would grow 6-10 types and 10% would grow 10+ types. For after lockdown, this is expected to be 65% growing 1-5 types, 22% 6-10 types and 13% 10+ types.

5.5.1 This suggests that not only did lockdown cause people to start growing food for the first time, but for those that already did, they shifted to growing more types of food than they normally would.

5.5.2 This information can be used to support the establishment of any initiatives regarding growing local food.

5.6 There are nearly three times more people who would like to have an allotment (182), than those that do (64). 90% of those who would like to have an allotment, already have a garden. The remaining 10% either do not have a garden or live in a flat with a balcony.

5.6.1 This shows that there is a strong appetite for people to have allotments and more work could be done by Dacorum to make more available, and also provide alternative methods for those who would like to be able to grow food – such as community gardens.

5.7 There are a variety of different reasons why people would want to grow their own food locally. The top answers were 'healthy food', 'better for the environment' and as a 'hobby', but 'saving money' and 'improving mental health' also scored highly.

5.7.1 When running campaigns to encourage people to grow food locally, these results should be kept in mind so as to appeal to as many people as possible.

5.8 The main answer for why people would not be able to grow food locally is because they don't have a suitable space – 40% of answers. For those that say that they do not have a suitable space, 80% of these already have a garden. This matches the previous finding that even though people have gardens, they would still want allotments.

5.8.1 If there was sufficient space available either as allotments or community gardens, we would have a greater number of residents able to grow their own food. This further supports the need to have more allotments and community gardens available for residents.

5.9 26% of participants said that a barrier to them not growing food locally was because they don't have the knowledge or equipment and 15% said that they do not have the time. Only 20% said that they were not interested.

- 5.9.1 A community garden would be perfect for someone who is curious about growing food but does not have the knowledge or equipment as they would be able to learn from others and use shared equipment.
- 5.9.2 Primary and secondary schools could be encouraged to have gardens on their school grounds where possible, so as to help learn about growing food, as well as other key areas such as valuing food as a resource, the importance of eating seasonally and organically, reducing food waste and packaging, etc. Dacorum could look at ways in which it can support schools with this.
- 5.9.3 A community garden would be a useful solution for those who are interested in growing food, but do not have the time to commit themselves and so instead could volunteer on a casual basis.

5.10 Half of participants would be willing to volunteer at a community garden. Of these, 22% would do so weekly, 35% would do monthly and 42% would volunteer several times a year.

- 5.10.1 This demonstrates that community gardens would be well supported throughout Dacorum and more could be initiated widely.
- 5.10.2 Some community gardens already exist within Dacorum and these could be promoted more heavily. Dacorum's website can be used to help provide a map of all of the available community gardens.
- 5.10.3 92% of people who would volunteer at a community garden already have access to their own garden. This is the same percentage of participants who answered that they have their own garden which suggests that these answers are representative of the demographic of participants, rather than indicative.
- 5.10.4 Nearly two thirds of people would like to see a community garden in Hemel, but there is still some interest in Berkhamsted and Tring; once again this seems representative of the demographic. Participants suggested they would want community garden locations in a range of areas, with Adeyfield having the highest level of interest.
- 5.10.5 Dacorum could help to initiate community gardens by allocating land and supporting put together a volunteer network and a guide on best practise as well as promoting.

5.11 88% of people would buy food from a community garden, but only 2% already do. 58% of participants would be interested in having a veg box scheme, but only 8% do.

- 5.11.1 This shows that there is a huge market for schemes selling local food to be pushed within Dacorum. Community gardens or local enterprises such as Sunnyside could be encouraged to tap into this.

5.12 Despite approximately 50% of people saying that they would volunteer at a community garden, 88% say they would buy local food from them.

5.12.1 This highlights that these gardens would still be beneficial to the community even if people are not interested in volunteering.

5.13 Over half of participants would be interested in volunteering at a community orchard. Of those, 12% would do so weekly, 30% would do monthly and 57% would volunteer several times a year.

5.13.1 Although slightly more people are interested in volunteering at an orchard compared to a garden, people are more willing to volunteer in a garden more regularly – such as on a weekly or monthly basis.

5.14 Participants suggested they would want community orchard locations in a range of areas, with Adeyfield and Boxmoor having the highest level of interest.

5.14.1 Dacorum could help to initiate community orchards by allocating land, planting the trees and supporting a volunteer network and guide on best practise as well as promoting.

6. Energy and Water Use

Energy and Water Use - Key Findings and Recommendations:

6.1 On average, over half (56%) of participants saw an increase in their energy and water bills – with approximately 40% seeing a slight increase and 15% seeing a significant increase. The energy and water bills have stayed the same for around a third of households.

6.1.1 This indicates that since lockdown, there is a greater need for energy and water efficiency campaigns.

6.1.2 The answers provided indicates the areas that people want to know more about which will be useful for guiding future campaign work in these areas.

6.1.3 The survey has also provided us with a mailing list of residents to contact about future initiatives when these are up and running.



Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	20 April 2021
Part:	I (Note Cost Plan in Appendix at Part II)
If Part II, reason:	<p>The Part II appendix contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council.</p> <p>(Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3).</p>

Title of report:	Hemel Place Strategy
Contact:	<p>Cllr Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council</p> <p>Claire Hamilton – Chief Executive James Doe, Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regeneration</p>
Purpose of report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To propose arrangements for the creation of a new Place Strategy for Hemel Hempstead and the establishment of a Hemel Place Board 2. To set out proposals for, as part of the Place Strategy work, a new Strategy for the future of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre
Recommendations	<p>That Cabinet:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Approves the preparation of a Hemel Place Strategy, subject to final approval by Cabinet and Council once further work has been carried out. 2. Approves the establishment of a Hemel Place Board as outlined in the report to oversee the development and implementation of the Place Strategy, and delegates authority to the Leader of the Council to approve the final membership of the Place Board and its Terms of Reference. 3. Approves proposals as outlined in the report to carry out engagement with key partners, stakeholders and local residents to help shape the Hemel Place Strategy

	<p>vision and objectives.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 4. Endorses the creation of a comprehensive strategy for the future physical, economic, social and environmental development of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre as an early priority for the Hemel Place Strategy work. 5. Approves the provision of resources to develop the Hemel Hempstead Place Strategy and the related Town Centre Strategy. 6. Recommends Council approves a budget of £500K to be drawn down from the Dacorum Development Reserve as required to fund the work to develop the Place Strategy. 7. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive in consultation with the Corporate Director (Finance & Operations) to draw down the allocated funds to produce the work set out in this report. 8. Delegates authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader, to prepare and submit a bid to MHCLG for funding under the Levelling Up Fund programme.
Period for post policy/project review	Governance arrangements will be set out as part of the programme plan for the Hemel Place Strategy. The project will report into the newly established internal Corporate Growth and Regeneration Board. It is envisaged that a post-project review would be undertaken in mid-late 2023 following the completion of the Strategy in late 2022.
Corporate objectives:	The proposed Hemel Place Strategy, and specific work for Hemel Hempstead Town Centre, will address all Corporate Objectives.
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> The financial implications are set out in the report below and Cabinet is invited to approve a budget of £500,000 for this work.
'Value for money' implications	<u>Value for money</u> Value for money and financial management will be addressed through the proposals for programme governance as set out in the report. The work required will necessitate the engagement of a number of consultants, who will be procured in accordance with the Council's procurement regulations to ensure the best value for money is being achieved. Use is to be made of in-house Officer resources and aspects of the programme will be carried out, where possible, using these.
	A high level risk mitigation plan was carried out on 23 February 2021 as part of the initial Project Concept, which is included at

Risk implications	Appendix 1 to this report.
Community Impact Assessment	A Community Impact Assessment was carried out on 29 March 2021, attached at Appendix 2 to this report.
Health and safety Implications	None arising from this report.
Monitoring Officer comments	The Place Strategy will not be a statutory local plan document but it will help to guide future development principles and place-making for the town. The Strategy may help to inform and develop future local plan documents which will need to follow the required statutory procedures at the appropriate time.
S.151 Officer comments	A breakdown of the indicative costs comprising the requested budget of £500k is attached as a Part 2 appendix to this report. There is sufficient balance within the Dacorum Development Reserve to meet these costs and, subject to Council approval of Recommendations 6 and 7, the funding can be drawn down as required once the procurement exercises are complete and the actual figures are known.
Consultees:	<p>Mark Gaynor – Corporate Director, Housing and Regeneration Senior Leadership Team</p> <p>Chris Taylor, Group Manager – Strategic Planning and Regeneration</p> <p>Sara Whelan, Group Manager – Development Management and Planning</p> <p>Richard Rice, Group Manager – Commercial Assets and Property Development</p> <p>Nathalie Bateman, Hemel Garden Communities Lead Officer</p> <p>Alex Robinson, Strategic Planning Manager</p> <p>Gunilla Edwards, Interim Economic Development Officer</p> <p>Kelvin Soley, Communications Team Leader</p>
Background papers:	<p>Shaping the Future of Dacorum – Our Growth and Infrastructure Strategy to 2050 (DBC, 2019)</p> <p>Hemel Garden Communities Charter (HGC, 2018)</p> <p>Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision (HGC, 2020)</p> <p>Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Masterplan (DBC, 2012)</p> <p>Two Waters Masterplanning Guidance (DBC, 2016)</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>HGC – Hemel Garden Communities</p> <p>Hemel Hempstead BID – the Business Improvement District for Hemel town centre</p>

	Herts LEP – Hertfordshire Local Enterprise Partnership
	Herts IQ – Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter, the Enterprise Zone for the County
	MHCLG – Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government

List of Appendices

Appendix 1 – Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Project Concept document

Appendix 2 – Community Impact Assessment

Appendix 3 – Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Data Analysis report

Part II Appendix – Cost Plan

Executive Summary

Hemel Hempstead will see considerable growth and regeneration activity over the next 20-30 years and the Council has a clear leadership role in shaping and managing this change effectively to ensure that all parts of the local resident and business community benefit from future opportunities.

In addition to this, it is forecast that there will be long term effects of Covid19 which will impact on the borough's largest town centre. The way people will live their lives and do business in the future is likely to negatively impact on the vitality of the Town Centre unless action is taken now.

The proposed Hemel Place Strategy will set out a long term plan for the regeneration of Hemel Hempstead and set a path for recovery beyond the pandemic. It will develop a clear, ambitious yet realistic vision for the future of the town, and it will be shaped by extensive engagement with the Council's partners, stakeholders and residents.

To be successful, Hemel as a place needs to be celebrated and championed and the new Strategy must have the development of the place at its centre. It must also complement and embrace the Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision and strategies for growth and transformation and have environmental sustainability at its heart in line with the Council's declaration of a climate emergency and commitment to the reduction of the carbon footprint of the area.

An early priority, to be delivered through the Strategy, will be the development of a comprehensive approach to leading and managing change in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre. The new Place Strategy must ensure that the town centre is fit for purpose for the future and that it addresses the fundamental changes in retail that have been exacerbated by Covid19. The town centre must provide the right mix of facilities, not just retail, for a growing residential population and the Place Strategy must champion a clear and compelling vision for its regeneration.

In order to ensure that the place Strategy is effectively shaped and delivered, it is proposed to establish a multi-agency Hemel Place Board consisting of a range of Council partners and stakeholders who will be instrumental to the future success of Hemel Hempstead.

1. Background

1.1 The Council has already taken significant steps to address the challenges of both major growth and change affecting Dacorum. In 2019, the *Growth and Infrastructure Strategy* was prepared and approved by Council to set out the key challenges facing the Borough to 2050. It can be found at <http://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/dacorum-growth-and-infratstructure-strategy-to-2050.pdf> .

1.2 The Strategy sets out what needs to be done to address these issues, recognising both the objectives of the Corporate Plan and issues that will arise in the longer term to reflect the impact of major growth on the Borough as a whole and how Council services will need to be organised to meet these pressures.

1.3 It sets the vision for Dacorum to 2050 as:

“We want Dacorum to be known as a place where...

- *Everyone has the best start in life*
- *Both residents and businesses have the opportunity to achieve their hopes and expectations*
- *Families and young people are welcome, where older people are valued and where the vulnerable can get the help they need”*

1.4 From this, the Strategy is based on developing six themes of:

- Building Dacorum’s future with homes for everyone;
- Generating a vibrant economy with opportunities for all; A happier, healthier and safer Dacorum;
- Creating a clean, green and attractive Dacorum;
- On-track for a better transport network; and
- Harnessing the opportunity of technology and digital connectivity.

