



Strategic Planning & Environment

Overview & Scrutiny

Agenda

TUESDAY 8 NOVEMBER 2022 AT 7.30 PM

Conference Room 1 - The Forum

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

Membership

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

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

AGENDA

- 1. MINUTES** (Pages 3 - 19)
To agree the minutes of the previous meeting.
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**
To receive any declarations of interest.
- 4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**
- 5. ACTIONS FROM THE LAST MEETING** (Page 20)
- 6. CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN RELATION TO CALL-IN**

None

7. **Q2 - PLANNING, DEVELOPMENT AND REGENERATION PERFORMANCE REPORT** (Pages 21 - 31)
8. **COMPLAINTS POLICY** (Pages 32 - 47)
9. **GREEN WASTE SUBSCRIPTION** (Pages 48 - 82)
10. **WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 83 - 86)

MINUTES

Dacorum Borough Council

Strategic Planning and Environment Wednesday 12 Oct 2022

Councillors: (13)

Neil Harden (Chair)
Mark Rogers (Vice-Chair)
Jane Timmis
Nigel Taylor
Colette Wyatt-Lowe
Anne Foster
Garrick Stevens
Adrian England
Penny Hearn
Stewart Riddick
Rob Beauchamp
Sheron Wilkie
Julie Banks

Officers: (10)

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

SPE//22 MINUTES

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

SPE/0/22 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies for absence were received from Councillor England

SPE/0/22 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

SPE/0/22 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

**SPE/0/22 CONSIDERATION OF ANY MATTER REFERRED TO THE COMMITTEE IN
RELATION TO A CALL-IN**

The order of agenda items was changed.

6 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.

SPE/0/22 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.

SPE/0/22 ELECTRIC VEHICLE 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.

SPE/0/22 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.

SPE/0/22 CHILTERN BEECHWOOD 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.

SPE/0/22 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.

The meeting finished at: 22:50

Strategic Planning & Environment OSC Action Points - October

Date of meeting	Action point	Responsible officer	Date action completed	Response
12 October 2022	HPeacock and MParr to check if prediction of 30,000 cars by 2030 includes development of local plan	H Peacock		M Parr updated that this is still ongoing 01/11/2022
12 October 2022	To circulate the outstanding debt figure.	A Robinson	31/10/22	LF sent to committee 31/10/22



Strategic Planning and Environment

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Planning, Development and Regeneration Quarter 2 Performance Report 2022-23
Date:	8 November 2022
Report on behalf of:	Cllr Alan Anderson, Portfolio Holder for Place
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Performance Report
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>Back Office Planning System (BOPS)</p> <p>Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC)</p> <p>Planning Performance Agreements (PPA)</p> <p>Reducing Invalid Planning Applications (RIPA)</p> <p>Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL)</p> <p>Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)</p>

Report Author / Responsible Officer

Alex Robinson – Assistant Director for Planning



Alex.Robinson@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228236 (ext. 2208)

Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - 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
-----------------------------	--

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery - Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	All
Purpose of the report:	1. To set out the performance outturn for the service for Quarter 2 of 2022-23.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. That the report is noted.
Period for post policy/project review:	

1. Introduction

1.1 This report presents the performance outturn for the Planning, Development and Regeneration service for the second quarter (July – September) of the business year 2022-23. The full performance report is at Appendix 1.

2. Service Highlights

2.1 The following updates are provided on some of the key activities that have been underway during the last quarter.

2.2 Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation – During Q2 the Council has been working at pace with affected authorities, Natural England and the National Trust to prepare a Mitigation Strategy that will enable the partial lifting of restrictions. Reports have been presented to this Committee in September 2022 and October 2022 with the Council’s Cabinet due to consider the Mitigation Strategy in November 2022.

2.3 Planning Resilience – The Council continues to develop strategies to build resilience across the service to improve both the capacity of the service but also its approach to customers. It is recognised that the service is under considerable pressure and finding it difficult to recruit. As such, other options may need to be considered to address this, including potential enhanced collaboration with partners.

2.4 Supplementary Planning Documents - The statutory consultations for the adoption of both the Paradise Design Code - Draft SPD, and the Employment and Skills - Draft SPD were launched by the Council on Friday 28th October. Residents, businesses and organisations will be able to make comments on these documents for four weeks, until the consultations close on Monday 28th November. All information relating to both consultations is available on the Council’s online consultation portal and the Council’s website, and hard copies of the documents have been made available for members of the public to view at Council offices and libraries across the Borough.

2.5 Proptech Engagement Fund – In 2021, the Council was awarded a grant from the Government to trial new digital engagement technology. The ‘Shaping the Future of Two Waters’ consultation took place between April and June 2022 and received over 980 contributions from more than 400 individuals. The final report summarising the processes and outcomes of the consultation has been published on the Council’s website; the findings will go on to inform future guidance for the Two Waters Opportunity Area. In addition to this,

the Council has provided separate feedback to the Government in relation to the lessons learnt from the trial, which they will refer to when formulating digital planning reform proposals.

- 2.6 Kings Langley Neighbourhood Plan - The Kings Langley Neighbourhood Plan has completed its independent examination, with the Examiner's final report received on the 15th of August 2022. On the 10th of October 2022, Dacorum Borough Council issued the decision statement for the plan, setting out that we, and the Parish Council, accept all of the main modifications set out in the Examiner's report. The Council is now progressing towards the referendum, which will determine whether the Kings Langley Neighbourhood Plan should be adopted. Voting will take place on the 17th November 2022, between the hours of 7am and 10pm.
- 2.7 Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) and s.106 - £733,991 of CIL has been collected this quarter. £67,516 of the neighbourhood proportion of CIL has been allocated to projects this quarter. This includes £25,000 towards towpath improvements along the Grand Union Canal, £1,050 for the garden at Warners End Community Centre, £30,000 towards a connecting footpath along the A4251, £2,806 for a seating area at Grovehill Neighbourhood Centre and £8,000 towards public realm improvements around Chaulden neighbourhood centre. S106 funds allocated to projects this quarter include £15,000 towards wayfinding feature posts along the Buncefield Lane Quietway – a project being overseen by the County Council, £13,010 to Tring Town Council towards a new community centre feasibility study and £10,000 towards the Hemel Hempstead Bike Hire and e-Scooter project.
- 2.8 Hemel Hempstead Bike Hire and e-Scooter Feasibility Study – The Council has commissioned a feasibility study to look at whether a funded scheme providing electric bikes and e-scooters could work in Hemel Hempstead. The study is expected to be complete by December 2022.

3. Review of Performance

- 3.1 The performance report at Appendix 1 shows a total of 17 indicators, twelve of which are performance measures with the remainder setting out other metrics for Q2. Of the twelve performance measures three are green, one is at amber and eight are at red for this quarter.

Income

- 3.2 Planning fees income (FIN 16) is currently 6.9% behind target at the end of Q2 at £728,751 compared to a target of £782,985.
- 3.3 Search fees against profiled budget (FIN17) are also down in Q2 by 11.7% at £102,012, compared to £115,500 in the previous quarter. The average time taken to process local searches (LC04) has improved to 8.89 days, down from 9.02 days in the previous quarter. This is below the target of ten days and therefore is at green for Q2.
- 3.4 Trends in both planning and land charges income continue to be monitored closely as activity here has a strong correlation to the local and national economic climate. Data aggregated from other Councils suggest that activity is reducing and this could be an indication of wider economic uncertainties.

Development Management Performance

- 3.5 The number of planning applications received in the quarter increased to 736 compared to the 606 applications received in the previous quarter (DMP02). However, this represents a 10% drop from the same quarter last year. It should also be noted that a high proportion of these applications are householder, tree

works and other minor applications. The lack of applications for new homes is most likely linked to the SAC restrictions that were announced during quarter one but also reflects the national picture.

- 3.6 The total number of planning refusals (DMP03) sat at 33% in Q2. This figure has fallen from the 58.5% figure reported in Q1 one and is showing as green. However, the Council needs to be aware of the relatively high figures in previous months and the resource impact this will have for the Council as it defends these appeals.
- 3.7 The percentage of major applications determined in 13 weeks (DMP04) has fallen to 25% which is significantly below last month's performance of 66.7% and below the target of 60%. All cases were complex and developers were not willing to enter into extensions of time. The percentage of 'minor' applications due to be determined within the eight week period (DMP05) has dropped to 63%. This is reduction in performance from 67% rate in the last quarter and still under the 70% target.
- 3.8 The slippage in performance has been caused by the sustained vacancy levels across the service and the diversion of resources to lift the moratorium. As with major applications it must also be pointed out that the figures reflect the inability of the Council to grant planning applications for new homes brought about by the recreation pressures affecting the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation. It is hoped that with the publication of the Mitigation Strategy for Cabinet (15 November 2022) will ease the situation and this indicator will improve.
- 3.9 Performance in the percentage of 'other' applications determined within eight weeks (DPM06) remains at green (at 76.4%) and is up from the previous period (71.6%). This category includes the smallest scale cases such as house extensions and other domestic development, where the service has put in place fast track arrangements for processing. The target remains at 70%. It should be noted that performance in this area has deteriorated over the last year (91%) due to staff vacancies.
- 3.10 Performance on the Council's success rate in defending planning appeals in Q2 (DMP30) sits at 69.2% which is down from the 100% achieved in Q1. Four of the dismissed appeals were household applications. However, it was never going to be possible to sustain that level of success. This still represents very good performance whilst the Council continues to face staff vacancies and other pressures.
- 3.11 Performance in the validation of planning applications (DMP08) has increased over the last quarter with 78% of planning applications validated within 4 working days, this is up from 53% in Q1. This is partly due to a decrease in the number of complex applications being received but also reflects newer staff being trained.

Enforcement

- 3.12 The number of priority 1 site visits undertaken in time (PE01) in Q2 was 90% which is below the target of 100%. Although this is reduction from the previous quarter it represents a longer term improvement in performance as measured over the last 12 months.
- 3.13 The number of priority 2 site visits undertaken in time (PE02) in Q2 was 66.6% which is also below the target of 100%. This represents a drop in performance in Q1 where 74% of visits were undertaken in time. For Priority 3 sites due a visit (PE03) in Q2 73.6% of sites were visited in time which is reduction from the quarter's performance of 82% (Q1).
- 3.14 The dip in performance in the last quarter is attributed to reduced capacity over the summer holidays and a much greater focus on closing cases in the period. However, in the last quarter the team closed 23 more cases than were received and reached the 400 live enforcement cases milestone. It is also noted that

Dacorum Council undertakes more enforcement activity than any other Hertfordshire authority. Despite these successes fluctuation in performance does continue to highlight the wider service resilience issues being experienced and the need for the Council to continue to investigate creative solutions to these issues.

4. Options and alternatives considered

4.1 Not applicable.

5. Consultation

5.1 James Doe – Strategic Director (Place)

5.2 Philip Stanley - Interim Head of Development Management and Planning

5.3 Ronan Leydon – Team Leader, Strategic Planning

6. Financial and value for money implications:

Financial

6.1 None arising from decisions on this report though the financial indicators for Planning fees and Local Land Charges report an under recovery of income against target levels.

Value for Money

6.2 None arising from this report.

7. Legal Implications

7.1 None arising from this report.

8. Risk implications:

8.1 None arising from this report. Risks addressed through service level risk register.

9. Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

9.1 Community Impact Assessment - Not applicable for this report.

9.2 Human Rights – There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

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

10.1 None arising from this report.

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

11.1 None arising from this report.

12. Conclusions:

12.1 Not applicable



13. Appendix 1 - Performance Report (attached separately)

Measure Code	Measure Name	This Quarter Actual	This Quarter Target	Last Quarter Actual	Last Quarter Target	-4 Quarters Actual	-4 Quarters Target	DoT	Comments
DMP02	Number of planning applications received	736		606		854			30 Sep 2022 Whilst more applications were received this quarter than last quarter, this represents an approx. 10% fall from the same quarter last year. It should also be noted that a very high % of applications being received are householder, tree, and other applications of a relatively small nature.
DMP03	Percentage of planning application refusals appealed against	33.33%	35.00%	58.54%	35.00%	44.44%	35.00%		Within expected levels.
DMP04	Percentage of major applications determined within 13 weeks (YTD)	25.00%	60.00%	66.67%	60.00%	62.50%	60.00%		Numbers are low which means that each application will have a greater impact on the % figure; however, the reasons behind this disappointing quarterly figure will be investigated further to understand the particular circumstances surrounding this applications and the reasons behind three applications not being determined in time. Certainly this needs to be a measure carefully looked at next time to assess whether this a trend or a one-off.
DMP05	Percentage of minor applications determined within 8 weeks	62.96%	70.00%	67.39%	70.00%	67.54%	70.00%		30 Sep 2022 The fall in performance is reflective of the continuing difficulties of the service in filling staffing vacancies.
DMP06	Percentage of other applications determined within 8 weeks	76.47%	70.00%	71.66%	70.00%	91.97%	70.00%		30 Sep 2022 The significant drop compared to this time last year is reflective of staffing vacancies in the team, but the fact that this area remains above target is testament to the Fast Track structures put in place and the hard work of Officers.

