



Strategic Planning & Environment

Overview & Scrutiny

Agenda

WEDNESDAY 10 JANUARY 2024 AT 7.30 PM

Conference Room 2 - The Forum

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

Membership

Councillor Anderson
Councillor Birnie
Councillor Deacon (Vice-Chairman)
Councillor Gale
Councillor Hobson (Chairman)
Councillor Hobson
Councillor Mitchell

Councillor Patterson
Councillor Pringle
Councillor Riddick
Councillor Santamaria
Councillor Timmis
Councillor Walker
Councillor C Wyatt-Lowe

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

AGENDA

1. **MINUTES & ACTIONS** (Pages 3 - 8)

To agree the minutes of the previous meeting.

2. **APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

To receive any apologies for absence.

3. **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To receive any declarations of interest.

4. **PUBLIC PARTICIPATION**

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

6. **AFFINITY & THAMES WATER**

Presentation to be given at the meeting, There is no covering report.

7. **CHILTERNS BEECHWOOD MITIGATION AND SANG** (Pages 9 - 29)
8. **WORK PROGRAMME** (Pages 30 - 32)

MINUTES

Dacorum Borough Council

Strategic Planning and Environment
Wednesday 6th December

Councillors: Cllr Patterson
Cllr Gale
Cllr Anderson
Cllr Wyatt-Lowe
Cllr Birnie
Cllr Riddick
Cllr Timmis
Cllr Deacon
Cllr C Hobson (Chair)

Also in attendance:

Cllr Wilkie
Cllr England
Cllr Bromham

Officers: (6)

James Doe – Strategic Director - Place
Philip Stanley – Head of Development Management
Emma Walker – Head of Environmental and Community Protection
Stefania Horne – Strategic Director Neighbourhood Operations
John Mootealoo – Head of Environmental Services
Clare Dempsey – Financial Planning and Analysis Manager

The meeting began at 20:30

1 MINUTES AND ACTIONS

The Minutes of the last meeting were agreed

2 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE

There were apologies from Cllr Walker, Cllr S Hobson, Cllr Pringle, Cllr Mitchell

3 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

None

4 PUBLIC PARTICIPATION

None

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

None

6 BUDGET REPORT

Action: Layla Fowell to speak to Cllr Taylor on arranging training on the councils tendering process

Action: John Mooteealoo to provide details on if there are savings by starting 2 week later in 2024 compared to 2023.

Recommendation to the decision maker:

That the Scrutiny Committee reviews and scrutinises the draft budget proposals for 2024/25 and provides feedback, to be considered by Cabinet, for each Committee's specific area of responsibility.

Recommendations agreed

For full minutes please refer to the video minutes.

7 WORK PROGRAMME

To add Verge Hardening and Buses to Work Programme for future consideration.

Strategic Planning & Environment OSC Action Points - Jan

4 th Oct	A response to members as to why there is an air quality monitor in Bennets End when there wasn't previously.	Emma Walker	01/11/23	Sent Via Email
4 th Oct	Link to Urban Capacity Study to be circulated to committee members.	Sara Whelan	04/10/23	Sent via email to committee
4 th Oct	Committee members to submit any topics for discussion as part of the work programme to the Chair.	Committee	Ongoing	This is a standing action
1 st Nov	To email wording to be included on page 7 of the previous minutes regarding JDoe's response to Cllr Deacon. (Cllr Gale)	Cllr Gale	02/11/23	Received, LF to update minutes
1 st Nov	To provide exact definition of highways trees to councillors.	IRoss	12/12/23	A highways tree, or roadside tree, is usually a tree located on a grass verge next to a road or with a pavement next to a road. The vast majority of roadside trees are now managed directly by Hertfordshire County Council, although there will be some occasions when roadside trees are managed directly by our tree team, for example if they are on housing land. If there are any enquiries about roadside trees, it is best to talk to HCC directly and the contacts are on our the webpages

				Report a tree problem (dacorum.gov.uk)
1 st Nov	To confirm the next play area identified for improvement or refurbishment as referred to on page 18 of the report.	CDempsey	12/12/23	<p>To confirm the next play area identified for improvement or refurbishment as referred to on page 18 of the report.</p> <p>The following play areas form part of the capital programme</p> <p>Apsley Lock (HH) Durrants Lane (B) Warners End Upper Valley (HH) Flauden (HH) Tower Hill (Chipperfield) (KL) Croft Meadow (Chipperfield) (KL) Woodhall Farm (HH) Miswell Lane (T)</p> <p>The following Parks are planned to commence in June 2024; Flauden, Tower Hill, Croft Meadow and Woodhall Farm</p>
1 st Nov	To add additional commentary regarding potential overspend of around £1m	CDempsey		
1 st Nov	To confirm with Committee if the Council is working with Butterfly Conservation on the chalk bank at Spring Fields.	IRoss	12/12/23	The main work was completed last year. The seeds grew this summer. Next spring we should see a dramatic improvement in density as more perennials start to grow. We are still working with local volunteers and the Butterfly Conservation Trust, who monitor the site on a regular basis.
1 st Nov	To provide update from Environment Agency regarding proposal on River Gade	IRoss	12/12/23	<p>The Environment Agency now have a fully funded scheme and are mobilising to deliver the proposed river re-routing as per the approved planning consent. The decision was issued on Friday 27 January 2023.</p> <p>DBC Officer representation</p>

