



<b>Report for:</b>	<b>Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>
<b>Date of meeting:</b>	<b>30 September 2020</b>
<b>Part:</b>	<b>1</b>
If Part II, reason:	

<b>Title of report:</b>	<b>Climate Change Emergency Progress Update</b>
<b>Contact:</b>	Councillor Andrew Williams, Leader and Portfolio Holder for Climate Emergency  Author/Responsible Officer – Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration
<b>Purpose of report:</b>	The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Council’s work to tackle the climate emergency and to seek the feedback from the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
<b>Recommendations to Cabinet 20 October</b>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. That approach set out in the report be approved and actioned with the inclusion of any changes and additions that Cabinet are minded to accept following the feedback from the September 29 Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny meeting.</li> <li>2. That any changes to the text resulting from recommendation one be delegated to the Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration in consultation with the Leader of the Council to approve</li> <li>3. That a further progress report be submitted to Cabinet in the new year</li> <li>4. That the proposal to establish a Green Community Grant scheme, as set out in paragraph 6.3.3 of the report, be approved funded from the £75,000 Climate budget already established.</li> </ol>
<b>Period for post policy/project review</b>	The Strategy and Action Plan will ultimately be reviewed in 2030 but it is proposed that there should be an annual ‘state of the environment’ report made to Cabinet and Council setting out the progress made in the previous 12 months and measured against the baseline carbon dioxide and greenhouse gas position together with the specific targets and actions for the forthcoming year. In addition there will be periodic reporting to both Cabinet and the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.

Corporate objectives:	<p>The Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will help to support all 5 corporate objectives:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• <i>Safe and clean environment:</i> e.g. contains actions relating to the quality of existing environments and design and layout of new development that promote security and safe access;</li> <li>• <i>Community Capacity:</i> e.g. provide a framework for local communities to be better informed and involved in climate emergency mitigation;</li> <li>• <i>New and Affordable housing:</i> through both direct delivery and setting improved sustainability requirements in new homes would help to reduce both the cost of energy and water and the carbon dioxide (CO<sub>2</sub>) emissions the homes would produce;</li> <li>• <i>Dacorum delivers:</i> fulfilling the zero carbon pledge will make a huge contribution to local sustainability and assist in the national target to reach zero carbon as a nation by 2050;</li> <li>• <i>Regeneration:</i> the strategy and action plan will provide improvements to air quality, biodiversity, and opportunities for cycling and walking as well as major economic potential for 'green' businesses.</li> </ul>
<p>Implications:</p> <p>'Value for money' implications</p>	<p><u>Financial</u></p> <p>The financial implications of achieving the strategy are not as yet fully costed but will be factored in to the Medium Term Financial Strategy and subsequent budgeting. Some areas will procure and use alternative products, materials and services which may be more expensive, others adapt ways of operating, and for others such as the regulatory services the cost will fall to the private sector. One clear factor is that failure to act will have both financial and societal impacts which will be far more damaging and expensive.</p> <p>There is budget for the Climate Change Emergency Officer and a further £75,000 available for 2020/21 together with an earmarked reserve.</p> <p><u>Value for money</u></p> <p>The aim of the Climate Emergency Strategy and Action Plan is to reduce the carbon footprint of the Council's activities and whilst in procurement the Council will seek value for money through intelligent procurement and tendering a critical part of the value for money assessment must be the degree to which the expenditure acts to reduce net CO<sub>2</sub> and other greenhouse emissions</p>
Risk implications	A Risk Assessment will be completed and added to the Council's Strategic Risk Register
Community Impact	A full community impact assessment will be carried out

Assessment	following Cabinet's consideration of this report.
Health and safety Implications	Failure to act on the climate emergency would be damaging to the health and safety of all who work and live in the Borough. Action is required to mitigate the impact of our changing climate and day to day weather – flooding, drought, excessive temperatures and so on. There would also be severe impacts on air quality, ecological well-being and overall quality of life
Monitoring Officer/ S.151 Officer Comments	<b>Monitoring Officer</b>  To be added for Cabinet report  <b>S151 Officer</b>  To be added for Cabinet report
Consultees:	Association of Public Service Excellence Corporate Management Team Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee 29/9/20
Background papers:	Cabinet Report Climate Change Emergency Strategy and Action plan 19/5/20, and 23/6/20
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	CO2 Carbon Dioxide APSE Association for Public Service Excellence HRA Housing Revenue Account CSG Clean Safe and Green MTFS Medium Term Financial Strategy EPC Energy Performance Certificate PV Solar Photovoltaics BREEAM Building Research Establishment Environmental Assessment Method PSH Private Sector Housing PRS Private Rented Sector HMO House in Multiple Occupation CAVAT Capital Asset Valuation of Amenity Trees AQAP Air Quality Action Plan AQMA Air Quality Management Area LDS Local Development Scheme (Local Plan) LGA Local Government Association DCN District Council Network