Measure Code	Measure Name	This Quarter Actual	This Quarter Target	Last Quarter Actual	Last Quarter Target	-4 Quarters Actual	-4 Quarters Target	DoT	Comments
DMP07	Percentage of planning applications refused	12.86%	10.00%	11.26%	10.00%	8.77%	10.00%		30 Sep 2022 Slightly above target. This is principally due to the Officers leaving and closing down (by refusing) difficult cases before they left.
DMP08	Percentage of planning applications validated within 4 working days	78%	70%	53%	70%	77%	70%		30 Sep 2022 A great turnaround from the team. This is partly due to a decrease in the number of more complicated planning applications being received, but also reflects the training up of new staff within the team.
DMP30	Appeals dismissed	69.23%	70.00%	100.00%	70.00%	22.22%	70.00%		30 Sep 2022 The 100% appeal dismissed rate could not be continued, but appeal performance in 2022 remains good. Four dismissed appeals were householder applications.
DMP30 (D)	Total number of appeals in period	13		15		9		n/a	
FIN16	Planning Fees ytd actual against profiled budget	£728,751	£782,985	£465,189	£391,493	£753,126	£699,820		30 Sep 2022 Planning Fees are 6.9% under budget at the end of Quarter 2
FIN17	Search Fees ytd actual against profiled budget	£102,012	£115,500	£52,105	£57,750	£127,608	£115,500		30 Sep 2022 Search fees are 11.7% below budget at the end of Quarter 2
LC04	Average time taken to process an official Local Land Charges search	8.89		9.02	10.00	10.13	10.00		30 Sep 2022 Improvement in search turnaround times is reflective of a lower volume of searches in the system
PE01	Priority 1 site visits	90.00%	100.00%	100.00%	100.00%	50.00%	100.00%		A sharp increase in the number of P1 cases.

Measure Code	Measure Name	This Quarter Actual	This Quarter Target	Last Quarter Actual	Last Quarter Target	-4 Quarters Actual	-4 Quarters Target	DoT	Comments
PE02	Priority 2 site visits	66.67%	100.00%	74.07%	100.00%	50.00%	100.00%		A dip in this performance, largely attributable to reduced capacity during the summer holiday period. Nevertheless the Enforcement team leader has been reminded of the importance of hitting this target, not least because it allows the simple cases to be closed down quickly.
PE03	Priority 3 site visits	73.68%	100.00%	82.50%	100.00%	43.93%	100.00%		A dip in this performance, largely attributable to reduced capacity during the summer holiday period. Nevertheless the Enforcement team leader has been reminded of the importance of hitting this target, not least because it allows the simple cases to be closed down quickly.

Strategic Planning and Regeneration

Measure Code	Measure Name	This Quarter Actual	This Quarter Target	Last Quarter Actual	Last Quarter Target	-4 Quarters Actual	-4 Quarters Target	DoT	Comments
SPR05	Number of new homes completed	227		124		209			30 Sep 2022 Data is not provided quarterly
SPR20	Level of CIL receipts			761,081		2,240,328			N/a



STRATEGIC PLANNING & ENVIRONMENT Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Complaints Policy
Date:	21/10/2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Graeme Elliot, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Complaints Policy
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	DBC: Dacorum Borough Council CSU: Customer Service Unit EDI: Equality, Diversity, Inclusion
Report Author / Responsible Officer	
Aidan Wilkie, Strategic Director People and Transformation	
Hannah Peacock, Head of Transformation	
✉ 📞	
Aidan.Wilkie@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228569 (ext. 2569)	
Hannah.peacock@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228037 (ext. 2037)	

Corporate Priorities	Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
Wards affected	All Wards
Purpose of the report:	To update Members on the new Complaints Policy
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	That Members note the report, identify areas for further consideration.
Period for post policy/project review:	

Contents

1 Introduction:	3
2 New Complaints Policy.....	3
3 Implementation	4
4 Options and alternatives considered	5
5 Consultation	5
6 Financial and value for money implications:	5
7 Legal Implications.....	5
8 Risk implications:	5
9 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:	5
10 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety).....	5
11 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)	6
12 Conclusions:	6

1 Introduction:

1.1 One of the key work-streams within Dacorum Borough Council's Transformation Programme has been the development of our Customer Strategy, which was approved by Cabinet in February 2022. The Customer Strategy outlined how we will engage with our customers to review where we have not met customer expectations, where we may be excluding customers and where we have low areas of customer satisfaction. The strategy set out how we will use the findings from this customer engagement to embed customer focus in everything we do and how we do it in order to achieve the overarching vision:

"To put the customer at the centre of our services in order to provide a positive and effective customer experience, and to empower our staff so they can deliver consistent and quality Council services."

1.2 During the development of the Customer Strategy, the project team reviewed the ways the Council engages with our customers. We completed a root-and-branch review of the current complaints process. This review identified several opportunities to improve the complaints workflow, increase communication at key stages of complaints, align the policy to revised Ombudsman guidance, and ensure customer feedback is fed into service improvement activities.

1.3 This review fed into the proposed draft Complaints Policy (Appendix 1). This paper will outline the key changes to the Complaints Policy and the reasoning behind the changes, before setting out how the revised Complaints Policy will be implemented across the organisation.

2 New Complaints Policy

2.1 The new Complaints Policy incorporates changes to:

- Response times
 - The updated response times have been implemented to align to the Housing Ombudsman changes (date of change). The process of a complaint response has been changed. From moment of receipt, the customer will receive an acknowledgement within 5 working days, and receive a Stage One response within 10 working days of receipt (longer in exceptional circumstances, discussed with the customer). If a customer is unhappy with the Stage One response, they have 28 days to respond to DBC requesting a Stage Two response. From moment of receipt for a Stage Two response, the customer will receive such a response within 20 working days (longer in exceptional circumstances, discussed with the customer).
 - Instead of setting out a variety of separate complaint response times for different Ombudsman complaint processes, we have chosen consistency by prioritising the quickest complaint response times as provided by the Housing Ombudsman. The Policy recognises that the Council needs to act quickly to investigate and respond to the customer's complaint.

- Levels of responsibilities for complaint responses
 - The new reporting structure moves responsibility for complaint responses down the corporate hierarchy. The current policy sees Heads of Service and Assistant Directors responding to Stage One and Stage Two complaints respectively. The new policy moves these tasks to Team Leaders (Stage One) and Heads of Service and above (Stage Two). The benefits of this are that staff responding to individual complaints have a closer connection to direct service delivery, and it expands the pool of staff available to provide complaint responses. This will speed up our response times. The Complaints Policy puts trust in Team Leaders across the Council to respond to customers quickly and professionally. This demonstrates corporate behaviours: “We will be honest and act with integrity; we will support each other and work together; we will be accountable to each other to get things done.”

- Customer contact
 - The priority of the new Complaints Policy is providing an effective customer experience that swiftly investigates and resolves the basis of their complaint. The Complaints Policy prioritises talking directly to residents over the phone in the first instance by the relevant officer. In every case, the responsible Team Leader will call the customer to talk directly on the telephone about their issue. If a complaint can be resolved quickly and informally, this should be pursued.

2.2 The customer can challenge a Stage Two response at the Local Government Ombudsman (LGO) or the Housing Ombudsman Service, within 12 months after the customer first complained.

2.3 The previous Stage One complaints process followed a 15 working day target for a response, led by Group Managers. This is considered too slow, and the target has often been missed. If the complainant could demonstrate why the process or outcome of Stage One was unfair, the complaints progressed to Stage Two. This was an independent review, led by an Assistant Director from a different service area, who provided a formal response within 20 working days. Alongside other changes to the Complaints Policy, response times will improve and meet the new 10 day timescale for Stage One responses.

2.4 The Complaints Policy has been simplified. Firstly, it addresses complaints only. Previous versions incorporated compliments and comments, which will now be submitted via our website (subject to the same accessibility requirements). Secondly, we reviewed the Policy from a “plain English” point-of-view, to make it easy for customers to understand the process.

3 Implementation

3.1 Implementation of the new policy will require training for staff across the organisation. This is being designed by the project team and will be disseminated accordingly, prior to the launch of the new policy. Areas include:

- Introductions to the new Complaints officers and their responsibilities

- Demonstrations (in-person, Teams classes, and videos) on the new process for all Team Leads and Heads of Service
- Creating the role of a multi-directorate case owner for Ombudsman responses
- Leaver/starter notifications for Team Leaders and above from the HR service
- Staff-facing documents and processes for reference
- Incorporating new requirements into service plans, workflows, and team responsibilities

3.2 We will report and learn from the complaints received. This feedback will help us improve Council services, and should reduce the number of complaints we receive.

3.3 The launch date for the new policy is Thursday 1st December 2022.

4 Options and alternatives considered

4.1 One option considered was leaving the Complaints Policy unaltered, restricting change to the response times. However, this would put DBC in contradiction to the Housing Ombudsman which could find against the Council.

5 Consultation

5.1 The external project team (Ignite) is implementing the Customer Strategy, utilising their varied experience from other local authorities.

5.2 Key stakeholders at DBC have been consulted, such as the Customer Service Unit, and the new Complaints team within CSU, as well as services which currently receive higher proportion of complaints from residents, such as Property and Place, Development Management, and Waste.

6 Financial and value for money implications:

6.1 The new reporting structure moves responsibility for Stage One responses to team leaders, which will increase speed of response and efficiency of the process. There is an expectation that minor efficiency savings will be realised, which will contribute to wider benefits realisation from implementing the Customer Strategy.

7 Legal Implications

7.1 No Implications

8 Risk implications:

8.1 No implications

9 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

9.1 The EDI officer has been involved in the development of the new Complaints Policy. This has led to new information for customers regarding advocacy support and reasonable adjustments.

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

10.1 No implications

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

11.1 No implications

12 Conclusions:

12.1 The new Complaints Policy will change how complaints to DBC are dealt with. The focus is on the customer and ensuring their experience of interacting with us is positive whilst we investigate their complaint. No matter the result, the customer must feel assured that we have followed a fair, rigorous, and detailed policy (within reasonable timescales) that is consistent with national guidelines. The Complaints Policy empowers officers to contact customers directly to resolve issues informally, as well as setting out in detail how to conduct a formal complaint response.



Complaints Policy & Procedure

December 2022

1. Introduction

- 1.1 We always aim to provide good services, but sometimes things go wrong. This policy explains how you can complain about a service, and how we will make sure we deal with your complaint fairly.

2. Purpose of this policy

- 2.1 The purpose of this policy is to:
- define what a complaint is
 - explain who can make a complaint
 - explain how to make a complaint
 - explain the process we follow when dealing with a complaint, so you know what to expect
- 2.2 In short, we will:
- show understanding about the issues you raise
 - treat all comments and complaints seriously, with an honest and open mind, and do everything we can to deal with them efficiently and effectively
 - be as flexible as we can within the limits of the laws and policies we follow
 - say sorry if something has gone wrong
 - aim to resolve complaints as soon as possible
 - keep you informed about the progress of your complaint
 - respond to all the points that you raise, provide evidence for our decisions and explain them, using simple language and avoiding jargon

3. Complaints Policy

What is a complaint?

- 3.1 We define a complaint as:

‘An expression of dissatisfaction, however made, about the standard of service, actions, or lack of action by the organisation, its own staff, or those acting on its behalf, affecting an individual resident or group of residents’

- 3.2 Examples of complaints that we will deal with under this policy are:

- there has been a delay in providing a service
- we have made a mistake in the way we have provided a service
- we have failed to deliver a service - this could relate to quality, standard or service level
- we have not listened properly
- we have not followed our processes or policies
- we have not met our legal, statutory or regulatory requirements
- we have not delivered against a commitment or promise
- our staff have not been helpful or have not conducted themselves correctly

- 3.3 You can complain about any of Dacorum Borough Council services, whether

they are delivered by our staff, contractors or other organisations employed by us.

