

## MINUTES

### STRATEGIC PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW & SCRUTINY

12 OCTOBER 2022

**Present:**

**Members:**

**Councillors:** Beauchamp  
Foster  
Harden (Chairman)  
P Hearn  
Riddick  
Rogers (Vice-  
Chairman)  
Stevens  
R Sutton  
Taylor  
Timmis  
Wilkie  
C Wyatt-Lowe

**Officers:**

Emma Walker - Group Manager ECP  
Alex Robinson – Assistant Director Planning  
Richard LeBrun – Assistant Director Neighbourhood Delivery  
Dawn Rhoden – Regulatory Services operations Team Leader  
Emma Cooper - Assistant SPAR Officer  
Clare Dempsey - Financial Planning and Analysis Team Leader  
Hannah Peacock – Head of Transformation  
James Doe - Strategic Director  
Ronan Leydon - Strategic Planning and Regeneration Assistant Team Leader  
Melanie Parr - Climate Change and Sustainability Lead Officer

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

**1** **MINUTES**

The minutes from the last meeting were approved and signed by the Chair.

**2** **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor England.

### **3** DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest

### **4** PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation

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

None

The order of the agenda was changed

### **6** Q1 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

The report was presented by James Doe and Claire Dempsey and it was noted that NHowcutt could not be present. Apologies were noted for the lateness of the report, caused by the timing of the summer break, and it was confirmed that the report had already been noted by Cabinet. It was noted that there was a Q1 pressure of £870,000, £760,000 of which relates to the strategic environment division of the budget, and 96% of this relates to the refuse service. A review is being undertaken on the impact of the current economic uncertainty on the medium-term capital programme and this will be reported back with the Q2 report.

A comment was raised by Cllr Stevens regarding line 1 of Appendix A and it was asked how £12.8m was listed on year to date with nothing listed for the forecast outturn. It was confirmed that there are a number of grants to be received that are yet to be.

### **7** EV STRATEGY APPROVAL

HPeacock began by introducing herself as the Head of Transformation, advising that her role includes oversight of project management across the organisation, including the delivery of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Programme. HPeacock confirmed that she would be presenting the draft of the Electrical Vehicle Strategy, noting that the report requests that the Committee notes the comment of the draft strategy.

Cllr Beauchamp commented that one option was to use lampposts as electrical charging points and asked who would pay for this to be set up given that street lights are low powered. Cllr Beauchamp also asked if there should be some data on centralised charging zones. Cllr Beauchamp stated that charging zones would likely become areas of contention between residents. MParr confirmed that lampposts are not listed as the way forward as the majority of lampposts in the area are owned by HCC, and therefore DBC are moving forward with their own strategy. On charging on petrol forecourts, MParr confirmed that the first rapid EV forecourt opened in November last year and the Committee were referred to the charging hierarchy in the report, noting that the focus is encouraging first driveways followed by on-street, destination regular and then occasional. MParr stated that the industry still needs to

provide forecourt areas, though this would need to be on the understanding that these areas be on motorways or A roads and are charged more. Regarding areas of contention, MParr acknowledged that this will be a challenge and will be addressed when they look at more on-street charging. MParr noted that they expect to have 30,000 EVs in Dacorum by 2030 and they are therefore looking at charging points in council-owned car parks and are awaiting HCC to put forward their EV strategy, and it is hoped that focusing on areas where there is additional need will help relieve any pressure.

Cllr Stevens thanked officers for the report, noting that there are concerns regarding the lack of an implementation plan. HPeacock agreed, stating that they are in the process of developing an implementation plan as part of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Programme. HPeacock confirmed there are a number of sub-groups of officers who will lead on the implementation of the programme and that it is recognised within the strategy what they can directly influence, such as an EV charging point project. On the EVCP project, HPeacock acknowledged the false start and confirmed that they are working with suppliers, adding that they were limited on what information they could provide to the Committee due to commercial sensitivity. HPeacock confirmed that they hope to provide timescales to members as soon as possible, though they are broadly working towards the timescales provided in the document.

Cllr Stevens noted that they have identified operators in the past and asked if they are still talking to them. MParr confirmed that they could not comment on this. MParr advised that they were previously let down by a supplier and that they are happy with the 2 new suppliers they are working with, who they will formally announce soon. MParr acknowledged that the level of charging infrastructure in the borough is poor, though they will move from the bottom 20% of the national league table to the top 20% by the end of the financial year.

Cllr Rogers commended the report. Cllr Rogers asked where the power will come from given that they are potentially facing power outages. MParr confirmed that they are looking at creating more renewable energy within the borough and they are only working with suppliers who use 100% renewable energy. MParr added that the uptake used in the strategy is based on the Department of Transport's official modelling and that they hope more renewable energy will be brought in to address the national need.

Cllr Rogers queried if they should be considering running fuel stations for electricity and how much rapid charging points would cost. Cllr Rogers stated that if private investors are providing these then they may not be incentivised enough to invest the amount required to convert local petrol stations into EV charging points. MParr advised that triple charging can take the pressure off the National Grid, adding that slower charging is better for both the car and environmental resources. MParr stated that if there is land that is council owned where they can have a commercial contract with suppliers then this can happen, and the project they are working on to increase charging points in Dacorum is currently happening at low to no cost given the amount that suppliers will be putting in themselves. The only way for there to be a cost would be for certain car parks where it's deemed that they should have charge points in but are not identified as commercially viable.

