



Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environment overview and Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	23 March 2021
Part:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Climate and Biodiversity Emergency Progress Update
Contact:	Councillor Andrew Williams, Leader of the Council and Portfolio Holder for Corporate and Contracted Services Author/Responsible Officer – Mark Gaynor, Corporate Director Housing and Regeneration
Purpose of report:	The purpose of this report is to provide an update on the progress of the Council's work to tackle the climate and biodiversity emergency and to report the feedback from the Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee.
Period for post policy/project review	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:	The Council's Climate Change Strategy and Action Plan will help to support all 5 corporate objectives: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <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; • <i>Community Capacity:</i> e.g. provide a framework for local communities to be better informed and involved in climate emergency mitigation; • <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 (CO2)

	<p>emissions the homes would produce;</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • <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; • <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. • <i>Climate and Ecological Emergency</i>: the strategy and action plan is focused on meeting the Council's pledge to be zero carbon on its own emissions by 2030 for Scopes 1 and 2, and 2050 for Scope 3
<p>Implications:</p> <p>'Value for money' implications¹</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, the new post of Climate Change Emergency Technical Officer and a further £100,000 available for 2021/22 together with the remaining 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 CO₂ and other greenhouse emissions</p>
Risk implications	A Risk Assessment will be completed and added to the Council's Strategic Risk Register
Community Impact Assessment	A full community impact assessment will be carried out following Cabinet's consideration of this report.
Health and safety Implications	Failure to act on the climate and biodiversity 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
Consultees:	Association of Public Service Excellence

	Corporate Management Team
Background papers:	Cabinet Report Climate Change Emergency Strategy and Action plan 19/5/20, and 23/6/20, 20/10/20
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 20 October 2020. 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 its cost, current budgets, financial restrictions and the absence at this point of reliable and affordable alternatives to gas this will be a longer process.

2 International and National context

2.1 United Nations

Secretary-General António Guterres on December 12 2020 delivered a speech at the United Nations Climate Ambition Summit 2020 taking place virtually with world leaders invited to make pre-recorded statements outlining their new and ambitious commitments.

World leaders should declare a "[climate emergency](#)" in their countries to spur action to avoid catastrophic global warming, UN Secretary-General Antonio Guterres said in opening remarks at a climate summit on Saturday. On the fifth anniversary of the [2015 Paris Agreement](#), more than 70 world leaders are due to address the one-day virtual meeting in the hope of galvanizing countries into stricter actions on global warming emissions.

Guterres said that current commitments across the globe did not go "far from enough" to limit temperature rises. "Can anybody still deny that we are facing a dramatic emergency?" Guterres said. "That is why today, I call on all leaders

worldwide to declare a State of Climate Emergency in their countries until carbon neutrality is reached."

"So far, the members of the G20 are spending 50% more in their stimulus and rescue packages on sectors linked to fossil fuel production and consumption, than on low-carbon energy," Guterres said. "This is unacceptable. The trillions of dollars needed for COVID recovery is money that we are borrowing from future generations," he said. "We cannot use these resources to lock in policies that burden future generations with a mountain of debt on a broken planet," he added.

China and India vowed to advance their commitment to lower carbon pollution at the summit. President Xi Jinping was one of the first leaders to address the virtual conference and he said China will boost its installed capacity of wind and solar power to more than 1,200 gigawatts over the next decade. Xi also said China will increase its share of non-fossil fuels in primary energy consumption to around 25% during the same period.

2.2 European Union

European Union leaders meeting in Brussels on 10 December 2020 agreed to make the currently 27-member bloc carbon neutral by 2050. This equates to a commitment to reduce greenhouse gas emissions in the next decade by 55% in order to be able to achieve zero carbon by 2050.

The European Green Deal includes:

- A €100bn Just Transition Mechanism to help countries still heavily dependent on fossil fuels and "carbon-intensive processes" to move to renewable energy sources
- Proposals to reduce greenhouse gas emissions to 50% of 1990 levels or even lower by 2030 - instead of the current target of a 40% cut
- A law that would set the EU "on to an irreversible path to climate neutrality" by 2050
- A plan to promote a more circular economy - a system designed to eliminate waste - that would address more sustainable products as well as a "farm to fork" strategy to improve the sustainability of food production and distribution

3 United Kingdom – The Ten Point Plan for a Green Industrial Revolution

Of more direct importance is the government's new plan for carbon reduction and promotion of sustainability and associated business opportunities. There is a link below for the full document. The plan has been broadly welcomed though the level of investment committed at £12B is felt to be a start only and not adequate to deliver the promises made in the plan. Set out in Appendix One is the summary set out in the report. The key features are set out below:

1 Offshore wind

Producing enough offshore wind to power every home and supporting up to 60,000 related jobs.