				Representatives of the Environment Agency have been requested to attend the SPAE committee on Wednesday 7 February to update committee members further.
1 st Nov	To add inviting a member from the Environment Agency to a future meeting to provide an update on River Gade	LFowell		Contact has been made via Cllr Capozzi, awaiting confirmation they can attend.
1 Nov	To confirm if the number of fly-tipping incidents have increased or decreased	EWalker	12/12/23	Sent Via email
1 Nov	To provide quarterly figures for recycling rates over the past 3 years.	JMooteealoo	12/12/23	Sent Via email
1 Nov	To provide update on cost impact of extending green bin collection service	JMooteealoo	12/12/23	This would cost £29453 for one additional collection.
1 Nov	To provide update on issues with footfall counters	JDoe		Diane to provide information early 2024
1 Nov	To provide update on number of vacant retail properties	JDoe	06/12/23	Sent Via Email

6 th Dec	John Mooteealoo to provide details on if there are savings by starting 2 week later in 2024 compared to 2023	JMooteealoo	20/12/23	<p>24/45 Season to start on 26 Feb 24 and to close on 6 Dec 24. Communication already sent out residents for 24/25 green waste season. To extend the Green Waste service for another cycle (2 weeks) to finish on 20 Dec 24 this would cost in the region of £35K per week, totalling £70K for the 2 week extension.</p> <p>24/45 Season to start on 26 Feb 24 and to close on 6 Dec 24. Communication already sent out residents for 24/25 green waste season. To extend the Green Waste service for another stand alone cycle (2 weeks) ie to start on to finish on 20 Jan 25 and close on 31 Jan 25 this would cost in the region of £70K + £2.5K additional agency training for the 2 week extension</p>



Strategic Planning & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Strategic Planning & Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Mitigation Strategy and Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Update
Date:	10 th January 2024
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Sheron Wilkie, Portfolio Holder for Place
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	Appendix 1 Community Impact Assessment
Background papers:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation: Publication of Mitigation Strategy report to Cabinet 15 November 2022. 2. Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Mitigation Strategy 3. Bunkers Park Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Management Plan 4. Chipperfield Common Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace Management Plan
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	<p>CBSAC: Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation</p> <p>CIA: Community Impact Assessment</p> <p>SANG: Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace</p> <p>SAMMS: Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy</p> <p>SSSI: Site of Special Scientific Interest</p>

Report Author / Responsible Officer

Sara Whelan, Assistant Director - Planning



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Corporate Priorities	<p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Building strong and vibrant communities</p> <p>Ensuring economic growth and prosperity</p> <p>Climate and ecological emergency</p>
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Wards affected	ALL
Purpose of the report:	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. To update members on the implementation of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC Mitigation Strategy. 2. To seek SPAE views on the proposals for future SANG sites and the delegation of authority for Chilterns Beechwoods SAC Mitigation Strategy related decisions as set out in the recommendations.
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. That the update on CBSAC Mitigation Strategy matters presented be reported to Cabinet. 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 a Dacorum SANG Strategy be prepared to support identified future needs for Council led SANG arising from development. 4. That delegated authority be sought for the CBSAC Mitigation Strategy decisions set out in table 2. 5. That authority be delegated to the Monitoring Officer to amend the Constitution of Dacorum Borough Council to give effect to recommendation 4 above.
Period for post policy/project review:	5 years

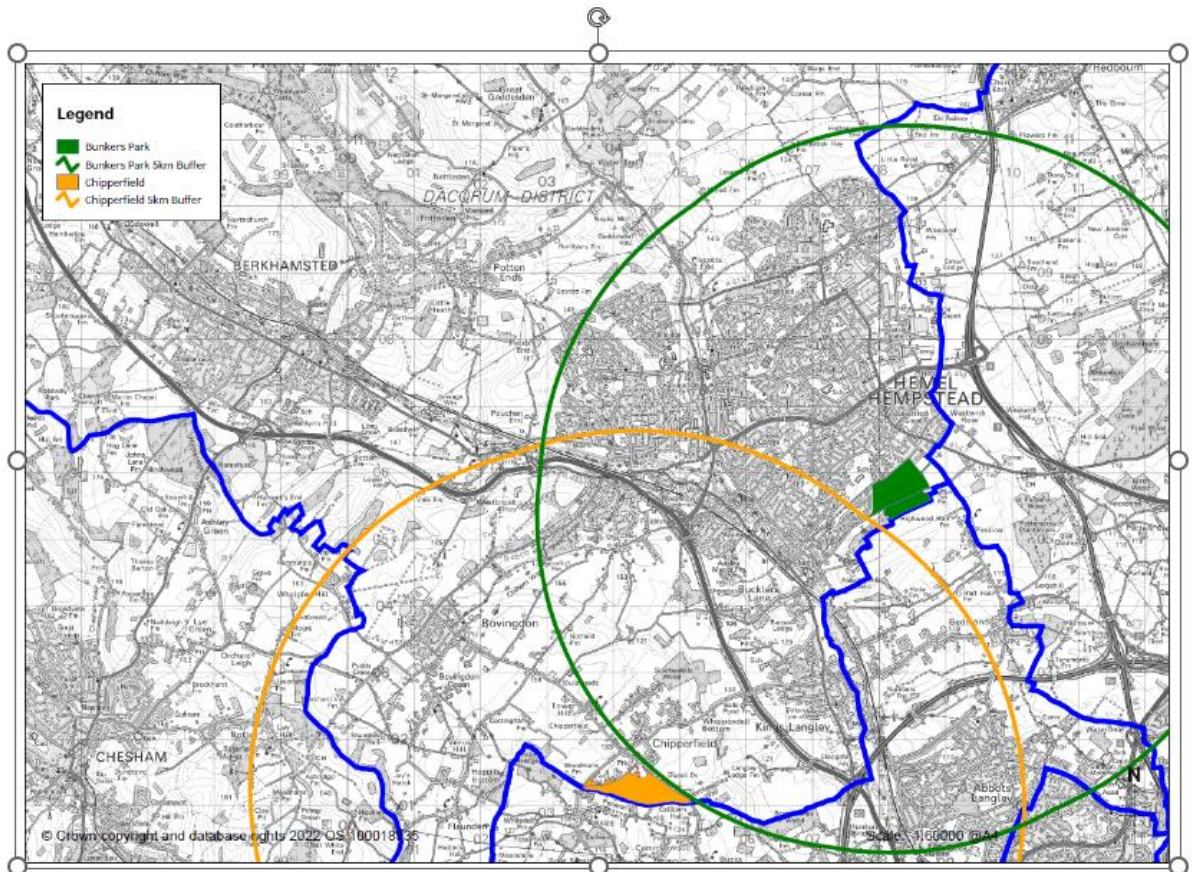
1 Introduction/Background:

