

CABINET AGENDA



TUESDAY 24 MAY 2022 AT 7.30 PM

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 Anderson
Councillor Griffiths (Deputy Leader)	Councillor Banks
Councillor Elliot	Councillor Barrett

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

AGENDA

1. MINUTES (Pages 3 - 9)

To confirm the minutes of the meeting held on 19th April 2022

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 10)

7. HEMEL PLACE STRATEGY UPDATE AND CONSULTATION LAUNCH (Pages 11 - 56)

8. QUARTERLY RISK REGISTER (Pages 57 - 75)

9. BUSINESS ENGAGEMENT (Pages 76 - 87)

10. HOUSING ALLOCATIONS POLICY AMENDMENT (Pages 88 - 156)

MINUTES

CABINET

19 APRIL 2022

Present:

Members:

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

Officers:	Claire Hamilton	Chief Executive
	Mark Brookes	Assistant Director - Corporate and Contracted Services
	David Barrett	Group Manager - Housing Development
	James Doe	Assistant Director - Planning, Development and Regeneration
	Layla Fowell	Corporate & Democratic Support Officer
	Nigel Howcutt	Chief Finance Officer (S151)
	Alex Robinson	Interim Group Manager - Planning and Development
	Phillipa Zieba	

Also Attendance:

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

CA/26/21 MINUTES

Cabinet Agreed the meetings from the previous meeting

CA/27/21 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were no Apologies received.

CA/28/21 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

CA/29/21 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

CA/30/21 REFERRALS TO CABINET

CA/31/21 CABINET FORWARD PLAN

CA/32/21 HRA BUSINESS PLAN

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

1. That Council approves the updated Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan

Cabinet Agreed

2. To approve the following budget virements in the HRA for 22/23:

- £140k increase to the HRA Supervision and Management employee budget to cover the costs of an additional Team Leader Post and two new Strategic Housing Officer posts.
- £200k increase to the HRA Supervision and Management supplies and services budget to cover the additional work to be undertaken in respect of stock reviews etc.
- £340k reduction to the HRA Rev

Corporate Objectives

Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery

Climate and ecological emergency

Statutory Officer Comments:

Monitoring Officer:

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

Deputy S151 Officer:

There are some inflationary assumptions inherent within the Business Plan, which are liable to change over the lifetime of the plan and so represent a risk to delivery. These assumptions are kept under regular review.

The Business Plan incorporates a programme of capital works, which must be financed. Funding sources available to meet the cost of these works includes capital receipts and reserves, grant funding and external borrowing.

The way in which the Council structures its borrowing will influence the amount of funding available to deliver the Business Plan in future years. Borrowing options and the associated implications for the Business Plan will be presented to Members in advance.

Advice

Cllr Griffiths introduced the report and said that this was revised business plan for the housing revenues account and that there were 2 recommendations, she said it is fairly self-explanatory and she was happy to take questions.

Recommendation agreed

CA/33/21 EMPLOYMENT AND SKILLS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

Cabinet Agreed

1. To approve the Draft Employment and Skills Supplementary Planning Document for public consultation.
2. To delegate authority to the Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure and the Assistant Director for Planning, to agree the timing of the public consultation on the Draft Employment and Skills Supplementary Planning Document.

Corporate Objectives

Building strong and vibrant communities
Ensuring economic growth and prosperity

Statutory Officer Comments:

Monitoring Officer:

No comments to add to the report.

Deputy S151 Officer:

This reports requests approval of the Draft SPD for public consultation. The costs associated with undertaking this consultation will be met from existing resources. Any financial considerations associated with the Council formally adopting the SPD will be brought before Cabinet in future reports.

Advice

Cllr Anderson introduced the report and said that he thought the report was excellent and they had hoped to get the most benefit out of new development and have skills for the future.

Cllr Elliot thought that this was a fantastic idea and hoped this would help the skills shortages, especially within the construction sector. He asked how this would be monitored to make sure that developers were actually doing this,

ARobinson responded that there were two main ways that they would do this, the 1st is through skills strategy that would be submitted to us prior to planning permission that they would set out amongst other things the proposals that the developer is offering, also the ongoing monitoring framework. The second way is that the skill strategy would be embedded into the section 106 process and the section 106 officer would monitor those provisions.

Cllr Elliot asked how would they keep on top of this and how do other councils monitor it.

ARobinson said that resourcing is an issue but he thought in the short term that the capacity to operate this effectively and what they needed to do as more developments come in stream and as the SPD embeds, in two or three years' time they may need to look at their processes for monitoring all 106 agreements. That may well mean improved software and improved processes to ensure that they were automating as much of the monitoring as they can. For the initial phase, they have the resources that they need to monitor and operate this effectively.

.Recommendations agreed

CA/34/21 ANNUAL INTERNAL AUDIT PROGRAMME APPROVAL

Cabinet Approved

The Annual Internal Audit Programme for 2022-23.

Corporate Objectives

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery.

Statutory Officer Comments:

Monitoring Officer

As set out in section 4, the Council is required by law to have a sound system of internal controls in place to review its main functions and areas of risk. This Internal Audit Programme will help to provide the required assurance and ensure the Council meets its statutory requirements.

Deputy s151 Officer:

This is a Deputy s151 Officer report. Comments are contained within the body of the report.

Advice

Cllr Elliot introduced the report and explained that this was a plan for the audit procedures over the next period.

NHowcutt said that this had already been to the audit committee and approved by them. They had allowed them a little leeway, 10% of the days for 2023 in case additional requests from members comes in in that period. It is flexible as well as providing them with the certainty that they need for their internal audit division and internal audit governance statement for 22/23.

Recommendation Agreed

CA/35/21 SOLAR BULK BUY PROPOSAL

Cabinet Agreed

1. To delegate approval to the Strategic Director (Place) for Dacorum Borough Council to sign the contract and appoint the chosen scheme provider (iChoosr) to proceed with the delivery of the Hertfordshire wide solar bulk buy scheme.
2. That the signing of the final contract by Dacorum Borough Council on behalf of the other authorities that wish to join the scheme, will be subject to them signing an MoU to 'promote the scheme and afford the relevant property data to Dacorum Borough Council', if required.
3. That Dacorum Borough Council agrees to share the auction benefits with Buckinghamshire County Council (plus any other local authority who may require support to join the scheme), subject to Dacorum Borough Council being satisfied there will be no legal commitments between the parties.

Corporate Objectives:

A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities
Climate and ecological emergency

Statutory Officer Comments

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

The internal Legal Team has reviewed the legal documents that are required to lead and participate in the Scheme and confirm there are no legal issues or concern.

Deputy S151 Officer:

The costs associated with this arrangement relate to the promotion of the scheme with householders and will be met in full by HGC funding. Engaging iChoosr as set out in this report is in line with relevant procurement requirements.

Advice

Cllr Anderson said he was pleased to present this report to members so that the Cabinet can approve it. It was an excellent scheme, not just to get solar panels

across Hemel Garden Communities but across the piece as a whole. This was a form of sustainability for the future generation that he fully supports and he hoped that they could get some traction and get some panels installed on roofs that do not have them. He felt this was an excellent opportunity and to do it in the most cost effective way.

PZieba said this was a real opportunity to retrofit solar panel, actual cells and charging points to the housing stock.

Recommendation agreed

CA/36/21 APPROPRIATION BY THE HOUSING REVENUE ACCOUNT OF GENERAL FUND LAND ST MARGARETS WAY

Cabinet Agreed

1. That the site at St Margaret's Way is no longer required for its current purpose.
2. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to apply for consent pursuant to section 19 Housing Act 1985 to the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities (or equivalent successor title) to appropriate the flats (above a garage block) and amenity land held within the Housing Revenue Account at St Margaret's Way as shown edged red and green on the Plan ('HRA Land').
3. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to carry out a consultation in relation to the intended appropriation and the disposal of the public open space within the HRA Land at St Margaret's Way; if objections are received as part of the consultation process, the consideration of those objections will be referred back to Cabinet.
4. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to take all necessary steps to appropriate the HRA Land from the Housing Revenue Account to planning purposes and the garages held within the General Fund within the Site for planning purposes pursuant to Section 122 of the Local Government Act 1972 and Section 227 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 for planning purposes subject to the completion of the processes authorised by Recommendations 2 and 3..
5. To delegate authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to appropriate the Site at St Margaret's Way from planning purposes to the Housing Revenue Account prior to construction of the new build council houses as set out in Part II of the report.

Corporate Objectives

A clean, safe and enjoyable environment

Building strong and vibrant communities
Ensuring economic growth and prosperity

Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need.

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery.

Climate and ecological emergency

Statutory Officer Comments:

Deputy Monitoring Officer:

The appropriation powers have been set out in the body of the report. The use of appropriation power needs to be justified by a clear 'public interest' case that overrides the individual rights of potential affected third party owners and occupiers of nearby properties.

Prior to appropriating the flats above the garage site that are currently held in the HRA, Secretary of State Consent will be required under section 19 of the Housing Act 1985.

Where land consisting or forming part of an open space is proposed to be appropriated, the Council cannot do so unless it has advertised its intention to do so for two consecutive weeks in a local newspaper and specifically considered any objections received under section 122(2A) of the Local Government Act 1972.

The definition of open space is "any land laid out as a public garden, or used for the purposes of public recreation, or land which is a disused burial ground". The amenity land at St Margaret's Way shown edged in green on the Plan comes within this definition and therefore the open space rules apply.

Deputy S151 Officer:

The appropriation of General Fund property and land to the HRA requires a technical to reduce the Capital Financing Requirement (CFR) of the General Fund and adjustment increase the CFR of the HRA by the market value of the transfer. The CFR is an indication of the Council's underlying need to borrow as a result of capital investment.

Advice

The meeting moved into part 2, please see the part 2 minutes.

CA/37/21 EXCLUSION OF THE PUBLIC

The Meeting ended at 7.51 pm

CABINET FORWARD PLAN

DATE	MATTERS FOR CONSIDERATION	Decision Making Process	Reports to Monitoring Officer/ S.151 Officer	CONTACT DETAILS	BACKGROUND INFORMATION
24/05/22	Business Engagement Proposals		04/05/22	James Doe – Strategic Director Place James.doe@dacorum.gov.uk	To Be Provided
24/05/22	Housing Allocations Policy amendment		04/05/22		
24/05/22	Quarterly Risk Register		04/05/22	Nigel Howcutt, Chief Finance Officer 01442 228662 Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	To be provided
24/05/22	Hemel Place Strategy Update and Consultation Launch		04/05/22	James Doe – Strategic Director James.doe@dacorum.gov.uk	To be Provided
12/07/22	South West Herts Joint strategic plan		23/06/22	James Doe – Strategic Director Place James.doe@dacorum.gov.uk	To be provided
12/07/22	MTFS Refresh		23/06/22	Nigel Howcutt, Chief Finance Officer 01442 228662 Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	To Be Provided
12/07/22	Housing Asset Management Contract		23/06/22	Simon Moody – Group Manager procurement & Contracted services Simon.moody@dacorum.gov.uk	To Be Provided
12/07/22	Housing Transformation Improvement Plan		23/06/22	Martyn Cockram – TBC	To Be Provided
12/07/22	Council Property Cladding Update		23/06/22	Mark Pinnell – Assistant Director Mark.pinnell@dacorum.gov.uk	To Be Provided
12/07/22	Community Governance Review 2022		23/06/22	Emma Walker, Group Manager Environmental and Community Protection emma.walker@dacorum.gov.uk and Ben Stevens, Lead Officer Environmental ben.stevens@dacorum.gov.uk	To Be Provided
12/07/22	Appointment of the Principal Contractor for the St Margaret's Way project		23/06/22	David Barratt – Head of Development David.barratt@dacorum.gov.uk	Deferred date TBC
12/07/22	Appointment of the Principal Contractor to Stage 2 for the Marchmont Fields Site		23/06/22	David Barratt – Head of Development David.barratt@dacorum.gov.uk	Deferred date TBC
12/07/22	Provisional Outturn Report		23/06/22	Nigel Howcutt, Chief Finance Officer 01442 228662 Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	To Be Provided
12/07/22	Public Space Protection Orders		23/06/22	Emma Walker, Group Manager Environmental and Community Protection emma.walker@dacorum.gov.uk and Ben Stevens, Lead Officer Environmental ben.stevens@dacorum.gov.uk	To Be Provided
12/07/22	Constitution and Financial regulations		23/06/22	Mark Brookes, Assistant Director Corporate & Contracted Service Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk	To Be Provided
12/07/22	Crematorium Governance		23/06/22	Mark Brookes, Assistant Director Corporate & Contracted Service Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk	To Be Provided
27/09/22	Housing Development Models			Robin Barton, Strategic Director Corporate & Commercial Robin.barton@dacorum.gov.uk	To Be Provided
12/07/22	Financial Monitoring Report Q1		23/06/22	Nigel Howcutt, Chief Finance Officer 01442 228662 Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	To Be Provided
27/09/22	Electric Vehicle Charging Point		08/09/22	Ben Hosier Ben.hosier@dacorum.gov.uk	To Be Provided



Cabinet

Report for:	Cabinet
Title of report:	Hemel Place Strategy
Date:	24 May 2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Alan Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Place
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A – Hemel Visuals Appendix B - Community Impact Assessment
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	HPB – Hemel Place Board

Report Author / Responsible Officer	
Sara Whelan, Hemel Place Strategy Programme Manager	
 	
Sara.whelan@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228590 (ext. 2590)	

Corporate Priorities	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need Climate and ecological emergency
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Wards affected	All Hemel Hempstead wards
Purpose of the report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To seek Cabinet approval to launch the Hemel Place work publicly in early July 2. To seek Cabinet approval to launch a Hemel Champions Programme 3. To seek Cabinet approval to carry out community and investor engagement to inform the drafting of the Hemel Place Strategy
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That Cabinet approves the public launch of the Hemel Place Strategy 2. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to agree details of the Hemel Champions' Programme including the launch date 3. That Cabinet delegates authority to the Strategic Director (Place) to agree the approach and timing of community and investor engagement following consultation with the Hemel Place Board
Period for post policy/project review:	2 years

1 Introduction/Background:

- 1.1 Cabinet agreed, in April 2021, to create a new Place Strategy for Hemel Hempstead and to establish a Hemel Place Board. As part of this work, strategy development for the future of Hemel Hempstead Town Centre was also agreed.
- 1.2 In September 2021, the Council's Hemel Place Strategy Programme Manager was appointed and, in November 2021, the Hemel Place Board was formed. The Independent Chair, Andrew Percival, was appointed in January 2022.
- 1.3 The Hemel Place Strategy development is in progress and includes key themes as well as key geographic areas which need intervention. The first geographic area of focus is Hemel Town Centre, and this is being worked on at the same time as the Hemel Place Strategy. This report provides an overview of how the strategy will be presented and next steps including a public launch of the Hemel Place Strategy work in July, followed by consultation with communities and investors over the summer months and the launch of the Hemel Place Champions.

2 Launch of Hemel Place work and Hemel Champions

- 2.1 The Hemel Place Strategy will set a clear direction of travel for Hemel Hempstead so that residents, businesses, stakeholders and the investment community can clearly see the level of ambition for the town. Once this is in place, every strategy, plan, intervention, development etc. can be aligned so that it contributes to the strategy and people will be able see how activity within Hemel is delivering the place they want to see. Leaders and Ambassadors for the place can use their networks, contacts and credibility to 'sell' the place, as set out in the agreed Strategy.
- 2.2 Thinking Place, the Council's Place consultants, have carried out stakeholder engagement and they have composed the 'Story of Hemel Hempstead', capturing the stakeholders' feedback and ambitions for Hemel Hempstead. The story includes a big idea and three themes;

Big idea...

- Growing a fresh new future

Three themes

- A vibrant destination for enterprise
- Enhancing your wellbeing in Hemel
- Where connections matter

- 2.3 The vision for the future of Hemel Hempstead is:

'Hemel is a family of welcoming neighbourhoods and thriving communities, that working together will shape our future with confidence'.

The main strapline to be used in marketing and demonstrating this message is;

'Hemel - where life is greener'

- 2.4 This story has been designed into a set of visual images which will be used to promote Hemel Hempstead. The visuals can be used to dress the Town Centre and options include visuals on site hoarding, lamp post banners, posters and any printed materials as well as on social media. A new website (www.thinkhemel.com) will be launched to host the new

Hemel Place approach. The attached presentation provides an overview of the new Hemel visuals (Appendix A).

- 2.5 The Hemel Place Strategy work will be launched at an event in early July and guests who will play an important role in the successful future of Hemel Hempstead will be invited. The new visuals will be used to dress the town. The team is exploring possibilities of lamppost banners, site hoarding, feather flags and crowd barriers to promote the Hemel Place launch.
- 2.6 The Hemel Place launch event will include a call to action, inviting people to become 'Hemel Champions'. This will include community and business leaders and ambassadors throughout Hemel Hempstead who are interested in engaging with the Hemel Place Strategy work and being advocates for Hemel Hempstead. They can use their networks, contacts and credibility to 'sell' the place in any conversation or situation they are in.
- 2.7 The Hemel Champions will be invited to meet every four months, and the Council will provide strategic updates on how delivery of the Hemel Place Strategy work is progressing. Partners will also be able to contribute updates on their activities to the meeting. The events will provide a networking opportunity and a platform to showcase other important interventions happening in Hemel Hempstead so that all Champions are aware of the share vision and ambitions for Hemel Hempstead as well as considering how they can participate in delivering future ambitions.

3 Consultation for Hemel Place Strategy

- 3.1 The Hemel Place Strategy will include ten key themes:
 - Vision / Ambition for Hemel Hempstead
 - Sustainable/active travel
 - Meanwhile Uses
 - Digital
 - Cultural
 - Social Value outcomes
 - Health and wellbeing
 - Landscape / Public realm
 - Education & Skills
 - Net Zero Carbon
- 3.2 Each theme will be presented in the Hemel Place Strategy with ambitions and objectives, proposals and guidance and actions. The actions will range from short, medium and long term, and the Hemel Place Board will have oversight on the progress and risks associated with the delivery of these.
- 3.3 The strategy will be based on evidence, drawing in sources which have been both recently commissioned for the place strategy or the emerging local plan, and other evidence collected in house, for example on health and wellbeing. The next steps include engaging with the community on each of the themes. As well as engaging with communities there will also be engagement with potential investors to understand how Hemel is understood as a town and to hear what its wider reputation is and to hear about the perceived opportunity for investment. An important part of this will be understanding what information investors want to see about Hemel and how the Council can attract strong investment in the future.
- 3.4 In order to prepare for this engagement, the team will use the below principles when drafting the community engagement plan:
 - Support – The Council will identify and overcome barriers to participation using support from the Council's Diversity and Inclusion Officer
 - Planning – there will be a clear purpose for the engagement, which is based on a shared understanding of community needs and ambitions

- Working together – The Council we will work effectively across its services, and with partners, to achieve the aims of the engagement
- Methods – The Council will use methods of engagement that are fit for purpose, including a Commonplace platform which has been used successfully for the Paradise Design Code and Hemel Old Town engagement
- Communication – The Council will communicate clearly and regularly with the people, organisations and communities affected by the engagement
- Inclusion – The Council will identify and involve the people and organisations that are affected by the focus of the engagement
- Impact – The Council will assess the impact of the engagement and use what has been learned to shape the Hemel Place Strategy and Town Centre Strategy and any future community engagement.

3.5 This report seeks approval to launch community and investor consultation, starting in the summer and concluding in early autumn, based on the broad approach above. The details of the community engagement will be agreed at the Council's Strategic Leadership Team and endorsed by the Hemel Place Board.

4 Options and alternatives considered

4.1 The recommendation is to carry out community and investor consultation focusing on communities' needs and ambitions as well as how Hemel Place is perceived as a place for investment. The following options have been considered;

Do nothing (no consultation)

4.2 This option is not recommended, as the qualitative data from our existing communities and how the place can support them, and their ambitions, is important to achieve community support and buy in to the future proposals for Hemel Hempstead. The aim of the place work is to support existing communities as well as to attract investment to improve the place.

Rely on previous consultations

4.3 Previous consultations on the Local Plan, Two Waters Guidance, Paradise Design Code and Hemel Garden Communities Spatial Vision have been analysed. They show some key themes. For example, respondents in all consultations wanted to see design quality in new developments, distinctive neighbourhoods and had crime and safety as a key priority. The Hemel Place consultation will look at the whole of Hemel Hempstead and how people feel about the town rather than about the buildings or future development in the town, which is different to previous consultations.

5 Consultation

James Doe – Strategic Director (Place)

Andrew Percival – Hemel Place Board Independent Chair

Alex Robinson – Assistant Director, Planning

Phillipa Zieba – Hemel Garden Communities Director

Bob Lane – Hemel Garden Communities Independent Chair

Kelvin Soley – Head of Communications

Ben Trueman – Head of Digital Technology and Digital Transformation

Matt Rawdon – Assistant Director, People

Allison Westray-Chapman – Interim Assistant Director, Place, Communities and Enterprise

6 Financial and value for money implications:

6.1 The costs for the launch of the Hemel Champions and the consultation and engagement exercise will be met by the Hemel Place budget which was approved by Cabinet in April 2021. Hosting this consultation using our existing partners and resources provides the best value for money for the Council.

6.2 Having a shared story will help the Council to bid for, and attract, Government funding as the development of a Place Strategy considered to be a best practice approach for investment. The approach will help create interest in the investor and developer community who want to see a strong and shared vision for a place before they consider investing.

6.3 The Hemel Place Strategy and Champions programme will help to leverage the support and engagement of stakeholders who may have played no role in the place before. This approach should open up other funding opportunities from the Local Enterprise Partnership and other organisations as a result.

7 Legal Implications:

None

8 Risk implications:

The launch of the Hemel Place work will mitigate the risk of missing investment opportunities and will help to support the future of the town.

9 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

9.1 The Community Impact Assessment has been reviewed and is annexed to this report. The consultation and outreach activities will need to ensure that opportunities are provided to all sections of the community

9.2 Human Rights – the consultation and engagement will be optional and there will be free text boxes to capture all feedback. This would not contravene respect for private and family life, home and correspondence, freedom of thought, belief and religion, freedom of expression and protection from discrimination in respect of these rights and freedoms.

10 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

The Hemel Place Strategy will seek to be ambitious on climate change, health and wellbeing and community safety. The proposed consultation will help to shape the actions required to improve on all sustainability matters.

11 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

There are no implications for Council infrastructure arising from this proposal.

12 Statutory Comments

Monitoring Officer:

There are no legal implications arising from this report.

S151 Officer:

The Hemel Place Programme has an approved budget to fund these proposals.

13 Conclusions:

13.1 Dacorum Borough Council is progressing the Hemel Place Strategy and Town Centre Strategy. The public launch of the work, including giving residents the opportunity to support this work programme by becoming Hemel Champions, is critical to our next step in the development of the Strategy. The Hemel Champions programme will allow ambassadors

in the community to learn about the Council's strategic priorities, and work together as a community.

- 13.2 Engagement will be carried out with members of the community and investors to inform the themes of the Hemel Place Strategy before it is presented to Cabinet for approval later this year.

**communicating the Hemel Hempstead
story:**

your visual language

themes

chapters of the story

areas of focus

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competitiveness and distinctiveness

direction of travel

the place for business and commerce
live, work; not just London commute
start ups

Page 21
one business offer, centre and edge
post Covid opportunity

business narrative

Garden Community

location, location, location

knowledge economy, higher skills
creatives and creative industry
energise the ambassadors

university presence?