Officers have since developed action planning across Council services in the short term and are developing long term objectives for future work.

1.5 In January of this year, Cabinet considered and endorsed the *Spatial Vision for Hemel Garden Communities*. This is online at: https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/docs/default-source/strategic-planning/210310_hemel-spatial-vision-with-appendix.pdf?sfvrsn=37e4039e_2 .

1.6 The Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision applies to the whole town: whilst fundamentally underpinning the shape and content of new development proposed for north and east of Hemel Hempstead, it also applies to the future development and transformation of the whole town and wider movement routes.

1.7 The agreed vision is to create a greener, more connected New Town and is organised into four thematic pillars:

- Inclusive **Integrated Neighbourhoods**,
- connected by **A Green Network**, and
- thoughtfully designed places with **Engaged Communities**, all underpinned by digital connectivity, and
- **A Self-sustaining Economy** and pioneering green technology driven by Hertfordshire Innovation Quarter.

Each of the four pillars reinforces aspirations to promote healthy lifestyles and respond to the climate crisis, which are the two crossover themes of the Spatial Vision. It provides an overarching spatial vision for the town with individual visions for each pillar. Each pillar includes spatial principles and

supported contextual information, further guidance and precedents, where spatial principles will inform detailed masterplanning and guide landowners and developers for all new development and transformational projects. The delivery section provides a strategy to support the delivery of each pillar with a range of studies and strategies required as next steps.

- 1.8 The underlying planning framework for dealing with change and development within the Borough is being addressed in the ongoing statutory Local Plan for Dacorum. Consultation on the Emerging Strategy for Growth closed on 28 February 2021 and Officers are currently collating and analysing the substantial number of responses received. Members will note that the forward plan for Cabinet foresees a report on the Local Plan to the meeting on 22 June, with a report to the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee a week beforehand on 15 June.
- 1.9 Both the Growth and Infrastructure Strategy and the HGC Spatial Vision, together with the new Local Plan as it progresses, set a clear and firm basis for how the Council, in its leadership role for the local community in its widest sense, will manage the challenges of change and new development over the next 20-plus years. There is now a need to pull together a distinct, ambitious and challenging strategy for Hemel Hempstead as a place and to start the work to facilitate its transformation in the long term.
- 1.10 Crucially, there is a pressing need to consider the effects of the Covid19 pandemic, particularly over the longer term in relation to how this, and other trends, will affect how people are likely to live their lives, how business will operate and locate in the future and to understand the implications for transport needs and to gear up the Borough for better digital connectivity. As with the HGC Spatial Vision, there is a need for action undertaken to develop Hemel as a place to be underpinned by the need for promoting healthy lifestyles and tackling climate change
- 1.11 To address all of these factors, this report proposes that arrangements are brought forward to create a unifying Place Strategy to deal with the variety and complexity of these issues and challenges for engagement with the Council's partners, stakeholders and local residents. The Strategy will aim to champion the promotion of Hemel Hempstead as a place, of which people are proud of and where they want to live, work and visit, and importantly to promote Hemel as a location of choice for investment.
- 1.12 As an early priority, however, it is recommended that work progresses on a new strategy for the future of Hemel Hempstead town centre, where many, if not all, of the above issues come together. This work will provide a firm platform for its ongoing success and that of the local economy.

2. Purpose of the Hemel Place Strategy

- 2.1 Drawing on work already undertaken, as referred to above, a new Strategy for Hemel Hempstead should commence with stakeholder and community engagement with a view to developing a new vision for the whole town. This Vision will then be translated into specific workstreams and projects for subsequent action. Para 3.4 of this report provides some early suggestions for what the workstreams could comprise.
- 2.2 These activities would then be overseen by a new multi-agency Place Board as set out in section 3 below.
- 2.3 The new Place Strategy will provide an exciting and compelling narrative to give Hemel Hempstead a clear identity and provide a strong vision and sense

of direction. The Place Strategy will provide the foundations for promoting the town as a destination for business activity, a place where people will want to live, work and visit and as a basis to attract inward investment and secure funding for infrastructure. It will also provide the opportunity for local residents and businesses to benefit through new employment and business opportunities.

2.4 It is proposed that the Hemel Place Strategy and proposed workstream plan will be brought back to the Council's Cabinet for endorsement.

3. Creation of a Hemel Place Board

3.1 It is strongly recommended that a multi-agency Place Board is created to oversee the development and implementation of the Place Strategy.

3.2 This approach is common to other places facing major change and will help to ensure full engagement and buy-in to shaping and delivering the strategy. Change is a complex process and cannot be delivered by the Council alone. For ambitious change proposals to be successful, it is imperative that the Council works side by side with a range of partners both in the public and private sector and works collaboratively to create the right conditions for good quality investment.

3.3 Cabinet will be aware that there is already an established Board for the Hemel Garden Communities programme on which St Albans City and District Council, Hertfordshire County Council, Homes England and Herts LEP are all represented in addition to Dacorum Borough Council. Although much of this Board's work is focused on delivery of development within the HGC area, its early work has included in setting the Spatial Vision for the whole town.

3.4 The purpose of the new Hemel Place Board will be to complement the work of the HGC Board, by focusing on delivery of both the Spatial Vision and the range of issues set out further ahead in this section of the report. Whereas detailed arrangements for the working arrangements of the Hemel Place Board will be a matter for further consideration and agreement by Cabinet, both its remit and membership will be expected to be wider than that of the HGC Board, and with a focus on transformative actions for the town beyond the HGC area.

3.5 Examples of other places where this approach is in place include Harlow and Gilston Garden Town, which is comprised of leading Members and Officers from its partner authorities and other key local agencies:

<http://www.harlowandgilstongardentown.co.uk/the-garden-town-board>

Aylesbury Garden Town has a similar approach, with its Board's membership extending to the South East Midlands Local Enterprise Partnership (SEMLEP) with representation from the programme's retained consultants:

<https://www.aylesburygardentown.co.uk>

3.6 Both of these areas set clear proposals for the ongoing and long term development of these rapidly-changing towns based on a vision of how the future place will function, what it will look like, and what it will contain.

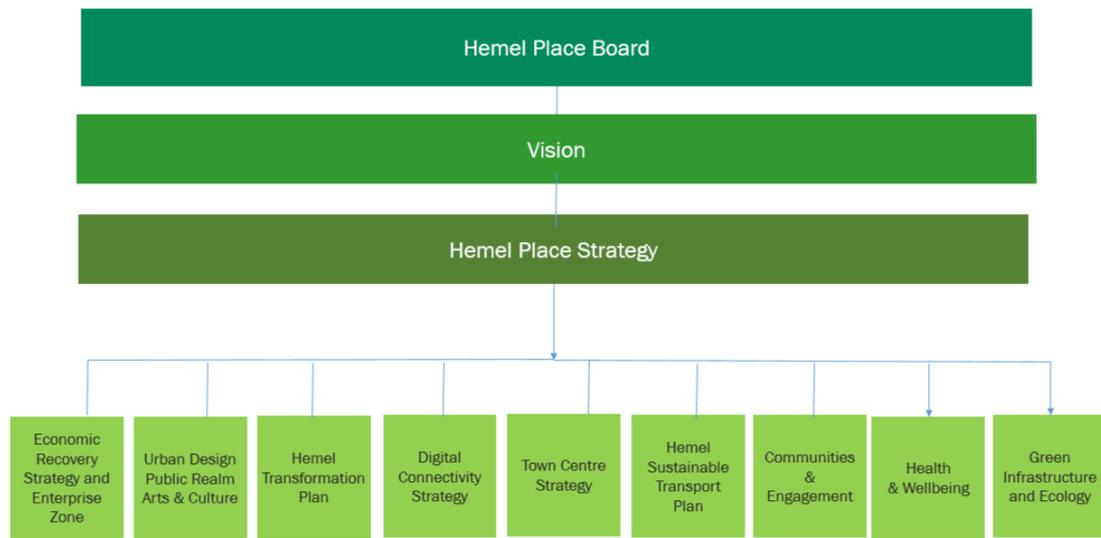
3.7 It is proposed that the Hemel Place Board will include representatives from Herts LEP, Herts IQ, West Herts College, Hemel Hempstead BID, Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassadors, The Crown Estate and other key landowners and developers along with Herts CC and St Albans City and

District Council (given its key role as the other District in the HGC programme).

3.8 The Place Board will also play an important role in championing engaging with the local community and residents' groups.

3.9 Terms of Reference will be developed by the Place Board and it is suggested that Cabinet delegates their approval to the Leader of the Council.

3.10 The diagram below indicates a suggested range of workstreams that the Board would oversee, following the development of the Place Strategy, these are united by a common vision for the development of Hemel as a place.



4. A New Strategy for Hemel Hempstead Town Centre

4.1 The background to why a new Strategy for the Town Centre is needed is set out in the Project Concept document at Appendix 1 to the report.

4.2 The Town Centre is the focal point for community activity and is the main retail centre for Hemel Hempstead. It is also a major public transport interchange. As Hemel Hempstead grows over the next 20 years and beyond, it is critical that the Council plans for an effective and vibrant town centre to serve a considerably expanded population and be worthy of that of a transformed 21st century Garden Town.

4.3 The Borough Council, over the decades, has a good track record of planning for, and adapting to change, in the town centre. Ranging from the pedestrianisation works and the construction of the Marlowes Centre in the 1980s and 1990s, the acquisition and regeneration of land at the southern end of the Marlowes to create the Riverside Centre in the 2000s, and through to the Hemel Evolution programme of the 2010s, a significant degree of change has occurred.

4.4 New factors and forces are now in play. Traditional retailing has been in decline in recent years and this trend, at least for now, has been accelerated by the Covid19 pandemic. Whereas there will be some return to the High Street shortly, with the proposed lifting of restrictions on non-essential retailing from 12 April this year, the trend of increases in online shopping is expected to continue. Some traditional retailers have already closed and

others expected to over the short term. Retail vacancy rates were at just under 15% in 2019 and whilst latest figures are awaited, the trend is expected to worsen.

- 4.5 The growth in residential development in the town centre was a key feature of the 2012 Masterplan and significant new schemes have been completed, with others under construction such as 'The Foundry' at West Herts College, 'The Gade' on land to the north of the Forum and the ongoing conversion of older offices at Hamilton House. Significant potential for further residential development remains and given both the level of housing need the Council is expected to plan for, and the long term strength of the local housing market, this is a trend that can be expected to continue. In turn these new developments will place increasing pressure on the town centre and its facilities to provide for the social needs of new residents.
- 4.6 Furthermore the growth in development in the rest of the town and its catchment area places both a pressure on the town centre, but at the same time provides an opportunity to consider how it should be repurposed for the future.
- 4.7 The data analysis report at Appendix 3 draws attention to these factors. It points to the need to develop the business base of the town centre and highlights a lack of leisure and cultural facilities, amongst others. Importantly, as working and living patterns change as a result of Covid19, the trend of increasing levels of working from home and a decline in traditional full-week out-commuting provides the opportunity to capture potential new footfall and therefore business. Hemel Town Centre therefore needs to be positioned through the right strategy and interventions to ensure it can adapt successfully to the new socio-economic environment that is emerging.
- 4.8 A new strategy must, to be successful, be comprehensive and address a combination of development, economic and social factors with the need to tackle the climate emergency running through it. It will need to be based on the agreed 'pillars' as set out in the Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision. The issues to be addressed, as set out below, will cross refer back to this.
- 4.9 Building in Social Value principles in the Strategy will ensure there are socioeconomic outcomes of developments such as ensuring jobs for local residents, apprenticeships, career engagement with local schools and opportunities for local suppliers.
- 4.10 To commence its preparation, Officers recommend that the new Strategy must begin with the creation of a new vision for the town centre's future, informed by extensive engagement with stakeholders and the community alongside data trends and evidence, consideration of urban futures trends and those from the effects of Covid19, and best practice from elsewhere.
- 4.11 Once this new vision is in place, and without pre-empting the final scope of the strategy it is expected it will need to address the following issues.
- 4.12 **Urban Design Strategy.** A coherent and comprehensive urban design strategy will be essential to ensure that the new Vision for the town centre can be delivered. This will set out the design themes and style for new development, and will address the issues of building heights, densities, function of public realm and importantly, use.

