

Public Document Pack



SUMMONS

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Wednesday 28 February 2024

Council Chamber, The Forum

You are hereby summoned to a meeting of the Dacorum Borough Council in the County of Hertfordshire to be held in the Council Chamber, The Forum on Wednesday 28 February 2024 at 7.30 pm to transact the business set out below.

A handwritten signature in black ink that reads "Claire Hamilton".

**CLAIRE HAMILTON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**Contact: Democratic Support
ext 2209**

AGENDA

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 8)

To confirm the minutes of the previous meeting of the council

2. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

To receive any declarations of interest

3. PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

To consider questions (if any) by members of the public of which the appropriate notice has been given to the Assistant Director (Legal & Democratic Services)

4. ANNOUNCEMENTS

To receive announcements and business brought forward by the Mayor, Leader, and the Chief Executive.

4.1 By the Mayor:

4.2 By the Chief Executive:

4.3 By the Group Leaders: Any apologies for absence

5. CABINET MEMBER UPDATES (Pages 9 - 28)

Members of the Council may ask the Cabinet member any question without notice upon an item on the report as published in this agenda;

5.1 Councillor Tindall Leader of the Council (verbal update only)

5.2 Councillor England Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Emergency

5.3 Councillor Wilkie Portfolio Holder Place

5.4 Councillor Weston Portfolio Holder People & Transformation

5.5 Councillor Tindall Portfolio Holder Corporate and Commercial Services

5.6 Councillor Dhyani Portfolio Holder Housing & Property Services

5.7 Councillor Bromham Portfolio Holder Neighbourhood Operations

6. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING (Pages 29 - 36)

To consider any business referred from the previous meeting

7. CABINET REFERRALS (Pages 37 - 44)

To consider the following referrals from Cabinet:

21 November 2023

7.1 CA/99/23 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

12 December 2023

7.2 CA/106/23 VCS COMMISSIONING – GRANT APPROACH

7.3 CA/108/23 COUNCIL TAX BASE REPORT AND SUPPORT SCHEME

30 January 2024

7.4 CA/09/24 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW

13 February 2024

7.5 CA/18/24 BUILDING SAFETY POLICY

7.6 CA/19/24 COMMITTEE TIMETABLE

7.7 CA/20/24 HRA BUSINESS PLAN REFRESH

7.8 CA/23/24 BUDGET

7.9 CA/24/24 CHILTERN BEECHWOODS SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION MITIGATION STRATEGY AND SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE NATURAL GREENSPACE UPDATE

7.10 CA/25/24 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

8. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

There were no referrals from Overview & Scrutiny

9. POLLING DISTRICT & POLLING PLACE ORDER 2024 (Pages 45 - 55)

10. COUNCIL SIZE SUBMISSION TO THE LOCAL GOVERNMENT BOUNDARY COMMISSION FOR ENGLAND (Pages 56 - 78)

11. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

To consider any proposals for changes to committee membership

12. CHANGE TO COMMITTEE DATES

To consider any proposals for changes to committee dates

13. COUNCIL TAX DECLARATION

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

15 NOVEMBER 2023

Present:

MEMBERS:

Councillors Tindall (Leader) Adeleke, Allen (Mayor), Banks, Barradell, Barry, Bhinder, Birnie, Bristow, Bromham, Capozzi, Cox, Deacon, Dhyani, Douris, Durrant, Elliot, England, Gale, Hannell, CHobson, Johnson, Maddern, McArevey, Patterson, Pesch, Pound, Pringle, Reynolds, Silwal, Stevens, Stewart, Symington, Taylor, Timmis, Walker, Weston, Wilkie, AWilliams, BWilliams and C Wyatt-Lowe

OFFICERS:

Claire Hamilton	Chief Executive
Mark Brookes	Assistant Director Legal & Democratic Services
Cassy O'Neil	Democratic Services Manager
Layla Fowell	Democratic Services Lead Officer

The meeting began at 7.30 pm

1 MINUTES

Please note that due to a technical fault, the video record of this item is not available to view.

The minutes of the previous full Council meeting which took place on 27th September 2023, and the Extraordinary Council meeting which took place on 25th October 2023 we agreed.

Decision

Agreed

2 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

There were no declarations of interest.

3 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

There was no public participation.

4 ANNOUNCEMENTS

Cllr Tindall gave apologies on behalf of Cllrs BLink, CLink, Freedman, SHobson, Santamaria & Mottershead.

Cllr Williams offered apologies on behalf of Cllrs Anderson, Guest & Riddick.

Cllr Pesch gave apologies on behalf of Cllr Mitchell.

5 CABINET MEMBER UPDATES

The Leader of the Council gave a verbal update, which included the following statement as displayed on screen;

I am pleased to announce that healthcare in Dacorum could have a new approach, following an outline agreement with our major health partners, together with support from our local MP, Sir Mike Penning, to explore the potential for a new health campus in the heart of Hemel Hempstead.

The Council, in partnership with West Hertfordshire Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and the NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board, is going to explore the future viability of an Integrated Health Campus at the former Market Square in Hemel Hempstead. The decision follows initial exploration work, which has highlighted the advantages to the healthcare offer for local people and the wider regeneration of the town centre.

This is very early days, and a full study will be commissioned to develop detailed proposals for this potential campus. The evidence gathered so far suggests that the former Market Square site has several advantages. It is in an accessible location, in the heart of the town centre and the Council owns the land. Additionally, it provides a focal point as part of our wider ambitions for the transformation of the town centre. We believe that this would be an exciting and highly beneficial development for the town and wider borough.

The benefits of locating an Integrated Health Campus in the town centre would help consolidate healthcare provision in a modern purpose-built facility in a central location. It is a flat and well connected site, and the Water Gardens Car Park can provide parking for the new facility. In turn, this will increase footfall into the town centre, supporting local businesses and economic recovery and will bring underutilised land back into use.

A new Health Campus will provide an opportunity to co-locate many different health and social care services in the heart of Hemel town centre, close to transport interchanges making them much more accessible to our residents than the current hospital site which is on a steep hill.

This is the first step in an ambitious plan for the former Market Square site, which will require detailed engagement with multiple partners to develop an accurate understanding of the financial costs and benefits to deliver this scheme.

The Council will now work with both West Herts Teaching Hospitals NHS Trust and the NHS Hertfordshire and West Essex Integrated Care Board to develop the next stages of the project and I look forward to updating Council at the next available opportunity – which I expect to be in early 2024 – on what will follow.

The remaining Portfolio Holder updates were taken as read and the Mayor invited questions, which can be viewed via the webcast.

6 BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING

The action points from the previous meeting, including two items that remain in progress, were noted.

Decision

It was suggested by Cllr Douris, and agreed by the Mayor, that when an outstanding action has not been completed by the following meeting, the update document circulated with the agenda includes an indication of the timescales a final response can be expected within.

7 CABINET REFERRALS

The Mayor introduced the item and handed over to Cllr Tindall who moved the Cabinet referral.

17th October 2023
CA/86/23 ANNUAL TREASURY REPORT

Cabinet decision;

Cabinet **RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND** that Council approved the contents of the report on Treasury Management performance and the Prudential Indicators for 2022/23.

Cllr England seconded the referral.

Decision

The recommendation was unanimously agreed.

8 OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

There were no referrals from Overview & Scrutiny.

9 POLLING DISTRICT & POLLING PLACE ORDER

Cllr Tindall to introduce the report, which was taken as read and the Mayor invited questions, which can be viewed via the video record of the meeting.

Recommendation;

That Council approve the updated Polling Districts & Polling Places Order

Decision

The recommendation was agreed, subject to a correction to wording in the report which still states the boundary of Nash Mills in Leverstock Green would change; it was initially proposed for change, but it was established those changes could not be made as the boundaries should be consistent with the Hertfordshire County Council boundaries. It was confirmed that the Nash Mills boundary would not be changed, the rest of the recommendation was agreed.

10 WAIVER OF 6 MONTH COUNCILLOR ATTENDANCE RULE

Cllr Tindall introduced the report with the recommendation that a further 6 months waiver be agreed for Cllr Mottershead who is suffering ill health.

Decision:

Unanimously agreed.

11 CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

The Mayor invited any changes from the group leaders.

Cllr Tindall proposed that Cllr S Hobson be given a seat on the Health & Wellbeing Committee.

Decision:

It was agreed that SHobson becomes a member of the Health & Wellbeing Committee.

12 CHANGE TO COMMITTEE DATES

The Mayor invited the group leaders to advise if there are any changes to committee dates; there were none.

The Meeting ended at 8.15 pm



5. Cabinet Member Updates

Members of the Council may ask the Cabinet member any question without notice upon an item on the report as published in this agenda;

- | | | |
|-----|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------|
| 5.1 | Councillor Tindall | Leader of the Council (verbal update only) |
| 5.2 | Councillor England | Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Emergency |
| 5.3 | Councillor Wilkie | Portfolio Holder Place |
| 5.4 | Councillor Weston | Portfolio Holder People & Transformation |
| 5.5 | Councillor Tindall | Portfolio Holder Corporate and Commercial Services |
| 5.6 | Councillor Dhyani | Portfolio Holder Housing & Property Services |
| 5.7 | Councillor Bromham | Portfolio Holder Neighbourhood Operations |



Council Briefing Note Wednesday 28th February 2024

CLIMATE ACTION AND OPPORTUNITY – COUNCILLOR
ADRIAN ENGLAND

Climate and Ecological Emergency programme

Significant service achievements since last Council meeting:

Dacorum CAN - we are saving waste, saving CO2, and saving money.

In total Dacorum is on track to have saved over £300,000 by 2026/27 via energy efficiency investment, and these benefits will contribute even more to Council budgets each year, from the capital and revenue investment. With the new CEE Reserve, we expect to identify opportunities to leverage ever greater, lasting and perennial savings.

That kind of saving gives us better budget choices than would otherwise be available.

It is better to spend the saving on investing to unlock more energy saving, compounding the efficiency, but it also gives the Council self-sufficiency, should reform of Local Government financing fail to materialise.

The CEE Portfolio reported to scrutiny at Finance & Resources on 7th February and primary reporting and scrutiny will move to SPaE, as from the Full Council Meeting on 28th February. Scrutiny Chairs please note that as this is a cross-cutting programme, different reports may naturally fit F&R or H&C.

We are in an El Nino year and unsurprisingly the temperature figures for January (and 2023) have exceeded records again.

Just 6 years to 2030, and it just makes sense that with 2050 being the UK Government's legal commitment, there must be milestones we will need to reach on the way to the middle of the century.

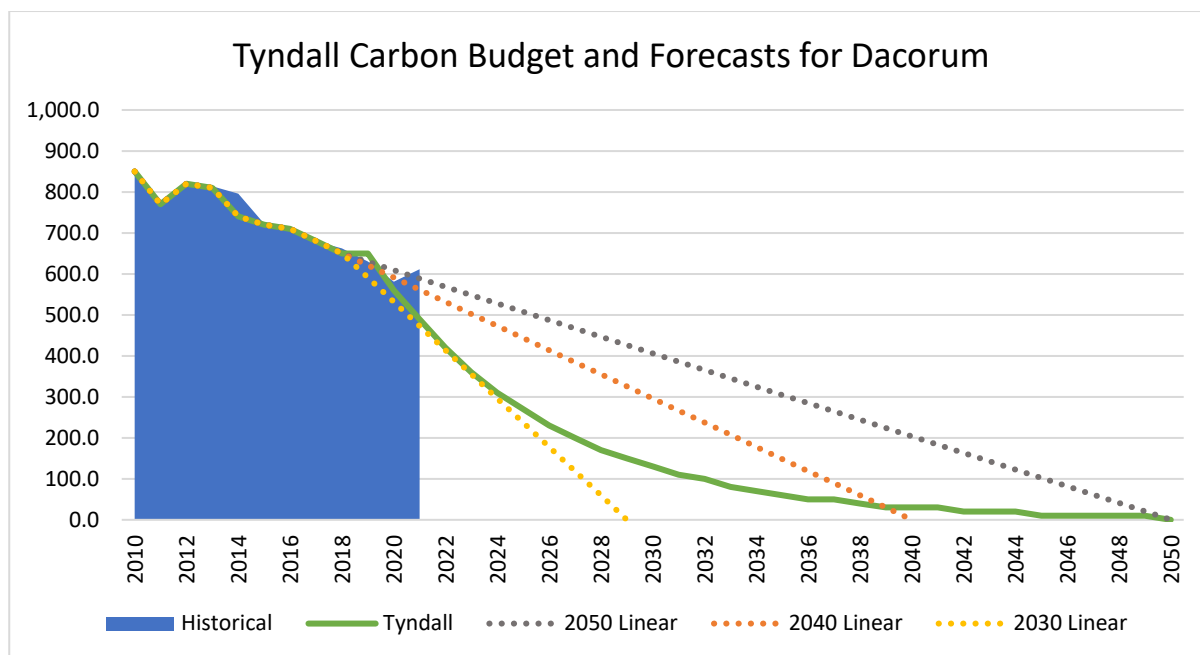
The less good news here is that we are behind our "Tyndall" trend line, and we will find necessary progress opportunities become harder to realise, so we need to get ahead of a linear trend to net Zero by 2050.

In June we will publish two years of BEIS figures. But for now here is the update to 2021:

Dacorum's emissions increased in 2021 and the emissions are above all the scenarios shown in the graph. Dacorum is 100 kilotons over the Tyndall pathway, and slightly over the least ambitious pathway of net-zero by 2050. 2021 was an anomalous year with COVID restrictions and a surge in economic activity in the latter half, so the next reporting period of

2022 will be more reliable to analyse progress. Nonetheless, this makes meeting the Paris-aligned Tyndall pathway much harder in this decade.

The chart below shows historic carbon emissions from Dacorum Borough, with four different pathways to net zero. “Tyndall” is the most ambitious, aligned to the COP21 Paris agreement, in 2015. The other three pathways, linear routes to net zero by 2030, 2040, 2050, are shown in dotted lined. Dacorum Borough’s trajectory is downward, but well above the ambitious Tyndall pathway.



Local sit rep, mention

The £1.16m Climate Generation Reserve has been published in the 2024/25 budget. As tempting as it is to spend it all on investing in our energy-efficiency and renewables generation, this fund may also be used to support the resourcing of work to bring in grants and match-funding to achieve strategic Climate Generation goals. Identified direct savings from its investment will be repaid to the reserve, so that the effects of acting on climate change are measured.

Consultants CLS were commissioned in 2021 to identify potential measures that can be implemented and associated benefits it would achieve and reported in spring 2022. A number of recommendations were made which identified the potential to make a total of £150k annual savings on energy bills through a total investment of £617k, giving a four-year payback, followed by many-fold income return.

£40,000 has been invested in implementing some of these revenue budget recommendations so far, which is generating more than £34,000 of repeated annual savings in energy bills. With additional Capital investment opportunities relating to Leisure Centres, which could boost the total repeating annual benefit to £461k.