Cllr Rogers asked if they would have Shell running charge points. MParr confirmed that they have invested in Ubitricity. A comment was raised that this is a different form of public sector development.

Cllr Taylor commented that he has a plug-in hybrid car that he has used for 6 years, which he mostly charges at home, and is also a member of HCC Highways and Transport Cabinet Panel. Cllr Taylor stated that the same conversation is happening at the Panel and that they don't want to put chargers on the roadside, though they are starting to rethink this position. Cllr Taylor remarked that he was hoping for more from the strategy, stating that they need to put in a strategy to put charging in wherever people have cars and ensure that every car park has 1-2 charging points. Cllr Taylor stated that he would like the strategy to set out how they reach this point and he noted the barrier to taking up an EV caused by a lack of charging points. Cllr Taylor suggested that every polling district should be guaranteed at least 1 double-charger within 12 months, adding that this will encourage private companies to come in.

Cllr Taylor continued, stating that the strategy needs to set out the medium-term, and he noted that there was no mention of vehicle to grid technology. Cllr Taylor recommended that this be focused on, adding that those against renewable energy generation fail to mention how far battery technology has advanced and they could bridge the evening peak by having batteries charged when there is spare capacity. Cllr Taylor asked that on-street charging be explored to allow vehicle to grid technology and that the car owner is paid to charge their car when there is spare capacity. Cllr Taylor added that if they require vehicle to grid charging on all streets with parking, it would need to be recognised that decent cabling or trunking should be put in when roadworks are being carried out. Cllr Taylor requested that destination parking be considered for all parts of the borough, including all hotels and guesthouses, as this would help make EVs viable.

MParr commented that they want room to be reactive to funding opportunities and technology, and they therefore have different internal documents used for tracking and workload with forward-facing documents to show the overall picture. MParr stated that the aim of the strategy is to show the national policies and is not intended to show exact actions, adding that details on projects can be shared, such as the plan for car parks. On vehicle to grid, MParr advised that the quick advancing of this technology makes this challenging to balance as they need to avoid flooding the borough with technology that has become outdated by the time people start using them. Vehicle to grid technology is not yet mainstream technology and they hope to refresh the strategy with what they can do in light of new technology and funding. On road works, MParr confirmed there is a project within the borough that she would like to look at putting charge points when this is happening. On destination charging, MParr agreed with Cllr Taylor's comments, adding that they are working on both direct and indirect actions. Whilst they have direct control of car parks, they don't have direct control over what hotel owners choose to do. Their indirect action is to communicate and MParr stated that there is a constant engagement strategy to work with businesses to help meet the needs of 40% of the borough that doesn't have on-street charging. MParr advised that around 700 publicly available charge points are required within the borough to meet the need, which Dacorum can't provide in full and therefore they need to engage with others. MParr added that they also hope to see workplace car parks making charging points available to the public outside of work hours.

Cllr Taylor stated that he wanted to see the short, medium and long-term included in the strategy, and that he would like to see descriptions of what is on the horizon. For the medium term, this should be to encourage the private sector, and Cllr Taylor noted his concerns for the short term and that they would not hit the target by 2030. Cllr Taylor added that they need to see plans for the short-term and how they will get charging points. MParr advised that the strategy is to be a public-facing document and that plans for costing could be provided separately.

Cllr Harden stated that the focus needs to be on what's within DBC's remit.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe commented on the challenge of rapidly changing technology and asked how much they invest in providing what is required in the short-term. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe also noted the development of solar power cars and asked how quickly they can implement new technology. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe also urged the team to not pursue on-street charging. MParr commented that car clubs could be a more affordable option and could help address the on-street parking issue. Where they are looking to install hubs, MParr stated that they hope the next steps would be to have car clubs at these hubs in the longer-term.

Cllr Stevens commented on hubs, stating that the typical car charge will take around 40 minutes, meaning that the location of the hub needs to cater for someone parking for this length of time or more. MParr advised that a hub established in 2020 was installed by a main junction and has a gym, café and shop. For Dacorum, it would depend on the land available. HPeacock added that it would therefore be most sensible to put charging in the most utilised car parks, which are more likely to be closer to locations that people are travelling to so can leave their car in the car park to charge. HPeacock noted that this could therefore encourage commercial opportunities as well as help increase footfall.

Cllr Stevens asked if they are talking to suppliers about the location of the hub. It was noted that junction 8 has been considered given the volume of traffic coming in, though it was also acknowledged that the centre of town would also be appropriate. It was stated that the issue with junction 8 is a lack of suitable or available land and will therefore come down to planning and investment. Cllr Harden asked if there was a partnership option between the council and landowner. MParr confirmed that they would have to work with landowners and this has been looked at, though they have moved away from that to instead focus on what they can work with, such as council car parks. MParr added that suppliers are keen to look at more of the hubs, adding that the majority of use would be for emergency charging where a full 40-minute charge may not be required.