HH not just Maylands

not just logistics

shared workspace, repurpose buildings

clear, shared strategy on who to attract

a vibrant destination for enterprise

develop a cultural product, offer

link to liveability, local working

vital for post Covid opportunity

Page 23 focus on night-time economy

public space strategy

event and animation strategy

hub for visitors to the area

exploit the London link

link to film and creative industry

best value place to live

best place to grow a family

affordable

growing but green

a community of communities

Snow Centre, XC, parks, leisure centre

curate the experience

enhance your well being in Hemel

High Street

centre/centred

Old Town

Chilterns, countryside

Garden Community

active travel

Maylands

walking, cycling focus across the area

Berkhamsted and Tring

leisure facilities

London

creating a heart and an experience

HH communities

public transport links

being the centre of a wider experience

the living, leisure and working HH

water, green as part of the High Street

a holistic business offer

where connections matter

big idea

big idea

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what you are about
what you stand for
what you believe in

clarity, consistency, self-awareness

an emotive, 'strategic signature' and statement of intent

town centre transformation

work/live opportunity

Garden Community

new town re-invented

activating the place

new way of living

Garden Community principles

focus on green spaces

Apsley, Two Towns

growing a life, career, family, in yourself

cultural and leisure hub

repurposing the place

Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, Tring; a connected future

a centre for business growth; Maylands and town centre

a natural choice for liveability

new and existing communities growing together

ambitious, aspirational, achievable

a shared confidence and boldness to do things differently

growing a fresh new future

where life is greener

marketing strapline:

where life is greener

big idea:

growing a fresh new future

themes:

a vibrant destination for enterprise

enhance your well being in Hemel

where connections matter

what is a visual language

a visual way of telling your story

'glue' that holds together the story and photography

flexible, from 'full on' to watermark

designed for stakeholders to use

a way of involving places and organisations

for existing and new activity

what are the communication priorities?

growing place

somewhere I want to be

modernity

Page 37
vibrant

green

aspirational



The images shown are for illustrative purposes only



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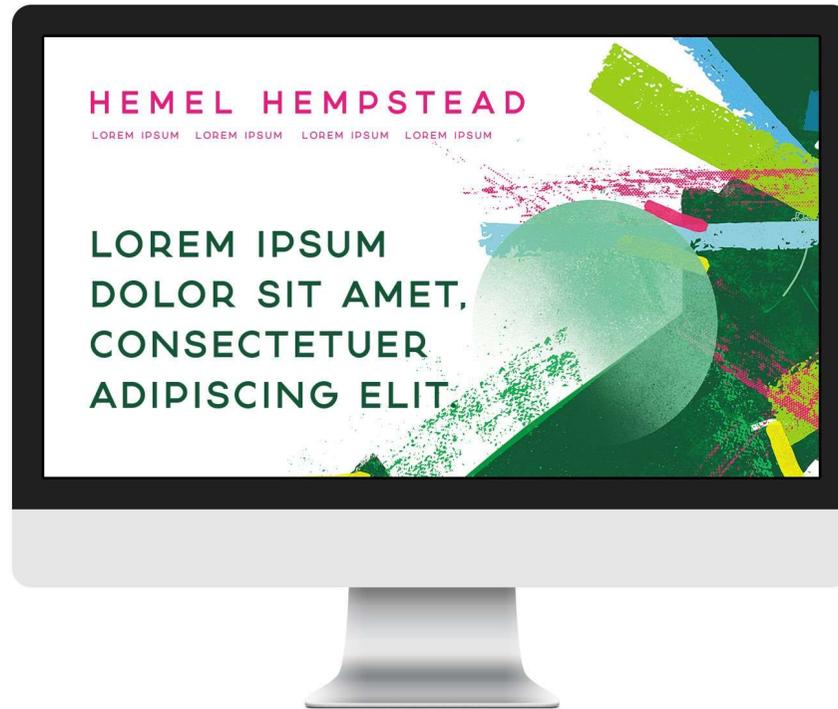
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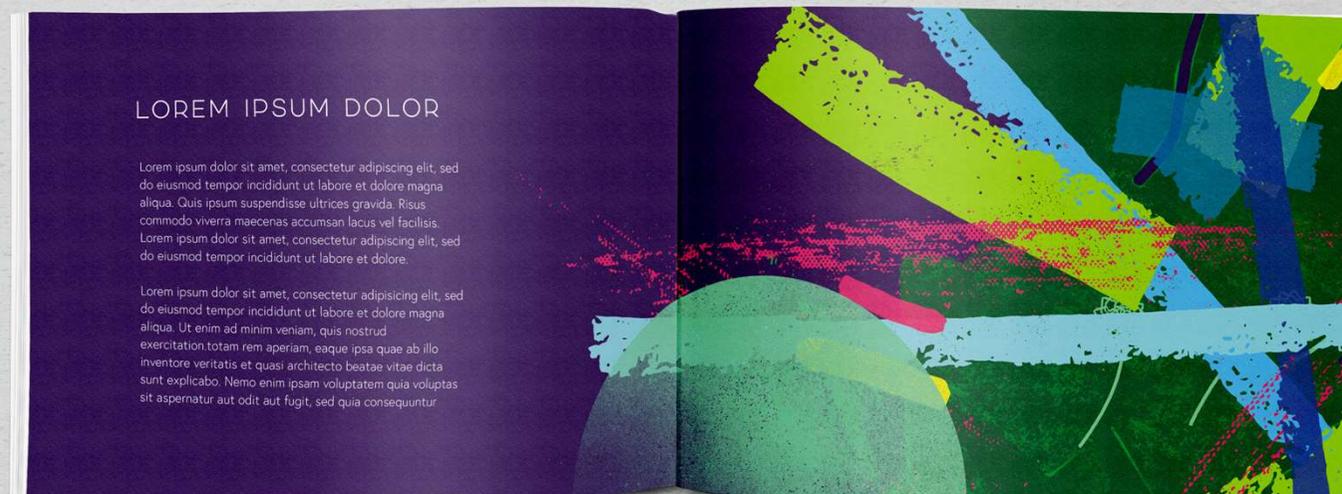




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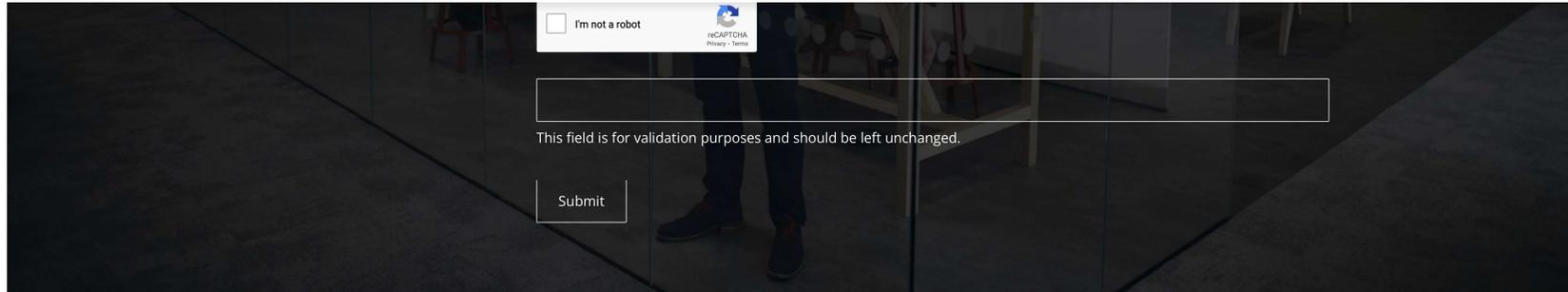
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Community Impact Assessment

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 Age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil</p>	<p>The new Hemel Place Strategy is wide-ranging and will need to ensure that the impact on the protected characteristics are</p>

Community Impact Assessment

<p>partnership, pregnancy and maternity, race, religion or belief, sex, sexual orientation (Specify where impacts are different for different characteristics)</p>	<p>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>	

Community Impact Assessment

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?

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

Community Impact Assessment

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

Community Impact Assessment

- 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 – Sara Whelan
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 – Sara Whelan

Completed by:

Sara Whelan
 Hemel Place Strategy Programme Manager
 Dated 04 May 2022

Reviewed and signed off by:

Matt Rawdon
 Assistant Director – People



Cabinet

Report for:	Cabinet
Title of report:	Strategic Risk Register Quarter 3 2021/22
Date:	24 May 2022
Report on behalf of:	Cllr Graeme Elliot, Portfolio Holder Corporate Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A Strategic Risk Register Q3 2021/22 Appendix B Strategic Risk Register Scoring Methodology
Background papers:	None.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	None

Report Author / Responsible Officer

Nigel Howcutt, Chief Finance Officer



Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228662 (ext. 2662)

Corporate Priorities	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	All
Purpose of the report:	1. To provide the quarter 3 update on the Strategic Risk Register for 2021/22.
Recommendation to the decision makers:	1. That the content of the report is noted.
Period for post policy/project review:	Not applicable.

1 **Background:**

The purpose of this report is to present the Strategic Risk Register (SRR) as at quarter 3, 2021/22. This is attached at Appendix A. The scoring methodology used to update the SRR is detailed in Appendix B.

2 **Consultation**

The position on the SRR at Q3 2021/22 has been reviewed and approved by the Strategic Leadership Team.

3 **Financial and value for money implications:**

Where relevant, financial and value for money implications associated with strategic risks are set out within the SRR Q3 2021/22 at Appendix A.

4. **Changes to the Strategic Risk Register since the last update**

Risk scores against the following strategic risks have changed since the SRR Q2 2021/22 was presented to Cabinet in December 2021. (Risk score as at Q3 2021/22 in **bold**; risk score as at Q2 2021/22 in *italics*).

- Cyber Attack **9** (*6*)
- Social Media risk **9** (*6*)

The narrative in the register has been reviewed and amended as appropriate to reflect the current position.

5. **Legal implications:**

Where relevant, legal implications associated with strategic risks are set out within the SRR at Appendix A.

6. **Risk implications:**

These are set out within the SRR at Appendix A.

7. **Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights**

A Community Impact Assessment is not required for this report.

There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

8. **Statutory Comments**

Monitoring Officer

No comments to add to the report.

S151 Officer:

This is a s151 Officer report. Comments are contained within the body of the report.

9. **Conclusion**

The SRR Q3 2021/22 identifies key strategic risks for the Council and assigns a risk score to each of these risks based on consequences and likelihood of occurrence.

Risk Register Summary Table

Risk Name	Risk Owner	31 Dec 2021			
		RM01 Risk Consequence	RM02 Risk Likelihood	Status	
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Update
Cyber Attack	Jody Nason	3	3	9	The Council continues to prioritise Cyber Security and works closely with the Information Security Team Leader (within the Legal and Corporate Services Service) to ensure that our data is secure and the Council is compliant. Q3 saw the annual Public Sector Network (PSN) accreditation process completed. This includes the undertaking of rigorous third-party health checks by Cabinet Office approved ethical hackers, both from outside and within the Council's network. DBC ICT then prepares and implements a Remedial Action Plan in response to these health checks, which is submitted directly to the Cabinet Office as part of our re-accreditation submission. On 21st January, the Cabinet Office confirmed that they were satisfied with Council's approach and our accreditation was renewed for a further year.
Failure to secure sufficient investment in essential infrastructure required	James Doe	3	3	9	The Dacorum Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) continues to be developed for the Local Plan Period to 2038. This sets out clearly what new infrastructure provision is needed to support to support planned growth, and how it should and can be funded. There is also a separate yet heavily related IDP in preparation to support longer term growth arising from Hemel Garden Communities running through to the mid-2050s. Both IDPs are critical to forming the basis for funding strategies to ensure the delivery of new infrastructure which will come through a combination mainly of developer contributions (s106 obligations on developers and Community Infrastructure Levy receipts) and opportunities to seek external funding.

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		31 Dec 2021			
Risk Name	Risk Owner	RM01 Risk Consequence	RM02 Risk Likelihood	Status	
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Update
Funding and income is not sufficient to deliver the Council's Corporate Objectives	Robin Barton	3	3	9	There are no changes to this risk score for Quarter 3 21/22. During this period the provisional 22/23 local government finance settlement was announced and this confirmed the continuation of single year settlements. This did indicate an additional £1.7m of one off funding that at present is proposed to be allocated to reserves. There were no specific medium term funding announcements. The impact of Covid continues to provide uncertainty and during this quarter the Omicron strain and the implementation of Plan B measures has provided further uncertainty to short term income generation services.
Social media risk	Jody Nason	3	3	9	Weekly social media and print media reported to SLT to manage risk and to have oversight of social media content
The Council is unable to recruit and retain the staff required	Jody Nason	3	2	6	People Strategy is being developed with staff feedback sessions planned for the next month which will support broader recruitment and retention activity. A review of agency spend is underway across HR and Procurement - whilst primarily looking at spend this will also look at wider recruitment and retention activities.

		31 Dec 2021				
Risk Name	Risk Owner	RM01 Risk Consequence	RM02 Risk Likelihood	Status		
		Actual	Actual	Actual	Update	
Page 61	The Council will be unable to ensure that sufficient quality & affordable homes can be delivered	James Doe	3	3	9	The supply of affordable housing from the Council House New Build Programme and other provision coming forward from Registered Providers and other affordable housing models is likely to be held up if the council has to impose a planning moratorium in respect of new residential development, because of potential damage to the Chilterns Beechwoods. The First Homes policy from central government - aimed at increasing the amount of new housing for first time buyers - is likely to reduce the ability of the Council as planning authority to secure as much affordable rent housing through new developments as it has been able to do so previously. A revised programme for the production of the new Local Plan for Dacorum (the Local Development Scheme) has been approved by the Council setting out a clear path and timetable to lead to adoption, with the next draft of the Plan due to be published for public consultation (the 2nd 'Regulation 18' version) in June 2023. Council Officers continue to work proactively with developers on proposed development sites, with appropriate and rigorous challenge through viability assessment, to ensure that, specific to each case's circumstances and taking into account all other planning and infrastructure requirements, the affordable housing output is maximised.
	Uncertainty around Brexit negotiations could result additional demand for council services.	Robin Barton	2	4	8	There are no changes to this risk during the quarter. The main impact of Brexit continue to relate to the shortage of skilled contractors, mainly in construction and service contracts that the Council holds and the implications are being managed through the individual contracts.

Risk Register Details Table

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2021 Status
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Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2021 Status	
Page 62	Cyber Attack	Risk Owner	Jody Nason
		Portfolio	Community & Regulatory Services
		Risk Description	Risk of cyber attack or ransomware.
		Comments	The Council continues to prioritise Cyber Security and works closely with the Information Security Team Leader (within the Legal and Corporate Services Service) to ensure that our data is secure and the Council is compliant. Q3 saw the annual Public Sector Network (PSN) accreditation process completed. This includes the undertaking of rigorous third-party health checks by Cabinet Office approved ethical hackers, both from outside and within the Council's network. DBC ICT then prepares and implements a Remedial Action Plan in response to these health checks, which is submitted directly to the Cabinet Office as part of our re-accreditation submission. On 21st January, the Cabinet Office confirmed that they were satisfied with Council's approach and our accreditation was renewed for a further year.
		Controls & Assurances	The Council monitors and protects against threats with particular attention to the following, in line with the Government's Cyber Essentials direction: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Boundary firewalls and internet gateways • Secure configuration • Access control • Malware protection • Patch management <p>The Council also ensures that system and operational data is backed up securely and regularly, and the process of restoring from those back-ups is tested regularly.</p>
		Evidence Risk is being managed	Adherence to National Cyber Security Centre (NCSC) Cyber Essentials (formally audited 2017); Public Sector Network (PSN) Compliance (including annual vulnerabilities assessment by approved cyber security consultancy)
		Consequences / Impacts	At least 263 million cyber-attacks were carried out on UK local authorities in the first half of 2019 alone. Nearly half of all local authorities had experienced an attempted cyber-attack on their IT systems since 2017 and 37% of them had experienced cyber-attacks in the first half of 2019. The Council's ICT team is aware that its network is the subject of attempted cyber-attacks on a daily basis from a range of sources, likely to include organised crime and state operators. The potential consequences of a successful cyber-attack are extremely damaging to any organisation. In the public sector, cyber-attacks on NHS trusts have led to cancelled operations, including the WannaCry attack in 2017 that affected 45 NHS organisations. In 2016 Lincolnshire County Council were hit with a £1M demand following a ransomware infection and in 2020 Hackney Council was profoundly affected by a similar ransomware attack. Within Dacorum, a successful and extensive cyber-attack has the potential to impair the delivery of all services to its residents as well as the potential publication of sensitive and personal data. Any successful Cyber Attack could significantly impact the Council's reputation, as residents may lose confidence in the management of electronic records.
Failure to secure sufficient investment in	Risk Owner	James Doe	
	Portfolio	Planning & Infrastructure	

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2021 Status
essential infrastructure required	Risk Description	That the Borough does not secure sufficient investment in essential infrastructure that is required for continued and improved economic performance and housing delivery that is sustainable and fit for the future
	Comments	<p>The Dacorum Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP) continues to be developed for the Local Plan Period to 2038. This sets out clearly what new infrastructure provision is needed to support to support planned growth, and how it should and can be funded.</p> <p>There is also a separate yet heavily related IDP in preparation to support longer term growth arising from Hemel Garden Communities running through to the mid-2050s.</p> <p>Both IDPs are critical to forming the basis for funding strategies to ensure the delivery of new infrastructure which will come through a combination mainly of developer contributions (s106 obligations on developers and Community Infrastructure Levy receipts) and opportunities to seek external funding.</p>
	Controls & Assurances	<p>Infrastructure is provided through the development process (s106 and Community Infrastructure Levy) and elements of funding which comes from central government (increasingly through the LEP, bidding and HCC). The responsibility for some infrastructure elements is through privatised arrangements (utilities) or arms-length government agencies such as Network Rail. The ability of the Council to control these processes is limited.</p> <p>The Council is able to promote the quantum, nature and timing of growth making it more likely that the infrastructure will be delivered. It is also able to promote partnerships and use its asset base and influence to stimulate desired development. Current controls include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Ensuring that the Local Plan (and its component elements such as site allocations, supporting policies and so on on) is up to date and sets out very clearly the requirements of proposed development. This promotes sustainable development by design, access and movement, materials. • Working with other South West Herts councils and HCC to make a case at national level for strategically important infrastructure • Bidding into government funding pots such as the Housing Infrastructure Fund where possible. • Use of masterplanning which supports what is required to be delivered to produce sustainability on larger sites and formalising as a Special Planning Document where appropriate to give it more 'teeth'. • The approved Council's Community Infrastructure Levy Policy and schedule (CIL) provides for the levels of contributions that must be made by developers and the purpose for which they will be spent. This also includes an element of CIL which can be spent by local communities and act to link growth directly with infrastructure provision that local people want. • Operating an 'open for business' approach to how the Council deals with potential development with a presumption of making acceptable development easier to deliver by proactive advice through the planning process. Allied to this is ensuring that the development management service is capable of achieving decision making within required time limits. • Stimulating required growth through the Council's own regeneration activity, including the Enterprise Zone making inward investment being more likely. • Increasing inward investment through initiatives such as Dacorum Look no Further, Ambassadors, direct provision of business advice and a supportive approach to new development. • Good market intelligence through regular liaison with local employers, landowners, developers, institutional investors and land agents regarding demand and expected assistance. • Partnership with the LEP as the main route for additional funding for infrastructure through influencing the Strategic Growth Plan (in which Hemel Hempstead and the M1 corridor is a priority) and bidding for resources for infrastructure (such as the £5M achieved for West Herts College) • Working to create key partnerships to bring forward development capable of funding major infrastructure such as Hemel Garden Communities with the Crown Estate, St Albans and City Council, HCC, the LEP and the Enterprise Zone.

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2021 Status
Page 64	Evidence Risk is being managed	<p>These controls are exercised and reported within the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Regular reporting to the Growth and Infrastructure Group, SLT, Cabinet and Overview and Scrutiny Committee • Fortnightly reporting on key projects to SLT • Reporting to Performance Board before each Cabinet Meeting • A clear programme for the Local Development Framework and CIL Quarterly reporting to Overview and Scrutiny • Regular reporting to Cabinet • Adherence to the agreed performance and project management processes <p>The process for setting out development delivered is through the Authority Monitoring Report. The agreed process for CIL will see an annual report setting out income due, income achieved and expenditure made on agreed infrastructure. Regular reports are made as set out above.</p>
	Consequences / Impacts	<p>The provision of infrastructure such as schools, health, transport and other facilities is crucial to sustainability of the local community and economy. Its funding, however, is increasingly complex and difficult as central government moves away from direct provision and expects the development process and local partnerships to deliver it. The risk is, therefore, that new development at a scale not experienced in Dacorum since the New Town development will not be matched with the infrastructure that a healthy and thriving community depends upon.</p> <p>Failure to provide this infrastructure will have a number of damaging consequences:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • a reduction in the quality of life and opportunities for people in the Borough • a serious constraint to economic growth with the impact on the prosperity of local people • reduced financial contribution to service provision through Business Rates growth • increased community opposition to new developments, particularly housing, on the grounds that existing infrastructure will not cope • damage to the image of the area, worsening of community pride and social cohesion and reputational damage to the Council. <p>The provision of infrastructure such as schools, health, transport and other facilities is crucial to sustainability of the local community and economy. Its funding, however, is increasingly complex and difficult as central government moves away from direct provision and expects the development process and local partnerships to deliver it.</p>
Funding and income is not sufficient to deliver the Council's Corporate Objectives	Risk Owner	Robin Barton
	Portfolio	Finance & Resources
	Risk Description	Funding and income is not sufficient to deliver the Council's Corporate Objectives
	Comments	<p>There are no changes to this risk score for Quarter 3 21/22. During this period the provisional 22/23 local government finance settlement was announced and this confirmed the continuation of single year settlements. This did indicate an additional £1.7m of one off funding that at present is proposed to be allocated to reserves. There were no specific medium term funding announcements.</p> <p>The impact of Covid continues to provide uncertainty and during this quarter the Omicron strain and the implementation of Plan B measures has provided further uncertainty to short term income generation services.</p>

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2021 Status
	Controls & Assurances	<p>The Council's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) and the HRA Business Plan are controls that mitigate the likelihood of this risk crystallizing through the effective modelling of the future financial environment. Sound financial planning maximizes the opportunity for the Council to identify funding risks in advance, and therefore grants more time for it to plan to provide its services differently in order to continue delivering its corporate priorities. The Council's sound financial planning processes, detailed below, have resulted in my reducing the inherent probability score from '4', Very Likely, to a residual probability score of '3', Likely.</p> <p>The MTFS details the financial implications of the Corporate Plan over a five-year period. It ensures that the Council is able to forecast likely income pressures in the medium-term, and optimise the balance between its financial resources and the delivery of its priorities. The MTFS is reviewed at least annually and is approved by Full Council, thereby providing the opportunity for Members to make informed amendments to the Corporate Plan on the basis of likely funding constraints.</p> <p>The 2021 MTFS outlines the continuation of the ongoing two-pronged approach to combine the Council's need to 1) continue driving the efficiencies required to ensure underlying sustainability; and, 2) to protect frontline services in the face of the time-bound Covid pressures.</p> <p>The approved MTFS can be viewed on the September 2021 Cabinet Agenda, Item 9: (Public Pack)Agenda Document for Cabinet, 21/09/2021 19:30 (dacorum.gov.uk)</p> <p>In addition to the MTFS, quarterly Covid Updates have been reported to Cabinet throughout the 20/21 and 21/22 financial years outlining the constantly evolving financial implications of the pandemic. The forecasts are kept under constant review and any updated forecasts that threaten the viability of the approved MTFS will be reported back to Members together with updated recommendations.</p> <p>As part of its Transformation Programme, the Council is seeking to deliver its Service Plans differently from 2021 – using a more cross-directorate approach and covering a longer period than the traditional one year. The closer alignment of the MTFS and Service Plans over a multi-year period should strengthen the Council's financial planning, and the cross-directorate approach to unlock corporate opportunities that would be less clear under an individual approach to service planning.</p> <p>The Council's Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Business Plan maps planned income and expenditure over a thirty-year period. Government legislation that can affect the Council's delivery of social housing is incorporated within the plan and forms the basis for informed strategic decision-making.</p> <p>By keeping the Corporate Plan and Communications Strategy under review the Council is able to mitigate the impact of this risk, should it occur, by keeping residents informed of the pressures faced by the Council, and consequently by managing aspiration and expectation (detail below). On this basis, I have maintained the Impact score of 3, 'High'.</p>

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2021 Status
	Evidence Risk is being managed	<p>Internal Audit</p> <p>In recent years, the Council has received independent, third-party audit reviews of the financial processes that contribute to the management of this risk:</p> <p>The 'Budgetary Control' process is audited by the Council's Internal Auditors annually and in 2020, and 2021 has received the highest level of assurance.</p> <p>The 'Core Financial Systems and Budgetary Control' which have also achieved the highest level of assurance with no recommendations or action points.</p> <p>External Audit</p> <p>The 'Value for Money' opinion issued in Grant Thornton's 'Audit Findings' report in September 2020, was based on evaluation of the MTFS; the budget-setting process; the reserves policy and use; and, the Council's forecasting of the Covid threat and plans to deal with it. Grant Thornton's conclusion was:</p> <p>'Based on the work we performed to address the significant risks, we are satisfied that the Council had proper arrangements for securing economy, efficiency and effectiveness in its use of resources.'</p> <p>Internal validation</p> <p>The fact that the Council was in a position to approve an MTFS which is capable of funding forecast Covid pressures from reserves, is practical validation of its approach to managing the MTFS and reserves over recent years. Although the planned use of reserves will inevitably reduce the amount available for future investment in the borough, it has meant that the Council is able to protect the delivery of its frontline services into the medium-term.</p>
	Consequences / Impacts	<p>The Council is currently facing two fronts of significant financial uncertainty that both hamper planning and risk deliverability of the objectives within the Corporate Plan into the medium-term: 1) the ongoing uncertainty around future Government funding of local authorities, and 2) the financial implications of Covid.</p> <p>Government Funding</p> <p>The Council is currently operating on a one-year Finance Settlement from Government, the third in succession, following the conclusion of the 4-year deal in April 2019. One-year Settlements, and the planning challenges that accompany them, are expected to continue until Government implements its new funding allocation model following the completion of its Fair Funding Review. As yet there is no certainty over the level of funding that Dacorum or any other authority can expect in the future, post-review.</p> <p>However, there is a strong belief across the sector that the new model will divert funding away from lower tier authorities in favour of those authorities with responsibility for the provision of social care. The Council must ensure that it's in a position to adapt to significant funding reductions at potentially short notice when the new model is announced.</p> <p>Covid Implications</p> <p>The Council faces significant expenditure and income pressures as a result of Covid. The pattern of expenditure pressures have thus far tended to be more-directly lock-down related and, therefore, are not expected to continue in the medium term. Income pressures on the other hand, have a short-term element, e.g. dramatic loss of car parking income during lock-down, but also potentially an even more significant long-term effect through a recessionary impact on the Council's primary income generating services, e.g. commercial property.</p> <p>The magnitude of the potential ongoing Covid-related losses, combined with uncertainty around the duration of the pandemic and the unknown timing and severity of the economic recovery period creates a significant financial threat to the Council's in-year and medium term budget. In addition it adds further complexity and risk to the already challenging medium-term planning environment arising from one-year Government funding settlements.</p>

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2021 Status
Social media risk	Risk Owner	Jody Nason
	Portfolio	Corporate & Contracted Services
	Risk Description	Confidentiality and reputational issues
	Comments	Weekly social media and print media reported to SLT to manage risk and to have oversight of social media content
	Controls & Assurances	<p>The Council monitors and protects its social media presence through a Social Media Management Platform (Social SignIn). Social SignIn provides management options for automatic moderation of abusive messages and other risk mitigation tools.</p> <p>All staff are required to read and sign up to a range of policies including:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Corporate Information Security Management Policy • Corporate Information Technology Security Policy • Data Protection Act Policy • Freedom of Information Policy • PSN/Government Connect (GSx) Acceptable Usage Policy • Information Security Incident Procedure
	Evidence Risk is being managed	<p>An audit of DBC's internal controls in strategy and governance, training and awareness, processes and technology, found that there is a sound system of internal control designed to achieve the system objectives.</p> <p>The communications team carry out training for new staff members and refresher training when needed.</p> <p>Social Media remains a key role in sending information and engaging with our residents/customers. This remains controlled and well managed as we experience very few instances where this causes issues for the Council.</p>
The Council is unable to recruit and retain the staff required	Consequences / Impacts	<p>"Almost nine in ten (86%) of UK adults now have internet access at home, and this is highest among those aged under 55. Facebook continues to be the largest social network service in the UK. In April 2016, it attracted a digital audience of 38.9 million (more than three-quarters of active internet users).</p> <p>This was larger than that of LinkedIn (21.8 million) and Twitter (20.9 million)" (Ofcom report 2016).</p> <p>By design, social media is widely accessible and offers users easy electronic communication of personal information and other content, such as news, videos and photos. With public participation and exchange of content so readily available, this introduces a certain level of risk.</p> <p>The consequences of using social media include members of the public, pressure groups or employees using DBC social media accounts to raise negative, confidential, incorrect or abusive statements/campaigns aimed at damaging the reputation of DBC. Similarly, the risk of DBC not using social media will exclude a large proportion of residents and key demographic groups including younger residents and businesses.</p>
	Risk Owner	Jody Nason
	Portfolio	Community & Regulatory Services
	Risk Description	The Council is unable to recruit and retain the staff required to progress as a Modern and Efficient Council