## 1. Background

- 1.1 Cabinet received and approved a report on the draft strategy and action plan on 23 June following consideration by the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Housing and Community Overview and Scrutiny Committee. This confirmed the Council's commitment to achieving net zero carbon for the Scope 1 and 2 emissions resulting from its service delivery and operations by the end of 2030. It also agreed a net zero position on the Scope 3 emissions arising from the 10,250 Council homes it provides by 2050 recognising that given current budgets, financial restrictions and the absence at this point of reliable and affordable alternatives to gas this will be a longer process.

1.2 This report sets out the progress made to date and the shorter term actions that officers will be taking along with the preparation for the implementation of the overall action plan. The Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee is requested to consider this report and forward its comments on to Cabinet for consideration at its meeting on 20 October. It is important to note that the intention is to deliver many of these changes across every service and that the delivery will be through the service plans and via the MTFs and annual budgeting process. There will be cross service actions and corporate ambitions that will also be delivered. Tackling the climate emergency is everyone's business and must not be seen as an 'add on'. Whilst there will be some 'quick wins' much of the work will be medium and longer term where progress will inevitably be more gradual.

1.3 This report sets out:

- The officer arrangements for bringing forward the actions required
- Continued work on finalising the Strategy and Action Plan (though the latter will be continuously reviewed and updated)
- Progress made on the key areas to date and future actions being progressed
- Key actions that are of a more immediate nature.

#### **1.4 Key actions required and being followed up**

- It is recommended that tackling the Climate Change Emergency should be added to the Council's other five corporate priorities but that it be recognised that it will be delivered across the whole Council and involve all services rather than a stand-alone matter;
- It is essential that the data collection processes are adapted and enhanced to be fit for the new purposes of delivering on the climate emergency;
- Work is being completed on the initial Action Plan, which will be to the point and effective, and embarking on the work associated with its delivery;
- Develop a programme of energy efficiency works in relation to its General Fund buildings, part funded by Salix or other available grant, that will deliver reduced emissions and capture savings on the running costs of the Council's buildings;
- Developing a clear approach to carbon offsetting – the baseline work by APSE Energy confirmed that some level of offsetting will be necessary to achieve zero carbon by 2030. This could be delivered in a variety of ways which may include substantial tree planting in the Borough or, more immediately, through embarking on and investing in a renewable energy project of commercial size that would put the Council in a workable and commanding position regarding offsetting, as well as earning it vital income into the future;
- Put in place community arrangements to start moving the outward facing part of the climate emergency declaration forwards i.e. the persuasion of the partners representing the local community to act likewise
- Continuing to work with the County Council, and other key partners, for a pan Hertfordshire approach to climate change and the climate emergency

## **2. Progress Report**

### **2.1 Updated Strategy Paper**

We are currently working with an APSE consultant to provide an updated strategy paper which will suggest further actions that will help guide us to reach the commitments laid out in the Climate Emergency declaration. This strategy work is in progress and is expected to be completed in the next few weeks.

### **2.2 Data collection and analysis**

Having received the carbon footprint report from APSE energy it is crucial that the Council commit to overhauling the data collection processes in place in the Council and ensuring that these are fit for the new purposes of delivering on the climate emergency. This is vital to monitor the impact on the interventions that the Council implements through its Climate emergency work and to assist in the process of assessing the options most likely to deliver the best results. Whilst the Council does collect data required for ISO14001 it needs a more thorough and sophisticated process of monitoring going forward. It is only through thorough data collection and analysis that assurance can be made on the progress made. This will need to extend to the emissions that are produced by our contractors.

This will require services to ensure that this data is required in new contracts and in areas where there are any gaps in data collection in our own services. This will require an increase in staff resource working to the Climate Emergency Officer for the next financial year 2021/22.