Given two years have surpassed since the CLS report recommendations were made, costs have increased by about 30%, energy prices have also increased from about ~12p/kWh to ~30p/kWh or more, therefore the payback period would now be quicker and expected energy savings higher.

The council is working with the Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH) and Tallarna to develop an updated, prioritised, and financed Net Zero programme to decarbonise our built assets by 2030. Some measures, such as solar and heat pumps, previously recommended by the consultants will form part of this prioritised plan, but there are a further 23 quick win measures, including thermostatic radiator valves, BMS controls, glazing and insulation, worth £22,000 (figures correct in 2022, the team are awaiting updated quotes) which we will be implementing as soon as possible. The total energy efficiency savings realised to date as well, as these quicker win measures planned, will save around £314,000 cumulatively by the end of 2026/27 financial year.

Planning policy

We have been using our influence through our planning policy and planning processes to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation and wider benefits, for example, using the Local Plan to reduce the need to travel and a focus on providing sustainable transport.

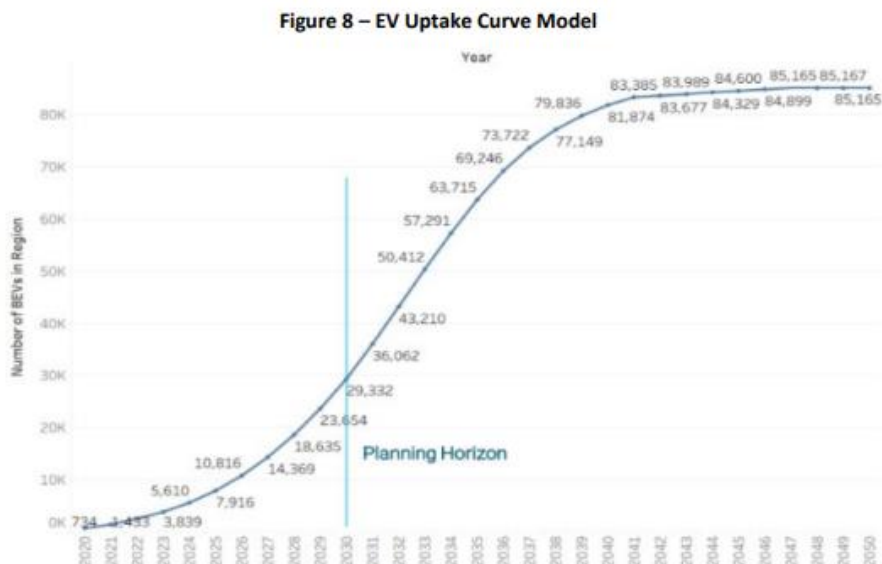
Members will know we carried out a successful consultation on our forthcoming Local Plan for Dacorum – the Revised Strategy for Growth – towards the end of 2023. Over the coming months, the Local Plan Task and Finish Group will be working with officers to shape the content of a full version of the Local Plan for consultation later in 2024 and then for submission to the Secretary of State (for Levelling up, Housing and Communities) in early 2025.

We believe that our new and revised strategy for growth offers many opportunities for delivering sustainable transport and energy efficiency in new housing and other developments. Building on the technical study from 2010 on opportunities for District Heating, now known as heat networks, we will be presenting to Council later in the year new policies to encompass a range of requirements that the Council will be seeking in new, especially major, developments.

EVCPs:

- The next Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) for Dacorum are being installed now, through to March in neighbourhoods across Dacorum. These were originally meant to be installed in 2022. Five rapid sites are now live and five fast sites have started install this month. The rapid charging hub is planned for installation this summer.
- Growth in EV adoption is very high, from a low base, and even without significant Government subsidy support (unusual in leading economies) it is heading from 3.3% (1-in-30) of all cars on the road now, to 4.3% (1-in-23) next year, probably 1-in-10 by 2027 and 1-in-4 by 2030.
- My projections, based on 23% of new registrations in Jan 2024 being EVs, with these new registrations hitting the open second-hand market three years later. An uptake curve (Figure 8) below, was developed by Department for Transport and presents a

model for update of Electric Vehicles in Dacorum.



- Users will aim to keep their batteries between 20% and 80% for best battery-health, so the opportunity for a partial charge at a convenient time when there is something else to be doing should be a behavioural shift, and that should benefit café and retail near EVCPs, bringing new/different custom from the Zap Map, for instance. An hour-long charge would cost about £3.60 and give up to 30 miles – enough to complete a journey home and would ensure a paying EV driver a prime space, or a quick 15-minute charge will cost about 90p, giving 7 miles of range.
- We are working closely with HCC to identify additional on street locations throughout Dacorum that would be suitable for EVCP's. HCC has been allocated £6m through the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund. HCC has submitted an outline business case demonstrating how the funding would be used and we have contributed to this a draft list of locations to their business case. The LEVI fund prioritises off street locations, as such the list is comprised of locations in car parks at community centres or shopping areas, with a few of on street chargers where there was no off-street option available nearby to suit residents. The idea is that this fund will be used to distribute charge points much more closely to residents' homes, ensuring they're within a walkable distance and prioritising areas where residents do not have off street parking.
- HCC has clarified a few areas in their application and the updated version is currently in review at the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles LEVI board. Following this HCC will be issued 90% of the allocated funding. HCC plan to procure on behalf of the Districts and Boroughs and are drafting an agreement for us to sign. Once signed the project will start moving forward with the site selection and procurement.
- HCC have completed the recruitment of two sustainable partnership officers who will act as the first point of contact for DBC and provide the required support and project management.

Homes: (Decarbonising)

- £22.4M has been allocated in the HRA Business Plan to achieve Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C by 2035 in social homes, prioritising those in fuel poverty for 2030, in line with the government's milestones. The service is currently developing the plan.
- The Council has delivered the first wave of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) investing over £1m decarbonising 24 homes, achieving an average EPC A.
- We are working to decarbonise 75 more homes with SHDF (Social Homes Decarbonisation Fund) wave 2, with the first lot of 30 homes in this wave to be completed or underway by April 2024. This is currently on track.
- Dacorum have successfully levered in a further £580,000 of government grants to deliver phase 2. The first tranche of 30 dwellings consists of 8 homes at Blackwell Road & 22 at Curtis Road. Work will include energy efficiency measures such as external wall insulation, loft insulation, draught proofing, heating controls, improved ventilation and solar PV installations. Government funding is being used where possible, but it often comes with constraints which limit its effect in widening the benefits.
- The team is currently working to identify a further 45 properties.
- Upgrading gas boilers to hybrid heat pumps and installing solar is already part of our BAU and planned in 12 more schemes up to 2030. An additional £500K per year to 2030 is needed to complete these works in all schemes. The Council has allocated £500K for 24/25 so that the planning for the work can commence.

Communities

- We are using a thermal imaging camera to show properties 'before' and 'after' effect of energy saving measures. The housing/assets team have finished their data cleansing as part of the EPC C work and have established that there are 20 archetypes for social homes. The team have requested thermal imaging at a number of properties to show the before and after of different types of measure such as EWI and cavity wall insulation. We hope to have some case studies to be deployed in comms to support and advise homeowners, at the end of summer.
- Update on Transition Street in Dacorum. Transition Streets bring neighbours together to reduce their carbon footprint and save money, through taking practical action together.
- DCAN hosted its third annual conference and networking event in November, with a focus on community climate action. More than 90 people attended the event in November.

Neighbourhood

- While Government changes to recycling have been postponed to 2025, DBC knows that there are cost-of-living savings to be found in minimising waste – especially food waste. Almost a quarter of the average household rubbish bin is edible food waste. Hertfordshire Waste Partnership’s WorthSaving campaign highlights that households can save up to £720 a year by following four simple steps to save.
- A green screen project is underway, a living barrier around schools to reduce air pollution. Nash Mills has been identified as a pilot school, the team is in touch with providers confirming quotes.
- The council is also expanding wildflower areas - we now have 45, planting new trees - in 2023 we planted 130 trees and 2500 whips. 12,000 whips are planned to be planted in Bunkers Park, pond field in March. The recent HCC “Your Tree Our Future” giveaway totaled 5500 whips allocated to the area of Dacorum, with all to be planted in private property.
- Affinity Water and the Environmental Agency are pursuing chalk river restoration projects at the River Bulbourne and River Gade. The River Gade restoration is due to begin in spring 2024.

Sustainable transport:

Dacorum is currently developing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to encourage residents to cycle and walk more. Draft walking and cycling maps have been developed from data, now being combined with public consultation, which commenced on 29th January and closed on 26th February. At the time of writing there have been

- From week ending Sunday 11th February, there were 103 responses on cycling, 86 comments on walking and 23 comments on current cycling network.
- The Council is exploring the feasibility of the provision of E-bikes in the borough. The project is going through various internal approvals at the moment.

Fleet:

- Route Optimisation for waste collection rounds has taken 5 vehicles off the road completely, and has saved over 8000 miles annually.
- An electric waste vehicle was trailed in January for 10 days and has shown that some routes do have the potential to be done with an electric vehicle. Officers are currently undertaking some feasibility work to establish options for potential electrification of the wider Council fleet.

Other:

- Carbon literacy training has been delivered to all senior management and to new Portfolio Holders. Mandatory training for all staff members on Climate and Ecological Emergency has also been implemented.

Strategic or significant operational matters which your service would like full Council to be aware of:

- With a new CEE programme team in place, we have reviewed all of the existing actions identified to help deliver our CEE Strategy ambitions, establishing defined projects with key plans and timescales and a new robust governance structure to ensure we have appropriate oversight and accountability of the programme.



Council Briefing Note 28 February 2024

PLACE PORTFOLIO – COUNCILLOR SHERON WILKIE

Planning Services

Significant service achievements since last Council meeting:

- DBC awarded Planning Skills Delivery Fund, totalling £63,412. An award towards planning application processing and skills training.
- Interviewed candidates for two graduate positions as part of the LGA backed Pathways to Planning initiative; we were awarded two positions as part of first cohort. Graduates will have LGA support as well as DBC support throughout their Planning Masters and training
- Launched the Local Cycle Walking Infrastructure Plan consultation which closes 29 Feb 2024, next stage will be site visits and auditing the primary and secondary routes, further consultation on final plans in early September 2024 . As at 12th February there have been 103 (11 from under 40 year olds) responses in relation to cycling and 86 (5 from under 40 year olds) in relation to walking
- DBC along with North Herts and Herts CC as other host authorities have objected throughout the Luton Development Consent Order (DCO) process in line with the agreed Council motion of February 2023. The Leader of Dacorum, alongside the Portfolio Holder for Place and members representing the wards most affected by the DCO have been kept informed on progress made over the past six months. While it is recognised that some progress has been made on a number of detailed and technical matters, fundamental concerns remain that go to the heart of the aforementioned motion.

Dacorum confirms its overarching position of objection of the Luton DCO and this position aligns with objections maintained by North Herts and Hertfordshire County Council.

DBC has set out in a Statement of Common Ground all the areas still cause for objection and where the matters of disagreement are these focus on Noise pollution; Air pollution and odour; Traffic and transportation; Climate Change and Green Controlled Growth. DBC has signed a Section 106 Legal Agreement along with North Herts and Herts CC which enables DBC to enforce matters in the S106 if permission is granted and these matters are breached. It is clear to the examining authority that DBC and other host authorities maintain a strong objection to the Luton DCO.

- Local Plan consultation ran between 30 October and 11 December, using the Engagement HQ platform and face to face sessions at community events. The response to the consultation will be presented to SPAE OSC on 6th March. Highlights include
 - 1,356 responses from residents, businesses, organisations and national bodies interested in planning for the future of Dacorum
 - (97%) of these via the new online consultation portal, Engagement HQ, and 41 (3%) by post
 - 37% support the local plan
 - Top 5 infrastructure priorities were Healthcare (290, 21.4%), Green space and play facilities (251, 18.5%), The road network (209, 15.4%), Public transport (172, 12.7%), Community facilities (163, 12%)
 - Task and finish group will have its first meeting on 4th March
- Officers presented a report to SPAE OSC on 10 Jan 2024 on Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace, the Scrutiny Committee made one substantial recommendation, which is to engage with ward

members and Parish and Town Councils when drafting a management plan for future SANG sites. This amendment was presented to Cabinet on 13 Feb 2024. They also requested quarterly updates to SPAE OSC ion SANG matters which will be actioned.

- Planning enforcement – 5 enforcement notices served in the last quarter. As at 9 February 2024 there are 338 live planning enforcement cases. Visits have been carried out on time for all new cases opened in 2024.

Strategic or significant operational matters which your service would like full Council to be aware of:

- Bovingdon Neighbourhood Plan consultation closed 12 November 2023, DBC are supporting Bovingdon with next steps
- DBC responded to Secretary of State request on the Land East Tring appeal, following an update to the National Planning Policy Framework before Christmas. The SoS decision is now expected in Mid-March.
- Appeal received and PINs confirmed a Public Inquiry 9-12 April for Rectory Farm site (GB and lack of SANG refusal a delegated decision)
- New planning application received on National Grid site 23/03028/MFA
- Biodiversity Net Gain is now mandatory, this new law part of The Environment Act. Developers must deliver a minimum 10% net gain (Major applications – over 10 units or 1,000sqm from 12 Feb and small sites 2 April 2024)
- Planning application fee increase came into force on 6th December; Major applications increased by 35% and 25% for all other applications, annual indexation introduced from 1 April 2025, remove a free go.
- Government has announced the Housing Delivery Test results for 2022, DBC is in a buffer category where as many other Herts authorities are in a presumption category. A new version of NPPF was released before Christmas and consultations recently announced on building on brownfield land as well as further PD changes, we are expecting many more preparing for secondary legislation following the Levelling Up Regeneration Act. The AD Planning will host a session to all members on the recent government announcements.

Place and Enterprise

Significant service achievements since last Council meeting:

- Dacorum BC attains Skillmaker accreditation. Skillmakers are employers and people from industry who are dedicated to the development of skills in young people and adults.
- Dacorum's Den 2023 successfully completed. £13,500 was secured from 4 sponsors – Epson, Abodebed, Sopra Storia and Beeches Group. 10 local businesses were awarded grants of up to £2,000 each. This was the tenth anniversary and in total over £100,000 has been awarded to 80 local businesses
- Successful programme of Christmas lights and trees across the borough which was well received by the community and businesses
- UK Shared Prosperity Fund – Hemel Imaginarium. Officers are working with voluntary sector partners as well as the BID on proposals for meanwhile and activation plans for the Town Centre which will include 'pop up' summer activities. Once costed and finalised a list of activities will be shared with members and communicated residents through the usual channels.

Strategic or significant operational matters which your service would like full Council to be aware of:

- Health Campus – Officers are working with health colleagues to develop a Memorandum of Understanding and PID for the next stage of feasibility works
- Dacorum BC attains Skillmaker accreditation
- Laserquest will be opening in the Marlowes opposite Marlowes shopping centre on 16 February
- Officers hosted a visit from officers of the Cities and Local Growth Unit at the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities where a presentation was given on the Town Centre Vision, HGC and

the Local Plan followed by a town centre walkabout. This was to demonstrate in person the council's ambitions. This was very well received by the DLUHC officers.