- 1.1. In March 2022, the Council published evidence demonstrating that recreational pressure on the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is impacting the integrity of one of its component parts at Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) ('Ashridge Estate') and that there is potential for further deterioration through recreational activity arising from new development. Following advice from Natural England, the Council subsequently stopped permitting net new residential developments across the borough.
- 1.2. In November 2022 Cabinet approved the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC Mitigation Strategy. This sets out the process that the Council applies to ensure developments will not adversely affect the integrity of the CBSAC at Ashridge Estate. Necessary mitigation is secured through contributions for Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) interventions delivered by the National Trust, funded

through a tariff collected from development of £913.88 for each new home built. In addition to this, affected developments also need to provide sufficient Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG). This can be delivered directly by the applicant through their own bespoke solution or alternatively they can contribute towards one of the Council's Strategic SANGs.

- 1.3. All housing development of one or more new net homes within the 12.6km Zone of Influence is required to comply with the Mitigation Strategy. In addition to the provision for new homes, the Mitigation Strategy sets out other forms of development that could cause additional harm to the CBSAC which are considered on a case by case basis. This includes student accommodation, residential care homes and institutions, residential extensions for separate 'Granny' annexes, hotels, houses in multiple occupation, residential caravan sites, residential boat moorings, holiday dwellings and gypsy and traveller pitches.
- 1.4. Types of development which are not subject to the strategy includes householder extensions or other minor works and replacement dwellings.
- 1.5. To enable the partial lifting of the moratorium, Cabinet approved two SANG sites on Council owned land – Chipperfield Common and Bunkers Park – with the further approval of a third site at Gadebridge Park to follow at a later date. SANG Management Plans were presented for Chipperfield Common and Bunkers Park which detailed the interventions, management and monitoring needed for them to act as SANG. A tariff of £4251.71 is collected from each new home allocated Council SANG, based on costs over an 80 year period against an initial capacity to absorb recreational pressure arising from 3782 homes.
- 1.6. SANGs have a catchment based on their particular characteristics and location, and also their location within a wider green infrastructure network. As a guide:
 - SANG of 2-12ha will have a catchment of 2km
 - SANG of 12-20ha will have a catchment of 4km
 - SANG of 20ha+ will have a catchment of 5km.
- 1.7. Any development of 10 or more net new homes must be located within or on the edge of the catchment of the SANG from which it seeks an allocation. Smaller proposals for up to 9 net new homes are not restricted to catchment areas and can be allocated capacity from any available SANG within Dacorum.
- 1.8. The Council's current SANG sites are located within the south and east of the borough. This, combined with the SANG catchment area, results in the Council not being able to offer its SANG capacity to developments of ten or more new homes in Berkhamsted, Tring or the west of the borough. This is illustrated on map 1 below.

Map 1 Catchment areas of existing Council SANG sites



1.9. The Council has now been implementing the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC Mitigation Strategy for over a year. Officers have reviewed progress and the processes involved and present this update alongside recommendations for Cabinet, which will also seek to delegate authority for specific decisions.

2 Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (CBSAC) Mitigation Strategy Update and Proposed Recommendations for Delegated Authority

Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (CBSAC) Mitigation Strategy

2.1 The Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Mitigation Strategy is the mechanism by which Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is protected from adverse recreational pressure arising from new housing. Part A provides common guidance for the planning areas of the Partner authorities – Buckinghamshire Council, Central Bedfordshire Council, St Albans City and District Council and Dacorum Borough Council. Part B provides specific detailed guidance on its administration relating to Dacorum. It is the Council’s legal duty to protect the CBSAC from the effects of new development and the Council is only able to grant qualifying development planning permission where it can be demonstrated it is in compliance with the Mitigation Strategy. The CBSAC Mitigation Strategy has been in operation since November 2022.

2.2 Officers intend to update the strategy to reflect lessons learnt during its operation over the past year. The most significant change will be introducing flexibility into the protocol which guides how the Council allocates capacity provided by its own SANG sites.

2.3 Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG) is the term given to greenspaces that are created, or enhanced, with the specific purpose of absorbing recreation pressure that would otherwise occur at National Sites, such as the CBSAC at Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest.

2.4 Introducing a mechanism to vary the protocol will enable officers to safeguard Council SANG capacity during periods when there is limited SANG supply available in order to prioritise affordable housing schemes, for example and small and individual housing developments. The protocol could then be widened once further Council SANG sites came forward and supply issues eased.

Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy

2.5 The Strategic Access Management and Monitoring Strategy (SAMMS) arm of the CBSAC Mitigation Strategy enables contributions to be collected from new housing development to be used by the National Trust to implement an agreed project plan of mitigation measures at Ashridge Estate. The systems used to administer the SAMMS payments are in the process of being formalised through a collaboration agreement between the Partner Authorities and the National Trust. It is expected that Dacorum will take the lead on administering these payments. Moving forward the Council will periodically review the SAMMS contributions levied from new housing development to reflect updated measures provided by the National Trust and the costs to the councils.

Gateway solution at Ashridge Estate

2.6 A gateway site is an innovative and emerging concept with regards to avoidance and mitigation measures at Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI. The purpose of a gateway is similar to that of SANG, to create an attractive alternative to Ashridge that deflects users away from the site, reducing recreational pressures as a result. A key difference between SANG and a gateway site is that the latter needs to be well related to the existing Ashridge Estate and, importantly, on land outside of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

2.7 The National Trust has launched a Protecting our Roots project to engage with the public on the challenges facing the Ashridge Estate and their vision for its future. This includes their ambition to create new visitor hubs in less sensitive parts of the estate to help disperse footfall and provide a better experience for visitors, and changes to Monument Drive to help protect this area.

2.8 The Council continues to engage constructively with the National Trust on the principle of gateway sites and how they can deliver the core aim of reducing recreational pressures and associated harm at Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI.

Delivery of Council Suitable Alternative Greenspace (SANG)

2.9 In November 2022, Cabinet approved the delivery of two initial Council owned SANG sites, Bunkers Park and Chipperfield Common, with Gadebridge Park to be progressed as the next scheme.

2.10 Recruitment is taking place for a new operational SANG team within the Clean, Safe and Green service who will be dedicated to the Council's SANG sites. This team will be responsible for implementing the SANG management plans, by delivering the SANG improvements, maintaining the sites to the required quality standards and engaging with the local community. Going forward they will also be preparing management plans for new Council SANG sites and updates to existing management plans.

Next Phase of Council SANG sites

- 2.11 The Council will need to bring more SANG sites on line to provide a future supply for new homes. There are four in Council ownership that are under consideration and development presently.
- 2.12 Plans for **Gadebridge Park** are advanced and it is expected that this will shortly become available as the next SANG site. Following on from this the sites under assessment for the next phase of SANG are Margaret Lloyd Park, Howe Grove and an extension to Bunkers Park.
- 2.13 The earlier delivery opportunity to develop **Margaret Lloyd Park** (at Grovehill) as SANG has arisen as a result of the Marchmont Farm planning application for up to 350 homes. This development proposes an extension to the park, enabling the minimum 2.3 – 2.5km circular walk criteria for SANG to be achieved. In return the proposals would deliver an upgraded park that would receive a higher standard of maintenance, benefiting both future and existing residents.
- 2.14 The extension to Margaret Lloyd Park would also act as a connecting link to **Howe Grove Wood Local Nature Reserve** enabling this site to be brought forward as part of a Gadebridge to Grovehill SANG network that would link to the Hemel Garden Communities development area in the long term.
- 2.15 At **Bunkers Park**, there is the opportunity to create additional SANG capacity by utilising the land opposite Poppy Fields Cemetery. This may require a variation to the current permitted uses agreed by Homes England when the land was purchased by the Council, which is subject to an overage clause.
- 2.16 Table 1 below shows the approximate additional Council SANG capacity that would be created through these further sites.

Site	Approximate capacity (number of homes)
Gadebridge Park	1118
Margaret Lloyd Park and future extension	452
Howe Grove Wood Local Nature Reserve	443
Bunkers Park extension	163
Total	2176

Future SANG Strategy

- 2.17 Council owned SANG is a finite resource. Officers have undertaken an extensive assessment of land owned by the Council, from which the next phase of SANG set out in paragraphs 2.11-2.16 has been identified. Moving forward a new strategy for SANG allocation will be developed during 2024 which will consider the SANG capacity needed to support the current rate of planning applications received and housing sites being progressed, growth arising from the new Dacorum Local Plan and third party SANGs coming forward.
- 2.18 The allocation of third party SANG provided by local charitable trusts and developers is likely to be ring-fenced for development meeting criteria such as a number of homes threshold, location of development, or a particular housebuilder. An ongoing future supply of Council owned SANG is important to support the ongoing delivery of homes across the borough, particularly for smaller sites of 9 homes or less.
- 2.19 The SANG strategy will support the new Dacorum Local Plan, by providing evidence for the Sustainability Appraisal, and the Appropriate Assessment under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 that considers the impact of the Local

Plan would have on protected sites such as the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. This will require the provision and capacity of SANG for all development coming forward through the Local Plan to be assessed against the requirements set out in the CBSAC Mitigation Strategy. These document will be critical to supporting the Local Plan throughout a future Examination in Public as the Planning Inspector will want to be satisfied there is a supply of SANG to support the delivery of new homes across the borough.

Delegated authority from Cabinet

2.20 The Chilterns Beechwoods SAC Mitigation Strategy, and the Chipperfield Common and Bunkers Park SANG management plans were expedited quickly in November 2022 to enable the partial lifting of the planning moratorium in the shortest time possible. Having reviewed the operation of the strategy over the past year, a list of decisions where it is proposed to seek delegated authority has been prepared and is shown in table 2. This will provide the framework for enabling decision making at the appropriate level of delegated authority and the decision mechanism.

