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FINANCE AND RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY AGENDA

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

TUESDAY 5 SEPTEMBER 2023 AT 7.30 PM

COUNCIL CHAMBER, 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 Freedman (Chair)
Councillor Capozzi
Councillor Gale
Councillor Reynolds
Councillor Santamaria
Councillor Stewart
Councillor Adeleke

Councillor Elliot (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Guest
Councillor Pound
Councillor Hannell
Councillor S Hobson
Councillor A Williams
Councillor Cox

For further information, please contact Corporate and Democratic Support on 01442 228209 or email member.support@dacorum.gov.uk

AGENDA

- 1. MINUTES** (Pages 3 - 12)
To confirm the minutes from the previous meeting.
- 2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**
To receive any apologies for absence.
- 3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest

A member with a disclosable pecuniary interest or a personal interest in a matter who attends a meeting of the authority at which the matter is considered -

- (i) must disclose the interest at the start of the meeting or when the interest becomes apparent

and, if the interest is a disclosable pecuniary interest, or a personal interest which is also prejudicial

- (ii) may not participate in any discussion or vote on the matter (and must withdraw to the public seating area) unless they have been granted a dispensation.

A member who discloses at a meeting a disclosable pecuniary interest which is not registered in the Members' Register of Interests, or is not the subject of a pending notification, must notify the Monitoring Officer of the interest within 28 days of the disclosure.

Disclosable pecuniary interests, personal and prejudicial interests are defined in Part 2 of the Code of Conduct For Members

[If a member is in any doubt as to whether they have an interest which should be declared they should seek the advice of the Monitoring Officer before the start of the meeting]

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

An opportunity for members of the public to make statements or ask questions in accordance with the rules as to public participation.

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

None.

6. ACTION POINTS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

There were no actions raised at the previous meeting.

7. QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT - CORPORATE AND COMMERCIAL

Report to follow.

8. QUARTER 1 PERFORMANCE REPORT - PEOPLE AND TRANSFORMATION (Pages 13 - 24)

9. FINANCIAL PERFORMANCE QUARTER 1 2023-24 (Pages 25 - 38)

10. REVISIONS TO COUNCIL TAX SUPPORT SCHEME FOR 2024/25 (Pages 39 - 43)

11. PARKING SERVICE TARIFF & BUSINESS CASE PROPOSALS (Pages 44 - 54)

12. WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 55 - 57)

MINUTES

FINANCE & RESOURCES OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

4 JULY 2023

Present:

Councillor Freedman (Chair)	Councillor Guest
Councillor Capozzi	Councillor Hannell
Councillor Gale	Councillor Pound
Councillor Reynolds	Councillor Elliot (Vice-Chair)
Councillor Santamaria	Councillor Cox
Councillor Adeleke	Councillor S Hobson
Councillor Stewart	Councillor Wyatt-Lowe

Officers:

Catherine Silva Donayre (Strategic Director, Corporate and Commercial) (Virtual)
Nigel Howcutt (Chief Finance Officer)
Ben Hosier (Head of Commercial Development)
Matt Brookes (Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services)
Trudi Angel (Democratic Support Officer)

Also in attendance:

Councillor Sally Symington (Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial)

The meeting started at 7.30 pm.

1. MINUTES

The minutes of the previous meeting held on 6 June 2023 were approved as an accurate record and signed by the Chair.

2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

Apologies were received from Cllr Williams. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe substituted for Cllr Williams.

3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

4. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

It was noted that a member of the public from the Local Reporting Service was in attendance.

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

None.

6. ACTION POINTS FROM THE PREVIOUS MEETING

Officers were thanked for providing responses to all the action points and it was confirmed there were no matters to be discussed. It was suggested that anyone with comments or updates regarding the responses contact T Angel within the next week, and that these items would otherwise be marked as closed off after that time.

7. PARKING SERVICE TARIFF & BUSINESS CASE PROPOSALS

C Silva Donayre gave a brief overview of the work, explaining that it was from work undertaken as part of the parking business case and had looked at how to use council assets most effectively and ensure parking charging policies were fair and appropriate, highlighting proposed changes to tariff and charging policies including removing free or partially free parking across the borough, policies relating to chargeable hours, and the rationalisation of long and short stay parking tariffs, the details of which would be determined through consultation following cabinet approval. Proposed parking tariff increases were identified to be 40p for all off-street parking, which would mean an estimated 25% increase in off-street income and broadly reflects the 25% inflation since the last increase in 2019, plus a standardised hourly charge for on-street parking of £2 per hour across the borough. The report was confirmed to include details on the context and impact of the proposed changes, as well as work undertaken to explore the potential benefits of smart technology and parking, with a proposal for parking commissioning work to be undertaken over the next year, and timescales and the consultation process.

B Hosier referred to page 23, point 2.5 and table 4, which showed an indicative timeframe for tariff and policy review, explaining that consultation would typically take 24 to 26 weeks to complete, plus getting a traffic regulation order signed, after which information boards could be manufactured and placed along with the update of information on the website, pay-and-display machines, and payment applications. It was noted that consultation would rely on a decision by the cabinet, and the results of the consultation would also have a potential impact on timelines and actions.

Cllr Freedman asked B Hosier to detail the consultation process, specifically how people would be notified, who would be asked for feedback, and how feedback would be collated and measured. B Hosier explained that in the case of changes with limited impact, typically the council employs a consultant to carry out the consultation, with every household impacted by the change contacted using a questionnaire with a range of questions for feedback and a free text area for general comment. In regard to a change with a wide range of impact, such as a change to tariffs, B Hosier explained that

everything was done online, with adverts and notifications to direct individuals who wish to provide feedback appropriately. Cllr Freedman further asked how feedback would be incorporated into a proposal. B Hosier confirmed that the proposal would be set out and approved by the cabinet, and questions would be asked around the proposals put forward, which the consultants would then use the feedback from to generate a report that would be published online for transparency.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe wondered why the increases were being proposed at the current time, and what the justification for the size of the increase was. B Hosier reiterated that 25% was the increase in inflation over the last four years since the tariffs last changed, following the precedent of increasing charges once every administration, noting that it was a proposal, and the charges would remain one of the cheapest in the country. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe further wondered whether cost increases would cover inflation or if there would be a surplus and what would be done with it if so. B Hosier explained that there was ring-fenced income from on-street charging, and income from PCNs either on- or off-street, with the trading account historically operating at a loss, adding that because the ring-fenced income could not run at a deficit it had to be balanced, with any surplus from the account going towards travel and transport related expenditure. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe finally asked what consideration had been given to the impact on those with lower incomes who would feel the increase the most. B Hosier confirmed that all tariffs had been treated equally, noting that many local shopping centres still had free parking, and that there would still be free parking areas. C Silva Donayre reiterated that the increase would still be cheaper than private car parks and compare favourably with other local authorities, adding that alternatives still existed for on-street parking, and that removing certain areas of free parking would be bringing those areas in line with the rest of the borough.

Cllr Pound asked for clarification regarding the areas where it was proposed that free parking be removed. B Hosier confirmed that there were four free car parks, being Gadebridge Park in Hemel Hempstead, The Nap and Langley Hill in Kings Langley, and Canal Fields in Berkhamsted, plus three car parks with the first hour free, being The Forge and Frogmore East in Tring, and Cowper Road in Hemel Hempstead. It was also confirmed that there were a number of limited-wait bays that were free to use and on-street, with the proposal to change these into paid on-street car bays. For reference, B Hosier explained that there were currently 18 limited-wait car park bays in Berkhamsted High Street, 12 in Tring High Street, 26 in Hemel Hempstead Old High Street, 53 in Kings Langley High Street, and 16 on London Road.

Cllr Guest noted that removing the free hour in Tring would have an impact on parents of children attending Bishop Wood School and wondered if there would be any special consultation with the school and parents. B Hosier agreed that it could be built into the consultation and highlighted with the consultants, but noted that there was usually a lot of unregulated highway near schools that could be used instead. Cllr Guest also wondered how businesses would be consulted based on potential impact on footfall. B

Hosier confirmed that anyone could take part in the consultation. Cllr Guest further wondered whether there would be a means for respondents to indicate whether they were private individuals or businesses. B Hosier explained that there would be an optional area for details such as name and address to be provided, but that it was not mandatory. It was clarified that fields for respondents to indicate their status could be included, but would be highly reliant on the decision of the respondents to give that information. Cllr Guest finally wondered if the decision to increase charges was to maintain services, or also to deter car use. It was explained that financial reasons included having an equitable parking policy across the borough, charging the right fee for the product, and making the best use of assets, but that other aspects included modal shift from cars to cycling or walking, as well as improving customer experience on the high street.

Cllr Elliot asked for confirmation that it would be Tring where the free period was proposed for removal. B Hosier confirmed the proposal was to remove the free parking across the borough, not just Tring. Cllr Elliot wondered if B Hosier could expand on the idea of smart technology and what it would entail. B Hosier explained that some smart technology had been reviewed, and there was a business case for its use in supporting parking enforcement, giving an example of an ANPR camera in a car park to allow automatic payment for registered vehicles and simplification of the payment process, with potential benefits to the council in regard to self-enforcement of car parks and civil enforcement officers being more available for on-street locations. Cllr Elliot further wondered if there would be separate apps for each car park. B Hosier clarified that a commissioning process was about to start to determine whether awarding a contract for utilising smart technology as part of the parking enforcement contract, or as a standalone, suggesting that it should be one contract covering all suitable car parks across Dacorum. C Silva Donayre added that studies had shown other benefits including increased dwell time, increased compliance, and agile tariffs based on car types. Cllr Elliot noted that individuals with more polluting vehicles tended to be lower down the affordability scale, and expressed concern in regard to penalising individuals unable to afford greener vehicles. It was agreed that the concern was valid, and noted that the process was just starting, with the paper outlining possible opportunities and options. Cllr Elliot wondered what the proposals were in regard to payment options, whether it would just be online, or whether card and cash options would remain. B Hosier confirmed a number of payment options remained, with some incurring cost for the individual and some incurring cost for the council, noting that there would be further discussion of options later on and that the intent was to ensure everyone had an opportunity to pay for the service being used.

Cllr Freedman added that he would have liked to see more in the report about payment mechanisms, noting that there was an over-generalisation in regard to those who struggled with payments as 'non-smartphone users' and highlighting that pay-as-you-go phones on certain tariffs were unable to phone premium rate numbers that were required to register to pay in some car parks. B Hosier reiterated that nothing had been

ruled in or out regarding payment methods, which was why nothing specific had been added to the report, with a review and policy decision expected following the commissioning process.

Cllr Capozzi referred to the previous month's report and a drop in car park usage, which had contributed to a loss of around £600,000 in the previous financial year, noting that the report had not included a baseline and suggesting that there be a comparative value of some sort, as well as an indication of the overheads for the car park services, potential surplus for additional services, and drivers of change in those values. Cllr Capozzi also suggested that there should be more detail regarding the additional income forecasts, and reviews of the main towns of Tring, Berkhamsted, Hemel Hempstead, and Kings Langley showing what that impact might be, and expressing concern that a blanket approach may not be the solution. Cllr Capozzi referred to free parking in neighbourhood shopping areas, asking why people using the current free hour parking were being penalised in comparison and the report had not suggested pay machines in each DBC-owned car park. B Hosier clarified that the land in question could be found in most towns and some villages and wasn't necessarily owned by the council, acknowledging that it was a valid point and could be added for the consultation. Cllr Capozzi explained that the main issue was the apparent lack of evidence for the assumptions, insinuations and forecasting in the report. It was confirmed that prior to Covid income from parking had been about £2.9 million, during Covid there had been a reduction of over 70% off peak, and post Covid there had been a 20% reduction in terms of behavioural habits, leading to the £600,000 drop in income to £2.3 million in 2021-2022 and 2022-2023 with that shortfall funded using reserves. It was reiterated that the first part of the proposal was to increase the tariffs to catch up with inflation since the last change in 2019, which was expected to bring in several hundred thousand pounds to just under £1 million additional income. In regard to the assumptions, it was explained that the 40p increase did not have price elasticity due to a lack of cheaper alternatives, with allowances made for people parking less or in free spaces and using alternative transport. It was admitted that data on free parking was not great in some areas, but an assumption of at least 50% use going forward had been made. It was further emphasised that it was likely to be the first round of a wider range of policies on transport, parking, and the green agenda not just for Dacorum but also for Hertfordshire County Council and central government, and that this had led to the assumption of further policy changes and consequently an assumption of no increases or decreases, leading to straight lines from year two. It was reiterated that neighbourhood areas and parking areas could be discussed, but noted that neighbourhood areas were used more for non-shopping parking, including residents parking semi-permanently, which was why payment had not been proposed in those areas.

Cllr Capozzi wondered at the assumption of residential parking in the neighbourhood areas, and B Hosier explained that there were typically residential flats above the businesses. It was clarified that there were currently questions without answers or solutions, such as what provisions could be made for residents if neighbourhood parking

was not free, and that the new administration had yet to clearly dictate the direction of travel. Cllr Capozzi expressed her concern regarding plans to charge for recreational-adjacent free parking such as Gadebridge and Canal Fields, as well as for the impact on small businesses, reiterating the request for the consultation questionnaire to include a checkbox for respondents to indicate their status as a private individual or business. B Hosier highlighted that due to the nature of the consultation, it was highly unlikely that responses would be positive. Cllr Capozzi noted that the 40p increase was not 25% for all tariffs depending on the length of stay. C Silva Donayre added that the equitable approach of removing free parking across the borough was to end the situation where certain areas were effectively subsidising services in other areas. Cllr Capozzi disagreed that comparisons with other local authorities was helpful due to differing catchment areas, expressing her belief that Dacorum car parks were more likely to be used by Dacorum residents rather than people from outside the area. It was agreed that it was a fair point, but that a range of local authorities had been included for that reason, and that smart parking might be a means of charging resident and non-resident fees.