Communities and Leisure

Significant service achievements since last Council meeting:

- Household Support Funding – second payment of £50,000 received from HCC, passported to Dacorum Community Trust to provide emergency support to residents. This is the final payment with no further funding expected for 24/25
- Community Grants – a further £17,000 has been awarded to 6 organisations with more applications under consideration
- Reithfields and Coronations Fields Tennis Courts refurbishment complete and courts opened with new booking system at these courts and Cupid Green. Funded by the Lawn Tennis Association - £116,000 investment

Strategic or significant operational matters which your service would like full Council to be aware of:

- Head of Communities and Leisure, Chris Fennell. Started on 8th January 2024
- Following Cabinet approval to a grant based approach to VCS funding, funding agreements are being developed for implementation for first grant payments in April 2024
- Everyone Active (EA) Exercise Referral Programme – EA are in the process of rolling out an app onto the desktop of Herts GPs allowing GP's and other health professionals to refer patients into the leisure centres to access the social prescribing activity programmes available to residents with long term health conditions
- Funding for Health Inequalities and Healthy Hub officers extended by HCC for 24/25

Arts and Culture

Significant service achievements since last Council meeting:

- Dance ReIgnite – funded by Arts Council England : delivered in partnership with BEEE Creative and Dacorum Community Dance – 265 people engaged at workshop at Old Town Hall a local dance artist and a visual artist are working with older adults in the community to co-create a performance to tour to 10 local community venues and settings later in the year
- Plough roundabouts subways art project - Proposal submitted and funding agreed (in addition to Hemel BID funding) to work with Hemel Hempstead School pupils to design and paint two subways
- Old Town Hall Theatre – new digital solutions implemented to provide improved pre ordering, ticket sales, venue management
- Old Town Hall Theatre - Customer satisfaction rating remains in mid 90%

Strategic or significant operational matters which your service would like full Council to be aware of:

- Head of arts and Culture, Diana Houghton, joins the council on 4th March 2024
- Creative Hertfordshire - Discussion on creative evaluation methods to better demonstrate the impact of arts on health and wellbeing.

Hemel Garden Communities

Significant service achievements since last Council meeting:

- A series of Hemel Garden Communities' Councillor Review Group engagement activities were held during December and January, with presentations on the evolving Framework Plan; the need for active and sustainable travel; and, the Transport Vision and Strategy.

- A successful Homes England funding bid (up to £190k, subject to expenditure during 2023/24) was confirmed in December to support the development of a series of workstreams addressing transport and the opportunities for active and sustainable travel; future stewardship opportunities; and design.
- Hemel Garden Communities continues to develop evidence to support the Local Plans processes, across both Dacorum and St Albans.

Strategic or significant operational matters which your service would like full Council to be aware of:

- N/A will be reported via wider DBC Local Plan processes.



Council Briefing Note 28th February 2024

PEOPLE AND TRANSFORMATION PORTFOLIO –
COUNCILLOR CAROLE WESTON

Digital

- The new Digital Platform has been purchased, recruitment has commenced in line with the agreed business case and training is underway. This is a significant milestone for the council and our ambition to deliver the digital strategy & customer service strategy.
- Multi-Factor Authentication (MFA) has been successfully rolled out across all users and is now fully operational.
- Public Sector Network (PSN) compliance and certification was awarded by the Cabinet Office in January 2024.
- Our customer website has been upgraded to make better use of the technology and increase accessibility

Transformation

- Improved the Interactive Voice Recognition phone system (IVR) experience for customers, allowing them to obtain the response to their query quicker, direct them to utilise self-service facilities and overall improving the customer journey
- Reviewed the Call Centre callback telephone facility offering more hours of availability to customers, reducing down the time they wait for their call to be answered and being able to receive a call back without waiting in line.
- We have been redesigning processes in Revenues and Benefits and launching self-service channels which will make the process more efficient and much faster for customers to process moving in/out of an address and issue refunds where required. This will also help reduce the volume of call into CSU and back office.
- Delivered Complaints training to Managers and HOS/AD's to ensure all customers have a consistent approach when resolving complaints
- Annual service planning process currently being delivered – all services across the council being supported to establish their service plan for the upcoming financial year and consider prioritisation of their service activities.
- Continue to improve our Programme Management Office (PMO) approach: All projects have been baselined so we can monitor progress against this going forward, new project and programme boards have been set up for greater oversight and simplified reporting templates set up.
- Performance Improvement Project progressing well. All our performance measures were reviewed and proposed new measures have been developed for presentation to Cabinet.

HR

- Leadership Training for all tier 4 managers – Launched and to conclude in Spring
- Set up a staff values and behaviours delivery group to help further embed these within the Council's desired culture.

- Menopause Policy – Council agreed and to be launched in February 2024
- Launched a new coaching scheme for staff to become workplace coaches
- Established a new vacancy management tracker to assist SLT in managing their vacancies with their teams

Communications

- Local Plan consultation – Successfully delivered the six week consultation with integrated communications campaign and engagement programme.
- Internal Communications – Enhanced staff communication and engagement through the intranet, Town Hall (attended by 299 staff) and staff survey action plan.
- External Communications – Continued support across all services, supporting on communication, marketing and engagement activities for corporate projects, campaigns and operational service delivery.
- Filming – Continued growth and impact of filming activity across the borough, including national coverage praising filming in Dacorum and the Old Town for the blockbuster film 'Masters of the Air'.



Council Briefing Note 28th February 2024

**CORPORATE & COMMERCIAL SERVICES PORTFOLIO –
COUNCILLOR RON TINDALL**

- Despite a challenging environment our Commercial portfolio is circa 96% occupied and income levels remain on target. Income target for period 10 February £4,837,492.
- February 2024 update - There are 150 commercial buildings and sites that DBC own and Property Services manage and report on for compliance under 6 main headings: Fire; Asbestos; Legionella; Gas, Electricity & Passenger Lifts. For example, Cupid Green Depot is the largest site containing 5 occupied buildings. Heating Systems Insurance inspections have been added to the compliance report.

Area	Description	Target	Performance	Trend
Fire	Percentage of properties covered by valid FRA	100.00%	100.00%	
Legionella	Percentage of water installations covered by risk assessment	100.00%	100.00%	
Asbestos	Percentage of known asbestos locations re-inspected	100.00%	100.00%	
Gas	Percentage of properties with valid gas or combustion certificate	100.00%	100.00%	
Electrical	Percentage of properties with satisfactory EICR	100.00%	100.00%	
Lifts	Percentage of passenger lifts with current examination certificate	100.00%	100.00%	
Heating	Percentage of properties with current insurance inspection	100.00%	100.00%	

Key Points

- All areas of compliance now being maintained

- Good progress to complete concrete render repairs and window replacements at Bennetts Gate - The render repairs are approaching the end of the cutting out stage to the west elevation and central block. The east elevation repairs have now been infilled and are ready for the proprietary protection coat to be applied. The new window installation works has started and the project is forecast to be fully completed by the end of March 2024.
- **Victoria Hall Ceiling.** Concerns were raised due to the condition of the plaster and remedial patch repairs have been completed. We commissioned a consultant to review the ceiling who has advised that the structural condition of the roof is satisfactory, however further works are required. These works will be completed during the 2025/26 financial year.
- **Nash Mills Recreation Centre** – the entrance road to the Recreation Centre has deteriorated leading to large pot holes and edge subsidence. This poses a potential health and safety risk for users. Following a successful capital bidding process, completed as part of the 2024/25 service planning exercise, funds have been approved and the works are planned for week commencing 15 April 2024.



Council Briefing Note 28th February 2024

**HOUSING & PROPERTY PORTFOLIO – COUNCILLOR SIMY
DHYANI**

Property Services

- Aaron Services successfully won the Heating and Ventilation contract. Contract mobilisation has commenced and will go live from 1st April 2024
- Over 5,000 domestic electrical tests were completed in 2023 – we are in the process of phasing these inspections to reduce the impact on available resources.
- We have achieved 100% compliance on gas safety for two months running, December and January.
- Major fire safety works were completed at Gade Tower and lift replacement works are currently on site
- A fire remedial repairs project has started targeting multiple repairs across several blocks of flats, these are mostly medium / low risk repairs.
- Launch of Customers weekly drop in at the forum for customer to discuss any on-going repairs issues has started. This is an opportunity for residents to call into The Forum to discuss any repairs issues face to face with DBC and Osborne representatives.
- Complaints process amended to ensure that actions from responses are monitored to reduce the likelihood of stage 2 complaints
- New planned programmes now set out for 24/25, Stakeholder communications are currently being prepared in preparation for works starting
- Improvements reported in keys KPIs – First time fix, appointments made & kept, average time to complete repairs
- 23 contracts awarded under the Interim Contract Strategy with 8 contracts still to be signed. Terms and Conditions have been agreed with 7 of the 8 companies, with 1 company reviewing the Council's comments on suggested amendments.

Housing Operations

- Engagement with supported housing residents to inform tenants of the introduction of the Enhanced Housing Management charge.
- Mapping activity of all Housing green space and trees to support review of grounds maintenance planning. Bio-diversity pilot – completion of 'Planet Garden' in partnership with Sunnyside and tenant improvement panel to be celebrated with formal opening in February 2024.
- Refreshed rent policy developed in support of HRA business plan review.

- Successful pilot activity in relation to bin store cleansing and fly tipping, undertaken in collaboration with CSG – activity will inform revised approach to delivery.
- Delivery of one new temporary accommodation unit in accordance with Local Authority Housing Fund (LAHF), 4 additional HRA units via LAHF on track for completion in Q4.
- Task & finish group activity led to ensure implementation of 24/25 rent charges and incorporation of 53rd week due to leap year.
- Several well attended and successful celebration events at supported housing schemes over festive period, with fantastic feedback and compliments to the service from residents.
- The estate inspection regime is well bedded in with some great work to improve common areas of our housing stock and standing up of task/finish activity for longer term interventions
- Continuing to evolve the new way of working within Tenancy Management, specifically to our approach towards tasks/cases. In turn, we are now able to produce quantitative data on aspects of work undertaken in set period.
- Successfully managed the community alarm upgrade at Douglas Gardens – new community alarm upgrade starting at Gilbert Burnet House next week.
- Several teams across housing participated in person at the South Hill Centre, this was a successful event with residents being supported with a range of housing related queries; rent payments/ income maximisation, ASB, housing allocations or Housing register application and advice on sustaining tenancies.

Safe Communities

- Afghan Bridging Hotel closure and successfully ensuring all Afghan households into settled accommodation. Partnership presentation at HCC asylum workshop to showcase DBC activity.
- Identified accommodation in the private sector for 16 refugee households alleviating requirement for statutory homeless or temporary accommodation assistance.
- Facilitated access to education classes in the home of 2 refugee woman who were unable to access mainstream programmes due to disability or childcare (newborn) to prevent isolation.
- Delivery of Prevent training to DBC, VCS and Home Office accommodation provider staff in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council.
- Severe cold weather plan implementation, providing targeted support to individuals at risk of rough sleeping – up to 15 individuals have accessed services each night during Q3.
- Successful closure order of property in Grovehill due to ongoing ASB and impact to local community.
- Launch of Community Safety Partnership survey – to gain valuable insight from residents and inform partnership activity.
- Proactive monitoring and engagement with Fire Protection Team in relation to high rise building in private sector.
- Targeted activity to raise standards of private sector accommodation in borough, resulted in execution of warrants with Police support due to an unlicensed HMO in Cornerhall and improvement notice served in relation to two homes in Apsley

- Refreshed ASB Policy scrutinised by SLT and TLC – further review, engagement and scrutiny with PH/SLT February ahead of HC&OSC in March 2024.

Strategic Housing & Delivery

- 6 new social rented homes handed over at Douglas Terrace, Sempill on the 12th December and all occupied prior to Christmas.
- Cabinet approved the award of Principal Contractor for the resumption of construction works to Eastwick Row in Adeyfield on the 30th January. This project will provide 34 x 1 and 2 bed flats let at social rented values and forecast to be handed over in summer 2025.
- The Team have been working on a Local Connection policy for First Homes and all other affordable home ownership tenures – the policy proposal will be reported to Cabinet in a few months' time.
- The Council received its report on the Homes England Compliance Audit of its new build scheme at Beechfield (Sandy Close) and are pleased to report a finding of "Green – meets Requirements" judgement.
- The Housing Strategy has been approved by Cabinet on the 30th January. We are now preparing a launch and wider stakeholder involvement to track our progress against the targets set.
- We held our first TLC scrutiny sub-meeting on the 16th January, where residents scrutinised our Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSM's) and started to prioritise what service areas they wanted to explore next.
- We have agreed to purchase CX-Feedback. From April this system will help us capture our TSM's going forward but is a much broader resident engagement platform which will allow us to capture much more customer insight in real time.
- We held a breakfast club on the 24th January for staff to hear presentations from the Chartered Institute of Housing on the new legislative changes and explain the benefits of professional membership to individuals.
- We have reviewed the departmental targets and measures used to manage and monitor performance. This work is nearing completion and new reports are being produced for a range of audiences.



The New Neighbourhood Operations Directorate has a new team of senior managers and is already starting to have an impact in relation to ways of working: focusing on partnership and collaboration as well as tackling performance.

Neighbourhood Management

New play areas

Tenders received and currently being evaluated. Projects will be delivered in two phases, one commencing in June and the second phase commencing in September. A discussion will be held with the successful contractor to see whether any of the programme can be accelerated but avoiding school summer holidays.

HCC Tree Giveaway

On Saturday 9th December 2023, DBC held a tree giveaway event on behalf of HCC and their 'Your tree, our future' initiative.

Due to the demand from the previous years' event, HCC increased the number of trees available to Dacorum's residents from 2,000 to 3,000. This was further increased to 5,500 with additional funding from DBC itself.

Residents who had been allocated free trees attended Cupid Green Depot and were directed through the site by DBC staff to the tree collection area. Each resident was then given their correct allocation of trees from a mix of native species which included field maple, birch, hornbeam, hazel, hawthorn, cherry, rowan and crab apple.

The flow of residents continued throughout the day with staff remaining in good spirits despite the wintery weather.

Many thanks to Cllr England who attended the event with myself.

Christmas Tree Recycling

The annual Christmas Tree recycling day, which has been running in Dacorum for 27 years, welcomed residents to bring along their real Christmas trees to one of three chipping points set up at Cupid Green Depot in Hemel Hempstead, Canal Fields car park in Berkhamsted, and Tring Garden Centre. Local Scout groups and the Hospice of St Francis were once again able to offer tree collections to residents.

Over 5,000 trees were recycled on the day and over 100 bags of chippings were taken away by residents to reuse in their gardens as a weed preventative. The remaining trees and chippings have been taken to a compost facility and will eventually be turned into soil to help new plants to grow.