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2021 Status
	Comments	<p>People Strategy is being developed with staff feedback sessions planned for the next month which will support broader recruitment and retention activity.</p> <p>A review of agency spend is underway across HR and Procurement - whilst primarily looking at spend this will also look at wider recruitment and retention activities.</p>
	Controls & Assurances	<p>A programme of work has been developed to enhance our ability to recruit and retain staff:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Terms and conditions have already been reviewed to develop a range of benefits within the remuneration package - Flexible working arrangements are in place to ensure staff achieve a good work/life balance. <p>Further measures currently being developed and implemented include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Enhanced and expanded Graduate/apprenticeship scheme to create up to 8 new posts within areas experiencing recruitment and retention difficulties, this will be supported by a planned approach to utilising the Council's apprenticeship levy to support some of the professional training costs -SLT has agreed a further three graduates for 2021/22 from the National Graduate Development Programme (hosted by the Local Government Association) - Succession planning approach embedded into appraisals and service plans with supported by the career development plans. - Implementation of more robust management information which will be enabled by the implementation of a new Human Resources technology system - Streamlining of recruitment campaigns and modernisation of recruitment web pages including video clips; further develop the use of social media platforms for recruitment. - Hosting of recruitment days to generate interest in high volume recruitment service areas and retain CV's for future reference to fast track the filling of vacancies - Establish DBC as employer of choice by presence at careers fairs, developing links with Schools, Colleges and Universities. - As with many other organisations the Council is suffering from a lack of HGV driver availability. Current HGV drivers, in particular Waste Service drivers, are being approached by external organisations with significant increased pay offers. The Council has sought to mitigate this by training more staff to be HGV drivers and offering a retention bonus with appropriate clauses of £5k per driver.
	Evidence Risk is being managed	<p>Turnover remains reasonably low and it is infrequent that posts are re-advertised.</p> <p>Graduates have been appointed and we are working for LGA to appoint the next batch of three. HR will be working with services with recruitment challenges to ensure the graduates to support these areas in the first instance.</p>

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2021 Status
	Consequences / Impacts	<p>The Council is currently finding it challenging to recruit and retain staff with the appropriate skills to deliver all of its services, particularly within professional areas such as Legal, Finance, Surveyors, Environmental Health and Planning etc.</p> <p>This challenge has grown significantly over recent years – as the economy has emerged from the worst of the recession, the private sector employment market has become relatively more buoyant due to the continued constraints on public sector funding. General competition with the private sector for skilled employees is exacerbated for Dacorum by its close proximity to the higher salaries of the London market.</p> <p>This has resulted in the appointment of some agency staff across the Council in order to maintain service delivery. A reliance on agency staff brings a number of specific risks:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Statutory – staff shortages can put delivery of the Council’s statutory services at risk, e.g. Environmental Health, Housing repairs and Fire safety, and Building Control; • Resilience – any need for agency staff leaves the Council vulnerable to potential higher turnover and loss of knowledge which can affect continuity of service provision; • Financial – the cost of agency staff is higher than for permanent staff, which can pressurise budgets in several areas across the Council. • Staff Morale - could be affected in areas which are carrying vacancies, due to increased workload pressure and as a result of lack of team rapport <p>This challenge affects all public sector organisations within the region, and a solution is high on the agenda for county-wide working groups of which DBC is a member</p>
The Council will be unable to ensure that sufficient quality & affordable homes can be delivered	Risk Owner	James Doe
	Portfolio	Housing
	Risk Description	The Council will be unable to ensure that sufficient good quality and affordable homes can be delivered, particularly for those most in need
	Comments	<p>The supply of affordable housing from the Council House New Build Programme and other provision coming forward from Registered Providers and other affordable housing models is likely to be held up if the council has to impose a planning moratorium in respect of new residential development, because of potential damage to the Chilterns Beechwoods.</p> <p>The First Homes policy from central government - aimed at increasing the amount of new housing for first time buyers - is likely to reduce the ability of the Council as planning authority to secure as much affordable rent housing through new developments as it has been able to do so previously. A revised programme for the production of the new Local Plan for Dacorum (the Local Development Scheme) has been approved by the Council setting out a clear path and timetable to lead to adoption, with the next draft of the Plan due to be published for public consultation (the 2nd 'Regulation 18' version) in June 2023.</p> <p>Council Officers continue to work proactively with developers on proposed development sites, with appropriate and rigorous challenge through viability assessment, to ensure that, specific to each case's circumstances and taking into account all other planning and infrastructure requirements, the affordable housing output is maximised.</p>

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2021 Status
	Controls & Assurances	<p>The Local Plan is currently under development and the next consultation point with the public and stakeholders is scheduled for mid-2023, following the Regulation 18 consultation over the winter of 2020/21.</p> <p>The new Plan will incorporate a very high level of housing growth and the plan needs to ensure that the sites are identified and are likely to be delivered in the timescales identified. There will be a strong affordable housing policy, building on the current one, which will require at least 35% affordable homes on every scheme above 10 units. The council is strengthening its expertise in Planning on robustly testing developers viability submissions. This will include no longer accepting developer arguments that the cost of land prevents or reduces the amount of affordable they can deliver – they should take account of the council’s policy when agreeing the price.</p> <p>Ensuring good masterplanning of the larger sites emerging from the Local Plan will mean that they are more likely to be built out as planned and will be more attractive for potential buyers.</p> <p>The Private Housing Service in Housing, which includes Private Renting, has been reshaped and is geared up to the licensing of up to 900 Houses in Multiple Occupation and addressing issue of disrepair and harassment in the sector. It will work with and support landlords who are prepared to grant longer tenancies which will allow families more security and stability.</p> <p>There is already a new build council home programme of 370 new homes by 2022 that is just starting. The government has announced that the cap on the HRA borrowing will be ended in April 2019 and the programme will be further expanded. A full assessment of the capacity of the HRA to move to an output of around 100-200 new homes per year will be made in the very near future and will gear up for that level of delivery. This will help, though not solve, the shortage of affordable homes for rent. Housing Associations will be encouraged to include social rented homes at lower rent levels than affordable to be built as grant is now available from Homes England for this aim.</p> <p>The introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act has allowed the Council to be geared up to dealing with an increased number of homeless households with the initial aim of preventing the homelessness from happening. One important route will be working with those private landlords that have a desire to help those in housing need, and there are many, to be able to continue renting without losing income.</p>
	Evidence Risk is being managed	<p>The process for setting out development delivered is through the Authority Monitoring Report. The agreed process for CIL will see an annual report setting out income due, achieved and expenditure made on agreed infrastructure. Regular reports are made as set out above in controls.</p> <p>Regular reports will also made to the Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee on new build council homes, homeliness performance, and Private Renting sector performance.</p>

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2021 Status
	Consequences / Impacts	<p>Housing costs in Dacorum are already extremely high and among the highest in the country outside of London. The impact of this is that local people (and potential new residents) face considerable difficulties accessing decent and affordable homes. This has potential risks in increased homelessness, difficulties in attracting new business and inward investment and breakdown of family support networks if people have to move away or have to stay longer in parental homes than is desirable.</p> <p>The causes for this are complex and varied, and some are outside of the Council's control, but include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The high cost of owner occupation due to location, local income levels, market shortage and increasing demand from people moving out from London. <p>This can mean owner occupation is well beyond the reach of a large number of local people.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The Private Rented Sector is not focused on providing homes of quality to those on low incomes with short 6 months tenancies and often in poor condition. • The planning system does not have the levers to require new homes to be built and with respect of providing affordable homes the rented product – usually affordable rent at 80% of market rent - they are too expensive for those on low incomes. • There are still cuts being made to the benefits systems and Universal Credit has seen a dramatic increase in the levels of rent arrears in those areas that have already had the full roll out. This will cause further difficulty for low income households to afford rent and would lead to still further homelessness. • the impact of the First Homes Policy from Government putting further pressure on the Council's ability to provide genuinely affordable homes to people most in need through the planning process. <p>The key risks this raises for the Council are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The supply of homes is unable to match demand • An increase in the levels of homelessness resulting from landlords in private renting seeking to maximise their rents • The impact of Universal Credit roll out leading to increased arrears, debt and homelessness • A general risk that the construction industry may not have the capacity to meet the level of demand for development • The HRA will not be able to access sufficient funds to fulfil the Council's programme of social rented housing

Risk Name	Detail	31 Dec 2021 Status
Uncertainty around Brexit negotiations could result additional demand for council services.	Risk Owner	Robin Barton
	Portfolio	Corporate & Contracted Services
	Risk Description	Uncertainty around Brexit negotiations could result in the Council facing additional demand for its services in the short to medium-term
	Comments	There are no changes to this risk during the quarter. The main impact of Brexit continue to relate to the shortage of skilled contractors, mainly in construction and service contracts that the Council holds and the implications are being managed through the individual contracts.
	Controls & Assurances	<p>The Chief Executive prepared a report to Members outlining the sector's view on where the key Brexit risks currently lie.</p> <p>The Senior Leadership Team (SLT) has received a report from the Assistant Director (Corporate and Contracted Services), who is leading on Brexit risk, highlighting key risk areas for the Council which continue to be monitored with the wide Corporate Leadership Team. All service areas are represented at SLT, and the majority of SLT members operate within county- and nation-wide professional groups. This means that the knowledge reach of the group is wide and varied, meaning that emerging issues are likely to be raised for discussion around impact as they arise.</p> <p>The Assistant Director, Corporate and Contracted Services also sits on a multi-agency county wide Tactical Coordination Group which monitors the EU Transition period although as the risk has reduced in early 2021 and this group was stood down in February 2021.</p> <p>SLT has also ensured that all service areas revisit their Business Continuity plans to ensure that they remain up-to-date and capable of mitigating known and emerging risks.</p> <p>SLT also review and update the Corporate Brexit risk register.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council and the Chief Executive have taken part in webinars hosted by MHCLG with various Government departments in preparation for Brexit.</p>
	Evidence Risk is being managed	The subject of Brexit is reviewed by SLT if there are any specific issues or impacts for discussion. Members will be kept advised as more information becomes available.
	Consequences / Impacts	<p>On 23rd June 2016, the UK voted in a referendum to leave the European Union (EU). Article 50 was triggered on 27th March 2017 starting a two year formal process for leaving the EU. The UK left the EU on 31 January 2020 with a withdrawal agreement which is subject to a transition period ending on 31st December 2020. The UK have now reached agreement on how the future relationship will work, including trade, energy, transport, social security, law enforcement, health and scientific collaboration and dispute settlement.</p> <p>The agreement now reached gives the Council greater certainty and there has been no noticeable increased demand for its services in 2021 as a direct result of Brexit.</p> <p>Brexit does still pose a strategic threat to the Council primarily because there is lack of clarity over how or to what extent the outcome may threaten achievement of its corporate priorities. In the absence of more detail, the Council is, in general terms, planning to 'be prepared'.</p> <p>In addition, there is the possibility that the Council may be required to carry out functions under its Civil Contingencies responsibilities, although in early 2021 this threat has not come to fruition to date.</p>

Risk Scoring Methodology

Impact Score

The following descriptions and definitions of impact are indicative and not exhaustive. They are a guide to assist you in assessing the impact of the risk **should** it occur.

Description	Factor	Score
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Brief disruption of service area – up to 1 day No or insignificant environmental damage Financial loss < £5,000 Minor injury (first aid treatment) to an individual or several people Complaint from member of public Litigation/claims/fines up to £5,000 No reputational damage – little or no local press interest 	Minor	1
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service disruption 2-3 days Adverse effect on services in one or more areas for a period of several weeks Financial loss < £25,000 Adverse local publicity Significant injury to an individual or several people – medical treatment required Litigation/claims/fines up to £25,000 	Significant	2
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service disruption 3-5 days Complete loss of service area for 3-5 days Financial loss up to £50,000 Adverse publicity in professional/municipal press Adverse local publicity of a persistent nature Major injury to an individual or several people Litigation/claims/fines up to £50,000 	Serious	3
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Service disruption 5+ days Major loss of service, including several important areas, and/or for a protracted period Financial loss >£50,000 Adverse and persistent national media coverage Adverse central government response, involving (threat of) removal of delegated powers Officers and/or Members forced to resign Loss of life Litigation/claims/fines >£50,000 	Major	4

Likelihood Score

The following descriptions and definitions of likelihood of the risk occurring are intended as a guide to assist you in arriving at your risk score.

Description	Indicators	Factor	Score
Less than 10% chance of occurrence	Has happened rarely/never before	Very unlikely	1
10 – 40% chance of occurrence	Only likely to happen every 3 or more years	Unlikely	2
40-75% chance of occurrence	Likely to happen at some point within the next 1–2 years. Circumstances occasionally encountered – few times a year	Likely	3
More than 75% chance of occurrence	Regular occurrence Circumstances frequently encountered – daily, weekly, monthly	Very likely	4

Scoring the risk

The charts above are designed to help you score the risks in terms of likelihood and impact.

This is carried out in two stages:

- Multiply the likelihood and impact scores together, as if there were **no** controls in place. This will give you an inherent risk score.
- With the list of controls that are currently in place, re-score the risk, taking into account the effect of these controls.

These final scores will give you a risk profile of those risks that may need more immediate attention.

Risk Score	Overall Rating
12 - 16	HIGH
6 - 10	MEDIUM
1 - 4	LOW

Level of Risk / (Inherent Risk Score)	Managing the risk
High Risk (12-16)	<p>Requires active management High impact / High likelihood: risk requires active management to manage down and maintain exposure at an acceptable level</p> <p>Contingency Plans A robust contingency plan may suffice together with early warning mechanisms to detect any deviation from profile</p>
Medium Risk (6-10)	<p>Good Housekeeping May require some risk mitigation to reduce likelihood if this can be done cost effectively, but good housekeeping to ensure the impact remains low should be adequate. Reassess frequently to ensure conditions remain same</p> <p>Contingency Plans A robust contingency plan may suffice together with early warning mechanisms to detect any deviation from profile</p>
Low Risk (1-4)	<p>Review Periodically Only put mitigations in place if it's cost effective to do so</p>



Report for:	Cabinet
Title of report:	Business Engagement Proposals
Date:	24 May 2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Alan Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Place
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 Current Business Engagement Activities Appendix 2 Business Profile
Background papers:	None
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	UKSPS – United Kingdom Shared Prosperity Fund

Report Author / Responsible Officer

Allison Westray-Chapman, Interim Assistant Director (Place, Communities and Enterprise)



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Corporate Priorities	Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity
Wards affected	ALL
Purpose of the report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> To review the Council's engagement with local businesses and to set out new framework To identify aims and outcomes of closer business engagement and to recommend a way forward
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> Cabinet to approve the new framework for Business engagement in Dacorum. Cabinet to approve the establishment of a high-level strategic Hemel Business Board.

	3. Cabinet to approve holding a business event, hosted by the Leader, to launch the Hemel Business Board.
Period for post policy/project review:	1 year

1 Introduction/Background:

- 1.1 The report aims to set out a new framework and process how the Council will engage with companies in Dacorum. It aims to set out the benefits for both the Council and local companies in having an ongoing and transparent dialogue and developing a new way of working together for the economic wellbeing of the borough.
- 1.2 The report recognises that there is a significant amount of business engagement already taking place across Dacorum (see Annex 1) but there is a lack of high-level coordinated engagement with large, and strategically important, businesses in Dacorum. The aim is to put in place a framework which ensures effective communication between the Council and businesses at a strategic level. It also aims to create a platform which gives businesses a voice on the regional and national scene to highlight both the challenges and opportunities in Dacorum.
- 1.3 Businesses play a key role in developing the economic wellbeing of communities and their contribution to Dacorum's future sustainable economic growth is important. In order to meaningfully engage with the business community, the Council must develop a clear picture of businesses' barriers and challenges as well as their opportunities.
- 1.4 The challenge of encouraging engagement from the business community is dependent on the value businesses feel the engagement with the Council gives their business and in what respect their voice is being heard. Many larger businesses engage with the Council as part of their social value commitment, however, to achieve a deeper and more meaningful engagement, the true value of collaborating with the Council has to be felt. This requires a more sophisticated approach and an understanding of both parties' limitations and issues. A mature relationship needs to be developed and then sustained through arrangements which are fit for purpose.
- 1.5 In addition to this, the Pandemic has heightened the importance of the Council engaging with, and supporting, local businesses. Businesses will play a key role in the economic recovery and now is the ideal time to review how the Council engages with businesses.
- 1.6 As part of its economic recovery work, Dacorum Council has reviewed its business engagement activities and developed a comprehensive business engagement framework for the borough. The newly established Economic Recovery Board will engage with businesses to ensure they are part of, not only, the recovery of Dacorum's economy, but also play a key role in the development of an economy which ensures the economic wellbeing of all Dacorum residents.
- 1.7 An engagement framework is proposed which ensures effective communication between the Council and businesses at a strategic level. It also aims to create a platform which gives businesses a voice on the regional and national scene to highlight both the challenges and opportunities in Dacorum.

2 Key Issues/proposals/main body of the report:

- 2.1 Due to the effects of the Pandemic on the retail and hospitality sectors, the Council's Economic Development team has focussed its resources and support on these sectors over the last two years. It is now time to look forward to supporting business sectors which can provide significant outcomes for the economic wellbeing of residents over the coming years.
- 2.2 To ensure the engagement with businesses in Dacorum provides the optimal opportunity to provide a sustainable and inclusive growth, it is important that there is an agreement about which businesses the Council should engage with in the first instance.

- 2.3 The criteria for strategic engagement will include an assessment of:
- The value of businesses, i.e. high value sector offering high payment and requiring high skills.
 - Number of employees
 - Global importance
 - High exporter/innovation activities
 - High Growth and scale up potential
- 2.4 To understand the existence of business clusters, emerging sectors and the competitive edge of the economy, a deep dive into the current business landscape is needed and key sectors for focus need to be agreed. (see Annex 2 – Business Profile)
- 2.5 As an example, the sector with the biggest concentration of jobs and forming a distinct cluster is Information and Communication with 5000 jobs but it currently has 0% employment growth in Dacorum (source Dacorum Dashboard August 2021) The jobs within this sector are highly paid and skilled and provide an opportunity for Dacorum to identify a Unique Selling Point (USP) compared to other areas. It is clear that engagement with, and support from, the Council is required to ensure these is growth within this sector.
- 2.6 Maylands Business Park is the main business area in Dacorum and one of the largest business parks in the South East of England. It is located next to the Herts Innovation Quarter and is in close to Hemel Town Centre and the Hemel Garden Communities growth area. It would also make sense to focus activities and engagement with the businesses on Maylands. The strategic importance of Maylands and its contribution, not only the local economy, but also that of Hertfordshire and the UK is being recognised through the development of an Opportunity Plan for Maylands. The development of the Plan will require intensive engagement with businesses currently located there to identify their future plans and barriers to growth.

Business engagement framework

- 2.8 In order to achieve the optimal benefit from the Council's engagement with businesses, a clear framework has to be set out.
- 2.9 It is important to recognise that no one single approach to engagement can capture the views of the wide range of businesses in Dacorum. There are particular challenges in developing sustained engagement between businesses that are very different in terms of size or sector and it is unlikely that one single forum or issue can adequately engage with a cross-section of businesses.
- 2.10 There are also particular challenges in reaching smaller businesses through smaller strategic groups or business forums, which are often more difficult for SMEs to attend. To ensure that the Council engages with smaller businesses it is helpful to engage with business intermediary groups such as the Federation of Small Businesses (FSB).

Suggested approaches and aims for meeting the requirements for business engagement Function	Suggested mechanism
Structured approach to communication between the Council and local businesses on economic development issues and consultations such as the Local Plan.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hemel Business Board • Leader/Chief Executive business conversations

Suggested approaches and aims for meeting the requirements for business engagement Function	Suggested mechanism
Enable businesses to develop a strong voice to support their effective representation within the Economic Recovery Board, the Local Enterprise Partnership, Hemel Place Board and other structures	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hemel Business Board • Engagement with business networks through the Economic Development Team. • Engagement with business leaders through the Chief Executive and Leader of the Council • Engagement through Economic Recovery Board representatives
Clarify for businesses how and where they can express their views on economic growth and other issues	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 1-1 regular business discussions with the Leader and CEO • Hemel Business Board
Facilitate the development of sector specific projects and programmes or discussions in support of economic strategies	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sector networks and other mechanisms as appropriate, as led by Herts LEP, such as the Filming sector group • Herts IQ Innovation Hub
Facilitate B2B engagement and networking including access to new customers and procurement opportunities.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hemel Business Ambassadors events
Collection of up to date business intelligence and business priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Database and continuous management through the LEP and other partners • Annual business survey undertaken by the Economic Development Team • Leader/Chief Executive business conversations

Hemel Business Board

2.11 It is proposed that the Council creates a Hemel Business Board which will include the key private sector influencers, key business sectors, business intermediaries and Herts LEP as well as the Chairs of the Hemel Place Board, Herts IQ and Hemel Garden Communities. It will be chaired by the private sector and attended by the Leader of the Council and Chief Executive. The Board will draw its private sector representatives from those companies which meet the criteria set out in section 2.3 of this report. It is anticipated that a significant number will be from the Maylands Business Area in recognition of its strategic importance to the local and regional economy.

2.12 *Proposed Terms of Reference*

- To provide a forum for discussion of strategic economic growth in Dacorum including joint horizon scanning and intelligence sharing.
- To help shape policies which are developed by other organisations but have an impact on Dacorum
- To provide a mechanism for discussion and agreement on Dacorum's input to the Herts LEP strategy and programmes between the Council and businesses
- To provide input into the implementation of projects and programmes to support economic growth including the Dacorum's Economic Recovery Plan and the Local Plan; and
- To support inward investment strategies and activities for Dacorum

- 2.13 Members of the group will need to attend as representatives of the sector they represent not solely as representatives of their individual business.
- 2.14 The Council will organise a high-level business event to launch the Hemel Business Board and set out the Council's priorities and the borough's opportunities. This will be hosted by the Leader of the Council and attended by approximately 10 strategically important businesses and regional partners. The aim of the event is to:
- Provide a high-level platform for Dacorum Council to showcase aspirations and plans to external partners.
 - Introduce the Council's Place Strategy and the work of the Hemel Place Board.
 - Facilitating a discussion focussed on opportunities and challenges for businesses.
 - Seeking input into the development of the Council's Investment Plan to secure UKSPF funding.

3 Options and alternatives considered

The Council could consider not engaging with businesses however, in order to grow the economy, it is considered essential that the Council has a dialogue with key employers in the area.

4. Consultation

James Doe – Strategic Director (Place)
Andrew Percival – Hemel Place Board Independent Chair
Kelvin Soley – Head of Communications

5 Financial and value for money implications:

- 5.1 The cost of the proposed Business event is approximately £1,000.
- 5.2 By engaging on a regular basis with major employers, the Council is more likely to be aware of any significant changes which might impact on business rates, such as relocation intentions or expansion plans.

6 Legal Implications

None

7 Risk implications:

A risk assessment has been completed as part of the Economic Recovery Plan.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

A Community Impact Assessment has been carried out as part of the Economic Recovery Plan.

There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

A thriving economy contributes positively to the health and wellbeing of residents.

10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

None identified.

11 Statutory Comments

Monitoring Officer:

There are no specific powers for local authorities to engage with businesses generally however section 1 of the Localism Act 2011 provides a general power of competence which can be relied upon to implement the proposals in this report.

Under section 137 of the Local Government Act 1972, the Council has the power to incur expenditure, which in its opinion is in the interest of and will bring direct benefit to its area or any part of it or all or some of its residents.

S151 Officer:

The financial investment to support these proposals are minimal and can be funded through existing approved budgets in 2022/23.

12 Conclusions:

- 12.1 The Council is reinvigorating the way it engages with external partners and stakeholders. There is an exciting narrative emerging about the establishment of the Hemel Place Board, the review of Maylands Industrial area, Hemel Garden Communities and Herts IQ.
- 12.2 Business play a key role in developing the economic wellbeing of communities and their contribution to Dacorum's future sustainable economic growth is important. The aim, with the proposed approach, is to intensify the Council's strategic engagement with local businesses, and to develop a clear picture of businesses' barriers and challenges as well as their opportunities. The Council can then work proactively in partnership with businesses to attract investment, funding and regional and national recognition and support.
- 12.3 The UK Shared Prosperity Fund, has recently been launched with the government allocating £1,763,392 to Dacorum Borough Council for supporting local Business, People and Skills and Communities and Place. This provides an immediate opportunity for the Council and businesses to work together to develop and agree an Investment Plan in order to release the funding allocation from government. Closely engaging with the private sector when developing the Investment Plan will ensure that it will provide realistic and optimal outcomes for Dacorum residents and businesses.

ANNEX 1 - Current business engagement arrangements

Business Ambassadors

Hemel Business Ambassadors (HHBA) was established in 2014 when the Council was developing its place message and identity. The HHBA brought together the District's economic champions, with the aim of influencing the regeneration of Hemel Hempstead, in order to compete, attract investment, business and visitors and to create a more successful economy.

It is led and administered by West Herts College and is financed on a subscription model (up to £3,500 pa for a large business). A website was also developed, <https://investhemel.co.uk/ambassadors/> focussing on attracting inward investors.

However in the last couple of years, HHBA has had difficulty maintaining membership of the larger businesses and has gradually morphed into a SME networking forum. The aim of championing the District to investors has been lost due to the lack of engagement from big businesses with the current HHBA offer.

Economic Development's Team's 1-1 business engagement

The Council's Team Leader and Economic Development Officers have been carrying out business engagement visits on a regular basis, (subject to COVID restrictions), with an additional focus on the sectors which have been most affected by the Pandemic (hospitality and retail).. The Council also has a dedicated officer who engages and supports companies within the film and creative sector to facilitate the increase in filming activity in the borough. Around 8-10 individual engagements take place each week. A comprehensive database also exists and discussions and meetings are recorded on this.

The Maylands Business Centre provides space for over 40 small businesses and flexi space for up to 10 daily customers. Furthermore, as part of the recovery plan, the LEP Growth Hub now offers a monthly business surgery, providing support and business advice. In addition to this a bi-monthly business newsletter is sent out to over 3,000 business contacts that have been built up over many years.

Economic Recovery Board

This Board was set up in May 2021 to support the recovery of the local economy following the Pandemic and also to achieve longer term objectives for the future growth of the economy in Dacorum. A representative from the HBA sits on the Board together with a representative from the hospitality sector.

Hemel Place Board

The newly established Hemel Place Board will be engaging with businesses to identify their barriers to further growth and sustainability. Currently the Board has two business representatives, Amazon and ProLogis. The input from businesses on the Board will contribute towards the development of a Hemel brand and identify the conditions needed for further investment and growth.

Hemel Business Improvement District

The BID is a business-led and business-funded organisation which runs various events every year, operates cleaning projects and runs safety initiatives to improve the area for businesses, visitors and residents. It was established in 2018 with the priorities to promote the town and attract more visitors by improving the environment and the visitor

experience. The Council works in partnership with the BID and the Council's Strategic Director of Place is also on the BID Board.

Herts Innovation Quarter

Herts IQ taps into, and uses, trusted existing channels and forums to engage and communicate with businesses, supporting both local business growth and wider new inward investment opportunities. Herts IQ works closely with Hemel Hempstead Business Ambassadors, providing speakers for their events, it shares information for newsletters and supports relevant activities.

At a regional, national and sector level, Herts IQ has led Off Site Manufacturing (OSM) construction opportunities, showcasing events and undertaken comms activities using construction related forums and media.

In spring 2022, Herts IQ will be launching the Herts IQ Network, which is a platform aimed at connecting and supporting businesses specifically involved in construction, OSM, agri-science, enviro and clean tech industries. Formed in partnership with built environment experts BRE Group, agricultural research pioneers Rothamsted Research and the University of Hertfordshire, the Herts IQ Network will boost collaboration, innovation and new business opportunities county-wide, bolstering Hertfordshire's green economy.