- 3.4 It is helpful if you raise your issue with us as soon as possible, to help us to solve your complaint quickly. We will only accept complaints related to issues that happened more than six months ago in exceptional circumstances.

What is not treated as a complaint under this policy

Informal complaints

- 3.5 We encourage our staff to talk to customers and try to resolve problems first so that you do not need to submit a formal complaint.
- 3.6 Often, we can resolve an issue by putting the problem right straight away. We consider these types of cases as informal complaints and will resolve your issue using our established service request processes.
- 3.7 For example, you let us know that our waste collection team has not emptied your bin. If we have missed the bin, we would try to fix this by returning to empty your bin as soon as possible. We would not usually treat this as a formal complaint unless the problem happens repeatedly.

Conduct of a councillor

- 3.8 There is a separate process if you need to complain about the behaviour of local councillors (also called elected Members). This includes borough councillors and parish and town councillors within the borough of Dacorum. The Code of Conduct for Members describes the standard of behaviour expected of councillors. You can find the Code of Conduct and report an issue on our website:

www.dacorum.gov.uk/complaints-about-councillors

Statutory appeals

- 3.9 Some services have a separate appeal process if you think the Council has made the wrong decision. For these services, you should follow the appeals process instead of submitting a complaint. These include:
- **Appeal a Housing Benefit decision.** Our website has details on the procedure for appealing
www.dacorum.gov.uk/benefits-appeal
 - **Appeal a Homelessness decision.** Our website has details on the procedure for appealing

www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/housing/housing-advice-and-options/homeless-or-at-risk

- **Appeal a refusal of planning permission.** Our website has information about the appeals process:

www.dacorum.gov.uk/planning-appeals

- **Appeal a planning enforcement notice.** The government website has details of the appeals process and requirements:

<http://www.gov.uk/appeal-enforcement-notice>

Services not provided by Dacorum Borough Council

3.10 We cannot deal with a complaint about a service that the council does not provide. For example, Hertfordshire County Council is responsible for:

- Maintenance of roads and street lighting
- Adult Social Care provision
- Children's services and education

You can read the Hertfordshire County Council's complaints policy, and find out how to make a complaint on their website:

www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/complaints

Complaints about government legislation or policy

3.11 We will respond to complaints about Dacorum Borough Council policies. We will do our best to explain the policy and the reasons for it. For policy or legislation that is set by central government, we will direct you to your MP for a response.

4. Making a complaint

4.1 The quickest way to complain is by using our online form:

www.dacorum.gov.uk/complaints-form

4.2 If you cannot use our online form, you can call us on 01442 228000.

4.3 If you prefer to write to us, send your complaint to: Dacorum Borough Council, The Forum, Marlowes, Hemel Hempstead, Hertfordshire, HP1 1DN

5. What happens when a complaint is made?

5.1 Our complaints process has two stages.

Stage One - Initial Investigation and response

5.2 If you complain using the online form, we will send you an automatic email to confirm receipt.

5.3 If you complain over the telephone or via letter, we will send you a written acknowledgement within five working days of receipt.

5.4 The Team Leader responsible for your complaint will acknowledge and contact you after reading your complaint, to make sure we understand your concerns and what we could do to put things right. This will be within five days of receipt. If we can agree on a resolution with you at this stage we will close the complaint, subject to the agreed action being taken.

5.5 If we cannot agree on a quick resolution your complaint will be investigated and responded to by the Team Leader within the service responsible.

5.6 **We will make a decision within 10 working days of receiving your complaint.**

5.7 If your stage 1 complaint is complex or requires a lot of investigation, we may need to extend this time limit. If we think we need more time to investigate, we will contact you to discuss and agree on a new date.

5.8 We will reply to you in writing (sent by email if we have your email address) and will clearly explain:

- the stage of the complaint
- the nature of the complaint made
- our decision
- the reasons for our decision
- actions we will take to put things right
- how to escalate the matter to stage two if you are not satisfied with the answer

5.9 If you are dissatisfied with our response when you receive it, you can escalate your complaint to stage two of the process, either by responding to the email we will send you or writing to us within **28 calendar days from receipt of our response.**

Stage Two - Internal Review

- 5.10 If you want to proceed to stage two you must explain why you are not satisfied with our response.
- 5.11 If you cannot demonstrate why the process or outcome at stage one was unfair, incorrect or incomplete we can decide not to proceed to stage two. We will write to you to explain our decision and we will give you details of the ombudsman if you want to take the complaint further. An ombudsman is an independent person, not connected with the council, whose job it is to investigate complaints.
- 5.12 If we do accept your stage two complaint, we will appoint a Head of Service, or another appropriate senior officer, to investigate. This person will work in a different service area from those associated with the complaint. **You will receive a formal response within 20 working days, at which point we will consider the complaint closed.**
- 5.13 If your stage 2 complaint is complex or requires a lot of investigation, we may need to extend this time limit. If we think we need more time to investigate, we will contact you to discuss and agree on a new date.

Escalation to the Ombudsman

- 5.14 Once a complaint has been through the Stage One and Stage Two complaints process, if you are still unhappy with our response, you can choose to contact the relevant Ombudsman. The Ombudsman will accept complaints for up to 12 months after you first complained to us.
- 5.15 **For complaints about our duties as a social landlord**, please contact the Housing Ombudsman. You can visit their website for more information on the process of escalating the complaint:
www.housing-ombudsman.org.uk
- 5.16 **For all other matters**, please contact the Local Government and Social Care Ombudsman. You can visit their website for more information on the process of escalating the complaint:
www.lgo.org.uk

Involving a councillor, MP or another person in a complaint

- 5.17 Sometimes customers ask their local councillor, MP or another person to complain on their behalf. If you do this, we will follow our normal process and respond directly to that person.
- 5.18 If you have raised a complaint with us first and then asked your councillor, MP or someone else to get involved, we will continue to respond to you. We will also provide a response to the councillor MP where they are involved.

6. Unreasonable behaviour towards our staff

- 6.1 We will do our best to resolve complaints and you will be treated with respect throughout the process. We also expect our staff to be treated with respect and we do not accept any form of abuse or intimidation towards staff at any time, including the use of offensive language. Any abuse of staff will be dealt with robustly and the Council may report any incident to the Police or use the tools available to us to prevent further incidents occurring.

7. Reporting and learning from complaints

- 7.1 We are committed to learning from complaints and using complaints information to improve our services. We will look at:
- the type of complaint
 - the complaint outcome
 - the timescales agreed
 - whether timescales were met
 - equality information about complainants

We will then:

- publish (anonymised) a summary of complaints and their outcomes on the Council's website, including:
 - information on the complaint outcomes
 - lessons learnt and what we have done to make sure this doesn't happen again and how we have improved services because of the complaints we have received

8. Data Protection

- 8.1 When you make a complaint, we will log information about your complaint and your name and contact details. To investigate a complaint, certain customer information (like your name, contact details and details of the complaint may be shared with other Council departments so that a response can be given. We may also use this information to improve our services. Information may also be shared with the relevant Ombudsman if they have received a complaint. All personal data will be held securely and retained in line with the relevant

legislation. More information on how we use your information can be found here:

[Retention Guidelines for DBC \(dacorum.gov.uk\)](https://dacorum.gov.uk)

- 8.2 All complaints will be dealt with in line with the UK GDPR and Data Protection Act 2018. The identity of the person making a complaint will only be made known to some or all of the parties stated above in order to consider the complaint.
- 8.3 The council aims to be transparent when responding to complaints but sometimes it is necessary to maintain confidentiality. Information will generally not be provided about third parties in line with the Data Protection Act unless asked to do so by a Regulator or Ombudsman.

9. Equalities and accessibility

- 9.1 We will ensure our complaints process is easily accessible to all customers.

Accessibility

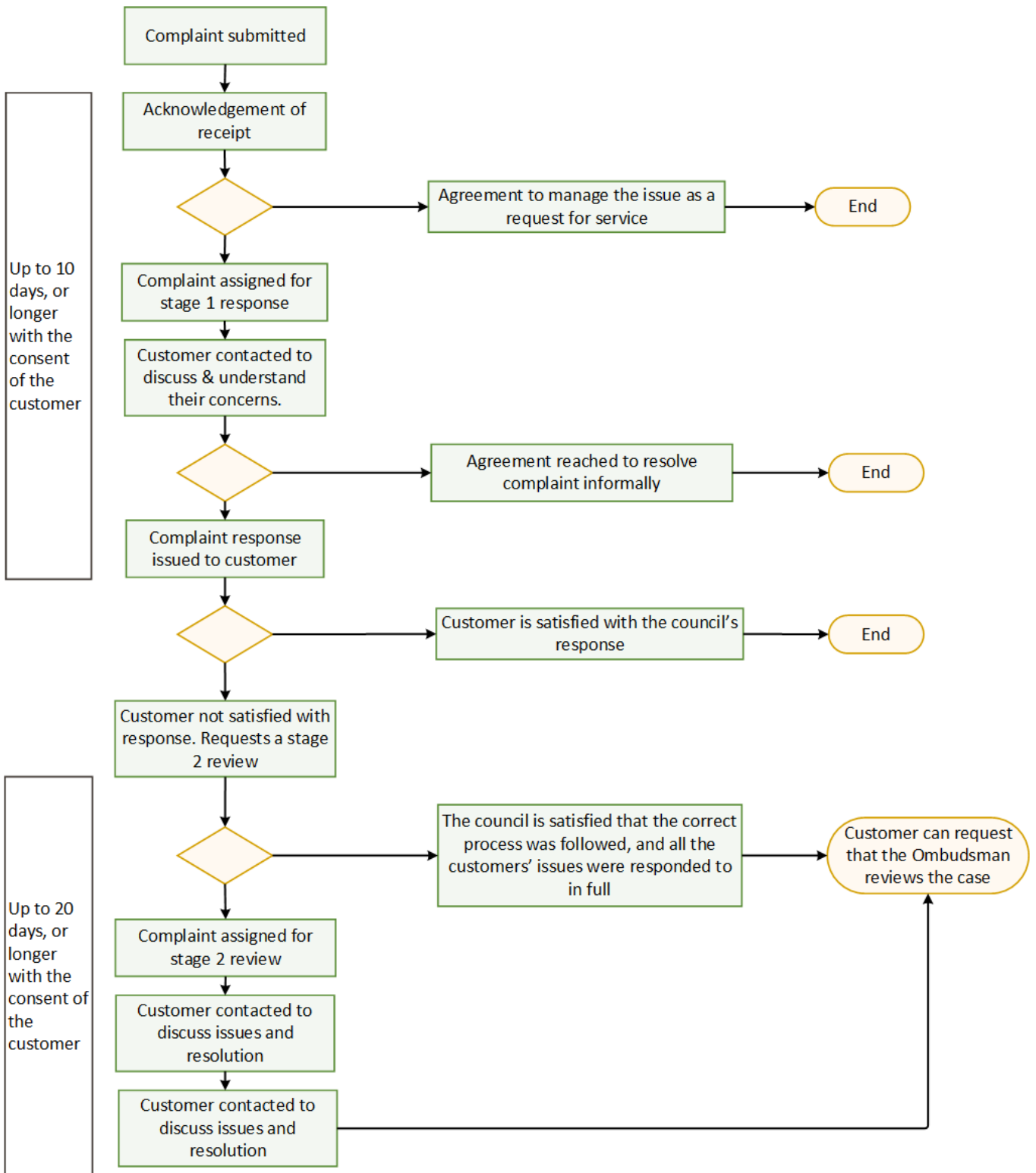
- 9.2 If a customer is unable to access the internet, and therefore cannot view the online version of the Complaints Policy and connected webpages (see list below), the Complaints Officer will share physical copies of the necessary documents with the customer. These will be shared by post or at an appointment.

The connected webpages include:

- Complaints about a councillor
 - Statutory appeals pages (Housing Benefit, Homelessness Decision, Refusal of Planning Permission, Planning Enforcement Notice)
 - Data retention guidelines
 - Hertfordshire County Council complaints
 - Housing Ombudsman
 - Local Government Ombudsman
- 9.3 We are committed to equality and diversity in employment practice and service delivery. We aim to ensure that all our customers are confident of receiving fair treatment and equality of opportunity. This is irrespective of age, disability, gender reassignment, marriage and civil partnership, pregnancy and maternity, sexual orientation, race, sex, and religion or belief.
- 9.4 Our aim is to have an inclusive environment for everyone, identifying and removing barriers in our practices. Completing the Equality Monitoring Form will help us achieve this and will also help us meet our obligations under the Equality Act 2010.