In total, we collected 45 tonnes of Christmas trees. Unfortunately, this is classified as commercial green waste, so it doesn't contribute to our recycling rate.

Green Flag Award

We have made our annual entry to Green Flag Award – we currently hold awards at Canal Fields, Tring Memorial Garden, Water Gardens, Chipperfield Common and Bunkers Park. This year, an additional entry has been made for Gadebridge Park

General waste and dog bin mapping

Clean Safe and Green have now completed an exercise to digitally map all general waste and dog bins in the boroughs. This will now form the basis of an exercise over the next 12 months to ensure we have the right bin in the right place.

Environmental Services

As part of the Fleet Decarbonisation programme, a trial of electric 26-tonne Dennis and Renault dustcarts is underway.

Communal bin locations are being checked to get the capacity for each type of refuse up to standard wherever possible.

Regulatory Services

The service were in Court for an Animal Welfare Offences in December. Jackie Connolly was found guilty of one count of allowing a cat to suffer unnecessarily and one count of failing to meet the needs of an animal. The cat was removed by officers and euthanised under veterinary advice. Connolly was fined and banned from keeping or owning animals for 5 years.

Health, Safety and Resilience

I would like to welcome Martin Kirk to the Council. Martin started in a new role as Head of Health, Safety and Resilience on the 8th January 2024 and I look forward to working with him.

FULL COUNCIL – 2023/2024

ACTION POINTS FOR PORTFOLIO HOLDERS

Date of meeting	Action point	PH responsible for action	Response / Investigation Ongoing
July 2023	Cllr Symington to circulate cost of the strategic review to members.	Cllr Sally Symington	<p>The work streams planned for the Strategic Asset Review (SRA) are reported in the Report to Cabinet 20 June 2023 and listed in Table 1 on page 5. In total, the costs for the SAR are estimated at £516k. These are being partly funded from existing budgets provided for by the previous administration. However, there is a shortfall across the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) of £95,500 and the General Fund (GE) of £115,500, giving a combined total shortfall of £211k. The HRA funding requirement is being funded by a one-off reduction to the 2023/24 HRA revenue contribution to capital and the GF funding requirement is being funded from the Dacorum Development Reserve.</p> <p>The Strategic Asset Review will enable the Council to make best use of Council assets to support the delivery of housing growth and regeneration throughout Dacorum; and to generate long term income streams that support service delivery for the benefit of Dacorum’s communities.</p>
July 2023	Cllr Bromham to provide written answer regarding timescale for verge hardening.	Cllr Robin Bromham	<p>“I appreciate the amount of reported parking congestion we have on residential streets, and the effect that has, especially on pedestrians of restricted mobility. Our streets were not designed for the quantity and size/weight of modern vehicles.</p> <p>As this problem was neglected by the previous administration, and a backlog of potential schemes has built up, I have asked for policy options, based on evidenced parking congestion, desire-lines for pedestrians and co-ordination with the Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which is now being progressed properly by the new administration.</p> <p>I believe that the LCWIP will serve to reduce the need for reliance on cars for local travel, and hence support the choice to reduce levels of multiple car ownership.</p> <p>Thus, I am investigating the provision of more parking on residential streets where the need is shown to be most acute, with an ability to restore to grass or planting in the long-term.”</p>

July 2023	Cllr Wilkie to provide written information on fast-tracking to Cllr Johnson	Cllr Sheron Wilkie	<p>Further to the question from Cllr's Anderson and Johnson in Full Council meeting on 12th July , please find my written response to all members as requested.</p> <p>In November 2022 Planning Officers provided a Member Briefing Note regarding fast-track appeals after a request from the previous portfolio holder Cllr Anderson – please find attached.</p> <p>Cllr Anderson and Johnson asked at FCM on the 12th July;</p> <p><i>'In the last year there have been two highly controversial planning appeals in Kings Langley that have been fast-tracked. The fast-tracking process has been used for some years, but this is the first time it has been used for cases where the officer's recommendation has been overturned by Development Management Committee, and the decision to fast-track an appeal against the decision of Development Management Committee is made by Dacorum Planning Department, not the Planning Inspectorate. The fundamental problem with the process is that the appellant gets another opportunity to include disputed information, but neighbours and ward councillors who have objected to the application are denied a role in the fast-track process. They are denied a fair hearing. The previous portfolio holder banned fast-tracking controversial appeals, resulting from the first case, but this ban would appear to have been discontinued. Does the portfolio holder agree with me that fast-tracking these cases is fundamentally unfair, and will the portfolio holder reinstate the ban to stop this from happening?'</i></p> <p>As per the Member Briefing in 2022:</p> <p><i>'A householder appeal is an appeal against the refusal of planning permission for development attached to a dwelling or within its grounds (i.e., householder planning applications); or against conditions attached to such planning permissions. The householder appeal service was introduced in April 2009 to streamline the procedure for householder appeals, with quicker timescales for making an appeal, and the overall appeal decision-making process". In other words, a 'fast track appeal' is simply the process by which <u>ALL</u> householder appeals are heard. In that sense Cllr Anderson has misunderstood the fast-track appeals process as this is not a process that Dacorum's Planning Department can choose.'</i></p>
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			<p>Cllr's Anderson and Johnson are correct that the appellant has a further opportunity to provide the Planning Inspectorate with their comments (their 'full case'). However, given the appellant will not previously have seen the Officer's report and the reasons for refusal it is in my view proportionate and proper that they have an opportunity to respond to these.</p> <p>Cllrs Anderson and Johnson are incorrect to say that there was a ban in place through the previous portfolio holder (Cllr Anderson), as it is not the Council / Planning Department that decides this process.</p> <p>As such, I have not lifted any such ban, nor do I have the powers to re-instate one.</p> <p>Moving on to the two specific cases referenced by Cllrs Anderson and Johnson:</p> <p>1) 22/00015/FHA: 36 Belham Road, Kings Langley WD4 8BY</p> <p>This appeal was allowed on 21.02.23. The Planning Inspector agreed with the recommendation of Officers and concluded that the development would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. The key section is as follows:</p> <div data-bbox="920 839 2119 1394" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 5px;"><ol style="list-style-type: none">6. I consider that the proposed two storey side extension incorporating the existing garage and extending to the rear elevation of the main house would be of a scale, height, bulk and design in keeping with the character of the existing house itself and the prevailing pattern of development along the street. The extended hipped roof would reflect the existing roof pitch and would be a visual improvement over the existing side dormer when viewed from the street. The size of the plot is ample to accommodate the increase in built form.7. The proposed first floor rear extension over the existing single storey extension would be relatively modest in scale with a hipped roof and would be in keeping with the main house. It would be visible from the rear windows of properties in Hempstead Road over the long rear gardens but not from the street.8. I conclude that the proposed extensions, together with the minor alterations to the chimney and rooflights and other openings, would not harm the character and appearance of the street scene or the wider area and that they are consistent with Core Strategy policies CS11 and CS12.</div>
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			<p>Therefore, this is simply an example of where Planning is not an exact science. Members, as is their right to do, reached a different view on the harm caused by the development to Officers. This is not uncommon and not due to a fast-track appeals system.</p> <p>Design / impact on the character and appearance of the area are subjective assessments. Officers rely on their experience and knowledge of previous decisions to assess when a scheme tips the balance and becomes sufficiently harmful that it needs to be refused.</p> <p>Officers have checked through householder planning appeals since the beginning of 2021 and there have been 4 householder appeals resulting from DMC Members reaching a contrary view to Officers. Three of these appeals were dismissed with one allowed.</p> <p>2) 22/03760/FHA: 29 Langley Hill, Kings Langley WD4 9HA</p> <p>This appeal has not yet been determined. This one was refused for the following reason:</p> <div data-bbox="920 770 2049 1018" style="border: 1px solid black; padding: 10px;"> <p>Reason(s) for Refusal:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> The proposed development by virtue of the rear facing balcony, will result in overlooking of, and an unacceptable loss of privacy to neighbouring residential properties. As such, the development fails to comply with Policy CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy </div> <p>It if Planning Officers position that regardless of the Planning Inspector’s conclusion, any impact resulting from this development is very localised and that this development is not controversial in a wider sense.</p>
<p>July 2023</p>	<p>Cllr Weston stated that she would provide a written reply to this question “What work was being done with</p>	<p>Cllr Carol Weston</p>	<p>Hertfordshire County Council staff members regularly attend the Hertfordshire Head of Human Resources meetings and recruitment is a frequent item at the meeting. We had an external presentation on how to best use social media and LinkedIn to assist with recruitment. As a result we are now utilising a recruiter license which allows us to proactively contact candidates who match the job vacancy skill set and are open to work.</p>

	Hertfordshire County to promote roles with young people		<p>There is other work continuing at the Council, which will support the recruitment/retention of young people. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Increase in the number of our national graduate development programme intake, from 1 per year to 3 per year. • Continuing HR and management presence at career fairs • We have a stage in recruitment approval process to ensure managers consider the option to amend the vacancy to a trainee/apprentice role. • Bespoke marketing campaigns for graduate positions, latest one for the graduate environmental health officers. We received 12 applications. • We offer apprenticeship training for staff and currently have 11 members of staff on apprenticeship courses. • We offer a work experience programme for schools, this will be expanded in the next offer. • We are exploring partnerships with local colleges/universities with an aim to provide a pathway to job opportunities with the Council. • We have recently registered our interest in the planning graduate scheme run by the Local Government Association (LGA). This will be launched in the New Year. • The appraisal process now includes a succession planning element to ensure that future training is bespoke to the needs of personal career development as well as job related training.
September 2023	To send enquiries regarding expected receipt of King's official portrait for Council Chamber. (Cllr Tindall & Officers)	Cllr Tindall	Picture has been ordered and should be in situ for Full Council in November
September 2023	Cllr Barradell noted the Council's success as referred to in the report regarding countering dog fouling and littering in Gadebridge Park. Cllr Barradell asked how this was achieved	Cllr Bromham	Regarding Gaddesden, I have received queries about signage locally, to advertise the fact that PSPO against dog fouling is in force. When I visited the Great Gaddesden, I did notice that a sign to that effect has now been put up on the parish notice board. We could consider adding signs to posts, although that is a compromise between the deterrent effect and the visual impact of such signs. Please encourage residents to report things like dog fouling online, which helps identify hotspots. https://www.dacorum.gov.uk/home/do-it-online/report-it .

	<p>and if there are plans to use this knowledge to tackle incidents elsewhere, including Gaddesden.</p> <p>Cllr Tindall advised that the handling of anti-social behaviour is being reviewed, noting that the previous administration restricted the activities of wardens to the centre of Hemel Hempstead. Cllr Tindall suggested that the work has been achieved by staff and that he would arrange for a portfolio holder to provide a full reply.</p>		<p>The reduced dog fouling in Gadebridge is likely to be due to the increased presence of park staff and the standard of tidiness and beauty of planting in the area.</p>
September 2023	<p>Cllr Timmis asked if the electrical vehicle charging points will be limited in time or if cars can charge overnight.</p> <p>Cllr Tindall stated that this will depend on the particular charging point and that the portfolio holder could provide a more detailed response</p>	Cllr Tindall	<p>I'm delighted to see these first three Osprey EV charging points go operational earlier than expected. Tring leads this wave of modern infrastructure being installed right across Dacorum, helping local residents, shoppers and other visitors to be confident in leaving behind vehicles which require outdated fossil fuels.</p> <p>The following public car park locations are included in the current programme:</p> <p>Hemel Hempstead</p>

			<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wood Lane End car park • Alexandra Road car park • Queensway car park • Park Road • Bellgate neighbourhood centre • The Queen’s Square neighbourhood centre • Durrants Hill car park <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leverstock Green village shops • Water Gardens • Cowper Road • The Gables car park • Henry Wells Square • Bennetts End neighbourhood centre • High Street Car Park <p>Berkhamsted</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • St John’s Well Lane car park <p>Tring</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Frogmore Street (East) car park • Forge Car Park <p>Kings Langley</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Langley Hill car park <p>Markyate</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hicks Road car park
<p>September 2023</p>	<p>Cllr Douris commented on the proposal for some car parks to have a minimum charge based on a longer period of time and asked if this was correct.</p>	<p>Cllr Tindall</p>	<p>This is correct and is as set out in the proposals that went to Scrutiny and Cabinet in September 2023 and again in December 2023</p>

	Cllr Tindall stated that he would arrange for a written answer to be provided		
November 2023	Cllr Barradell asked if there was data available of fixed penalty notices, specifically dog fouling outside of Hemel Hempstead and Berko.	Cllr Bromham	In the previous financial year, out of 3015 FPNs issued, 96% of FPNs were issued in Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted. 0.4% of the total were for dog fouling and 0.3% were for not carrying dog poo bags. 82% were for tobacco-related litter.
November 2023	Cllr Birnie asked if trading standards could offer regular reports on the selling of nicotine products to underage people	Cllr Bromham	Trading Standards (in Herts. County Council) said that vapes have been seized from 6 premises in Dacorum in current financial year and continue to do Test Purchasing for under age sales of vapes. Schools have been encouraged to report instances of children found in possession of vapes to a particular Herts CC email. HCC are considering how to share press releases on this topic to District/Borough Council Colleagues/ Members. I hope that UK government regulations will deter the use of disposable vapes among those who were not previously smokers and reduce incidence of these problematic devices in litter and waste-streams.
November 2023	Cllr Douris referenced the point in the report “: HCC are now talking to Dacorum Borough Council about how to get bus services up to 15 minute intervals (ie “just turn up”) in Dacorum” He asked if Cllr England could tell them which particular bus services these were	Cllr England	HCC are now talking to Dacorum Borough Council about how to get bus services up to 15 minute intervals (ie “just turn up”) in Dacorum. HCC are looking to invest locally because we have signalled this is a priority. It will take time, but we are also activating partnership links with Intalink. ...and said that you were pleased I had used the plural. You then asked me which services: I look forward to inviting you to join me for a trip to and from Luton on the 721 and/or Stevenage on the 302, in the New Year?

Cabinet Referrals

21 November 2023

CA/99/23 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

Decision

1. That Cabinet notes the financial position for 2023-24 as at Quarter 2.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

2. That Cabinet **recommends that Council** approve the following supplementary capital budgets representing growth to the Capital Programme:
 - £0.025m for additional works relating to Leisure Courts improvements.
 - £0.195m to support enhancements to the Council's Leisure facilities. This includes £0.102m for the refurbishment of the lighting at Jarman Park, £0.070m to replace the lift at the Berkhamsted Leisure Centre and a £0.022m contribution towards Building Energy Management System upgrades.

These supplementary capital bids will be financed in line with the Council's approved Capital Strategy.

3. That Cabinet notes the following slippage on the capital programme into future years:
 - General Fund £4.114m
 - Housing Revenue Account £4.523m

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

Statutory Officer Comments:

Monitoring Officer:

This report is part of the Council's financial governance and gives assurance on the financial position at the end of quarter 2 for members to review and note. No further comments to add to the report.