Cllr Santamaria asked if B Hosier could explain where people who might park in Gadebridge and walk a bit further were expected to park. B Hosier noted that they could park on any road that was not restricted. Cllr Santamaria highlighted that parking around town was completely full most of the time, and people would be parking on residential streets. B Hosier confirmed that there was nothing to stop it. C Silva Donayre added that on-street parking would effectively have a premium due to its proximity to their destination, but that the hope was they would move to an off-street car park within the council's provision and walk a little further.

Cllr Adeleke wondered how comprehensive the consultation would be in terms of explaining the implications to residents and businesses. B Hosier explained that it would set out the proposed changes in detail along with the reasons and goals of those changes, and that it was not possible to put anything into a traffic regulation order that had not been consulted on, adding that it was a process carried out every time the tariffs were changed. Cllr Adeleke further wondered if it would include being transparent about intentions such as discouraging the use of certain types of cars. B Hosier agreed that it could be included for context, but noted that the consultation had not yet been drafted and would be based around the proposals as eventually agreed. C Silva Donayre reiterated the need to be clear that the current proposals were aimed at bringing charges in line with inflation and having an equitable parking policy for the borough, clarifying that the potential to charge based on car type had been mentioned as a possible next step in relation to smart technology and was not part of the current proposal.

Cllr Pound noted that The Nap in Kings Langley was located near a community centre, doctors' surgery, and a library. B Hosier pointed out that there was also Kings Langley High Street, with Langley Hill just above and The Nap just below.

Cllr Wyatt-Lowe wondered why the DBC's shopping centres were being excluded when free parking near parks and recreational spaces were not. B Hosier stated that they had not been included at this stage due to the number of residents using them, but adding them could be discussed. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe further wondered how smart technology would work for blue badge holders. B Hosier explained that registry on the payment system could include indicating that a blue badge was held. Cllr Wyatt-Lowe clarified that the badge is registered to an individual, who might then be in different vehicles if friends or relatives were providing assistance with transport. B Hosier noted that enforcement could not be done with cameras, so a PCN would have to be issued physically and could be waived if the civil enforcement officer saw a blue badge, but reiterated that being at the start of the process it was something that still needed to be investigated and discussed.

Cllr Gale referred to the report's allusion to income from parking services contributing to the council's overall sustainability, noting that effectively car drivers were subsidising non-car-drivers and wondering how that differed from paid parking subsidising free parking. N Howcutt agreed that the council was effectively a business, with profitable services subsidising other areas, explaining that council tax was approximately 75% to 80% of the income, with fees and charges making up most of the rest, adding that car parking, commercial profit, and the garage service all made a profit that then went into the rest of the corporate plan and wider objectives. The budget report was highlighted as indicating where all funds were spent. N Howcutt further noted that the policy would drive a lot of financial and non-financial benefits, and that if it was not approved, the £1 million would need to come from elsewhere in the budget, which could lead to even less favourable decisions. Cllr Gale suggested that the argument of making the charges equitable might be less important than the economic reality. N Howcutt explained that the modal shift in transport use was key, guaranteeing that car parking income was going to reduce in future based on the government's environmental agenda, and reiterated that the idea was to look at strategy, reviewing the current organic policy with a view to making charges equal for all residents.

Cllr Stewart referred to page six, table two, noting that policies had been bundled into two rows, being the removal of free parking, and all other policies, and wondered if it was an all or nothing proposal. B Hosier clarified that the current discussion would be summed up at the end to form the proposals, ideas and options put to the cabinet, who would make a decision to make changes or not, after which cabinet and council would receive it for approval. Cllr Stewart further wondered what size of hole the policy was trying to fill. B Hosier explained that the policy was not to fill a hole, but to provide an equitable, fair, and transparent policy driving other core corporate policies, and aligned with the administration's agenda. C Silva Donayre reiterated that the maximisation of income and review of asset use to ensure efficiency was a strong part of the whole organisation, and confirmed that the bundled policies would be separated out if and when the proposal went to consultation.

Cllr Freedman firstly referred to point 1.3 in the introduction, which mentioned the commercial strategy objectives, and reminded members and officers that part of the commercial strategy objectives was the intent to not charge residents more than they were already paying for services, such as with the green bins. He suggested that the proposal was rather in keeping with the medium-term financial strategy, rather than the commercial strategy. N Howcutt noted that the commercial strategy was wide ranging, with a focus on maximising all income to the council, including maximising existing sources of income. Cllr Freedman secondly referred to the mentioned benefit of encouraging people to find alternative transport to cars, noting that the proposal alone would not achieve that and there would need to be other things also assisting which wouldn't really fall in the council's remit, suggesting that the report should contain references to external activities that would have a positive impact. It was noted that Hertfordshire County Council had a consultation out currently around a demand responsive bus service across Dacorum, funded by BSIP and using Uber technology to determine routes, and that buses were subsidised with a maximum fare of £2. N Howcutt reiterated that the proposal was part of a much wider strategy. C Silva Donayre explained that they had wanted to include some mention and give context of wider policy plans for the future, but that the intention and primary subject of the current report was not about the wider policy, just the rationale for the tariff increase. Cllr Freedman thirdly wondered if, rather than removing the one hour free car parking entirely, it would be possible to reduce the spaces offering it and monitor the effects before wider implementation. B Hosier explained that it would make it very difficult from an enforcement perspective. N Howcutt expressed his concern for the fairness to residents, as well as operational issues, adding that implementing pilots would also have a significant impact on timescales. C Silva Donayre confirmed that specific committee comments could be made known to cabinet, although it wouldn't necessarily change the recommendations put forward. Cllr Freedman finally wondered if nearby clubs and businesses could be asked to contribute to keep the free parking, giving Canal Fields as an example with the nearby Tennis and Bowls clubs. B Hosier agreed it could be put to cabinet for discussion, with a possible sticking point being that members of the club wouldn't be guaranteed parking spaces. C Silva Donayre suggested that the free parking could be removed and a club could have a chargeable permit, reiterating again that the intention was to avoid case-by-case solutions.

Cllr Hannell noted that the previous increases in tariff had been in circumstances with a much lower level of inflation, suggesting that 25% was too much considering the cost of living crisis, mortgage rate increases, and wage increases not keeping up with inflation, and expressing his hope that free parking in neighbourhood shopping centres would not be stopped.

Cllr Symington asked if the cost of adjusting the tariff annually could be explained for context. B Hosier noted that there was a table showing the implementation cost, including carrying out the consultation, and updating signage and payment machines,

which would be £27,000 for every change, with the process taking 24 to 26 weeks each time, leading to the current approach of making a change once per administration.

Cllr Capozzi wondered where in the report the cost of making the currently free car parks chargeable was discussed, and whether that expense would negate the expected income. B Hosier explained that there were currently about 80 pay and park machines across the borough that could be moved around as needed with an installation charge of a few hundred pounds, and that those assets would be renewed in a couple of years' time as part of the parking enforcement contract, but would link in with smart technology to enable people to pay through alternative measures.

Cllr Symington thanked the officers for the report, and councillors for their feedback requesting more information, noting that there would likely be more detail within the cabinet papers to come. She reviewed the fact that inflation had been between 25% and 30% over the past four years, with cost increases also impacting how the council generates income, reiterating that the two aspects of the report were firstly, using assets within the council's control to generate income, and secondly, seeking a behaviour change around car use in line with environmental policies and targets. Cllr Symington also suggested that to avoid a race to the bottom it was not necessary to remain within the lowest quartile of parking charges in the county or locally, when the additional income could go towards other improvements for residents in relation to parking enforcement, provision of blue badge spaces, addition of cycle racks etc. It was acknowledged that retailers were suffering in the face of Covid, climate change, and online competition, and conceded that the price increases were skewed in favour of longer stays, but suggested that the matter needed to be considered holistically, as part of a larger programme of changes.

M Brookes noted that the recommendation would be to go out to consultation, with another decision-making process to follow. A recommendation was made to note the proposals put forward, with feedback and comments to be taken onboard the following day.

Cllr Freedman thanked everyone for their input, and summarised the items of concern around taking this step now, and the current level of detail, explaining his understanding that the committee would have a problem with going to public consultation with just the information within the current report, while acknowledging the report was not intended to be used for public consultation. Cllr Freedman also noted that in regard to the need for change and policy, the portfolio holder should have enough feedback to take to cabinet such that cabinet could make an informed decision.

Cllr Freedman asked the committee whether they were happy to note the report subject to the comments raised.

Cllr Elliot noted his support for point C, but that he would abstain from points A and B.

Cllr Guest requested whether it was possible to have a recorded vote. M Brookes explained that the scrutiny committee's comments would be taken forward for cabinet to make the decision, so a vote would have no purpose.

Cllr Freedman reiterated the question of whether the scrutiny committee agreed to note the report, and there was general agreement.

8. WORK PROGRAMME

Cllr Freedman noted that he had not received any items for discussion, and reiterated that these could be submitted at any time.

There being no other business, the meeting was closed at 9:25.

The meeting ended at 9.25 pm.



Finance and Resources

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Quarter 1 Performance Report: People Transformation Digital and ICT Communications
Date:	5 September 2023
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Carole Weston
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	N/A
Background papers:	Nil
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	KPI – Key Performance Indicators CSU – Customer Services Unit CEE – Climate and Ecological Emergency

<p>Report Author / Responsible Officer</p> <p>Aidan Wilkie, Strategic Director (People & Transformation)</p> <p>Matt Rawdon, Assistant Director (People)</p> <p>Kelvin Soley, Head of Communications</p> <p>Shaj Choudhury , Head of Transformation</p> <p>Yvonne Salvin, Head of Digital</p> <p> </p> <p>Matt.Rawdon@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228513 (ext. 2513)</p> <p>Kelvin.Soley@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228504 (ext. 2504)</p> <p>Shaj.choudhury@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228166 (ext. 2166)</p> <p>Yvonne.salvin@dacorum.gov.uk / 01442 228454 (ext. 2454)</p>

Corporate Priorities	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	All wards
Purpose of the report:	To provide the Q1 performance information for monitoring and information
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	That Members note the report and identify any areas where they require additional information
Period for post policy/project review:	N/A

1. Introduction

1.1. This paper will provide an update on service performance over Q1 2023/24 for People, Transformation (including CSU and Climate and Ecological Emergency), Digital and ICT, Communications, and also highlight key achievements over this same period.

2. People

2.1. The total days sickness absence for quarter 1 is lower than the previous quarter.

2.2. Detailed analysis shows the main contributors to sickness absence were musculoskeletal, Cold/Flu and mental health. HR work with management to assess cases to understand the reasons for the absence so that a tailored approach can be devised. For cases of work-related sickness, mechanisms are in place to identify the 'possible cause', so that managers can find solutions to alleviate these pressures whilst still setting expectations of work delivery. Alternatively, for cases including home life stressors, there are many support processes in place such as occupational health; counselling; sign posting to external support; and our mental health first aider programme.

2.3. The sickness scrutiny group continues to meet monthly to assess all sickness absence and looks to identify trends and areas of concern. Any such cases will be escalated to a more formal route as per the policy. This group also monitors return to work interview compliance, as well as carrying out spot checks on whether managers are in regular contact with their staff whilst off sick from work.

2.4. The sickness scrutiny group continues to assess all long-term sickness cases each month to ensure the Council is doing all it can to support staff back to work, by ensuring we have the latest medical information from our Occupational Health team, looking at what adjustments we can make to roles and where cases need to be escalated to a formal process in line with the policy. We work closely with managers to ensure regular contact is made with staff who are absent from work as this is a critical aspect to help staff back to the workplace.