Annex 2- BUSINESS PROFILE

To ensure the engagement with businesses in Dacorum provides the optimal opportunity to gather intelligence and enable the council to effectively communicate with local businesses, it is important that there is an agreement of which businesses we should target.

To enable us to agree on the focus we also need to agree upon the criteria how we select these businesses. The criteria could include:

- Value of businesses i.e. from a high value sector offering high payment and requiring high skills.
- Global importance
- High exporter/innovation activities
- Key sector – need to agree what these are
- High Growth and a scale up

To understand the existence of business clusters, emerging sectors and the competitive edge of the economy, a deep dive into the current business landscape is needed.

Dacorum Business Profile

Dacorum have 7405 micro businesses (1 – 9 employees) 91.53%, 545 small businesses (10 – 49) 6.74%, 105 medium businesses (1.3% and 35 large businesses (250+) 0.43%.

Employment Sector performance 2015 - 2019

The **largest employment sector** in regards to employment is Wholesale and Retail with 13000 jobs but with a reduction in employment of nearly 8%. This will have reduced further as a result of the Pandemic and is a very vulnerable sector.

The **fastest employment growing sector** is Financial and Insurance Services with 1250 jobs and an employment growth of nearly 40%.

Other **high employment growth sectors** are;

- Professional and Scientific with 8000 jobs and employment growth of 33%
- Transportation and Storage with 5000 jobs and employment growth of 25%

The **sector reducing most employment** 22%, is Manufacturing with 3000 jobs.

The **sector with the biggest concentration of jobs and forming a distinct cluster** is Information and Communication with an Employment Location Quotient¹ of 1.14 (anything over 1 is above UK average, so more jobs within this sector compared to other areas) with 5000 jobs but with 0% employment growth. The high LQ shows the competitive advantage of this sector in Dacorum. Transportation and Storage is the only other sector with a higher LQ than 1 in Dacorum (1.04) making these two sectors what sets Dacorum apart from other areas.

Amongst the sectors with the lowest representation and LQ in Dacorum are:

¹ Location quotient (LQ) is a way of **quantifying how concentrated a particular industry, cluster, occupation, or demographic group is in a region as compared to the nation**. It can reveal what makes a particular region “unique” in comparison to the national average

- Human Health and Social work LQ 0.5
- Accommodation and Food Services LQ 0,6
- Arts and Entertainment LQ 0.76

However all the above low LQ sectors have relatively high employment growth around an average of around 17% so have future potential.

The **Film and TV sector** is seen as an opportunity sector but needs to be seen in relation to its economic value to the District. In 2020 there were 155 companies in the sector in Dacorum (NOMIS) with only 275 employees. Compared to Watford with only 65 companies but 920 employees and Three Rivers with 100 companies and 744 employees. The high number of companies in Dacorum in relation to the low number of employees, indicates that most are micro businesses compared to Watford and Three Rivers with fewer larger companies. However there are future plans to expand the sector in Dacorum with Bovington Studios and thus also increase the employment opportunities.

There needs to be some caution when attributing a sector specification to a company, For example, is Amazon a retailer, distribution or a tech company? It all depends on the company sees itself and how it has registered the company. To get a true picture Real Time Industrial Classifications can be used. This uses an algorithm to find companies key words how they describe themselves and then produce datasets that are representative of technologies, functions and services. Doing this would better describe the makeup of business sectors in Dacorum.

Due to limited resources we need to agree a clear focus for the engagement and which companies/sectors will give us the maximum outcomes in relation to raising the economic wellbeing of Dacorum residents. It is clear that some companies and sectors produce more economic value for local residents in the form of sustainable employment, higher salaries and opportunity to upskill and progress within the company. These companies invest in technology and recruits a smaller but highly skilled workforce. On the other side of the spectrum, there are companies and sectors who offer low paid and insecure employment, with a larger workforce but little investment in technology and therefor low demand for a skilled workforce. Both have a place in the local economy but with a limited capacity to engage with all, the council will have to decide its focus.

There is also the need to understand what businesses need to become successful and contributing to residents' economic wellbeing. For ex a Tech company requiring a highly skills workforce will need support to access this and in turn residents need to have the skills to access the opportunities. A low value business needs support to develop its business by adopting new technologies rather than relying on cheap labour and as a result being able to offer better paid employment. In the case of the Manufacturing sector, it is clear to see that many companies within the sector have adopted technology which has enabled them to reducing the low skilled jobs and reducing their workforce.

Dacorum has a job density of 1.16 (i.e. 1.16 jobs per resident) and far higher than UK average of 0.86 so is well placed to accept reduction in low skilled jobs and the support of companies adopting new technologies. However it needs to be noted that in December 2020, there were 5,000 Dacorum residents without qualifications and reliant on the low value/ unskilled jobs. The Council also needs to support these residents to access new skills.

For discussion and to be considered;

The **IT and Communication** sector forms a distinct cluster offering highly skilled jobs. In 2019 there were 1115 businesses and the highest Business LQ of 3.14 but with a relatively slow growth of new companies 2.74% and a 0 % growth in employment. There is a risk that this cluster will stall its growth and importance to Dacorum.

One sector to highlight is the **Transportation and Storage sector**. Between 2015 and 2019 it had a 33% reduction in employment but a growth in business formation, nearly 40% and the highest business growth sector in Dacorum. The assumption is as the sector has adopted new technologies it will require less staff but better skilled staff. However the drastic reduction in employment compared with the raise in new companies is a worrying development and needs to be considered from a land use perspective and the employment intensity of any developments.

It is clear that Dacorum, together with other areas in Herts, have become attractive to the film industry as a location and several studios have been developed. However there needs to be a realistic view in regards to the impact of the **Film/TV industry** has locally. In many cases it brings little new employment and this is especially true for Dacorum, who mostly have micro businesses in the sector and slow employment growth. A discussion is needed to relate the resources allocated to support this sector, against the economic impact it can bring for local residents. It is also worth noting that the job intensity is low when developing studios, taking up considerable space in relation to the employment it produces.

Source Dacorum Dashboard August 2021



Report for:	Cabinet
Title of report:	Housing Allocations Policy (Capital threshold)
Date:	24 May 2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Mrs Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 Briefing Paper – Supported Housing Capital Threshold 070222 Appendix 2 Briefing Paper – Supported Housing Capital Threshold – Part 2 21 0222 Appendix 3 Housing Allocations Policy 2022 Version (DRAFT) Appendix 4 Community Impact Assessment Appendix 5 October 2021 Cabinet Report - Housing Allocations Policy
Background papers:	Cabinet report 19 October 2021
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	Housing & Community Overview Scrutiny Committee (HC&OSC) Housing Revenue Account (HRA) Housing Senior Management Team (HSMT) Local Housing Authorities (LHAs)

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	<p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Building strong and vibrant communities</p> <p>Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need</p>
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Wards affected	ALL
Purpose of the report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To advise Cabinet on recent data related to the Housing Allocations process and the current sheltered housing demand 2. To inform of the reasons for the amended Capital Threshold proposal for sheltered housing allocations
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cabinet to approve the capital threshold proposed in paragraph 2.4.
Period for post policy/project review:	Quarterly performance updates to Housing & Community Overview Scrutiny Committee (HC&OSC)

1 Introduction/Background:

- 1.1 Local authorities are required to have a defined housing allocations scheme in line with the Housing Act 1996, Part VI (Allocations). It is a legal requirement that the policy is reviewed in the event of legislative and or case law change. In the absence of such change, the policy should be revised every 4 years.
- 1.2 The current Housing Allocations Policy, which was adopted in April 2018, stipulates that 'Applicants will not qualify if they have the financial means to meet their own housing need. We define this as the applicant and/or their partner having in excess of £60,000 gross income or £16,000 in savings, (except where a lump sum has been paid to a current or former member of the armed forces as compensation). Supported housing applicants will be exempt from this criteria if it is evident that their financial means is £250,000 or less.'
- 1.2 Following extensive consultation with key stakeholders and HC&OSC, the revised draft Housing Allocations Policy was presented to, and approved by, Cabinet in October 2021, with scheduled implementation in the summer of 2022. This new policy proposed no upper capital threshold. At the time of writing the policy, the service had a high number of sheltered housing vacancies, with a lack of demand for Supported Housing properties in Dacorum, which was resulting in lengthy and repetitive advertising cycles, extremely high void periods and loss of income to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). As a result, it was proposed to remove the capital threshold, to increase the uptake of supported housing accommodation.
- 1.3 Due to a changed position, as a result of extensive preparatory work to aid the implementation of the new policy, new data is now available and this has informed proposals to revise the position. To inform decision making, data has been obtained from The Association of Housing Advice Services (AHAS), Office for National Statistics in relation to the Consumer price inflation, an Age UK paper in relation to rising energy bills and open market research in relation to average market valuations for private sale and rental properties. The Housing Senior Management Team (HSMT) has considered the findings presented and determined that the implementation of a revised capital threshold is appropriate. The outline findings were presented to the Strategic Leadership Team (SLT) in April 2022, and SLT feedback identified that, as Cabinet had previously approved the policy and the proposal to implement a capital threshold was a fundamental policy change, the findings needed to be presented to Cabinet.
- 1.4 Cabinet is requested to agree a capital threshold for sheltered housing applicants, to ensure that all future housing is allocated based on need, means and affordability – further details are set out below.

2 Key Issues/proposals/main body of the report:

- 2.1 Since the approval of the new Housing Allocations Policy, the Strategic Housing Service has undertaken extensive customer engagement to aid data cleansing of the Housing Register, consequently there are now currently 2886 applicants on the Housing Register.

The current applicant demand profile is set out below:

Bed size	Number	Sheltered need	Adapted need	Adapted & sheltered need
1 bed	1654	234	48	24
2 bed	557	-	20	7
3 bed	496	-	21	0
4 bed	139	-	8	0
5 bed	34	-	1	0
6 bed	6	-	-	-

- 2.2 Demand for, and take up of, supported housing has increased during the latter stages of 2021 and has continued into 2022, consequently this has seen the number of void properties reduce. This is as a result of targeted engagement undertaken by the Supported Housing and Housing Needs Teams; many applicants have also given feedback that the pandemic has led to reconsideration of their future living requirements and support needs. As a result, this activity, alongside the completion of the Altair affordability model and early shaping of the new Strategic Housing function, has led to a review of the decision to remove the capital threshold, ensuring the future approach to allocations considers all relevant factors and available information. At the time of writing the report, the current number and status of sheltered housing voids is outlined below:

Sheltered voids	Allocated to applicant & pending void works	Pending flexi care placement	Verification before offer	Consideration for adaptation	Under advert	Long term void
60	41	1	4	3	11	2*

**3-bedroom ex-warden flat vacant since 18 October 2021 and 2-bedroom flat vacant since 16 December 2021.*

- 2.3 Further research has been conducted using a range of data sources, this research included average market value data for supported housing properties and supported housing private rentals, further details as to findings, relevant case studies and impacts are highlighted in Appendix 1. Following review by HSMT on 7 February 2022, it was felt necessary to undertake further research to identify, the housing cost level that would, prevent prospective applicants being able to access private sector accommodation. These findings were presented to the HSMT on 21 February 2022 and including details of the rising inflation, cost of living and fuel costs, the results of which can be seen in Appendix 2.
- 2.4 It is therefore proposed to introduce a capital threshold of £400,000 for supported housing applicants and that this threshold be implemented within the new policy, which will be implemented in June 2022. The average open market value to purchase a general needs property within the Dacorum Borough is averaged at £400,978 (as at February 2022). The threshold is therefore in line with these values and is considered to be an appropriate level to set the threshold, as it is considered this is threshold amount where applicants would have sufficient means to seek to resolve their own housing difficulty. It should be noted that there may be exceptional cases, where the households' circumstances and essential future housing needs prevent them from resolving their housing situation, despite having capital means of £400,000 or more (e.g., significant adaptations required). Each application to the register is assessed on its own merits in line with the policy and in such cases, officers will determine if the Exceptions to Policy applies.
- 2.5 When undertaking an affordability assessment of a household, full consideration will need to be given to household income, all assets including owned property and any related business assets, in addition to stocks, shares, investments and other financial interest or equity. Applicants with capital/financial interest over the threshold should be in the position to make sufficient purchase decisions within the Borough to resolve their housing situation.

The new draft policy can be viewed at Appendix 3.

3 Options and alternatives considered

The alternative option is to retain the original decision presented to Cabinet in October 2021. If the capital threshold is fully removed as previously proposed, there will be significantly more applicants able to access the housing register who have the potential to resolve their housing situation using their financial means. Not implementing a capital threshold could potentially impact other aspects of organisational service delivery such as Private Sector Housing and Revenue & Benefits, due to a potential increase in Empty Homes.

4 Consultation

In reaching the revised capital threshold proposal, consultation has been undertaken with the Housing Senior Management Team, the Strategic Leadership Team and the Chair of HC&OSC.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

The Housing Operations Service, and its costs, are reviewed annually through a national benchmarking organisation (Housemark). Council homes let via the Council's Housing Allocations Policy are let in line with the Rent Regulators framework.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 The allocation of housing accommodation by local housing authorities (LHAs) is regulated by Part VI of the Housing Act 1996. Further to Section 166A(1) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011) it is a statutory requirement for the council to have a scheme for determining priorities between qualifying persons and as to the procedure to be followed.

6.2 It is good practice to review the schemes regularly to ensure compliance with the law and relevant guidance and that the scheme is addressing housing need effectively in the LHA's area.

7 Risk implications:

The intention of this report is to comply with legislation and therefore avoid the risk of any non-compliance.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

8.1 A Community Impact Assessment was undertaken on 26 September 2021 in collaboration with the Diversity and Inclusion Lead Officer. The assessment identified the potential for negative impacts relating to age, disability, and race. In order to mitigate the impact of these outcomes, the service has reviewed processes and implemented measures to ensure that additional support can be provided to those where service access is impacted. Arrangements to be implemented include, but are not limited to, interpreting services, provision of paper application forms in Braille, assistance with voice recordings and home visits.

8.2 There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

9 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

When allocating social and affordable housing, due consideration is given to health, safety and welfare of individual and the local community – taking into consideration risk management, safeguarding arrangements and other relevant prescribed conditions such as licence requirements and other Court Orders.

10 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

The Housing Allocations Policy underpins the Council's approach to the allocation of social housing assets, ensuring that the authority makes best use of stock, additionally the policy sets out the approach in relation to allocation of accommodation to the Council's employees and elected members to ensure full compliance and robust management.

11 Statutory Comments

Monitoring Officer:

No further comments to add to the legal implications included in the report.

S151 Officer:

The introduction of the capital threshold limit is not projected to have a negative impact on void levels and hence there is no projected financial impact on the HRA. The introduction of the threshold at £400,000 is in line with local property prices and would appear appropriate to allow the HRA to support vulnerable residents in the borough.

12 Conclusions:

This report outlines the current position in relation to the Housing Allocations Policy, approved by way of previous Cabinet in October 2021 and informs Cabinet of the reasons for proposing an amendment to this policy, by way of introducing a capital threshold for Sheltered Housing applicants.

Briefing Paper - Supported Housing Capital Threshold

This briefing paper explores the proposal of retaining and raising a capital threshold for Supported Housing applicants.

The paper will explore why it is considered appropriate to place a capital threshold placed on applicants applying for Supported Housing. This is to ensure that the council can continue to make best use of its housing portfolio with specific regard to housing need, availability of stock, and financial accessibility. This report also suggests a reasonable and proportionate figure for the capital threshold. Consideration has been given to the accessibility of properties available through private sale or rent directly for those households who would be likely supported housing applicants.

Summary

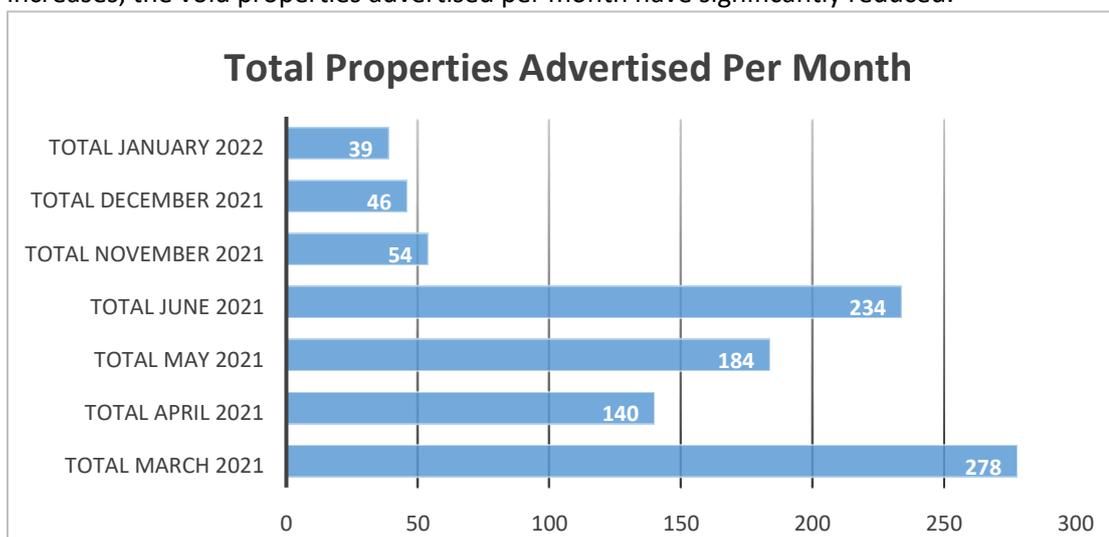
The current Allocations Policy stipulates that *'Applicants will not qualify if they have the financial means to meet their own housing need. We define this as the applicant and/or their partner having in excess of £60,000 gross income or £16,000 in savings (except where a lump sum has been paid to a current or former member of the armed forces as compensation). Supported housing applicants will be exempt from this criteria if it is evident that their financial means is £250,000 or less.'*

The new policy drafted and approved by Cabinet in November 2021 proposed no upper capital threshold. This policy is due for full implementation in summer 2022. At the time of writing the new policy draft, the service had a high number of vacancies, with a lack of demand for Supported Housing properties in Dacorum, this was resulting in lengthy and repetitive advertising cycles, extremely high void periods and loss of income to the Housing Revenue Account (HRA). The new Policy wording: *'2.5 Financial Means' that 'Supported Housing applicants over the age of 60 will be exempt from this criteria.'* However, following a review of the data, the capital limit needs to be revised again due to the change in demand of Supported Housing properties.

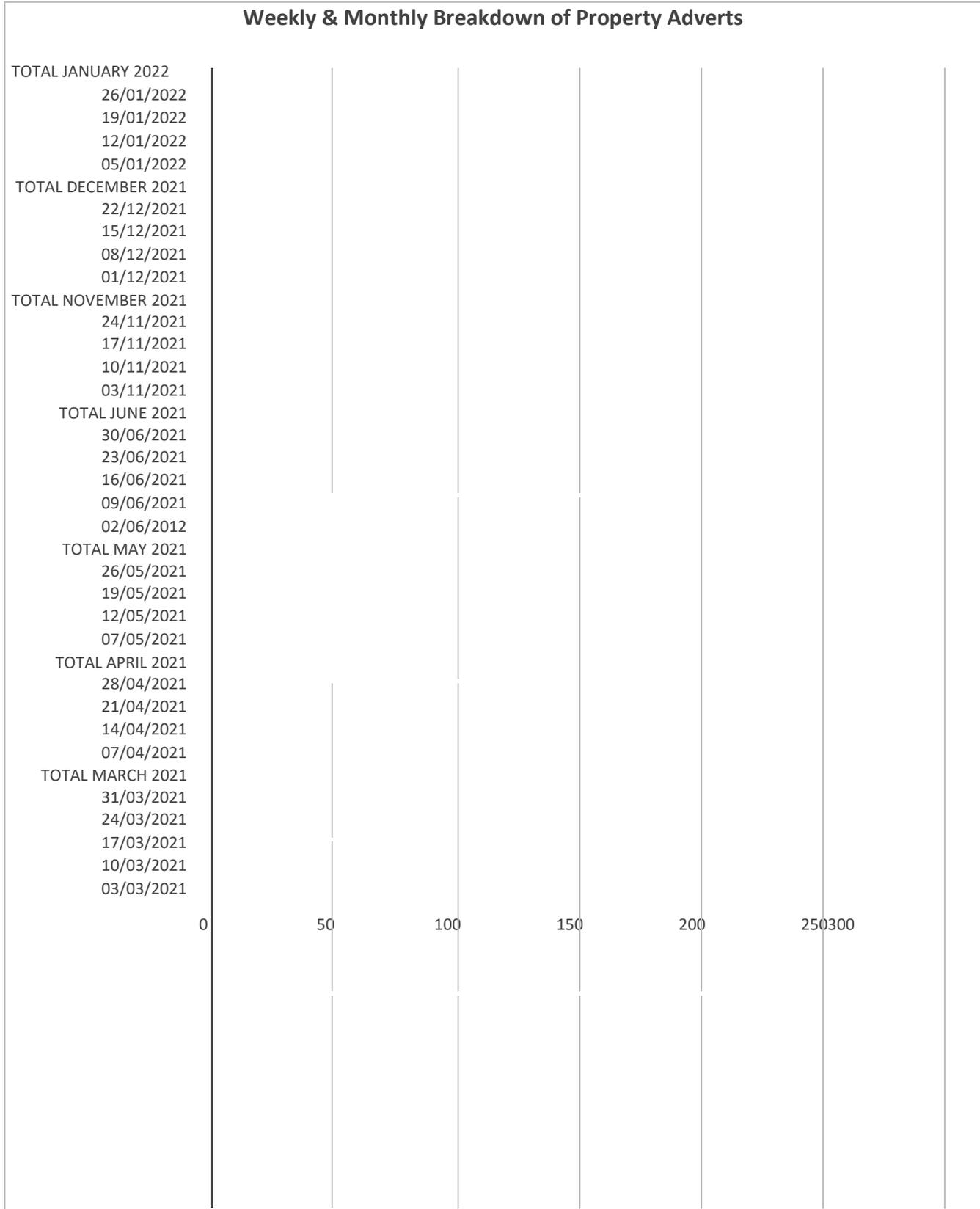
The council has 1906 supported housing properties. Of which, 691 CAT 1- Community properties and 1215 CAT 2- Indoor & Outdoor Schemes.

What the data says

At the time of drafting the new policy, the demand for supported housing was low. The decision to remove the capital threshold, was proposed to encourage further applications to ensure that supported housing properties were being let and to reduce income loss to the HRA (Housing Revenue Account). As the demand for sheltered housing increases, the void properties advertised per month have significantly reduced.



Below is a further breakdown of the council’s sheltered void properties advertised weekly and monthly. The data below shows that following the review of the policy, the void properties available had decreased by 86% by January 2022.



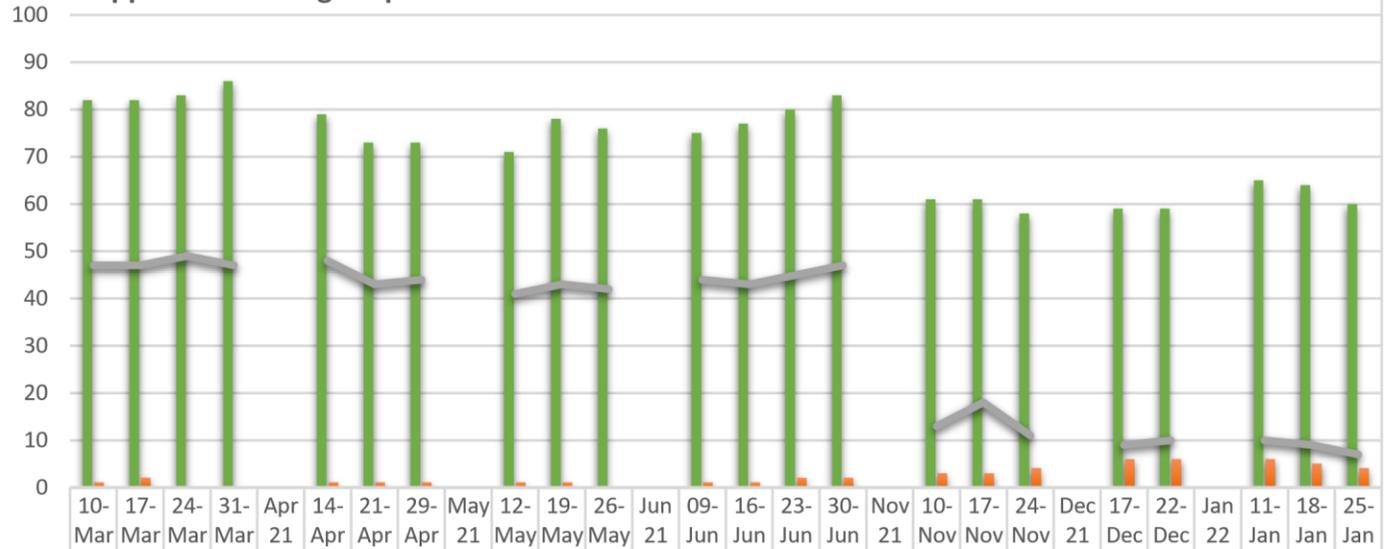
Demand for supported housing has increased significantly, this is likely to be as a result of targeted discussions by Sheltered Housing staff and the Housing Needs team – in addition it is likely that the impact of the pandemic has seen a number of households consider their future living requirements and support needs. This therefore requires a subsequent review of the decision to remove the capital threshold and ensure that our approach is reflective of the current circumstances.

Below is a full breakdown of supported housing properties per week. The number of void properties available per week may not always be advertised and may be used for direct offers. Void properties may not be ready for advertisement or occupation, and this is reflected in the data. Void properties also include properties being considered for adaptations or confirmed adaptations for direct offers.

The graph displays that supported housing that is available for advertisement has significantly decreased. Properties considered under adaptations have been increasing weekly. The number of properties available is decreasing.