Deputy S151 Officer:

This is a S151 Officer report

Advice

N Howcutt introduced the report.

Recommendation agreed

12TH December 2023

CA/106/23 VCS COMMISSIONING – GRANT APPROACH

Decision

Cabinet to:

1. Endorse the principle of a direct award grants based approach to funding the Voluntary and Community Sector as set out in the report
2. That awards be made to the following organisations for a three year period, with an option to extend for a further two years upon review, for the sums set out in section 5.1:
 - (a) Citizens Advice Dacorum
 - (b) Community Action Dacorum
 - (c) Herts Age UK
 - (d) Relate Dacorum, Watford and Three Rivers with Mediation Hertfordshire
3. Delegate any decision to implement the two year extension to the Portfolio Holder for Place

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

4. **Recommend to Council** that authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer and the Head of Commercial Development to amend the Procurement and Commissioning Standing Orders to allow for a direct award approach to grant funding

Corporate Priorities

Building strong and vibrant communities

Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery

Statutory Officer Comments:

Monitoring Officer:

The terms of the funding will be documented in a formal grant funding agreement to ensure that the funding is applied to the particular purpose of the organisation and can be monitored by the Council.

The proposal for direct award of the grant funding will require an amendment to the Council's Procurement and Commissioning Standing Orders if the recommendations in this report are agreed.

Deputy S151 Officer:

The 2024/25 budget setting process will set a budget in line with the grant awards for VCS and future annual budget setting cycles provide relevant inflation in line with the approved MTFS.

Advice

Recommendation agreed

CA/108/23 COUNCIL TAX BASE REPORT AND SUPPORT SCHEME

Decision

RESOLVE TO RECOMMEND

1. To **recommended that Council** change the council tax support scheme from April 2024 to:
 - a. increase the backdating period for working age CTS applications to three months in line with pension age applications;
 - b. remove the restriction for residents in properties from bands E to H for maximum CTS to be calculated using band D.
2. Approved an additional one off payment of support to Council Tax Support Claimants.
3. Cabinet approved the Collection Fund surplus estimate of £665,115.33 as at 31 March 2024. The Dacorum Borough Council share of this surplus is £77,517.77.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

4. Cabinet **recommended to Council** that Dacorum's share of the Council tax surplus (£77,517.77) be transferred to the funding equalisation reserve, specifically to manage fluctuations in the collection fund position.
5. Cabinet approved the payment profile for the surplus identified at 3) above and contained at section 2.39 to this report (Table 4).
6. Cabinet approved the calculation of the Council's tax base for the year 2024/25 incorporating an estimated collection rate of 98.5%.
7. Agreed that, in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) Regulations 2012, the amount calculated by the Council as its tax base for the year 2024/25 shall be 60,276.5 and its constituent elements shall be

Table 1 Taxbase 2024/25

Part of Area - Parished and Non Parished	100% Tax base	98.5% Tax base
Hemel Hempstead	32,886.6	32,393.3
Aldbury	477.0	469.8
Berkhamsted	8,715.3	8,584.6
Bovingdon	2,165.9	2,133.4
Chipperfield	911.2	897.6
Flamstead	671.5	661.5
Flaunden	182.2	179.5
Great Gaddesden	463.5	456.6
Kings Langley	2,406.1	2,370.0
Little Gaddesden	638.2	628.6
Markyate	1,346.8	1,326.6
Nash Mills	1,241.2	1,222.6
Nettleden with Potten End	815.2	803.0
Northchurch	1,415.0	1,393.8
Tring Rural	728.6	717.7
Tring Town	5,450.4	5,368.7
Wigginton	679.5	669.3
Total Taxbase	<u>61,194.4</u>	<u>60,276.5</u>

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

Statutory Officer Comments:**Monitoring Officer:**

No comments to add to the report.

Deputy S151 Officer:

This is a Section 151 officer report. Comments contained within the body of the report.

Advice

Recommendation agreed

30TH January 2024

CA/09/24 TREASURY MANAGEMENT MID-YEAR REVIEW

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

Cabinet **recommends to Council** acceptance of the 2023/24 Treasury Management performance report

Advice

Recommendation agreed

Please refer to the video minutes to view this item in full.

13th February 2024

CA/18/24 BUILDING SAFETY POLICY

Decision

1. Approved the Building Safety Policy.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

2. **Recommended to Council** that the Chief Executive be designated as the Accountable Person within the Council's constitution and scheme of delegation and the Monitoring Officer is given delegated authority to make the required amendments to the Council's Scheme of Delegation.

Advice

Recommendation agreed

Please refer to the video minutes to view this item in full.

CA/19/24 COMMITTEE TIMETABLE

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

Cabinet **recommended that Council** approves the Committee Timetable for 2024/25 as set out in Appendix A to this report.

Advice

Recommendation agreed

Please refer to the video minutes to view this item in full

CA/20/24 HRA BUSINESS PLAN REFRESH

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

4. **Recommend that Full Council** adopt the HRA Business Plan at Appendix A.
5. **Recommend that Full Council** approve the Acquisitions and Disposals policy at Appendix B.
6. **Recommend that Full Council** approve the Rent Policy at Appendix C.

Advice

Recommendation agreed

Please refer to the video minutes to view this item in full

CA/23/24 BUDGET

Decision

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

Cabinet recommends that Council:

General Fund Revenue Estimate

1. Set a Dacorum Borough Council General Fund Council Tax requirement of £13.821m, and a provisional amount of £15.144m for the combined Borough Council and Parish Councils' requirement for 2024/25;
2. Approve a Band D Council Tax increase of £6.66 (2.99%) for Dacorum Borough Council;
3. Approve the base estimates for 2024/25, as shown in Appendix A1, and the indicative budget forecasts for 2024/25 – 2027/28, as shown in Appendix A2;
4. Approve the forecast balances of Revenue Reserves as shown in Appendix J, and approve section 10 of this report as the updated Reserves Strategy;
5. Approve increases in Fees and Charges for 2024/25 as set out in Appendices C3, D3, and E3;
6. Approve and adopt the Treasury Management Strategy for 2024/25, attached at Appendix K;
7. Approve and adopt the Capital Strategy for 2024/25, attached at Appendix L;

8. Note that this budget paper, if approved by Council, will form part of the Medium Term Financial Strategy.

Capital Programme

9. Approve the Capital Programme for 2024/25 to 2028/29, as detailed in Appendix I;

10. Approve the financing proposals in Appendix I subject to an annual review of the financing options by the Chief Finance Officer, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Finance and Resources, during the preparation of the Statement of Accounts.

Housing Revenue Account (HRA)

11. Set dwelling rents according to DLUHC guidance, which provides for a rent increase of CPI plus 1% which equates to 7.7%. The average dwelling rent is proposed to be £127.73 per week in 2024/25 (based on 52 weeks);

12. Approve the HRA budget for 2024/25 as shown in Appendix F

Employer Terms and Conditions

13. Note that the hourly rate of all Council employees continues to exceed the rate proposed by the rates of the Living Wage Foundation, for 2024/25 (to be reviewed annually thereafter).

Statement by Chief Finance Officer

14. Approve the statement by the Chief Finance Officer regarding the robustness of the budget estimates and level of reserves as set out in Appendix M.

Advice

Recommendation agreed

Please refer to the video minutes to view this item in full

CA/24/24 CHILTERN BEECHWOODS SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION MITIGATION STRATEGY AND SUITABLE ALTERNATIVE NATURAL GREENSPACE UPDATE

Decision

1. That the update on CBSAC Mitigation Strategy matters presented be noted.
2. That Gadebridge Park, Margaret Lloyd Park, Howe Grove, and an extension to Bunkers Park, be considered and, if appropriate, taken forward as the next phase of Council SANG sites.
3. That the relevant Ward members and Town and Parish Councils be involved in the drafting and finalising of SANG Management Plans for Council owned sites.
4. That a Dacorum SANG Strategy be prepared to support identified future needs for Council led SANG arising from development.
5. That authority be delegated for the CBSAC Mitigation Strategy decisions, Section 106 Legal Agreements for appeals and Development Consent Orders as set out in table 2.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

6. Cabinet **recommended that Council** delegates authority to the Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution to give effect to recommendation 5 above.

Advice

Recommendation agreed

Please refer to the video minutes to view this item in full.

CA/25/24 FINANCIAL MONITORING REPORT

1. That Cabinet notes the financial position for 2023-24 as at Quarter 3.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

2. That **Cabinet recommends to Council** to approve the following Reserve Drawdowns:
- a. £0.100m Funding for Luton Airport Legal costs - £0.050m from the Dacorum Development reserve and £0.050m from the Local Development Framework reserve.
 - b. £0.025m drawdown to fund additional Customer Support Unit (CSU) support for Garden waste renewals from the Management of Change reserve

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

3. That **Cabinet recommends to Council** to approve the following reserve transfer:
- a. £0.020m for funding of an update to the Council Human Resources System Itrent in 2024-25. There is one off provision in 2023-24 budgets for this upgrade, work on which has now slipped to 2024-25.

RESOLVED TO RECOMMEND

4. That **Cabinet recommends to Council** to approve the following supplementary capital budgets representing growth to the Capital Programme:
- £2.265m relating to a payment to Hightown Housing Association for the provision for affordable housing in the borough at 66 Books, Wood End Lane. This expenditure was approved by Cabinet in February 2023. Full Council approval is now required to increase the capital programme budget accordingly.
 - Provision of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCP) in the borough, funded entirely by government grant £0.415m.
5. That Cabinet notes the following additional slippage on the capital programme to future years:
- General Fund £1.404m
 - Housing Revenue Account £6.804m



Council

Report for:	Council
Title of report:	Polling District & Polling Place Order
Date:	28 February 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Ron Tindall, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	n/a
Appendices:	Appendix A – Polling Districts & Polling Places Order
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
Wards affected	All of Dacorum
Purpose of the report:	1. To approve the updated Polling Districts & Polling Places Order
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. That Council approve the updated Polling Districts & Polling Places Order as set out in Appendix A

Period for post policy/project review:	Every 5 years as part of the Polling District & Polling Place Review or as required
-----------------------------------------------	-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------

1 Introduction/Background:

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district.

The following definitions may be helpful when reading the report and Appendices.

- “Polling districts” are geographical electoral areas into which wards and constituencies may be sub-divided.
- “Polling places” are the buildings or areas designated by the council where electors in a polling district go to vote in person.
- “Polling stations” are the number of issuing desks in the building or area that is the designated polling place.

The Electoral Administration Act 2006, as amended, introduced a duty on all local authorities in Great Britain to review their polling districts and polling places at least once every five years.

The intention of the legislation was reviews would be completed by the January before a UK parliamentary general election. However, since the repeal of the Fixed Term Parliaments Act 2011, there is no longer any certainty as to when the next general election will be.

The Dissolution and Calling of Parliament Act 2022 means:

- the UK Parliament can be dissolved by the King on request of the Prime Minister, at any time within the 5 years of the life of the Parliament
- the next general election must take place before Tuesday 28 January 2025, but it could happen at any point before then

2. Updated Polling Districts & Polling Places Order

A need has arisen to relocate from an existing polling station in the Leverstock Green Ward (for the ALA Polling District): Parish Hall, Ritcroft Street.

At the request of the Returning Officer, an alternative venue within the Leverstock Green Ward has been identified: St Albert the Great Catholic Primary School, Acorn Road.

A site visit has been carried out and confirmation given that the location is suitable to be a polling station.

The school have suggested that they would close on polling day and will allow access to the main hall, along with the kitchen and staff room. They will also keep the car park open, so there will be around 20 parking spaces, including disabled parking.

3. Amendments made

A new polling place is created at St Albert the Great Catholic Primary School, Acorn Road

4 Consultation

The Returning Officer; Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services, relevant ward councillors; Group Leaders, Electoral Review Committee. There were no objections received.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

The provision of Polling Stations for elections is reviewed on a regular basis and the funding is overseen by the Electoral Commission and the Elections Claims Unit.

6 Legal Implications

Under the Representation of the People Act 1983, the council has a duty to divide its area into polling districts and to designate a polling place for each district. This must be reviewed every five years.

7 Risk implications:

Electoral matters require continual review to ensure that the democratic process operates effectively. A failure to provide polling places would likely result in legal challenges to elections and subsequent reputational damage.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

There are no equalities or community impacts arising directly from this report. Polling stations have been fully assessed and are deemed fully accessible for all members of the public.

9 Sustainability implications

There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

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

There are no council infrastructure implications arising directly from this report.

11 Conclusions:

After consideration, the above recommendation is deemed an appropriate amendment to the councils Polling Districts & Polling Places Order.

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

THE BOROUGH OF DACORUM (POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES) ORDER 2024

COMING INTO OPERATION – 1st March 2024

Claire Hamilton

Chief Executive

The Forum

Hemel Hempstead

Herts

HP1 1DN

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL

REPRESENTATION OF THE PEOPLE ACT 1983

THE BOROUGH OF DACORUM (POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES) ORDER 2024

DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL in exercise of the powers conferred by the Representation of the People Act 1983, as amended, DO HEREBY ORDER as follows:

1. This Order shall come into operation on the 1 March 2024 provided that for the purpose of all proceedings preliminary or relating to an election to be held on or after that day the said Order shall be deemed to have come into operation forthwith.
2. The Electoral Registration Officer shall be directed to make such rearrangements or alterations as may be necessary to the Register of Electors on account of the coming into operation of this Order.
3. From and after coming into operation of this Order the Parliamentary Constituency of Hemel Hempstead and so much of that part of the South West Hertfordshire Constituency and Harpenden & Berkhamsted Constituency within the Borough of Dacorum shall be divided into polling districts specified in columns (1) and (2) of the Schedule annexed to this Order and more particularly described in Maps on the Dacorum Borough Website.
4. For each Polling District constituted by this Order there is hereby designated a Polling Place situated at or near the place specified in column (3) of the said Schedule.
5. As from coming into operation of this Order, the Borough of Dacorum (Polling Districts and Polling Places Order 2023) and any subsequent variation orders made to it shall be repealed.
6. The Chief Executive of the said Council shall maintain on the Dacorum Borough Council website a copy of the Maps showing the boundaries of the Polling Districts and the situations of the Polling Places constituted and designated by this Order.
7. This Order shall be cited as “The Borough of Dacorum (Polling Districts and Polling Places) Order 2024”.