- 2.5. HR also continue to send out staff wellness offers which includes courses, webinars, exercise classes and other support. These focus on a dedicated topic and also link into national themes around wellness, with the next initiative, financial wellbeing workshops, being launched. The Council continues to promote our mental health first aider programme, where we have a cohort of trained staff who can be the first port of call for our workforce should they need some assistance. We also offer free confidential helpline to staff where they can seek professional advice and counselling in certain cases. We also are continuing to run our staff engagement group which is focussing on health and wellbeing issues/solutions. The recent initiative coming out of this group is hosting a staff picnic.
- 2.6. HR has been undertaking further interventions which have been approved by the strategic leadership team to help reduce sickness absence, the key actions include implementing Mental Health First Aid awareness 'lite' course for managers, where there is a high level of mental health issues in their teams, having a physio on site for front line staff (Pilot to commence at Cupid Green), working with H&S on musculoskeletal cases – to identify trends, appropriate PPE and training needs. We have also recently commissioned a clinical counselling service for front line staff who are dealing with traumatic/emotional caseloads.
- 2.7. The HR team has arranged Food Nutrition classes delivered by Community Action Dacorum and we have created a new Cost of Living internal web page to offer support/guidance to staff. Alongside all this work, HR and H&S are conducting a review of DSE assessment compliance to ensure that both DSE assessments have been undertaken at both home and office locations. In the summer there is to be a leadership development course launched for all middle managers which will focus on many aspects of good leadership. We are launching our leadership development programme for team managers, in which managing staff through change and how we best manage anxious staff is factored into the programme.
- 2.8. The annual staff turnover percentage is still below 15% (actual 7%) which is considered a healthy staff turnover rate in the UK. Work continues within the people strategy to ensure we are creating an engaging culture and ensuring staff have effective leaders guiding them within the workplace.
- 2.9. The people strategy continues to be delivered, some of the key developments include:
- Leadership programme delivered for the Leadership team
 - Launch of our new values and behaviours
 - Windrush event delivered and held various equalities staff workshops
 - Supporting various staff restructures
 - Job career fairs attended
 - Market forces policy implemented and being applied to roles across the Council
 - Utilising LinkedIn Recruiter license to contact possible applicants for vacancies
 - Implemented new recruitment agency framework
 - Increased graduate intake through the national graduate development programme (increase from 1 to 3 graduates per year).
 - Delivered the Annual Staff Recognition Awards.
 - Held a leadership conference to share strategic vision and launch new management training programme.
 - Consultation stage to launch a new menopause policy.
 - Implemented a new sickness management system to reduce costs (circa. £25k)

3. Transformation

- 3.1. We continue to work on implementing the Customer Strategy. A new Customer Charter has been developed, which set out a number of commitments the Council will adhere to improve our Customer Service across the organisation. An implementation plan has been developed to help embed the charter commitments across all departments. Some of the actions include:
 - 3.1.1. Improving some of our webpages so that we can make it easier for our customers and residents to access the information they need easily without having to call or contact us.
 - 3.1.2. We established a Values Delivery Group with colleagues from across the organisation to help us focus on embedding the culture of our Customer Charter. Our Champions will also be working with us to review our methods of communication with our customers to help improve this.
 - 3.1.3. We have recognised issues with our Integrated Voice Recognition System which is adding to the call wait-times and have undertaken a review to identify improvements to the customer journeys. To ensure we design the most customer friendly journeys, we will be reaching out to residents and customers to help us design and test the future automated scripts.
- 3.2. A review of the Central PMO function was undertaken to identify how the current PMO reporting process can be improved and how the PMO can provide greater value to the leadership team to ensure greater accountability and assurance on project and programme delivery across Dacorum.
- 3.3. Over the next few months, we will be working with colleagues across the council to define projects and ensure robust plans are in place, develop new and efficient reporting mechanisms and work to establish improved governance arrangements to ensure we have effective oversight and assurance of critical projects being delivered across Dacorum.
- 3.4. Following the adoption of a new Key Performance Framework by Cabinet in February 2022, we have been working with services to establish appropriate targets for Key performance indicators.
- 3.5. To ensure a greater focus on improving performance across Dacorum, we have worked with services to establish key actions that need to be undertaken to help improve performance and give leadership greater assurance on how teams are performing across the Council.
- 3.6. Over the next few months we will be undertaking further work to review all performance metrics and ensure we have relevant KPIs set for all teams as well as reviewing our reporting approach.

4. Customer Services Unit (CSU)

- 4.1. Call handle times remain high and consistent with the previous quarter. The first quarter of the year will always see high call volumes due to the start of the financial year and the increase in Council Tax and Rent calls. To mitigate this we ensure staff are trained in these services as a priority to ensure wait times are maintained at a manageable level. As well as encouraging customers to use online facilities, they are given the option to request a call back to avoid them experiencing lengthy wait times.
- 4.2. The Integrated Voice Recognition (IVR) dialogues continue to be reviewed with service areas to ensure the customer's journey is a seamless route to obtaining the answers they require. Forthcoming feedback sessions with customer focus groups will allow us to improve the customer journey further.

- 4.3. Three new starters have filled the vacant posts, the dedicated Training Officers has focused on training them in the high volume call areas, and over time this will assist with reducing call wait times as more staff are available to answer calls.
- 4.4. Complaint volumes remain consistent and the Complaints team continue to work closely with Service Managers and Heads of Service to monitor performance, review data and provide data on trends to ensure service improvements can be implemented and in turn reduce down the volume of complaints received. New Service Managers and Heads of Service have received training from the Complaints team in how to manage complaints.

5. Climate and Ecological Emergency (CEE)

- 5.1. We have recently employed a new Project Manager and Project Officer as part of the CEE programme team. The team have focused on reviewing all of the actions we have listed across the organisation to help deliver against our CEE strategy and have developed a robust programme with subsequent projects prioritised to help us achieve our ambitions. Over the next few months, the team will focus on establishing detailed project plans and ensure projects have the right resources in place.
- 5.2. A Clothes swap event was held in June, with a total of 115 people who attended to refresh their wardrobes for free. A total of 1,063 items of clothing was brought in, 89 per cent of which were swapped. This saved 5.6 tonnes of carbon dioxide equivalent from being emitted, had these clothes ended up in landfill.
- 5.3. Let's clear the air campaign – Hertfordshire County Council has led this in person initiative, aimed at promoting air quality discussions. They toured the county week commencing 15th May. They visited Hemel Hempstead, supported by 3 DBC Officers and Members on the rainbow stage on Thursday 18th May.
- 5.4. Works are complete in decarbonising 24 homes using the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) Wave 1. Closing out reports will be completed next quarter and post completion monitoring will continue after this. We have been successful with SHDF-Wave 2 and will develop an initial implementation plan for this next quarter.
- 5.5. Solar Together Phase 1 has seen over 2,000 solar panels installed on over 350 residents' rooves. Phase 2 will open for registration in autumn this year.
- 5.6. The team continue to record and report on organisation and borough wide emission data.

6. Digital and ICT

- 6.1. IT Systems availability (100%) continued to be positive within the quarter demonstrating the fundamental reliability of the Council's technology infrastructure.
- 6.2. The primary performance indicator (ICT01 - Percentage of incidents resolved in less than 2 days) remained red within the quarter at 85% against a target of 90%. In May 2023, there was a performance dip because laptops were not connecting to applications. Investigations identified an issue with the deployment of the latest Endpoint Protection update and was therefore treated as a potential virus. Whilst the issue was fixed in under 48hrs the team decided to leave calls open to ensure the fix applied was tested fully and signed off by users.

- 6.3. In June our target performance was achieved despite the fact that there continues to be a vacancy in the team, affecting our ability to meet our targets. This is because we have provided additional management oversight in this area to ensure tickets are managed effectively and closed on time.
- 6.4. Negotiations are underway with Housing to extend an existing secondment which would enable us to attempt to recruit a 12 month fixed term post which will have a positive impact on the team's overall performance.
- 6.5. Work to improve our ability to self-serve across IT is continuing. The new starter process is under review with new automation helping to drive down the time it takes to get a new starter set up on our network.
- 6.6. During this quarter SLT approved an upgrade to Teams which will enable all users to make and receive external calls from customers directly from their Teams dashboard. This will make Council officers more productive and efficient when responding to customer needs. All users will have access to this new functionality by the end of the year.
- 6.7. The Digital Team is currently testing an application that will allow users to use Teams securely on their own mobile phones. Besides allowing us to reduce the numbers of expensive mobile devices on our estate, this initiative will enable users to work even more flexibly; allowing us all to see our diaries, take calls, send messages and chat on the go.

7. Communications

- 7.1 In Q1 we delivered against our external communications programme supporting corporate projects and events across DBC services and partner organisations. This includes 418 social media campaigns/posts on our corporate channels (Facebook, Twitter and LinkedIn), 12 news articles (website), 12 press releases and more than 160,000 emails via our digital publications portfolio.
 - 7.2 In Q1 we delivered on our events and awareness programme including the planning and delivery of the Coronation of His Majesty King Charles III, with free events and screenings in Gadebridge Park. We also delivered the Annual Armed Forces Day celebrations and Windrush 75th anniversary in June, with free events and entertainment.
 - 7.3 In Q1 we delivered against our internal communications programme supporting corporate projects and staff initiatives. We have delivered the quarterly in-person/hybrid 'Staff Update Session', with more than 300 colleagues attending (in-person and online), and an 'informal Coffee Morning' event with SLT and staff. We also delivered other staff engagement events including the Annual Staff Recognition Awards. In Q1, we issued 45 internal communication campaigns across internal channels, such as our intranet, covering general staff news, corporate information (projects and initiatives) and staff events.
 - 7.4 We have delivered our programme of print and digital publications, including 12 issues of our weekly *Dacorum Life* digital newsletter (currently 12,881 subscribers).
 - 7.5 Social media and website statistics: Our social media channels continue to grow organically at a healthy rate compared to similar local authorities. This quarter sees a further significant increase in Facebook and LinkedIn connections, reflecting increased engagement, place shaping and business-related activity, including effective promotion of job vacancies.
- Dacorum BC **Facebook** – April to June 2023:
 - o Connections – 12,753 (increase of 253 from Q4 2022/23)
 - o Link clicks – 4,627
 - o Posts – 176

- Dacorun BC **Twitter** – April to June 2023:
 - o Connections – 8,993 (increase of 78 from Q4 2022/23)
 - o Link clicks – 2,817
 - o Posts – 208
- Dacorun BC **LinkedIn** – April to June 2023:
 - o Connections – 5,076 (increase of 187 from Q4 2022/23)
 - o Link clicks – 331
 - o Posts – 34


Website statistics Q1 2023/24

Page Title	Pageviews ↓	Unique Pageviews	Avg. Time on Page	Bounce Rate
	848,345 % of Total: 100.00% (848,345)	610,844 % of Total: 100.00% (610,844)	00:01:03 Avg for View: 00:01:03 (0.00%)	47.64% Avg for View: 47.64% (0.00%)
1. My Bin Collections	108,109 (12.74%)	47,570 (7.79%)	00:00:31	9.03%
2. Dacorun Borough Council Home Page	92,374 (10.89%)	77,023 (12.61%)	00:00:30	22.64%
3. Garden Waste Subscription Service	59,058 (6.96%)	23,133 (3.79%)	00:00:39	50.40%
4. Council Services - Payment Portal	43,903 (5.18%)	21,399 (3.50%)	00:00:27	14.17%
5. Transaction complete - Payment Portal	34,445 (4.06%)	32,607 (5.34%)	00:01:56	89.81%
6. When are my bins collected	34,095 (4.02%)	32,690 (5.35%)	00:01:07	89.21%
7. Elections 2023	32,757 (3.86%)	20,201 (3.31%)	00:03:39	67.95%
8. Search Dacorun Borough Council	27,814 (3.28%)	25,218 (4.13%)	00:01:00	62.54%
9. Search planning applications	22,523 (2.65%)	18,610 (3.05%)	00:04:00	78.08%
10. Rent	18,198 (2.15%)	16,864 (2.76%)	00:01:16	77.29%
11. Complete your shopping - Payment Portal	17,873 (2.11%)	14,135 (2.31%)	00:02:01	25.54%
12. Payment summary - Payment Portal	17,832 (2.10%)	14,334 (2.35%)	00:00:11	17.99%
13. Paying your Council Tax bill	14,226 (1.68%)	12,710 (2.08%)	00:01:06	62.70%
14. Apply for housing	8,528 (1.01%)	7,164 (1.17%)	00:04:55	78.63%



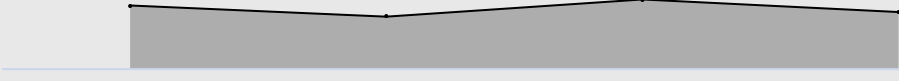
15. Contact us	8,381 (0.99%)	7,195 (1.18%)	00:02:47	63.89%
16. Waste services extra questions	8,306 (0.98%)	2,989 (0.49%)	00:00:41	10.55%
17. Your Councillors	8,178 (0.96%)	6,277 (1.03%)	00:01:10	30.84%
18. Do it online	7,585 (0.89%)	6,437 (1.05%)	00:00:16	14.82%
19. Council Tax	6,714 (0.79%)	5,723 (0.94%)	00:00:32	21.36%
20. Payment	6,111 (0.72%)	4,127 (0.68%)	00:01:15	67.02%
21. Decision Notice search	6,030 (0.71%)	3,680 (0.60%)	00:00:33	48.73%
22. Make a payment	5,811 (0.68%)	5,191 (0.85%)	00:01:15	64.85%
23. Recycling refuse and waste	5,706 (0.67%)	5,060 (0.83%)	00:00:27	17.21%
24. Back end page	5,107 (0.60%)	4,572 (0.75%)	00:01:06	87.11%
25. Dacorum Borough Council - Payment Portal	4,449 (0.52%)	3,743 (0.61%)	00:00:08	3.59%

Finance & Resources OSC
People & Transformation Report

Performance Scorecard F&C OSC- Digital

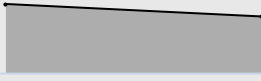
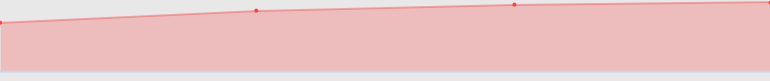
Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Target	DoT	Performance Trend
ICT01(Q)	Percentage of incidents resolved in less than 2 days (Q)	Jun 2023	84.82%	90.00%	✓	