- 9.5 While it is voluntary to disclose this information, it will allow us to identify current and future needs, potential inequalities, including problems with accessing or using services and information.
- 9.6 Your responses will be treated with the utmost confidentiality and will not be included as part of your complaint.

Appendix 1





Spatial Planning and Environment

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Spatial Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Chargeable Garden Waste Service
Date:	8 th November 2022
Report on behalf of:	Cllr Graham Barrett, Portfolio Holder for Environment
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	<p>Appendix 1 – Usage Maps</p> <p>Appendix 2 - High Level Implementation Plan</p> <p>Appendix 3 – Subs Communication Strategy</p> <p>Appendix 4 – Implementation Costs</p> <p>Appendix 5 – Permi-serv process</p> <p>Appendix 6 – Draft Terms and Conditions</p>
Background papers:	N/A
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

<p>Report Author / Responsible Officer</p> <p>Richard Le-Brun, Assistant Director (Neighbourhood Delivery)</p> <p>✉ 📞 Richard.Lebrun@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228355 (ext. 2355)</p>

Corporate Priorities	<p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery</p>
Wards affected	ALL
Purpose of the report:	<p>1. To set out the rationale for the chargeable garden waste proposals for member consideration.</p>
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<p>That the following proposals are noted prior to consideration by Cabinet.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The annual subscription scheme for garden waste collection (2.4.1.4) • The communication plan (2.6.1) • The recommended proposal “B” (3.0)

1, Executive Summary

Council budgets across the country have been under considerable pressure over the past few years, mainly due to austerity measures introduced nationally, but these have been further exacerbated by the effects of the Covid-19 pandemic.

Dacorum Borough Council is therefore continuing to review all its services in order to ensure they are, either provided in the most efficient way possible, or generate income where appropriate, and it is within this context that the garden waste collection service is being reviewed.

In 2019, PlanB Management Consultants carried out an audit of Depot Based Services and functions to identify potential efficiencies and opportunities, and this is leading to business-as-usual processes and systems and optimise route collections being updated. Part of this audit also identified opportunities to introduce a chargeable garden waste service.

This paper sets out the details of this proposal, and includes information about the current business operations and the way that these can be adapted to meet needs, with the intention of still providing a discretionary service but one which generates income to avoid service reductions in other parts of the Council. The proposal is to introduce a paid service for all garden waste from March 2023, when the garden waste service re-commences after the winter break.

2. Background

2.1 Introduction

The Council is facing significant financial and environmental pressures in the medium term. The continued reductions in grant funding from central government mean that the Council must consider a number of options to close its budget deficit in future years. This situation has been exacerbated by the cost-of-living crisis, leading to increased capital and project costs, as well as a predicted national pay award that is likely to be at a cost of £1925 per employee per annum within each Authority across the Country.

The option, which is being considered here, is to introduce a chargeable garden waste service to help the Council reduce the costs of this service provision. This would also result in potentially more environmentally friendly ways of dealing with garden waste, including home composting.

The collection of garden waste is a discretionary service, not a statutory service – i.e. it is a service which does not need to be provided by the Council.

2.2 Current Operation

Currently, a green bin for garden waste is provided free to all residents and is collected for free on a fortnightly basis. Green bins are collected between the months of March and November, and collections stop between December to February.

55,861 households have one green bin and, 1079 households have an additional green bin. This equates to over 56,940 bins distributed across Dacorum. This represents a Council capital investment of around £1.423 million (based on £25 per bin).

There is a charge for subsequent bins of £25 per bin, and an additional £60 per annum collection per additional bin (<https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/environment-street-care/recycling-refuse-waste/household-waste-recycling/green-wheeled-bin/additional-garden-waste-subscription-service>). Any person subscribing to this additional subscription is provided a sticker with a unique serial code that goes on to the additional bin to indicate that it is paid for and to be collected. There is no limit on the number of additional bins that can be provided.

Currently, Dacorum Borough Council does not offer any concessions or discounts to this subscription element of the service. Additionally, the Council does not provide a garden waste collection from flats and other multiple occupancy properties (future proposals will not change this approach).

The cost of providing the current service is approximately £1.375m per annum, based on staffing, vehicles, on costs and capital costs around bin provision. £64,740 of this is recovered through second and third green bins subscriptions.

Appendix 1 sets out service usage for the 9 months period of the year, with increased take up from June to November in particular.

2.3 Neighbouring and National Picture

In 2012, it was estimated that a third of Councils operated a chargeable green waste service¹ By 2019, this figure had risen to 65% of Local Authorities². Within Hertfordshire, 8 out of 10 Boroughs now charge for garden waste, with St Albans moving to the scheme in 2021 along with East Hertfordshire.

A common theme across Authorities moving to a chargeable service is that it is considered fairer to offer a paid service for those who want it, rather than add to everyone's Council Tax bill whether they use it or not.

There are various charging schemes across the Country, and charges range from £25 to £100 per annum for the collection of garden waste. The table below sets out the current situation in Hertfordshire:

Council	Direct Debit	Card	Concessionary Charges
---------	--------------	------	-----------------------

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-18580191>

² [Free garden waste collections must be fully funded, councils warned](#) ITV News

	Per Annum	Per Week	Per Annum	Per Week	Per Annum	Per Week	Notes
Broxbourne	£34	£0.65	£42	£0.81	N/A	N/A	
Welwyn	£40	£0.77	£40	£0.77	N/A	N/A	
North Herts	£40	£0.77	£40	£0.77	£20	£0.38	Council Tax reduction scheme
Three Rivers	£50	£0.96	£50	£0.96	£42	£0.81	Council related benefits. 50% charge only if subscribe for last 6 months
Watford	£40	£0.77	£40	£0.77	£35	£0.67	Council related benefits
St Albans	£45	£0.87	£45	£0.87	£35	£0.67	Council related benefits. Second and subsequent bins are £50 per year
East Herts	£49	£0.94	£49	£0.94	N/A	N/A	
Hertsmere	Cannot charge at moment as garden and food waste mixed in same bin						
Stevenage	Cannot charge at moment as garden and food waste mixed in same bin						

Note "Council related benefits" typically include; income support, housing benefit/council tax support, job seekers allowance, guaranteed pension credit, employment and suppose allowance, incapacity benefit and universal credit.

Of these Councils, a number also charge for the provision and delivery of a garden waste bin if one is not already in place. For example, East Herts charge £35 for this service, and then a £49 subscription. In the case of all Councils, the bin remains the property of the Council.

2.4 Charging Proposals

2.4.1 Charging Options

Garden waste is a discretionary service that the Council has the ability to charge for, as it falls outside the mandatory collection regime that Councils are subject to. The Local Government Act 2003 allows charging on a cost recovery basis; therefore any charging regime must be directly linked to costs incurred.

Taking into account this requirement, the following options have been considered:

2.4.1.1 Increase Council Tax to cover increasing costs

Pressure is on Local Authorities to provide essential and statutory services, and any increase in Council Tax will be aimed towards this provision. As a discretionary service, it is therefore essential to make garden collection self-financing to help protect other essential services.

With increasing pressures on statutory services, it would not be value for money to increase Council Tax to cover a discretionary service, especially when the means to charge to recover costs exists.

2.4.1.2 Only seek to charge certain Council Tax Bands

This works on the basis that those premises that would need /use a garden waste service fall within certain Council Tax bands.

Our current banding breakdown is:

Council Tax Band	Properties
A	1232

B	8217
C	20299
D	15949
E	9253
F	5714
G	5105
H	814

Unfortunately, only broad assumptions can be made around the types of premises within each, being:

- Bands E-H are almost certainly houses
- Bands A-B are almost certainly flats.

Over half are in bands C-D, and could easily be either. Charging on such a general basis risks a discretionary service being charged against a person /premise that will not use the service. This would be contrary to the Local Government Act 2003 in relation to cost recovery.

2.4.1.3 Charge all properties a flat fee

Using data from the work carried out as part of the Route Optimisation programme, it is feasible that work can be carried out to understand who currently receives a garden waste collection. But again, this is not an exact science and is likely to lead to a charge being administered for a discretionary service, on a cost recovery basis, against persons who do not actually use the service or want to use the service.

Evidence also suggests that those who are provided with the means to dispose of garden waste free, via the green bin, may not actually be using the service as it currently stands. This is supported by findings of other Authorities, including North Devon, who estimated that only a third of the district actually used their green bins for garden waste, so two out of three homes either hadn't put them out, or had put them out practically empty. This incurs cost that can be avoided, rather than continue to provide a service to all regardless.

2.4.1.4 Subscription Option

This is the recommended approach. Details are set out below:

- Introduce a chargeable garden waste service from 27th February 2023 to align with the re-start of the green waste collection.
- The annual charge for the service will be £45.00 per wheeled bin (£0.87 per week). Additional bins will be charged at £45, to ensure consistency. These charges are generally in line with those in place elsewhere in Hertfordshire, including neighbouring authorities such as St Albans.
- A £10 discount will be offered to those residents who are in receipt of benefits. For the first bin, the charge would therefore be £35 per annum (£0.67 per week).
- These charges will be added to the Council's Fees and Charges Schedule.
- The payment terms will be a single annual subscription fee payable in advance and non-refundable.
- The service will continue to run for a 9 month cycle, which will allow staff capacity to be directed into other services to assist, including consideration of extra work around aspects such as Christmas tree recycling. This will aid in reducing any additional costs of the "pool" of covering staff to cover sickness, leave and other absence.
- Bins will be emptied on a fortnightly basis throughout the 9 month period.
- Households will be able to use their existing bin(s). If residents do not currently have adequate bin provision, they may purchase new bins (as appropriate) for a one-off cost in accordance with the Council's Fees and Charges Schedule. Residents who do not sign up to the scheme will keep the bin

and may use it for other means but, should they sign up later, the bin must be free from all contamination.

- Residents who require the service will need to 'opt-in' on an annual basis. They will receive a branded sticker/tag each year so that the crews are aware of the bins to be emptied.
- To minimise impact on residents in terms of collections during the introduction of the scheme, collection days will remain in line with the current regime (e.g. if green bin currently collected every 2 weeks on a Tuesday, the paid for subscription bin will also be collected every 2 weeks on a Tuesday)
- The intention is that all green waste routes will continue to operate as is during the period February to end of November 2023, meaning every road is covered and, as new subscriptions are added, these will be picked up without any need to re-route rounds.
- June 2023 will see a move towards a new route optimisation for all refuse streams, with a "wave" approach (all resources will hit an area together to ensure all relevant bins are collected). While the day of collection may change for some people, bins will still be collected on the same schedule (e.g. residual and green one week, recycling the next). An initial assessment of the green waste subscriptions will be made at this point to determine if levels are such that some vehicles can be removed.
- The intention is then to work on re-routing options from December 2023, when a full period of subscription will have taken place and an assessment has taken place of how many vehicles /crews will be needed to efficiently operate the service. This then allows the new routes to be communicated with residents when they (re-)sign up for the following year, and provide additional savings to the Council.
- When an application for the service is received, residents will receive the branded sticker/tag for display on each bin confirming their entitlement to the service for that year.
- In the event that the resident moves property, the service will be transferrable within the Dacorum Borough Council area (after advising the Council of the address change) or to the new occupier.
- The Council will promote discounted home composting and implement a strict policy of no garden waste in the grey bin, with any persistent contamination breaches resulting in the non-collection of grey bins.
- The Council will work closely with Hertfordshire County Council and Herts Waste Partnership to minimise the amount of garden waste sent to landfill

2.5 Projected income and annual running costs

A number of predictions can be made based on current households and from an evidence base garnered from those Authorities who have introduced charging. The baseline used by most Councils in terms of estimated initial participation rate is 30%, which then allows incremental increases to be built in going forward. For the purposes of this paper, the table on the following page sets out the different subscription rates as well as working on a £45, £50 and £55 subscription rate (the concessionary rate staying static).