2.21 In order to provide clarity within CBSAC Mitigation Strategy processes, the list includes operational decisions where delegated authority will be confirmed to the Strategic Director - Place or Neighbourhood Operations, or Assistant Director – Planning. Given the impact of the strategy across the Council, this may involve many directorates (particularly Place, Neighbourhood Operations, Housing and Property, and Corporate and Commercial). Where approval has previously been given by Cabinet, such as for the CBSAC Mitigation Strategy and SANG tariff, it is proposed to delegate subsequent amendments to a Portfolio Holder decision. For new Council owned SANG, the list of sites to be considered within the next phase will be shared with Cabinet, with agreement for a site being brought into operation delegated to a Portfolio Holder decision.

2.22 Decisions of a strategic nature will be retained by Cabinet. This includes policy areas such as the approval for Council land or assets to be used as SANG, prioritising SANG above other alternative uses, amendments to the SAMMS tariff, and any acquisition strategy to provide future SANG supply (none currently proposed).

2.23 Table 2 Proposed delegated authority for decisions relating to the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC Mitigation Strategy

Decision	Proposed delegated authority to:	Authority mechanism:
1 Approval for Council owned public open space to be used as SANG, where these sites have previously been reported to Cabinet.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Services and Portfolio Holder for Place (for Council owned land) Portfolio Holder for Place (for non-council owned) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio Holder Decision Sheet
2 Approval of extensions to existing SANG sites by adding further parcels / adjustments to the red line boundary of a SANG.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Commercial Services and Portfolio Holder for Place (for Council owned land) Portfolio Holder for Place (for non-council owned) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio Holder Decision Sheet
3 Approval of SANG management plans for new	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Director - Place or the Assistant Director - 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer Decision Record Sheet

SANG sites, and for these to be made publicly available.	Planning, and the Strategic Director - Neighbourhood Operations	
4 Approval of amendments or updates to existing SANG management plans (eg changes in interventions, management plans for later time periods/phases, or additions due to SANG sites being extended as per 2 above).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Director - Place or the Assistant Director - Planning, and the Strategic Director - Neighbourhood Operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer Decision Record Sheet
5 Approval for spending SANG contributions paid to the Council (to include post-commencement charges).	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> S151 or DS151 Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved through the relevant financial system (as per current S106 arrangements for approval of drawdown, and invoice payments to follow existing scheme of delegation for payment approvals)
6 Adoption of SANG sites or public open space sites provided/gifted by a developer where recommended by officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Director - Place or the Assistant Director - Planning, in consultation with the Strategic Director - Housing and Property Services and/or the Strategic Director - Neighbourhood Operations 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Officer Decision Record Sheet
7 Decisions relating to the use of third party SANG by a developer.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Strategic Director - Place or the Assistant Director - Planning or the Head of Development Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Approved through the relevant processes for issuing a planning decision and reported periodically to Corporate Place Board.
8 Approval of revised/varied Council-led SANG tariff (amending the tariff approved by Cabinet in November 2022)	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio Holder of Place in consultation with the Strategic Director - Place and the S151 or DS151 Officer 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio Holder Decision Sheet
9 Approval of revisions to the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC Mitigation Strategy including variations to the Allocations Protocol for Council owned SANG.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio Holder for Place in consultation with the Strategic Director - Place 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Portfolio Holder Decision Sheet

10 Approval for officers to offer Council SANG capacity to development within the borough.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Director - Place or the Assistant Director - Planning or the Head of Development Management 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Approved through the relevant processes for issuing a planning decision and reported periodically to Corporate Place Board.
11 Approval for officers to offer Council SANG capacity to development outside of the borough where this is deemed appropriate or beneficial by officers.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Strategic Director - Place or the Assistant Director - Planning 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Officer Decision Record Sheet

3 Options and alternatives considered

3.1 Not allocating further Council owned parks and open spaces as SANG – not recommended

- This would be an opportunity lost to the Council to increase the use and attractiveness of its parks and open spaces, and would limit the supply of SANG available to support the delivery of future homes across the borough. Any restriction to the delivery of new homes would have a number of related consequences including reducing delivery of new affordable homes, limiting the supply of homes to rent and purchase, not being able to prove housing delivery to the Secretary of State and limiting the opportunities and aspirations for our communities.

3.2 Not changing the scheme of delegation

- Decisions and approval for each individual SANG site would instead be referred to Cabinet as they become available to be taken forward for delivery. This would be an inefficient approach and would further delay decision making, implementation of Council SANG, and the delivery of a SANG strategy and is not recommended.

3.3 Do not develop a Dacorum SANG Strategy and instead rely on the current Council SANG sites and third party SANG opportunities to meet development needs.

- This would limit development to areas where there is SANG capacity available, impacting the delivery of new homes and may result in the moratorium on new housebuilding being reinstated. The new Dacorum Local Plan would not be able to be progressed, causing further risk of speculative planning applications and intervention by Government. This would be inflexible and is therefore not recommended.

3.4 Develop an acquisition strategy to purchase additional land for Council SANG.

- This is not currently being considered within the current CBSAC Mitigation Strategy work programme. The current priority focusses on opportunities for SANG on existing Council owned land. Once these have been progressed, SANG provision across the borough and future needs will be reassessed and further consideration of future SANG options will be considered. This will be informed by any potential sites put forward as part of the Call for SANG sites undertaken alongside the recent Revised Strategy for Growth consultation.

4 Consultation

4.1 The matters raised in this report have been discussed at the Corporate SANG Group which comprises officers from Strategic Planning; Finance; Clean, Safe and Green; Legal; Infrastructure; Development Management; Commercial Development; and Property.