Performance Scorecard F&R OSC- People

Measure Code ↑	Measure	Date	Actual	Previous Quarter	DoT	Performance Trend
HR02a	Turnover of staff	Jun 2023	7.00%	14.00%	❌	
Staff Turnover is lower than the last quarter and still within the standard healthy industry guide of less than 15%.						
HR03 (Q)	Total days lost through sickness absence for the council (OSC)	Jun 2023	2,146.50	2,574.26	✅	
<p>The sickness outturn is lower than last quarter and lower than the same quarter last year. Detailed analysis shows the main contributors to sickness absence were musculoskeletal, Cold/Flu and mental health. HR work with management to assess cases to understand the reasons for the absence so that a tailored approach can be devised. For cases of work-related sickness, mechanisms are in place to identify the 'possible cause', so that managers can find solutions to alleviate these pressures whilst still setting expectations of work delivery. Alternatively, for cases including home life stressors, there are many support processes in place such as: occupational health; counselling; sign posting to external support; and our mental health first aider programme. The sickness scrutiny group continues to meet monthly to assess all sickness absence and looks to identify trends and areas of concern. Any such cases will be escalated to a more formal route as per the policy. This group also monitors return work interview compliance, as well as carrying out spot checks on whether managers are in regular contact with their staff whilst off sick from work. The sickness scrutiny group continues to assess all long-term sickness cases each month to ensure the Council is doing all it can to support staff back to work, by ensuring we have the latest medical information from our Occupational Health team, looking at what adjustments we can make to roles and where cases need to be escalated to a formal process in line with the policy. We work closely with managers to ensure regular contact is made with staff who are absent from work as this is a critical aspect to help staff back to the workplace. HR also continue to send out staff wellness offers which includes courses, webinars, exercise classes and other support. These focus on a dedicated topic and also link into national themes around wellness. The Council continues to promote our mental health first aider programme, where we have a cohort of trained staff who can be the first port of call for our workforce should they need some assistance. We also offer free confidential helpline to staff where they can seek professional advice and counselling in certain cases. We also are continuing to run our staff engagement group which is focusing on health and wellbeing issues/solutions. HR has been undertaking further interventions which have been approved by the strategic leadership team to help reduce sickness absence, the key actions include: Implementing Mental Health First Aid awareness 'lite' course for managers where there is a high level of mental health issues in their teams, having a physio on site for front line staff (Pilot commenced at Cupid Green), working with H&S on musculoskeletal cases - to identify trends, appropriate PPE and training needs. We have also recently commissioned a clinical counselling service for front line staff who are dealing with traumatic/emotional caseloads, the pilot will be run in the homelessness team, and we will roll out to other teams if it is successful. The HR team has arranged Food nutrition classes delivered by CAD, created a new Cost of Living internal web page to offer support/guidance to staff. Alongside all this work, HR and H&S has recently conducted a review of DSE assessment compliance to ensure that both DSE assessments have been undertaken at both home and office locations. In the summer there is to be a leadership development course launched for all middle managers which will focus on many aspects of good leadership. We are currently in the planning stage of a leadership development programme, in which HR will be looking to ensure supporting staff through change and how we best manage anxious staff will be factored in to the programme.</p>						
HR05	Average days lost due to sickness absence per FTE (OSC)	Jun 2023	0.99	1.22	n/a	

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Performance Scorecard F&C OSC- Transformation





Measure Code	Measure	Date	Actual	↓ Target	DoT	Performance Trend
CS01 (Q)	Percentage of stage 1 complaints due and resolved in the month within policy period (Q)	Jun 2023	51.22%		✘	
CS02 (Q)	Percentage of stage 2 complaints due and resolved in the month within policy period (Q)	Jun 2023	55.56%		✘	
CSU10 (Q)	Call Handling: Average wait time (Q)	Jun 2023	788.67	300.00	✘	



Finance and Resources

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Financial Performance Quarter 1 2023-24
Date:	5th September 2023
Report on behalf of:	CLlr Sally Symington, Portfolio Holder for Corporate Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix A – General Fund Forecast Outturn Position Q1 2023-24 Appendix B – HRA Forecast Outturn Position Q1 2023-24 Appendix C – Projected Capital Outturn Q1 2023-24
Background papers:	None.
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	GF – General Fund HRA – Housing Revenue Account

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Responsible Officer	
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Corporate Priorities	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery

	Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	All
Purpose of the report:	<p>1. To provide details of the projected outturn 2023-24 as at quarter 1 for the:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • General Fund • Housing Revenue Account • Capital Programme
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<p>1. That Committee note the financial position for 2023-24 as at Quarter 1.</p>
Period for post policy/project review:	The Council's financial position is reported to committee on an ongoing, quarterly basis.

1 Introduction:

1.1 This report presents the Council's forecast outturn for 2023-24 as at quarter 1, 30th June 2023. The report covers the following budgets with associated appendices:

- General Fund – Appendix A. A surplus against budget of £0.766m is forecast.
- Housing revenue Account (HRA) – Appendix B. A pressure of £0.390m is forecast.
- Capital Programme – Appendix C. General Fund Budgets are forecasting a pressure of £0.07m and re-phasing to future years of £23.780m. The HRA capital programme is forecast to budget and re-phasing to future years of £17.682m.

2 General Fund Position – all Scrutiny Committee Areas

2.1 Appendix A provides an overview of the General Fund forecast outturn position.

2.2 The table below provides an overview by Scrutiny area of the provisional outturn for controllable budgets within the General Fund.

Table 1 Scrutiny Committee	Current Budget £m	Forecast Outturn £m	Variance	
			£m	%
Finance & Resources	10.937	11.760	0.823	7.5%
Strategic Planning and Environment	12.299	13.088	0.789	6.4%
Housing and Community	1.903	1.933	0.030	1.6%
Total Operating Cost	25.139	26.781	1.642	6.5%
Core Funding	(25.140)	(27.548)	(2.408)	9.6%
(Surplus)/ Deficit	(0.001)	(0.767)	(0.766)	

2.3 Key variances against General Fund and HRA service areas (greater than £0.100m) are outlined in sections 3-7 below.

3 General Fund Position- Finance and Resources and Core Funding

Table 2 – Finance and Resources Quarter 1	Current	Forecast	Variance	
	Budget	Outturn	£m	%
	£m	£m	£m	%
Chief Executives	0.999	0.999	0.000	0.0%
Housing & Property	(6.083)	(5.930)	0.153	(2.5%)
Neighbourhood Delivery	0.334	0.382	0.048	14.4%
Corporate and Commercial	6.861	7.167	0.306	4.5%
People and Transformation	4.055	4.373	0.318	7.8%
Place	4.771	4.769	(0.002)	(0.0%)
Total Operating Cost	10.937	11.760	0.823	7.5%
Core Funding	(25.140)	(27.548)	(2.408)	9.6%

3.1 Key variances against Finance and Resources service areas (greater than £0.100m) are outlined below.

3.2 Housing & Property – pressure of £0.153m

Pressures on Civic Halls in respect of income, utilities and repairs are being reported, including those relating to Victoria Hall, Tring and Berkhamsted Civic Centre and the Council’s Community Centres.

3.3 Corporate and Commercial- net pressure of £0.306m

A pressure of £0.385m is being forecast in respect of the delivery of income associated with the Council’s commercial programme. The commercial programme is focused on developing a stronger commercial culture and ethos in Council service delivery. The Commercial income targets are being reviewed and re assessed as part of the Council’s Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) delivery. The pressure is partly offset by underspends across the directorate due to vacant posts.

The Council has incurred legal expenses of £0.057m in respect of an historic and expected pension settlement. A request will be made to Cabinet to recommend to Council a reserve drawdown from the Council’s Litigation reserve in order to cover these costs.

3.4 People & Transformation – pressure of £0.318m

A £0.200m saving for 2023-24 associated with the Council’s customer strategy is not expected to be achieved until future years. The service is progressing the strategy, having identified processes and areas for improvement. The project will now look at the level of digital support required in order to streamline manual process and implement changes.

A request will be made to Cabinet to approve a virement of £100k of revenue budgets from the Transformation service where it is held to the Digital Service. The budget is currently held in the Transformation service, earmarked for licence costs associated with the Council’s digital platform. The virement will simply move the budget to the service which is leading on this procurement work.

3.5 Core Funding- additional income of £2.408m

A surplus of £2.298m is forecast for treasury investment income for 2023-24. Since the treasury investment income target was set, a number of factors impacting performance against this target have changed. £20.298m of the capital programme was slipped from 2022-23 to 2023-24, meaning cash balances are higher than expected when the income target was originally calculated. In addition, interest rates have risen higher than expected and are staying higher for longer periods than originally anticipated. These factors mean that the monies held in investments is higher and generating higher returns for 2023-24. This is not projected to continue into 2024-25 as cash balances are expected to reduce as the capital programme develops. The Council is expecting to take on both GF and HRA borrowing in the medium term to support its capital programme. The approved capital programme for the current and next financial year, prior to inclusion of the 2022/23 slippage was approved at:

- 2023/24 £114m (GF - £33m, HRA - £81m)
- 2024/25 £88m (GF - £26m, HRA £62m)

4 General Fund Position- Strategic Planning and Environment

Table 3 – Strategic Planning and Environment Quarter 1	Current	Forecast	Variance	
	Budget	Outturn	£m	%
	£m	£m		
Neighbourhood Operations	11.310	11.399	0.089	0.8%
Housing & Property	0.053	0.098	0.045	84.9%
People & Transformation	(0.114)	(0.165)	(0.051)	44.7%
Place	1.050	1.756	0.706	67.2%
Total Operating Cost	12.299	13.088	0.789	6.4%

4.1 Neighbourhood Operations – pressure of £0.089m

Staffing pressures for waste services are forecast to be £0.520m for the year, due to additional agency requirements to meet service demand. The waste transformation program is nearing completion with the new rounds having commenced from the beginning of August. The breakdown of this pressure is split between current operational structures causing a pressure £0.250m, and the new rounds including staff absence pressures are expected to cause a further pressure of £0.270m for the remaining 8 months of the year. The pressure in 23/24 is a significant reduction on 22/23 financial pressures due to the implementation of the route optimisation project and further cost reductions are expected going forward.

There is a pressure of £0.175m on hire vehicle budgets due to the ongoing breakdowns from the existing fleet. The service is working with the supplier to find a resolution to the problems and options to reduce / control these pressures moving forwards.

A surplus of £0.700m on Garden Waste income is reported. Take up of the scheme is much higher than anticipated when the charge was introduced at the end of 2022-23 and hence the underlying service financial pressure is significantly reduced.

4.2 Place – pressures of £0.706m

The planning service has seen the pressures on their planning income continue from 2022-23. The income pressure for 2023/24 is £0.500m for planning income and £0.050m for land searches fees. The pressures are linked to the impact of the current economic conditions on developers and the associated adverse impact on planning income. There are smaller pressures across the service contributing to the balance of pressures.

5 General Fund Position- Housing and Community

Table 4 – Housing and Community General Fund Quarter 1	Current Budget	Forecast Outturn	Variance	
	£m	£m	£m	%
Housing & Property	1.228	1.231	0.003	0.002
Corporate and Commercial	(2.412)	(2.421)	(0.009)	0.004
People and Transformation	1.239	1.341	0.102	0.082
Place	1.848	1.782	(0.066)	(0.036)
Total Operating Cost	1.903	1.933	0.030	0.016

5.1 People & Transformation – pressure of £0.102m

This comprises smaller pressures across the service.

6 Housing Revenue Account Position

6.1 The HRA is a ring-fenced account relating to the Council’s Landlord functions. A guiding principle of the HRA is that revenue raised from rents and service charges must be sufficient to fund expenditure incurred. The provisional outturn position for the HRA is shown at Appendix B.

6.2 The projected HRA balance at the end of 2023-24 is a pressure of £0.390m.

6.3 Supervision and Management - £0.577m pressure against budget

A pressure of £0.577m is being seen on employee budget due to interim management £0.279m within the HRA while works continue on the Housing Transformation Improvement Programme. Agency staff covering vacancies across the service are causing pressures of £0.365m. This pressure is offset by a number of vacancies across the service £0.062m.

6.4 Repairs & Maintenance - £1.313m pressure against budget

A pressure of £1.313m is being forecast due to demands on repairs and maintenance remaining high, including that relating to void properties and the completion of damp and mould works. The service is working on a number of strategies to ensure that pressures are contained and where possible reduced for the remaining 9 months of 2023-24, the current economic inflationary pressures significantly impact on this particular services ability to manage cost pressures.

7 HRA- Technical and Accounting Adjustments £1.484m over achievement in investment income

7.1 Like the General Fund, in recent years due to the pandemic and the planning moratorium the HRA saw a large amount of capital slippage, £55.938m, which has increased the balances held in investments at the start of 2023-24. This has led to a surplus of £1.484m from the investment of those cash balances. The cash balances for the HRA are expected to significantly decrease during 2023-24 as the capital

programme progresses. It is still expected that the HRA will require borrowing to fund its capital expenditure by the end of 2023-24.

8 Capital Programme

8.1 Appendix C shows the projected capital provisional outturn in detail by scheme.

The table below summarises the overall capital outturn position by Scrutiny committee area.

The current budget is the original budget approved by Cabinet in February 2023, plus approved amendments.