- 4.13 **Economic and Business Development actions.** Officers have already begun work on a wide-ranging economic recovery strategy for the whole of the Borough. This work will need to include a specific action plan for the town centre to address both the structural issues within retailing, but also to look at boosting the supply of general business space, to complement the approach to new development being considered.
- 4.14 The economic recovery strategy will set out the principles how to ensure inclusive economic growth and the focus will be on local wealth creation. The Hemel Place Strategy will play a key part in delivering these principles through adopting **Social Value outcomes** in developments. This could include the development of an Employment and Training Agreement for individual developments highlighting the opportunities that will be delivered and demonstrate how those will be achieved both during and after construction. The outcomes will include:
- construction apprenticeships
 - local employment during the construction phase
 - construction work experience opportunities
 - end use apprenticeships
 - local procurement opportunities
- 4.15 **Digital connectivity strategy.** As Appendix 3 refers, the provision of fibre to the premise in Dacorum is very low compared to other areas, and there is no public Wi-Fi in the town centre. A specialist focus is needed on developing the town centre's digital offer, sitting within emerging strategy work planned for other areas including Hemel Garden Communities. This work needs to be firmly linked to the approach to economic and business development.
- 4.16 **Arts, Culture, Leisure and Heritage Strategy.** This will need to address the current low offer of the town centre in this area. It will need to consider how new facilities can be planned for, and delivered, by both commercial providers and the voluntary and community sectors to deliver a diverse offer and one that brings vibrancy and footfall to the town centre. As with all constituent parts of the strategy, it will need to be developed in connection with the framework plan and the approach to new development. There is a considerable opportunity to build on the town centre's inherent strengths, not least the restored Jellicoe Water Gardens and its proximity and access to Gadebridge Park and Heath Park, both of which have been improved recently, and to Box Moor.
- 4.17 **Social and Community Facilities.** This part of the strategy will address the social needs of existing and new residents living within the town centre and its catchment hinterland, and will recognise the central role it plays in a centre for the whole community of Hemel Hempstead, both now and in the long term. A particular issue is for the provision of new primary school facilities which has been highlighted by Herts CC in the production of the emerging Local Plan.
- 4.18 **Framework Plan and assessment of development sites.** Much of the opportunity to drive and direct change in the town centre will come from the shape, extent, design and content of sites with development opportunities. Members will be aware that officers are continually reviewing the availability and opportunity for new sites through Local Plan-related Urban Capacity assessment work, and a full review will be key to this part of the strategy. Specifically, change can be expected at the former Civic Centre and Market Square sites (both owned by the Council) and at Hemel Hospital for a mix of new hospital facilities, primary school and further residential. Officers

are aware that the long lease for Riverside shopping centre is currently on the market and it can be expected that any new leaseholder will bring forward plans for change, particularly to look at the potential for further flatted residential development as part of the scheme, and the future of street-level uses.

4.19 Based on the anticipated future purposes of the town centre arising from the visioning work, the new strategy will need to set a framework for the role of key sites and how they relate to and facilitate activity, footfall, visits and business in the town centre. Specific development viability work will also need to be undertaken.

4.20 **Transport assessment and recommendations for intervention.**
This will be a key element of the strategy to be developed alongside the development framework and assessment of key sites and development trends. It will be informed by the ongoing Sustainable Transport Plan for Hemel, which is being developed to support the new Local Plan. The emphasis will need to be on promoting sustainable forms of transport, building on the town centre’s strength as the central public transport interchange for the town.

4.21 Key outputs from this work will be recommendations for specific interventions to address the pressure on the transport network arising from new development and to address modal shift and reduction of carbon emissions. It will need to take account of key movement patterns, and particularly the central role the town centre plays between the link between the mainline rail stations, Maylands Business Park and Hemel’s residential neighbourhoods, both established and proposed. Particular attention will need be given to measures such as demand-responsive public transport and the role of e-bikes and e-scooters alongside walking and cycling. The ongoing work led by Herts CC on the A414 Mass Rapid Transit system project, which although still at a very early stage, is expected to originate at Hemel rail station, connect to the town centre and run on to Maylands via the A414 St Albans Road, will be important.

4.22 The final Town Centre strategy will enable the Council, with engagement from partners and stakeholders, to develop a range of action plans and projects to be brought forward as priorities indicate and resources allow. It will be brought back to Cabinet for approval in due course.

5. Programme Plan

5.1 The work on the overarching Hemel Place Strategy, and the more focused work on both Hemel Town Centre and Economic Recovery will extend over the next year and a half.

5.2 Implementation work arising from the development of the work strands will be continue for many years to come and will be subject to more focused project plans and timescales to be confirmed in due course.

5.3 The anticipated timeline so far is as follows, with the detail of specific project activity and milestones to be established once the Project management and consultancy team is in place.

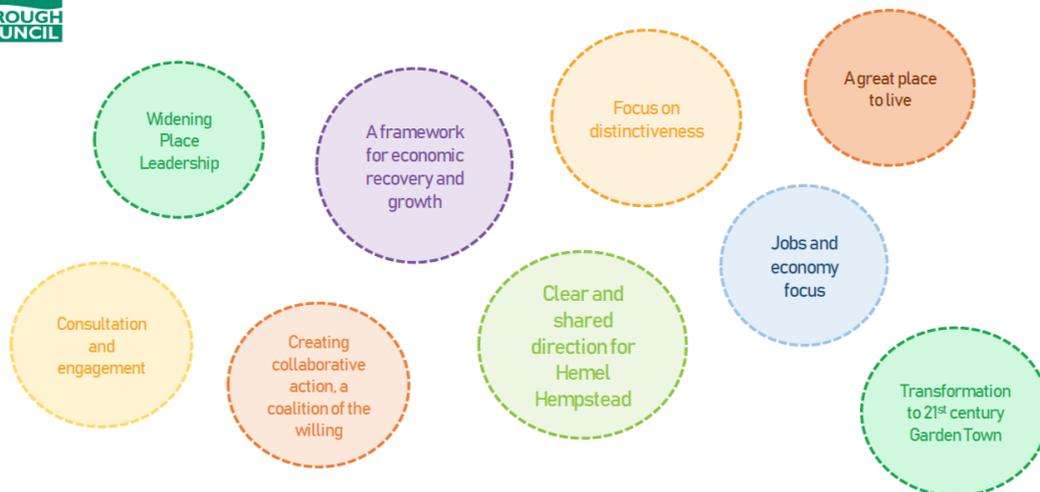
Action	Timescale
Preparation and Procurement	
Place engagement consultant appointment	Apr 21
Consultant team procurement	Apr-June 21
Inception meetings	May-Aug 21
Hemel Place Strategy	

Stakeholder and community engagement	May-July 21
Vision development	July-Aug 21
Cabinet and Council approval of Hemel Place Strategy	Oct-Nov 21
Town Centre Strategy Development	
Commence strategy development	Aug/Sept 21
Stakeholder and community engagement	To be determined
Member briefing	To be determined
Review and Completion of Town Centre Strategy	
Council adoption of new Strategy	Sept 22

6. Engagement and Branding

- 6.1 Given the extensive work on strategy and visioning development done so far on the Growth and Infrastructure Strategy, HGC Spatial Vision and the new Local Plan, it will be important that proposed engagement work for Hemel as a place both recognises work done to date, but provides an opportunity to engage stakeholders and residents in a positive and proactive discussion over the future direction of the town.
- 6.2 As an initial step, Officers propose that a focused engagement process begins later in May of this year after the local elections. For this early work it is proposed to appoint Thinking Place <http://thinkingplace.co.uk/>, a consultancy which specialises in developing a strong narrative around the concept of local place, what it means to local people and what it could be transformed into. The Council previously engaged Thinking Place a few years ago when the Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassadors programme was being set up.
- 6.3 The initial work will comprise data and information gathering, and a series of focus groups from different stakeholders and residents' groups to gather feedback for the Council to consider.
- 6.4 Later in the programme, decisions will need to be taken by the Council over effective branding for both Hemel as a place overall, and for the town centre, for which consultancy input will be needed.
- 6.5 The following diagram provides an early indication of the scope of new branding, but this will be developed as the project progresses

Developing a Brand for Hemel



7. Resources Required

- 7.1 A significant amount of work is required to deliver this ambitious programme. Much of the anticipated costs, as set out in the table below, will focus on underpinning strategies and study work for the Town Centre strategy. Cabinet is therefore requested at this stage to make a budget of £500,000 available to carry out this work over the next year to eighteen months. A cost plan containing estimates of the specific areas of expenditure is appended at Part II of the agenda.
- 7.2 This will allow for consultancy support to cover a range of issues including development viability and strategy, market assessments, urban design framework, transport assessment and solutions, retail strategy, arts, culture and heritage strategy and the approach to digital connectivity solutions.
- 7.3 In-house capacity and expertise from the current establishment of staff will be used, but the above specialist areas are where external support is needed. To successfully initiate and set a framework for the new town centre strategy, a lead consultant with expertise in urban futures and delivery of new development and both property and market issues will be critical. More focused expert appointments as indicated above are expected to flow from this.
- 7.4 The budget will also make provision for stakeholder engagement, branding and marketing. Finally the programme will need the support of a dedicated programme manager and Officers are currently considering options for how this is to be provided, including a secondment opportunity.
- 7.5 Opportunities to support this budget will be taken wherever possible from Government funding sources where they are available and Officers are currently both considering relevant funds announced by the Government, and monitoring future sources.
- 7.6 The end product will be a new Strategy to promote Hemel as a place, and specifically will also deliver a new town centre strategy, for final approval by Cabinet and Council. It will set a clear direction and vision for how the town centre should develop, and importantly communicate this to businesses, residents and investors.

- 7.7 In terms of external funding, recently the Government has announced a range of funds. Two of these are of particular relevance for this work: the Levelling-Up Fund (LUF) and the Community Renewal Fund (CRF).
- 7.8 The LUF invites proposals from across the Country and encourages every Member of Parliament to support a bid. It can support the delivery of urban regeneration, transport and cultural investment proposals up to a maximum of £20million capital with the possibility of some revenue funding support. Officers have begun considering the scope of such a bid to assist with the delivery of key sites in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre. The deadline for submission of bids to MHCLG is relatively short, by 18 June 2021. Members are therefore requested to delegate authority to the Chief Executive, in consultation with the Leader of the Council, to prepare and submit an appropriate bid by this time.
- 7.9 The CRF can provide funds for communities and places and the prospectus issued by MHCLG points to studies delivering net-zero and local energy projects, and exploring opportunities for promoting culture-led regeneration and community development, improving green spaces and preserving important local assets and promoting rural connectivity. All issues would be relevant to emerging Hemel Place Strategy and Town Centre work.
- 7.10 Dacorum is not designated as a 'lead authority', but Hertfordshire County Council is. Lead authorities are required to submit their project shortlist up to a maximum of £3million per place to MHCLG by 18 June 2021, with the Government making decisions by late July 'onwards'. Officers will liaise with HCC about including a Hemel-focused element to a County-wide bid.
- 7.11 In addition, there will be in-kind support to the programme from Council services including, but not limited to economic development, communications and procurement.

8. Conclusions

- 8.1 Hemel Hempstead is at a key turning point in its history. It faces the challenge of accommodating major growth both through the development of Hemel Garden Communities and other new developments and ongoing regeneration in the town centre and the Two Waters and Apsley area. Together with the new socio-economic environment emerging from the Covid19 pandemic, there is a need to consider the town's future through a full consideration of the future development and transformation of Hemel as a place into a vibrant 21st century garden town.
- 8.2 To do this, it is recommended that the Council develops, with its partners, a new Place Strategy drawing on the foundations of work carried out to date on the Growth and Infrastructure Strategy, HGC Spatial Vision and the Local Plan. It is considered that this should be governed by a multi-party Place Board, a practice which is being used successfully in other locations.
- 8.3 An early priority of this new strategy approach is to commence major work on the role, functions and opportunities offered by Hemel town centre on the basis set out in this report.