Supported Housing Properties Breakdown

Number of Supported Housing Voids



Total Supported Voids per week	82	82	83	86	79	73	73		71	78	76		75	77	80	83		61	61	58		59	59		65	64	60
Adapted Supported Properties	1	2	0	0	1	1	1		1	1	0		1	1	2	2		3	3	4		6	6		6	5	4
Supported Properties Being Advertised/Ready for Direct Let	47	47	49	47	48	43	44		41	43	42		44	43	45	47		13	18	11		9	10		10	9	7

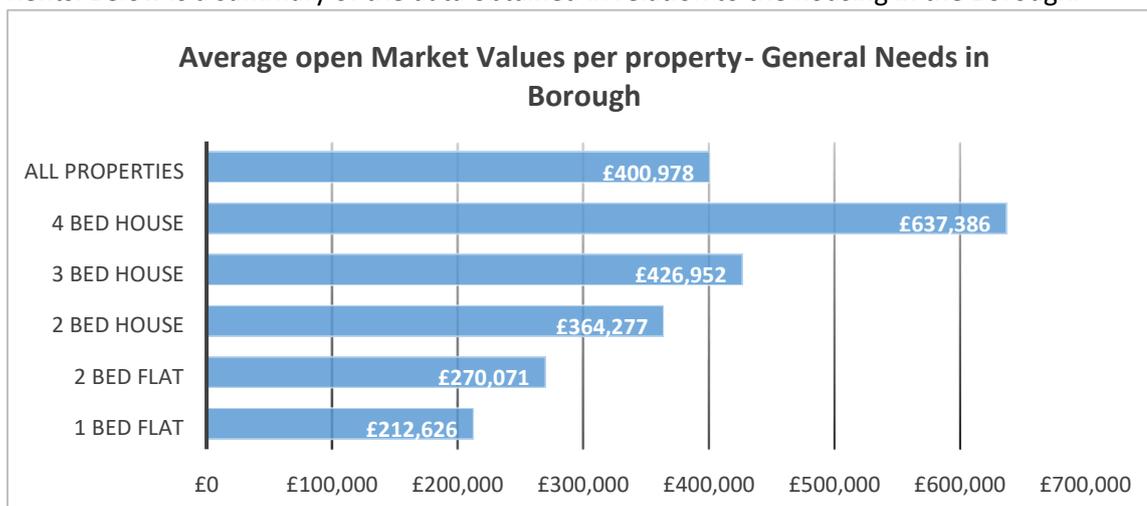
■ Total Supported Voids per week
 ■ Adapted Supported Properties
 — Supported Properties Being Advertised/Ready for Direct Let

There are currently 1136 Applicants over the age of 60 on the Housing Register, 823 are active and 675 of the 823 have stated that would like to move into Supported Housing.

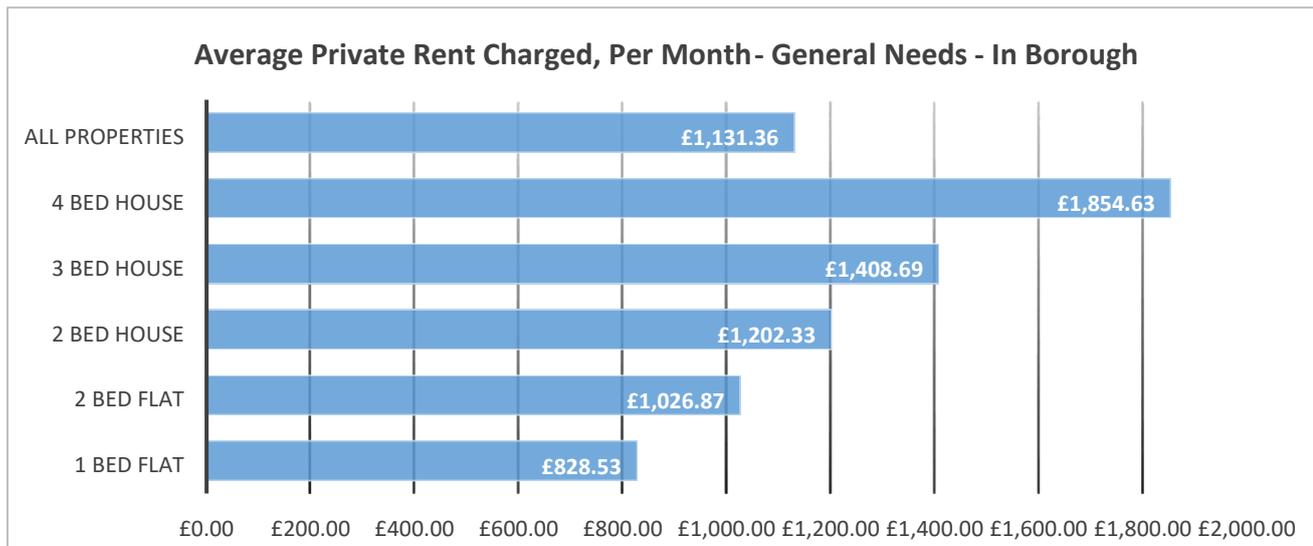
The decrease in properties available and current active applicants requiring to move must be taken into consideration. If the capital threshold is fully removed as previously proposed, there will be significantly more applicants able to access the housing register who have the potential to resolve their housing situation themselves using their own financial means – this could further impact other areas of the organisation such as Private Sector Housing and Revenue & Benefits, as a result of a potential increase in Empty Homes.

The Current and Proposed Threshold

In consideration of the current capital threshold being £250,000, and the proposed policy to have removed the upper capital threshold altogether; research has been conducted into, Open Market Values for General Need’s properties, Private rent values, Market value data for supported housing properties and Supported Housing Private Rents. Below is a summary of the data obtained in relation to the housing in the Borough.



- The average open market value to purchase a general needs property within the Dacorum Borough is averaged at £400,978.
- The average open market value to purchase 1 to 3 bedroom properties is £318,481.
- The average supported housing private sale equivalent is averaged at £328,797.11. The properties on average have between 1 and 3 bedrooms. (The average is based on properties sold within the last two years).



- The average 'general needs' private rent cost per month in the Borough is £1131.36. □ The average supported housing equivalent private rent cost per month is £1363.52.

To further consider the impact of capital threshold on applicants, please consider the scenarios below:

Scenario 1

Mr S has applied to the councils housing register. He is widowed aged 70 and has advised that he wishes to move to Supported Accommodation. Mr S currently resides in a privately owned house, in which he has approximately £300,000 capital. Mr S advises this is a 2 bed roomed property. His bathroom is on the first floor and his kitchen on the ground floor. Mr S is unable to safely navigate stairs due to worsening health conditions, and is vision impaired. Due to Mr S's mobility problems, Mr S uses a mobility scooter outdoors. Mr S requires level access within the property.

- Under the current housing Allocations policy Mr S would be rejected due to his financial situation being over the capital threshold. Given Mr S's circumstances, an exceptions to policy report would most likely be considered due to his medical requirements to move.
- Under the agreed policy, the council assesses Mr S's housing need and medical evidence, and award him 30 medical points, if an Exceptions to Policy is granted – this will enable Mr S to bid for sheltered housing.
- Under the revised Allocations policy, the council assesses Mr S's housing need and medical evidence, and award him 30 medical points, no Exceptions to Policy would be required due to the lack of capital threshold.
- Mr S requires adaptations including level access. The data gathered shows that Mr S would struggle to obtain privately owned supported housing with adaptations within the Borough. Mr S would also have difficulty to secure private rented supported housing as there are limited schemes within the Borough that he can afford. Mr S will likely rely on the housing register for suitable housing despite £300k of capital.

Scenario 2

Ms A has applied to the councils Housing Register. She is single, aged 65 and advises that she wishes to move into supported accommodation. Ms A currently resides in a 2 bed roomed privately owned property. Ms A advises that she owns the property and that she has approximately £650,000 capital. Ms A's bathroom is on the first floor and the kitchen on the ground floor. Ms A is unable to safely navigate the stairs due to worsening health conditions, and is hard of hearing. Ms A requires level access within the property.

- Under the current housing Allocations policy, Ms A would be unable to access the housing register, and would be advised to make her own private arrangements due to her financial circumstances.
- Under the agreed housing allocations policy, Ms A would be able to access the housing register. It would be likely that the council assesses Ms A's housing need and medical evidence and award her 30 medical points.
- Under the revised allocations policy, with an implemented capital threshold, Ms A would be unable to access the housing register, and would be advised to make her own private arrangements due to her financial circumstances. Ms A has significant capital in comparison to Mr S. Ms A's financial situation is significant enough for her to resolve her housing situation, by either adapting her current property or moving to more appropriate housing as there is the financial resource to do so.

The scenarios here highlights the benefits of a capital threshold, to limit the applications to register for those who have a housing need and are unable to financially resolve their current housing situation.

Recommendations

- HSMT to provide feedback on the report and findings.
- HSMT to consider the recommendation that a capital threshold of £400,000 should be implemented into the Housing Allocations policy approved by Cabinet in November 2021. It is felt that this figure is rational and proportionate given the data obtained which reflects the housing situation in the Borough. However, advice and guidance is welcomed on this figure from HSMT.
- It is recommended that the capital threshold should be revisited on an annual basis, with consideration given to volume of supported housing voids and demand. This will ensure that the capital threshold remains within market rates and reflective of housing need in the Borough.
- HSMT to provide direction in terms of approvals for implementing a new capital threshold and advise as to whether this can be undertaken by Senior Officer Decision or if a Portfolio Holder Decision is required.

Briefing Paper - Supported Housing Capital Threshold - Part 2

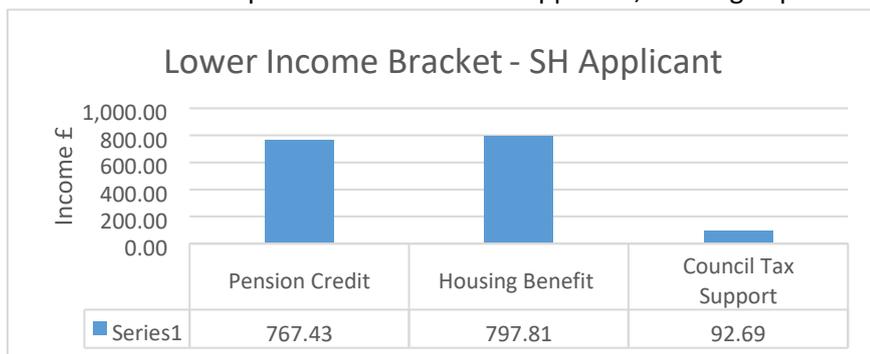
Following the presentation of ‘Briefing Paper - Supported Housing Capital Threshold’ (Please refer to Appendix 1) at the HSMT meeting on the 7th of February 2022, this paper explores further evidence based information in relation to the recommendations set out to HSMT.

Supported Housing Applicant Income

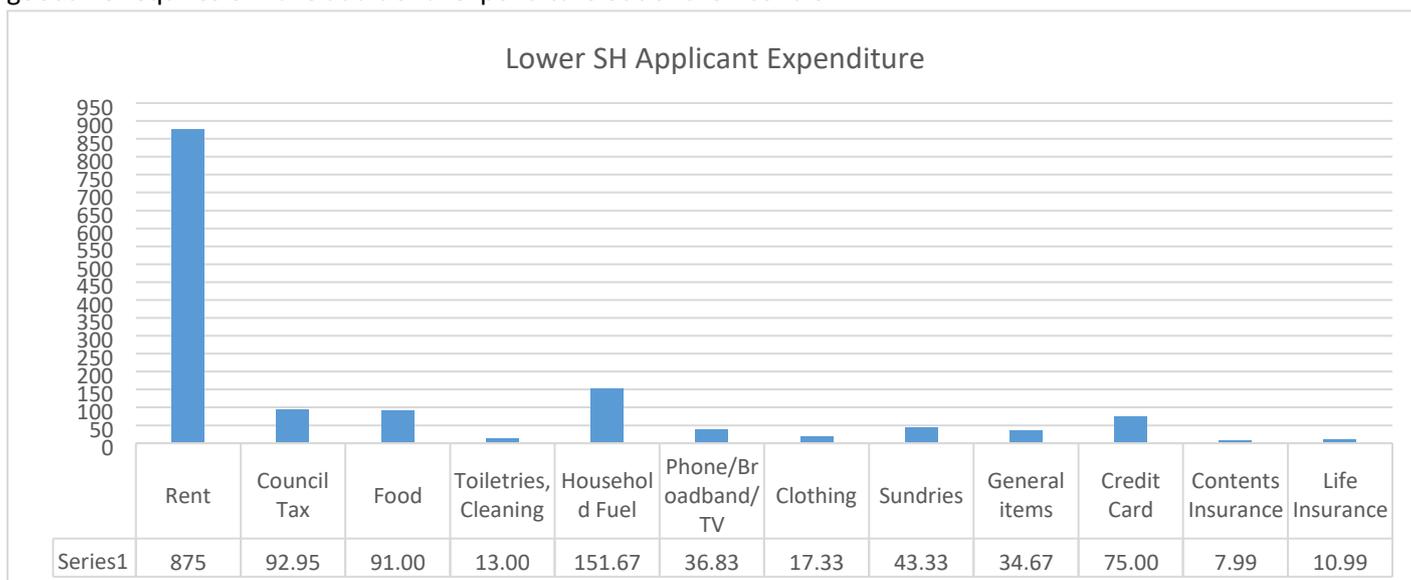
In order to further consider the recommended capital threshold amount of £400,000 (which is proposed to be reviewed annually) - supported housing applicant’s income has been explored. In doing so consideration has been given as to the differing income and lifestyles of applicants approaching the council for assistance.

Scenario 1 - Lower Income Bracket

The details below represents a low income applicant, residing in privately rented general needs accommodation.

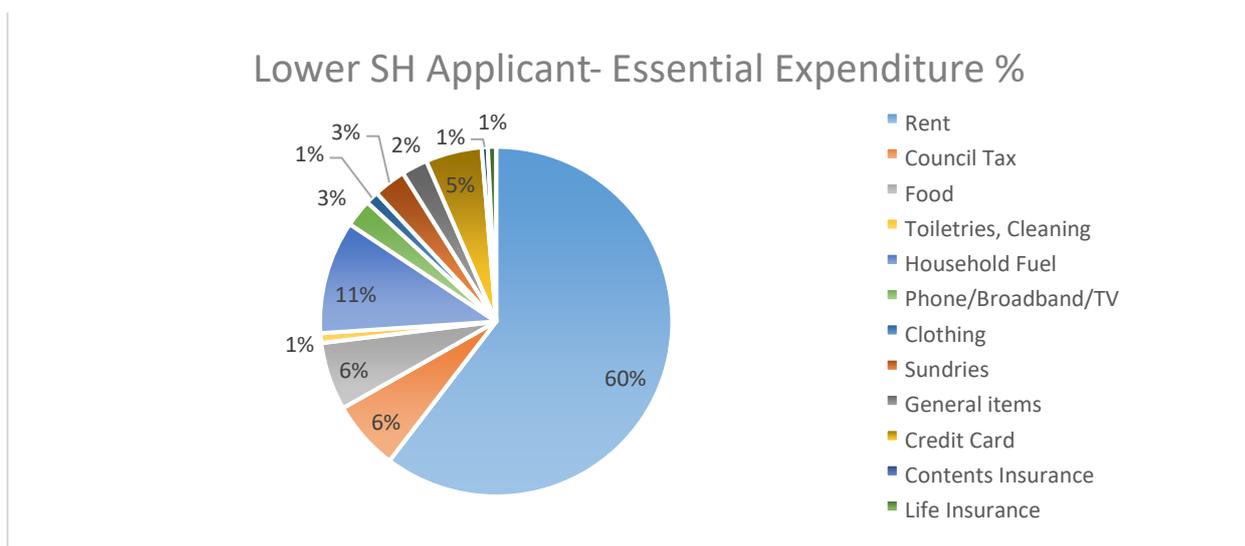
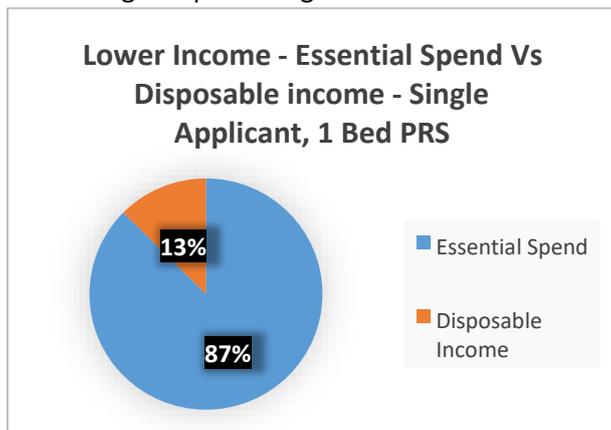


An applicant on a low income is likely to be solely reliant on benefits. In this scenario, the applicant has no savings, and has credit card debt. The applicant has no access to their own vehicle, and is reliant on public transport. There is no particular flexibility in the expenditure. Expenditure is based on actual figures and affordability guidance figures from AHAS.¹ The applicant is limited to a pay as you go phone or a mobile contract. The applicant is unable to afford a TV package and makes use of Freeview. The applicant is frugal, and puts the heating on less due to the rising costs of utilities. In this scenario the applicant may struggle to make financial commitments, should he have to replace any goods he requires or have additional expenditure out of their control.



¹AHAS Guidance as of Dec 2021 Outdated due to inflation rates and dramatic rise in the cost of living

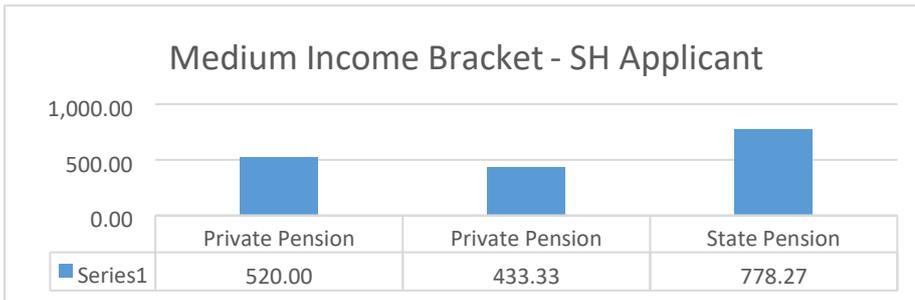
In this scenario, a total of 87% of the applicant’s income will be spent on essential expenditure. 60% of the applicant’s expenditure is spent on rent, a further 6% on council tax, 6% food. Credit Card repayments are a total of 5%. It is worth highlighting that household fuel costs make up 11% of total essential expenditure spend. This is the second highest percentage after rent.



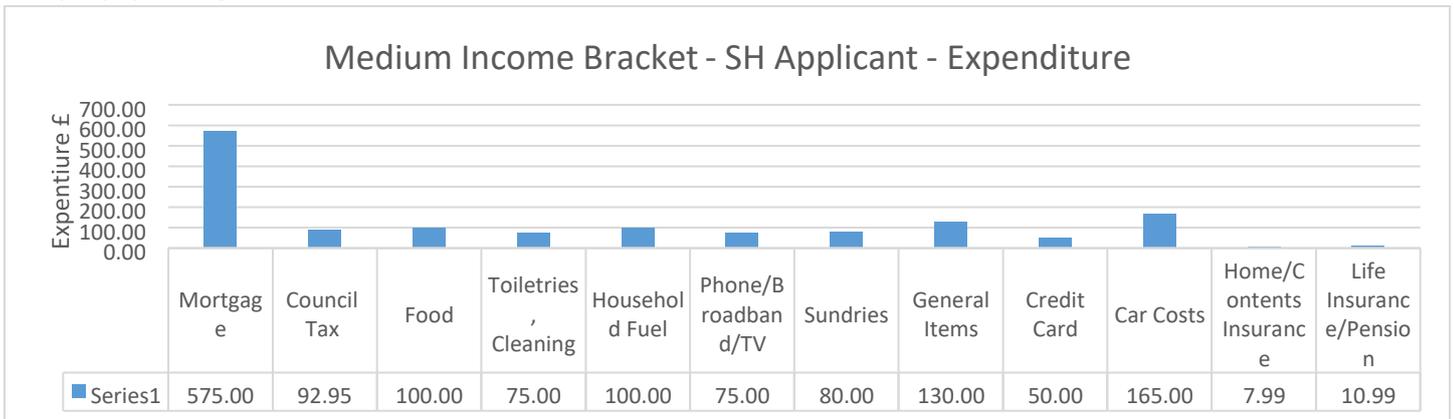
Essential expenditure in this case is the minimum that can be spent on reasonable living costs. However, what is clear is that the applicant would be very much living a modest lifestyle. The applicant would be identified as potentially at risk of falling into unavoidable poverty, due to inflation rises affecting essential expenditure and fuel costs.

Scenario 2 - Medium Income Bracket

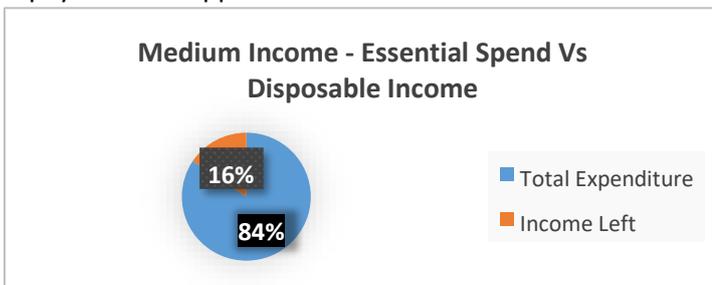
The data and information represents an applicant residing in privately owned accommodation. The property was last valued at £275,000 and mortgage repayments are £575 per month. Equity within the house is approximately £175,000. The applicant is receiving income in the form of private and state pension payments. The applicant in this case is ineligible for benefits for help towards the cost of living and housing.



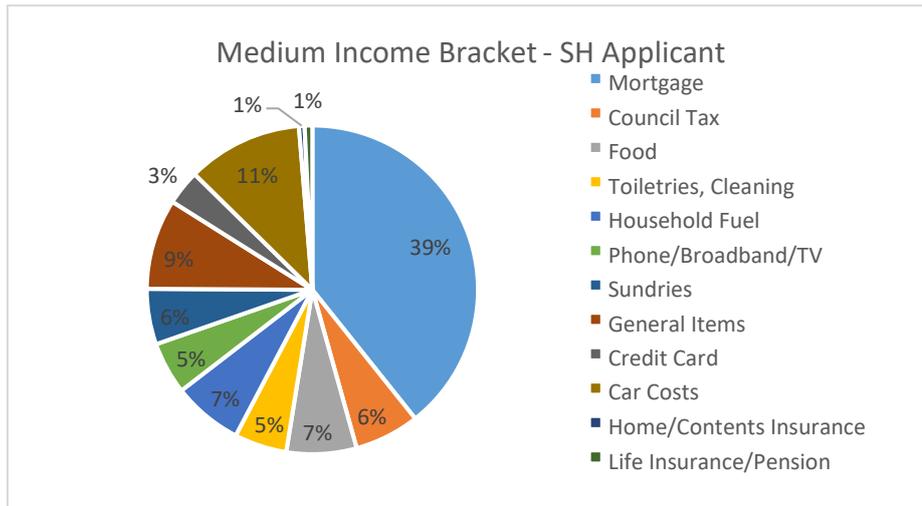
In this scenario the applicants expenditure is still considered 'essential' however, this is relative to the income received by the applicant. The applicant has the ability to be flexible in their essential costs, and are not requiring themselves to live by 'reasonable living costs' as they are not in a financial position that requires them to limit their everyday spending.



The applicant has their own vehicle, by default giving them more freedom than that of someone limited to public transport. The applicant is able to make minimum credit payments with ease, and could increase their amount repayable. The applicant has the freedom to select a more expensive television and Wi-Fi package.

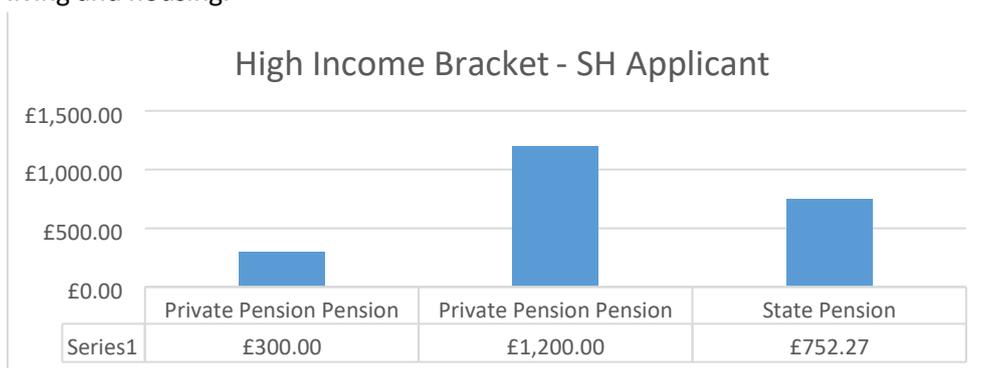


The applicant in this case has 84% essential spend, however this is comprised of vehicle repayments and where possible essential spend could be reduced. There is flexibility within essential expenditure. The applicant would be able to afford an increase in fuel costs, with available disposable income in the instance of inflationary rises. The flexibility of spend is highlighted as below.

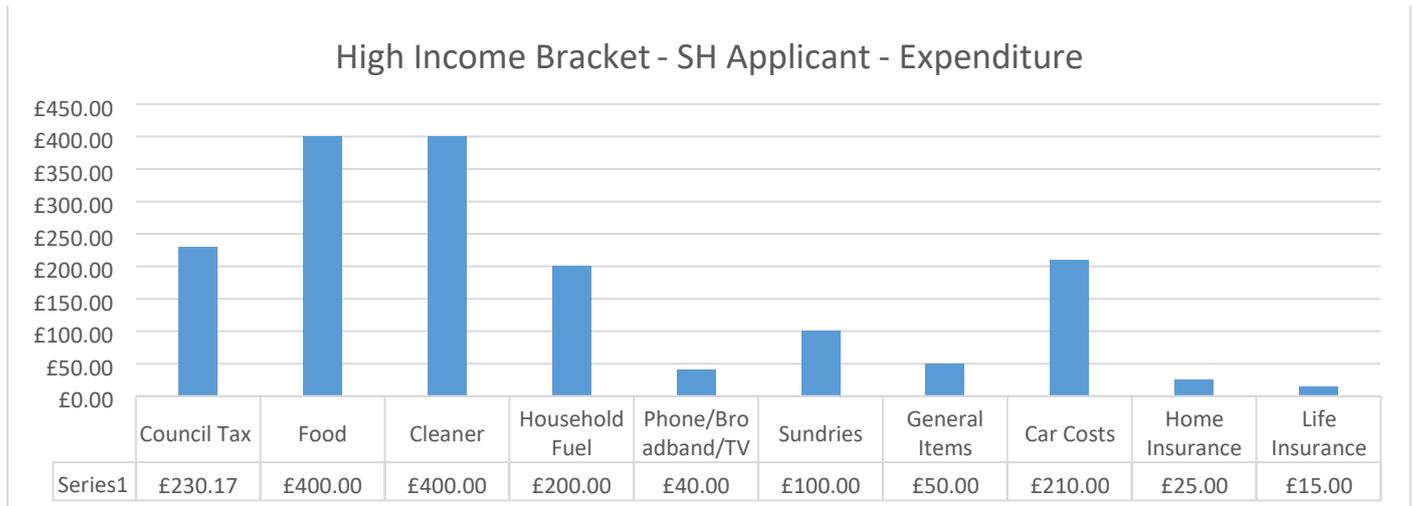


Scenario 3 - High Income Bracket

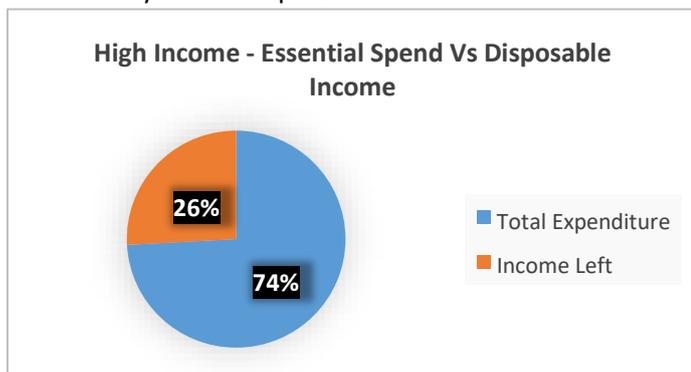
The data and information represents an applicant residing in privately owned accommodation. The property was last valued at £400,000. The property is 3 bedrooms and owned outright. The applicant is receiving income in the form of private and state pension payments. The applicant in this case is ineligible for benefits for help towards the cost of living and housing.