The 'rephasing' column refers to projects where expenditure is still expected to be incurred but will now be in 2024-25 rather than 2023-24 ('slippage'), or conversely, where expenditure planned initially for 2024-25 has been incurred in 2023-24 ('accelerated spend').

The 'Variance' column refers to projects which are expected to come in under or over budget and projects which are no longer required.

Table 5- Capital Outturn 2023-24	Current Budget £m	Re-phasing (To)/from future years £m	Revised Budget £0m	Forecast Outturn £m	Variance	
					£m	%
Finance and Resources	25.952	(19.152)	6.800	6.770	(0.030)	(0.44%)
Strategic Planning and Environment	6.261	(3.373)	2.888	2.988	0.100	3.46%
Housing & Community	3.380	(1.254)	2.125	2.125	0.000	0.00%
GF Total	35.593	(23.780)	11.813	11.883	0.070	0.59%
HRA Total	86.989	17.682	69.308	69.308	0.000	0.00%
Grand Total	122.582	(41.462)	81.121	81.191	0.070	0.09%

8.2 General Fund Capital Programme Major Variances

General Fund capital budgets are reporting slippage of £2.780m. The slippage includes the following items over £0.100m:

- Fleet Replacement Programme £0.750m, additional time taken to review the requirements of fleet moving forward and delays in delivery of orders.
- Commercially sensitive projects £4.002m, while review of options and viability is considered.
- Car parking refurbishment £0.135m and Water Gardens Drainage £0.035m, while options and procurement are undertaken.
- Leisure centre improvement programme £13.850m. Options for the future developments are being designed and will be considered by Members, significant spend now unlikely in 2023/24.
- Disabled Facilities Grant £0.344m. Based on capacity within the team, some of the funding is expected to be carried forward to future years.

- Automation Programme £0.170m, Civica Customer Experience £0.150m, Future Vision of Customer Relationship Management (CRM) system £0.435. These projects are all linked to the new digital platform. This project is due to commence December 2023 and complete during 2024-25.
- The Bury £2.623m. This project is still under review to determine the best use of the site moving forwards.
- Adventure Playground Improvement Programme £0.911m due to a review of the service and project requirements moving forward.

The General Fund is reporting overspend on capital projects of £0.070m. £0.100m relates to Wheeled Bins and Boxes. The service has experience continuing high level of demand for replacement bins following the deterioration of existing bins splitting and requiring replacement. A large proportion of the defective bins have now been replaced and therefore spend is expected to fall within budget in future years.

8.3 Housing Revenue Account

HRA capital budgets are reporting slippage of £17.682m. The housing development programme is being reviewed. Some projects, including Cherry Bounce and Garages Sites are currently on hold while options and assessments are considered in the context of increasing project costs linked to the challenging current economic climate.

8.4 Supplementary Capital Budget and Capital Virement Requests

A request will be made to Cabinet to approve a virement of General Fund capital budgets in relation to the Hemel Garden Community programmes, in order to allocate the approved budget to the projects being undertaken, as shown in appendix C. The Council received funding from central government in 2022-23 for various works relating to Hemel Garden Communities. The associated budget has been held against one project in the capital programme (Nickey Line improvements), and is to be moved out to specific projects as they are identified.

A request will be made to Cabinet to approve supplementary capital budget of £0.109m for improvement works to tennis courts across the borough, to be funded via a capital grant that the Council is to receive for this purpose.

A request will be made to Cabinet to recommend to Council to approve slippage of £1.000m of HRA capital budgets relating to the buy-back of Council Homes purchased under Right to Buy Purchases. There are several purchases coming to completion but the timing meant they were delayed from 22/23 into the present year. This budget was approved during 2022/23 and unspent during that year. Approval of the request will allow this unspent budget to be added to the capital programme for 2023-24.

9. Financial implications

9.1 Contained within the body of this report.

10. Legal implications

10.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from this report.

11. Risk implications

11.1 Regular monitoring and reporting on the Council's financial position is one of the key ways in which the organisation manages the potential risk of the weakening of its financial resilience.

12 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights

12.1 Community Impact Assessments on Council activities are carried out by relevant services with responsibility for those activities. A separate Community Impact Assessment has not been carried out in respect of this report.

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

13 Sustainability implications

13.1 There are no specific sustainability implications arising from this report.

14 Council infrastructure

14.1 The content of this report sets out the implications of the Council's activities for its financial resources for 2023-24.

15 Conclusions

15.1 The forecast position for 2023-24 at quarter 1 is a surplus of £0.766m against Council General Fund budgets. Housing Revenue Account budgets are reporting a pressure of £0.390m.

15.2 A forecast position for 2023-24 at quarter 1 is slippage of £23.780m For General Fund capital schemes and £17.682m for the Housing Revenue Account capital schemes.



Dacorum Borough Council

Revenue Budget Monitoring Report for June 2023 (Cost of Services Analysis By Scrutiny Committee)

	<i>Month</i>			<i>Year-to-Date</i>			<i>Full Year</i>		
	Budget £000	Actuals £000	Variance £000	Budget £000	Actuals £000	Variance £000	Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Variance £000
Cost of Services									
Finance and Resources	421	1,185	764	1,301	1,780	479	10,937	11,760	823
Housing and Community	310	(312)	(622)	554	(654)	(1,208)	1,903	1,933	30
Strategic Planning and Environment	828	1,339	511	2,155	2,112	(43)	12,299	13,088	789
Net Cost of Services	1,559	2,212	653	4,010	3,238	(772)	25,139	26,781	1,642
Other Items									
Investment Income	(63)	(628)	(565)	(189)	(259)	(70)	(755)	(3,053)	(2,298)
Interest Payments and MRP	62	332	270	185	332	147	741	741	0
Parish Precept Payments	0	0	0	1,234	1,234	0	1,234	1,234	0
Government Grants	(141)	(849)	(708)	(423)	(2,446)	(2,023)	(1,693)	(1,723)	(30)
Taxation (Council Tax and Business Rates)	(1,563)	(43,423)	(41,860)	(4,688)	(38,159)	(33,471)	(18,552)	(18,552)	0
Surplus / Deficit on Provision of Services	(1,705)	(44,568)	(42,863)	(3,881)	(39,298)	(35,417)	(19,025)	(21,353)	(2,328)
Transfers between Reserves / Funds									
Net Recharge to the HRA	(510)	(167)	343	(1,529)	(17)	1,512	(6,115)	(6,195)	(80)
Net Movement on General Fund Working Balance	(656)	(42,523)	(41,867)	(1,400)	(36,077)	(34,677)	(1)	(767)	(766)



Housing Revenue Account

2023/24 Outturn Revenue Budget Monitoring Report Q1

	Budget £000	Forecast Outturn £000	Variance	
			£000	%
Income:				
Dwelling Rents	(60,868)	(60,941)	(73)	0.1%
Non-Dwelling Rents	(104)	(47)	57	-54.8%
Tenants Charges	(1,504)	(1,504)	0	0.0%
Leaseholder Charges	(606)	(606)	0	0.0%
Interest and Investment Income	(210)	(1,694)	(1,484)	706.7%
Contribution towards Expenditure	(647)	(647)	0	0.0%
Total Income	(63,939)	(65,439)	(1,500)	2.3%
Expenditure:				
Repairs & Maintenance	14,594	15,907	1,313	9.0%
Supervision & Management	18,421	18,998	577	3.1%
Rent, Rates, Taxes & Other Charges	178	178	0	0.0%
Interest Payable	11,267	11,267	0	0.0%
Provision for Bad Debts	750	750	0	0.0%
Depreciation	15,620	15,620	0	0.0%
HRA Democratic Recharges	406	406	0	0.0%
Revenue Contribution to Capital	2,538	2,538	0	0.0%
Total Expenditure	63,774	65,664	1,890	3.0%
Transfer to / (from) Housing Reserves	165	165	0	0.0%
HRA Deficit / (Surplus)	0	390	390	
Housing Revenue Account Balance:				
Opening Balance at 1 April 2022	(2,892)	(2,892)	0	
Deficit / (Surplus) for year	0	390	390	
Proposed Contributions to Reserves	0	0	0	
Closing Balance at 31 March 2023	(2,892)	(2,502)	390	

CAPITAL PROGRAMME MONITORING BY SCRUTINY COMMITTEE FOR JUNE 2023

Scheme	Original Budget	Prior Year Slippage	Adj's, Supps, Virements	Adjustments (Slip. C/F)	In-Year Adjustments	Current Budget	YTD Spend	Projected Outturn	Forecast Slippage	Projected Over / (Under)
General Fund										
Totals:	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0	0
Finance and Resources										
Chief Finance Officer (S151)										
51 Commercially Sensitive Projects	4,002,000	0	0	0	0	4,002,000	0	0	(4,002,000)	0
	4,002,000	0	0	0	0	4,002,000	0	0	(4,002,000)	0
Head of Digital										
56 Automation Programme	85,000	85,000	0	0	0	170,000	0	0	(170,000)	0
57 Civica Customer Experience Software (Flare replacement)	50,000	100,000	0	0	0	150,000	0	0	(150,000)	0
58 Rolling Programme - Hardware	675,000	30,101	0	0	0	705,101	31,200	623,000	(82,101)	0
59 Software Licences - Right of Use	40,000	33,417	0	0	0	73,417	0	0	(73,417)	0
60 Future vision of CRM	590,000	193,375	0	0	0	783,375	(5,225)	348,000	(435,375)	0
	1,440,000	441,893	0	0	0	1,881,893	25,975	971,000	(910,893)	0
Head of Environmental Protection										
64 Health and Safety software system	0	40,000	0	0	0	40,000	0	0	(40,000)	0
65 Air Quality Monitoring	40,000	0	0	0	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	0
	40,000	40,000	0	0	0	80,000	0	40,000	(40,000)	0
Head of Environmental Services										
69 Tring Cemetery Access Road	40,000	0	0	0	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	0
	40,000	0	0	0	0	40,000	0	40,000	0	0
Head of Property Services										
73 Public Conveniences Renovation Programme	20,000	0	0	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	0
74 Service Lease Domestic Properties	30,000	8,118	0	0	0	38,118	0	38,118	0	0
75 Old Town Hall - Cafe Roof and stonework renewal	0	60,000	0	0	0	60,000	0	30,000	0	(30,000)
76 Piccotts End Retaining Wall Rebuild	0	35,000	0	0	0	35,000	0	35,000	0	0
77 Victoria Hall Lift replacement	45,000	0	0	0	0	45,000	0	45,000	0	0
78 Community Buildings Fire Exits	30,000	0	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000	0	0
79 Adeyfield Community Centre Structural Improvements	0	37,000	0	0	0	37,000	0	37,000	0	0
80 Boiler Replacement Programme	22,000	0	0	0	0	22,000	0	22,000	0	0
81 External Refurb - Woodhall Farm Community Centre	0	12,980	0	0	0	12,980	12,980	12,980	0	0
82 Tring Community Centre - Gutters and Facias	20,000	0	0	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	0
83 Rossgate Shopping Centre - Structural Works	0	315,281	0	0	0	315,281	0	315,281	0	0
84 Bennettsgate Shopping Centre - External Render	15,000	0	0	0	0	15,000	0	15,000	0	0
85 Roof Replacement Programme - Individual Assets To Be Identified At A Late	200,000	0	0	0	0	200,000	0	200,000	0	0
86 Commercial Properties - Renew Obsolete Door Entry Controls	20,000	1,723	0	0	0	21,723	1,902	21,723	0	0
87 100 High St (Old Town), Hemel - Window Replacement	0	14,000	0	0	0	14,000	0	14,000	0	0
88 Long Chaulden Roof	0	55,020	0	0	0	55,020	0	55,020	0	0
89 Bellgate - Walkway Renovation	0	12,100	0	0	0	12,100	0	12,100	0	0
90 Bennettsgate - Window Renewal	210,000	74,780	0	0	0	284,780	0	284,780	0	0
91 Queens Square Canopy Renewal	0	40,072	0	0	0	40,072	72	40,072	0	0
92 Void Commercial Property Refurbishment	70,000	22,508	0	0	0	92,508	15,916	92,508	0	0