APPENDIX A – HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN CENTRE STRATEGY PROJECT CONCEPT



Managing Projects Successfully

Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Strategy

Project Concept

FOR APPROVAL	Name	Contact details	Approved?
Portfolio Management Team	Name		N
	Name		N
	Name		N
FOR CONSULTATION	Name	Contact details	
	Name		
IMPACT ASSESSMENT		Completion Date	

Document Control

Date	Issue	Changed by	Comments
3 Feb 2021	1.0	James Doe	For discussion at Project Steering Group 4 Feb 2021
19 Feb 2021	1.1	James Doe	Amendments for Steering Group

23 Feb 2021	1.2	James Doe	Further amendments for Steering Group meeting on 24 Feb 2021 following input from Linda Roberts including Risk Mitigation Plan at section 3.3
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Background

The HH Town Centre Masterplan was published in 2012 – it created a series of character zones around which a development strategy to 2021 was formed. This served as the basis for the Hemel Evolution programme of direct works improvements to the Marlowes, Bank Court, Bus Interchange and Water Gardens restoration, and the creation of the Forum. These have been completed, with the exception of the 'PAM' parking, access and movement project for Water Gardens South car park access and Bridge Street remodelling which is scheduled for 2021.

Importantly it set the basis for private sector housing led regeneration which has on the whole been successful: the Civic Zone in the north of the town centre has two major projects underway by Bellway and Hill, delivering between them around 140 new homes.

Elsewhere a high number of new apartments have been delivered or are well under way through conversion of outmoded office accommodation for which there was no demand: key examples are Lord Alexander House, Stephyn's Chambers, Swan Court, Hamilton House and Bryanston Court.

Concept

Opportunity or Problem

High Street retailing is in long term decline, and this has been exacerbated further by the Covid-19 pandemic which has both reduced footfall significantly and fuelled online spend.

Despite this, the town centre remains a popular place to visit even with a large number of stores closed due to Covid-related lockdowns or restrictions; it also provides direct amenities and facilities to the growing number of residents in newly built or converted apartments.

Hemel, and Dacorum is growing in the long term: The new local plan anticipates a further 18,000 new homes in the Borough by 2038; for Hemel this is 10,000 new homes, and by the time Hemel Garden Communities is fully developed into the 2050s, the total level of growth could be in the region of 20,000 new homes taking into account both the post-2038 phases of HGC in Dacorum, and the new housing to be built just over the boundary in the St Albans district, which functionally will be part of the town.

The long term aspiration, with this totality of growth, is to transform Hemel Hempstead from a mark one new town that has grown incrementally and evolved over its 70+ year history into a 21st century Garden Town; using Hemel Garden Communities as its catalyst, a transformation strategy will link the new developments at HGC to the transformative effects of other key sites, underpinned by a new sustainable transport strategy and the eventual introduction of a mass rapid transit system linking Hemel Hempstead across Hertfordshire to Harlow and Gilston Garden Town.

The Local Plan is in draft only and Dacorum's main towns are surrounded by Green Belt: this means DBC has to take every reasonable opportunity to drive housing growth from regeneration of its urban areas – as such the focus will be on Hemel Town Centre to achieve a substantial proportion of this.

The 2012 Town Centre masterplan has in all been a great success; however there are key sites which remain undeveloped although feasibility work has been carried out on all three:

1. The Civic Centre Site – owned by DBC, notional capacity c 200 homes
2. Market Square – owned by DBC albeit with small areas of title enjoyed by Homes England – about another further 200 homes capacity

3. The Hospital Zone – comprising of the operational Hemel Hempstead Hospital in the ownership of West Herts Hospitals Trust, though with significant areas of land owned by both DBC and Homes England which adjoin it; the redevelopment must comprise a new hospital facility for which the NHS is bringing forward a business case, a new 2FE primary school, and capacity for c 500 new homes

There are other sites under consideration through ongoing work on Urban Capacity in the town centre.

Prior to the pandemic, the owners of the Riverside shopping centre placed it on the market; Riverside is anchored by Debenhams which can be expected to close at some point in 2021; the future of other retailers at Riverside is also in some doubt.

The development strategy for all town centre sites needs to be re-appraised, not least to explore the potential for greater density and quantity, avoid piecemeal and unco-ordinated development, and to deliver the highest quality of new design possible to create an exciting new identity and image for the town centre.

Related to this is the need to meet the social needs of this growing community in the town centre; the Water Gardens restoration and improvements to both Gadebridge Park and Heath Park, together with the community aspects of The Forum, provide a good base.

However the town centre lacks primary school provision; opportunities for delivering new open spaces are limited; and connectivity with the rest of the town, particularly on foot or by cycle remains limited; apart from The Forum, there is no community meeting facility such as is enjoyed by Hemel's other residential neighbourhoods.

A Business Improvement District has been in place since 2018, and is in place until 2023 when a further five years will depend on a further ballot of businesses within the BID area.

Its success has been limited and there has to be real concerns over its future given the weak state of retailing in the town centre with struggling businesses likely to be reluctant to commit to a further period of levy paying.

A new BID Manager was appointed in late 2020 and things are starting to move again, such as with the development of a shopping app, but progress is bound to be limited for the first and possibly second quarter of 2021 given current Covid-19 restrictions; we need a return to the ability to run events and attract footfall back.

Recent research by KPMG (2021) points to Hemel Town Centre being the most affected by the Covid19 pandemic out of the 109 UK towns researched due to the highest proportion of home working (estimated at 27%) and a lack of cultural and leisure facilities. Other Hertfordshire towns also scored poorly. This however may present a big opportunity for increasing footfall as fewer residents will be commuting out of Hemel Hempstead for work.

Furthermore, and despite previous policy intentions, the night time economy has never developed well, with the town centre becoming lifeless after the shops close in the evening. There is a real opportunity to be exploited here based on an imaginative and supportive approach to fostering such businesses within a revitalised urban realm.

Businesses need support, and a new purpose for street level activity and business opportunities needs to be developed; resources from the Re-opening High Streets Safely fund are being deployed but these will run under Government spending rules to the end of March 2021 and cannot extend to wider town centre improvement and development initiatives beyond helping the area to deal with Covid-related implications on the safe re-opening of businesses

There is no public wi-fi in the town centre.

The Marlowes Shopping Centre has been subject to major and beneficial improvements by its new owners, Capital and Regional plc, but plans for a new multi-screen cinema in the centre are currently on hold.

Underpinning any new strategy of this magnitude and importance is the climate change agenda, recognising both the UK Government’s commitment to zero carbon by 2050 and DBC’s Climate Change strategy for zero carbon from its own operations by 2030.

Alignment to Corporate Plan

(Mark 'X' for all that apply)

Alignment to Corporate Plan (indicate all that apply)		Benefits (to Corporate Plan)
A clean, safe and enjoyable environment	X	
Building strong and vibrant communities	X	
Ensuring economic growth and prosperity	X	
Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular, for those most in need	X	
Delivering an efficient and modern council		

Interdependencies

Within DBC, the main services to be involved in the development and delivery of the new strategy are:

- Planning, Development and Regeneration
- Commercial Assets and Property Development
- Neighbourhood Delivery
- Housing

Services that will need to support the project are:

- Finance and Resources
- ICT
- Legal
- Procurement

External to DBC the key organisations and interests to be engaged will be:

- Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Business Improvement District (BID)
- Town Centre Businesses
- Local Residents
- Capital and Regional plc (owners of the Marlowes centre and other TC property)
- Aberdeen Asset Management (long leaseholders of the Riverside Centre)
- Landowners
- Commercial Agents
- Hertfordshire County Council (Transport, Education, Property, Planning in particular)
- West Herts Hospitals Trust

- Herts Valleys Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- West Herts College
- Herts LEP
- University of Herts
- MHCLG Cities and Local Growth unit
- Connected Places Catapult
- Hertfordshire Growth Board
- Hemel Garden Communities programme

Success Criteria

Outputs – what will be delivered through this project?

- A clear, challenging yet achievable Vision for the future of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre for the next 20 years or so
- Members are able to Champion this Vision within Dacorum and with Government and other key agencies
- Full Corporate buy-in to the project and strategy, with meaningful engagement from stakeholders and partners
- A fully developed and future-proofed Strategy to transform Hemel Hempstead Town Centre through the redevelopment of key sites in line with the Vision, business development to meet the challenges of the next c20 years and with clear benefits to the local community
- A robust and realistic Delivery Plan in place with resources identified to support the enabling work required

Outcomes – what will the project lead to?

- Hemel Hempstead's town centre as vibrant, busy, prosperous and a place people will want to visit, shop, spend time and do business in, live and work
- A significant uplift in the number of quality new homes delivered, in high quality attractive buildings befitting of a 21st century Garden Town, and linked to the Hemel Garden Communities Charter and Spatial Vision
- Hemel Hempstead as a town centre that all residents will see as the heart of the town, a hub for the community that people will want to use and visit frequently and spend time in
- A vibrant arts and culture offer
- Delivery of a green and attractive public realm
- Rationalisation of retail leading to high occupancy of retail, service and business premises providing a vibrant and diverse offer of experiences
- Opportunities for innovation and the ability for independent businesses to set up and thrive

- Increased public dwell time and footfall both during the day and in the evening
- A growing residential population in the town centre, engaged in the life and future of the town centre with the ability to lead healthy lifestyles and well supported by social and community facilities
- Clear Car Parking strategy in place, providing the right level of public parking but linked to objectives to achieve a better modal share of non-car use
- A revitalised town centre with a strong digital offer and high levels of online connectivity
- A town centre which makes a positive contribution to addressing the climate emergency and helps Dacorum achieve a net zero carbon position
- Sustainable transport links and hubs – improved connectivity to the surrounding area and the station and potential network of Multi-Modal Transport Interchanges across Hemel Hempstead

Options to Consider

For the project to be successful it requires Member leadership and corporate leadership and support, engagement and co-production with a wide range of stakeholders including residents, businesses – including HHTC BID, landowners and key public sector partners

The starting point will be to scope the remit of the project which will initially be carried out by the Steering Group; this will be considered, reviewed and validated by SLT, PHCOG and the DBC Corporate Growth and Infrastructure Board before approval by Cabinet for authority to proceed, confirm resource allocation and project timetable.

This Project Concept sets out three principal stages:

Stage 1 - to confirm initial scope and then the appointment of a consultancy team and Project Management support.

Stage 2 - to commence project visioning, co-production and development of the new Strategy through to completion and adoption by DBC

Stage 3 – Preparation and completion of the Strategy with full stakeholder engagement

Scope of Project to be agreed

- Extent of Strategy area
- An outline proposal from Cushman and Wakefield is appended, for discussion

Scope of Project expertise needed including consultancy support

To include the following:

- Council, stakeholder and resident visioning

- Lead consultant to co-ordinate all consultancy input with experience of town centre regeneration and development
- Urban design strategy development including public realm
- Site development appraisal and viability assessment
- Transport strategy with proposals for necessary interventions
- Digital and connectivity strategy
- Arts and Culture and evening economy strategy
- Business strategy to develop a robust offer from the town centre
- Project management
- Community and business engagement
- Procurement process lead and support

Plan to Develop Outline Business Case

Time Schedule

Action	Accountability	Timescale
Stage 1		
Establishment of Steering Group, Consideration of Lead Consultant for procurement		Jan 21
Draft scope of work/ detailed programme		Feb 21
Identify wider consultant team		Feb 21
SLT paper		2 March 21
PH COG (special)		11 March 21
Growth and Infrastructure Board		19 Apr 21
Member briefing		Apr 21
Cabinet report and approval		25 May 21
Stage 2		
Visioning and Masterplanning/consultant team procurement		May-June 21
Inception meetings (note consider impact of holiday period on progress)		July- Aug 21
Visioning exercise		September 21
Stage 3		
Commence strategy development in line with agreed vision		October 21
Stakeholder and community engagement		Oct 21 – April 22
Council adoption of new Strategy		May - June 22

Resource Plan

Officer Project Team

Project Champion	Claire Hamilton - Chief Executive
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Project Sponsor/Lead Officer	James Doe - Assistant Director Planning, Development and Regeneration
Steering Group Members	Mark Gaynor – Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration
	Chris Taylor – GM Strategic Planning and Regeneration
	Richard Rice - GM Commercial Assets and Property Development
	Alex Robinson – Strategic Planning Manager
	Nathalie Bateman – HGC Lead Officer
	Ronan Leydon – Assistant Team Leader Strategic Planning
	Gunilla Edwards – ED Support Officer
	Jane Hakes – Urban Design Officer