### **2.3 Sustainability Impact Assessment development**

A Sustainability Impact Assessment (SIA) document is currently being drafted, which will ultimately be implemented into existing project development policy and in all reports to Cabinet. The SIA will explore how a proposed project will have an impact on the environment and use a criteria to give a rating. The report will explore elements such as carbon emissions and the affect this will have on our net-zero targets. All SIAs will need to be sent for internal approval before the project can be approved to progress. It might be that a project will need to reconsider a greener alternative to reduce its impact on the environment before it is given approval.

This method is currently already in use by many other local authorities.

Once the SIA has been developed throughout Quarter 3, there will be a soft launch alongside both staff and member training which will take place in Quarter 4. Feedback will be collated and any adjustments that need to be made will be taken into account with the expectation that a finalised SIA would be ready for use ready by Quarter 1 2021/22.

## 2.4 Member and Officer Climate Emergency Training

A full day of Carbon Literacy Training will be taking place for the certain staff who are heavily involved in climate change work, such as chairs and vice-chairs of the Climate Emergency sub-groups and other key staff who will be selected by the Assistant Directors.

Half day training courses on the Climate Emergency and Dacorum's strategy will be created and delivered by the new Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme Lead Officer. These will be available for other key members of staff to be determined by Assistant Directors and Group Managers and also available for Members. This training will be delivered in Quarter 4. We will aim to run internal training concurrently with SIA training.

## 2.5 Officer Climate Groups

The main actions to combat the Climate Emergency will take place across the Council but will have a focus on the areas which either have the greatest carbon emissions outputs to reduce or the greatest potential to deliver a more sustainable future. With this in mind, one core climate group, four sub-groups and a co-ordinating group have been established:

- **Housing and Built Assets**  
This will incorporate new build Council Homes, action to improve the energy efficiency and carbon output from our existing Council Homes, and similar improvements to our General Fund built assets.
- **Planning**  
This will focus on the Climate Change Mitigation requirements of new development through the Local Plan. It will also take responsibility for biodiversity, green energy and environmental requirements in the Local Plan.
- **Environmental Services**  
Work here will be split between the Waste and the biodiversity/land management elements.
- **Community and Communications**  
This will involve a transformation of our web facility on Climate Emergency and Sustainability, the running of any campaigns and initiatives, as well as achieving community outreach with interested groups and residents.

The co-ordinating group will meet a week before the meeting of the Core Group and will be made up of the Chairs of the sub-groups, the Climate Emergency Officer and the Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration. It is important to stress that while the four sub-groups will pursue their action plan there are interconnections between all of these actions not least in terms of timing and finance.

All of the sub-groups have been established and had their first meetings with actions already getting underway.

## 3. Housing and Built Assets

3.1 In Housing **Property and Place** are exploring/considering actions in relation to carbon reductions to help the climate emergency objectives:

- Health Check of our current stock condition data (our asset management data base), potential new survey required which can be tailored to suit our need to encompass energy, renewables and landscaping measures on the tenure,
- Purchase software (IT system) to map Energy Performance Certificate data and energy consumption – options are being considered from the Building Research Establishment and the Energy Savings Trust. This in turn will give us options on ways to best tackle carbon reductions with a number of said interventions with envisaged capital cost, whilst considering future energy bills to the end users, this is really exciting stuff
- Identifying a small pilot scheme to monitor the impact of carbon reduction measures with a supplier, this is at its infancy,
- Formally commissioning the architectural and Mechanical and Engineering Design work for the potential expansion of the existing bio mass boiler system at Summer Court to extend over the road to the flats on Church Street, basically this will be a phase two of that original refurbishment project,
- Properties which were down for external cladding refurbishment over the next 18 months will now be considered for external wall insulation, new roofs (possible solar inclusion) and windows with enhanced ventilation,
- Consideration following an options appraisal on a *re-think* refurbishment solution to large complexes of flats which have numerous problems to include:
  - Carbon reduction measures
  - Fuel poverty
  - Communal heating source
  - Substructure refurb, various elements
  - Measures to tackle anti-social behaviour
  - Landscaping options
- Currently exploring a trial estate for a domestic landscaping survey on trees within HRA tenure

3.2 **Energy grant applications:**

Two have been made - the first is for financial support, the second for support on effective options.