Scheme	Original Budget	Prior Year Slippage	Adj's, Supps, Virements	Adjustments (Slip. C/F)	In-Year Adjustments	Current Budget	YTD Spend	Projected Outturn	Forecast Slippage	Projected Over / (Under)
93 Bennettsgate - Structural Concrete Improvements & Façade Renewal	0	51,712	0	0	0	51,712	0	51,712	0	0
94 Bellgate - Concrete Renewal & Refurbishment	0	14,300	0	0	0	14,300	0	14,300	0	0
95 Village Centre - Soffits & Facias	0	3,950	0	0	0	3,950	0	3,950	0	0
96 9 High Street Tring, Electrical Works	0	4,293	0	0	0	4,293	0	4,293	0	0
97 Broadwater Road Resurfacing	0	93,000	0	0	0	93,000	0	0	(93,000)	0
98 Damp proofing improvements to commercial properties	30,000	30,000	0	0	0	60,000	0	60,000	0	0
99 Kings Langley Charter Court - Separate Meter Supply	0	20,000	0	0	0	20,000	3,081	20,000	0	0
100 48-52 High Street - Fire Alarm System Renewal	15,000	0	0	0	0	15,000	0	15,000	0	0
101 Bellgate Canopy Renewal - Highfield	0	200,000	0	0	0	200,000	0	150,000	(50,000)	0
102 Rossgate Terrace Walkway Waterproofing	0	30,000	0	0	0	30,000	0	30,000	0	0
103 Fire Alarm Upgrades	20,000	0	0	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	0
104 Dacorum Heritage Trust Storage Building-	80,000	0	0	0	0	80,000	0	80,000	0	0
105 Hyde Meadow Commercial Unit structural works	35,000	0	0	0	0	35,000	15,640	35,000	0	0
106 Silk Mill Shops - Concrete works	25,000	0	0	0	0	25,000	0	25,000	0	0
107 Public Conveniences - Improvement Programme	0	15,502	0	0	0	15,502	4,000	15,502	0	0
	887,000	1,151,339	0	0	0	2,038,339	53,591	1,865,339	(143,000)	(30,000)
Head of Commercial Development										
111 Berkhamsted Leisure Centre Upgrade Works	15,000	0	0	0	0	15,000	0	15,000	0	0
112 Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre - Plant Room Upgrade	147,000	0	0	0	0	147,000	0	147,000	0	0
113 Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre - Basketball Hoop Replacement	26,000	(21,274)	0	0	0	4,726	0	4,726	0	0
114 Car Park Refurbishment	0	135,000	0	0	0	135,000	0	0	(135,000)	0
115 Water Gardens North Car Park Drainage Improvements	0	35,000	0	0	0	35,000	0	0	(35,000)	0
116 Multi Functional Devices	0	90,000	0	0	0	90,000	0	90,000	0	0
	188,000	238,726	0	0	0	426,726	0	256,726	(170,000)	0
Head of Investment and Delivery										
120 Creation of new Community Facility and Foodbank at The Hub (Dens)	1,875,000	625,000	0	0	0	2,500,000	0	2,500,000	0	0
121 Hemel Hempstead Sports Centre - Astroturf renewal	300,000	280,000	0	0	0	580,000	0	580,000	0	0
122 Berkhamsted Leisure Centre Redevelopment	0	13,850,356	0	0	0	13,850,356	0	0	(13,850,356)	0
	2,175,000	14,755,356	0	0	0	16,930,356	0	3,080,000	(13,850,356)	0
SD Place										
126 Buncefield lane North Quiet Way (phase 3) - HGC capital project	0	0	0	0	0	0	190,000	190,000	0	190,000
127 Grand Union Canal Improvements - HGC capital project	0	0	0	0	0	0	64,064	64,064	0	64,064
128 Nickey Line Improvements - HGC capital project	0	552,754	0	0	0	552,754	(117,246)	262,754	(35,936)	(254,064)
	0	552,754	0	0	0	552,754	136,818	516,818	(35,936)	0
Totals: Finance and Resources	8,772,000	17,180,068	0	0	0	25,952,068	216,384	6,769,883	(19,152,185)	(30,000)
Housing and Community										
Assistant Director - Place, Communities and Enterprise										
136 Adventure Playgrounds Improvement Programme	500,000	435,535	0	0	0	935,535	24,916	24,916	(910,619)	0
137 Capital Grants - Community Groups	20,000	0	0	0	0	20,000	0	20,000	0	0
	520,000	435,535	0	0	0	955,535	24,916	44,916	(910,619)	0
Head of Asset Management										
141 Disabled Facilities Grants	741,000	343,873	0	0	0	1,084,873	133,845	741,000	(343,873)	0
	741,000	343,873	0	0	0	1,084,873	133,845	741,000	(343,873)	0
Head of Safe Communities										

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Scheme	Original Budget	Prior Year Slippage	Adj's, Supps, Virements	Adjustments (Slip. C/F)	In-Year Adjustments	Current Budget	YTD Spend	Projected Outturn	Forecast Slippage	Projected Over / (Under)
145 Rolling Programme - CCTV Cameras	25,000	36,290	0	0	0	61,290	0	61,290	0	0
146 Alarm Receiving Centre	0	33,627	0	0	0	33,627	0	33,627	0	0
147 CCTV Equipment Refresh	110,000	29,782	0	0	0	139,782	0	139,782	0	0
	135,000	99,699	0	0	0	234,699	0	234,699	0	0
Head of Investment and Delivery										
151 Affordable Housing Development Fund	0	458,837	0	0	0	458,837	(285,121)	458,837	0	0
152 Temporary Accommodation - creation of new units	0	71,665	0	0	0	71,665	0	71,665	0	0
153 Aragon Close - Creation of Affordable Housing Move-on Units	0	118,983	0	0	0	118,983	0	118,983	0	0
154 Verge Hardening Programme	250,000	205,293	0	0	0	455,293	0	455,293	0	0
	250,000	854,778	0	0	0	1,104,778	(285,121)	1,104,778	0	0
Totals: Housing and Community	1,646,000	1,733,885	0	0	0	3,379,885	(126,360)	2,125,393	(1,254,492)	0
Strategic Planning and Environment										
Assistant Director - Place, Communities and Enterprise										
162 Urban Park/Education Centre (Durrants Lakes)	0	134,015	0	0	0	134,015	8,625	134,015	0	0
163 The Bury - Conversion into Museum and Gallery	2,570,000	53,150	0	0	0	2,623,150	0	0	(2,623,150)	0
	2,570,000	187,165	0	0	0	2,757,165	8,625	134,015	(2,623,150)	0
Head of Development Management										
43 CIL Capital Projects	0	0	0	0	0	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	0
	0	0	0	0	0	50,000	50,000	50,000	0	0
Head of Environmental Services										
167 Waste Services IT upgrade	0	80,000	0	0	0	80,000	0	80,000	0	0
168 Wheeled Bins & Boxes for New Properties	100,000	0	0	0	0	100,000	50,868	200,000	0	100,000
169 Litter Bin Upgrade	85,000	0	0	0	0	85,000	0	85,000	0	0
170 Play Areas & Open Spaces - replace equipment	250,000	137,470	0	0	0	387,470	0	387,470	0	0
171 Gadebridge Park - Splash Park	70,000	0	0	0	0	70,000	36,128	70,000	0	0
172 Resurfacing Works and Building Improvement to Depot	0	60,000	0	0	0	60,000	0	60,000	0	0
173 Chipperfield Common Car Park Resurfacing	0	200,000	0	0	0	200,000	0	200,000	0	0
174 Waste Transfer Site Upgrade Works	0	262,461	0	0	0	262,461	0	262,461	0	0
175 Water Gardens Fencing	25,000	0	0	0	0	25,000	0	25,000	0	0
176 Fleet Replacement Programme	(312,221)	2,341,332	0	0	0	2,029,111	56,116	1,279,111	(750,000)	0
	217,779	3,081,263	0	0	0	3,299,042	143,112	2,649,042	(750,000)	100,000
Head of Property Services										
180 Allotment Improvement Programme	0	47,970	0	0	0	47,970	0	47,970	0	0
181 Stone Works to Charter Tower	15,000	18,000	0	0	0	33,000	0	33,000	0	0
182 Nickey Line Bridge Refurbishment	0	50,000	0	0	0	50,000	0	50,000	0	0
183 Bennetts End Adventure playground - Cabin Roof	24,000	0	0	0	0	24,000	0	24,000	0	0
	39,000	115,970	0	0	0	154,970	0	154,970	0	0
Totals: Strategic Planning and Environment	2,826,779	3,384,398	0	0	0	6,261,177	201,737	2,988,027	(3,373,150)	100,000
Totals - Fund: General Fund	13,244,779	22,298,351	0	0	0	35,593,130	291,760	11,883,303	(23,779,827)	70,000

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Scheme	Original Budget	Prior Year Slippage	Adj's, Supps, Virements	Adjustments (Slip. C/F)	In-Year Adjustments	Current Budget	YTD Spend	Projected Outturn	Forecast Slippage	Projected Over / (Under)
Housing Revenue Account										
Housing and Community										
Head of Safe Homes										
195 Communal Gas & Heating	0	391,720	0	0	0	391,720	(32,916)	3,516,717	0	3,124,997
	0	391,720	0	0	0	391,720	(32,916)	3,516,717	0	3,124,997
Head of Asset Management										
199 Planned Fixed Expenditure	16,650,000	612,295	0	0	0	17,262,295	576,108	13,042,298	0	(4,219,997)
200 Pain/Gain Share (Planned Fixed Expenditure)	0	0	0	0	0	0	80,606	0	0	0
201 M&E Contracted Works	0	0	0	0	0	0	372,774	1,500,000	0	1,500,000
202 DBC Commissioned Capital Works	5,975,000	5,024,882	0	0	0	10,999,882	1,140,876	10,594,882	0	(405,000)
203 Special Projects	0	513,021	0	0	0	513,021	0	513,021	0	0
	22,625,000	6,150,198	0	0	0	28,775,198	2,170,365	25,650,201	0	(3,124,997)
Head of Investment and Delivery										
207 Bulbourne	(2,210,742)	2,209,142	0	0	0	(1,600)	9,111	0	0	1,600
208 Coniston Road	0	220,145	0	0	0	220,145	(66,965)	142,692	(77,453)	0
209 Eastwick Row	1,569,000	4,166,856	0	0	0	5,735,856	1,091	1,455,196	(4,280,660)	0
210 St Margaret's Way	6,330,903	9,687	0	0	0	6,340,590	276,745	7,433,393	1,092,803	0
211 Paradise Fields	3,765,365	9,374,973	0	0	0	13,140,338	987,398	9,197,144	(4,084,338)	141,144
212 Randalls Ride	2,103,000	2,921,684	0	0	0	5,024,684	398,638	4,475,826	(548,858)	0
213 Garage Sites - New Build Developments	4,779,000	1,102,139	0	0	0	5,881,139	1,481,153	4,572,085	(1,309,054)	0
214 Wilstone	857,000	266,257	0	0	0	1,123,257	224,106	579,320	(543,937)	0
215 Marchmont Fields	2,775,835	6,698,893	0	0	0	9,474,728	2,700	5,386,809	(4,087,919)	0
216 Paradise Depot	8,640,000	79,924	0	0	0	8,719,924	1,600	5,899,340	(2,820,584)	0
217 Cherry Bounce	(232,816)	222,980	0	0	0	(9,836)	0	0	0	9,836
218 Stoneycroft and Great Sturgess	789,236	(91,651)	0	0	0	697,585	0	0	(545,005)	(152,580)
219 Garage Sites B	59,064	(39,064)	0	0	0	20,000	0	0	(20,000)	0
220 Great Sturgess Road	500,000	(43,323)	0	0	0	456,677	0	0	(456,677)	0
221 RTB Buy-Backs	1,000,000	(1,090)	0	0	0	998,910	0	998,910	0	0
	30,724,845	27,097,552	0	0	0	57,822,397	3,315,576	40,140,715	(17,681,682)	0
Totals: Housing and Community	53,349,845	33,639,470	0	0	0	86,989,315	5,453,025	69,307,633	(17,681,682)	0
Totals - Fund: Housing Revenue Account	53,349,845	33,639,470	0	0	0	86,989,315	5,453,025	69,307,633	(17,681,682)	0
Totals	66,594,624	55,937,821	0	0	0	122,582,445	5,744,785	81,190,936	(41,461,509)	70,000



Finance and Resources

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Revisions to Council Tax Support scheme for 2024/25
Date:	5 September 2023
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Symington, Portfolio Holder for Corporate & Commercial Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	CTS – council tax support

Report Author / Responsible Officer

Chris Baker, Head of Revenues & Benefits



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Corporate Priorities	Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
Wards affected	ALL
Purpose of the report:	1. To make members aware of proposals for consultations on changes to the Council's Local Council Tax Support scheme
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. Provide feedback on the proposed changes
Period for post policy/project review:	Further report to be made in December 2023 after consultation

1 Introduction/Background:

- 1.1 The Council Tax Support (CTS) is a scheme that has been in operation for many years and requires annual review. The local Dacorum CTS aims to reduce the council tax bills of residents considered to be financially vulnerable and hence are on low incomes. This scheme does not cover residents of pension age, as the rules for calculating CTS for pensioners are set nationally by central Government.
- 1.2 For residents of working age, the law allows a wide flexibility to local councils to set their own rules for the calculation of CTS. The process for making amendments to a CTS scheme is set out in Schedule 1A of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 (LGFA), and includes two separate consultations.
- 1.3 This report proposes amendments to the 2024 CTS scheme to increase the level of support for certain groups of working age residents.

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

- 2.1 The Council's current CTS scheme includes a number of measures which mean that for some residents, the maximum help they can get with their council tax is not their whole bill. This is in contrast to the CTS rules for residents of pension age, for whom the maximum reduction in council tax is 100%.
- 2.2 The Council's current scheme also provides for a maximum reduction of 100% for residents who:
 - a. Receive a disability benefit or are registered blind.
 - b. Have a disabled child who lives with them
 - c. Have a child under the age of five who lives with them
 - d. Receive a war disablement pension, war widow's pension or war widower's pension.
- 2.3 For residents of working age who do not fall into one of these protected groups, the maximum help they can get is a reduction of 75% of their council tax bill. Also, if the property they live in is in band E or above, their CTS is worked out as if they lived in a band D property.
- 2.4 This report proposes that these restrictions are removed from the CTS scheme from April 2024. This will mean that for all residents, the maximum reduction they can get will be 100% of their council tax bill.
- 2.5 This report also proposes that the backdating period for working age residents is extended from one month to three months. This is line with the period for residents of pension age, and provides extra time to apply, in particular for residents who claim Universal Credit and do not realise they have to make a separate application to the Council to receive CTS.
- 2.6 A review of CTS schemes across the county shows a variation in the maximum reduction available to working age residents:

Number of councils	Maximum reduction available
3	100%
2	91.5%
1	80%
3	75%

- 2.7 The cost of the CTS scheme is funded through the wider calculation of the council tax base and hence is provided for by a reduction in the total council tax that can be collected across the borough. This is because the estimated cost of the scheme is one of the factors used to calculate the council tax base each year.