The COMMON SEAL OF THE
DACORUM BOROUGH COUNCIL
was hereunto affixed this
XXXXXXXXXX
in the presence of

AUTHORISED SIGNATORY

AUTHORISED SIGNATORY

Borough of Dacorum Polling Districts and Polling Places 2024

SCHEDULE OF POLLING DISTRICTS AND POLLING PLACES

1. HEMEL HEMPSTEAD CONSTITUENCY

(1) Polling District Letters	(2) Areas comprised in Polling Districts	(3) Polling Place
AAA	Hemel Hempstead Town (part)	George Street Primary School
AAAA	Hemel Hempstead Town (part)	Highfield Hall, Bellgate
AABA	Hemel Hempstead Town (part)	Highfield Hall, Bellgate
AABB	Hemel Hempstead Town (part)	Carey Baptist Church, Marlowes
AAB	Hemel Hempstead Town (part)	Carey Baptist Church, Marlowes
ABA	Highfield Ward (part)	Highfield Hall, Bellgate
ABA	Highfield Ward (part)	Highfield Hall, Bellgate
ABB	Highfield Ward (part)	St Pauls Church Hall, Solway, Hemel Hempstead
AC	Adeyfield West Ward (part)	Communal Room, Old House Road
AC	Adeyfield West Ward (part)	Communal Room, Old House Road
ACA	Adeyfield West Ward (part)	Adeyfield Community Centre, Queen's Square
ADA	Adeyfield East Ward (part)	Hobletts Manor Junior School, Adeyfield Road
ADB	Adeyfield East Ward (part)	Adeyfield Community Centre, Queen's Square
AFA	Apsley and Corner Hall Ward (part)	Apsley Community Centre, London Road
AFAA	Apsley and Corner Hall Ward (part)	Apsley Community Centre, London Road
AFB	Apsley and Corner Hall Ward (part)	Two Waters Primary School, Highridge Road
AFC	Apsley and Corner Hall Ward (part)	Tudor Primary School, Redwood Drive
AFC	Apsley and Corner Hall Ward (part)	Tudor Primary School, Redwood Drive
AGA	Boxmoor Ward (part)	St Francis Parish Hall, Glenview Road
AGB	Boxmoor Ward (part)	Camelot RFC, Chaulden Lane

AGBA	Boxmoor Ward (part)	Hemel Hempstead Methodist Church
AGC	Boxmoor Ward (part)	South Hill Centre
AHA	Chaulden and Warners End Ward (part)	Warners End Community Centre, Stonecroft
AHA	Chaulden and Warners End Ward (part)	Warners End Community Centre, Stonecroft
AHB	Chaulden and Warners End Ward (part)	Gt Sturgess Communal Hall, Great Sturgess Road, HH
AHC	Chaulden and Warners End Ward (part)	Chaulden Community Centre, Long Chaulden
AJ	Gadebridge Ward	Gadebridge Community Centre, Rossgate, Galley Hill
AJ	Gadebridge Ward	Gadebridge Community Centre, Rossgate, Galley Hill
ALA	Leverstock Green Ward (part)	St Albert the Great Primary School, Acorn Road, Hemel Hempstead
ALB	Leverstock Green Ward (part)	Leverstock Green Village Hall, Village Centre
ALB	Leverstock Green Ward (part)	Leverstock Green Village Hall, Village Centre
ALC	Leverstock Green Ward (part)	Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School, Peascroft Road
ALCA	Leverstock Green Ward (part)	Hobbs Hill Wood Primary School, Peascroft Road
AMA	Woodhall Farm Ward (part)	Woodhall Farm Community Centre, Datchet Close
AMB	Woodhall Farm Ward (part)	Brockswood Primary School, Shenley Road
AMB	Woodhall Farm Ward (part)	Brockswood Primary School, Shenley Road
APA	Grovehill Ward (part)	Grove Hill Community Centre, Henry Wells Square
APA	Grovehill Ward (part)	Grove Hill Community Centre, Henry Wells Square
APAA	Grovehill Ward (part)	Grove Hill Community Centre, Henry Wells Square
APB	Grovehill Ward (part)	St Thomas Indian Orthodox Church, St Agnells Lane, Hemel Hempstead
AQA	Bennetts End Ward (part)	Bennetts End Community Centre

AQB	Bennetts End Ward (part)	Belswains JM School, Barnfield
AQC	Bennetts End Ward (part)	Belmont Baptist Church Hall, Belmont Road
BA	Nash Mills Ward (part) (Nash Mills Parish)	Nash Mills Village Hall, 4 Lower Road
BA	Nash Mills Ward (part) (Nash Mills Parish)	Nash Mills Village Hall, 4 Lower Road
BAA	Nash Mills Ward (part)	Nash Mills Village Hall, 4 Lower Road
LA	Bovingdon , Flaunden and Chipperfield Ward (part) (Bovingdon Parish)	The Memorial Hall, High Street, Bovingdon
LA	Bovingdon , Flaunden and Chipperfield Ward (part) (Bovingdon Parish)	The Memorial Hall, High Street, Bovingdon
LB	Bovingdon , Flaunden and Chipperfield Ward (part) (Flaunden Parish)	The Village Hall, Flaunden
LC	Bovingdon , Flaunden and Chipperfield Ward (part) (Chipperfield Parish)	Chipperfield Village Hall, The Common
LD	Bovingdon, Flaunden and Chipperfield Ward (part)	Bourne End Village Hall
LE	Bovingdon, Flaunden and Chipperfield Ward (part)	The Boxmoor Trust Centre

2. HARPENDEN AND BERKHAMSTED CONSTITUENCY

EAA	Aldbury and Wigginton Ward (Aldbury Parish East Ward)	Aldbury Memorial Hall
EAB	Aldbury and Wigginton Ward (Aldbury Parish West Ward)	The Iron Room, Tring Station
EB	Aldbury and Wigginton Ward (Wigginton Parish)	St Bartholomews Church Hall
FA	Ashridge Ward (part) (Little Gaddesden Parish)	The Sports Pavilion, Little Gaddesden
FB	Ashridge Ward (part) (Nettleden with Potten End Parish)	Potten End Village Hall
KAA	Berkhamsted West Ward (part) Berkhamsted Parish West Ward (part)	Lagley Hall, Douglas Gardens
KAB	Berkhamsted West Ward (part) Berkhamsted Parish West Ward (part)	All Saints' Church Hall, Shrublands Road
KAB	Berkhamsted West Ward (part) Berkhamsted Parish West Ward (part)	All Saints' Church Hall, Shrublands Road
KBA	Berkhamsted Castle Ward (part) Berkhamsted Parish Castle Ward (part)	Bridgewater Middle School, Bridle Way

KBB	Berkhamsted Castle Ward (part) Berkhamsted Parish Castle Ward (part)	Berkhamsted Lawn Tennis and Squash Rackets Club, Lower Kings Road, Berkhamsted
KBC	Berkhamsted Castle Ward (part) Berkhamsted Parish Castle Ward (part)	Court House, Church Lane
KCA	Berkhamsted East Ward (part) Berkhamsted Parish East Ward (part)	Evangelical Free Church Hall, Kings Road
KCB	Berkhamsted East Ward (part) Berkhamsted Parish East Ward (part)	Swing Gate First School, Swing Gate Lane
JA	Northchurch Ward (Northchurch Parish)	Northchurch Social Centre, Bell Lane
DAA	Tring East Ward (Tring Parish Dunsley Ward)	Tring Scout Hall, Adjacent to 35 Grove Road, Tring
DBAA	Tring Central Ward (part) (Tring Parish Bunstrux Ward – part)	Nora Grace Hall, Faversham Close, Tring
DBBB	Tring Central Ward (part) (Tring Parish Bunstrux Ward – part)	Tring Community Centre, Silk Mill Way
DBCC	Tring Central Ward (part) (Tring Parish Bunstrux Ward – part)	New Mill Baptist Church, New Road, New Mill
DCAA	Tring West and Rural Ward (part) (Tring Parish Miswell Ward – part)	Goldfield Infants School, Christchurch Road
DCBB	Tring West and Rural Ward (part) (Tring Parish Miswell Ward – part)	Roman Catholic Church Hall, Langdon Street
DDAA	Tring West and Rural Ward (part) (Tring Rural Parish – part)	Long Marston Victory Hall
DDBB	Tring West and Rural Ward (part) (Tring Rural Parish – part)	Wilstone Village Hall
GA	Watling Ward (Flamstead Parish)	The Methodist Church Hall, Trowley Hill Road
GB	Watling Ward (Markyate Parish)	Markyate Village Hall, Cavendish Road
GB	Watling Ward (Markyate Parish)	Markyate Village Hall, Cavendish Road
GCA	Watling Ward (Great Gaddesden Parish – Part)	Great Gaddesden Parish Hall
GCB	Watling Ward (Great Gaddesden Parish – Part)	Gaddesden Row Community Hall

3. SOUTH WEST HERTS CONSTITUENCY

(1)	(2)	(3) Polling Place
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Polling District Letters	Areas comprised in Polling Districts and Reference	
PA	Kings Langley Ward (Kings Langley Parish North Ward)	The Community Centre, Rucklers Lane
PB	Kings Langley Ward (Kings Langley Parish South Ward)	All Saints Church Hall, Church Lane
PB	Kings Langley Ward (Kings Langley Parish South Ward)	All Saints Church Hall, Church Lane
PC	Kings Langley Ward (Kings Langley Parish Central Ward)	Methodist Church Hall, Hempstead Road



Report for:	Council
Title of report:	Council Size Submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England
Date:	28 February 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Tindall, Leader & Portfolio Holder for Corporate & Commercial Services
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	n/a
Appendices:	Appendix A – Council size submission
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	LGBCE (Local Government Boundary Commission for England)

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery
Wards affected	All of Dacorum
Purpose of the report:	1. To approve Dacorum Borough Council's submission on Council size to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. Approve the submission on Council Size, as set out in Appendix A.

	2. Authorise the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services to submit the Council's Submission on Council Size to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England.
Period for post policy/project review:	Every 15 years as part of the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's review timetable.

1 Introduction:

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) is an independent statutory body responsible for conducting reviews of local authority electoral arrangements through an 'electoral review' process.

It can also conduct reviews of the structure of local government, and the external boundaries of local authorities.

An electoral review is an examination of a council's electoral arrangements. This means:

- the total number of councillors elected to the local authority;
- the number and boundaries of wards or divisions for the purposes of the election of councillors;
- the number of councillors for any ward or division of a local authority; and
- the name of any ward or division.

The Commission's objectives include the provision of electoral arrangements that are fair and that deliver electoral equality for voters. The purpose of an electoral review is to examine the electoral arrangements of an area so as to ensure:

- such arrangements are fair and deliver electoral equality for voters, and
- the arrangements help to deliver effective and convenient local government to citizens

The aim of a review is to recommend ward boundaries where each councillor represents approximately the same number of voters. In turn, ward boundaries are drawn up to reflect the interests and identities of local communities and promoting good local government. This will take place during the next phase of the electoral review.

2. Progress made so far

The Commission first met with the Leader and Chief Executive on 25 July 2023. This was followed up with a presentation to the Group Leaders on the 15th of September 2023 and then an all Member briefing on the 18th of September 2023.

The Commission explained the reasons behind the electoral review being required, namely:

- that legislation requires a review to be undertaken "from time to time". The Council was last reviewed in 2006 and so it has been a number years since the last review; the Commission therefore felt that Dacorum should be included in the electoral review programme;
- Electoral changes – this is about how many people a councillor is representing. There are threshold tests which, if exceeded can trigger a review. A few wards have seen large increases in population since the last review was undertaken;
- Community interests and identities may have changed. The review allows the Commission to create ward boundaries that match the shape of communities across the borough as they are now.

When calculating electorate numbers, there are a range of variables which need to be considered. The Commission's forecasting tools help to provide an evidence base for these calculations. The wards will be based on a forecast electorate for 2030 to help futureproof the wards (again, this is legally required).

The Commission have a range of guidance on how a Council Size Submission can be developed by Councils. However, there are a range of core matters a submission document must address. The process is designed in a way so it starts with zero, and the number of councillors needed for a Council to function is built up.

Officers have been producing such things as a Geocoded Electoral Register, Current & Forecast Electorate numbers, Housing Development Data, Polling District Maps, future planning applications, Parish Electoral Arrangements etc. in order to aid the Commission in determining the suitable size for the Council.

The Submission on Council Size requires Council approval before it can be submitted to the Commission. A cross party group, which makes up the Electoral Review committee, met in October 2023 and January 2024 to agree a proposed Council Size number to present to Council.

3. Recommendation on Council Size

The recommendation is for the number of Councillors to increase to 53 as the minimum number to ensure effective governance.

4. Next Steps

After submission, the Commission will consider the Council's submission along with a range of other data. The Commission will make their recommendations on the number of Councillors the Council should have. They will then open a public consultation exercise for information from people and groups across the Borough for opinions, comments and submissions, on where the Ward boundaries should be, the names for the Wards, and the number of Councillors for each Ward. It is expected this will run from the 7th of May – 15th of July 2024.

This consultation exercise will shape the Commission's draft recommendations for the new electoral arrangements. Once the Commission have considered all the submissions, they will put forward their draft recommendation report to a new public consultation exercise. This is expected to run from the 1st of October – 9th of December 2024.

Once this second consultation exercise concludes, the Commission will then produce its Final Recommendations. This is currently scheduled for the 1st of April 2025.

There is sometimes a small discretionary consultation on the final recommendations. Once concluded, the Final Recommendations will be put before Parliament. The Order is expected to be laid in the spring of 2025 and to be implemented for May 2027 local elections.

5. Consultation

Consultation has taken place through the Electoral Review Committee, which is a cross party group and is supported at officer level by the Assistant Director, Legal and Democratic Services and the Electoral Services Manager.

6. Financial and value for money implications:

If approved, the increase in councillors will have a small impact on Member specific budgets.

7. Legal Implications

There are no legal implications from making a submission to the Commission on Council Size, however, the final outcome of the Commission's consultation exercise and recommendations, will be put before Parliament, which will determine the number Councillors and the Wards for the local 2027 elections.

8. Risk implications:

Electoral matters require continual review to ensure that the democratic process operates effectively.

9. Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

There are no equalities or community impacts arising directly from this report.

10. Sustainability implications

There are no sustainability implications arising directly from this report.

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

There are no council infrastructure implications arising directly from this report.

12. Statutory Comments

Monitoring Officer:

This is a report of the Monitoring Officer who has worked closely with the Chair of the Electoral Review Committee to agree the proposed template response.

S151 Officer:

No further comments to add to the report.

13. Conclusions:

After consideration, the above recommendation is deemed an appropriate submission to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England's electoral review.

Dacorum Borough Council

Council Size Submission:

This report is the submission of Dacorum Borough Council (the Council) to the Local Government Boundary Commission for England (LGBCE) on its proposals for Council Size.

February 2024

About You

This submission is made on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council and was agreed at full Council on 28th February 2024

Reason for Review:

The Commission identified the Council was due for review as the last review was carried out in 2006.

The Context for the proposal:

Electorate changes since 2006

The Boundary Commission's last review of the Council's size and ward boundaries reported in 2006. The Council adopted the Leader and Executive model in 2001 and this model has since been embedded within the work of the Executive as part of the Council's wider governance framework

At the start of the last review in 2006, 52 councillors represented 106,238 electors, an electoral ratio of 2043; the review at that time reduced the number of councillors to 51.