4.2 The Corporate SANG Group reports to the Corporate Place Board which includes representatives from across the Council.

5 Financial and value for money implications:

5.1 Developer contributions (£4,251.71 per new home) are currently collected towards the delivery and upkeep of the Council's SANG sites at Bunkers Park and Chipperfield Common. The collected funds are ring-fenced for SANG purposes and drawn down by services as needed. This tariff will be updated as further Council SANG sites are taken forward and the additional demand on Planning resources to manage CBSAC Mitigation processes over the 80 year period of the planning legal agreements have been quantified. Delegated authority is sought to approve amendments to this tariff to reflect the costs of further Council SANG sites as these are taken forward and other Council costs attributable to SANG.

5.2 Development within the borough also pays £913.88 per new net home towards Strategic Access Management and Monitoring (SAMM) Strategy measures which are delivered by the National Trust at Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest. Going forward, the intention is for the Council to administer this scheme on behalf of the partner local authorities.

6 Legal implications

6.1 The Council is only legally able to finalise a Local Plan, or grant planning permission for development where it can rule that there will be no significant adverse effects on the integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects. This is achieved through an effective Mitigation Strategy. The Council's Planning Department took independent legal advice throughout the development of the Strategy and the Council is confident that legal risks have been minimised as far as possible.

6.2 All of Dacorum is located within the 12.6km recreational Zone of Influence from Ashridge Estate, as a result it will be a continuing requirement for housing development to contribute towards both SANG and SAMMS.

6.3 SANG monies are collected on commencement of development and the requirement is that the mitigation is "on the ground" by the time dwellings are occupied.

7 Risk implications:

7.1 Without a Mitigation Strategy in place the Council is exposed to future legal challenge from an aggrieved party.

7.2 If the Council's SANG commitments are not delivered there is a risk that Natural England will object to future planning applications as mitigation would not be in place to absorb the additional recreational pressure arising from new residents. Similarly there is a risk to SANG capacity and planning decisions if new SANG sites are not found.

7.3 A reintroduction of the planning moratorium would prevent permission being granted for new homes, impacting services across the Council and on Dacorum's communities.

8 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

8.1 A Community Impact Assessment (CIA) is attached as appendix 1. The CIA confirms that the Mitigation Strategy and associated measures contained in the report will positively impact the community generally by enhancing local spaces across Dacorum and through the provision of new homes across the borough. The types of positive outcomes to be delivered:

- More access to natural green spaces within the borough's communities;
- Positive social, physical and mental health and wellbeing impacts for people of all ages and abilities.

8.2 Human rights – There are no Human Rights implications arising from this report.

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

9.1 Providing a long term mitigation strategy for the SAC will ensure the protection of the site from the recreational pressure that is currently being experienced. These measures will also help adaptation and mitigation in response to climate change. Measures to upgrade a number of the Council's existing open spaces to SANG will reduce pressure on the SAC and will provide improved environments for residents and visitors.

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

10.1 Implementing the Mitigation Strategy requires Council's resources to administer the resulting processes and to maintain Council owned SANGS. These costs will be recovered as part of the SAMMS and SANG tariffs.

11 Conclusions:

11.1 The proposed recommendations for Cabinet will enable officers to develop the sites identified into SANG, providing a supply of SANG capacity over a period during which a future Dacorum SANG strategy will be developed. The delegated authority sought will aid decision making on CBSAC Mitigation Strategy matters, this will ensure the Council's planning function can operate efficiently and planning decisions can be issued.

11.2 Having in place an up to date CBSAC Mitigation Strategy and Council SANG supply will allow the Council to demonstrate that it has discharged its legal obligations under the Habitats Regulations enabling planning permission to be granted for new housing development.

11.3 The Council has identified the next phase of Council owned SANG as **Gadebridge Park, Margaret Lloyd Park, Howe Grove Wood Local Nature Reserve and an extension to Bunkers Park**. It is recommended that these be reported to Cabinet and delegated authority is sought for the Portfolio Holders for Corporate and Commercial and Place to approve the use and delivery of these sites.

11.4 The report recommends that a **Dacorum SANG Strategy** be prepared to support identified future needs for Council led SANG arising from development. This will provide certainty for development going forward and enable the new Dacorum Local Plan to be progressed towards adoption.

11.5 In addition it seeks agreement to **delegated authority** being sought from Cabinet for the CBSAC related decisions set out in table 2 and delegated authority to the Council's Monitoring Office to

amend the constitution. This will provide clarity on CBSAC Mitigation Strategy processes and governance, and enable efficient decision making.

Dacorum BC Community Impact Assessment (CIA) Template

Policy / service / decision

Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation – Mitigation Strategy for Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest and supporting documents

Description of what is being impact assessed

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

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

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

Dacorum is home to Ashridge Common and Woods SSSI, and Tring Woodlands SSSI, which are part of the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC, an area that is internationally recognised for its importance to nature conservation and designated part of the national site network under the Habitats Directive. This places a responsibility on the Council to ensure that the integrity of the sites is not adversely affected by new planning proposals such as the new Dacorum Local Plan and individual planning applications, and a legal requirement to undertake a Habitats Regulations Assessment.