- 2.8 This means that changes to the scheme will impact not just on the Council, but also on the major preceptors, ie Herts County Council and the Police & Crime Commissioner for Hertfordshire, as it reduces the total council tax collected.
- 2.9 The following table shows the estimated change to the council tax base for Dacorum if the proposed changes are taken forward:

Proposed change	Number of households affected	Adjustment to taxbase compared to no change	Approx reduction in total council tax for DBC
Remove 25% minimum payment	1,000	Reduce by 0.35%	£35,000
Remove band D cap	50	Reduce by 0.02%	£2,000
Extend backdating period to three months	50	Reduce by 0.01%	£1,000
Combined impact	1,000	Reduce by 0.38%	£38,000

- 2.10 The combined impact of all the changes would only be a small reduction in the council tax base.
- 2.11 The changes would provide additional assistance to around 1,000 of the lowest income households in the borough. Around 700 households would move to zero council tax bills, and so this would also lead to associated administrative efficiencies, relating to the reduced need for resident contact, or the issue of reminder notices and summonses.
- 2.12 Recommendations: that Cabinet -
 1) approves the consultation on the proposed changes to the Council Tax Support scheme
 2) delegates authority to the Head of Revenues & Benefits to: consult with the major preceptors; publish a draft scheme; and consult with residents.
- 2.13 Recommendation: that Scrutiny –
 1) Scrutinise, review and feedback on the proposed policy changes.

3 Options and alternatives considered

- 3.1 Any options for change which could lead to a resident being worse off are not being proposed.
- 3.2 Any significant changes to the structure of the scheme are not being proposed – this is because it would be likely to take several months to effectively model the impact of such changes, and so it would not be possible to make changes in time for 2024/25, given the required consultations.

4 Consultation

- 4.1 The required consultations are set out in schedule 1A , paragraph 3 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.
- 4.2 “Before making a scheme, the authority must (in the following order):
 a. Consult any major precepting authority which has a power to issue a precept to it,
 b. Publish a draft scheme in such manner as it thinks fit, and

- c. Consult other such persons as it considers are likely to have an interest in the operation of the scheme”

4.3 If this report’s recommendations are approved, the anticipated timeline is:

18 September – 16 October 2023 – major preceptor consultation

16 October 2023 – publication of draft scheme

16 October 2023 – 24 November 2023 – resident consultation

4.4 The outcome of the consultation process would be reported to Overview and Scrutiny, and then Cabinet, in December 2023.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

5.1 The proposed changes will provide benefit to the lowest income residents, without significant cost, and will also enable more efficient administration. The proposed cost of £38k will be one driver factored into the Council’s 2023 Medium Term Financial Strategy as part of the annual review of the council tax base and council tax collection projections.

6 Legal Implications

6.1 At this stage, no decision is being taken on the CTS scheme for 2024/25.

6.2 Following the consultation process, details of a final scheme will be submitted for the approval of Council, alongside the calculation of the council tax base for 2024/25.

7 Risk implications:

7.1 If changes are made without following the mandatory consultation process, the amended CTS scheme could be vulnerable to being challenged by judicial review.

7.2 This risk should be entirely mitigated by following the process as laid down in law.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

8.1 Community Impact Assessment carried out and annexed - there are no negative impacts expected from these proposals. The CIA will be reviewed in light of any comments received during the consultation period.

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

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

9.1 The increase in the number of residents receiving a zero council tax bill is likely to have a beneficial effect on health and wellbeing by reducing financial stress for those households.

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

10.1 The proposed changes can be made using software currently licensed by the Council. There are no other infrastructure implications.

11 Statutory Comments

Monitoring Officer:

S151:

Local Government statute sets out that both a Local Authority's council tax base and council tax support policy are reviewed and approved annually. The changes proposed to the council tax support policy will have an impact on the amount of council tax collected by both Dacorum and its precepting partners.

The financial impact of these proposed changes for the council are minor, but could have a significant impact to those residents that benefit from the scheme. The financial costs of this policy change are circa £38k and will feed into the annual review of council tax base and collection that feeds into the MTFs and 2024/25 budget setting process.

12 Conclusions:

- 12.1 The proposed changes would reduce the council tax burden on some of the lowest income households in the borough.
- 12.2 The proposed scheme would not be significantly different to other CTS schemes within the county.



FINANCE & RESOURCES Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Finance and Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Parking Service Tariff & Business Case proposals
Date:	5 th September 2023
Report on behalf of:	Cllr Ron Tindall, Leader of the Council Cllr Sally Symington, Portfolio Holder for Corporate & Commercial Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 – Neighbouring Local Authority Town Centre Car Park Tariffs Appendix 2 - Privately Owned Car Park Tariffs
Background papers:	5 July 2022 Finance & Resources OSC – Commercial Programme Update 27 Sep 2022 Cabinet – Commercial Strategy 1 Feb 2023 Finance & Resources OSC – Commercial Programme Update 21 Mar 2023 Cabinet – Commercial Strategy Update 4 July 2023 Finance & Resources OSC – Parking Tariff & Business Case Proposals
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	IBC - Initial Business Case FBC – Full Business Case MTFS – Medium Term Financial Strategy EVCP – Electric Vehicle Charge Point TRO – Traffic Regulation Order

Report Author / Responsible Officer

Ben Hosier, Head of Commercial Development



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Corporate Priorities	<p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Building strong and vibrant communities</p> <p>Ensuring economic growth and prosperity</p> <p>Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery</p> <p>Climate and ecological emergency</p>
Wards affected	All
Purpose of the report:	1. To update committee on the development and recommendations of the Parking Tariff and Smart Parking approach
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<p>1. That the committee considers and notes the proposal to informally consult businesses and residents on the proposed changes to parking policy as set out in the report, these include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Off-Street Parking tariff changes for 2024 • On-Street tariff changes for 2024 – Minimum tariff for on street parking to be set at £2, • Changing on-street Limited Wait Bays to chargeable spaces, • Extending the current operating hours of the car parks, • Introducing new longer stay off-street tariffs to support extended car park operating hours • Consolidating off-street (car parks) short stay sessions to introduce a new minimum stay of 2 hours • Opening up part of the upper level of the Water Gardens North car park for public use Mon – Fri. • Reducing free parking sessions from 1hr to 45 minutes <p>2. That the committee considers and notes the proposals for ‘smart’ technology as set out in section 2.4 and their inclusion in a future commissioning as part of the wider parking enforcement contract.</p> <p>3. That the committee notes that the council intends to retain the free parking policy in Gadebridge Park, Canal Fields, and the existing kings Langley car parks</p>
Period for post policy/project review:	12 months

1. Background

- 1.1 Dacorum Borough Council (the Council) launched its Commercial Strategy in 2022, to support the Council's ongoing financial sustainability, allow it to continue to invest in and deliver services to its residents, and deliver wider strategic objectives for the Borough, which include housing, regeneration and responding to climate change.
- 1.2 The Commercial Strategy adopted a broad definition of 'commercial', including a change in culture to focus on regular assessments of ways in which the Council might be able to use its assets and capabilities more effectively; to improve service and financial outcomes. It is recognised that continued financial pressures mean that focussing on cost reduction measures alone will not be a sustainable strategy, if the Council wishes to continue delivering its ambitions and services to those that live and work in the Borough. There are various themes within the Commercial Strategy, including how the Council can drive value, income and efficiencies through careful consideration of a range of service models, procurement, contract management, and how it can maximise the value of its assets and investments.
- 1.3 As part of a new more commercial focus, a range of potential opportunities were assessed early in 2022. Twelve Initial Business Cases (IBCs) were developed at high level, and then taken forward for development into Full Business Cases (FBCs), during the course of 2022 and 2023. The outcomes of these FBCs have been the subject of previous reports to the Finance & Resources Overview and Scrutiny Committee, and reports will continue as appropriate in the future.
- 1.4 In 2021, the Council approved its Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and made this one of its six corporate priorities. Although the majority of the Borough's emissions are outside of the Council's direct control, it pledged to support the Borough to become net zero by 2050 and to work alongside individuals, community groups, businesses and schools to help achieve this.
- 1.5 This report outlines the outcomes from the FBC for Parking Services, and sets out the proposals that will be presented to Cabinet in September 2023, with a recommendation for approval. The FBC focused on changes to Council parking policy to ensure fair and equitable access to Council services and assets, appropriate pricing and cost recovery that reflect the value and costs of the Parking service and assets, and to support wider strategic objectives relating to promoting active travel and sustainable transport, the environment and climate change.
- 1.6 The FBC investigated the following areas:
 - a) A review of tariffs and charging policies across both on-street and off-street parking locations, to reflect inflation and cost increases, make better use of the Council's parking assets, identify opportunities for the Council to amend and improve charging policies, and introduce more equitable charges across the borough.
 - b) Consideration of the introduction of 'smart' technology, to improve the parking experience and allow for flexible and targeted parking tariffs that support environmental or other strategic objectives; for example tariffs that contribute to a reduction in local air pollution.
- 1.7 This paper sets out each of the above areas in more detail and provides recommendations for each.

2. Issue/Proposal

2.1 Context and drivers for changes to parking tariffs and charging policies

The Council is legally obliged to present a balanced budget, in the context of a challenging economic environment and with de facto sector constraints on its means of doing this, with income generation being a significant tool to enabling this process, of which parking is a major consideration.

The Council has the ability to make better use of its parking assets and utilise them in a more strategic manner, to improve parking services from an operational, commercial and environmental perspective and deliver a more consistent approach on parking tariffs and charging policies. There are a range of considerations as to why it is necessary to increase tariffs and update parking charging policies. These include the following:

- The Council's existing parking charges are significantly lower than public sector averages and local private sector parking. Benchmarking the new proposed parking tariffs with other Local Authority car parks shows the Council's parking tariffs are in the lower quartile of prices charged, with tariffs varying between 20% to 100% lower (see appendix 1). Further benchmarking with privately operated car parks in the vicinity also show that the Council's proposed parking tariffs are comparative or lower (see appendix 2).
- Parking tariffs across the Borough were last reviewed and increased in 2019. During this 5 year period, inflation has increased by c.28%, so the current proposals for tariff increases in off-street car parks only bring the Council's parking income in line with the impact of inflation, and will warrant further reviews going forward to ensure income supports the costs of service delivery. Where applying these increases the Council have also been minded to ensure new fees mean the Council is still the most cost effective solution.
- Proposals for increases to on-street parking reflect the value of the on-street parking resource for those who choose to park closer to their intended destination, rather than using a nearby off-street car park. It will also incentivise the use of car parks as an alternative.
- The Council has ongoing financial pressures arising from reduced parking income since the onset of the pandemic. In 2022-23, there was a deficit in parking income of £600k. Thus there is an ongoing need to set appropriate tariffs that maximise income and reflect the cost of the assets and parking service, given the ongoing pressures to parking income.
- The proposals to be informally consulted on over a 6 week period;
 - a) Car parking tariffs increased by circa 28% rounded to the nearest 10 pence,
 - b) On-Street tariff increases – Minimum cost for on street parking set at £2 per hour,
 - c) Changing on-street Limited Wait Bays to chargeable spaces,
 - d) Extending the operating hours of the car parks,
 - e) Introducing new longer stay off-street tariffs as a result of the extended operating hours,
 - f) Consolidating short stay parking sessions in off-street car parks to introduce a new minimum 2 hour stay (only in car parks that are chargeable for the first hour),
 - g) Open the upper level of the Water Gardens car park for public use during Mon-Fri

- h) Reducing free parking sessions from 1hr to 45 minutes.
- These proposals are aimed to provide the following benefits:
 - Retention of free parking in car parks where this already exists,
 - A gradual downward adjustment of the ‘free 1st hour, where this already exists,
 - Provide an appropriate and more equitable charging basis that reflects the value of assets and cost of the services provided,
 - Drive additional income that will contribute to parking income pressures, and contribute to the Council’s wider financial sustainability and delivery of services,
 - Contribute to longer term objectives relating to sustainability and climate change, as part of a holistic approach to encouraging behaviour change in relation to travel and sustainable transport options.

2.2 Proposals for Parking Tariff Increases

The proposed changes to parking tariffs that are outlined in this report will achieve circa £660k from 2024/25 onwards, in additional income for the parking service:

Table 1 – Projected Budgetary Position

Description	2024/25 (full year)
Tariff Increase across all car parks (Circa 28%), Including 2 hour minimum stay.	£500k
On-street parking – increased hourly rate and chargeable waiting bays	£85k
Extended Car Park Hours and Long Stay Tariffs	£75k
Total	£660k
Cumulative Commercial Income Projection (MTFS 2023-25)	(£850k)
Cumulative Parking Inflation Assumption (23/24 – 24/25)	(£140k)
Budget (Surplus)/Shortfall	£330k

The 2022 Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) assumes a 2023 increase in Commercial Income of £850k and the standard parking inflationary uplift of £140k over the 2023-25 period.