In 2016 the number of electors had risen to 107,108 and in December 2022 there were 112,155 registered voters (excluding overseas voters), giving an electoral ratio of 2199.

This is likely to increase by approximately 12,000 to 124,239 by 2030, an electoral ratio of 2436. This figure is based on planned housing development mainly in Hemel Hempstead as set out in the draft Local Plan, which includes significant growth planned through the Hemel Garden Communities project.

Governance, Decision Making and Scrutiny

Dacorum is made up of 25 wards, comprising 51 councillors. Each ward is represented by a varying number of councillors, the highest being three councillors to a ward, and the lowest being one councillor. Following the local elections in May 2023, the political balance of the Council stands at Liberal Democrat: 28 seats, Conservative: 18 seats, Labour: 3 seats and 2 Independent Members.

All councillors serve on the full Council, which is the sovereign decision making body of the Council and is chaired by the Mayor. The Mayor is elected annually by full Council and is the ceremonial representative of the District and in 2022/23 attended just over 100 external events, raising money for several charities.

The current Leader and Executive governance model has operated effectively since its introduction and there are no plans for it to change in the near future. The model provides

a framework for agile, timely and effective decision-making with scrutiny and policy development support provided by the three Overview and Scrutiny Committees and the Audit Committee.

Transference of function and demand since 2006

There have been significant changes on the demands on local authorities since the last review in 2006, particularly in terms of increased regulatory requirements, the climate change agenda, a step-change in partnership working beyond the Council to both address public service needs and deliver essential transformation, development and growth, and meeting the changing needs and expectations of the public who expect a modern, responsive and transparent service.

Modern forms of communication, via email, mobile phone, video conferencing and the greater use of social media have made meeting the changing demands on local authorities and councillors more efficient even though this technology has also brought greater expectations in terms of the immediacy of response.

These challenges, coupled with the widely recognised public sector funding pressures and the need to increase revenue, has meant the Council has had to evolve and adapt governance and departmental structures in order to meet these requirements.

The Council has developed an ambitious commercial strategy, internal transformation programme, housing transformation and improvement programme, and climate change programme to ensure that it can meet the changing legislative, environmental and fiscal environment it works within and this requires strong political leadership to lead the change agenda.

The governance structure led by councillors, whilst remaining constant in its overall structure, has adapted many times since the last review in order to meet the changing demands and was most recently amended following the all-out council elections in 2023 to ensure that portfolios align with departmental structures, and to provide the required oversight and political leadership. This review also introduced a new Portfolio for Climate and Ecological Emergency to provide greater focus in that area.

The current pool of 51 members has meant that there continues to be a strong group of talented councillors with diverse knowledge and experience to fill Cabinet positions when required and also to meet the demands of the Council's scrutiny and regulatory committees (see further details on those committees below).

It is the view of the full Council that a reduction in numbers of councillors could lead to there being insufficient numbers of councillors to fill all the Cabinet and Committee vacancies, which would impact on the sound decision making and political leadership that the Council provides.

A reduction in the number of councillors would also add to the existing workload of councillors, who already experience significant demands of time, and this could lead to councillors with work and/or caring responsibilities being unable to perform their roles effectively and could prevent such councillors seeking election or re-election. This is clearly undesirable and the Council needs to ensure that it can attract councillors from all demographics. Further analysis on the time spent by councillors performing their role is

included below, but this has been an important consideration for the Council in recommending an increase in councillors to 53.

Governance and capacity issues

There have been no governance issues raised by any inspectorate or other third party, which have been connected to the number of councillors or the Council's overall governance structure. Attendance at Cabinet and Committees is generally strong with enough members to substitute any absences if required. There have been no issues making any Cabinet or Committee meeting quorate; however, this could become an issue if the number of councillors is reduced to below the current 51.

As set out above, there has been steady, but not significant levels of growth in the electorate since the last review in 2006, which will continue to grow to 2030 and beyond. This will mean that the electorate ratio will have increased by 393 (19%) during the period 2006-2030.

This electorate growth when considered with the changing demands placed on local authorities and higher expectations of residents within the last 20 years does suggest that consideration should be given to a small increase in councillor numbers to ensure that councillors can continue to perform their community leadership, and council representations roles.

The population growth needs to be considered in the context of the changing forms of communications that the Council and councillors use to serve their communities, which makes this much more efficient than it was 20 years ago and enables councillors to perform their community leadership roles to a wider constituency number with a similar amount of time resource.

In terms of governance structure, the base structure has remained unchanged since 2001 and working experience has shown that the current structure works efficiently. The number of councillors required to serve on relevant committees is adequate but a small increase in capacity is desirable to continue to operate the structure and meet the changes in demand to serve the projected increase in population to 2030 and beyond.

It is therefore recommended that councillor numbers are increased by 2 and this would bring the electorate ratio to 2344. This still represents an increase in the ratio of 301 (approx 15%) since the last review, but taking into account of the changes to communication methods and the stable governance framework, it is the view of Council that this is an appropriate number of councillors.

Local Authority Profile

Setting and local geography

Dacorum is a district council with borough status located in Hertfordshire. The modern local government district of Dacorum was created on 1st April 1974 under the Local Government act 1972. The district was granted borough status in 1984.

The Council's central office, The Forum is located in Hemel Hempstead town centre. The borough also includes the market towns of Berkhamsted and Tring and surrounding villages.

Dacorum is located just beyond the Greater London area and, as a result, a significant portion (60%) lies within the Metropolitan Green Belt. The Borough also contains a high percentage of rural land (85%), while much of the countryside is situated within The Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB). The special landscape character of the AONB adds significant value to the environmental quality of the district.

Hemel Hempstead, and the village of Bourne End are unparished areas. The rest of the borough is divided into 16 civil parishes.

Demographics and community characteristics

Dacorum has a population of 155,100 (2021 ONS data) which makes it the largest district in Hertfordshire by population.

The population breakdown by age (Herts Insight 2023) currently is:

- 20.1% children (those aged under 16).
- 62.4% aged 16 to 64.
- 17.5% of people aged 65 and over.

The mid-2043 population predictions for Dacorum as set out below highlight that age demographics are projected towards a higher growth in the 65 and over group compared to other groups:

- 18.5% children (those aged under 16).
- 58.2% aged 16-64.
- 23.3% aged 65 and over.

In terms of its ethnic make-up (2021), 21.3% of Dacorum residents were from an ethnic minority (non-white British). This is slightly lower compared to both England's population (26.5%) and Hertfordshire's population (28.2%).

As a borough, Dacorum has low levels of deprivation.

- The Index of Multiple Deprivation (IMD) score for Dacorum is 12.17
- The borough ranks at 261 out of 326 local authority areas, placing it in the 20% least deprived local authority areas in the country. It has no areas in the most deprived 10%.

However, it is important to note that there are several small areas (LSOAs) throughout the borough where deprivation is very apparent. The 5 wards with the highest deprivation rate in 2021 were Highfield, Grovehill, Warners End, Corner Hall which are all in Hemel Hempstead and Hemel Hempstead Town ward itself. Representation in these areas and other areas with high levels of deprivation such as Adeyfield and Woodhall Farm, bring significant demands and challenges for councillors with more direct involvement on housing related and welfare issues in particular.

This does not necessarily mean that areas of deprivation require greater representation than other wards as more affluent areas bring different but equally demanding challenges in areas such as planning, standards and other regulatory matters.

Crime in Dacorum is relatively low in comparison to county, regional and national averages. There were 63.3 crimes per 1,000 residents in Dacorum, which is lower than England's 83.9

Economy

Dacorum added £4,453 million into the national economy in 2019. Ranking Dacorum fourth in gross value added (GVA) when comparing the 10 districts in Hertfordshire.

There were approximately 134,000 jobs in Dacorum in 2021 and 76.6% of the working aged population were employed in 2022.

In 2022, the average annual pay for Dacorum residents is £29,431. This is slightly higher than the average annual pay across England of £28,000.

The largest industry in Dacorum is the wholesale and retail trade and the largest occupation types in Dacorum are professional occupations.

The above statistics demonstrate that Dacorum is a relatively affluent borough with strong economic performance and relatively lower levels of deprivation and crime incidents.

Constraints and challenges ahead

Local government remains under financial pressure and this has resulted in Dacorum needing to reconsider capital spending projects, find savings and generate additional revenue, whilst continuing to deliver on its priorities.

The effects of Covid-19, and high inflation have had a significant impact on the council's finances and reduced reserves. This will continue to impact Council decision-making and priorities in the short-medium term as the Council plans for the future.

Housing growth is planned throughout the borough, with the largest growth planned through the Hemel Garden Communities project in Hemel Hempstead, but the planned growth is not expected to significantly change the demographics in any one group by 2030.

Dacorum retains ownership of its council housing stock, which consists of approximately 10,200 homes, 2000 of which are sheltered housing for older people. Dacorum also own the freehold for approximately 1800 leasehold flats. The housing stock continues to generate significant demand on the Council's staff and councillors to ensure that the Council's stock is maintained to a good standard and regulatory compliance achieved whilst balancing the Housing Revenue Account. There continues to be significant demand for Council housing with over 1400 households on the active register.

Council Size

Topic		
<p>Governance Model</p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<p>Strategic Leadership</p> <p>The Council operates a Leader and Executive Model. The Leader is elected at the annual meeting of the Council after the four yearly Council elections for a four-year term. The Leader in turn appoints his Portfolio Members, which currently cover the following portfolios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Corporate and Commercial Services ➤ Housing & Property Services ➤ Neighbourhood Operations ➤ Climate & Ecological Emergency ➤ Place ➤ People & Transformation <p>The Executive (Cabinet) holds public meetings in accordance with the published Committee timetable for the effective discharge of its functions, on dates and times agreed by the Cabinet and meets every month except during August.</p> <p>Cabinet Members play a key role in the development of strategic and major operational strategies and policies. They make decisions collectively at Cabinet and individually through their Portfolios, provide political leadership and implement policy through senior officers. Individual members are responsible for and play an active role in the development and clearance of all published Cabinet and delegated authority reports, which are in their name. Members hold regular scheduled briefings with Strategic Directors, Assistant Directors and Heads of Service, ahead of all Cabinet meetings.</p> <p>The Leader of the Council estimates that he spends approximately 4-5 days per week on his council duties, although this will vary from week to week. Members of the Cabinet estimate they spend between 3-5 days a week on their duties, which includes both their executive and elected member functions.</p> <p>In addition to formal and informal meetings of the Cabinet, portfolio holders meet regularly with officers to provide strategic guidance and receive briefings.</p>

Accountability (scrutiny, regulatory and partnerships)

The Overview and Scrutiny Committees review and scrutinise all key decisions before they go to Cabinet for decision. Scrutiny committees also have the power to call-in decisions for further scrutiny if decisions are not made in accordance with the Council's decision-making principles.

Cabinet members are not permitted to be on scrutiny meetings (scrutiny meet on average 9 times per year) and 42 scrutiny members (14 on each committee) are required to serve these meetings, plus substitutions if required. The current Cabinet is 6 members plus the Leader of the Council. Therefore 49 members are required to serve the Executive decision process including scrutiny alone.

In addition to the Executive decision making framework the Council has the following regulatory committees:

- Development Management (14 members) – meets 15 times a year
- Licensing (12 members) – meets monthly if required.
- Appeals and Reviews Committee (8 members) (ad-hoc as required)
- Audit Committee (6 member) meets six times a year
- Standards Committee (5 members) meets 4 times a year

Dacorum also has the following committees/steering groups noted below:

- Member Development Steering Group (6 members) meets 4 times a year
- Joint Negotiating Committee (4 members) meets 5 times a year if required
- Electoral Review Committee (6 members) ad-hoc as required
- Health and Well-being Committee (12 members) meets four times a year.

In total therefore 73 seats are required to be filled for the regulatory and other committees/working groups, although the frequency of these meetings varies in accordance with the committee timetable and whether there is relevant business to be considered.

		<p>In summary, there are a total of 115 committee seats to be filled by 51 councillors to fill the scrutiny, regulatory and other committee seats (excluding Cabinet seats and full Council) at a ratio of 2.25 seats per member.</p> <p>The above ratio enables each councillor to take part in a variety of the Council’s decision-making and regulatory committees, which has proven to be effective and enabled sound decision-making. Reducing the numbers of councillors would mean this ratio would move up which would be problematic in terms of attendance as many councillors have full-time jobs and other commitments, and workloads need to remain proportionate to ensure that the Council can continue to attract councillors from all demographics.</p> <p>Significantly Increasing the number of councillors would dilute the influence of individual councillors and prevent councillors from gaining a holistic view of the Council’s functions and would not be desirable; however, it is the view of Council that a small increase of two councillors would provide greater resilience and an enhanced ability for councillors to substitute for one another at meetings if required.</p> <p>In addition to formal Council business a number of councillors are appointed as Council representatives on outside bodies. These organisations include local charities, community groups and regional and national bodies. In total there are 57 outside appointments made. Meeting frequencies vary but are generally no more than quarterly.</p> <p>It can be challenging for political Group Leaders to find enough councillors to provide representation on all of these outside bodies and therefore a small increase in councillors would assist with the distribution of roles.</p>
	Analysis	<p>The current Leader and Executive governance model has operated effectively since its introduction and there are no plans for it to change in the foreseeable future. The model provides a framework for agile and efficient decision-making with scrutiny and policy development support provided by the three statutory Overview and Scrutiny Committees, and the Audit Committee.</p> <p>The current number of councillors (51) has adequately served the current governance structure, but it is the view of Council that a further two councillors would provide some extra assurance that committee seats can</p>

		<p>continue to be filled and provide resilience for the Council going forward.</p> <p>Alternative numbers have been considered but for the reasons set out above, it is the view of Council that 53 members provides the right balance and will enable councillors to continue to take part in various scrutiny and decision-making committees, ensure that the public are appropriately represented from councillors with relevant experience and local constituency knowledge, but also provide resilience if there are any absences.</p>
<p>Portfolios</p>	<p><i>Key lines of explanation</i></p>	<p>Dacorum currently has six portfolios:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Corporate and Commercial Services ➤ Housing & Property Services ➤ Neighbourhood Operations ➤ Climate & Ecological Emergency ➤ Place ➤ People & Transformation <p>This was increased to 6 following the May 2023 elections by the addition of a Portfolio Holder for Climate and Ecological Emergency.</p> <p>Portfolio Holders are responsible for the functions and services, which fall within their remit as agreed by the Leader of the Council. The services which fall under each Portfolio are set out in Part 3 of the Constitution, published on our website, and change from time to time to reflect Council priorities.</p> <p>Portfolio Holders agree the strategic direction for the services within their portfolio, oversee performance and agree any strategy, policy, project, or initiative before it goes to Cabinet for final approval. Portfolio Holders also exercise decision making directly for major operational issues affecting their portfolios.</p> <p>In 2022/23 there were 42 Portfolio Holder decisions across all Portfolios.</p> <p>The role of Portfolio Holder is not a full time position but Members estimate that they spend between 3-5 days per week carrying out their responsibilities, which varies from week to week depending on meeting requirements and other commitments. This time estimate includes general members' responsibilities.</p>

	Analysis	The number of portfolios has remained broadly constant over the last 20 years and for the last two electoral terms has involved either 5 or 6 Portfolios. The functions and services that portfolios cover is a decision of the Leader of the Council and are amended from time to time, but there are no significant changes proposed that are likely to impact the number of Portfolio Holders in the short to medium term.
Delegated Responsibilities	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	The Council has a scheme of delegation in place as set out in Schedule 2, Part 3 of the Constitution to ensure the operational efficiency of the Council. Cabinet delegate operational decisions to officers but the most strategic and significant decisions are reserved for members.
	Analysis	Portfolio Holder decisions require appropriately skilled and experienced members to ensure that decisions are made fairly and proportionately. Therefore it is essential to have a significant pool of members to be able to call upon from the party forming the administration. This has been achievable with the current 51 member base but could be a challenge if this number was reduced, and the pool of available candidates will be improved with the proposed change to 53 councillors.