The Green Homes Grant Local Authorities Delivery Scheme (GHG LAD). The grants are available for upgrading lower EPC rated properties, those in E, F, and G bandings and are targeted at households with incomes below £30K. The funding is available capped at £5K per property, and with a minimum anticipated expenditure of the grant funding or £500K, which has to be spent by 31 March 2020. DBC have applied as part of a consortium bid with Watford and hope to secure £50K funding towards the external wall insulation scheme, which is being delivered this year.

The second is the Expression of Interest for Public Sector Estate – Energy Efficiency and Decarbonisation Support, Greater South East Energy Hub.

The Greater South East Hub is arranging for support and modelling tools to be made available on a prioritised basis to help public sector organisations identify energy efficiency/clean heat/renewable generation measures across their own estate. The Energy Hub aims to support public sector organisations to be 'bid ready' to access the UK government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Fund in due course. The expression of interest is focused on Council owned community buildings, a waste depot and General Fund housing being used for Temporary Accommodation. We have also included a number of HRA sheltered schemes which may possibly be eligible due to the nature of the needs of the households living there.

The Council has recently become a member of the UK Green Building Council which is an industry led network committed to radically improve the sustainability of the built environment.

### **3.3 Housing Development**

The Council's new build programme already ensures a high level of energy efficiency is achieved above the former Sustainable Housing Code Level 4. We have developed to Passivhaus standard on one scheme and the focus is on developing a revised standard which will be considerably higher than Code level 4 and potentially higher than the proposed Future Homes Standard. As with all such improvements in standards there will be a balance between the ideal standard and that which can be reasonably afforded.

### **3.4 New Build Climate Change Action Plan**

The current work programme includes the following actions:

- A review of previous projects and capture of lessons learnt.
- Capture benefits / performance of our current schemes.
- Establish a minimum DBC standard for new builds going forward with the aim of exceeding this where practicable.
- Review our Design Guide and Employers Requirement to identify possible improvements including materials specified. This will include advantages in CO2 reductions in the manufacturing and completion of homes produced via off site manufacturing.
- A Review and update of the current Energy & Sustainability Strategy
- Update the Project Management Handbook to the improved requirements are embedded
- Review BREEAM standard to see how this can best be adopted
- Track improvements coming through Building Regulations and revise requirements accordingly
- Resolve the issue of a lack of interest by private EV operators in being prepared to manage charging points for flatted developments due to the lack of commercial return given the very low number of social housing tenants with electric vehicles. We already install the capacity to introduce charging points in such developments and provide charging facilities in houses with off road parking.
- Understand how we capture evidence of in use performance and resident experience / awareness and, where non gas based heating solutions are used such as Air/Ground source heat pumps, to provide Training and support to tenants to maximise the potential.



#### 4. Strategic Planning and Environment

- 4.1 This work stream is largely focused on the Local Plan which is nearing its completion for public consultation. The Local Plan is key to being able to ensure that future development is a low carbon as it can be and promotes energy and resource efficiency. The aims within the plan are ambitious and once approved will make a big impact on reducing the Borough's carbon footprint.
- 4.2 The Local Plan is bound by the requirements of Planning Law and government guidance which attempts to create a balance between achieving a net zero carbon UK by 2050 and developer viability, the latter causing a potential restriction the levels of carbon efficiency to be required. There are a number of parallel developments in government policy which will have a bearing on how far we can increase the standards above the current levels specifically the Future Homes Standard. This will be delivered as a Building Control requirements at levels considerably higher than the old Code Level 4 and should be in force relatively quickly. One proposal in the Future Homes Standard is to prevent Local Planning Authorities from imposing higher requirements than the new standard through their Local Plans. As this seems contrary to national target of zero carbon by 2050 it is hoped that MHCLG drop this and allow the highest energy efficiency standards and low/zero carbon development to be incorporated into Local Plans and ongoing development management.
- 4.3 The government has also issued a Planning White Paper which will recommend major changes to the planning system which may add further complications to the completion of the Local Plan.
- 4.4 In view of this uncertainty, and to provide additional detail to the Council's ongoing Local Plan, we will produce a Supplementary Planning Document specifically on Climate Emergency Mitigation where the standards can be more specific and to the maximum permitted in reducing carbon emissions both in the construction and ongoing habitation.

#### 5. Current position of Climate Change and Emergency mitigation in the draft Local Plan

- 5.1 Set out below in Table One are the key elements of the future planning position in the Local Plan which, as indicated, will be augmented by a Supplementary Planning Document where greater detail can be included.