Number of households (Excluding flats) projection for 2022-23	55,851
Target participation % (based on PlanB estimates and Hertfordshire)	30%

Participation Rate	10%		20%		30%		40%		50%	
	Payment	CR ³	Payment	CR	Payment	CR	Payment	CR	Payment	CR
Proposed charge (per bin per annum)	£45	£35	£45	£35	£45	£35	£45	£35	£45	£35
Projected take up for each charge rate	94%	6%	94%	6%	94%	6%	94%	6%	94%	6%
Participation number (30%)	5250	335	10500	670	15750	1005	21000	1340	26250	1676
Projected income	£236,250	£11,729	£472,499	£23,457	£708,749	£35,186	£944,999	£46,915	£1,181,249	£58,644
Annual Admin costs (@15%) inc ICT, transactions,	£35,437	£1,759	£70,875	£3,519	£106,312	£5,278	£141,750	£7,037	£177,187	£8,797
	£200,812	£9,969	£401,625	£19,939	£602,437	£29,908	£803,249	£39,878	£1,004,061	£49,847
Total Net Income	£210,782		£421,563		£632,345		£843,127		£1,053,908	
£50 subscription	£233,094		£466,189		£699,283		£932,378		£1,165,472	
£55 subscription	£255,407		£510,814		£766,221		£1,021,629		£1,277,036	
Vehicles Needed	1		2		2		3		4	
Current vehicles: c5 - therefore savings will be made from this aspect, but decreasing as participation increases. A participation rate of >60% will require additional investment										

The disposal cost for garden waste is not included as (1) Hertfordshire County Council has a duty to pay for the disposal and is not allowed to pass on the cost and (2) the disposal authority (Hertfordshire County Council) is not allowed to make a profit.

Previous modelling by PlanB, (2018), showed cost recovery is at its highest at a subscription rate of £55 however it is considered that this may well limit participation by not being sufficiently accessible to all residents. This is of importance when considering already increasing costs faced by residents due to the cost of living impact.

Subscription charges below £40 are unlikely to be optimal as the increase in participation does not lead to an increase in revenue because of increased operational costs.

An assumption around second bins that would remain, in terms of cost and subscription that people currently paying would continue to do so based on the evidence they are willing to do so already. The income generation from this is not included in the overall calculation as this is already picked up in current budgets.

Estimations in 2019 by PlanB, showed that a move to a chargeable service is likely to also impact the number of garden waste collection rounds currently being provided. This will be factored in from December 2023 once there is an evidence base in place to inform decisions. The Council does not want to be in a position whereby vehicles are withdrawn on an expectation of a certain take up level, only to have to re-introduce if this is exceeded. By doing this work from December 2023, there will be a high confidence level in terms of take up, as evidence from other Authorities show there is little movement year on year in terms of subscription numbers.

2.6 Implementation Approach and Costs

³ CR – Concessionary Rate (this is kept the same for all equations)

A decision to implement the charging scheme when the garden waste service resumes at the end of February has been plotted out in the implementation plan in Appendix 2, showing both a November and December Cabinet approval route. The timelines can be adjusted to fit any implementation date decided, although consideration must be given to when the service is running (e.g. starting the process in June, with a November go live date is likely to fail as the service stops in December until February).

2.6.1 Communications

Key to the implementation is communications, and a clear communication campaign will be put in place. This will set out the rationale for moving to such a scheme, based on the backdrop of the Council's finances and equity of approach. Such a campaign will also look to learn from the introduction of similar schemes in other Authorities across Hertfordshire.

A frequently asked questions document will be developed and added to the website, and will be kept up to date, to enable customer queries to be directed and answered.

Communications is a significant part of delivering this change to the Garden Waste service. The communications plan is targeted at: Council Members, Town and Parish Councils, Residents/public (external), Pressure groups, Council staff (internal), Press/media.

Communications Objectives: To promote awareness of the new green waste collection charge; to manage messaging from this new charge; and to introduce the paid service for all garden waste starting from the end of February 2023. Key dates for this Communications Plan: 8 November – SPEOSC, 15 November – Cabinet, 16 November – Commence communications plan, January/February 2023 – Commence marketing plan.

These are the recommended key messages:

- From February 2023, the Council's garden waste service is changing. The garden waste collection will be by paid subscription only.
- You will need to sign up to the new opt in paid subscription service to continue to have your garden waste collected.
- We know lots of residents value the Council collecting their garden waste, so we have provided the subscription service for those people who want to keep the service.
- Nearly two thirds of councils in England charge for this service and, with a large budget gap to fill, sadly we can no longer continue to offer it without making a subscription charge. The garden waste subscription charge will go towards covering the direct costs of delivering this service. The charge will also help to protect other vital services including the fortnightly refuse and recycling collections and weekly food waste collections.
- Locally most Hertfordshire Councils charge to collect garden waste, including St Albans, Watford, Three Rivers, North Herts, Broxbourne and Welwyn Hatfield councils
- Under the Controlled Waste Regulations 2012, we are able to charge for the separate collection of domestic garden waste.
- We offer a discount for those residents receiving Council Tax Reduction benefit.
- You will still have the option to pay for an additional garden waste bin(s) or bags on similar terms to the current scheme.

Home composting will be promoted and facilitated for those residents who do not wish to subscribe to the garden waste collection service. This will be achieved by the further promotion of the already established Hertfordshire Waste Partnership (HWP) home composting scheme. The HWP has teamed up with GetComposting.com to provide multi buy deals on home compost bins and other green products, including kitchen food waste caddy liners. Full details of the scheme can be found on the HWP website.

In terms of projected costs, these are set out below:

Area	Page 55	Cost
------	---------	------

Communication Campaign	£30,000
ICT changes to include website update and on line payment options	£50,000
Project Management to implement	£5,000
Customer Service Capacity	£10,000
	£95,000

These costs above are one off implementation costs, absorbed within the first year. A further breakdown is given in **Appendix 4**.

2.6.2 Technology

The ICT changes incorporates the upgrade of the Bartec system to enable a resident web page to back office /in cab Bartec system including payments. This costs £10,000 to set up but provides a “personalisation” for the customer so that when they log in they will see: a calendar of their collections; how many bins they have; and an option to report missed bins through this system. It also allows expansion to incorporate bulk waste collection requests, as well as other options. Due to the system being linked to the in-cab devices, it also allows live information from the crews to be updated on the calendar, for instance why a bin has not been collected (e.g. contamination). An ongoing cost of c£12,000 is required but is easily offset by the service income.

In line with this, Permi-serv offer a web-to-resident option that works in conjunction with Bartec, meaning that, once a resident signs up, then the data can be provided to Permi-serv who will send out the relevant letter, terms and conditions and sticker for a cost of £1.25 (including postage). For 50% subscription, it would cost the Council approximately £35,000 but weighed against the cost of funding it in house it provides clear cost efficiencies. The process is seen in **Appendix 5**.

2.6.3 Customer Services

Consideration must also be given to potential increase in customer service interactions resulting from the introduction of the subscription scheme. A cost of £10,000 has been accounted for to put in place a full-time member of staff to sit within the CSU for 3 months to handle any calls /interactions.

2.7 Impact on Councils’ Recycling Performance

Three Rivers District Council has successfully introduced and run a similar subscription scheme for some time, without any perceivable impact on their top performing status. Additionally, the latest published figures, for the top 10 performing recycling councils, show that only two do not charge for separately collected garden waste. St Albans, on introducing the chargeable scheme in 2021, remained consistent in terms of their recycling rates around 63%.

The recent introduction of a chargeable scheme in Haringey evidenced that the scheme led to 4% garden waste being found within the residual waste stream. The clear marketing of what can go into each bin, especially in terms of recycling, will be part of the communications strategy to help further educate around recycling.

3. Options and alternatives considered

In relation to the recommendation in this report, the main options include:

A. Continue with the current garden waste collection regime

- Garden waste is a discretionary service, currently with limited means to recover any costs. The result is operating costs having to come directly from Council budgets, meaning less funding available for the provision of other vital services.
- The Council is facing a MTFS budgetary gap in 2022 to 2025, requiring the Council to, either decrease costs or increase income, or face potential detrimental impacts on statutory duties. The garden waste service, as it currently stands, offers no benefit to this funding challenge.
- It is therefore no longer viable to continue with a free discretionary service in the absence of alternative options.

B. Introduce a chargeable subscription scheme from March 2023 (recommended)

- The proposal is set out above, including the cost benefit of moving to such a scheme
- Such a move allows a discretionary service to continue for the benefit of those who want to use it, but not to the detriment of those who do not.
- The projected reduction in costs, and increase in income, meets all the criteria around business efficiency when looking to balance budgets year on year going forward. It provides a significant income input at a time when the Council is limited in options to address cost of living costs as well as an impending national pay award
- Experience of other Councils, including those in Hertfordshire, show no evidence of detrimental impact on the environment or recycling rates
- The charging regime has been set out to be in line with neighbouring boroughs but does not prevent a decision being made to increase / decrease such fees and add further concessions if desired.
- The introduction in March 2023 ties in with the re-starting of the service after the winter break.

C. Stop Garden Waste Collections

- Garden waste is a discretionary service, and there is no legal obligation on the Council to carry it out
- This would save costs due to removal of vehicles and staffing around providing this service but would also remove any income generation element. It therefore only meets one aspect of business efficiency in terms of reducing costs /maximising income
- This also limits the Council in terms of future options. While there is a risk that the Government may eventually stop the ability to charge for garden waste, this comes with lobbying around extra funding for Councils to cover lost income. Stopping the service at this time prevents such discussions going forward for Dacorum.

4. Consultation

The above recommendations have not been subject to public consultation. This is on the basis that there is no statutory duty to consult and the Council can demonstrate that it has acted fairly because:

- The Council faces a challenging financial position and that it will have to generate additional income to protect services;
- The chargeable service will be optional, and the practical alternative is the stopping of the service completely due to it being discretionary;
- Alternative options for the disposal of Green Waste are available and reasonable, including use of the two Civic Amenity Sites and home composting
- The £45 annual fee is reasonable, equating to less than 90 pence per week; and
- Those residents on local Council benefits will be eligible for a discount

It is vital though that the communication strategy is launched at the earliest opportunity following formal Cabinet decision to inform residents of the upcoming changes, to provide opportunities to get information out and ensure proactive in getting answers to early questions.

5. Financial and value for money implications:

The current contract cost of providing a garden waste collection service is over £1m per year. This does not include Council costs such as capital charges for the bins purchased to date.

The introduction of a chargeable garden waste service is projected to generate an income return of just over £600k in year one. This does not take into account service savings from operating a reduced service. Increased yield is expected as the scheme progresses, with the aim of a 40% sign up by year 3

resulting in a projected income of around £900,000. These figures do not take into account 2nd and 3rd bin subscriptions, which are in the main accounted for already as part of the service.

6. Legal Implications

Local Authorities have a legal obligation under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 to collect only household waste. The Council is permitted to charge for discretionary services by virtue of Section 93 of the Local Government Act 2003. It is also permissible to have different charges for different people; however, the annual income must not exceed the actual cost of the service.

The Controlled Waste (England and Wales) Regulations 2012 allows a charge to be made for the collection of household garden waste.

7. Risks

Risks included on corporate or directorate risk register? No

Separate risk register in place? No (part of service risk register)

The relevant risks contained in the register are attached/summarised below. N/A

The following key risks should be taken into account when agreeing the recommendations in this report:

Risk Description	Mitigations	RAG Status
Key Stakeholders Residents do not understand and accept the need for changes	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear communication strategy to outline the need for change ▪ Set out budget benefit compared to alternatives for residents (e.g. keeping services, limiting council tax increases, only pay if need service) 	
Financial Income target is not achieved	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ The 30% is set based on experience of other councils ▪ System are in part in place to run a subscription service ▪ Likely underestimation of potential savings from moving to a chargeable service ▪ Savings will be realised by reducing the rounds currently in place, so can compensate any loss of take up. 	
Legislation Central Government change or remove powers to allow the collection of garden waste at charge	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ This is part of the Government consultation that went out in 2021, but no decision made and current economic climate unlikely to lead to change ▪ Substantial lobbying by Local Authorities and bodies around this, especially on back of increasing costs. ▪ Unlikely due to Government having to change funding to Local Authorities to compensate for loss of income ▪ If do introduce, likely Government funding to cover loss of income. If no income being garnered, then DBC will be more at risk 	
Recycling Rates 2035 target of 65% could be adversely affected by charging for garden waste	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No evidence to show any detriment amongst those who have carried this out ▪ At last check, 8 out of 10 top recycling councils charge for garden waste ▪ Alternative options will be presented as part of the communication package, including composting 	
Environment Increase in fly tipping to avoid paying the subscription	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ No evidence to show any detriment amongst those who have carried this out ▪ Alternative options will be presented as part of the communication package, including composting ▪ Alternative routes to recycle to be presented including local recycling centres 	

<p>Implementation</p> <p>Delay in implementation leading to start after March 2023, meaning hybrid free then paid for service</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Clear scheme to get in place to meet deadlines ▪ Automation of key aspects to minimize in service risks due to capacity 	
--	--	--

8. Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

A full Community Impact Assessment has been carried out and is attached as Appendix 7.