Cllr Beauchamp referred to Cllr Steven's comments regarding charging in hotel car parks, stating that they now insist that 50% of all new properties provide EV charging points within their parking, which also applies to businesses that offer staff parking. Cllr Beauchamp stated that he would believe this would also apply to hotels and therefore there is this provision in place. Cllr Beauchamp noted the Water Gardens North car park, advising that members of staff or councillors with a permit can use the EV charging point on the top deck, and he asked if this space could be neutralised so it could be used more widely. MParr advised that they are looking to remove these types of charging point as they do not function correctly. These points were inherited from HCC and the project will address this issue. Cllr Beauchamp

asked if the spaces will be replaced with something available for all. MParr confirmed that Water Gardens is a valuable car park and therefore want to install a number of charging points, adding that they will be putting up signage regarding new charging points and they hope that installation work will be completed quickly.

Cllr Beauchamp commented on Jarman Park and that Tesco have started putting in EV charging points, adding that this would be an ideal location for a hub given its proximity to the M1. It was noted that the space has now been sold to a private developer and is now under the planning application for Lidl.

Cllr Beauchamp asked if the recycling of car batteries has been considered. Cllr Harden queried if this was under the remit of DBC. Cllr Beauchamp advised that you can currently take your car battery to HCC recycling centre. MParr advised that Dacorum is not a waste processor.

Cllr Foster commented on the document and asked that specific suggestions on how the strategy will be achieved be included. Cllr Foster asked where the information regarding 30,000 cars by 2030 comes from. MParr confirmed that external consultants were appointed last year to assist with the strategy and that they used the Department for Transport's uptake curve based on the population size of Dacorum. Cllr Foster queried if it took into account the development of the local plan. HPeacock confirmed they would check this.

Cllr Foster noted that 100 charging points are due to be installed over the next year and asked what the breakdown of this would be. MParr commented on the current car park project, stating that around 80% will be fast charge and 20% will be rapid charging. Quotes have come in from the sites and these will then be sent off for funding application. MParr advised that it will also depend on the lease and that with their supplier it can either be a 15-year or 25-year lease and that this is currently being looked at by the legal team. MParr confirmed that Berkhamsted is included within the car park project.

Cllr Foster commented on street and home charging and asked if they envisaged people using car parks to charge their cars overnight. MParr confirmed that as part of the On-Street and Residential Charge Point Scheme, part of the criteria is that car parks have to be available for free to charge overnight, so residents will be able to do this. MParr noted that this places emphasis on workplace charging and encouraging organisations to allow people to use them. MParr referred to Zap Work and Zap Home, which shows publicly available charge points, and organisations are encouraged to install charge points and also allow them to be used by residents. Cllr Foster stated that they had approached businesses regarding using their car parks at the weekend and that there were issues regarding insurance.

Cllr Foster asked if they are working with supermarkets and other businesses regarding destination charging. MParr confirmed that she has reached out to some supermarkets to ask when they would be putting in charge points but she had received little response. On car clubs, MParr confirmed that there are 2-3 local authorities in Hertfordshire that have already signed an agreement with a car club and that she will look into this once the car park project is complete.

Cllr Wilkie thanked HPeacock and MParr for the report. Cllr Wilkie referred to point 5 in the document that states that the EV strategy does not have any financial

implications in itself and noted that, despite it being a front-facing document, there are residents who are experts.

Cllr Harden noted the report and agreed for it to be passed to Cabinet.

**ACTION:** HPeacock and MParr to check if prediction of 30,000 cars by 2030 includes development of local plan.

## **8 INFRASTRUCTURE FUNDING STATEMENT - DEVELOPER CONTRIBUTIONS UPDATE**

ARobinson presented the report, noting the amount of money collected in the financial year as just under £7.5m with £18.8m overall, and in the same year they collected around £3m in Section 106 funding. ARobinson noted that the report also contains a summary of projects invested in.

Cllr Banks commented that the report contains no reference to outstanding money. It was confirmed that this was not within the report and that the report closely follows the CIL regulations, though there is little outstanding debt. ARobinson confirmed there are a number of developers that are seeking deferred or late payments and that this figure could be provided for the Committee.

**ACTION:** To circulate the outstanding debt figure.

## **9 CHILTERN BEECHWOODS MITIGATION STRATEGY (UPDATE)**

Cllr Harden noted that the item was to specifically look at the two sites within their ownership.

ARobinson presented the report, noting that they would be looking at the production of two management plans for Bunkers Park and Chipperfield Common. ARobinson advised that, in order to release the moratorium, developers need to identify alternative land and that management plans need to be prepared for these. ARobinson also highlighted that the management plans have been developed closely with colleagues, particularly Clean, Safe and Green, and that they are in close consultation with Natural England. Once the management plans are adopted, there should be around a 4,000-unit capacity for new homes. ARobinson added that the lifting of the moratorium will only be partial.

Cllr Sutton commended the report, particularly the plan for Bunkers Park. Cllr Sutton noted that travellers have accessed the site on a number of occasions and asked if they would be ensuring they would not be able to access the site again. ARobinson advised that the management plans have been set up with the input of a number of departments and they will ensure that they do not open up the sites to adverse impacts, including those accessing the sites who shouldn't be. ARobinson stated that they need to focus on a balance between improving accessibility of the site whilst also not weakening its protection.

Cllr Sutton noted that the main issue regarding dog fouling are those bringing multiple dogs to the site and that she was unsure how they would prevent this. ARobinson advised that there is a wider educational piece around this and that they are looking to improve signage and bins. ARobinson agreed that there is a

discussion to be had around the use of enforcement officers in the future. Cllr Banks commented on the consultation around the PSPO regarding dogs and control of dogs, noting that they have been alerted to the issues around professional dog walkers as a concern and that officers are looking at how to restrict the number of dogs per walker. Cllr Banks asked for any specific issues regarding dog fouling to be reported.