5.2 Table One

<b>Climate change policy</b>	<b>Purpose</b>	<b>Comments/action</b>
SP Climate Change Mitigation	Overarching strategic policy setting out range of measures in the Plan that contribute to climate change and emissions reductions for new development up to 2030 and net zero from 2030	Carbon emission targets may be superseded by Future Homes Standard and White Paper 2025 requirements

Sustainable Design and Construction	Requirement for majors to submit sustainability statement demonstrating that the Plan's mitigation and adaptation principles have been satisfied. For non-res, this is waived for BREEAM excellent including ongoing commitment to BREEAM certification	To be expanded within Climate Change and Sustainability SPD
Energy and Carbon Emissions Reductions in New Development	Submit evidence that energy efficiency standards in new development up to 2030 are as a minimum 19% below target plus major residential to contribute towards a further 20%, and non-residential BREEAM excellent, and support for retrofitting	May be superseded by Future Homes Standard and White Paper 2025 requirements
Low carbon community heat and energy networks	Major proposals to either create a site-wide community heat or energy network or connect to an existing decentralised network (or better alternative)  We have also commissioned an energy mapping study by BEIS, which shows areas of high energy usage which could benefit from district heating or other decarbonisation measures	Requires further and up to date evidence, including full range of electricity generation options and battery storage
Stand-alone Renewable or Low Carbon Energy	Protects AONB, landscape, wildlife and residential amenity from impact of these measures and ensure community led schemes genuinely benefit communities	Further guidance to follow within Climate Change and Sustainability SPD
Carbon offsetting	Development to contribute to carbon off-setting fund if it can't meet the Plans greenhouse gas reduction requirements, other schemes that reduce greenhouse gas emissions may be accepted, subject to meeting criteria.	Further guidance on collection and operation of carbon off-set fund to be provided

5.3 Climate Change mitigation in the draft Local Plan is also supported by policies in

- Environment and biodiversity
- Healthy communities
- Transport
- Delivering great places (design and heritage)

5.4 In addition the following initiatives are being developed:

- Working on a Business Plan for the 'Beryl Bike' scheme – an initiative to provide bicycle and E bicycle options to travel from Hemel Station to Maylands to reduce reliance on cars - following instruction from CMT to look at longer term funding (rather than a 12 month pilot)
- Continue working with the Go Travel sustainable transport work for the Maylands area
- Finalised a feasibility study for Working Place Parking Levy to help provide long term funding for sustainable transport which Members will be able to consider in due course
- Completed work on sustainable transport for Tring and Berkhamsted to support the Infrastructure Delivery Plan.
- Commissioned the same work for Hemel Hempstead
- The Herts Growth Board bid includes bids for funding for feasibility on local energy production and improved connectivity within Hemel Garden Communities

## **6. Communications and Community**

6.1 Engaging with the community will be an imperative part of the Climate Emergency work in order to educate, encourage and enable our residents as well as local organisations and businesses to reduce their impact on the environment. A range of different projects, activities and events will be required in order to help reduce the carbon emissions of the borough which are outside of Dacorum's control.

6.2 A comprehensive communications strategy will be created once Dacorum's Climate Emergency Strategy and Action plan has been finalised though preparatory work has already started. Some of these activities, such as marketing campaigns will need to be in response to external triggers and timelines – for example, the Green Homes Grant scheme which has been recently launched by central Government. Other activities can work alongside our own strategies and plans – such as tree planting events.

6.3 Set out below are some of the projects we propose that we have been, or will be, working on in the coming months.

### **6.3.1 Learning from Lockdown – Sustainability Survey**

We have been running a short online sustainability survey throughout July and August to understand how lockdown has affected people's habits, hobbies and daily routines. The aim is to identify how DBC can embrace any positive changes that could help to benefit the environment as well as our communities. The results of this survey – which attracted nearly 1500 responders - will be made available by the end of September 2020 and will be passed on to teams internally that will be able to make use of this information to help guide their

future work in the community. The main findings are still being analysed but will be made available in the next few weeks.