2 Hydrogen

Working with industry to aim to generate 5GW of low carbon hydrogen production capacity by 2030 for industry, transport, power and homes.

3 Nuclear

Advancing nuclear as a clean energy source and developing the next generation of small and advanced reactors.

4 Electric Vehicles

A ban on new cars and vans powered wholly by petrol and diesel being sold in the UK from 2030 and an acceleration of the infrastructure required to transition to electric vehicles.

5 Public Transport

Making cycling and walking more attractive ways to travel and investing in zero-emissions public transport.

6 Greener maritime

Supporting maritime and airline industries to become greener through research projects for zero-emission planes and ships.

7 Homes and public buildings

Making UK homes, schools and hospitals greener and more energy efficient, including a target to install 600,000 heat pumps every year by 2028.

8 Carbon capture

Becoming a world-leader in technology to capture and store harmful emissions away from the atmosphere, with a target to remove 10MT of carbon dioxide by 2030.

9 Nature

Protecting and restoring the UK's natural environment, including by planting 30,000 hectares of trees every year.

10 Innovation and Finance

Developing the technologies needed to turn the UK into the world's number one centre for green technology and finance, creating the foundations for years of economic growth.

Unfortunately there was very little new investment for tackling the climate emergency announced in the recent budget which seems like an opportunity missed.

4 Officer Climate Groups: Progress Report

4.1 Housing and Built assets

4.1.1 New Build

Current work includes:

- Reviewing previous projects and capture lessons learnt.

- Capturing benefits / performance of our current schemes. See updates on Bingham Mews and Coniston Road below
- Work to establish a DBC standard for new builds going forward. - this includes delivering projects at a higher performance level than Building Regulations and targeting Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) B.
- Reviewing our Design Guide and Employers Requirement to identify possible improvements including materials specified.
- Reviewing current Energy & Sustainability Strategy with a view to update it to reflect the increase in sustainability required and reviewing the Project Management Handbook to further embed carbon reduction and sustainability.

Improvements coming through Building Regulations are tracked – we are currently reviewing the forthcoming changes to Part L of the Building Regulations (Conservation of Fuel and Power) and the outcome of the second consultation of the Future Homes Standard.

Reviewing Building Research Establishment Environmental assessment Method (BREEAM) standard to see how we can adopt. .Improvements coming through Building Regulations are tracked – we are currently reviewing the forthcoming changes to Part L of the Building Regulations (Conservation of Fuel and Power) and the outcome of the second consultation of the Future Homes Standard.



Built by our team, the homes back onto open fields and are designed to c New residents have recently moved into a small development of three two-bedroom homes for social rent in West Dene, Gaddesden Row designed to complement the neighbouring properties. They are also highly energy efficient - these super-insulated homes come with photovoltaic panels and air source heat pumps to deliver an off-gas heating system using renewable energy.



4.1.1a Coniston Road development update

Work has started on this village development of ten 2-bedroom and 3-bedroom homes, including a fully compliant wheelchair house, all for social rent in Kings Langley.

Project managed by our team, the homes back onto open fields and are designed to complement the neighbouring council properties to the side. They are also energy efficient - these highly-insulated homes come with photovoltaic panels and increased insulation to the fabric above the current building regulation requirements, in addition each home will have an external 32amp power supply to the front or side of the house to allow the connection of up to 7kw wall chargers for an electric vehicle.

Our contractor, Bugler Developments Ltd is registered with the Considerate Contractors Scheme and provides a monthly newsletter to the surrounding residents, keeping them updated on progress during the construction period.

The homes should be ready for letting in the summer of 2022.

4.1.2 Existing homes

4.1.2a Green Homes Grant Vouchers

Green Homes Grant vouchers can subsidise energy saving measures such as insulation and renewable energy technologies across all tenures of housing.

- We have responded to over 25 Green Homes Grant enquiries from private residents via email and telephone.
- We have promoted the Green Homes Grants scheme via social media, our website and the Dacorum Digest.
- Green Homes Grant vouchers will contribute to the cost of loft insulation in 50 council tenants' homes

4.1.2b Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery 1 and 2

The Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery funding is for local authorities to directly control the roll out of Green Homes Grants for low-income households across all tenures of housing.

- We applied for Green Home Grant Local Authority Delivery 1a funding as part of a consortium led by Watford Council. Unfortunately, the bid was not successful.

- Dacorum has been allocated approximately £0.4 million via the Green Homes Grant Local Authority Delivery Phase 2, which needs to be spent by December 2021.