Human Rights – there are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report

Pursuant to section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (“the Act”), the Council, in the exercise of its functions, has to have ‘due regard’ to (i) eliminating discrimination, harassment, victimisation and any other conduct that is prohibited by or under the Act; (ii) advancing equality of opportunity between those with a relevant protected characteristic and those without; and (iii) fostering good relations between those who have a relevant protected characteristic and those without.

The relevant protected characteristics are age, race, disability, gender reassignment, pregnancy and maternity, religion or belief, sex and sexual orientation. The duty also covers marriage and civil partnership, but to a limited extent.

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

As covered above, the charging of garden waste has limited impact on recycling rates, as well as detriment to the environment. It does instead encourage alternative means of disposal.

For example, an increase in home composting which is the most environmentally friendly way of dealing with garden waste. It is widely acknowledged that well-managed compost heaps provide microclimates for minibeasts and produce a healthy clean mulch or fertiliser for the garden, which helps to return vital nutrients to the soil.

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

The work around implementation will look to ensure no detrimental impact on staff from moving to a chargeable service. The initial launch will continue the current collection regime already (2 weekly, with current locations), though not collecting every bin (only stickered).

Working with PlanB, the impact of this and the number of vehicles /route optimisation will be assessed. The initial assessment will take place in June 2023, in line with the route optimisation implementation, with a further assessment in December 2023 when the service breaks for winter and there will be full key season subscription data in place.

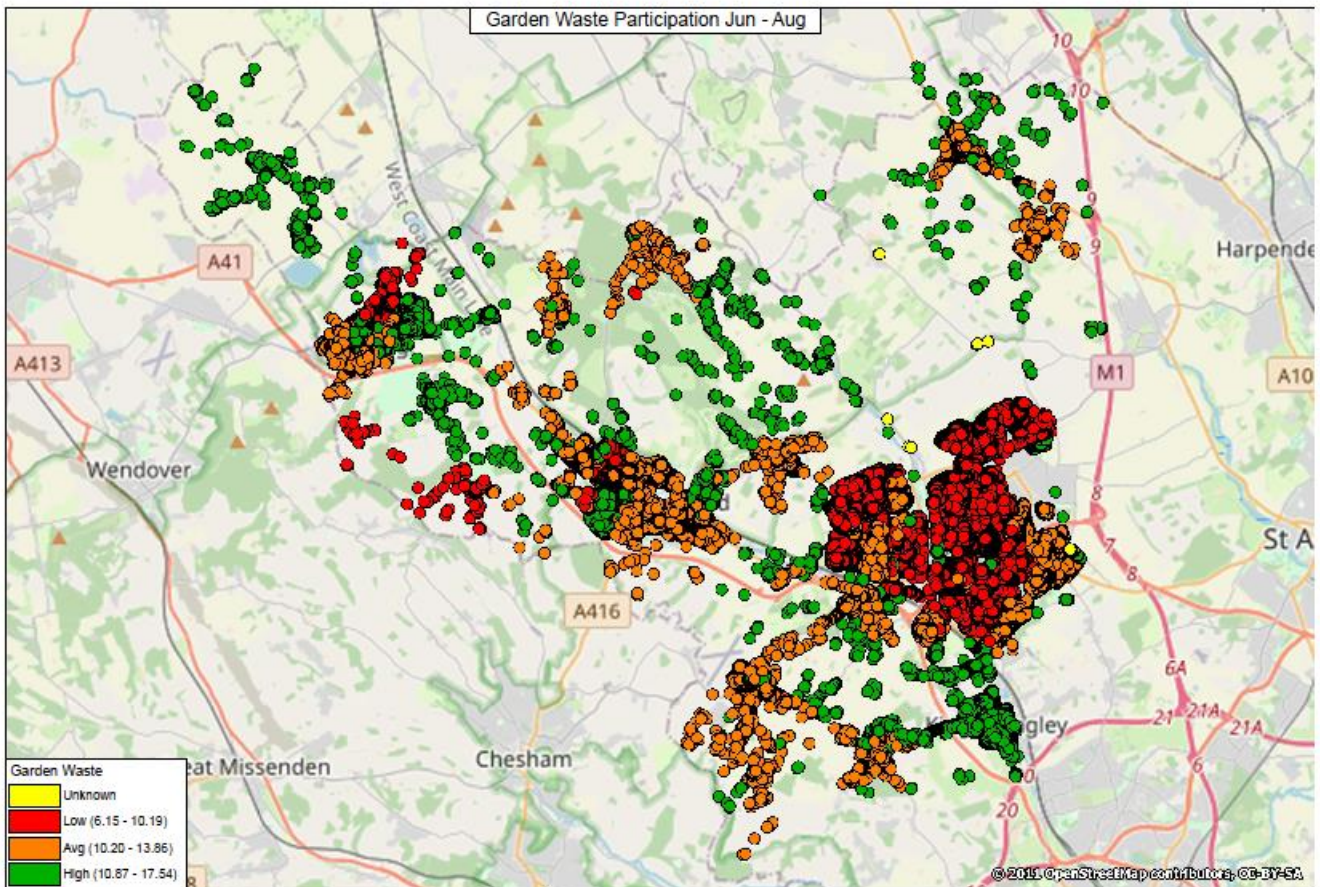
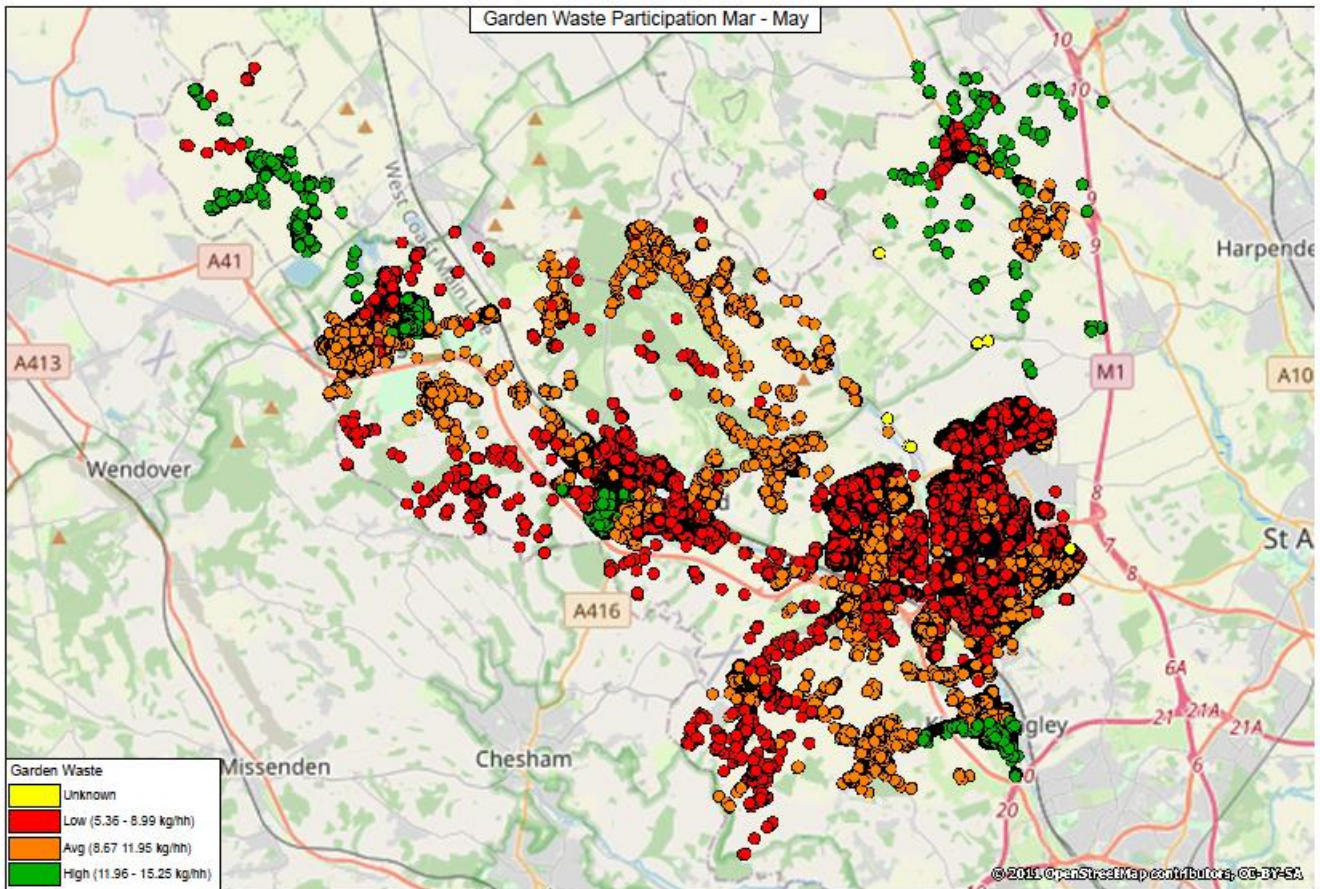
11. Conclusion

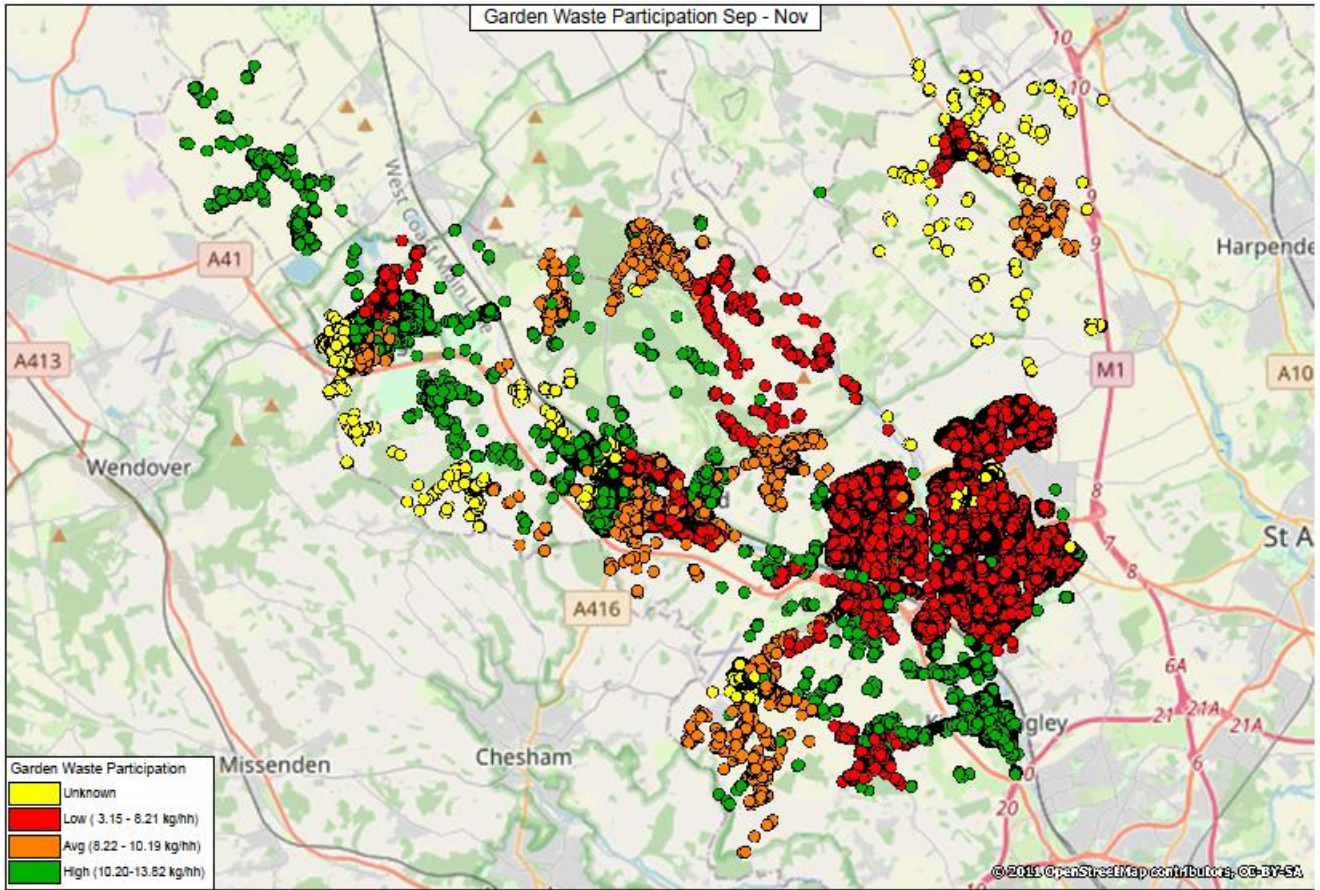
Garden waste is discretionary and costs the Council over a £1m per year with limited (2nd bin) returns. Experience of other Councils clearly shows the estimates of a 30% take up, at a £45 charge, is realistic and feasible. The reduction of vehicles will lead to further savings that can be set out clearly once implementation is in place and full figures become available. It is therefore reasonable to assume a first year return of **£632,336 per annum**, considering implementation costs, with a review built in to determine further costs savings once round data is available following implementation.