### 6.3.2 Energy Efficiency Campaigns

The intention here is to make it easier for residents to be aware of and take advantage of the schemes which are already available, and those which follow. The level of Council involvement will depend on the aims and rules of the schemes. For most it will be information provision, for others there may be the need for more direct advice and where the Council itself is eligible for financial support we will evaluate then make use of it as effectively as we can. Existing examples include:

- **Green Homes Grant voucher scheme.**
  - This [scheme](#) allows home-owners and landlords to claim up to £5000 (or £10,000 for low-income homes) of vouchers for energy efficiency improvements in their homes. The vouchers need to be used by March 2021.
- **ECO Scheme**
  - This [scheme](#) allows certain eligible residents to be able to have efficiency improvements in their homes. There is no end date.
  - Generic and targeted marketing campaigns aimed at both residents and landlords will be rolled out highlighting both schemes throughout Autumn and Winter 2020.
  - Loaning out **thermal cameras** to residents (*scheme to be approved and established. E.g. <https://sustainablestalbans.org/thermal-imaging/>*)

### 6.3.3 Direct Council involvement

- **Green Community Grants**

It is proposed that £10,000 worth of community grant funding will be made available (from the £75,000 budget for 2020/21) to environmental groups (or groups proposing an initiative with a clear Climate Change mitigation impact) within Dacorum before March 2021. If judged to be successful this could be repeated in subsequent years budget allowing. A maximum of £2000 will be awarded per group.

  - This scheme is to be developed and launched in Q3 with the funding being provided in Q4.
  - If it continues it is proposed that this becomes a regular grant with several application rounds throughout the year Please note this is not the same scheme as the existing community grants that are available.
- **Climate Emergency - Public Consultation**

The public are more likely to be engaged in a strategy that they have been able to give feedback into. Once Dacorum's Climate Emergency Strategy and Action plan has been finalised we would like to open up a public consultation and potentially host an online or physical event in order to get feedback help shape potential actions. Attendees could be a mix of residents, businesses, organisations, councillors and council staff in a format aimed at asking the group to give views on ways to make proposed initiatives to be best delivered. It would not be a standing group

and it would be clear that this was to improve delivery and not to make the final decisions on what the Council will do – that is for Members to decide. It could include:

- Producing a short marketing and information video in order to help promote the consultation and increase engagement available on the Council's website for any individuals or groups who may be interested.
- Delivering a presentation on the feedback from this as part of the consultation event referred to above. The information will be used to help guide future initiatives and campaigns.
- **Establish a “Dacorum’s Climate Action Network” (DacorumCAN)**  
Such a network would encourage individuals and members of various environmental community groups to work together to share experiences and best practice, have common goals, avoid repetition of effort and act as a volunteer hub.
  - Those who wish to be involved could sign up to a mailing list so that we can contact them regarding future initiatives, projects, activities and events.
- **Annual Climate Emergency evening:**
  - Yearly face-to-face element of DacorumCAN.
  - Opportunity to give a presentation to attendees updating on what has been achieved in the past year by DBC and what is on the agenda for the year ahead
  - Other key community groups can give updates on what they have done – share best practise and experiences.
  - Awards ceremony for Green Community Grant
  - Networking opportunity for local groups
  - Guest speakers and presentations
- **Training**  
Climate Emergency training will be made available to staff and members before the end of March 2021.
- **Environmental events and training**
  - Events such as Community Tree Planting, Community Talks and Training, Clothes Swaps, Repair Cafés, Educational film nights can be planned and delivered once it is safe to do so without the threat of COVID-19 having an impact.
  - Research the potential of environmental courses - potentially subsidised by DBC – could be delivered as webinars or physically.
- **Annual Surveys**  
In order to capture information on the behaviour of our residents, a short annual survey would help us monitor and report on community progress. To facilitate this we could:
  - Make available a quick carbon footprint monitoring tool (we could partner with a company that has one of these designed already – e.g. Leeds partnered with WWF to have access to their [footprint](#)



- ❖ Repair centres
- ❖ Biodiversity strategy spots
- Providing access and an explanation of our **Biodiversity strategy** and all other green initiatives such as:
  - ❖ How this relates to grass cutting – next year have signs up in the areas we are not cutting as regularly to enable more wildflowers to grow and native insects, reptiles and small mammals to benefit and so that residents understand that they are part of a biodiversity plan and that their area has not been ‘forgotten’ (or we couldn’t be bothered to cut the grass).
  - ❖ Actions to protect endangered species such as ‘Bug hotels’, and how to make gardens more friendly towards bees and hedgehogs for example
- How to book a **Community Climate Emergency Talk**
- **Green Community Grants** and other available funding
  - ❖ E.g. <https://www.cornwall.gov.uk/environment-and-planning/grow-nature/funding/>
- o In 2021/22 – create and launch a marketing campaign to communicate the Climate Emergency action plan and direct residents to our new website. Have informative videos, information packs to send to each resident, presentations to deliver to community groups.