4.1.2c Energy Company Obligation Funding

We support vulnerable private residents in applying for Energy Company Obligation funded measures such as boiler replacements and provide match funding where applicable via a Disabled Facilities Grant.

- In July 2020 we signed a Service Level Agreement with Yorkshire Energy Solutions. Since then, nine households have received heating repairs/replacement and/or insulation with works in progress at a further eight properties.
- In January 2021, we signed a Memorandum of Understanding with the National Energy Foundation, which will allow a network of installers to provide energy company funded grants and scale up the work being completed.

4.1.2d Social Housing Technical Assistance Pilot

The Social Housing Technical Assistance pilot, funded by the Greater South East Energy Hub, aims to create a detailed assessment of the current energy performance of Dacorum's Council Housing stock and make recommendations to set it on a path to net zero. Our application to take part in the Pilot was successful. The data is currently being analysed and report expected after 31 March 2021.

4.1.2e Home Energy Conservation Act Progress Report 2021

Every two years we are required to provide a progress report to the department of Business Energy and Industrial Strategy (BEIS) on the progress we have made under the Home Energy Conservation Act (1995). New guidance for local authorities was issued by BEIS in February and the next report will be required by 31 May 2021.

4.1.2f Low Carbon Skills Fund and Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme

The Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS) was launched in autumn 2020 and offered £1bn grant funding to decarbonise Public Sector buildings. In order to help access this funding, running alongside this there was also a Low Carbon Skills Fund (LCSF).

The LCSF essentially would pay for any survey work that needed doing which would then provide evidence to access the PSDS. We submitted an application for the LCSF which proposed the surveying of Cupid Green Depot and the near-by Grovehill/Woodhall Farm Adventure Playground. However, due to high demand we were unsuccessful in this round. The delayed response from the LCSF application consequently meant that there was no opportunity to apply for the PSDS.

4.1.2g Energy Saving Trust

Using housing data, the Energy Savings Trust (EST) are in the process of running a variety of scenarios in order to develop a Home Analytics Report and a Portfolio Energy Assessment Tool (PEAT). The data and reports supplied by

EST will provide a wide range of information for every household in the borough, such as the actual and predicted EPC ratings.

The PEAT scenarios can accurately forecast a range of outputs, for example;

- the work that is needed to raise each household's energy efficiency levels;
- how much the retrofit work is expected to cost per household;
- the EPC rating the household could achieve;
- how much it could reduce the household bills by;
- whether the property is likely to be suitable for solar panels;
- what the CO2 emission savings will be per household.

The final report, which is due by the end of March 2021 will present a stock overview of the carbon impact of the current building stock, including regional and national benchmarks. It will also provide a series of decarbonisation recommendations that Dacorum can use to work towards its EPC goals and carbon reduction targets.

This knowledge will be crucial not only to help plan future housing retrofit schemes but also to use as evidence when applying for government funding. Part of the work has been specifically tailored to fit with the government's Green Homes Grant eligibility criteria.

Using this data will also feed into the communications plan – as part of this we will work to target private households and landlords and signpost them to funding that will be able to support them make their homes more energy efficient.

4.1.2h Retrofitting

Planning and ultimately delivering net zero council housing will not, and currently cannot, happen quickly. There are various reasons for this:

- The scale of the challenge and the finance required to deliver
- The absence of affordable alternative energy sources that don't at this point have a reliability on fossil fuels
- The lack of capacity in the construction sector to deliver at scale existing alternatives such as heat pumps (delivery nationally in 2020 was 35,673 homes). At this rate it would take 85 years to deliver on to every home in the UK.
- The expectation, and need, of significant technical advances in alternative energy provision such as hydrogen, continued greening of the grid and so on. This will take time

Consequently, the approach we are taking is referred to as 'fabric first'. Making homes more energy efficient and fitting additional changes as they become available.

As indicated above Housing and Regeneration are currently working with the Energy Savings Trust (EST) to develop a number of scenarios or suggested joinery maps to address the climate emergency agenda. These scenarios cover the whole Dacorum regardless of tenure and ownership, however the scenarios will also be broken down to highlight the Dacorum Housing Revenue Account (HRA) portfolio.

Housing will use these scenarios, compelled with some existing data and knowledge, to map and develop a business model/programme to help tackle climate emergency aspirations. Consideration is being given at breaking this down further into a phased approach as technology and the energy related industry is changing daily with improved methodology, ie with time more sustainable and logical options will come into the market place with potential addition funding options from central Government. The first phase being considered is a 5 year programme to tackle low performing dwellings within the HRA portfolio with a fabric first approach, this would concentrate on roofs, insulation, windows and ventilation (with the potential of some type of solar intervention). Further phases would hopefully widen the scope as industry and technology moves forward to consider areas such as heating.