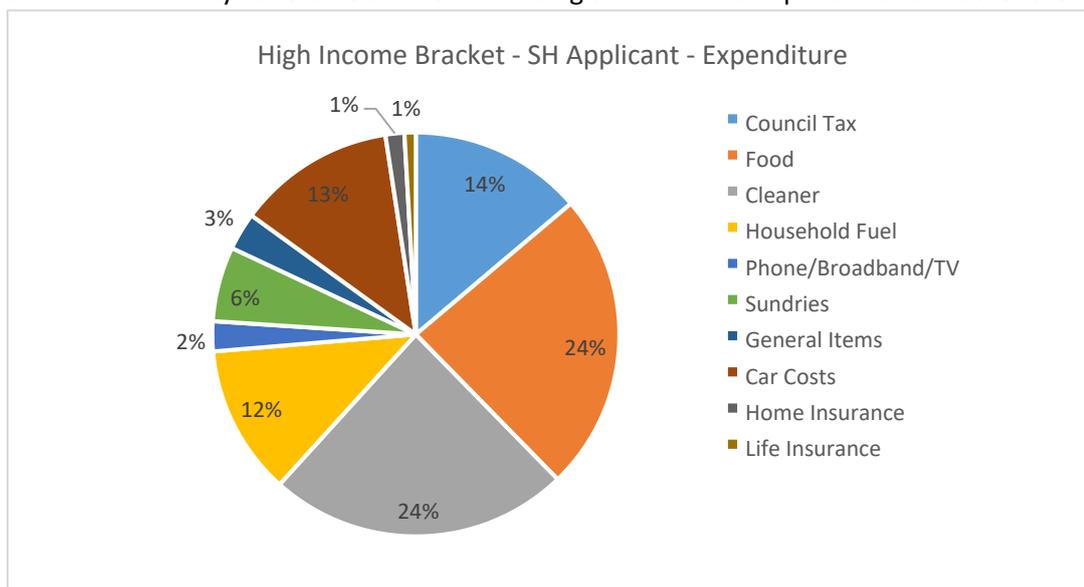
In this scenario the applicants expenditure is still considered 'essential' however, this is relative to the income received by the applicant. The applicant has the ability to be flexible in their essential costs, and are not requiring themselves to live by 'reasonable living costs' as they are not in a financial position that requires them to limit their everyday spending.



In this scenario the applicant’s essential expenditure is 74% of their income. A disposable income of 26% indicates a stronger financial position in terms of being able to be flexible in their spending, and that essentials can be reduced dramatically where required.



The applicant would be more able to afford an increase in fuel costs, with available disposable income in the instance of inflationary rises. The Flexibility of spend is highlighted as below. Using the Altair Housing Model, the household would be able to afford to buy a property to resolve their housing needs that is affordable, in line with open market rates. The scenario here highlights how the applicant is less likely to rely on the council for rehousing as they have the financial ability to resolve their own housing situation in comparison to the other scenarios.



Consumer Inflation and fuel poverty

When considering the income brackets of supported housing applicant(s) it is important that we consider the overall impact of the cost of housing versus the cost of living. Due regard for consumer price inflation must be taken into consideration, when considering affordability. Inflation will have a large impact on supported housing applicants, especially those within the lower to medium income brackets who will be effected the most. The largest upward contributions to the change in the Consumer Price Index with Housing Costs 12-month inflation rate between November and December 2021 came from food and non-alcoholic beverages, restaurants and hotels, furniture and household goods, and clothing and footwear.²

Inflation rates will likely impact affordability of supported housing applicants who access the councils Housing Register. Poverty in the UK pre-pandemic statistics highlight the number of state pension age individuals experiencing relative and absolute poverty.³

Poverty - pensioners 2019/2020				
	Relative poverty		Absolute poverty	
	number (millions)	%	number (millions)	%
Before housing costs	2.2	19%	1.7	15%
After housing costs	2.1	18%	1.5	13%

To note that ‘Energy bills are predicted to rise by 50% from April, costing millions of UK households as much as £1,200 extra a year.’⁴ Age UK have reported that In a best-case scenario, where an older person gets access to both the Council Tax and energy bill rebate, they will receive £350 this year. But with bills increasing by an average of £693, that still leaves them with a £343 gap in their finances and that’s before accounting for how much bills may rise again in October.⁵

It is therefore likely that those supported housing applicants on the lower income bracket will experience fuel poverty, and in turn see their disposable income diminish rapidly, essential expenditure is very likely to rise. This is notwithstanding the increase of the cost of food, household goods and clothing. It is therefore important that those on the lower income bracket, with no savings/capital continue to access supported housing with affordable rents and also those who are within the medium-high income bracket.

Service Charges – Private versus Social

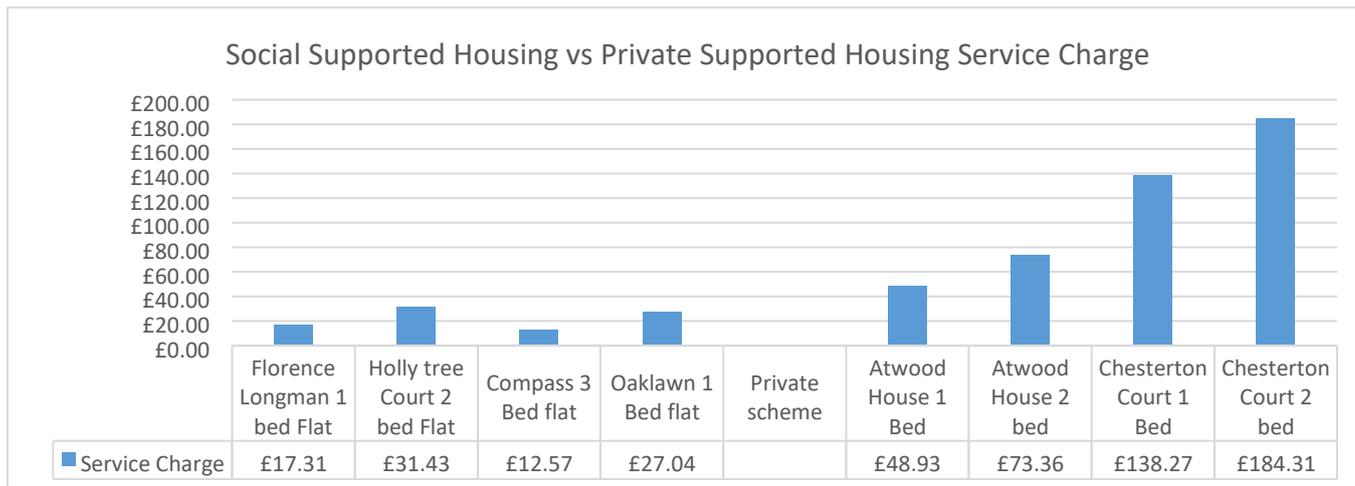
Whilst data on equivalent private supported housing is limited it must be noted that the price of service charge(s) are much higher within private rented supported housing than social housing. Therefore, those who would likely be unable to pay this additional housing cost that is not housing benefit eligible are not going to have the options be able to secure private alternatives. This indicates that those with the financial capability to afford such costs, should explore alternatives to social housing.

² [Consumer price inflation, UK - Office for National Statistics](#)

³ [SN07096.pdf \(parliament.uk\)](#)

⁴ [Energy crisis: Elderly 'too scared to use oven' amid soaring gas prices, charity warns - LBC](#)

⁵ [Why are energy bills going up? | Discover | Age UK](#)



Dacorum Housing Affordability Model – General Needs

The council have developed with support of Altair an affordability model to be adopted for those accessing the Housing Register. A working group has been set up to implement this affordability tool to ensure that a robust affordability assessment is carried out on those accessing our Housing Register. The overall objective is for the tool to be used with supporting guidance and developed into the Enhanced Housing Options toolkit, enabling residents to self-serve and identify their entry point into Dacorum’s Housing market. The affordability model ⁶ has based its data on open market values, private rent values, including national average earnings, national average property values and national average rent. The affordability model is generally directed to what we categorise as ‘general needs’ accommodation over ‘supported housing’ type accommodation. This tool will be required to be implemented within the Housing Needs Officers daily work to ensure that housing is suitable for applicants.

COVID19 – The impact on Housing Allocations

Local research has not yet been conducted in relation to the direct impact of COVID19 on the councils housing availability. Housemark’s data advises “it was estimated that at the end of June around 50,000 social dwellings across the UK – twice as many as normal – were ‘empty but available to let’”⁷

However, lockdown restrictions meant that properties being advertised and let were placed on hold in April 2020. The impact on housing stock availability was negatively impacted by the pandemic, causing delays in voids. Movement within supported housing at this time was limited, due to a number of factors.

The National Housing Federation reports ‘There are lower levels of tenant turnover: Vulnerable people are delaying their moves, Self-isolation is delaying moves, Prospective tenants are unwilling to move in or out, even if they have accepted a property, and are not handing back keys and so landlords cannot gain access to properties and arrange inspections’⁸

⁶ Dacorum Housing Affordability Model includes Social rent, Affordable Rents, Shared Ownership and discounted sale

⁷ [COVID-19 housing and the housing market: Synopsis of events and evidence to date, with a focus on Northern Ireland \(nihe.gov.uk\)](https://www.nihe.gov.uk/publications/COVID-19-housing-and-the-housing-market-synopsis-of-events-and-evidence-to-date-with-a-focus-on-northern-ireland)

⁸ [the-impact-of-covid-19-on-homelessness-in-the-private-rented-ector---nhf-submission.pdf \(housing.org.uk\)](https://www.housing.org.uk/publications/the-impact-of-covid-19-on-homelessness-in-the-private-rented-ector---nhf-submission.pdf) ⁹ Dacorum

Housing Model, Altaire Data

Contractors reported that suppliers of parts, furniture, carpets and general building supplies caused delays in the ability to repair and make available void properties.

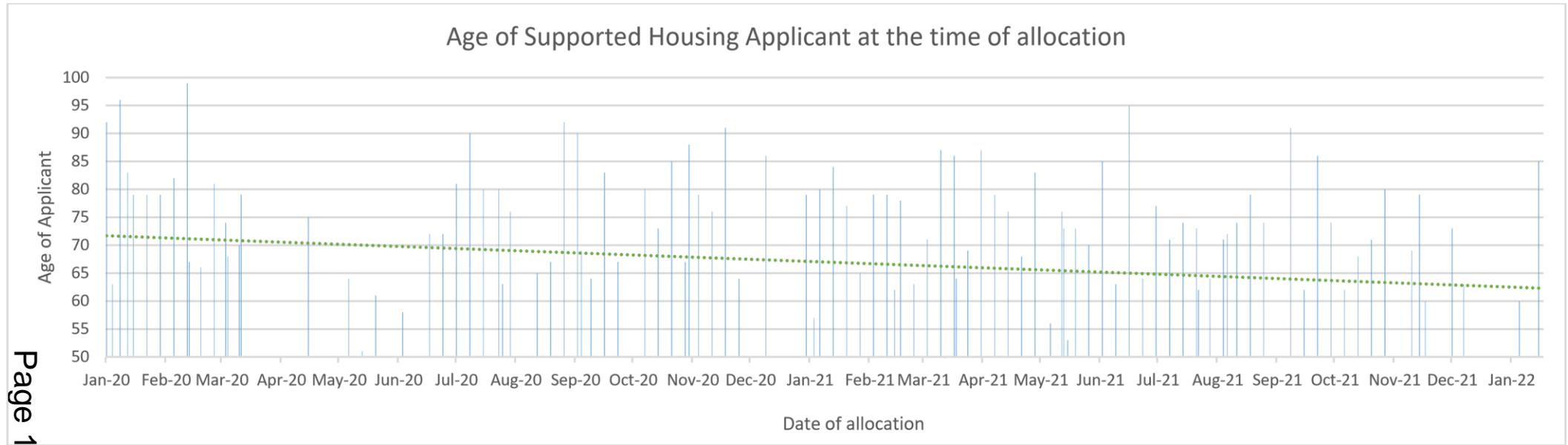
As the UK proceeded to lift lockdown restrictions, the council saw an uptake in its applicants bidding on supported housing properties. It is likely that as the general public gained confidence in their ability to move with less restriction, that they felt able and willing to make the decision to move. It is likely that supported housing applicants were aware of their needs to be closer to their support networks, should further restrictions arise, and that the importance of moving may have become a higher priority. Applicants may want to be closer to family, friends to reduce social isolation, which may indicate some of the reasons for increased uptake of our sheltered housing stock.

Revisiting the Supported Housing capital threshold limit

In light of the above additional investigations following previous HSMT discussion, a revised capital threshold is proposed for introduction at limit of £400,000. The average open market value to purchase a general needs property within the Dacorum Borough is averaged at £400,978. The threshold is therefore in line with open market values.⁹ When assessing a household's affordability, full consideration will need to be given to household income, all assets including owned property and any related business assets, in addition to stocks, shares, investments and other financial interest or equity.

Applicants with capital/financial interest over the threshold should be in the position to make sufficient purchase decisions within the Borough to resolve their housing situation. This includes any need for renovation, modernisation and adaptation works. We have the ability to consider applicants under the exceptions to policy, in extenuating circumstances.

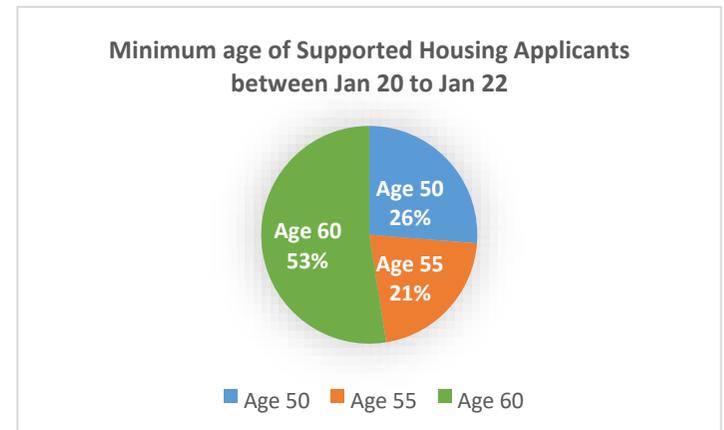
Exploring age of Supported Housing Applicants allocated accommodation



The graph above shows the actual age of a supported housing applicant, allocated a property from January 2020 to January 2022. The dotted green line shows a forecast using the graph data, that the age of supported housing applicants has decreased and will continue to do so. Supported Housing properties are always advertised from the outset as minimum age of applicant of 60. However, where a property is repeatedly advertised over a period of three cycles, the minimum age is dropped from 60, to 55 and finally 50. The reason for doing so is to ensure that properties are continuing to be let within a reasonable time frame and to reduce income loss to the HRA (Housing Revenue Account).

The period ending March 20 to end of April 20 shows that a gap within the data. This was due to the COVID19 pandemic, lockdown measures and that properties were not being allocated at this time. From the end of March until the end of June 2020, there were a decrease in allocations due to the ongoing lockdown measures.

This chart shows a breakdown of the minimum age supported housing properties are advertised at, and the actual percentage of each age group in which a property was allocated from January 2020 to January 2022.



This may suggest that the age of applicants accessing supported housing in need, is decreasing, and consideration as to whether the age bracket of 60 and above may need to be reviewed to ensure best use of the available housing stock and consistent HRA revenue turnover.

Recommendations

1. HSMT to consider the recommendation that a capital threshold of £400,000 should be implemented into the Housing Allocations policy approved by Cabinet in November 2021. It is felt that this figure is rational and proportionate given the data obtained and investigations which reflects the housing situation in the Borough. However, advice and guidance is welcomed on this figure from HSMT.
2. It is recommended that the capital threshold should be revisited on an annual basis, with consideration given to volume of supported housing voids and demand. This will ensure that the capital threshold remains within market rates and reflective of housing need in the Borough.
3. HSMT to consider whether it be beneficial for a Dacorum Housing Affordability model to be developed in consideration of supported housing, specifically considering applicants aged 50 above (50 as property ages are dropped down to this).
4. HSMT to consider whether the age bracket of supported housing is lowered from 60 to 55.
5. HSMT to provide feedback on the report and findings.
6. HSMT to provide direction in terms of approvals for implementing a new capital threshold and advise as to whether this can be undertaken by Senior Officer Decision or if a Portfolio Holder Decision is required



Housing Allocations Policy (DRAFT)

Last reviewed May 2022

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1.0 Allocations policy overview

This policy will be reviewed annually

1.1 Introduction

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

To deliver this, we manage a choice based lettings system in Dacorum, and households wanting to apply to be on the council's housing register will need to complete an online application form at [Moving with Dacorum](#). Support is available to those applicants who are unable to submit their application online, either by booking an appointment for the Customer Service Unit at The Forum or by requesting a paper application. Applications are usually assessed within 4-6 weeks.

Whilst Moving with Dacorum advertises all social and the majority of affordable housing options, each housing association within the borough may have its own allocations policy, which may have different rules about who is eligible. These policies should be available on their websites or by contacting the housing association directly.

Many people who apply for housing will never be allocated a property by the council because of the shortage of social housing in the borough. Even if you have a high housing need, it is likely that you will have to wait for a considerable amount of time before you are offered a property.

The council is required to respond to any local or national restrictions imposed by central government. The administration of this and other council policies could, therefore, be impacted by a pandemic or other emergency for the period that such restrictions are in operation.

1.2 Aim(s) of the policy

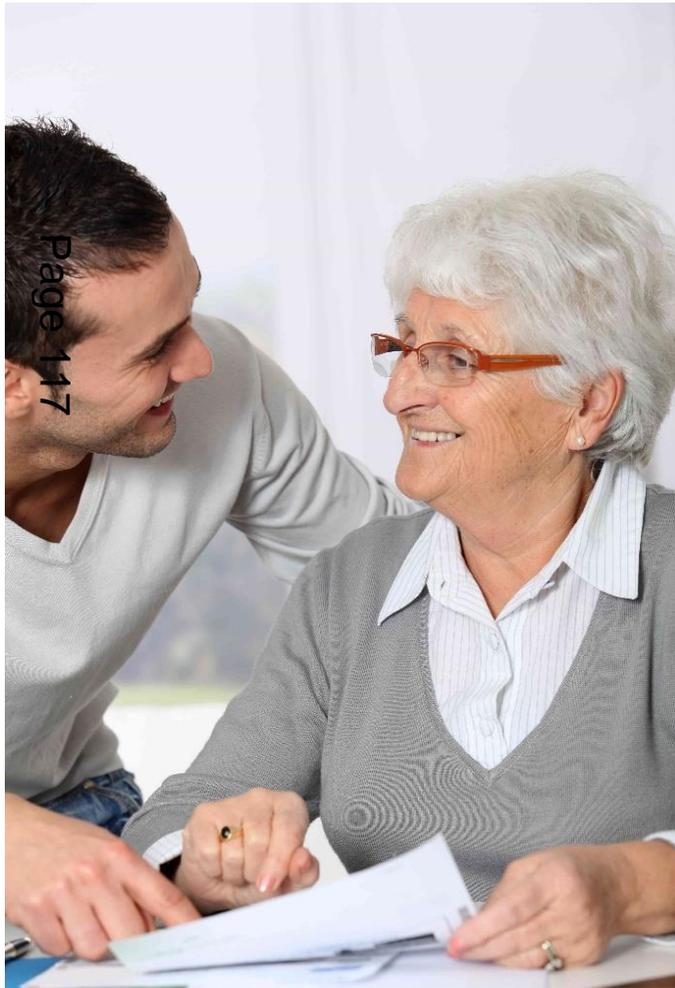
Discharge the council's statutory duties as contained in Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996, as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002, Civil Partnership Act 2004, Housing and Regeneration Act 2008, Localism Act 2011 and the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017.

The aims of this policy are to:

- Ensure we allocate homes appropriately and fairly to those in need;
- Ensure that the allocations and assessment policy is transparent, simple, and easy to understand for all;
- Offer as much choice as possible to customers, to create genuine customer choice and empowerment;
- Help increase the housing options for homelessness applicants;
- Prioritise households that have been assessed to be in most need and to those who make a positive contribution to our community;
- Ensure we make best use of local housing stock;
- To reduce the time properties are empty between lettings;
- Create strong, mixed and sustainable communities, and;
- Set out our approach to eligibility for and qualification to the council's housing register.



1.0 Allocations policy overview (continued)



1.3 Links to the council's corporate aims

This policy supports the council's corporate priorities of providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need; and building strong and vibrant communities. Our corporate priorities are set out in the [Corporate Plan 2020 - 2025](#).

1.4 Equality and diversity

All applicants will be invited to provide details of ethnic origin, sexuality, disability and other equalities information. Provision of this information will not be obligatory or a requirement for acceptance of an application. Such information however will help the Council monitor the number and types of applicants with protected characteristics seeking housing and their position under the policy, and therefore applicants will be encouraged to supply the relevant information to be used for this purpose.

Equalities data will be kept and monitored on a regular basis to ensure properties are being allocated fairly. This policy itself will be monitored to ensure it does not operate in ways that discriminate against, or unfairly disadvantage, any particular group.

The Council will seek to ensure that this policy is operated in a manner that is fair to all sections of the community. The information provided will be kept confidential and treated with respect at all times.

1.5 Policy Statement(s)

- Applicants will need to meet eligibility and any applicable qualification requirements in order to be active on the housing register (see **2.0**).
- We will administer the housing register and allocate homes by adhering to a fair and transparent process (see **3.0**).
- Points will be awarded to applicants based on their housing need and priority group status (see **4.0**).
- We will offer additional priority to applicants who fit specialist criteria (see **5.0**).
- There are a number of exemptions and exceptions to the guidelines laid out in this policy (see **6.0**).

2.0 Eligibility and Qualification

2.0 Eligibility and Qualification

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

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

- They are subject to immigration control (unless covered under the exceptions stated at section 160ZA(2) of the Housing Act 1996).
- They are prescribed as being 'persons from abroad' other than a person subject to immigration control as defined by regulations made under section 160ZA(4) of the Housing Act 1996.
- If you have any doubts as to whether or not you are "eligible" to apply join the register please do not hesitate to contact us for advice and guidance. More information is available via the [FAQ document](#).
- Where an applicant lacks **capacity**, the housing service will liaise with the relevant appointed representative to ensure that their housing needs are fully assessed and, where appropriate, arrangements are made to meet future accommodation needs. This may include liaison with alternative housing agencies to provide specialist packages of support.

In addition to eligibility, applicants must also meet the criteria outlined at 2.1 to 2.10 in order to **qualify** for the housing register and bid on homes. Eligible but non-qualifying applicants will not receive a sole tenancy under this policy; however, they will be able to enter into a joint tenancy as long as the other applicant is both eligible and qualifying.

The qualifying criteria do not apply to applicants to whom a 'reasonable preference' must be given under the Housing Act 1996 and Regulations made by the Secretary of State.

Reasonable preference categories:

- People who are homeless as defined by the Housing Act 1996, Part 7;
- People who are owed a duty by any local housing authority under section 190(2), 193(2) or 195(2) (or under section 65(2) or 68(2) of the Housing Act 1985), or who are occupying accommodation secured by any such authority under section 192(3);
- People occupying insanitary or overcrowded housing, or who are otherwise living in unsatisfactory conditions;
- People who need to move on medical or welfare grounds (including any grounds relevant to a disability); and
- People who need to move to a particular locality in the district of the Council, where failure to meet that need would cause hardship (to themselves or to others).

2.1 Age

Applicants must be 18 or over, unless age 16 or 17 and are either entitled to a reasonable preference under Part 6 of the Housing Act 1996 or are otherwise considered as part of a high risk property group (see **4.0**).



2.0 Eligibility and Qualification (continued)

2.2 Local Connection

Subject to the exceptions outlined below, applicants must meet the local connection criteria by providing evidence of at least one of the following:

- A 10 year residency within the borough at some point in their lifetime;
- Family connection where an immediate family member (parents, children, siblings) who are over the age of 18 and are resident within the borough for 10 years consecutively, immediately preceding the date of application and are still resident at point of allocation;
- Currently in permanent employment within the borough boundary, consisting of 16 hours a week or more, and which has been continuous for the last 24 months. Applicants that are home working must provide evidence that their main workplace is in based in Dacorum. The employment must be based on actual place of work and not based on where the head/ regional office is based.
- Additional local connection criteria apply to certain villages within the borough; applicants will need to meet criteria above for the specific village and applicants with a connection to the specified village are given priority at the short listing stage (see 5.2). There are, however, a number of circumstances which mean that an applicant may not need to meet the local connection criteria in order to qualify.

These are as follows:

- Current council or housing association resident living within the borough;
- Applicants for sheltered housing aged 60 and over or between 50 – 59 when there is a medical or welfare need, recognised by the internal Housing Panel;
- Members of the armed forces where the application is made within five years of discharge (includes bereaved spouses and civil partners leaving service family accommodation following the death of their partner);
- Existing social housing tenants seeking to transfer from another local authority district in England because they work in the district, need to avoid hardship or need to move to take up an offer of work in the area (see below 'Right to Move')
- Where the requirement of a local connection may infringe equality and diversity legislation (e.g. Equality Act 2010) considered on a case-by-case basis by the Housing Panel; or
- Residents living in refuges within the Dacorum area.

2.3 Right to Move

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

Any contracts must be for more than 12 months, consisting of 16 hours or more a week. Voluntary work does not qualify for the Right to Move. We must also be satisfied that the required move is based on applicants' needs, rather than wishes.

Things considered when assessing this include (but are not limited to):

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

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

2.4 Home Ownership

Applicants must not hold a legal or beneficial interest in a property within the UK and/or internationally. This does not apply to supported housing applicants aged 60 or over. However, if a supported housing applicant has sufficient means (including financial interest in a property) to purchase suitable accommodation for their needs in the Dacorum area they may not qualify for an allocation. If exceptional circumstances preclude this from happening they may still be eligible for supported housing. Such cases will be looked at on a case by case basis. An applicant will need to evidence a housing need to move into Supported Housing if they hold a legal interest in a property (see Appendix 1 for how the council allocates points on a housing need).