The increases proposed in this report have considered relevant benchmarking data, the Council’s car parks would still be very competitive/lowest in most tariffs of prices charged in similar car parks managed by other Councils and similar nearby private car parks, so would still offer value for money for residents and visitors.

It is worth noting that a 28% increase in the parking tariffs for Water Gardens North & South and Moor End Road car parks results in them becoming less competitive than parking tariffs in privately owned car parks in the vicinity (these car parks account for approx. 49% of the Council’s total off-street parking income), it is therefore proposed that to encourage users to continue to use the Council’s car parks, that the tariffs in these car parks are increased, but only to match that of the tariffs in the privately owned car parks.

This additional income would contribute to the Council’s overall financial sustainability and delivery of essential services.

2.3 Review of the Parking Charging Policies:

The Council's Commercial Strategy supports maximising use of Council assets to contribute to financial sustainability and service delivery. It is timely to review charging policies now, to ensure the Council's charges are reasonable and consistent with the wider parking sector, and deliver optimum levels of income that will support the Parking Service and wider Council service delivery.

The proposals as part of a wider update to Council car parking charging policies ensure the effective and efficient use of valuable Council assets, and reflect the cost of parking services.

A properly and consistently priced parking resource forms part of a holistic framework for transport in the Borough, and should reflect the fact that people have choices about their means of transport. It is hoped that as part of the collective public approach to combatting climate change and air pollution, people will make choices and changes that include avoiding using their cars for short trips where they can use other more sustainable and active means of transport. There is a significant body of evidence that demonstrates how parking policies influence car use and so environmentally-based choices.

The Council aims, with partners, to help provide support for people to change their behaviours and means of transport in the longer term. For those who are planning a short local trip for example, they might choose an active transport method – walking, or cycling – rather than taking their car for a short journey. The Council is looking to support this by currently considering plans for the introduction of e-bikes in certain areas of Dacorum.

All proposals will be subject to the appropriate statutory consultation before introduction and approval of Traffic Regulation Orders (TROs).

2.4 'Smart' technology in Parking

The concept of 'smart' technology in parking involves using digital technologies to optimise vehicle parking and allow for flexible and targeted tariffs that can contribute to strategic objectives. Many cities and towns, as well as the wider highways infrastructure, have now introduced smart technology as part of a basket of measures to improve transport and parking initiatives, support the climate change agenda and other strategic objectives.

'Smart' technology provides the Council with the opportunity to support the use of 'cleaner' vehicles by more 'agile' differentiated parking tariffs e.g. for lower polluting vehicles, which would improve local air pollution.

In an increasingly digital environment, the introduction of 'smart' technology will provide motorists with the option to take advantage of a cashless environment, enabling a quicker and improved experience.

Studies show that the introduction of 'smart' technology can increase compliance with the local parking tariffs, enabling the Council to benefit from increased revenue and reduce operational costs.

Studies also show that dwell time can increase when 'smart' technology is implemented as motorists do not need to choose a return time and rush back to their vehicles, which should benefit retail for local businesses.

The recommendation that will be proposed to Cabinet is that 'smart' technology is included in the re-commissioning of the parking enforcement contract commencing this year in time for a contract start in April 2025, to develop a procurement strategy on whether it should form part of the new parking enforcement contract or be a stand-alone contract.

2.5 Project Structure Key Milestones

The table below highlights the key stages required to implement changes to tariffs and charging policies:

Table 2 – Indicative timeframe for tariff and policy review

Process	Timeline
Agree proposed Informal Consultation Proposals	Sept 2023
Undertake Informal public consultation with residents and businesses	Sept – Oct 2023
Respond to Consultation and Produce a revised Car Parking Tariff policy to cabinet.	Nov 2023
Formal Statutory Consultation Process	Nov – Jan 2024
Respond to consultation feedback & produce report to Cabinet	Feb 2024
Signing & sealing of Traffic Regulation Order	Feb 2024
Information board proofing sign off, manufacture and installation by third party	Mar 2024
Update website, pay and display machines and pay by phone applications	Mar 2024

This is a long process and it should be noted that there are several external factors that may impact on the minimum timeframe; such as statutory stakeholder consultation, the TRO process and the lead-time for the manufacture and installation of the car park information boards and updating pay and display equipment.

The table below highlights the key stages required to implement 'smart' technology. The overall timescale for achieving this is approximately 19 months.

Table 3 - Indicative timeline for introducing 'smart' technology

Process	Timeline
Commissioning & Procurement	Aug 2023 – Jul 2024
Consultation on proposed implementation of 'smart' technology	Jul 2024
Quotation for undertaking changes to Traffic Regulation Orders, Signage etc.	Jul 2024
Produce draft documentation (Traffic Regulation Order, Traffic Order, Notice of Variation, press notice etc.)	Aug 2024
Respond to any consultation feedback & produce report to Cabinet	Oct 2024
Signing & sealing of Traffic Regulation Order (TRO)	Nov 2025
Install Equipment and signage	Jan 2025
Staff Training	Mar 2025

3 Options and alternatives considered

Many options were analysed as part of the process of reviewing parking tariff increases and the charging policies. The modelling for each of the options was reviewed by officers from finance and commercial teams and presented to the Portfolio Holder, Leader, Overview and Scrutiny and the wider Administration group, as well as to SLT.

The informal consultation is an opportunity for public feedback to adjust and build on the pitch of the proposals.

The proposed implementation of 'smart' technology has been developed as part of the Parking FBC and has investigated a few different options, to help understand the different technologies in the market. Any implementation of 'smart' technology will first need to follow a robust commissioning and procurement process where different solutions will be analysed to evaluate the optimum outcome. Recommendations will be made accordingly.

4 Consultation

Any changes to parking tariffs and charging policies will undertake informal consultation during the autumn prior to the required formal consultation with stakeholders and members of the public. Any required changes would need to be incorporated into a TRO and a final decision to implement any changes will be made by Cabinet which is anticipated to be in February 2024.

Likewise, the implementation of 'smart' technology will need to follow a formal consultation process with stakeholders and members of the public, so that any changes are incorporated in to a TRO for enforcement purposes. Again a final decision to implement 'smart' technology will be made by the Portfolio Holder who will have requested delegated authority to make such decisions.

5 Financial and value for money implications

The recommended changes to parking tariffs and charging policies will have a positive financial impact on the Council's ability to raise its own income and achieve some of the MTFS income generating targets. These proposals do still leave a shortfall in the expected additional income achieved through the commercial programme and further work will be required to achieve this shortfall.

There are low level implementation costs that will be incurred in implementing these proposals, but these were projected as part of the councils MTFS.

The development of the Parking FBC in terms of the implementation of 'smart' technology suggests that it could deliver a positive financial impact in terms of greater compliance and increased dwell time. However this will not be known until the commissioning and procurement of any technology has been concluded.

6 Legal Implications

Any changes to parking tariffs, charging policies and the introduction of 'smart' technology will need to be incorporated in to the TRO for enforcement purposes. This will also ensure that the Council are fully compliant with any legislation.

7 Risk implications:

There are risks that can be attributed to a review of parking tariffs and charging policies, higher parking tariffs may lead to reduced usage, which may result in a loss of parking income and reduced footfall in the town centre locations. To mitigate these risks, the modelling takes into consideration other car park tariffs and alternative parking arrangements in the vicinity and the likelihood of alternative travel options and hence has reduced the projected usage figures.

The Council is the land owner of the car park assets and has full control over making any changes to tariffs and charging policies.

There is a risk of complaints about any changes to current tariffs and charging policies, but the increases and proposals are reasonable, no increases will have taken place in five years by 2024, and prices still compare favourably with neighbouring Authorities and local privately managed car parks.

At this stage, no key risks have been identified for the implementation of 'smart' technology, however, this will be further analysed as part of the commissioning and procurement process.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

A Community Impact Assessment will be completed once this report has been to scrutiny committee to ensure that the assessment considers any matters raised by the committee. The CIA will then be presented to Cabinet as part of the final report.

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

The recommended changes in parking tariffs and charging policies are to support and nudge behavioural change that will have a positive sustainability implication.

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

Consultation with statutory stakeholders will ensure that any implications on Council infrastructure are considered.

11 Conclusions:

Parking Tariffs & Charging Policies

It is proposed that the recommendations set out in this report for increases to on-street and off-street parking tariffs and changes to charging policies are presented to Cabinet in September 2023.

The financial and non-financial benefits of this approach will be as set out in this report.

Introducing 'smart' technology

It is proposed that the recommendation be presented to Cabinet for 'smart' technology to be included in the re-commissioning exercise commencing this year, which will include the parking enforcement contract due for renewal in April 2025. A commissioning review will develop a procurement strategy on whether it should form part of the new parking enforcement contract or be a stand-alone contract.

If the outcome of the commissioning process is consistent with the estimates in the FBC, and supports the introduction of 'smart' technology, then the benefits will deliver the following:

Financial - The introduction of 'smart' technology should generate a small level of additional income each year – this would be investigated through commissioning and procurement

Non-Financial - The ability to change parking tariffs in an agile fashion in support of strategic considerations such as pollution and peak travel times. The technology can support the reduction in local air pollution levels and deliver an improved and more convenient service for motorists.

Appendix 1

Proposed Parking Tariffs Compared to Neighbouring Local Authority Town Centre Car Parks

	Dacorum WGN Lower Deck	Watford	St Albans	Three Rivers	Stevenage	East Herts	Luton	Aylesbury
30 minutes	n/a	n/a	n/a	Free	£1.00	n/a	n/a	n/a
1 Hour	n/a	£2.00	£2.00	Free	£2.00	£1.00	£1.00	£1.10
2 Hours	£2.00		£3.50	£2.00	£3.00	£2.00	£1.50	£2.10
3 Hours	£2.30	£3.10	£4.20	£2.50	£4.00	£2.60	£2.00	
4 Hours	£2.50	£4.10	£5.50	£4.00	£5.00	£3.50	£2.50	£3.60
5 Hours	n/a	£5.10	£7.50	n/a	£11.00	£4.30	£3.50	£5.10
6 Hours	£4.00	£6.10		n/a		£5.20	£5.50	£8.10
8 hours	£5.00	£10.50	n/a					
10 Hours	n/a	£15.00	n/a					
12 Hours	£6.00		£15.00	n/a				
15+ Hours	£7.50		n/a					
24 Hours	n/a		n/a				n/a	

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Appendix 2
Proposed Parking Tariffs Compared to Privately Owned Car Parks

	WGN Lower Deck	Riverside	Hillfield Road NCP	Marlowes	Hemel Hospital	Hemel Station	Apsley Station	Berkhamsted Station	Tring Station
1 Hour	n/a	n/a	£1.45	n/a	£3.50	£9.10 (£5.10 after 10am)	£9.10	£9.10 (£6.40 after 10am)	£8.50 (£6.40 after 10am)
2 Hours	£2.00	£2.00	£2.90	£2.00	£5.00				
3 Hours	£2.30	n/a	£4.35	n/a	£7.00				
4 Hours	£2.50	£2.50	£5.80	£2.50	£8.00				
6 Hours	£4.00	£5.00	£6.95	£6.50	£9.00				
8 Hours	£5.00			£8.00	£10.00				
12 Hours	£6.00			£8.00	£12.00				
15+ Hours	£7.50	£10		£15.00	£15.00				

Finance and Resources Overview & Scrutiny Committee Work Programme 2023/2024

Meeting Date	Report Deadline	Items	Contact Details	Background information
3 October 2023	22 Sept 2023	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Legal Shared Service	Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk	
7 November 2023	27 October 2023	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Q2 Corporate & Commercial Performance Reports: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finance and Resources ○ Legal and Democratic Services ○ Commercial Development Services 	Strategic Director, Corporate and Commercial Catherine.silvadoonayre@dacorum.gov.uk Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk Head of Commercial Development Ben.Hosier@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
		Budget Monitoring Report	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise</i>

			ov.uk	<i>quarterly performance</i>
		Q2 People and Transformation Performance Report	Strategic Director, People and Transformation Aidan.wilkie@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i>
6 December 2023	27 November 2023	Joint Budget	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise the draft budget proposals for 24-25</i>
9 January 2024	28 December 2023	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
7 February 2024	29 January 2024	Joint Budget	Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk	<i>To review and scrutinise the draft budget proposals for 24-25</i>
5 March 2024	23 February 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)	Democratic Services Trudi.angel@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Q3 Corporate & Commercial	Strategic Director, Corporate and	<i>To review and</i>

	<p>Performance Reports:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ○ Finance and Resources ○ Legal and Democratic Services ○ Commercial Development Services 	<p>Commercial Catherine.silvadoonayre@dacorum.gov.uk Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk Assistant Director, Legal & Democratic Services Mark.brookes@dacorum.gov.uk Head of Commercial Development Ben.Hosier@dacorum.gov.uk</p>	<p><i>scrutinise quarterly performance</i></p>
	<p>Budget Monitoring Report</p>	<p>Chief Finance Officer Nigel.howcutt@dacorum.gov.uk</p>	<p><i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i></p>
	<p>Q3 People and Transformation Performance Report</p>	<p>Strategic Director, People and Transformation Aidan.wilkie@dacorum.gov.uk</p>	<p><i>To review and scrutinise quarterly performance</i></p>