Cllr Timmis referred to the development of 4,000 units following the identification of the 2 SANGs and noted that they are existing commons. ARobinson clarified that there are currently 2,500 homes with planning permission or going through the planning system and are on hold due to the moratorium. An upgraded network of sites to SANG standard has to be provided to allow the backlog to be improved, and there will be additional capacity for further development. ARobinson confirmed that the SANGs will allow them to theoretically provide new homes for the borough, though it will not mean they will grant 4,000 units.

Cllr Timmis commented that her understanding was that they would have SANGs so people will not just be using Chiltern Beechwoods, and therefore if a development is brought in, a green space would need to be provided that residents are more likely to use. Cllr Timmis stated that Bunkers Park and Chipperfield Common are existing spaces for people to use and that introducing more housing would mean people are impacting other parts of the environment. ARobinson advised that Bunkers Park and Chipperfield Common have a certain level of accessibility and infrastructure and that the management plans set out how to improve them and make them more inviting spaces for residents. RLeydon added that they are not looking to stop people using Ashridge, though if they can encourage them to use other sites then they can reduce the impact on the site. Cllr Timmis commented that they are turning areas into parks and will therefore have the same impact as they are seeing on Ashridge. Cllr Timmis added that her understanding was that SANGs should be new spaces to balance the impact of a new development. It was confirmed that no additional capacity is currently being added and that they are not proposing changing Bunkers Park or Chipperfield Common.

Cllr Timmis commented that the SANG should be green space that relates to the number of new developments to ensure there is no additional impact on Ashridge and therefore using existing spaces as SANGs means they are not providing anything new for the new development. Cllr Harden clarified that the highlighted spaces are for existing developments and that new homes will require new spaces. ARobinson agreed, explaining that the current homes are in the system and this is the response to the issue regarding Ashridge.

Cllr Harden noted that Natural England want to divert people away from Ashridge and therefore they will be potentially damaging other areas. Cllr Harden queried why Tring Park was not included as a site. ARobinson confirmed that Tring Park is part of the SAC. RLeydon added that Tring Park is a SSSI and that the site is currently improving due to a number of interventions made. Cllr Harden noted that Bunkers Park and Chipperfield Common are not as popular and therefore there is the capacity to allow more visitors. RLeydon agreed, adding that they consider any environmental impacts and will take steps to protect the most important features within these spaces. It was noted that there will be ongoing monitoring with regular reporting on how the management plans are performing and how the site is responding, with the opportunity to make changes in the event of any unintended consequences. It was

also noted that the SANGs are the first of many that will come forward over the next 15-20 years and there will be a pipeline of new sites through growth of sites or the council or landowners bringing forward SANGs.

Cllr Foster commented that once a site is declared as a SANG then any development within 5km could go ahead. ARobinson advised that the initial capacity created will be finite and that they will see demand from developers. The protocol to address this is under development and a range of factors will be considered, such as the nature of proposals, location and how it conforms with local policy, and not everyone will be awarded SANG capacity in the short-term.

ARobinson advised that developments in Hemel Hempstead are more likely to be able to progress sooner, while those further away, particularly those over 9 units, will not progress as this is the threshold where you need to be located within the 5km catchment of the SANG.

Cllr Foster asked if the management plan for Bunkers Park and Chipperfield Common need to be completed before progressing with development. ARobinson confirmed that they need to have the management plan to be agreed and developers need to commit to a programme. The works do not need to be implemented before development commences but they will need a strong prospect that it will be delivered within a reasonable timescale.

In response to a question on whether there was the potential for staged build outs for developments under 10 units, ARobinson stated that they need to recognise there will be a number of developments that will continue to be restricted and will therefore need to work closely with the developers on creative solutions. ARobinson continued that this will be approached on a case-by-case basis to look at location and the number of units.

Cllr Wilkie thanked the team for the report, commenting that her understanding was that they required a mitigation strategy in order to lift the moratorium and that it now appeared that they could identify SANGs to release the backlog of planning applications. Cllr Timmis asked if no development over 9 units would be released as part of the lifting of the moratorium. ARobinson stated that this was not necessarily the case.

Cllr Wilkie acknowledged the SANG criteria, stating that this did not make the site like-for-like with Ashridge and Chiltern Beechwoods and that people would still be drawn to these places. Cllr Wilkie noted her concern regarding the belief that the 2 SANGs would help divert people away from Ashridge and Chiltern Beechwoods.

ARobinson provided an overview of the mitigation strategy, stating that it consists of a number of aspects, of which SANG is one. The majority of the mitigation strategy is around the payments made to the National Trust to mitigate the impact on the woodlands, with SANG then being the second element. ARobinson advised that SANG is not to replicate Ashridge and is instead to offer an alternative to help reduce the visits to Ashridge. SANG will be either delivered through a large community development with a SANG onsite, though these will not come forward in the short-term, and therefore the short-term solution is to identify council-owned land. These sites will provide a solution that has been caught up by the moratorium. ARobinson continued that additional SANG sites will be required in the future, though this will

only deal with larger growth and a solution will be required for smaller units as it will be challenging for these developers to provide their own SANG.