Accountability

Topic	
Internal Scrutiny	
<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>Dacorum has 3 main Overview and Scrutiny Committees which are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> ➤ Finance and Resources (14 members) ➤ Housing and Community (14 members) ➤ Strategic Planning and Environment (14 members) <p>The number of members on each committee has remained constant over recent years. 14 members enables good representation from the administration but more importantly from opposition members as each committee has to be politically balanced. A membership of 14 enables scrutiny to benefit from the knowledge & experience of councillors representing the borough as a whole.</p> <p>Each committee is responsible for different functions of the Council as set out in Part 2 of the Constitution and the portfolios are broadly aligned to Council departments.</p>

The OSC vision is – ‘Scrutiny making a difference: member-led and independent, Overview & Scrutiny Committees promote service improvements, influence policy development and hold the Executive to account for the benefit of the whole community of Dacorum’

OSC therefore has a broad vision and purpose and is used to scrutinise and assist with strategy, project and policy development, and review service performance and the outputs from approved policies, strategies and projects.

The scrutiny committees each meet 9 times a year.

The work programme is developed in consultation with the Chairman and Vice-Chairman of each committee and approved by committee at each meeting.

The committees have the power to call-in decisions of the Executive for further review, although this power is rarely required due to the significant level of pre-decision scrutiny which takes place.

In addition to ordinary meetings, the Committees can agree to establish task and finish groups to review and develop important policies, projects or initiatives. There are currently two tasks and finish groups set up to consider the Council’s Housing Maintenance Contract and Local Plan development.

The Council is currently undertaking a review of its scrutiny function which is being facilitated by the Centre for Governance and Scrutiny (CfGS). The draft report highlighted the positive engagement of members and supported the overall committee structure and highlighted areas for potential review and improvement. At the point of this submission the recommendations of the review are currently being considered by officers and members, but it is not expected that any of the recommendations will result in significant structural change which will impact on the councillor resource required to serve the committees.

The Council’s scrutiny function is further enhanced by its Audit Committee, which comprises six members for each meeting.

The work programme of the Committee is developed at the start of the municipal year, and reviewed quarterly. The Chairman and Vice-Chairman play an active role in developing the work programme also. There are normally between six meetings annually.

		The Audit Committee has the specific role of monitoring the budget, approving the Council's Statement of Accounts, considers matters of risk management, and any internal audits which have been carried out. The committee also has oversight of the Council's treasury management functions.
	Analysis	The Council has a positive and effective scrutiny function with good engagement from members. The function does require a significant numbers of members to fill the committee seats (42) across the three committees plus six on Audit but they provide a vital function in an Executive form of governance to hold the Executive to account. The Council are not anticipating any significant structural change to this function going forward although the recommendations of the recent scrutiny review are currently being considered.
Statutory Function		
Some	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	The Development Management Committee (DMC) is the committee responsible for determining planning applications across the borough. It consists of 14 members and substitutes can be called from the wider member pool if required as long as they have received prior training. The scheme of delegation in Part 3 of the Constitution delegates decisions to officers, but has a number of exclusions from delegation including; major applications, those with significant public interest, those which are called-in by ward members and where there is a contrary view to the officers recommendation from a town or parish council – all of these exclusions are reserved for committee decision.
	Analysis	<p>In 2022/23 95% of the applications received were determined by officers, but the exclusions from delegation mean that DMC still has a significant workload and in the last two financial years have determined circa 90 applications each year.</p> <p>DMC meets on average every 3 weeks (15 times a year) and these meetings can be demanding for members, lasting between 2- 4 hours. Applications can be complex and require significant preparation time to read the application reports before the meeting in order to prepare.</p> <p>Some applications also necessitate members making a site visit to consider the site and surroundings prior to the meeting.</p>

		DMC considers applications from across the borough and therefore it is important that there is geographical representation from the boroughs three main towns and the rural parts of the borough. The current 14 members provides an adequate pool of members to support the committee but less than 14 would not provide sufficient members to adequately serve the committee.
Licensing	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>The Licensing and Health and Safety Enforcement Committee is responsible for fulfilling the role of the statutory Licensing Authority under the Licensing Act and Gambling Act as well as other regimes such as Hackney Carriage licensing. It is also responsible for certain functions under health and safety law. The main committee delegates most decisions to officers unless objections to applications are received in which case they are referred to one of two sub-committees for decision.</p> <p>The two sub-committees are the Licensing Health and Safety Enforcement Sub-Committee (6 members) and a Licensing of Alcohol and Gambling Sub-Committee (3 Members), which are drawn from the main committee. The sub-committees have delegated responsibilities as set out in Part 3 of the Constitution.</p> <p>Applications reported to the main committee and sub-committees can be complex and will generally involve public representation and can last anywhere between 1-3 hours. As with DMC, the committee meetings require significant preparation time to read and consider reports before the meeting.</p> <p>The Licensing committee is scheduled for meeting monthly but is cancelled if there is no business.</p> <p>In 2022/23 three full Licensing Committees took place, five Licensing Health and Safety Sub-Committee and one Licensing of Alcohol and Gambling Sub-committee.</p>
	<i>Analysis</i>	<p>The current structure of the Licensing Committee works efficiently and provides an adequate pool of members.</p> <p>Members are required to be trained and therefore members are allocated specifically to the committee, although substitutes can be called from the wider membership if required.</p> <p>The current split of functions between the main committee and sub-committees works efficiently and reduces the burden on the full committee.</p>

		There are no plans to change the composition of the committee in the foreseeable future.
Other Regulatory Bodies	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>The Council has the following other regulatory Committees:</p> <p>Appeals and Reviews Committee (8 members) (ad-hoc as required). The terms of reference include the determination of appeals against employee dismissals, determinations on Tree Preservation Orders, hearings on Business Rate Discretionary Rate Relief where certain financial limits are exceeded. In 2222/23 this meeting met 4 times.</p> <p>Standards Committee (5 members) meets 4 times a year if required - The terms of reference include the determination of complaints of councillor conduct that have been referred and the consideration of related codes of conduct. In 2022/23 this committee met twice, although neither meeting was required to consider a formal councillor complaint. Traditionally, the number of complaints against councillors in Dacorum is low with most complaints being dealt with at the assessment stage of the complaints process, which is led by the Monitoring Officer</p> <p>Joint Negotiating Committee (4 members) meets 5 times a year if required. This committee is used to enable the negotiation and resolution of trade relation matters with the council's trade unions. In 2022/23 JNC was not required to meet.</p> <p>The Electoral Review Committee (6 members) is an ad-hoc committee and meets as required to consider electoral matters such as boundary reviews, polling place reviews and electoral reviews. In 2022/23 the committee was only required to meet once but the work of the committee in 2023/24 will increase as it will play an important part in this Electoral Review.</p> <p>Health and Well-being Committee (12 members) meets four times a year. The terms of reference for this committee are to review internal and external providers of health services within Dacorum. The remit of the committee was reviewed in 2023 to give it a greater focus to review and develop services provided by the Council rather than just the external focus it had previously.</p> <p>There is limited delegation from the above committees to officers as most matters are considered directly by committee members. This makes member training and pre-meeting briefings particularly important.</p>
	<i>Analysis</i>	The above committees all play a vital role to ensure that the Council's functions and services are effectively discharged. The workload for each committee varies and fluctuates depending on the workplans and matters arising in-year, but the

		structure allows meeting dates to be flexible as required. There are no plans to change the structure of these meetings in the short-medium term although the remit of each committee is reviewed from time to time.
External Partnerships		
	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>A number of councillors are appointed as Council representatives on outside bodies. These organisations include local charities, community groups and regional and national bodies such as the Local Government Association. In total there are 57 outside appointments made. Meeting frequencies vary but are generally no more than quarterly.</p> <p>These groups are generally not decision-making forums in the sense that they have no decision-making authority to bind the Council and any decision relating to the Council's affairs or business would need to go through internal decision-making processes if an official Dacorum vote on a matter was required.</p> <p>The Council is a party to various inter-authority partnerships or companies, but generally officers are appointed to formal decision making roles rather than councillors. There are examples where councillors are on Joint Committees such as the West Herts Crematorium Joint Committee, where appointed councillors do have voting rights, but those voting rights would only be exercised where decisions have been through the appropriate decision making process within the Council.</p> <p>There has in recent years been an increase in the level of partnership working on the growth and infrastructure agenda with the nine other districts and boroughs in Hertfordshire and the County Council, together with other external organisations. Senior Members including the Leader are represented and vote accordingly. These include the Herts Growth Board, Herts Innovation Quarter (Enterprise Zone, mainly based in Hemel Hempstead), South West Herts Joint Strategic Plan, the Hemel Garden Communities Board and Hemel Place Board.</p> <p>Workload is generally limited to attendance at meetings with some preparation time to read agenda papers in advance if any are produced.</p>
	Analysis	Membership of outside bodies is an important part of councillors' representative roles in order to represent the Council in the wider community. It enables councillors to hear first-hand the issues affecting their constituents and enables councillors to develop strategy and policy, which impact their local areas. The list of outside bodies was reviewed following the local elections in May 2023 and some organisations were removed from the list who no longer wanted representation. The list remains under review, but it is not expected to

	significantly change in the near future and therefore demand on councillors is likely to remain constant. However, it has been problematic for Group Leaders to allocate councillors to all outside bodies and the addition of two further councillors would assist this process.
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Community Leadership

Topic		Description
Community Leadership	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>Councillors engage with their communities to understand the issues that are important to them. This is done in different ways by different councillors. Some councillors are very active in their communities with representation roles on community groups and local charities. Other councillors are much more active and use social media to a greater extent to understand local issues.</p> <p>Many councillors have dual representation roles either at County Council level or Town and Parish Council level and this enables councillors to gain a holistic view of issues at all levels of local government, but it also puts additional demand on their time.</p> <p>Many councillors use social media or email groups to communicate and to get wider messaging out, and reach parts of the community on a group basis, which would have been problematic at the time of the last review. Social media also enables councillors to gain a greater understanding of issues affecting the local area. Some councillors have set up Facebook groups, which have enabled direct interaction with residents in order to develop solutions to local issues.</p> <p>Ward surgeries or group meetings are much less frequent than they were in 2006 and are infrequently used although they can still be arranged if there are issues of particular concern to the locality.</p> <p>The Council does not have geographical area committees and all committees and decision-making forums cover the whole borough. Area representation comes from committee membership, which provides cross borough input.</p> <p>At Dacorum all councillors have at least two seats on different committees and this allows councillors to take that community knowledge and use it to develop strategy, policies and projects that will benefit the communities they represent and enable sound decision making.</p>

	Analysis	<p>Modern forms of communication have made the representation role of councillors much more effective. They are able to gain a greater insight into local issues, assist individuals and use this knowledge to develop council policy that can make a difference to their wards. Changing the number of councillors is unlikely to significantly change the effectiveness of community leadership as it is now more efficient via modern methods of communication to reach out and support individuals and groups; however, the proposed addition of two councillors will reduce the councillor/electorate ratio and will assist the community leadership role.</p>
Casework	<i>Key lines of explanation</i>	<p>A large number of queries, which would have been previously directed to councillors are now solved through direct contact with the Council, which is done by phone, email or social media.</p> <p>Therefore contact with councillors now often involves more complex matters such as planning or public policy issues where advice is being sought, or where dissatisfaction is being expressed resulting from the action or a decision of the Council.</p> <p>Initial contact with councillors is often made through email, or phone and issues are often picked up through community groups on social media. This has changed significantly since the last review in 2006 where most enquiries would have come by letter or phone and social media was in its infancy. Most communication with residents is now undertaken by email and phone, which has made communication a lot easier.</p> <p>Issues raised by residents can often be resolved by referral to relevant officers and occasionally more direct intervention is required to coordinate officer or members in order to seek an appropriate resolution.</p> <p>Members generally believe that casework is proportionate to the borough councillor role and manageable and can be dealt with on average with 1-2 days per week, but when this is combined with the required committee membership (pre-meeting preparation and attendance), and attendance at meetings of outside bodies, this does increase to 2-3 days per week although this does vary from councillor to councillor.</p> <p>Councillors do not feel that increasing or decreasing the numbers will significantly change this workload although the proposed addition of two councillors will enable additional capacity, particularly in areas where significant development growth is planned.</p>

	Analysis	The level of casework remains manageable and enables councillors to represent their constituents in an effective manner, but the addition of two extra councillors will enable improved representation taking account of the planned population growth to 2030 and beyond.
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Summary

Councillors continue to work hard to represent and support their communities and perform their role within the Council’s governance framework.

The role requires significant time investment to meet the demands of constituents, work with fellow councillors and officers to develop strategy, policies and projects, which can make a real difference to communities.

Any reduction in the number of councillors would require higher attendance across all meetings and it is the view of Council that this would put a disproportionate burden on councillors when considered with the other representation roles many of them carry out.

It is essential that the Council continue to ensure that the role of a councillor is attractive and manageable and this means that it needs to work for those in full and part-time employment and those with caring responsibilities. The workload needs to remain proportionate to ensure that councillors can continue to perform their community leadership and representative roles in an effective manner.

The Council continues to find itself in a challenging environment as the recovery from Covid -19 and high inflation continues, which will mean that the demands on the Council and councillors will continue to increase. However, with the advent of new working practices, the Council has become a much more efficient organisation since the last review in 2006 and therefore many local issues can be resolved by officers before they require input from councillors.

The Council’s overall governance structure has remained relatively unchanged since the last review and experience has shown that the current 51 members has efficiently served that structure. However, the workload on councillors to serve this structure is significant and it is the view of Council that an additional two councillors will provide greater resilience to the Council’s governance framework.

Growth is planned for the borough which will increase the population by 2030 and beyond and it is the view of Council that this should be reflected in a small increase in councillor numbers to 53 to ensure that the councillor to constituent ratio remains proportionate.