To understand the current and future impact of growth on the protected sites, the Council commissioned a Visitor survey, recreation impact assessment and mitigation requirements report. This found Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI to be under increasing visitor pressure and concluded that more protection measures were needed to safeguard the site from additional visitor pressure generated by new development. It established the need for a number of restrictions including establishing an Inner (500m) and Outer (12.6km) 'Zone of Influence' around the site where certain developments would be restricted in perpetuity (in the case of the Inner Zone) or until a mitigation strategy is in place (in the case of the Outer Zone). The entirety of Dacorum Borough lies within the Zone of Influence. As a result the Council worked with Natural England, the National Trust and a number of adjoining local authorities who are also impacted by the restrictions to prepare a Mitigation Strategy and supporting documents and plans.

The Mitigation Strategy aims to ensure that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation (CBSAC) at Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI arising from new development within Dacorum.

The Mitigation Strategy is in two parts:

Part A provides common guidance for the planning areas of Dacorum Borough Council, Central Bedfordshire Council and St Albans City and District Council.

Part B provides detailed guidance specific to Dacorum Borough Council including detailed information on the mechanisms for securing mitigation for each proposed development.

The Strategy Access and Management Strategy is designed to address issues at Ashridge Estate and mitigate the likely scale of development that will come forward within the Zone of Influence. It will deliver a range of projects to protect vulnerable habitats, improve the site's resilience to and recovery from recreational pressure, better manage visitor parking and access, encourage the uptake of sustainable transport, and educate and inform visitors, alongside additional monitoring of the impact of the measures. New qualifying development will be required to pay a per-dwelling tariff towards the required SAMMS interventions.

Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace is the term given to greenspaces that are created or enhanced with the specific purpose of absorbing recreation pressure that would otherwise occur at National sites, such as Chilterns Beechwoods SAC. New SANGs can be created or existing greenspaces enhanced to create a SANG, in order to absorb the level of recreation pressure associated with qualifying development. The Mitigation Strategy requires qualifying development to either provide new (bespoke) SANG or contribute towards Strategic SANG projects elsewhere. The Strategy provides guidance on the criteria for providing SANG and the allocation procedure for Council owned Strategic SANG.

The SANG part of the strategy will increase the overall provision and quality of natural greenspace within the Borough, as the identified sites must be maintained specifically for SANG and cannot be counted towards other uses, including formal recreation and activity. SANG sites must have a semi-natural feel without intrusions such as built development. SANG will be expected to have features that will enable all members of the community to visit and enjoy the sites. These will include – an appropriate level of parking for vehicles and bicycles; information boards and signage; easy to use paths, with a minimum circular walk of 2.3-2.5km; areas to walk a dog off lead; and a focal destination point. The Strategy also sets catchment areas for SANG, meaning

that development must be within an accessible distance of its related SANG. The SANG criteria are designed to make the area attractive to visitors to draw them to the site as an alternative to the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC.

Alongside the Mitigation Strategy, the Council approved two Council owned sites that can provide some Strategic SANG capacity – Bunkers Park and Chipperfield Common. SANG management plans have been prepared for these sites, which set out the improvements that will enable each to achieve SANG standard and the enhanced management and maintenance regimes that will ensure they continue to perform as SANG over the required 80 year period. Developers wishing to utilise the Council owned Strategic SANG capacity are required to pay their proportion of the costs for delivering the improvements needed.

The Council intends to bring forward a further phase of SANG sites to provide a future supply for development. It is expected that Gadebridge Park will shortly become available as the next SANG site. Following on from this the sites under assessment are Margaret Lloyd Park, Howe Grove Wood Local Nature Reserve and an extension to Bunkers Park.

Evidence

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

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

Footprint Ecology, Visitor survey, recreation impact assessment and mitigation requirements for the Chilterns Beechwoods SAC and the Dacorum Local Plan (2022)

Chilterns Beechwoods Special Area of Conservation Mitigation Strategy for Ashridge Commons and Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest

Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area Supplementary Planning Document Equality Screening (Runnymede Borough Council) <https://www.runnymede.gov.uk/downloads/file/834/equality-screening>

Improving access to greenspace: A new review for 2020

https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/904439/Improving_access_to_greenspace_2020_review.pdf

The Chipperfield Common (Green Flag) Management Plan

The Bunkers Park (Green Flag) Management Plan

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

Councillor Sheron Wilkie – Portfolio Holder for Planning and Infrastructure
 Sara Whelan – Assistant Director - Planning
 Luke Johnson – Trees and Woodlands Team Leader, Clean Safe and Green

Analysis of impact on protected groups (and others)

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

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

Summary of impact		Negative impact / outcome	Neutral impact / outcome	Positive impact / outcome
Protected group	<i>What do you know? What do people tell you? Summary of data and feedback about service users and the wider community/ public. Who uses / will use the service? Who doesn't / can't and why? Feedback/complaints?</i>			
Age	The SANG part of the Strategy will provide more and better access to natural greenspace through its requirement for development to either provide new bespoke SANG or contribute towards Strategic SANG. Access to natural spaces has found to create positive impacts for people of all ages, but particularly younger and older people.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

	<p>There is a large body of evidence pointing to the physical, mental and social development of children being enhanced by playing and learning in green environments, and further evidence suggests that poor health outcomes are reduced in children who have greater access to green space.</p> <p>A number of studies found that older people also benefit from increased access to green spaces through improved physical health and social well-being. Evidence suggests that access to green space can potentially reduce the disproportionate levels of social isolation and loneliness experienced by older people in society.</p> <p>The House of Commons research briefing 'UK disability statistics: Prevalence and life experiences' (published August 2023 data from 2021/22) stated that disability prevalence rise with age, with 45% of adults over State Pension age, and 58% of people aged 80 and over reporting a disability (compared to 23% of working age adults). Therefore, many of the specific points raised under 'disability' could potentially create positive impacts for the majority of older people.</p>			
<p>Disability (physical, intellectual, mental)</p> <p><i>Refer to CIA Guidance Notes and Mental Illness & Learning Disability Guide</i></p>	<p>There is growing evidence that increased access to natural spaces, and spending time in the natural environment, benefits the physical and mental wellbeing of all people, but particularly for people with disabilities and/or long-term health conditions.</p> <p>Improved access to green space is particularly beneficial to people's mental health. Studies support that improved access to green space can reduce rates of anxiety and depression (the most commonly diagnosed mental health condition in Britain).</p> <p>The Council's SANG management plans for Chipperfield Common and Bunkers Park also detail a number of specific improvements for</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>☒</p>