2.0 Eligibility and Qualification (continued)

2.5 Financial Means

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

- 1 Bedroom/studio Property £40,000
- 2 Bedroom Property £50,000
- 3 Bedroom Property £60,000
- 4 Bedroom Property £60,000

Supported Housing applicants over the age of 60, will not qualify if their capital amount exceeds £400,000.

These income thresholds have been based on a housing affordability model completed by an external consultant.

2.6 Unacceptable Behaviour

Applicants will not qualify where there is evidence that serious action or legal proceedings have successfully been brought against the applicant or any member of their household due to unacceptable behaviour, including breaches of tenancy and misuse of social housing (such as sub-letting), within the two years immediately preceding the date of application.

Applicants with any of the below legal orders will not be considered to qualify and will be unable to access the housing register for a period of one, three or five years (see below). The serious action or legal proceedings include but are not limited to:

- Acceptable Behaviour Agreements (one year exclusion from the register);
- Community Protection Notices (one year);
- Legal Undertakings (three years);
- Anti-Social Behaviour Injunctions (three years);
- Premises Closure Orders (five years); or
- Criminal Behaviour Orders (five years);
- Current Non-molestation order/ Occupation order (one year);
- Current Restraining order (five years).

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

- Have been evicted on the grounds of unacceptable behaviour in the five years immediately preceding the application;
- Have held a demoted tenancy due to unacceptable behaviour in the two years immediately preceding the application;

- Are a person known to be or have been involved with serious unacceptable behaviour within the two years immediately preceding the application, as per the advice of the council's Tenancy Management and Enforcement team or Community Safety team.

Any household can be removed from the register for unacceptable behaviour.

2.7 Rent Arrears

Applicants will not qualify where there is evidence that they or a member of the household has property-related arrears owed to the council (including Council Tax and service charges), a housing association or a private rented sector landlord, unless six months of an agreed repayment plan have been adhered to. This includes both current and former arrears. Applicants will also not qualify if they or any member of their household:

- Have been evicted on the grounds of rent arrears from a council or housing association property in the five years immediately preceding the application; or
- There is an existing notice or a possession order in relation to rent arrears on the property.

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

2.0 Eligibility and Qualification (continued)

2.8 Deliberately Worsened Circumstances

An applicant will not qualify if there is evidence that they have deliberately changed their circumstances in order to qualify to and/or receive additional priority on the housing register.

This may include but is not limited to:

- Homeowners or tenants who have transferred their property or tenancy to another family member within the last five years from the date of application.
- An applicant moving from accommodation that was available for their occupation that was suitable or more suitable for them than the accommodation they have moved into and which it was reasonable for them to continue to occupy.
- Applicants who have disposed of or deprived themselves of assets which reasonably could have been used to secure housing within the last three years from the date of application.

2.9 False, Misleading or Withheld Information

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

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

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

It is an offence (under Section 171, Housing Act 1996), for an applicant to knowingly or recklessly provide the council with information that is materially false or deliberately withhold or misrepresent their housing circumstances.

Applicants who have sourced accommodation via the council that have provided false, misleading or withheld information during the Housing Register process will be subject to eviction proceedings and the council will support other landlords who are seeking to gain possession of accommodation through an applicant providing false or withholding information.

2.10 The Household

As part of the application, applicants will be required to prove they have lived at their current address for a minimum of 12 months immediately before application and give details of all members of their household.

Any non-dependant children (aged 18 or over), or other adults who are considered part of the applicant's household, must have lived with the applicant for a minimum of 12 months and continue to do so. Any changes to the household may affect the level of priority afforded to them under the qualification criteria.

Household members over the age of 18 that can be considered as part of your household:

- Partner
- Child over the age of 18
- Carer (medical evidence and support package will need to be submitted)

Household members over the age of 18 that do not fall into one of the above categories will not be considered for an additional bedroom or awarded lacking bed space points.

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

(Continued on the next page)

2.0 Eligibility and Qualification (continued)

A child is not part of the household if:

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

When two applicants have equal staying contact with children, evidence as to the child's main and principal home is required when assessing bedroom requirements. There is an extreme shortage of housing in Dacorum and it is not possible to provide accommodation where children are not permanently resident and they will not be included if we are not satisfied that they are a permanent member of the household.

Where residence of a dependent child under 18 has been agreed between the parents, by consent or by a Court Order, and the council is being asked to include them as part of an applicant's household, the council will verify their permanent and/or principal home by establishing the following:

- The applicant that receives benefits, such as child benefit/child tax credits; and
- The applicant that arranges and pays for any childcare arrangements; and
- The home address and next of kin which the child's school and GP have registered for them.

If an applicant holds sole responsibility for residency of a child through a court decision, the child is immediately considered part of the household instead of having to wait for a minimum of 6 months.

A baby will be considered a household member from the date of birth, and not during the pregnancy. However, some housing associations will consider an unborn baby as a household member at the point that the mother receives her MATB1 certificate. For this reason, the council will still take a record of the MATB1 and in these cases an applicant may be able to bid for larger housing association properties before the birth.

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

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

All applicants can be subject to a home verification visit or other appropriate investigations by a Housing Needs Officer. The purpose of a visit is to check that all information relating to the applicant's housing application is properly recorded, and that their housing needs have been correctly assessed, and that they are a Qualifying Person and otherwise eligible for an offer.

3.0 Administration of the Housing Register

3.1 Bidding

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

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

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

Therefore, successful applicants will only receive one property offer. If an applicant refuses the offer of accommodation, the housing register application will be suspended for six months. A refusal of a property will only be considered if the applicant can provide evidence of a valid reason, of which the Service Improvement and Projects Team Leader shall be the final arbiter, as to why they cannot accept it. Examples of reasons which are unlikely to be considered valid include (but are not limited to);

- Location, size or layout of property;
- Condition of property; or
- Lack of garden and/or parking facilities (unless required under a medical needs assessment).

Where an applicant can provide evidence to support their refusal, and this is accepted by the Independent Reviewing Officer, they will be able to continue bidding on other properties.

Where an applicant cannot provide evidence to support their refusal of a property, their offer can be cancelled and they may be unable to bid on any future homes for six months. Supported Housing Applicants over the age of 60 who are downsizing from the council or Housing Association property, will be eligible to have three refusal options. After the third refusal, where an applicant cannot provide evidence to support their refusal of a property, their offer can be withdrawn and they may be unable to bid on any future homes for six months.

3.2 Approved Bidding

Applicants who have sensitive cases may still be able to bid themselves, but the council will have the right to review and approve the offer as suitable. This would happen if an offer of accommodation put the applicant or existing tenants at risk or in danger. The council would work with the applicant and potentially with third parties to discuss the reasoning and what alternatives are available.

In some cases applicants that require low level adaptations but may be made active eligible to place bids on the Housing Register. However, not all properties have the attributes or feasibility for adaptations to be completed. In these cases where the property is not suitable for the applicants medical or welfare needs, the council will consider applying approved bidding.



3.0 Administration of the Housing Register (continued)

3.3 Property Adverts

All properties (except supported housing), advertised through Moving with Dacorum will be made live on any given weekday. They will then remain live for a minimum of three days, closing at one minute to midnight on the final day. The first day of advertising will be the day on which an advert goes live, provided it goes live before midday; and will otherwise be the day afterwards.

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

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

Supported Housing applicants can also request a weekly newsletter to be posted to them to assist them in alternative ways of bidding. Please state in your Housing Register application or contact Housing Needs if you would like this service.

3.4 Direct Offers

On some occasions, properties will be allocated through a direct offer. A direct offer means that an applicant will not bid on properties but will receive one offer of suitable accommodation. Direct offers are made by the housing service outside of the choice based lettings system. When making a direct offer, the council is required to consider the suitability of a property for all members of the household. These offers are used as part of our approach to preventing homelessness. Applicants who are given a homelessness status at the point of receiving the main housing duty will receive one direct offer of suitable accommodation. If the direct offer is refused without a valid reason, the council will no longer have a duty to provide the applicant with accommodation. In addition to homeless applicants, direct offers may also be used:

- To match applicants requiring complex adaptations to a suitable property;
- For applicants living in Mother & Baby units;
- In the case of hard-to-let properties (advertised at least twice with no suitable bids);
- For applicants in high-risk priority groups (see **4.0**) where a sensitive letting is required; or
- For individual cases that would usually fall outside of this policy but have an urgent or high risk housing need (these offers can only be approved by the internal Housing Panel).
- Flexi Care applicants;
- Supported Housing applicants who do not have sufficient accessibility to placing bids can request to go on the assisted bidding system. Information surrounding location and scheme preference is taken and applicants will be contacted by the

Housing Needs team when there is a suitable vacant home to ascertain if they want the team to place a bid for them. Applicants will only receive one direct offer of accommodation.

3.5 Tenancies Offered

Home seekers will be offered an introductory tenancy. This usually lasts for 12 months from the start date of the tenancy. Upon successful completion of the introductory tenancy, a secure tenancy will be issued. Transfer applicants that already hold a secure tenancy with the council or a registered provider, will be issued with a secure tenancy. All Supported Housing applicants are issued with a secure tenancy from the date of the signed tenancy agreement.

Joint applicants could be eligible to be offered a joint tenancy. Both applicants will have equal rights to the whole property. Both parties are liable for the rent and any damage that may occur. Applicants are encouraged to research joint tenancies before signing or speak to the Housing Needs team. Joint applications are accepted by those who are married, in a civil partnership or living together as if they were. We do not offer cross generation tenancies.

Applicants that have been offered a council general needs property will be invited to complete a pre tenancy course before signing their tenancy agreement.

3.6 Types of Rent Offered

Social Rents- rents for these properties have been agreed based on a formula set by government.

(Continued on next page)

3.0 Administration of the Housing Register (continued)

This creates a 'formula rent' for each property, which is calculated based on the relative value of the property, local income levels, and the size of the property. An aim of this formula-based approach is to ensure that similar rents are charged for similar social rent properties. The majority of council properties are let on Social Rent.

Affordable Rents- In 2011, the government introduced affordable rent. This permits rents that are inclusive of service charges to be set up to 80% of market rent. Property size, location type and service provision must be taken into account when determining what gross market rent a property might achieve if let in the private rented sector. These properties are still defined as social housing.

Rent Increases- the government announced its intention to set a long term rent deal for both local authority landlords and housing associations. This would permit annual rent increases on both social rent and affordable rent properties of up to CPI plus one percentage point from 2020, for a period of at least five years. (Gov.uk)

More information about council's rent and service charges setting can be found in our [Rents and other charges policy](#)

3.7 Housing Support Provided

The Council has in-house support services:

Tenancy Sustainment- Supporting households from the initial stages of their tenancy to help them understand their roles and responsibilities as a tenant and how to sustain a tenancy and encourage and facilitate their independence, quality of life, health and well-being. All applicants under the age of 25 will automatically be referred to the Tenancy Sustainment team to ensure they have access to support and provide the best platform to sustain their tenancy.

Welfare & Sustainment- Provide support, advice and assistance to households in new or existing tenancies and to those who have been or are at risk of homelessness including applicants that are in temporary accommodation.

If an applicant is housed by the council via a homeless application, the support worker will continue to work with the applicant for a minimum of six months, ensuring a successful transition to their new tenancy.

3.8 Checks and Assessments

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

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

- Proof of identity (Full Birth Certificate or Passport);
- Proof of income and savings;
- Completed income and expenditure form*;
- Proof of residency of children (Child Benefit) (court arrangement);
- Proof of pregnancy (MATB1 Form);

- Confirmation of immigration status and right to work if from abroad;
 - Medical evidence; and
 - Notice of eviction (if relevant).
- * We may use a credit checking agency to verify details and as part of our policy to prevent/detect fraud, share information with other departments within the council and other Housing Providers. By completing the Housing Register declaration and consent form you will be giving your consent for this.

Existing tenants seeking a transfer will also need to make themselves available for a home visit. Applicants can aid this process by ensuring they have accurately reflected their circumstances in their application and by making sure they have all the necessary documents required to evidence their situation. Applicant are able to use the document upload function on their Housing register application via [Moving with Dacorum](#)

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

3.9 Renewal and Removal

It is the responsibility of the applicant to inform us if their circumstances change and to provide us with up to date contact details. Failure to notify the Council of a change of circumstance may result in an offer of a property being withdrawn. Some changes in circumstances will mean that the application will be suspended, this is because it could affect applicant's priority or eligibility for an offer.

(Continued on next page)

3.0 Administration of the Housing Register (continued)

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

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

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

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

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

Applicants can also be removed from the register for other reasons including:

- At their request;
- Where they no longer meet eligibility or qualifying requirements;

- Where they have knowingly provided false, misleading or incomplete information; or
- Where they have accepted an offer of accommodation.

Any applicant who is active on the Housing Register and has not placed a bid in the last 12 months, will be written to. Failure to respond to the letter within 28 days will result in details being removed from the Housing Register.

3.10 Reviews and Appeals

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

Applicants have the right to request a review of decisions under the Housing Act 1996:

- concerning their eligibility; or
- concerning their qualification to the scheme.

Review requests must be made in writing within 21 days of the applicant being notified of the decision. The review will be conducted by the Service Improvement and Projects Team Leader who is not involved in original case assessments.

Applicants have the right to request an appeal of the outcome of review decisions. Any appeal request must be made in writing within 21 days of the applicant being notified of the review decision.

An appeal investigation will be carried out by the Group Manager for Strategic Housing.

3.11 Disclosure of Information and Conflicts of Interest

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

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

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

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

- Housing officers or tenancy sustainment officers;
- Corporate anti-fraud team;
- Occupational health officers;
- Doctors or social services;
- Police or probation services; or
- Other local authorities or housing associations.

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

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

4.0 Points and Additional Priority

All applications are reviewed and assessed by a Housing Needs Officer who will make the decisions in terms of allocating points to each applicant on the housing register. Points awarded are reflective of housing need and are used to bid on a property. Applicants with the highest number of points will be made an offer on the property at the close of bidding (see appendix 1 for a detailed table of points awarded).

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

4.1 People Who Are Homeless

Part 7 of The Housing Act 1996 distinguishes between people who are homeless and owed the main housing duty to have accommodation secured for them by a local authority and those who are homeless with no main housing duty. Applicants who are homeless but are owed either no main housing duty or a limited duty may receive points. Those whom we have a full duty to house will receive a direct offer as stated in section 3.4.

Before receiving the main housing duty decision, applicants will receive assistance to prevent homelessness and to bid through the choice based letting scheme, with points awarded for relevant priority need criteria.

4.2 Insanitary, Overcrowded and Unsatisfactory Housing

As a council, we recognise that tenants in the private rented sector are more likely to be in insanitary or otherwise unsatisfactory dwellings which can lead to potentially harmful health and safety risks.

As a local authority, we use the [Housing Health and Safety Rating System \(HHSRS\)](#), introduced by the Housing Act 2004 to formally score and demonstrate the seriousness of hazards in dwellings.

To address these issues, we will give additional priority to applicants currently in private rented sector accommodation if the property is found to:

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

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

Low:

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

High:

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

Both minor and major disrepair will need to be confirmed by an officer from the Private Sector Housing Team and there must be evidence that the landlord is non-compliant in carrying out the repairs.

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



4.0 Points and Additional Priority (continued)

4.2 Insanitary, Overcrowded and Unsatisfactory Housing (continued)

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

Overcrowding points are not awarded to applicants currently residing in temporary accommodation.

In order to make best use of our available housing stock, we encourage tenants under-occupying their home (see 4.8 bedroom criteria) to downsize to a smaller property, as this is more reflective of their housing need.

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

4.3 Medical and Welfare

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

Points will be awarded based on four categories (Extreme, high, medium or low) and reflect the level

of risk caused by remaining in the current housing (see Appendix 1).

Medical cases are assessed by a Housing Needs Officer and may seek advice from an independent medical advisor who will advise the council when making our final decision.

Applicants need to state how their medical condition will be improved or alleviated by a move to alternative accommodation.

We will also award additional points on welfare grounds, which we define as care and support needs or other social needs that do not require medical care or support e.g. victim of domestic violence. These points are awarded using four categories that are reflective of the level of risk involved in the applicant remaining in their current accommodation. Where appropriate, we may request information from relevant professionals involved in the applicant's case to assess the level of need. All welfare cases are presented to and assessed by the internal housing panel.

4.4 Moving Due to Hardship

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

4.5 Armed Forces

Members of the armed forces who qualify to our housing register will receive additional points if:

- They are serving in the regular forces and are suffering from a serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable to their service;

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

Armed Forces points will only be awarded once. If the applicant is housed by the council but wishes to move again in the future, the additional points will not be awarded again.

4.6 Right to Move

Applicants who meet the 'Right to Move' qualifying criteria (see 2.3) will receive additional points.

4.7 Other Additional Priority Criteria

The council is also committed to recognising a number of other criteria, and in all cases the additional priority will be awarded as points (see Appendix 1). The additional priority criteria are as follows:

- Existing tenants of supported housing accommodation who wish to move from a dispersed property in the community to a supported housing scheme (CAT1 to CAT2 property);
- Existing tenants aged 60 or over in general needs accommodation who wish to move into sheltered accommodation;

(Continued on next page)

4.0 Points and Additional Priority (continued)

4.7 Other Additional Priority Criteria (continued)

- Applicants with a dependant child or children who occupy a flat on the first floor of a building or above which does not have a lift.
- Applicants that express an interest in moving to a Supported Housing property to prevent social isolation, be part of a community or require additional support.

Referrals received from Multi-agency public protection arrangements (MAPPA) panel. One nomination to us per year. All necessary information will need to be provided to us before an offer is made. All MAPPA referrals will be considered at the internal Housing Panel

Additional priority criteria have been established in relation to other high-risk applicants who are hard-to-house and may require sensitive lettings. These applicants include:

- Witness protection cases;
- Applicants moving on from supported housing; or
- Individuals identified through multi-agency groups.

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

4.8 Move on Accommodation for Young People and Care Leavers

Applicants who are ready for settled accommodation after a successful placement can make an application to the Housing Register. Evidence will need to be submitted from the applicant and Support Worker to show that that the applicant is ready to live independently. These cases will be heard at housing panel.

The evidence required but not limited to:

- Up to date rent statement showing no rent arrears
- Tenancy reference confirming young person has had no tenancy breaches as a result of nuisance, anti-social behaviour or other such behaviour that requires enforcement action
- Evidence that young person is ready to move on and able to sustain a tenancy
- Recently updated risk assessment
- Recently updated support plan
- Move on application form

4.9 Applicants involving Domestic Abuse

The definition of Domestic Abuse can be found [here](#):

Domestic Abuse cases through the Housing Register may be presented at the Domestic Abuse Panel. Where appropriate, we may request information from relevant professionals involved in the applicant's case to assess the level of need.

Points are awarded using four categories that are reflective of the level of risk involved in the applicant remaining in their current accommodation.

4.10 Bedroom Criteria

To ensure homes reflect people's housing need, we operate in line with the Government's Code of Guidance 2012 as well as the Dacorum Borough Council [Bedroom Standards](#)

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

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

Exceptions to the bedroom criteria will also be considered if medical evidence is provided to the Housing Panel showing that a member of the household is unable to share a room or requires an additional room for medical equipment.

Prospective adoptive or foster parents will also be considered for exemption at the discretion of the Housing Panel.

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

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

5.0 Further Specific Criteria

5.1 Adapted Properties

Due to the low number of properties available in the borough that are suitable to meet the needs of people who have mobility and physical health conditions, we are committed to making sure that people who need adapted properties are prioritised for them. Applicants will be asked to provide a completed Occupational Therapist (OT) report that states all the recommendations for future housing.

When properties become vacant they are assessed by the adaptations team to determine if the property can be adapted and what level of adaptations can be completed. When completing direct offers we will consider individual needs, area preference and length of time they have been waiting for a property, unfortunately this means we are not able to offer in order of length of time an applicant has been waiting as it depends on the attributes of any available property.

5.2 Village Lettings

When shortlisting for village properties, applicants must meet the Local Connection to the borough (see 2.2). To be considered for an additional village connection, applicants must meet the following criteria:

- A five-year residency within the village at some point in their lifetime;
- Family connection where an immediate family member (parents, children, siblings) who are over the age of 18 and has continuously been a resident within the village for 10 years immediately preceding the date of application;
- Currently in permanent employment within the village boundary, consisting of 16 hours a week or more, and which has been continuous for the last 24 months.
- Villages for which additional priority will be given for a local connection are:
- Aldbury, Bovingdon, Chipperfield, *Flaunden, Flamsted, Great Gaddesden, Gaddesden Row, Kings Langley, Little Gaddesden, Long Marston, Markyate, Northchurch, Potten End, Wilstone and Wigginton.*

5.3 Local Lettings Scheme

We reserve the right to implement local lettings schemes for new developments or to address issues on existing estates. These are used to ensure that communities are sustainable and contain an appropriate mix of households. Local Lettings Schemes may override the Council's normal lettings procedure. Examples include properties that may have criteria based on age or household composition to address specific local issues or may override occupancy level agreements and demand issues to address local management or supply.

The Council, in these circumstances, will ensure that their local lettings policies do not discriminate, directly or indirectly, on equality grounds. Local lettings policies will normally apply to new developments where over 10 affordable homes will be provided.

5.4 Supported Housing and Flexi Care

Supported housing properties are designed for people aged 60 and over. On occasion, the age limit is lowered to 55 and 50 when there has been no interest in a property. However, applicants below 50 years old that would benefit from Supported Housing will be required to demonstrate a medical or welfare need. These applications will be assessed by the internal Housing Panel.

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

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

We can also offer [Flexi Care](#) supported housing services for older people whose needs are beyond the provision available within traditional supported housing. Flexi care is different from other Supported Housing schemes as there is a care team based onsite which provides care packages and can attend emergency situations. Flexi Care offers are always made through a direct offer.

6.0 Exemptions and Exceptions

Lettings that are not treated as allocations under this scheme include:

- Mutual exchanges between tenants of the council or housing associations, whether by Deed of Assignment or by commencement of new tenancies (including those arranged via national schemes such as Homeswapper); Successions of a tenancy following the death of a tenant; Where an introductory tenancy, assured shorthold starter, or probationary tenancy becomes an assured or secure tenancy;
- Where a secure or assured tenancy is granted by court order under Matrimonial Causes Act 1973, Matrimonial and Family Proceedings Act 1984, or Children Act 1989; or
- Where a tenancy is demoted by court order or where a demoted tenancy reverts back to secure tenancy status.

Other exemptions may include (but are not limited to):

- A property allocated to a relative or carer of a tenant who has died without a statutory right to succession being present;
- Changes to a tenancy which do not result in a vacancy (e.g. joint to sole tenancy);

- Where a vacancy is required to enable us to discharge duty to statutorily homeless households;
- The need to re-house an existing tenant temporarily in order to carry out repairs; or
- Any other exceptional circumstances agreed by the Housing Needs Team Leader and Strategic Housing Group Manager.
- A move agreed from a property with adaptations that are no longer required in line with Help to Move Policy.

6.1 Use and Occupation

A use and occupation account can be created when a person is left in occupation following the death or abandonment by the tenant(s).

- These accounts must only be created once the original tenancy has been properly terminated either by a Notice to Quit (NTQ) being served and expired or, in cases where the tenant is deceased, a signed termination form from the Next of Kin (NOK) will suffice.
- The use and occupation provision allows the person left in occupation to stay in the property on a short-term, temporary basis whilst they seek alternative accommodation. During this time, the person left in occupation is expected to pay a property charge which is known as mesne profits. This payment is not and must not be referred to as rent as this can have legal implications that could imply the person has a tenancy giving them rights to the property.

- In circumstances where the tenant has died, and the person left in occupation has no right of Succession, a use and occupation account can be set up. Please refer to Succession Procedure for details regarding eligibility to succeed to a tenancy.

The use and occupation account does not confer any legal rights to the person left in occupation and they have no legal right to remain in the property.

In exceptional circumstances the Assistant Director of Housing has authority to award additional priority to applicants and to amend or dis-apply the qualification criteria. All exceptions such as this will be monitored and reported on to the Corporate Director of Housing and Regeneration.

In the interest of fairness and good administration, such awards, amendments and dis-applications will operate at the sole and absolute discretion of the Assistant Director of Housing and, the Council expects, will be both rare and few in number.

Dacorum Borough Council has the right to change this Housing Allocations Policy at any given time and implement changes immediately.

6.0 Exemptions and Exceptions (continued)

7.0 Data Protection

6.2 Ending your tenancy

To end your tenancy, there are several things that you must do.

- Give 4 weeks' written notice - you can end your tenancy by giving us 4 weeks' written notice that ends on a Monday. You can get a form sent to you by your Tenancy Management Officer.

You need to allow our staff to inspect your property during the 4-week notice period.

- When your tenancy ends, you must clear the inside and outside of your property unless we have agreed for you to keep certain items.
- A key safe will be provided at the property, you will need to place the keys in the key safe by midday on the day of the termination.

Further information on changing your sole tenancy to a joint tenancy and other queries around ending tenancies can be found on the [Changing or ending your tenancy](#) page of our website.

7.1 Data Protection

When an applicant applies for housing, the council will seek only information that they require to assess the applicant's housing need. The council is processing the personal data you provide to comply with its legal obligation, therefore processing is in accordance with Article 6 (1) (c) of General Data Protection Regulation ("GDPR").

If you are providing us with special category personal information (such as details about your health) we will be processing this under Art. 9(2) of GDPR. If you are providing us with criminal conviction personal information we will be processing this under Art.10 of GDPR.

We will use the data you have supplied for the purposes of your housing application. The Privacy Notice for Housing Applications details how the council will use the personal data, who this data will be shared with and how we will store your personal data.

Your personal data will be treated in accordance with the council's GDPR Personal Data Policy, the GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018.

Section 166(4) of the Housing Act 1996 provides:

"The fact that a person is an applicant for an allocation of housing accommodation shall not be divulged (without his consent) to any other member of the public."