12. Next steps

- To progress the report to Cabinet for approval in November 2022, for an end of February 2023 launch.
- To approve the implementation spend to automate the systems from resident to back office, as well as web-to-resident.
- To approve the temporary increase in CSU capacity to handle any increased customer interactions.

APPENDIX 1 – USAGE MAPS (GARDEN WASTE)





Garden Waste

Green Waste Implementation Plan

Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date

November Cabinet timeline

December Cabinet timeline

Milestone Description	Workstream	Start	No. Days	Column 1	09/10/2022	10/10/2022	17/10/2022	24/10/2022	31/10/2022	07/11/2022	14/11/2022	21/11/2022	28/11/2022	05/12/2022	12/12/2022	19/12/2022	26/12/2022	02/01/2023	09/01/2023	16/01/2023	23/01/2023	30/01/2023	06/02/2023	13/02/2023	20/02/2023	27/02/2023
	IMPLEMENTATION PLAN																									
GW1	Complete Financial Model	03/10/22	14		Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date																				
GW2	Complete Communications Plan	03/10/22	14		Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date																				
GW3	ICT connections scoped	03/10/22	28		Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date																		
GW4	Complete Resourcing profile	03/10/22	28		Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date		Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date																		
GW5	Complete draft Terms & Conditions	03/10/22	14		Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date																				
GW6	Finalise Collection Regime	03/10/22	14		Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date																				
GW7 - NOV	Complete Cabinet Report (Nov Cabinet)	10/10/22	12			November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline																			
GW7 - DEC	Complete Cabinet Report (Dec Cabinet)	10/10/22	26			December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline																	
GW8 - NOV	Obtain SLT approval (Nov Cabinet)	21/10/22	7				November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline																		
GW8 - DEC	Obtain SLT approval (Dec Cabinet)	04/11/22	7						December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline																
GW9 - NOV	Informal Cabinet Report (Nov Cabinet)	26/10/22	7					November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline																	
GW9 - DEC	Informal Cabinet Report (Dec Cabinet)	10/11/22	14							December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline														
GW10 - NOV	SPAE OSC Report Presented (Nov Cabinet)	03/11/22	7					November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline																	
GW10 - DEC	SPAE OSC Report Presented (Dec Cabinet)	25/11/22	7							December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline															
GW11 - NOV	Obtain Cabinet approval (Nov Cabinet)	08/11/22	7						November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline																
GW11 - DEC	Obtain Cabinet approval (Dec Cabinet)	06/12/22	14								December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline													
GW12 - NOV	Implement Communications Plan (Nov Cabinet)	21/11/22	N/A								November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline	November Cabinet timeline
GW12 - DEC	Implement Communications Plan (Dec Cabinet)	13/12/22	N/A									December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline	December Cabinet timeline
GW13	Implement Payment Process	24/10/22	70					Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date
GW14	Implement ICT Changes	24/10/22	70					Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date
GW15	Obtain Financial commitment	02/01/23	N/A															Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date
GW16	Design optimal collection routes	13/02/23	21																							
GW17	Desing optimal staffing resouce plan	09/01/23	56															Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date	Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date
GW18	Recruit per resource plan	16/01/23	42																							
GW19	Chargeable service go live	27/02/23	7																							Implementation regardless of Cabinet Date

PR and Communications Plan – Garden Waste

Start date: October 2022

End date: March 2023

Key audiences/stakeholders:

- DBC Members
- Town and Parish Councils
- Residents/public (external)
- Pressure groups (tbc)
- DBC staff (internal)
- Press/media

Communications Objectives:

- Promote awareness of the new green waste collection charge
- Manage comms messaging and reputational 'fall out' from this new charge
- To introduce the paid service for all garden waste starting from the end of February 2023

Key messages:

- Overview of green waste collection service and how it works (e.g. new stickers)
- Timeline for introduction to the new charge
- Rationale for new charged service, how this will impact or affect customers and address areas of concerns

Key dates for this Communications Plan:

- 8 November – SPEOSC
- 15 November – Cabinet
- 16 November – Commence communications plan
- January/February 2023 – Commence marketing plan

COMMUNICATIONS ACTION PLAN – INTERNAL

Description	Comments/further details/audience	Start date	End date (if applicable)	Responsible officer/s	Status/notes
Briefing note/session for SLT and Members (Informal Cabinet)	Briefing note explaining the impact, considerations and next steps.	TBC		Richard Lebrun	
Members News (weekly newsletter)	Provide updates at key stages – schedule to be agreed	TBC		Richard Lebrun/ Communications	
Intranet (DENNIS)	News page – key contact/phone number	TBC		Communications	

Page 65

COMMUNICATIONS ACTION PLAN – EXTERNAL

Description	Comments/further details/audience	Start date	End date (if applicable)	Responsible officer/s	Status/notes
Press/media: Reactive statement	Reactive statement to be prepared for media enquiries pre-cabinet approval	8 Nov	8 Nov	Richard Lebrun/ Communications	
Press/media: Press release	Press release prepared for post Cabinet approval on 15 November 2022	16 Nov	16 Nov	Richard Lebrun/ Communications	
Dacorum Life	Include calendar in Winter 2022 issue, signposting to website for more details	24 Oct	24 Oct	Communications	To be distributed mid-November 2022
Dacorum Life (Digital)	Provide updates at key stages – schedule to be agreed	17 Nov	TBC	Communications	

Description	Comments/further details/audience	Start date	End date (if applicable)	Responsible officer/s	Status/notes
FAQs	Compile list of likely questions and answers to prepare for reactive social media/press enquiries	14 Nov	TBC	Richard Lebrun/ Communications	To be added to webpage and provided to CSU for social media
Social Media	Campaign to support at all key stages – all channels Respond to questions/negative posts	16 Nov	TBC	CSU/ Communications	FAQs would be useful to develop standard responses for reactive social media.
Website	To update relevant pages re: new charges/process https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/environment-street-care/recycling-refuse-waste	14 Nov		Communications	
Website	To prepare e-commerce pages for payments: https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/environment-street-care/recycling-refuse-waste	TBC		Web development team	
Town and Parish Councils	Update on key stages / Share press release	16 Nov		Communications	
Marketing plan: Mail shots (letters and emails) to new and existing customers	Additional garden waste bin database	January 2023 / TBC	TBC	Communications	Marketing timeline and supporting materials TBC

30% Uptake

Budget	Existing service	(42,368)	Additional garden Waste Service
	New Saving	<u>(650,000)</u>	
		<u>(692,368)</u>	
Forecast	Additional Service	(49,500)	Revised to £45 per bin
	Income from new Service	<u>(732,600)</u>	Based on £45 @ 30% of which 6% at £35
		<u>(782,100)</u>	
	Operational Costs	37,125	Permiserve @£1.25 per subscription
	Bartec upgrade yearly cost	12,000	
	Variance	(40,607)	
	One Off Set Up costs		
	Additional CSU Resource	8,250	3 months 1 FTE
	Bartec Upgrade	10,000	
		18,250	

INTRODUCTION

What is PermiServ

A complete, managed service that you can simply upload data, then wait for your residents to receive their permit pack which includes everything they need for the garden waste service. Every permit is barcode-scanned on dispatch so that you can monitor progress in real-time from your Cloud Portal and respond immediately to residents' queries.



Typical Pack Contents

1. An envelope with an "Important Council Document" message tailored to your council.
2. A customised, ultra-tack, weather and scratch resistant permit.
3. Instructions to the reverse of the permit.
4. A folded "Welcome to the scheme" letter.

Benefits

- Simplified administration of permit schemes. Simply upload your data and wait for the permits to be delivered.
- A custom built, secure Cloud Management Portal to manage your permit data with development support and custom function creation on request.
- Live dispatch logging for every permit via barcode-scan giving reassurance from live status and the ability to help answer residents' queries in real-time.
- Minimum dispatch quantity of 1 permit.
- Data security: TLS site encryption, password protection on portal with secure database storage and user update logging
- 10-day lead-time from upload to delivery (via 2nd class).
- All print customised to your preferences.
- Control panel giving analysis and reporting for usage, invoice, sales-leads, on-time delivery, replacement yields and more.
- No software installation required, updates applied instantly, and universal cross-platform support.
- Resident dispatch-notification service via email if required.
- Tried and tested service, in use at several LAs.
- Ultra-high-tack, durable, scratch-resistant permits with light-fast inks, along with instructions printed on the reverse.
- Print includes data-driven address, large 'address barker', serial number, collection dates etc. to your request.
- Support for all permit types (remote delivery, group permits, relocation permits etc.).
- Unlimited user-logins with privilege restriction facility.
- Council maintains ownership of data.
- Ability to satisfy council audit by ensuring all permits have addresses, serial numbers and replacement traceability.
- We will never pass on data to 3rd parties.
- Amendments on portal after what is deemed reasonable maybe incur further charges but will be discussed before action.

Any questions please contact louise@permiserv.co.uk

QUOTE

PermiServ
Vincent's Yard
23 Alphabet Mews
London
SW9 0QT

(Quote Valid For 30 Days)

Dacorum Borough Council
The Forum
Marlowes
Hemel Hempstead
Hertfordshire
HP1 1DN

COUNCIL	Dacorum
QUOTE #	0000566549
QUOTE DATE	18/10/2022
PO #	TBC

QTY	DESCRIPTION	UNIT PRICE
55,000	Permits (Includes: 2nd class postage and packing service, plus extra T&C letter)	£1.25
1	Customisable Online Portal (Shows all permits in realtime giving the council ability to react to residents instantly, Unlimited users and access, Full training, IT intergration and support)	£0.00
1	Artwork Design & Manufacturing (Includes: A5 Permit with printed liner, Generic A4 letter, Printed Envelope)	£0.00



ORDER

- By formal PO or email confirmation
- Confirm list of everyone working on the project
- Send Permiserv supplier form to fill in



ARTWORK

- Permiserv will send you a template with online instructions to follow
- We use an in house design team for this project
- Send Permiserv any logos and confirm expiry dates



PORTAL CONSTRUCTION

- Fully customisable portal
- Council to confirm list of users required by sending us their email address's
- Council to confirm data they wish to display and any requirements



TRAINING

- Arrange GoToMeeting with Permiserv trainer with all staff using the portal



ARTWORK SIGN OFF

- Final sign off required so Permiserv can order the stationary (upto 10 days lead time on stationary)



TEST UPLOADS

- Choose how you wish to upload data, CVS file or automated method
- Permiserv will support your IT with test uploads to the portal
- Permiserv will clear portal after testing requestng live data



LIVE DATA UPLOAD

- Checks will be made that the upload has been a success
- Permiserv will send council merge proof approval, this is the final check showing variable data on a PDF of artwork - This requires sign off before Permiserv start printing



MONITORING PHASE

- Follow portal from upload to dispatch
- Follow up conversation to confirm project sign off

Will you join us for initial project meetings?

Yes! We have been through the process of setting up a garden waste collection services with councils many, many times. We have seen the pitfalls and what works well. We have lots of contacts within the industry who are always happy to help and make suggestions. We do not charge for consultation, but we're always happy to share our knowledge.

How do you invoice?

We invoice monthly. After the last day of the month, we calculate what has been dispatched in that month and invoice accordingly.

Can we help you with artwork?

Permiserv send a template via the Portal. Councils then request changes. Our designers apply those changes and resubmit via the portal. This process is often iterative until the council is completely happy with the artwork.

What is a merge proof approval?

A merge proof is when live data has been uploaded for the first time in that current year showing the variable data on a PDF to show size and styling to make sure everyone is happy with how it looks before printing.

Can you transfer data via API?

Yes, this is a quite common way of uploading to the portal, all API details are displayed on the portal for each individual council. If your council would like to connect via API (which we recommend), then we will allocate an engineer to ensure this happens.

Can you work with any third-party providers?

Yes. We work with several 3rd parties. We can build connections to any external entity. Our software is proprietary/bespoke and maintained by our in-house team.