Looking at the thresholds, ARobinson advised that a development of more than 10 units needs to be located within the catchment of a SANG, and Natural England have stated that a floating capacity can be provided for developments of 1-9 units. For these smaller developments, this means that they can proceed in most parts of the borough, and for those over 10 units, they can only be released in and around Hemel Hempstead as they are within the 5km catchment of Bunkers Park and Chipperfield Common.

Cllr Wilkie commented that if any developer tried to appeal to court proceedings then they could confidently say that they have no right to appeal as there is no mitigation strategy. Cllr Wilkie stated that there is still no mitigation strategy, though they have 2 SANGs and will therefore allow applications to go through. ARobinson advised that the umbrella mitigation strategy set out the SAM tariff and that this report was slotting in the SANG items, and once these are both complete then there will be a mitigation strategy in place.

Cllr Stevens referred to the floating SANG capacity and asked if this could be ring-fenced for DBC planning applications. ARobinson confirmed that they could.

Cllr Banks referred to a conversation with a resident who had visited Ashridge and that it was noted that the coffee shop is open again. Cllr Banks asked if Ashridge are not taking the issue seriously then why should they forsake Bunkers Park and Chipperfield Common. It was noted that Ashridge are putting in measures to prevent car parking. Cllr Harden noted the attraction of Ashridge and queried how the council could create a similar woodland. It was noted that they will look at the next round of sites and they may look at acquisition of land or working with other authorities.

The Committee noted the report.

## **10                    WORK PROGRAMME**

It was noted that a meeting would soon take place to review the work programme and that this would be brought back to the next meeting for comment.

There being no further business, the meeting was formally closed at 10:50pm.

## **11                    PSPO ANNUAL REVIEW**

EWalker presented the report and summary of work carried out by district enforcement in relation to PSPO and littering enforcement during the 12-month pilot contract, noting that the purpose of the report was to give recommendations in relation to extending or entering into a longer-term contract. During 2021-22, the council's enforcement team dealt with over 3,000 reported environmental crime issues including 1,587 fly-tipping reports, 1,500 abandoned vehicle reports, and other investigations such as commercial waste issues and illegal disposal through burning. The team is currently made up of 1.83 full-time environmental enforcement officers

and 1 temporary member of staff, which does not allow for patrols for low-level crime such as littering and dog fouling.

Looking at the 12-month pilot, EWalker advised that they were only looking at 10 months of data, and confirmed that 3,159 fixed penalty notices ("FPNs") have been issued, of which 3,149 were issued successfully and the remaining 10 were cancelled at source by District. 2,325 FPNs have been paid and 643 have been cancelled or written off by district enforcement, and 195 remain unpaid. Of the unpaid FPNs, 153 have been progressed through court and the remaining 42 cases are currently progressing through court. All cases have been concluded and all found in favour of the council.

EWalker noted that there have been challenges on representations made on the FPNs served by the company with 414 for representations. 106 have been accepted, with reasons for acceptance including medical representations, such as mental health reasons for behaviour, were under age or there was an officer conduct issue. 308 were declined with the general reason for decline being that they were unaware it was an offence, there were no signs, or there was an invalid complaint regarding conduct. 1 case was referred to DBC and this was declined due to unsubstantiated allegation of harassment with no evidence to prove the case.

District have carried out a number of educational campaigns and have produced an educational package for primary schools, and are now working on a package for lower secondary school age. District have been active in all wards and have engaged with members of the public, they have also worked with the Environmental Awareness Team and took part in the Great British Spring Clean. Some sports fields and pitches have also been targeted. District enforcement have also worked closely with Box Moor Trust who approached the Council for assistance to deal with littering, dog fouling and dog control on their land, resulting in positive feedback from the Trust. Over the coming months, district enforcement plan to hold an educational stall at Berkhamsted Market.

Looking at income share, EWalker confirmed that the Council has received 22% for FPNs, totaling £37,272 over the first 9 months of the contract, and the FPN payment rate is currently 73%. Some partners have been asked for testimonials, and Neighborhood Inspector Jeff Scott has given generally positive feedback, and whilst there have been some concerns raised by some officers regarding a lack of discretion around serving FPNs, he is supportive of the work continuing. Parks and Open Spaces Officer Rob Cassidy has described officers from district enforcement as a 'godsend' with his only negative feedback being that there aren't enough officers. Gail Buckland has stated that she is keen to support the introduction of PSPO enforcement officers within the town centre and Chris Connelly from Clean, Safe and Green has stated that he is seeing District having a positive impact on the issue of littering in the area. Peter Ablett of the Box Moor Trust has stated that he is delighted by the Council's application of officers and the continuing support of

officers, he has also stated that district enforcers are helping ensure a space where respected dog walkers can enjoy their visits.

EWalker confirmed that they raised an issue through their contract management meetings regarding FPNs being incorrectly awarded to some wards. This issue has now been rectified and all figures provided in the report are 100% accurate. EWalker advised that the issue affected a very small number of FPNs.

EWalker advised that the pilot has highlighted areas that require additional restrictions, noting that the National Trust have approached the Council and would like to be considered to be part of the PSPO for dog control, which the team are now looking into. EWalker noted that they also need to consider the processing of juvenile offenders and are producing operational guidance regarding 12- to 17-year-olds. There have been a small number of repeat offenders in this age group and therefore guidance will be produced in line with other councils on how to approach this. There is also a consideration regarding by-laws at Council.