## 7. Clean Safe and Green

### 7.1 Tree Planting

In order to increase the number of trees for biodiversity purposes and to act as a carbon sink, 4200 trees are to be planted by the Council over the next 5 years. Of these, 1170 are to be planted throughout this autumn and winter. This will include 45 large trees, 210 smaller sized trees and 915 whips for mass planting – subject to supplier availability.

Due to COVID-19 restrictions the decision has been made not to plant whips as a community event this year.

- The number of fruiting trees being planted across the borough is increasing, except in highway locations. It is envisaged that the 210 smaller sized trees being planted this year will in the majority be fruit or nut species.
- The above planting numbers are in addition to our annual street tree planting programme, which averages about 70 specimens per year.
- Additional tree planting on DBC land opposite the new cemetery at Bunkers Park has also been agreed and 26 trees will be planted there this autumn.
- Trees for following years will be procured when stock becomes available.
- During the coming 5 year period, specific areas of Bunkers Park will be allowed to re-wild (develop naturally using existing seed within the soil), so increasing tree cover on that site. An informal orchard is planned within the existing Bunkers Park site which could potentially be made formal with a volunteer group helping to manage this.

Trees and Woodlands Officers are also working with Herts County Council and Herts Tree Officers to develop a list of tree species that are suited to this region and its changing climate, as well as tackling new pests and diseases in a co-ordinated, cost effective way.

Work on the overall carbon dioxide reduction and carbon sequestration impact of trees in the Borough will require an external study. Trees and Woodlands are investigating an external provision of tree canopy cover survey that can provide data for carbon storage, sequestration, etc.

A tree survey methodology, i-Tree is being investigated by the Trees and Woodlands Officers for suitability. Trees and Woodlands are liaising with local authorities across Herts about the provision of such surveys. Welwyn Hatfield have already had an i-Tree survey carried out, HCC are looking at running the same project.

Trees and Woodlands are developing a tree survey project with DBC Housing team for gardens within tenanted control, to evaluate the amenity benefit of this tree stock to DBC and also understand its financial benefit and liability. Following the completion of this survey, data could be shared with i-Tree.

## 7.2 CSG Summary of current projects and progress:

1. Tree planting project 5-year plan. This will start in the autumn 2020, and will involve the planting of 500 smaller woodland trees as well as 15 bigger specimen trees. This will take place within Gadebridge Park between Galley Hill Road and Gadebridge Lane (see above).

Once this phase of the project is completed, we will be looking to plant 1000 trees per year in Bunkers Park in the Long Saunders Field.

2. In addition to the above, we will also be planting number of tree as one off schemes this year. This will be a mixture of woodland saplings and specimen trees. This is broken down as follows:
  - Keens Field 400 saplings and 20 specimen.
  - Lime walk 210 Saplings.
  - Bennetts End 30 specimen.
3. Northend Orchard - We are also looking at the potential to a form friends/community group for the Northend Orchard Site.

This Orchard site was developed by CSG working with Housing a few years back with the idea that tenants in the area would look after it with CSG and Housing support. Unfortunately, there was no up take from the local tenants at the time. As a result, CSG now has to pick up on the maintenance, at a cost to housing.

Hopefully, with there being more emphasis on the environment now, there will be more interest this time round, and a group could be formed as a pilot. This would be used as a blue print for further Orchards projects across the Borough. The first step is to visit the site with the Climate Emergency Officer and assess its suitability.



4. Allotments – CSG is working with the Estates Team in support of a project to clear the allotment site at Windmill Road, which has become overgrown with only two sites being active. The Estates team is leading this project. If this project is successful, the scheme will be rolled out to other allotment sites across the Borough, which have low occupancy, and are overgrown.
5. Grass cutting of verges – CSG leave a number of verges uncut through the summer months to promote natural wild meadow type growth and thereby increasing Biodiversity, as well as creating habitats for insect and small mammals. These all have to be cut back and the end of the season and there is insufficient capacity at this moment to expand the programme. CSG has therefore held off on creating any more such areas until such time as the current areas can be mapped so as to determine how much is being left and what the costs are to cut and collect these areas. To be able to increase the number of area, which are left uncut, CSG will require additional equipment and the resources to do this. Once the mapping has been completed, we will have a better idea of what this additional resource will be and what the costs will be. This can then be considered as part of the annual budget process.
6. Wildflower Areas - In addition to the above, a number of Wildflower areas have been created within our Open Spaces in addition to those, which already exist. These are areas, which are have left to grow through the summer. In addition, they are also actively planted up with native perennials or over seeded.