How many councils do you work with?

We now work with 50 councils on the garden waste project with more ready to go live in 2021 that were delayed due to COVID19

Are you GDPR compliant and secure?

Yes. We are GDPR compliant. With respect to this service, we are the data processor. The questions which normally arise are how long we keep data, whether we store personal details, and whether we sell data to 3rd parties. Unless a council insists, we do NOT keep personal names. We only store addresses which are public domain data. If names are submitted to us, our normal policy is to strip them out and remove.

Our default policy is to retain data for 16 months where upon it is deleted. If the council wishes to keep it for a different period, we will comply as the council is the Data Controller.

We will NEVER sell data to anyone. The council owns the data.

We have example contracts to cover GDPR, and/or happy to sign GDPR terms set by the council.

We are registered with the ICO, and hold Cyber Essentials Certification.

PermiServ

MANAGED PERMIT SERVICES



**Tip
Permits**



**Car
Parking**



**Disabled
Parking**



**Additional
Bins**



**Garden
Waste**



**Promotional
Mailing**

Terms and conditions

1. You agree to pay the council a subscription fee to collect your garden waste. You are required to subscribe for the garden waste collection service ("the services") on an annual basis ("the subscription period") by payment of an annual fee ("the subscription fee"). The subscription fee is a one-off fee and is irrespective of when you subscribe during each and any subscription period. Upon the council receiving payment of the subscription fee you will be issued with a license and if you move property, the subscription fee is not refundable.
2. The council reserves the right, in its absolute discretion, to refuse an application for the services. Any person making a fraudulent application will have their subscription cancelled without refund. Any person who seeks a concession, does so on the understanding that the Council will undertake all reasonable checks at the time of subscription and afterwards to ensure such claims are valid.
3. The council reserves the right to increase, or decrease, the subscription fee from time to time. You will receive notice of any such changes at least one month prior to the commencement of the next subscription period.
4. You will be provided with one free wheeled green bin ("the bin"). If one is not already in place, we aim to deliver this within 14 days of the council receiving payment of your subscription fee. During peak subscription periods, delivery may take longer. Additional bins are subject to charge.
5. You shall be responsible for placing the bin(s) on your property, so as not to cause a nuisance. Bins must not be stored on the highway.
6. You shall place the bin(s) to be emptied at the kerbside for collection by the council's employees. Bin(s) should be presented at the kerbside no later than 7am on your designated collection day.
7. The council offers an assisted collection service to residents who are disabled or have mobility issues and cannot move bin(s) to and from the kerbside. Only residents who have an agreed assisted collection service with the council will be exempt from presenting bin(s) at the kerbside.
8. The council will collect information about you when you subscribe to the services (for example, name, property address, email address and telephone number). This allows the council to provide the services and for it to contact

you in relation to the renewal of your current subscription fee. The council has a duty to keep records up to date therefore you are required to notify it of any changes to your personal details. You should inform the council of any changes to your address.

9. The services apply to domestic households, and or other locations at the council's discretion.
10. If you are provided with a bin, the subscription fee is charged on a per bin basis. If you wish to subscribe for more than one bin you will be charged an additional subscription fee. A maximum of 3 (three) additional bins are permitted.
11. Once you have subscribed to the services, you will be sent a permit which must be affixed to your bin(s) as per the instructions in the accompanying letter. Only those bin(s) displaying a valid permit, affixed in the correct manner, will be emptied. Once the council has received your payment of the subscription fee, it will take up to 14 days for you to be issued with a permit and for collections to be instigated. Prior to the season starting it may take longer than 14 days for your license to be issued.
12. Only garden waste i.e. grass, leaves, twigs, weeds, hedge clippings, flowers and plants can be placed in your garden waste bin(s). Please make sure you remove soil and stones from your garden waste before putting it in your bins or bags. Garden waste bins (or reusable bags) containing anything other than garden waste will be deemed as contaminated and will not be collected. A return collection will not be made under these circumstances. It is the responsibility of the householder to sort the contents of the bins) and remove any contamination prior to the next collection.
13. Garden waste bins must be used for domestic garden waste only. The bins must not be used for any garden waste arising from business or commercial activities.
14. All garden waste must be contained within the garden waste bin(s), with the bin lid closed flat. If they are too heavy to be collected safely, they cannot be emptied. Overflowing or excess garden waste placed around the bin(s) will not be collected. A return collection will not be made under either of these circumstances

15. The bin(s) used for the services remain the property of the council at all times. The bin(s) should remain at the premises stated on the application form unless it is removed by the council.
16. If you want to cancel the services you have arranged online or over the telephone, you are entitled to a 14 day cooling-off period during which time you can cancel for any reason and receive a refund. If you wish to cancel the services, you must contact the council on XXX. You are not entitled to a refund if you move property during the subscription period.
17. Garden waste bins will be emptied every other week, with collections operating from the first week of March for a 9 month period. No green waste is collected for the period December to February, though additional collections may be made for seasonal reasons (e.g. Christmas Trees)
18. Refunds will not be issued for missed collections. If there is a genuine missed collection (where there is proof the bin was presented on time and the council did not collect the waste), the council will aim to return to the property for a missed collection within five working days. If this is not possible, for operational reasons, you are allowed to present additional garden waste at the next collection. You are not entitled to receive a partial or full refund for missed collections.
19. Once you have subscribed to the services, the council will notify you when your next annual subscription fee is due. You will be notified at least one month in advance of the next subscription period.
20. Delays to the services may apply (1) during inclement weather, (2) in cases of operational difficulty or (3) any event or circumstance which is outside of the reasonable control of the council's control and shall include but is not limited to war, civil war, armed conflict or terrorism, strikes, lockouts or other industrial actions, riot, fire, flood and earthquake, pandemics and epidemics. For the purposes of this paragraph, (1) - (3) above are defined as an event or circumstance.
 - The council is not responsible for delays outside of its control. If the supply of the services is delayed by an event or circumstance outside its control then information will be published as soon as possible to notify you of a delay. The council will take steps to minimise the effect

of the delay. Provided it does this, it will not be liable for delays caused by the event or circumstance.

21. Scheduled alterations will be made to the garden waste collection service during public holidays. You will receive prior notification of these changes along with the changes to all collection services.
22. With the exception of paragraph 13 there will be no refund or reductions for part year subscriptions. Neither will there be refunds or part refunds for the cancellation of the service part way through the subscription period.
23. These terms and conditions in relation to the services do not affect your statutory rights.
24. The council may at any time assign, transfer, subcontract or deal in any other manner with all or any of its rights under these terms and conditions and may subcontract or delegate in any manner any or all of its obligations under these terms and conditions to any third party or agent.
25. A person who is not a party to these terms and conditions shall not have any rights to enforce them.
26. The council reserves the right to vary these terms and conditions at any time.
27. These terms and conditions, and any dispute or claim arising out of or in connection with them or their subject matter or formation (including non-contractual disputes or claims), shall be governed by, and construed in accordance with the law of England and Wales.
28. The council reserves the right to end these terms and conditions at any time and for whatever reason by giving you one month's notice of termination.

Dacorum BC Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Template

Policy / service / decision

Green Waste Subscription Service

Description of what is being impact assessed

What are the aims of the service, proposal, 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

The policy decision is to introduce a charge to the green waste collection service, bringing it in line with the majority of other Hertfordshire Councils. Garden waste is a discretionary service that the Council has the ability to charge for, as it falls outside the mandatory collection regime that Councils are subject to. The Local Government Act 2003 allows charging on a cost recovery basis; therefore any charging regime must be directly linked to costs incurred. At present, the service costs the Council in the region of £1.35m per annum. Rather than stopping the service, as the legislation allows, the introduction of a charging regime provides the collection service to those that need it at a reduced public purse cost.

Those affected are residents who have garden waste to be collected. Those within flats, for example, will not be impacted by the chargeable service.

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.

A review of the national and local picture has been carried out. In 2012, it was estimated that a third of Councils operated a chargeable green waste service¹ By 2019, this figure had risen to 65% of Local Authorities². Within Hertfordshire, 8 out of 10 Boroughs now charge for garden waste, with St Albans moving to the scheme in 2021 along with East Hertfordshire.

¹ <https://www.bbc.com/news/uk-england-18580191>

A common theme across Authorities moving to a chargeable service is that it is considered fairer to offer a paid service for those who want it, rather than add to everyone's Council Tax bill whether they use it or not.

There are various charging schemes across the Country, and charges range from £25 to £100 per annum for the collection of garden waste.

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.*

Work has taken place with other Local Authorities, including St Albans and North Herts who have recently introduced a chargeable scheme.

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>			

² [Free garden waste collections must be fully funded, councils warn | ITV News](#)

Age	No one age range has been shown to be more impacted than another.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Disability (physical, intellectual, mental) <i>Refer to CIA Guidance Notes and Mental Illness & Learning Disability Guide</i>	The Council offers an assisted collection service for all refuse collections (residual, recycling and green) and this will continue.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Gender reassignment	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Race and ethnicity	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sex	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	None	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

<p>Not protected characteristics but consider other factors, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, loneliness, rurality etc.</p>	<p>Consideration has been given to low income families, and therefore a concession rate has been introduced. This is in line with other Local Authorities, as can be seen in the main report</p>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>
--	--	--------------------------	--------------------------	-------------------------------------

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.

<p>Action taken/to be taken <i>(copy & paste the negative impact / outcome then detail action)</i></p>	<p>Date</p>	<p>Person responsible</p>	<p>Action complete</p>
	<p>Select date</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Select date</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Select date</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Select date</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>
	<p>Select date</p>		<input type="checkbox"/>

	Select date		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date		<input type="checkbox"/>
	Select date		<input type="checkbox"/>
If negative impacts / outcomes remain, please provide an explanation below.			
N/A			
Completed by (all involved in CIA)	Richard Le-Brun		
Date	31 st October 2022		
Signed off by (AD from different Directorate if being presented to CMT / Cabinet)	N/A		
Date	N/A		
Entered onto CIA database - date			
To be reviewed by (officer name)			

Review date	
--------------------	--

SPAЕ OSC: Work Programme 2021/22

Meeting Date		Report Deadline	Items	Contact Details	Background information
12 October 2022	30 September 2022				
			Chilterns Beechwoods Mitigation Strategy (Update)	Alex Robinson – Assistant Director for Planning	
			Q1 Financial Monitoring report	Fiona Jump Fiona.jump@dacorum.gov.uk	
			PSPO annual Review	Group Manager for Environmental and Community Protection Emma.walker@dacorum.gov.uk	
			EV Strategy Approval	Melanie Parr - Melanie.Parr@dacorum.gov.uk	
			Infrastructure Funding Statement – Developer Contributions Update	Alex Robinson – Assistant Director for Planning Alex.Robinson@dacorum.gov.uk	Statutory annual report on funds received and spent through new developments via s106 agreements and Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL

8 November 2022	28 October 2022			
		Food Service Plan and Recovery Plan	Environmental and Community Protection Emma.walker@dacorum.gov .uk	
		Quarter 2 2022/2023 Planning, Development and Regeneration performance Q2	Alex Robinson – Assistant Director for Planning Alex.Robinson@dacorum.gov v.uk	Quarterly performance report
		Environmental Services Performance Q2 Environmental and Community Protection Performance Report Q2	Group Manager for Environmental Services craig.thorpe@dacorum.gov.u k Group Manager for Environmental and Community Protection Emma.walker@dacorum.gov .uk	
		Hemel Place Strategy	James Doe, Strategic Director – Place James.doe@dacorum.gov. uk	
		Complaints Policy	Hannah Peacock & Oliver Burrough Hannah.peacock@dacorum. gov.uk	
6 December 2022	25 November 2022			

		Joint Budget		
10th January 2022	29th December 2022			
		AQMA and AQAP update	Environmental and Community Protection Emma.walker@dacorum.gov .uk	

Others to be programmed

		Biodiversity Net Gain SPD	Alex Robinson – Assistant Director for Planning Alex.Robinson@dacorum.gov .uk	January 2023
		Infrastructure Delivery Plan Update Report	Alex Robinson – Assistant Director for Planning Alex.Robinson@dacorum.gov .uk	January 2023
		Waste Services Route Optimisation	Assistant Director neighbourhood delivery - Richard LeBrun Richard.lebrun@dacorum.gov .uk	

	Affordable Housing SPD	Alex Robinson – Assistant Director for Planning Alex.Robinson@dacorum.gov.uk	
	Stewardship Supplementary Planning Document	Alex Robinson – Assistant Director for Planning	
	OSC KPI Update	James Wilson	