Draft Cost Plan

Direct project costs

£k

Lead Consultant

Project Manager

Urban Design strategy

Transport assessment

Development Viability

Visioning and Stakeholder Engagement

Digital and Connectivity Strategy

Total

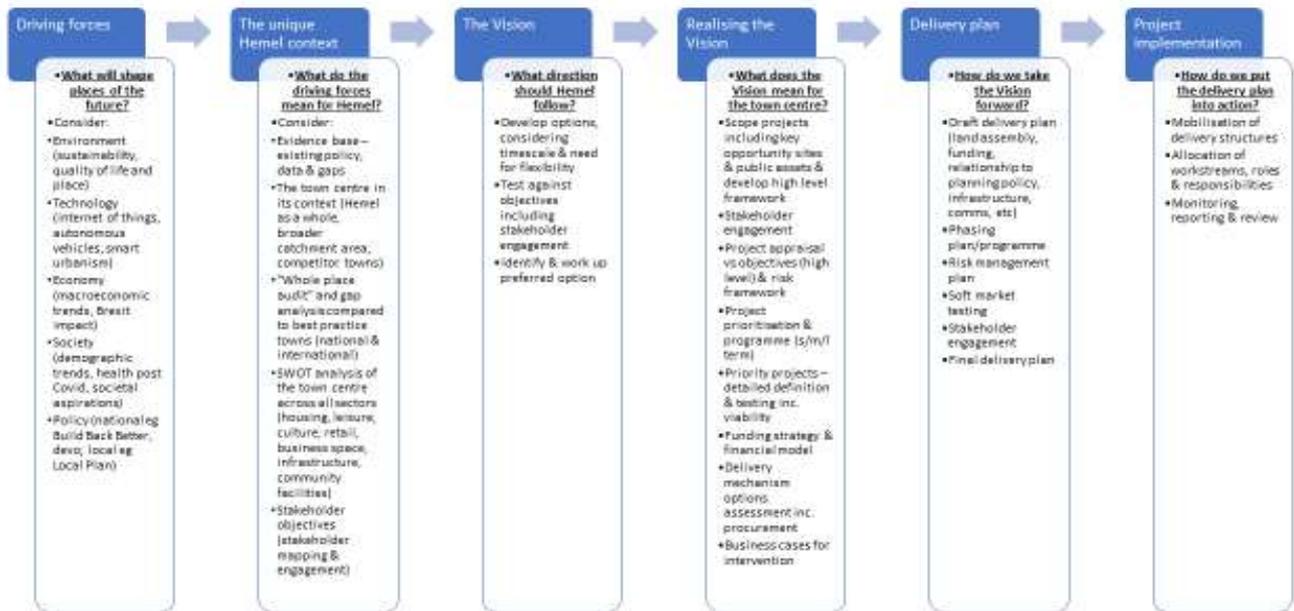
Risk Mitigation Plan

Risk	Likelihood	Severity	Mitigating Actions
	H/M/L	H/M/L	
1. Resourcing for direct project costs	H	H	Fundamental issue as the new strategy will require a large pull on resources – to be costed and requires decisions over use of reserves to fund
2. Implications for longer term Council funding both revenue and capital	H	H	There will be a need to prioritise potential actions and roles for DBC in the delivery of the new strategy depending on availability of funding and appetite for change
3. Lack of or uncertainty over external funding sources	H	M	Contact with MHCLG and Homes England and other funding sources needs to run through the project to assess the scope for funding from external sources

4. Project slippage	M	M	The project involves a high degree of external stakeholder engagement from a wide base where there may be conflicting views over priorities and actions. Need for scoping and prioritisation at an early stage and expectation management. See 5 below also.
5. Project creep	M	M	As 4; the project is complex and a high degree of change control needs to be exercised to manage both project creep and slippage.

To be developed through project risk assessment. Key risks are:

Hemel Hempstead Town Centre Vision & Delivery Plan - methodology



APPENDIX 2 – COMMUNITY IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Name and description of project, policy or service	
<p>Hemel Place Strategy</p> <p>Hemel Hempstead is the principal town within the Borough of Dacorum and faces big challenges in relation to future growth, the impact of Hemel Garden Communities as a catalyst for transforming it into a 21st century Garden Town, ongoing regeneration, the effects of Covid19 on how people will live their lives in the future, developing its economic position and meeting the challenges of tackling climate change. A new vision and strategy, involving the Council and its key partners, stakeholders and residents is needed to address these challenges.</p>	
Identifying the impact of this project, policy or service on the community and environment	
	<p>Questions to explore:</p> <p>What positive impact will your project, policy or service have? What negative impact will your project policy or service have? How will you ensure any negative impact is limited? What is the impact of doing nothing?</p>
<p>On the community in general e.g. social or economic benefits, negative impacts</p>	<p>The Strategy is being introduced to have a positive impact on the community: to create better places to live in, strengthening the economic position of Hemel Hempstead and the local economy generally and tackling the range of long-term impacts on the community arising from the Covid19 pandemic.</p>
<p>On the council as an organisation e.g. on staff, services or assets</p>	<p>Proposals for the new Hemel Place Strategy are, at the time of drafting this CIA, at an early stage. The Strategy will be a corporate document and as it emerges, the impact on all affected staff, services and assets will be considered.</p> <p>At an early stage it is considered that the approach to be taken to develop and then implement the Hemel Place Strategy will impact on resource arrangements for the following services:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Planning, Development and Regeneration • Commercial Assets and Property Development • Housing Strategy and Development • Community Engagement • Clean, Safe and Green
<p>On the protected characteristics</p>	

<p>Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation (Specify where impacts are different for different characteristics)</p>	<p>The new Hemel Place Strategy is wide-ranging and will need to ensure that the impact on the protected characteristics are addressed. The aim will be to make the proposals arising from the Strategy inclusive to all issues and groups.</p>
<p>On the environment e.g. effects on the climate, trees, amenity space, biodiversity, water, energy, waste, material use, air quality</p>	<p>Hemel Hempstead will be subject to major change and development over the next 20-30+ years. New built development creates a range of pressures on the environment which will be managed through specific policy and project work arising from the new Hemel Place Strategy and work on a new strategy for Hemel Hempstead Town Centre and the Hemel Garden Communities Programme as it progresses. The Hemel Place Strategy will be wide-ranging and consideration of impacts on the environment will be in accordance with the statutory development plan for the Borough and associated policy, including the Two Waters Masterplanning Guidance 2016. The emerging new Local Plan for Dacorum will set the policy basis for the environmental impacts of development in the Borough.</p>
<p>On the specific target community / location e.g. if the project is based in a specific area or targeted community group</p>	<p>The Strategy is generic to Hemel Hempstead as a whole and aims to improve the town as a place.</p>
<p>Outline the approach you took to identify the need for this project, policy or service. Please include use of research, data and consultation with residents and/or staff.</p>	
<p>The need for the creation of a new Hemel Place Strategy is set out in the introductory section of this Community Impact Assessment.</p> <p>The Council is in the process of preparing a new Local Plan for the Borough, for which amongst other things, background national policy and local research makes it clear that there is a need to plan for a step-change in the level of new development to substantially boost the supply of housing; to grow and develop the Borough's economic base; to tackle the impacts of climate change and address the Council's declaration of a Climate Change Emergency; and to deliver new infrastructure.</p>	

Further research has been carried out to examine the issues facing the future of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre in terms of its role as a central and vibrant focus for the community, both now and in the future.

Which commitment(s) does this policy, project or service support from the Equality and Diversity CIH Charter Housing Framework? [Link to PDF CIH Commitments on intranet](#)

The Chartered Institute of Housing has created a helpful framework to assess the need to ensure that equality and diversity is embedded into policy, project and service delivery. The key commitments are as follows, and as the new Hemel Place Strategy develops, the issues covered by each one will be addressed in the programme plan and its monitoring and management:

1. Equality and diversity is driven from the top:

- There is strong leadership from our governing body, chief executive and management team endorsing a strategic commitment to equality and diversity across all nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation; and to supporting an understanding of the role of human rights in housing

2. Equality and diversity informs our business planning

- Equality and diversity lies at the heart of our business planning process and informs our investment decisions, how we design and deliver value for money services, how we procure services; and how relationships with partners, suppliers, contractors, customers and communities are sustained
- We undertake equality analyses which show how equality and diversity informs our business objectives and equality analyses are transparent, monitored, reported and acted upon
- We are committed to ongoing improvement in providing fair and accessible services to our existing customers and to future customers

3. Equality and diversity shapes our organisational culture

- Equality and diversity informs recruitment and staff development - the staff we employ represent the communities we serve. Diversity is represented at all levels of the organisation and our staff in their diversity are satisfied with us
- Our commitment to equality and diversity is public, clear and transparent - all language, imagery, policies, procedures and publicity are inclusive and representative of our diverse communities. Information is provided in alternative or accessible formats where this is required
- Our organisation communicates a zero tolerance approach to discriminatory attitudes or practice from staff, partners, contractors, suppliers, customers and from individuals in the communities in which we work

4. Equality and diversity is supported through staff training, development and engagement

- Staff at all levels are supported to gain appropriate knowledge and skills to deliver equal services

to our staff and our customers in their diversity

- Staff in their diversity have an opportunity to shape and influence the delivery of fair and accessible services

5. We know who our customers are

- We proactively use customer profiling to gather customer insight information to help us develop fair and accessible services
- Staff and customers clearly understand how customer profiling can improve our organisation and where service improvements have been made we will share our successes
- We will develop our capacity to understand and respond to the housing needs and aspirations of migrants and new arrivals in the communities which we serve
- We will develop our capacity to understand and respond to the housing needs and aspirations of future customers in their diversity
- Customer insight information is regularly reviewed, monitored and refreshed and measured against our strategic plan and business objectives for equality and diversity
- Customer profiling is informed by best practice, is undertaken confidentially and in line with the Data Protection Act 1998

6. We involve our customers in shaping and scrutinising services

- We actively encourage and proactively seek the involvement of customers in their diversity across all nine protected characteristics: age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation, in the shaping and delivery of fair and accessible services
- We provide structures, resources, training and capacity building opportunities for customers to enable them to contribute to delivery of fair and accessible services
- We effectively empower our tenants to scrutinise, monitor and review our services for equality and diversity - we provide our customers with regular, robust and appropriate information in accessible formats which have been agreed with them and customers are encouraged to challenge our performance in relation to equality and diversity. We will report to our customers on our progress

7. We represent the communities which we serve

- We build visible links with local, diverse and representative community groups and community advocates to strengthen our relationships with the communities which we serve and to build trust
- We work openly with partners and other service providers in the community to ensure that our services are representative and diverse and to ensure that the diverse customers which we serve are safe and secure in their homes and communities

8. We support the communities which we serve

- We will work with the communities which we serve and with community partners to advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations between different groups within the communities which we serve

- We will work with the communities which we serve and with community partners to eliminate discrimination, tackle harassment, hate incidents and hate crime and domestic violence

How will you review the impact, positive or negative once the project, policy or service is implemented?

Action	By when	By who
Community Impacts to be reviewed by the Programme Steering Group at regular intervals	Standing Agenda item	Programme Manager (TBC)
Review by Growth and Infrastructure Corporate Working Board	Standing Agenda item	Programme Lead – James Doe
Include as part of post-project review	Dec 2023	Programme Lead – James Doe
Highlight of specific impacts through ongoing reporting to Council, Cabinet and Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee	According to Programme Plan	Programme Manager (TBC)

Completed by:

James Doe

Assistant Director – Planning, Development and Regeneration

Dated 29 March 2021

Reviewed and signed off by:

Linda Roberts

Assistant Director – People, Performance and Innovation

APPENDIX 3

HEMEL HEMPSTEAD TOWN CENTRE DATA ANALYSIS

MARCH 2021

In preparation for a Strategy for Hemel Hempstead Town Centre, existing data has been pulled together to inform the commissioning of a Project Team and to provide background information to initial discussion and plans.

