

To consider the following Motion:

CHALK STREAMS

Dacorum has internationally recognised rare natural chalk streams deserving protection and support, rarity to the point where even the World Wildlife Fund have suggested that they should be given special protection. The existing Dacorum Core Strategy documents acknowledge the importance of this asset in supporting endangered species and it is noted that the quality of these chalk streams is measured according to the amount of water present, balance of the water chemistry and the biodiversity of the water habitats supported by flow. Therefore

1. This Council

a. notes with concern the perilous state of the Gade and Bulbourne rivers in respect of vitality and water levels, and

b. expresses concern about the depletion of water resources by groundwater abstraction and the harm being caused to the ecology and biodiversity of the local chalk streams.

2. This Council

A. instructs officers to

i. Write to the Dacorum Environmental Forum – Water Group to ask for their comments as to how the Rivers Gade, Ver and Bulbourne could be managed in the future so that they are maintained as healthy and vibrant chalk streams, these comments to be forwarded to the Environment Agency as part of the following letter to the EA

ii write to the Environment Agency (EA) to express the alarm of this Council as to the current poor environmental health of these important chalk streams and to ask the EA to explain to the Council how they intend to retain, protect and manage the rivers Gade, Ver and Bulbourne in the future, this explanation to also set out the EA's requirements of Affinity Water and Thames Water to adapt the sourcing of water

iii. Consider the increased water resources that will need to be provided by Affinity Water and Thames Water for the anticipated local increase in housing development, and write to the Planning Inspectorate and the Environment Agency, making them aware of the issues and seeking their advice with regard to the future development

3. This Council, in furtherance of its objects, will

a. work with all relevant agencies to ensure that the decline in the quality of our chalk streams is halted and reversed, and

b. undertake to ensure that our Local Plan will be sympathetic to these rivers and that this council will do all that is possible to protect these important ecosystems