EWalker presented the current options available, noting that the first option would be to not extend the contract. EWalker noted that the size of the team means there is no ability to take on further enforcement work and there is no capacity to take on littering. A lack of enforcement in this area could mean that these rules are not adhered to so will return to higher levels of low-level environmental crime. The second option would be to continue the delivery of the same service in-house, which has been costed at approximately £500,000, a breakdown of which is set out in Appendix 4. EWalker stated that the risk of in-house delivery would be that they don't generate enough income from FPNs to cover costs of delivery and the number of FPNs would need to be doubled. Option 3 would be to continue to offer the contract for external enforcement, which currently is at zero cost to the council and provides a small income. EWalker confirmed that there are no targets set in terms of enforcement action to be taken and there is no intention to introduce this. Based on the current pilot model, a further 48 months would require 4 full-time officers to provide 7-day borough-wide coverage as well as environmental awareness campaigns.

EWalker noted that there has been a significant impact on the legal team and costs are added for cases that are taken to court through the single justice procedure to cover legal services time, and the court will then decide if the guilty party should pay those costs. On risk implications, EWalker confirmed there is a risk for not undertaking enforcement as crime could encourage further crime and disorder. On sustainability, district enforcement aims to be carbon neutral by 2030 and is also looking at intelligence-led patrolling to help reduce mileage. Borough residents are also employed for its local enforcement team and therefore provides social value through employment and training opportunities.

EWalker summarised that providing the service in-house would present a significant financial risk to the council and cause adverse pressure on service delivery standards. Officers therefore recommend that they proceed with option 3 and that the contract with District be extended up to 48 months.

Cllr Beauchamp commented on 2,432 offences occurred in Hemel Hempstead town, noting that this was not surprising given the focus of the work was on this area, and stated that if they decide to proceed with option 3 then more officers will be required. It was noted that there are currently 4 enforcement officers with 1 team leader and it's a cost neutral contract so they would need to approach them on providing further officers. EWalker added that if they expand the remit, they would have a stronger case to bring on more officers, though they are a commercial entity and will provide as many officers as they feel will bring in the income they require.

Cllr Beauchamp noted that the main criticism from those served notices is regarding a lack of signage where cycling is not permitted, and this is a particular issue in The Marlowes given the number of entrances. It was noted that signage will soon be updated to fit in with the electric scooter park in the town centre and extra signs have been ordered to cover all entrances. The signs are currently being produced and should be implemented within the coming weeks.

Cllr Beauchamp commented on the 10-metre boundary around the playground in Gadebridge Park, stating that it is difficult for people to understand where 10 metres starts and that it is difficult for dog walkers to control dogs when off the lead and prevent them from entering the 10-metre barrier. It was confirmed that the boundary is 3 metres and that the park was designed to not have fencing around. District enforcement are using their discretion in the event of a dog being off the lead and owners are giving a warning, though signage can be revisited. Cllr Beauchamp noted that very few people visit the northern end of Gadebridge Park and that there would be an option to enforce dogs on leads around the playground and allow them to be off the lead in another area. EWalker advised that this could be looked at as part of the 3-year renewal cycle of the PSPO.

Cllr Beauchamp stated that he believed the PSPOs to be a great asset to the town and that he supported the renewal of the contract.

Cllr Harden queried why some areas could not be adjusted under the 1-year pilot rather than waiting for the 3-year review. EWalker explained that the contract is enforcing the rules made as a council, some of which have been adjusted to include electronic vehicles. Rules can be reviewed at any point in the cycle, though the report is currently looking at enforcement of rules already made. Changing the PSPOs would require public consultation. Cllr Harden asked if they could change the remit of what they want district enforcement to do within the contract before the contract is up for renewal. It was stated that adding items in could change the remit of the contract.

Cllr Foster commented that the work is currently very Hemel Hempstead centric and asked if all primary schools in the borough have received the educational package. It was confirmed that the environmental package has gone to all environmental awareness officers and it would be checked if it has gone to primary schools beyond Hemel Hempstead. It was noted that the team look at all wards and where most complaints take place, and district enforcement will then target certain areas for a set amount of time per month, and leafletting will target areas that the team are focusing on.

Cllr Foster stated that 4 officers was not enough and suggested that they have at least 1 officer per market town. EWalker responded that they need to be realistic regarding the resources and that the contractor also need to cover their costs. It was noted that the team will target busier areas as this is where there is greater footfall. Cllr Foster asked if there would be an option for more officers in the future.

Cllr Harden interjected and asked if councillors had the opportunity to report concerns within a specific ward area, noting that if concerns are raised then there would be a targeted enforcement. It was noted that a complaint would first have to be made. EWalker advised that if officers don't find evidence of an issue then they will not keep returning to the same area, though if they witness patterns then they will focus their resources in a way that will have the most impact. EWalker added that councillors could report any issues and they would endeavor to ensure that they are resolved.