Appendix 1

How we allocate points

Priority Category	Criteria within priority categories <i>For all priority categories, applicants will only receive points for meeting one level of criteria.</i>	Points
<p>People who are homeless and haven't received full housing duty under section 193(2) of the Housing Act 1996, Part 7</p> <p>People who have received main housing duty under section 193(2) of the Housing Act 1996, Part 7</p>	<p>All people who are homeless (within the meaning of the Housing Act 1996, Part 7). People with no fixed abode, rough sleepers and sofa surfers.</p>	10
	<p>Temporary Accommodation If you are placed into temporary accommodation, you will be awarded 'temporary accommodation points' however, applicants will be exempt from sharing, overcrowding and flats without a lift points.</p>	10
	<p>The Elms Applicants who are residing at The Elms Hostel who have effectively engaged with support workers, have no licence breaches and no rent arrears at The Elms. Confirmation from The Elms support workers is required before these points are added.</p> <p>Successful Move on accommodation provided by the Elms. Applicants who have moved into 'Move on' accommodation through The Elms, once completed a satisfactory move on assessment. Confirmation from The Elms management is required before these points are added.</p>	5
	<p>People who are owed the full statutory duty by the housing authority under the Housing Act, 1996, Part 7 (as referred to in the Homelessness Reduction Act 2017 as the main housing duty). <i>Note: Only to be given at the point that the duty is awarded and not before even if an applicant is considered likely to receive this.</i></p>	Homelessness Status/ Direct Offer
Condition of private sector property	Major disrepair – the property has a high level hazard assessed using the HHSRS.	50

	<p><i>Note: This needs to be confirmed by a local authority Environmental Health Officer.</i></p> <p>Or</p> <p>Lacking kitchen and/or bathroom facilities.</p>	
	<p>Minor disrepair – the property has a lower level hazard assessed using the HHSRS.</p> <p><i>Note: This needs to be confirmed by a local authority Environmental Health Officer.</i></p>	10
Sharing kitchen and/or bathroom facilities	<p>A household that does not have sole use of kitchen and/or bathroom facilities. At Dacorum Borough Council we consider this to be in cases when applicants are residing in:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A household that is living with family or friends and has resided there for a minimum of 12 months. <p>A household that is residing in a House of multiple occupancy (HMO)</p>	<p>10</p> <p>15</p>
Overcrowding	<p>A household that is overcrowded.</p> <p>At Dacorum Borough Council, we consider overcrowding to occur when an additional person does not have a bed-space, if one bedroom is allocated to each:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Married or co-habiting couple; - Adult aged 18 years or more; - Pair of children aged 0 - 16 years of the same sex; and - Pair of children aged 10 years regardless of sex. <p>Applicants that reside in a bedsit who are overcrowded will receive points in addition to the above.</p>	<p>20</p> <p>(to be given for each additional personal lacking a bed-space if maximum use of available bed-spaces is assumed).</p> <p>5 per lacking bed-space</p>

Under-occupation in Council or Housing Association properties within Dacorum	<p>A household choosing to downsize by one or more bedrooms because they are currently under-occupying.</p> <p>Under-occupation will occur when:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - A bedroom is unoccupied; - The household contains two same-sex children aged 15 or under who occupy separate bedrooms; - The household contains any two children aged 9 or under who occupy separate bedrooms. 	<p>30 points per bedroom if applicant wants to downsize to a general needs property</p> <p>50 points per bedroom if applicant wants to downsize to a Supported Housing property</p>
Medical grounds	<p>Extreme medical needs as awarded by a Medical Advisor- add in very high- 75</p> <p>Very high medical needs as awarded by a Medical Advisor</p> <p>High medical needs as awarded by a Medical Advisor</p> <p>Medium medical needs as awarded by a Medical Advisor</p> <p>Low medical needs as awarded by a Medical Advisor</p>	<p>100</p> <p>75</p> <p>50</p> <p>30</p> <p>10</p>
Welfare grounds	<p>Extreme welfare needs as awarded by the Housing Panel</p> <p>Very high welfare needs as awarded by the Housing Panel</p> <p>High welfare needs as awarded by the Housing Panel</p> <p>Medium welfare needs as awarded by the Housing Panel</p> <p>Low welfare needs as awarded by the Housing Panel</p>	<p>100</p> <p>75</p> <p>50</p> <p>30</p> <p>10</p>
Children in flats	<p>A household with one or more children aged 5 years or under in a flat (first floor or above) where no lift is available.</p> <p>These points can only be awarded when another housing need is established. Applicants will not be made active just on these points.</p>	<p>10</p> <p>(only to be given once, regardless or number of children in household).</p>
Members of the armed forces	<p>People who have:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Formerly served in the regular forces (including those suffering injury, illness or disability attributable to their service); - Ceased entitlement to accommodation provided by the Ministry of Defence following the death of their spouse or civil partner who 	<p>10</p>

	<p>served in the regular forces (whose death was attributable to that service);</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Served in the reserve forces, suffering serious injury, illness or disability which is attributable to their service. 	
Supported housing moves	<p>Existing tenants of sheltered housing in Dacorum who wish to move from Category 1 to a Category 2 accommodation.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>An existing tenant aged 60 or over in general needs bedsit or one bedroom accommodation in Dacorum who wishes to move into sheltered accommodation.</p>	25
Use and Occupation	<p>Applicants that have been awarded points by Housing Panel in cases where they are under 'Use and Occupation' and Dacorum Borough Council require the property back.</p> <p>A Use and Occupation account will be created after the original tenancy has ended, a Notice to Quit has been served and any remaining household members are required to vacate the property.</p>	50
Hardship	<p>Applicants who need to move within the Borough due to hardship as noted by the Housing Panel.</p> <p>Or</p> <p>Applicants who have been awarded the 'right to move'.</p>	10
High risk groups	<p>People from high-risk groups who meet hard-to-house or sensitive lettings criteria, such as (this list is not exhaustive):</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Care leavers; - Witness protection cases; - Move-on from supported housing; or - Individuals identified through multi-agency groups. 	Direct offer or points at the discretion of the Housing Panel.

Management Reasons	Housing management can award points as an additional priority. In rare circumstances that these points will be used, it will need to be agreed by two housing managers.	10-100

Links to other corporate documents

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

- Prevention of Homelessness & Rough Sleeping Strategy
- Tenancy Strategy
- Mutual Exchange Policy
- Help to move Policy
- Rents and other charges Policy
- Lettable standard
- Adaptations Policy
- PRS Enforcement policy

Legislation

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

- Housing Act 1996, Part 6 and 7
- Children Act 2004
- Equality Act 2010
- Localism Act 2011
- Homelessness Reduction Act 2017
- Domestic Abuse Act 2021
- Allocation of accommodation: guidance for local housing authorities in England (June 2012)
- Providing social housing for local people (December 2013)
- Right to Move (March 2015)
- Improving access to social housing for victims of domestic abuse in refuges or other types of temporary accommodation (November 2018)
- Homelessness Code of Guidance for Local Authorities (2018)
- Homeless Suitability of Accommodation Order 2012

Dacorum BC Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Template

Policy / service / decision

Policy: Housing Allocations Policy

Description of what is being impact assessed

What are the aims of the service, proposal, and project? What outcomes do you want to achieve? What are the reasons for the proposal or change? Do you need to reference/consider any related projects?

Stakeholders; Who will be affected? Which protected characteristics is it most relevant to? Consider the public, service users, partners, staff, Members, etc.

It is advisable to involve at least one colleague in the preparation of the assessment, dependent on likely level of impact

- **What is the aim**

In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, each local authority has the right to determine their own Housing Allocations Policy. This allows local authorities to give “reasonable preference” to certain categories of applicants, ensure that properties are allocated in a fair and reasonable manner as well as being able to better manage our stock. The Allocations Policy sets out the rules that Dacorum Borough Council must follow when letting our properties. This also allows us to manage the unrealistic expectations of those applicants who have little or no prospect of being allocated a property. It is a legal requirement that this policy should be reviewed every 4 years to take ensure the current policy evolves with the ever changing climate.

- **Outcomes**

To make best use of our housing stock to house applicants most in need and ensure that access to Dacorum’s social housing is fair, transparent and flexible.

- **What are the reasons for proposal or change**

Changes to Housing Allocations Policy – recent significant change to address demand. Good practice to review policy every four years. Changes has been proposed to help and support applicants most in demand and to increase the uptake of Supported Housing stock.

- **Consider any related projects**

Not applicable.

- **Who will be affected?**

All residents wishing to apply for social housing in Dacorum.

Evidence

What data/information have you used to assess how this policy/service/decision might impact on protected groups?

(Include relevant national/local data, research, monitoring information, service user feedback, complaints, audits, consultations, CIAs from other projects or other local authorities, etc.). You should include such information in a proportionate manner to reflect the level of impact of the policy/service/decision.

The Strategic Housing team have used the following evidence to help support the proposed changes to the policy and assess the impact of the protected groups: complaints and service review requests, public consultations, KPI keys to key targets, village demand data, Microsoft Teams engagement sessions and benchmarking against other local authorities and housing associations. The policy will impact all protected groups and it is vital that the policy can support certain protected group and also ensure that it does not discriminate against them. The opinion of Counsel has been sought, and acted upon, in order to ensure that the changes are fair and comply with the law and is fair and non-discriminatory.

At engagement sessions, one was focused on Age of applicants at the Supported Housing Tenants Forum. Certain proposed changes in the policy could have a positive impact of the demand of Supported Housing and to make it more accessible for applicants over 60. However, this will not prevent applicants under 60 accessing this accommodation if their needs require.

Who have you consulted with to assess possible impact on protected groups? *If you have not consulted other people, please explain why? You should include such information in a proportionate manner to reflect the level of impact of the policy/service/decision.*

We have consulted with the general public (via Dacorum’s social media), Tenants & Leaseholders, staff, stakeholders and partners. This aligns with the government’s ‘Charter for Social Housing Residents’ [social housing white paper](#)

Analysis of impact on protected groups (and others)

The Public Sector Equality Duty requires Dacorum BC to eliminate discrimination, advance equality of opportunity and foster good relations with protected groups. Consider how this policy/service/decision will achieve these aims. Using the table below, detail what considerations and potential impacts against each of these using the evidence that you have collated and your own understanding. Based on this information, make an assessment of the likely outcome, **before** you have implemented any mitigation.

- *The PCs of Marriage and Civil Partnership and Pregnancy and Maternity should be added if their inclusion is relevant for impact assessment.*
- *Use “insert below” menu layout option to insert extra rows where relevant (e.g. extra rows for different impairments within Disability).*

Summary of impact		Negative impact / outcome	Neutral impact / outcome	Positive impact / outcome
Protected group	<i>What do you know? What do people tell you? Summary of data and feedback about service users and the wider community/public. Who uses / will use the service? Who doesn't / can't and why? Feedback/complaints?</i>			
Age	<p>Internet access – older people less likely to be able to apply online.</p> <p>Older people – more likely to be physically disabled (as per AGEUK)</p> <p>Younger people cannot be tenants until they are 18 years old.</p> <p>Older people may be isolated in terms of information as they may not have access to IT or the internet.</p>	☒	☐	☐

	<p>Older people may have vision issues which means they cannot read and write.</p> <p>16 year olds are able to apply for the Housing Register, however, a tenancy cannot be awarded until 18.</p> <p>Supported Housing is designed for 60+, limits the number of applicants that can apply for this type of housing.</p> <p>Applicants under 60 that have over £16k may not be eligible for Supported Housing.</p>			
<p>Disability (physical, intellectual, mental)</p> <p><i>Refer to CIA Guidance Notes and Mental Illness & Learning Disability Guide</i></p>	<p>Applicants might be partially sighted or blind so cannot read paperwork or websites.</p> <p>Deaf people may have difficulty communicating with officers and find the process daunting.</p> <p>Disability may impact on timescales for being rehoused due to lack of suitable property.</p> <p>Some people with a disability or mental health issues may not have been diagnosed, or may need extra support.</p> <p>Some applicants with mental health issues may not have the support worker in place to apply.</p>	<p>⊗</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>

	<p>People with intellectual impairment may not understand the application/allocation process.</p> <p>People that require major adaptations to their homes will receive a direct offer rather than being active and being able to bid.</p> <p>Blind applicants may want the Housing Register bidding process to be accessible via screen reader.</p>			
Gender reassignment	<p>We should refer to people as you/they, gender neutral</p> <p>We could ask people for their preferred pronoun on the application</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Race and ethnicity	<p>Some applicants may have English as a second language</p> <p>Some applicants may wish to live in an area where there are more likely to be other residents of the same ethnicity</p> <p>In some circumstances we may need to discriminate positively in favour of applicants from certain countries.</p>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	<p>Some applicants may wish to live close to a place of worship, or in an area where there are more likely to be other residents who follow the same faith</p> <p>In some circumstances we may need to discriminate positively in favour of applicants from certain countries, who may also be more likely to follow a particular religion.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	<p>Females are more likely to be a single parent than males and therefore more likely to have a housing need for properties with more than one bedroom.</p> <p>For this reason, single males are also less likely to be allocated social housing than females.</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>

	<p>According to Age UK, older women are more likely to be physically disabled than older men, partly because they live longer.</p> <p>Age and sex of children may impact how many bedrooms they are entitled to.</p> <p>Custody orders to determine their primary address.</p> <p>Social normality that children reside with Mother rather than their Father.</p>			
<p>Sexual orientation</p>	<p>Applicants may have concerns about homophobia from staff or other residents.</p> <p>Gender/sexual orientation etc is not a factor.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>
<p>Not protected characteristics but consider other factors, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, loneliness, rurality etc.</p>	<p>Lack of data on our applicants and existing tenants means we cannot always identify protected groups.</p> <p>Language should always meet plain English standards and be gender neutral – e.g. ‘parent’ rather than mother/father.</p> <p>Some applicants may not wish to live in an area where there are more likely to be incidents of hate crime/asb or there is a perception that this is the case.</p> <p>Victims of domestic abuse may have cases reviewed and be allowed to apply for housing when they would not otherwise qualify.</p> <p>Low income families, affected by high rents either in private rent or affordable rents. They would be deemed adequately housed, they would not be eligible for the Housing Register.</p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input checked="" type="checkbox"/></p>	<p><input type="checkbox"/></p>

Negative impacts / outcomes action plan			
Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative impacts / outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.			
Action taken/to be taken <i>(copy & paste the negative impact / outcome then detail action)</i>	Date	Person responsible	Action complete
<p>Age-</p> <p>Internet access- paper copies of the application can be provided, applicants can be given direct offers, able to bid by phone or text. Applicants can request a home visit if they struggle with completing paperwork online.</p> <p>Older people might be more physically disabled- If applicants have issues with applying or providing information, staff from DBC can help and assist with this. DBC have an adaptations team to ensure that properties offered are suitable for applicant's needs.</p> <p>Younger people cannot be tenants until they are 18 years old- DBC can signpost applicants under 18 to suitable supported accommodation provided by HCC or RPS. Also known as move on accommodation. When applicant is 18, the landlord will work with DBC to house applicant long term.</p> <p>Older people may have vision issues which means they cannot read and write- We will provide paper versions of forms, in alternative language, in Braille, or as voice recording</p>	26.09.21	Paul Hunt	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>Disability (physical, intellectual, mental)</p> <p>Applicants might be partially sighted or blind so cannot read paperwork or websites - We will provide paper versions of forms, in alternative language, in Braille, or as voice recording, staff can complete home visits or applicants can enter council offices. Supported Housing newsletters can be send out in braille.</p> <p>Deaf people may have difficulty communicating with officers and find the process daunting- staff will treat all applicants with the same help and advice. Emails, letters can be composed. If needed an interpreter can assist.</p> <p>Disability may impact on timescales for being rehoused due to lack of suitable property- OT reports are required for applicants that require adaptations, not all properties can be adapted, therefore can wait longer is likely. When properties become void, they are assessed to determine what adaptations are feasible.</p> <p>Some people with a disability or mental health issues may not have been diagnosed, or may need extra support- DBC has a tenancy sustainment team to help support applicants with complex needs & can make referrals to external agencies such as CMHT & ACS.</p> <p>People with intellectual impairment may not understand the application/allocation process- Applicants can have support with the allocation process, this can be provided by assisted bidding, direct offers or requesting staff to place bids for them.</p>	<p>26.9.21</p>	<p>Paul Hunt</p>	<p style="text-align: center;">□</p>

<p>People that require major adaptations to their homes will receive a direct offer rather than being active and being able to bid- as much personal information and preferences are taken and the Housing Needs team try to meet these preferences when allocating a property.</p>			
<p>Gender reassignment</p> <p>Applicants who are or who have children that identify as non binary may or may not be entitled to own bedroom- guidance required from counsel to fairly determine how applications are assessed fairly and in line with legislation.</p>	26.09.21	Paul Hunt	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
<p>Race and ethnicity</p> <p>Some applicants may have English as a second language- application or communication can be provided in different languages or an interpreter can be used.</p> <p>Some applicants may wish to live in an area where there are more likely to be other residents of the same ethnicity In some circumstances we may need to discriminate positively in favour of applicants from certain countries.- applicants who are active on the housing register have a choice to bid for properties in certain areas. Applicants that are on the direct offers list, information and area</p>	26.9.21	Paul Hunt	<input type="checkbox"/>

<p>preferences are taken into account when offering a property. Where area preference cannot be given, the Housing Needs team will make every effort to ensure that it is in the same town.</p>			
<p>Non protected characteristics-</p> <p>Veterans- are given additional priority on the Housing Register in line with legislation.</p> <p>Homeless- applicants that are homeless or at risk of homelessness can be awarded additional points. Homeless applications are taken from the Homeless Prevention team and are assessed in line with legislation and the homeless code of guidance. If a main housing duty is accepted, applicants are placed on the direct offers list.</p>			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
			<input type="checkbox"/>
<p>If negative impacts / outcomes remain, please provide an explanation below.</p>			

Completed by (all involved in CIA)	Paul Hunt, Sue Prowse, Cybele Fernandes
Date	
Signed off by (<i>AD from different Directorate if being presented to CMT / Cabinet</i>)	
Date	
Entered onto CIA database - date	
To be reviewed by (officer name)	
Review date	



Report for:	Cabinet
Date of meeting:	19 October 2021
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	
Contact:	Councillor Margaret Griffiths, Portfolio Holder for Housing Author/Responsible Officer – Natasha Beresford, Strategic Housing Group Manager
Purpose of report:	1. To inform members of the revisions to the Housing Allocations Policy and provide the opportunity for members to offer comments.
Recommendations	1. That Cabinet approves the implementation of the new Housing Allocations policy.
Period for post policy/project review	The Policy will be reviewed annually following implementation and upon any legislative change or case law revision.
Corporate objectives:	Providing good quality affordable homes in particular for those most in need Building sustainable communities
Implications:	<u>Financial</u> No identified financial implications for the service through implementation of the new policy.
'Value for money' implications	<u>Value for money</u> The Housing Service & its costs are reviewed annually through a national benchmarking organisation (Housemark). The Council properties let via the Council's Housing Allocations Policy are let in line with the Rent Regulators framework.
Risk implications	The intention of this report is to comply with legislation and therefore avoid the risk of non-compliance.

Community Impact Assessment	Community Impact Assessment carried out as per Appendix 8.
Health and safety Implications	Health & Safety is an identified key risk for the Housing Service and is managed in line with corporate guidelines.
Monitoring Officer/ S.151 Officer Comments	<p><u>Deputy Monitoring Officer</u></p> <p>1.The allocation of housing accommodation by local housing authorities (LHAs) is regulated by Part VI of the Housing Act 1996. Further to Section 166A(1) of the Housing Act 1996 (as amended by the Homelessness Act 2002 and the Localism Act 2011) it is a statutory requirement for the council to have a scheme for determining priorities between qualifying persons and as to the procedure to be followed.</p> <p>2.It is good practice to review the schemes regularly to ensure compliance with the law and relevant guidance and that the scheme is addressing housing need effectively in the LHA's area.</p> <p><u>Deputy S151 Officer</u></p> <p>The proposed changes to the housing allocations policy will not have a direct impact on financial Strategy of the HRA.</p>
Consultees:	<p>Mark Gaynor – Corporate Director, Housing and Regeneration</p> <p>Oliver Jackson – Group Manager, Tenants and Leaseholders</p> <p>Layna Warden – Group Manager, Communities</p> <p>Tenant & Leaseholder Committee</p> <p>Cybele Fernandes, Diversity & Inclusion Lead Officer</p> <p>Portfolio Holder Chief Officer Group</p>
Background papers:	<p>Appendix 1 - Housing Allocations Policy 2017</p> <p>Appendix 2 – TLC Presentation November 2020</p> <p>Appendix 2a – Housing Allocations Policy TLC report</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Member Development presentation December 2020</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Consultation results (survey)</p>

	<p>Appendix 5 – Herts LA income thresholds and Local connection</p> <p>Appendix 6 – Village Connection data</p> <p>Appendix 7 – New Draft Housing Allocations Policy</p> <p>Appendix 8 – Equalities Impact Assessment</p>
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	TLC – Tenant and Leaseholder Committee

1.0 Introduction

1.0.1 The Council’s current Housing Allocations policy was reviewed In November 2017 and adopted in April 2018 following Cabinet approval. There were minor amendments made to the policy by way of Portfolio Holder decision since adoption and the policy was last updated in February 2021. A copy of the current Housing Allocations Policy is at Appendix 1.

1.0.2 Local authorities are required to have a defined housing allocations scheme in line with the Housing Act 1996, Part 6 (Allocations). A housing authority allocates accommodation when it:

- selects a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of accommodation held by that authority;
- nominates a person to be a secure or introductory tenant of accommodation held by another housing authority;
- nominates a person to be an assured tenant of accommodation held by a Private Registered Provider.

The Act provides detailed explanation of the rules and exceptions governing the allocation of social housing. Local authorities must ensure that their allocations scheme is compliant with the framework, associated legislation and caselaw.

1.0.3 In accordance with the Localism Act 2011, each local authority has the right to determine its own Housing Allocations Policy. This allows local authorities to give “reasonable preference” to certain categories of applicants, ensure that properties are allocated in a fair and reasonable manner as well as enabling better management of stock. The defined policy sets out the rules that the Council must follow when letting properties. This also allows the Council to manage unrealistic expectations of those applicants who have little or no prospect of being allocated a property. It is a legal requirement that the policy is reviewed in the event of legislative and or caselaw change, in absence of such change the policy should be revised every 4 years.

2.0 Reviewing existing policy

- 2.0.1 In reviewing the existing policy, the service has engaged with key stakeholders and customers, regarding key service issues and trends identified during the life of the policy. This has been an extensive process with several opportunities for feedback to be provided.
- 2.0.2 Initial consultation was undertaken with the TLC in November 2020 (Appendix 2 and 2a), followed by a dedicated Member Development session in December 2020 (Appendix 3). This gave the opportunity for an overview of the Allocations Policy framework and discussion of key issues.
- 2.0.3 Internal service engagement was undertaken by the Housing Needs Team Leader through a series of 121 meetings and discussions at the Housing Operations Meeting. This, and the prior sessions with the TLC and Members, helped to inform the survey developed in partnership with the Corporate Communications team.
- 2.0.4 A public consultation was made available via a link on the Council's main Moving with Dacorum website, which was shared with key partners and promoted via social media, this provided a six- week window through February and March 2021 for stakeholders to give their feedback. Results of the survey can be seen at Appendix 4.
- 2.0.5 Following receipt of the survey results, there was final internal consultation via the Housing Senior Management Team in May 2021 proposing key changes that were to be presented to the TLC on 27 May 2021. Thereafter feedback and comments were shaped into the draft Housing Allocations Policy, which was discussed with the Portfolio Holder, Councillor Margaret Griffiths. This led to a further elected member group discussion in July 2021 relating to proposals regarding the local connection criteria, which helped to shape the final policy draft.

3.0 Revised policy development and key changes proposed

- 3.0.1 The following points outline the key areas of change proposed in the new draft policy following extensive engagement.
- 3.0.2 The council retains 1906 supported housing properties, broken down these are 691 dispersed properties in the community such as bungalows and 1215 properties that are within a scheme. The Housing Needs Team have continually experienced challenges in allocating to supported housing properties for a number of reasons, which is primarily due to the stock not lending itself to modern living requirements of the applicants. In addition to this, and in line with the previous policy. a capital threshold of £250,000 was set for applicants in order to be eligible to apply for stock. Applicants owning property or having savings/capital above this value cannot be considered. Elected Members have been consulted and have provided no strong steer in relation to the threshold, however have been clear that letting supported housing stock is a priority. It is proposed to remove the capital threshold, which will enable more households to access social housing and reduce the number of vacancies in the stock.
- 3.0.3 Current Allocation Policy states that local connection should be 10 years residence in Dacorum at any point in an applicant's lifetime or 10 years residence of an immediate family member. In addition, applicants with 16

hours or more permanent employment within the borough boundary for 2 years or more would qualify for local connection. Applicants wishing to live in a village within Dacorum, would need to identify a local connection for 10 years or more to that village. It is proposed that the local connection is not reduced in line with the Homelessness legislation (6 out of last 12 months or 3 out of 5 years) and that it should remain as previously mentioned. In relation to village connection criteria it is proposed that this be reduced to 5 years (to specific village) with a 10 year Dacorum connection. This is to reflect the growing number of allocations being made to applicants without a village connection or less than 10 years.

- 3.0.4 Currently applicants applying to the housing register, must evidence that they have capital/savings below £16,000 and household income of no more than £60,000. The service is experiencing unprecedented demand for social housing, in many cases from households who are able to resolve their housing difficulty through their own means and do not require access to social housing. As a result, it is proposed to introduce tiered income thresholds for applicants joining the register, so as to ensure that social housing is for those households who are unable to access other forms of affordable accommodation. Proposed thresholds are indicated below:

1 bedroom: £40,000; 2 bedroom £50,000 and 3 bedroom + £60,000.

- 3.0.5 The Dacorum Bedroom Standard states that a pair of same sex children up to the age of 16 years old can share a bedroom and a pair of different sex children are entitled to their own bedroom once the eldest child reaches 5 years, in this instance overcrowding points are awarded. This was previously introduced to free up two-bedroom properties, however the change several years on has meant that there is an increased demand for three-bedroom properties which cannot be realised. Following engagement, it was deemed reasonable to propose that a pair of different sex children should be eligible for their own bedroom at the age of 10 years unless a medical need determines otherwise. This proposal may see a reduction in the number of households living in unaffordable accommodation as a result of the bedroom tax and brings the standard in line with Housing Benefit Regulations.

- 3.0.6 Throughout the review process the service has also considered feedback from complaints, MP enquiries and service requests. An observation of the current policy is that several areas are open to interpretation, which can lead to confusion for applicants and increased customer enquiries as a result, which impacts on service delivery and response times. The new draft policy seeks to resolve this by providing an increased level of detail regarding the application and assessment process, plus information regarding other related areas. In addition, there is a further intention that a suite of supporting documentation and detailed process maps will be developed to enable our customers to better self-serve, which is hoped will further reduce response times.

- 3.0.7 As the letting of social housing using the Allocations Policy framework is a statutory function, the service must ensure it is compliant with the legislative framework that underpins the policy. As a result, the new draft policy, which can be viewed at Appendix 7 has been reviewed by external counsel and the Council's own Legal Service prior to presentation to Portfolio Holder Chief Officer Group. The external Barrister has provided comments on the policy

and made minor amendments to wording and key statements, and has confirmed that the document is sufficient to comply with the legislative framework and associated caselaw.

- 3.0.8 The service has liaised with the Diversity and Inclusion Lead Officer to undertake an Equalities Impact Assessment, which can be seen at Appendix 8.

4.0 Conclusion

- 4.0.1 The Strategic Housing Service has completed a full review of the Housing Allocations Policy, which can be seen at Appendix 7. Full consultation has been undertaken with all key stakeholders and the policy is considered to meet the statutory framework.

5.0 Recommendation

- 5.0.1 That Cabinet approves the draft Housing Allocations policy at Appendix 7.