The data has been divided into:

- Commercial Property
- People
- Business
- Infrastructure

The list of data is not exhaustive and further data evidence will be commissioned to provide comparators and trends.

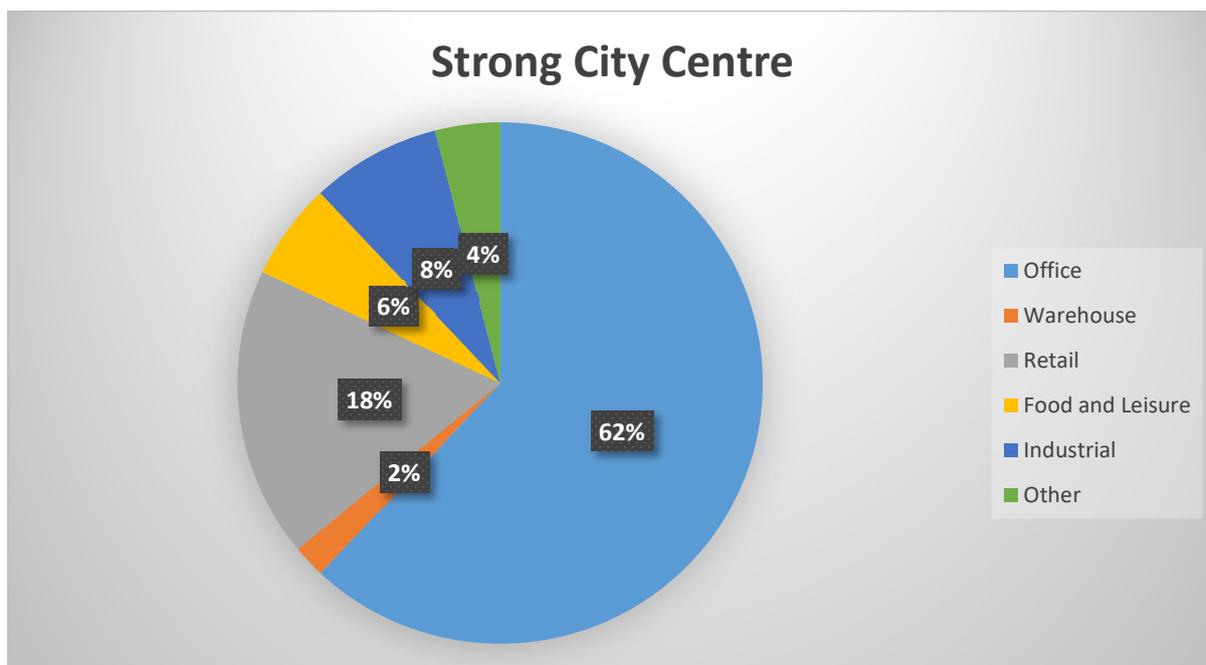
TOWN CENTRE COMMERCIAL PROPERTY

What is a strong City Centre?

Centre for Cities sets out the components for a Strong City Centre in their report; *City Centres; Past, Present and Future*. The profile of a strong city centre is dominated by employment uses, rather than retail, to provide footfall and spend. The Centre for Cities report¹ identifies the components for a successful City Centre in the figure below. The amount of Retail is no more than 18% with Office 62%.

¹ City Centres; Past, Present and Future, Nov 2019

Strong City Centre



This can be compared to retail space in Hemel Hempstead which was nearly 40% in 2017 and Office space which was 14%,² showing a weakness in the town centre. In recent years approximately 40,000 square feet of office space has been lost to Permitted Development, further weakening the town centre's capability to provide employment opportunities and increased footfall to support retail and business services.

Whereas it is highly unlikely that Hemel Hempstead Town Centre would reach the level of office space referred to above, the findings do point to a need to strengthen business activity and plan accordingly.

There is need to update figures from 2017 to take into consideration the work in the town centre after 2017 and the effects of COVID. However it provides a good indication of the need to reimagine the town centre offer to provide a wider offer to ensure future sustainability.

Dacorum's Local Plan³ identifies the lack of employment space as a real concern and of the challenges of permitted development rights. *"Vacancy rates are now so low that any further losses are likely to result in the displacement of jobs and businesses"*. Particularly it says; *"The Dacorum Employment Land Availability Assessment states that office floor space has fallen in the Borough's town centres and that there was no justification for any further losses. Indeed, the concern is that further losses in Hemel Hempstead town centre will force some local businesses to relocate out of the town"*.

Although Centre for Cities profile of a successful town centre may not be what the aim would be for Hemel Hempstead, it is clear that loss of employment space has contributed to the challenge of recovery for the town centre.

² South West Herts Leisure and Retail Study, 2017, Nexus Planning

³ Dacorum Local Plan; Economic Topic Paper chapter 3

Lower commercial property rents than comparative towns

Hemel Hempstead is struggling to be seen as an attractive option for businesses. This is reflected in the price of commercial property compared to other areas. The average price of commercial units⁴ for rent in Hemel Hempstead is currently £20.29 per square foot and this is compared to Stevenage (£22.25 per square foot) and Aylesbury (£23.38 per square foot), which indicates that there is less of a demand from businesses to establish in the town centre, than in other comparative towns.

The lack of demand for commercial space is a strong case for developers to use permitted development rights to reduce commercial space even further. There is a case for disrupting the market, in spite of the low demand, and resist further loss of commercial space. This has to be seen in relation to the need to provide further residential provision in Hemel and presents a challenge. However as is set out later in this report, evidence is clear that Hemel will need to also provide a strong employment offer to enable its recovery.

Online retail and business rates are often blamed for the reduction in retail; however this doesn't tell the whole story. Research⁵ shows that the real challenge for retailers is insufficient footfall in their city centres, due to the lack of jobs in these central locations, which would provide customers during the week. Growth has occurred in successful city centres principally because of their ability to attract jobs. These jobs have in turn created additional footfall for shops, bars and restaurants and together these developments have altered the benefits the city centres offer as places to live.

High vacancy rates and falling footfall

Vacancy rates are closely related to what makes a town successful or not. Prior to the Pandemic in April 2019, Hemel Hempstead town centre had a vacancy rate of 14.9% which can be compared to successful town centres such as Brighton and Swindon who had vacancy rates around 8% at the same time. Current vacancy rates for Hemel Hempstead are yet to be obtained, and a higher level can be anticipated due to closures arising from the Pandemic but with a starting vacancy rate of 14.9%, the challenge of recovering is substantial.

A report from KPMG⁶ establishes that high streets of the future will need to become multi-purpose locations, combining retail and hospitality amenities with residential, education, healthcare, cultural, technology, community and more. Office space will need to be transformed for three main purposes: collaboration, creativity and culture, with less space devoted to tasks that could be done remotely. Transport links will also need to be reconsidered, as well as additional infrastructure needs.

⁴ Realla listings, March 2021

⁵ City Centres; Past, Present and Future, Nov 2019

⁶ The Future of Towns and Cities post COVID, KPMG Jan 2021

In contrast, the KPMG report states that Hemel Hempstead town centre has a very weak offering of sports, culture and restaurant facilities, the third weakest out of 109 town centres.

Hemel Hempstead also has an oversupply of retail jobs, compared to UK average. Due to a shift in shopping patterns the town is expected to lose 31% or 1,401 retail jobs over the next few years.

Herts LEP identifies the current concentration of retail as a weakness of Dacorum's economy. Hemel town centre could provide the catalyst to grow future jobs and Herts LEP identifies⁷ Professional and Business Services as a growth opportunity for Dacorum.

The footfall has been reduced by 60% in last year, which is not unexpected due to the pandemic but to enable the town centre to recover, there needs to be a purpose for people to visit Hemel town centre, and this can no longer be relied on being for shopping only. Instead shopping is anticipated to become a secondary reason to visit the town centre, with working, living or spending leisure time being the primary reason.

In the KPMG report, Hemel Hempstead is the town out of the 109 towns and cities with the highest proportion of residents working from home, 27,4%. This will hugely effect the current offer in Hemel Town Centre and highlights the need to repurpose the offer to enable a recovery.

This fact, together with a very weak leisure and cultural offer attracting footfall, will make the recovery for the town centre challenging. The KPMG research, identifies Hemel Hempstead as one of the most vulnerable towns in England, to the effects of COVID and with the most challenges.

Changing trends providing opportunities

Post-COVID we are unlikely to see a return to old commuting habits, with a significant proportion of those able to work from home doing so for at least part of the week. At the same time, the collapse in high street retail, will serve to exacerbate the vacuum in city and town centres, with less people calling in to shop.

The reduction in commuter footfall and the consequent fall in commercial property values could open up opportunities to reshape town and city centres. By attracting new tenants for prime commercial property that will now find the rent affordable, town and city centres may be able to serve their inhabitants differently. To survive town centres need to move away from being predominantly retail and services to offer space to a different kind of tenant. For example, new tenants could include skills and training providers such as the College and Universities who can expand their remit to help support workers who lost their jobs during the crisis. Other new tenants could be spaces for start-ups and on-line businesses who are seeking pop up space to interact with its customers.

⁷ Recovery Plan, Herts LEP 2020

Trends in New Working practices

The increase in homeworking will also provide an opportunity to repurpose office space to smaller flexible units. There is also an opportunity to attract City companies looking for regional bases as they are reducing their City presence.

The Council carried out a survey in 2020 to identify the effects of Covid on residents' lives and behaviours. The survey showed that 75% were working from home at least one day a week but that 33% of people do not have a suitable workspace at home. The survey concludes that post Covid, there will be a significant increase in the number of people who work 2-4 days a week from home. This provides an opportunity for Hemel town centre to provide flexible drop down work spaces, which are close to services and retail.

The local community could be further served with a variety of new community centres, catering for a full range of ages and interests, from children's recreation to adult art courses. It is particularly important that the town centre have a clear purpose, which needs to include job creation, to try to address the reduction in commuter and shopper footfall.

BUSINESS

Healthy business growth except for micro businesses

Dacorum as a whole has a healthy growth of businesses (990 new businesses in 2019⁸) with a slightly higher than national survival rate of 45%, 5 years on. However the growth of micro businesses (10 or less employees) are reducing and reclining at -1.8%. This is concerning as 92% of all businesses in Dacorum are micro businesses.

Vulnerable business sectors

Dacorum has an oversupply jobs in (33,000) vulnerable sectors such as Administration and Support Services⁹. The figure is 33% of total jobs compared to 8.9% UK average. There is also a concentration of jobs in Wholesale, Retail and Transportation¹⁰, sectors which can also be classed as vulnerable to macro-economic changes such as Automation and Brexit and which have suffered most during lockdown. In addition to this there is an oversupply of part time employment (47%) against UK average if 32%, indicating than many of these jobs are lower paid and insecure.

In order to revitalise Hemel Town Centre and to ensure a higher footfall and mix of users of services and retail, the town centre needs to attract higher value knowledge based jobs. These jobs drive productivity and growth including the increase in wages and the demand for local services. However Hemel town centre has to provide an offer

⁸ Herts LEP 2020

⁹ Official Labour Market Statistics, NOMIS, June 2020

¹⁰ Regional skills demand beyond Covid-16: Dacorum, EMSI. Nov 2020

to attract these businesses to locate in the town centre by providing an attractive environment, services and access to a skilled workforce.

Hemel Hempstead Town Plan could provide the environment to foster micro company growth within the knowledge based sector by providing new work spaces and facilities. There are some impressive UK and international examples of how larger spaces such as department stores, can be repurposed to provide a mix of work spaces, artisan eateries, niche and local retailers and community services.

Talking to the Managers of Marlow and Riverside Centres, the offer of flexible rents and turn over leases would provide an opportunity to attract cost sensitive business start- ups and community groups and to start providing a different offer.

PEOPLE

Dacorum had a low pre Covid unemployment rate of 1.5% in June 2019 but has this increased to 5.4% in June 2020¹¹. It is worth noting that there is slightly higher proportion of 18 – 24 year olds (9.5%) than the rest of East (8.7%) and the UK (9.2%).

In addition to this, the furlough rate in Dacorum is the highest in Hertfordshire and the final effect of Covid on employment will not be felt until late 2021 when furlough has ended. It may be that due to the abundance of jobs within Covid affected sectors such as retail and services, Dacorum will find itself in a worsening position compared to the rest of Hertfordshire and the UK.