Once again, these types of areas have to have an annual cut and collect which as mentioned above is an issue from a resource capacity. We are holding off doing any more until we have clearer picture of what resources are required if more area are to be created, and the costs.

7. Another project is a joint scheme with the Butterfly Association. A pilot of this scheme has been undertaken already at Keens Fields, which has been very successful with a number of Butterfly Species being found. Discussions are now taking place with the Butterfly Association and looking at rolling this out and creating more such habitats for Butterfly's within the Borough. A number of 'Bee friendly' areas have been created, and work with the Bee Society continues with bee breeding program for endangered Bees species.

Waste Services Current and future potential projects:

8. Flats Food Waste project. Waste Services is currently rolling out the additional recycling service to all flats for the occupiers to recycle their food waste, which they could not do previously.

Waste services has invested in a dedicated vehicle for this, and crew. So far, this has been very well received, with a very positive uptake from residents in the flats. To date 90% of all flats have been completed with the remainder due to be completed this month.

## **8. Energy Procurement**

8.1 The Council have signed up for the supply of 'renewable energy' via Renewable Energy Guarantees of Origin (REGO) backed electricity and Renewable Gas Guarantees of Origin (RGGO) backed gas. These schemes are available to the Council through the supply contracts that the Council have with Npower for the supply of electricity and with Total Gas & Power for the supply of gas. The REGO scheme is administered by Ofgem and the RGGO scheme is administered by the Green Gas Certification Scheme. We initially looked at purchasing 'renewable energy' for all of the Council's sites, but this would increase the expenditure for the Council by a six figure sum, so a decision was made to just purchase 'renewable energy' for the following four main sites:

- The Forum
- Berkhamsted Civic Centre
- Victoria Hall
- Cupid Green Depot

8.3 The cost of the 'renewable energy' is based upon the usage per site and by using last year's usage it is expected to cost an additional £2,500 for electricity and £11,500 for gas. The schemes do not guarantee that you will be provided with 100% renewable energy, but they do issue out certificates for the generation of eligible 'renewable energy' (one REGO certificate per megawatt hour for electricity and one RGGO certificate per kilowatt hour of gas) and evidence that this element of your supply has been generated from a renewable source.

### **8.4 Electricity**

Many organisations are keen to demonstrate sustainable credentials by purchasing 'renewable energy'. But, if you do not generate yourself or have a direct contract for your supply with a renewable generator, a simpler way is to match the power you consume with the equivalent volume of renewable power supplied to the grid. From October 2020, Npower will arrange this on behalf of the Council by securing REGO certificates (UK generated) for the equivalent electricity volume the Council consume.

Npower will match the equivalent number of REGO certificates that are valid within a Fuel Mix Disclosure period (Apr-Mar) to our consumption that also falls within that same period. The Council are likely to use 3,500 MW/H of electricity over the 4 sites. Most REGOs come from wind farms or solar parks, others from hydroelectric sources (that use water to produce electricity). The REGO scheme provides transparency to consumers about the proportion of electricity that suppliers source from renewable generation rather than the generation from fossil fuels. Further information is available at the following website <https://www.ofgem.gov.uk/environmental-programmes/rego/about-rego-scheme>

### **8.5 Gas**

From October 2020 Total Gas & Power will provide RGGO certificates from UK-based renewable generation ranging from anaerobic digestion to biomass plants. The Council are likely to use 1,350 MW/H of gas over the 4 sites.

What's the difference between green gas and natural gas?

It's the way they're made. Natural gas comes from material that decomposed naturally millions of years ago, while green gas comes from material that's been produced and decomposed more recently. Green gas can renew itself quickly, over and over again, and unlike natural gas, it will never run out. Since it doesn't add more CO<sub>2</sub> to the earth's atmosphere it is a carbon neutral option. When a gas consumer buys an RGGO they are matching the gas that they have withdrawn from a Distribution Network to a unit of green gas that was produced and injected into the same network. Further information is available at the following website <https://www.greengas.org.uk/certificates>