Cllr Foster commented that the objective of the work is to reduce littering though there is no quantity of analysis on whether this is being addressed. It was noted that Clean, Safe and Green do not have the facilities to separate what they collect from littering. Cllr Foster stated that she would expect to see quantitative analysis. RLeBrun stated that it was virtually impossible to show that any one area of enforcement can reduce litter and that litter is not measured. Cllr Foster suggested that they could have looked at the number of people fined before and after enforcement officers were brought in. RLeBrun stated that this would require the same number of people going into the town centres and would not be a scientific approach. Cllr Foster commented that they could look at the effect of targeted advertising. EWalker confirmed that they do communicate prosecution cases for non-payment of FPNs. Cllr Foster stated that this should be advertised at areas such as bus stops. RLeBrun remarked that they need to consider how much money should be spent on telling people not to drop litter, adding that they are looking at better localised targeting.

Cllr Foster noted that the project could not be validated quantitatively, adding that another trial period should be carried out to provide quantitative measurements. It was commented that they would not reach a point where they have this data given that the baseline is further changing. It was noted that there was a higher amount of litter in Q1 when the pilot was introduced and this reduced over Q2 and Q3,

suggesting that the pilot has been successful. It was noted that there may be peaks during larger community events and that this will then drop again, and that it would be difficult to quantify the amount of litter picked.

Cllr Timmis noted her support for the project. Cllr Timmis highlighted the time spent in Watling ward and that it did not have any offences registered, commenting that this seemed unlikely. EWalker advised that the report looks at littering offences caught by district enforcement officers, and that fly-tipping, which is a significant issue in the ward is not covered by the scope of the report. EWalker added that targeted campaigns regarding dog fouling have taken place in Watling ward though they are yet to catch anyone. EWalker commented that patrols will help act as a deterrent. Cllr Timmis stated that it would help to have a bin close to the main areas where dogs are walked. EWalker confirmed that this would be taken back to the team.

Cllr Timmis queried if it would be useful to have leaflets in community centres and if local councillors should be informed when enforcement officers are coming to their area. Cllr Timmis suggested that secondary schools should definitely be targeted given the mess that teenagers can leave behind. EWalker confirmed that the educational package is being produced for secondary schools and agreed that the team could look at more communication. On notifying councillors, EWalker agreed that this could be looked at.

Cllr Banks declared an interest, stating that she is an employee of Grovehill Neighborhood Association and was also employed by Woodhall Farm Community Association. Cllr Banks confirmed that leaflets have been put into all community centers.

RLeBrun agreed that education packs need to go into secondary schools, stating that they initially target primary schools to reach children as early as possible. On communication, RLeBrun noted that some places are starting to advertise the number of FPNs that have been issued in an area, though this can backfire as FPNs can only be issued when someone is caught. Cllr Timmis stated that the focus should be on enforcement officers coming to an area and that they could increase awareness around this. Cllr Banks queried if the alert should be before or after officers have visited an area. Cllr Timmis commented that an alert beforehand would ensure people consider their actions. Cllr Harden stated that they could put up signs noting the number of people prosecuted in a particular area. RLeBrun agreed that this would work in high footfall areas, whereas they could look at Dacorum-wide data for quieter areas.

Cllr Wilkie commended the report. On warning people, Cllr Wilkie commented that people slow down when they are informed there are speed cameras, and therefore warning could be beneficial. Referring to Cllr Foster's comments regarding the purpose of the trial being to test its efficacy, it was acknowledged the difficulty regarding providing this data given the number of variables. EWalker clarified that

this would make it challenging to attribute any one change to any particular issue. Cllr Wilkie commented that, whilst helpful, the testimonials are only anecdotal and she was therefore concerned regarding committing to a further 48 months. Cllr Wilkie confirmed that she was in support of an extension, though she would prefer a 12-month extension to see a year-on-year comparison. EWalker queried what data they would expect from the project. Cllr Wilkie stated that officers should advise them on this.

Cllr Wilkie remarked on the focus on Hemel Hempstead and stated that they would need to be mindful of this when presenting the project to residents as Dacorum-wide.

Looking at the anecdotal evidence from the police, Cllr Wilkie noted that some concerns were raised regarding discretion and asked how this would be addressed should the contract continue.

Cllr Wilkie commented that she broadly supported the scheme, though she was hesitant to recommend it for a further two years given the current data and would rather recommend it for a further 12 months to allow officers to return and provide a year-on-year report.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe commented that the council were taking action following the number of complaints from residents regarding the levels of littering around the town, and that the number of FPNs being issued highlights that they are responding to concerns. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe noted that people protesting tickets becomes headline news and stimulates debate amongst the public, and therefore she did not agree that residents were unaware of the scheme. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe confirmed her full support of the proposal to continue with the scheme providing that it remains on the current terms and they do not incur costs.

Cllr Wilkie responded to Cllr Wyatt-Lowe's comments, noting her support of the scheme, and reiterated that the purpose of the trial is to test its efficacy and that councillors had been informed there was no way to do this. Cllr Wilkie clarified that her comments, adding that they may see more residents unable to pay fines as a result of the cost of living crisis. Cllr Wilkie stated that she would be more confident with a year-on-year review. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe replied that the number of FPNs issued helped demonstrate that there is an issue regarding litter. Cllr Wilkie responded that efficacy would be shown through reducing what they want to reduce and that this could not be proven. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe commented that residents were happy to see the council responding to the issue and Clean, Safe and Green's anecdotal evidence that they are seeing improvements was also noted.