Although the employment rate was high pre Covid and wages for full time work were higher than UK average, wages were lower for temporary and part time workers.¹² The existence of large amount of part time/ temporary low paid employment in vulnerable sectors affected by Covid, creates a perfect storm and could result in a decrease in economic activity and rise in unemployment.

Herts LEP Recovery Plan ¹³identifies the necessity for Dacorum to grow knowledge based jobs to underpin recovery and recognises the risk of the large concentration of retail in the town centre.

Hemel town centre can play a key part in ensuring the future stability and sustainability of the labour market by providing knowledge based employment. To support access to the higher skilled/high wage jobs, the town centre will need to provide facilities for skills training and career support in an empty shop unit.

¹¹ Recovery Plan, Herts LEP, 2020

¹² Official Labour Market Statistics, NOMIS, June 2020

¹³ Herts LEP, 2020

INFRASTRUCTURE

The Pandemic has highlighted the importance of being connected digitally and the reluctance to use public transport has encouraged people to cycle and walk more. The change in behaviour such as more home working, increased online shopping and the ideas around the 20 min neighbourhood, will present both challenges and opportunities for Hemel town centre.

Digital

Dacorum currently has a weak digital infrastructure and a considerable lack of fibre to premise broadband, 4.9% against the UK average of 20%. In comparison St Albans has 24% and Milton Keynes has 86%.

Fibre to the Premise (FTTP) rates for comparison (www.thinkbroadband.com) as at 1 March 2021	
Area	FTTP coverage (%)
UK average	20.63%
Herts	8%
Dacorum	4.9%
Milton Keynes	86.28%
St Albans	24.38%
Watford	2.38%

The ability to attract knowledge based/tech companies into the town centre and provide new work spaces will be dependent on the availability of a strong digital infrastructure. This will also support the large amount of residents working from home.

Introduction of free Wi-Fi will support leisure and entertainment activities and enable Hemel to connect with its residents and visitors.

Transport

The lack of a town centre station has been cited by the BID Chair, Philip Walker, as a barrier to attracting employment opportunities into the town centre and is a reason why the town centre is currently not seen as a viable option for employment space.

Further evidence gathering in relation to commuting patterns is required to understand the requirement.

Next Steps

This report aims to provide a snapshot of current evidence and feedback from discussions with external stakeholders. Further and more in depth research, including providing comparators and best practice is required to form a fuller picture.

Document is Restricted



AGENDA ITEM:

SUMMARY

Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	20th April 2021
Part:	Part I with Part II appendix
If Part II, reason:	The Part II appendix contains information relating to the financial or business affairs of the Council. (Local Government Act 1972, Schedule 12A, Part 1, Paragraph 3).

Title of report:	Berkhamsted Leisure Centre Redevelopment
Contact:	Cllr Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Contracted Services Author/Responsible Officers: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Mark Brookes, Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services)
Purpose of report:	To provide an update to Cabinet on feasibility work and project planning to develop a new Berkhamsted Sports Centre
Recommendations:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Cabinet note the feasibility work for the project and the options for facility mix as set out in Section 5 to allow the next stages of the project to be developed and considered in more detail during the next project stage. 2. That Cabinet note:- <ol style="list-style-type: none"> (a) the consultation undertaken with stakeholders and the further consultations

	<p>required, including public consultation, as set out in Section 4.</p> <p>(b) the indicative project timeline at Section 7.</p> <p>3. That Cabinet note the potential forecast project costs for each option (detailed in Part II Appendix) and agree to use £420,000 of the approved project budget to proceed with the next project stage (RIBA Stage 2 – Concept Design).</p> <p>4. That Cabinet agree to award the multi-disciplinary consultant project team contract to Faithful+Gould (via the CCS Project Management & Full Design Team Services Framework (RM3741)) with contractual break clauses at the end of each RIBA stage.</p> <p>5. That Cabinet endorse the proposal to provide a further update to Cabinet at the end of RIBA Stage 2 (Concept Design), at which point a more detailed level of understanding of the site will have been achieved and a design, cost and business plan developed accordingly.</p>
<p>Corporate Objectives:</p>	<p>Clean, Safe and Enjoyable Environment – Leisure provision is central to delivering a borough that people can enjoy.</p> <p>A new leisure facility will help to ensure that it continues to meet the needs of current and future residents.</p>
<p>Implications:</p>	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>An outline of the financial implications of the project are set out in the Part II report and will be developed into a formally costed proposal and business plan once further design and stakeholder consultation has completed.</p> <p>This report seeks approval to proceed to RIBA Stage 2 only and a drawdown of £420,000 for the consultancy and survey costs required at that stage. A further report seeking authority for the full project costs will be reported to Cabinet and Council at the end of RIBA Stage 2.</p> <p><u>Operational</u></p>

	<p>Subject to agreement on contractual terms, the sports centre will continue to be run by Everyone Active until the end of their contractual term, however a new build facility would require a reassessment of the existing terms.</p> <p>The aim (as far as is possible) will be to keep the existing facility open until the new facility is ready to be opened in order to minimise disruption to existing users.</p> <p><u>Value for Money</u></p> <p>The development will provide a new facility, which will be designed to last for the next 40 years and flexible enough to adjust to changes in user demands during that period.</p> <p>The main building contractor will be competitively tendered separately to the consultant project team and an appropriate and compliant route will be selected to ensure value for money is achieved.</p> <p>Further detail and recommendations are provided within this report and key decisions will be provided to Cabinet for approval in future.</p>
<p>Risk Implications:</p>	<p>Failure to invest in the facility could leave it in a condition, which will not meet the Councils and users expectations and could lead to reduced usage contrary to the Council's sports strategy.</p> <p>An initial review of project specific risks has been undertaken and a detailed risk register will be developed through the next stage.</p> <p>At this point the key risks to be monitored and mitigated are cost and affordability, market conditions (covid-19 and Brexit) and planning and building control consents.</p> <p>See also paragraph 4-13 of the Part II report.</p>
<p>Community Impact:</p>	<p>A Community Impact Assessment will be carried out as part of the RIBA Stage 2 project development, but the proposal will be developed to ensure that it has no adverse impacts on the community with an aim to</p>

	increase participation across all groups.
Health And Safety Implications:	A new centre will result in significant additional investment in the site and improve the Health and Safety of the facility by bringing it up to modern standards.
Monitoring Officer/S.151 Officer Comments:	<p>Monitoring Officer:</p> <p>There are no legal issues to highlight at this stage as the report is recommending proceeding to RIBA Stage 2 where further design, costs and revenue planning, and site due diligence work be carried out.</p> <p>The consultant project team procurement has been carried out in a compliant and competitive manner using the Crown Commercial Services Framework.</p> <p>S.151 Officer:</p> <p>The £420K funding required to progress is within the limits already approved by Council for this project. Updated modelling will be produced and further financial recommendations provided on completion of the RIBA Stage 2 work.</p> <p>I have provided more detailed comments in Part 2 of this report.</p>
Consultees:	<p>As part of the Feasibility Study, a significant amount of NGBs, stakeholders and interested parties have been consulted, including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader of the Council/Portfolio Holder for Corporate & Contracted Services • Portfolio Holder for Community and Regulatory Services • Everyone Active • Sport England • Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee <p>A full schedule of consultees is included within this paper.</p>
Background papers:	Strategic Review Indoor Sports and Leisure Facilities – (October 2016)

	<p>Physical Condition Survey - Oakleaf Group (July 2017).</p> <p>Draft Feasibility Study – Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd (August 2018) with February 2019 update.</p> <p>Active Dacorum: A Physical Activity and Sport Strategy for Dacorum 2019-2024 (the Sports Strategy)</p> <p>Cabinet reports March 2019, January 2020. Housing and Community OSC January 2020</p> <p>Feasibility Study – Knight, Kavanagh & Page Ltd (May 2020)</p> <p>UK Active – Covid-19 Impact Report – May 2020</p>
<p>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</p>	<p>Dacorum Borough Council (the Council) Everyone Active (EA) Berkhamsted Sports Centre (the Sports Centre) Office for National Statistics (ONS) Overview and Scrutiny Committee (OSC) Berkhamsted Town Council (BTC) Knight, Kavanagh & Page (KKP)</p>

1. Background & Context

1.1 In March 2019 Cabinet considered a report regarding options for the redevelopment of Berkhamsted Sports Centre.

1.2 The options considered were Minor Refurbishment, Major Refurbishment or New Build facility. Members agreed that further feasibility work should be carried out on the New Build option.

1.3 In January 2020 Cabinet were presented with the following recommendations:

1. That Cabinet endorse the Minimum Project Requirements as set out in paragraph 2 of the report.

2. That Cabinet note:-

a) the governance structure for the project at paragraph 3.

b) The consultation strategy for stakeholder and public consultation and the stakeholders identified in paragraph 5.

c) The indicative project timeline at paragraph 6.

The above recommendations were endorsed by Cabinet and by Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

1.4 Further work has been undertaken with regards to consultations, site surveys and feasibility work to provide a comprehensive Feasibility Study which is summarised within this paper.

1.5 Two options have been developed for the replacement of the Berkhamsted Sports Centre, detailed as the 'Essential Option' and the 'Desirable Option', although it important to note that these were developed for the feasibility stage to ensure that the Council's minimum requirements could be met and will be developed significantly through the next stages of project and design development.

1.6 Following the 'RIBA Plan of Work' (table below), the work undertaken completes Stages 0 (Strategic Definition) and 1 (Preparation and Briefing).

1.7 The next stage is Stage 2 (Concept Design). Whilst some survey work has been undertaken during the Feasibility Study, additional site information is required to further develop the proposals, which is undertaken during Stages 2 & 3.

- To create a sports centre which considers its impact on the environment and implements measures to mitigate that impact.
- To create a sports centre which is financially sustainable in terms of its running costs against projected income and a centre which can be developed within the Council’s affordability criteria.

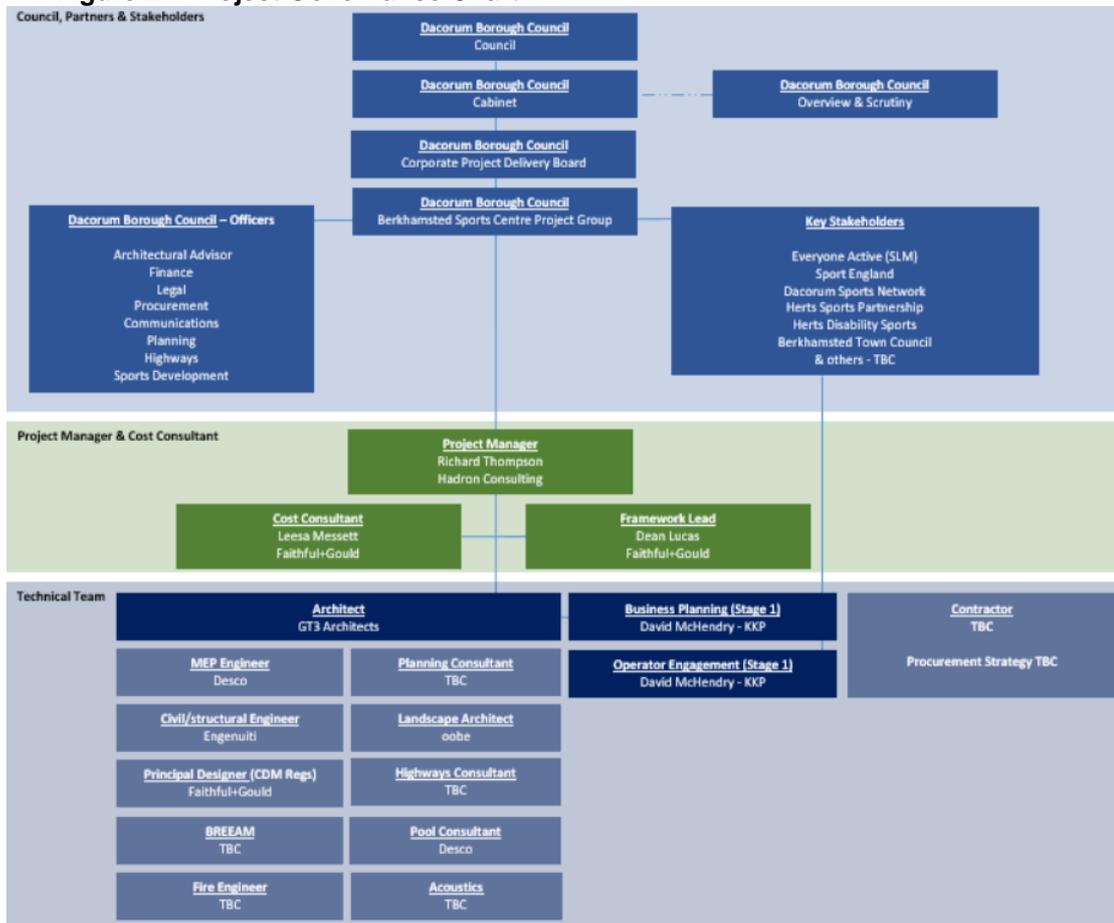
2.4 The scheme will be continually reviewed by the Project Board against the MPRs as the project develops.

