



SUMMONS

MEETING OF THE COUNCIL

Wednesday 25 September 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 25 September 2024 at 7.30 pm to transact the business set out below.

**CLAIRE HAMILTON
CHIEF EXECUTIVE**

TO ALL MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

**Contact: Democratic Services
ext 2209**

AGENDA

1. MINUTES (Pages 5 - 9)

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 Members of the Cabinet or 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 10 - 22)

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

5.2 Councillor Bromham Portfolio Holder Neighbourhood Operations

5.3 Councillor Wilkie Portfolio Holder Place

5.4 Councillor England Portfolio Holder People & Transformation

5.5 Councillor Capozzi Portfolio Holder Corporate and Commercial Services

5.6 Councillor Dhyani Portfolio Holder Housing & Property Services

5.7 Councillor Allen Portfolio Holder Climate & Ecological Emergency

6. MOTIONS

6.1 Winter Fuel Allowance and Protecting Pensioners from Fuel Poverty

Council Notes:

- The Labour Government's recent decision to restrict the Winter Fuel Payment to only pensioners in receipt of means-tested benefits like Pension Credit, as announced by Chancellor Rachel Reeves.
- The estimated impact of this decision, which Age UK says will mean 2 million pensioners who badly need the money to stay warm this winter will not receive it.
- The significant role that Winter Fuel Payments play in helping older residents of Dacorum and across the UK afford heating during the coldest months, thereby preventing 'heat or eat' dilemmas and safeguarding health.
- The criticism from Age UK, the Countryside Alliance and other charities, highlighting the social injustice and potential health risks posed by this sudden policy change.
- The additional strain this decision will place on vulnerable pensioners, many of whom do not claim Pension Credit despite being eligible, further exacerbating their financial hardship.

Council believes:

- That the Winter Fuel Payment has been a lifeline for many older people across the UK and that restricting its availability solely to those on Pension Credit risks leaving many pensioners in financial hardship.
- While some pensioners currently in receipt of the Winter Fuel Payment may not require it, many across Dacorum sit just above the cut-off for Pension Credit and will now lose their allowance.
- The decision to means-test Winter Fuel Payments, especially with such short notice and without adequate compensatory measures, is deeply unfair and will disproportionately affect the health and well-being of our poorest older residents.
- The government's approach fails to consider the administrative barriers and stigma that prevent eligible pensioners from claiming Pension Credit, leaving many without the support they desperately need.

Council resolves to:

- Bring forward a Council-led local awareness campaign to alert those eligible of Pension Credit which in some respects will help access to the Winter Fuel Payment for those most in need.
- Request that the Council Leader write to the Chancellor of the Exchequer, urging a review of the decision to means-test the Winter Fuel Payment and asking the government to ensure that vulnerable pensioners, are protected from fuel poverty.
- Commit the Council to signing the 'Save the Winter Fuel Payment for Struggling Pensioners' petition being run by Age UK and ask members to sign the petition themselves.
- Encourage the promotion of Pension Credit uptake through council services and partnerships with local charities and community organisations to ensure that all eligible pensioners in Hemel Hempstead, Tring, Berkhamsted and the villages are supported in claiming their entitlement.

7. BUSINESS FROM THE LAST COUNCIL MEETING (Pages 23 - 25)

To consider any business referred from the previous meeting

8. CABINET REFERRALS (Pages 26 - 28)

To consider the following referrals from Cabinet:

8.1 CA/71/24 23rd July 2024 Provisional Financial Outturn 2023/24

8.2 CA/82/24 10th Sept 2024 Dacorum Borough Council Corporate Plan: "Our Plan For Dacorum 2024-28"

9. OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY REFERRALS

10. CHANGES TO COMMITTEE MEMBERSHIP

To consider any proposals for changes to committee membership

11. CHANGE TO COMMITTEE DATES

To consider any proposals for changes to committee dates