Cllr Banks noted the impact of the cost of living crisis on residents, stating that if people contact district enforcement directly then they can come up with a payment plan. EWalker confirmed there, stating that payment plans have been set up for those struggling to pay.

Cllr Harden referred to the report and challenged there being no reduction for an earlier payment as it is not financially beneficial to the company. Cllr Harden also queried who creates the offence titles and why ethnicity was included within the report and what would be done with this information. On the list of offences, it was noted that this was set up by District and is used by all authorities. Cllr Harden queried the title 'other litter'. RLeBrun advised that this is often used when more than one type of littering offence has occurred.

Cllr Harden encouraged a reduction for early repayment. EWalker stated that bringing this in would mean they would be unable to attract companies to deliver the service. RLeBrun added that early discounts tend to be offered on higher fines and are not offered on lower fines of £80, therefore councils tend to increase the fine to then allow for an early discount rate. RLeBrun advised that Three Rivers has fines of £150 and therefore the £80 rate would be seen as the discounted rate by others.

On the data regarding ethnicity, EWalker advised that this data is provided to them and that they check for any skewing of data. RLeBrun added that this data is helpful for highly diverse boroughs as certain communities will require different communication methods.

Cllr Rogers declared an interest, noting that he is a market researcher. Cllr Rogers stated that whilst Cllr Wilkie's comments regarding year-on-year comparisons was valid, he noted that there may be a number of variables, such as more littering during a particularly hot summer. Cllr Rogers commented that he would be in favour of a full-year trial to help see trends, adding that the third-party are there to make a profit rather than hit the council's targets. Cllr Rogers recommended that the contract run for 4 years to help provide greater trend analysis. Cllr Wilkie thanked Cllr Rogers for his points, adding that her concern was that the contractor was making money from their residents. Cllr Wilkie noted the focus on Hemel Hempstead and that the large majority of FPNs were regarding cigarettes, which would suggest that all bins require cigarette bins. Cllr Wilkie commented that this project should focus on education and making adjustments, stating that her concern is fining people a day's salary.

Cllr Wilkie queried if the contract had to be extended two years at a time. EWalker confirmed that the contract is 12 months plus an additional 48 months. Cllr Harden commented that the project is targeting the minority of residents who don't feel littering is an offence. Cllr Harden stated that the fine remains high and asked how much they could control the balance between officers issuing warnings rather than fines and issuing fines to help make a profit. EWalker acknowledged the point, noting that the majority of residents will not encounter district enforcers as they don't litter or carry out antisocial behaviour, and that poorly kept areas will attract further environmental crime. EWalker confirmed that they are not looking to make money from residents and that they are addressing the core behaviour of the few for the benefit of the many, and an element of this will be through enforcement. It was noted

that stub-out bins are available and that officers provide stub-out pouches to members of the public.

A comment was raised regarding informing local councillors, stating that this could allow councillors to highlight areas where there are particular issues. A further comment was made regarding the focus on Hemel Hempstead and that this was proportionate given the footfall and where the majority of issues occur. The councillor continued that the issue regarding cigarette butts mainly happens around litter bins and that providing more bins may not address the problem.

Cllr Timmis asked if the focus would continue to be on Hemel Hempstead. Cllr Harden stated that the largest footfall will be Hemel Hempstead town centre. It was noted that the main PSPO for Dacorum is based in Hemel town centre to address further issues. Cllr Harden referred to Cllr Foster's earlier comment and that specific concerns should be highlighted to officers to allow for a review to take place.

Cllr Timmis noted Cllr Wilkie's comments regarding quantifying data from the trial and suggested that the evidence of success be measured by 10-month periods. If there is a reduction in the number of prosecutions and people stopped then this would suggest that the project is successful. Cllr Harden confirmed that they could not influence the 48-month decision given that the contract is based on a 12-month pilot plus 48 months.

Cllr Harden noted concerns around the discretion of officers and acknowledged that this had been addressed. Regarding there being no evidence of an offence committed, Cllr Harden noted that body cameras will start when interaction occurs and that this will be based on the officer's word. On there being no right to clear litter before charge, Cllr Harden stated that no charge should be given if the litter is cleared up. On removal of litter, Cllr Harden stated that he was unsure if the officer or person had picked up the litter at all during the process. Cllr Harden also noted impact on the charitable sector due to the support of individuals due to the loss of funds by extortionate penalty. RLeBrun advised that the legislation regarding litter is that it is left on the ground and there is no guidance that if they pick it up then you don't have to issue a fine as the offence is committed when the person walks away. With regards to evidence, RLeBrun agreed that they are reliant on the officer's word, stating that they have to be able to rely on the evidence provided. RLeBrun confirmed that there is guidance around dealing with vulnerable people and that this is always taken into consideration. Operational guidance will help improve the service and address any particular concerns. RLeBrun advised that people are treated consistently and that officers are performing a role that is unlikely to receive a positive reaction.

RLeBrun commented that each piece of litter has to be cleared up at the public's expense, and by fining those responsible, it is targeting those who are causing everyone else to pay money and diverting this money away from other services.

RLeBrun acknowledged that the fine may seem harsh, but that fines wouldn't be issued if people don't litter.

Cllr Harden thanked officers for their report and responses.

The Committee agreed with the officers' recommendation to extend the contract.

**12                    SUPPLEMENT - PSPO ANNUAL REVIEW**

The Meeting ended at 10.50 pm