3. Project Governance

3.1 The project governance structure is set out below. The major budgetary approvals will be approved by full Council and the strategic project decisions made by Cabinet, with delegations down to the Corporate Delivery Project Board to ensure that the more operational decisions can be made efficiently.

3.2 Scrutiny will be provided to Cabinet decisions through the Finance and Resources OSC in relation to finance/budgetary matters with scrutiny in relation to sports development and community impact provided by the Housing and Community OSC.

Figure 2 – Project Governance Chart



4. Consultation strategy

4.1 As part of the Feasibility Study, the first stage of the consultation strategy was undertaken. The majority of stakeholders were engaged on a one to one basis to better understand their current and future requirements/needs and seek their input into the facility mix for the development.

4.2 The following organisations/groups were engaged with:

- ❖ Everyone Active
- ❖ Berkhamsted Town Council
- ❖ Herts Disability Sports Foundation
- ❖ Herts Sports Partnership
- ❖ Dacorum School Sports Manager
- ❖ Thomas Coram School
- ❖ Dacorum Sub-Aqua Club
- ❖ Watford FC Community Trust
- ❖ Dacorum Sports Network
- ❖ Herts Valley Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG)
- ❖ Herts Community NHS Trust
- ❖ Hertfordshire Community NHS Trust
- ❖ Hertfordshire Libraries
- ❖ Happy Days Pre-School
- ❖ England Indoor Bowls Association
- ❖ Hannah Marie Dance Academy
- ❖ Berkhamsted Swim Club
- ❖ England Volleyball
- ❖ Sport England
- ❖ Tring Town Council
- ❖ England Netball
- ❖ Swim England
- ❖ Herts Cricket
- ❖ Ashlyn's School
- ❖ APEX
- ❖ Toad Hall Nursery
- ❖ Badminton England
- ❖ England Basketball
- ❖ British Gymnastics
- ❖ Ministry of Air
- ❖ Herts CC
- ❖ Banks Physio
- ❖ Mind & Body
- ❖ Apex Dance
- ❖ Scraggs Roller Skating
- ❖ Hawks Lacrosse
- ❖ Hemel Swim Club
- ❖ Marcel Fairs

- 4.3 The consultation responses have been carefully considered and the facility mix, scheme layout and design developed to respond to the consultation exercise.
- 4.4 In particular, there were strong representations and objections regarding the use of Lagley Meadow/East Meadow for a 3G football facility and therefore this option has been discounted although opportunities to improve this area will be explored further at the next stage.
- 4.5 During the next stage of the project, further consultation will take place to advise the consultees of progress and 'direction of travel'. Feedback will be again be captured and considered.
- 4.6 Once existing consultees have been consulted further, the intention is to hold a wider public consultation, which may include a consultation day with drop in sessions if possible or on-line consultations and feedback.
- 4.7 Further consultation will be continued as the design evolves through the project stages and will include specialist input at appropriate stages by using processes such as Design Review Panels and Community Review Panels.
- 4.8 As part of any planning application the public, stakeholders and NGBs will be consulted and able to feedback. By undertaking the above consultations it is hoped that any major considerations or issues are identified and mitigated.

5. Scheme options & facilities mix

- 5.1 Following consultations, two facility mix options have been developed, the 'Essential Option' and the 'Desirable Option', as detailed below, however, it is important to note that the options below will continued to be developed and reviewed through the next consultation and design stage.

Essential Option	Desirable Option
Office/Admin Space	Office/Admin Space
Café/Kitchen	Café/Kitchen
Soft Play Area (within Café)	Soft Play Area (within Café)
Viewing Spectator Seating	Viewing Spectator Seating
Staff Room	Staff Room
M&F WCs	M&F WCs
Cleaners Store	Cleaners Store
Community Meeting/Class Room	Community Meeting/Class Room
4x Treatment Rooms	4x Treatment Rooms
	<i>Spa Zone/Health Suite</i>
Pool Filtration/Main Plant	Pool Filtration/Main Plant

6 Lane Pool Hall	6 Lane Pool Hall
Training Pool	Training Pool
	<i>Splash Pad</i>
First Aid	First Aid
Air Handling Plant	Air Handling Plant
Pool Store	Pool Store
Wet Change Village/Accessible Change	Wet Change Village/Accessible Change
3x Studios (Activity/Holistic/Spin)	3x Studios (Activity/Holistic/Spin)
Fitness Suite (90 Stations)	<i>Fitness Suite (120 Stations)</i>
2x Fitness Change	2x Fitness Change
Nursery	Nursery
4 Court Sports Hall	<i>6 Court Sports Hall</i>
Dry Change (Sports Hall)	Dry Change (Sports Hall)
Sports Hall Store	Sports Hall Store
Family Change	Family Change
150x Car Parking Spaces	150x Car Parking Spaces
Mini Soccer (1 x 7v7 / 2 x 5v5)	Mini Soccer (1 x 7v7 / 2 x 5v5)
New Access Road	New Access Road
Relocation of MUGA	Relocation of MUGA
Outdoor Play Area	Outdoor Play Area
Storage	Storage

Note: differences between options in red italics (associated storage and changing spaces are also larger to suit the increased facilities).

Table 1 – Options and facilities mix

- 5.2 A high level construction cost and revenue business plan has been developed for each option for feasibility purposes and is set out in the Part II report annexed.
- 6. Appointment of Consultant Project Design Team**
- 6.1 A review of the Consultant Project Design Team procurement options was undertaken during the Feasibility Stage.
- 6.2 The aim was to select a high quality multi-disciplinary cohesive team with previous experience of successfully delivering similar projects and ensure a competitive process was used to ensure value for money.
- 6.3 The use of a suitable EU compliant Framework agreement was decided as the best route to market as it allowed a fully compliant process to be followed but also introduced competition to the process.
- 6.4 Core appointments of Project manager, Cost consultant, Architect, M&E engineer, Civil/Structural engineer, Landscape engineer and Principal Designer allows the Council to have more flexibility over the smaller appointments of specialists. This makes the initial procurement

exercise more straightforward and makes the opportunity more attractive to bidders.

- 6.5 A tender process for the consultant project design team was therefore run via the CCS Project Management & Full Design Team Services Framework (RM3741)).
- 6.6 The CCS Framework is considered the 'go to' framework for local authorities and there is very good access to suitably experience professional teams via the framework. The framework fees are also amongst the lowest fees of the available frameworks.
- 6.7 The Council received 8 submissions from market leading consultancy practices who were evaluated against the assessment criteria based on 75% quality and 25% price. The top three bidders were invited to clarification interviews, which gave the assessment team an opportunity to meet the key personnel from the bidders. Further detail of the assessment criteria and the evaluation scores are set out in the Part II report annexed.
- 6.8 The recommendation based on the evaluation scores is to award the project management and full design team services contract to Faithful+Gould who will act as the Framework Lead to the core consultancy team which includes:
- ❖ GT3 Architects
 - ❖ Hadron Consulting – Project manager
 - ❖ Engenuiti – Civil/structural engineers
 - ❖ oobe – Landscape architect
 - ❖ Desco – MEP Engineers (including pool filtration)
 - ❖ Faithful+Gould – Cost Consultants & Principal Designer
- 6.9 The tender submissions received were all of an exceptionally high standard, however, the areas where the Faithful+Gould team particularly impressed the assessment team were around their understanding of the site and creative interpretation of the opportunities that the site presents. The collective team had excellent experience of working on similar projects together and their case studies of similar sites, including Dover District Leisure Centre and Hart Leisure Centre which they had delivered together had many similarities to the Berkhamsted site.

- 6.10 The Council also has experience of working with Faithful+Gould (cost consultants) and Hadron Consulting (project management) through the feasibility stage and therefore already has good working relationships with core members of the project team which should ensure continuity through the next stage of project development.
- 6.11 The contract award will be for all RIBA stages 2-7, however there will be a break clause at the end of Stage 2 and subsequent stages, and therefore this report only seeks budgetary approval to the end of RIBA Stage 2 where a detailed design, construction cost plan and revenue business plan will be produced. At this stage there will be full scrutiny and Cabinet/Council review of the developed plan which is the point where members will be asked if they wish to formally commit to the project and agree the funding structure.
- 6.12 In addition to the core consultancy team, there will be site surveys, which need to be completed through Stage 2 and non-core consultancy appointments. Details of the projected survey costs are set out in the Part II report annexed.

7. Project timetable

- 7.1 Working with the Council's consultants an indicative project/delivery plan has been developed to highlight the key steps required to deliver the project together with an indicative development timetable:

Milestone	Date	Comments
DBC Cabinet	20 April 2021	
RIBA Stage 2 commencement	1 May 2021	
RIBA Stage 2 completion	17 September 2021	
DBC Cabinet / Council	TBC	To approve Stage 2 outputs
RIBA Stage 3 commencement	1 November 2021	
RIBA Stage 3 completion	2 March 2022	
Target Planning Application submission	12 April 2022	
Target Planning Decision & Discharge Pre-commencement conditions completion	20 July 2022	
Stage 4A / Tender completion	6 December 2022	
Authority to proceed and Contractor	12 January 2023	

appointed completion		
Start on Site	10 February 2023	
Practical Completion New Leisure Centre	29 October 2024	
Opening New Leisure Centre / Commencement of demolition existing centre	26 November 2024	
Project completion	27 May 2025	

Note: the above indicative timetable assumes no significant procurement, planning or construction delays. The overall delivery programme will be reviewed at each RIBA stage to consider any necessary phasing and delivery considerations.

8. Covid-19

- 8.1 During the Stage 1 feasibility Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the country as a whole including the leisure market with sport centres being required to close for long periods of 2020/21.
- 8.2 This project has been paused during this period in order to consider the longer term implications of Covid on the Council as a whole but specifically the leisure market.
- 8.3 In May 2020 UK Active produced a Covid-19 Impact Report and whilst it is now a little out of date and produced prior to the announcement of vaccines it does provide some useful analysis of potential post lockdown behaviours.
- 8.4 The reports highlights at page 5 a survey carried out on gym members by leisure-net that indicated that 88% of respondents said they would use their facility the same or more once it reopens. The modelling carried out also predicts a return to pre-covid usage numbers within 25 weeks of reopening without any restrictions in place.
- 8.5 There have clearly been changes in customer behaviours during lockdown, home/online workouts, greater use of outdoor space etc which will impact the recovery period, however there will also likely be a greater emphasis on physical and mental well-being post lockdown which may increase usage.
- 8.6 The facilities to be provided in terms of workout space, swimming, sports hall, 3G 5-a-side football, are also difficult to replicate outside of a sports centre environment. A new build facility will also be designed so that it is flexible enough to respond to future pandemics if required.

- 8.7 The new centre will not be open until mid-late 2024, which will give the leisure market another 3 years to recover, and it is therefore believed that Covid-19 should not be a reason to discontinue the project, although its impact will continue to be reviewed as the project develops.

9. Summary and Recommendation

- 9.1 The current site presents an opportunity to significantly improve the Sports Centre for the next 40 years, maximise the use of the site and increase public participation in sport and leisure.
- 9.2 The feasibility study carried out to date indicates that the site is suitable for redevelopment with no major impediments to progressing to the next stage of design, cost assessment, business planning and consultation.
- 9.3 Cabinet members are requested to approve the recommendations in the heading to this report to progress the project.

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Agenda Item 11

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