	<p>each site that could provide a positive impact for people with disabilities.</p> <p>Both plans include access improvements by: creating new surfaced Easy Access Routes or enhancing existing; surfacing areas where access becomes difficult during wet weather; regularly maintaining footpath routes to ensure they are clear of obstructions. Works to footpaths will particularly benefit individuals with physical/mobility disabilities as it will improve their access.</p> <p>The Council SANG sites will also offer new circular walking routes that will be signposted through information boards, route markers and wayfinding, increasing the overall legibility of the sites. This particularly benefits people with sensory, developmental, memory and learning disabilities.</p> <p>In terms of access to and from the areas, the provision of resurfaced car parks and marked circular routes to and from car parks will ensure that individuals who rely on personal transport to access spaces can do so.</p> <p>New facilities on the sites such as benches for places to rest, and waymarked routes indicating difficulty levels, will ensure the spaces cater for a range of user interests and capabilities.</p> <p>Lastly, a new management regime will be introduced at the Council's SANG sites that will include monitoring the condition of the sites and the success of the access and inclusion measures.</p>			
<p>Gender reassignment</p>	<p>No material impact on this protected group</p>	<p>□</p>	<p>⊗</p>	<p>□</p>

Race and ethnicity	No material impact on this protected group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Religion or belief	No material impact on this protected group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sex	No material impact on this protected group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Sexual orientation	No material impact on this protected group	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>
Not protected characteristics but consider other factors, e.g. carers, veterans, homeless, low income, loneliness, rurality etc.	The Mitigation Strategy is intended to protect the integrity of Ashridge Commons and Woods SSSI. This will be beneficial to the wider community as it will safeguard the important natural capital and ecosystem services the area provides. These are the benefits humans gain from the natural environment such as carbon storage, water and air quality improvements and diversity in wildlife.	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input type="checkbox"/>	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/>

Negative impacts / outcomes action plan

Where you have ascertained that there will potentially be negative impacts / outcomes, you are required to mitigate the impact of these. Please detail below the actions that you intend to take.

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

If negative impacts / outcomes remain, please provide an explanation below.	
n/a	
Completed by (all involved in CIA)	Claire Covington, Assistant Team Leader – Strategic Planning Keeley Mitchell, Assistant Officer – Strategic Planning and Regeneration Officer
Date	18/12/2023
Signed off by (AD from different Directorate if being presented to CMT / Cabinet)	Mark Brookes
Date	22/12/2023
Entered onto CIA database - date	
To be reviewed by (officer name)	
Review date	

Agenda Item 8

SPAEC OSC Work Programme 2023/2024

Meeting Date	Report Deadline	Items	Contact Details	Background information
7 Feb 2024	29 Jan 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)		
		Joint Budget <i>Ideally no further items to be added</i>		
		Hemel Hempstead e-bike hire scheme	Shalini Jayasinghe Manager, Strategic Planning and Infrastructure shalini.jayasinghe@dacorum.gov.uk	
		New KPIS	Shaj Choudhury Head of Transformation Shaj.choudhury@dacorum.gov.uk	
6 March 2024	28 Feb 2024	Action Points (from previous meeting)		
		Q3 Quarterly Budget Monitoring Report	Clare Dempsey – Financial Planning & Analysis Team Leader Clare.dempsey@dacorum.gov.uk	
		Q3 Neighbourhood Services Performance Report	Stefania Horne – Strategic Director – Neighbourhood Services Stefania.horne@dacorum.gov.uk	

		ov.uk	
	Q3 Planning, Development and Regeneration Quarterly reports	Sara Whelan – Assistant Director Strategic Planning and Regeneration Sara.Whelan@dacorum.gov.uk	
	The Local Plan – Regulation 18 Feedback	Sara Whelan – Assistant Director Strategic Planning and Regeneration Sara.Whelan@dacorum.gov.uk	
	Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plan	Sara Whelan – Assistant Director Strategic Planning and Regeneration Sara.Whelan@dacorum.gov.uk	
TO BE DATED	CIL Review	Sara Whelan – Assistant Director Strategic Planning and Regeneration Sara.Whelan@dacorum.gov.uk	
Affordable Housing SPD	Sara Whelan – Assistant Director Planning Sara.Whelan@dacorum.gov.uk		
	Chilterns Beechwood Mitigation/Sang	Sara Whelan – Assistant Director Strategic Planning and Regeneration Sara.Whelan@dacorum.gov.uk	

Items to be planned in by chair

Luton Airport

Chilterns Beechwood Mitigation Strategy

Economic Development Update

Place Strategies (Hemel, Berko, Tring)

Maylands Master Plan

Visit to Cupid Green and CCTV

Hemel Garden Communities

Air Quality

Water – Sewage

Rural Plan

Visit Fly Tip – In small groups

Climate Change

Environment Agency – River Gade update / Other Chalk Streams

Verge Hardening

Buses