Housing are also about to develop a model/specification for a separate more traditional stock condition survey of the HRA portfolio, this would be used in conjunction with the EST data to develop a capital investment model, at this time decisions would need to be made about what can realistically be delivered within a said time frame, hence agreed development of a 30 year business plan for investment.

The 2021/22 financial year in terms of capital investment will concentrate on catching up with delayed projects from 2020/21 due to the Pandemic, however this relies on no further lock downs within the UK. The phased approach to tackle climate emergency would commence financial year 2022/23.

Some bespoke pre-agreed carbon savings projects will commence earlier as planned on the HRA portfolio, with the possibility of some pilot vehicle charging point projects. The stock condition survey exercise, EST data and capital investment programme will go a long way to improving the energy efficiency of the HRA stock. In tandem with this we will develop a robust tenant engagement and behaviour change programme. Our tenants will play a crucial role in achieving our climate change targets and we need to be able to influence factors beyond our direct control, such as energy usage. We will also encourage the (free) installation of Smart Meters. Understanding how a building performs and how an individual's actions can reduce carbon emissions, whilst potentially saving money, is equally important as investing in our stock.

In the private rented sector, we are working with private landlords to ensure minimum energy efficiency standards are met. The pandemic has had a significant impact on the finances of both tenants and landlords. Targeting external funding for this sector will help make the costs of compliance more manageable for landlords.

Over the next 10 years, sustained funding will be required to meet the goal of net zero carbon emissions from private sector housing. Additional staff resources will be required if large scale funding schemes are to be directly managed by Dacorum.

5. Community and Communications

5.1 Learning from Lockdown – Results and Recommendations

During July and August 2020, we ran a six week sustainability survey to help understand how certain behaviours within Dacorum changed as a result of the safety measures brought about by COVID-19.

Several of the lifestyle changes that people made are also essential for helping to tackle the Climate Emergency. We wanted to understand how we can positively embrace these changes within Dacorum, so that instead of going 'back to normal', we move forwards to a better, greener future.

1500 residents took part. The survey was broken down into several key areas; Transport, Cycling, Commuting, Food, Waste and Resources, Energy and Water Use. The survey delivered a number of key findings, for example:

- 9 out of 10 people would like to see fewer cars on the road
- The number of people working from home after lockdown is expected to increase by a third, rather than 'return to normal'. With an increase in flexible working.
- Over a third of people stated that the barrier to them cycling more was road safety concerns.
- Approximately 1 in 5 more residents will be growing food locally compared to 'before lockdown'
- Half of participants told us they would volunteer at a community garden, with 9 out of 10 saying that they would want to buy food from one.
- Half of participants would be interested in using a community fridge.

The report was made available online in November to residents. This Recommendations Report has been circulated to staff for input and presented to the Leadership Team. There are a number of actions from the back of this research that will be able to feed into the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and Action Plan as well as a Communications Plan.

The survey results have also been used by local community groups to provide evidence to support grant applications. One group have been awarded £4000 from an NHS charities grant and credited the survey results for helping to achieve this. Several of applicants for the Green Community Grant also referred to these results to support their projects. The full report is at Appendix Two

5.2 Communications Plan

As an organisation, the Council is responsible for just 1% of the total emissions within Dacorum as a borough, and we have limited control over the remaining 99%. For this reason, connecting with the local community is crucial so that we can lower the borough's emissions as quickly as possible.

To help with this, we will plan to use the Council's 'spheres of influence' to educate, enable and engage with residents and local organisations. A range of resources, initiatives and campaigns will be put together in a comprehensive Communications Plan. This will incorporate both internal activities as well as local and national campaigns.

One of the immediate key focuses of this plan will be overhauling the content on our website and providing much more information for residents to help them learn more about the Climate and Ecological Emergency and what they can do to help at home.

The Learning from Lockdown survey results provided a great deal of local insight and statistics that can be used when shaping these ideas. Lockdown

showed us all the value of social interaction and developing a communications work plan that is full of events, training, presentations and promoting volunteering with community groups will be a significant part of the sustainability work – when it is safe to roll these initiatives out. For example – hosting Repair Café events, supporting the establishment of Community Fridges, a ‘Library of Thing’s, as well as creating Community Gardens and Orchards too.

Another element of the communications plan would be looking at engaging with staff and residents through surveys. For example, having an annual transport survey would be very useful to help us understand whether active travel campaigns are having an impact.

5.3 Green Community Grants scheme

Providing funding is another method of enabling the local community to reduce their emissions. Several of the initiatives that are highlighted in the Learning from Lockdown survey would involve high levels of officer resources if we were to deliver them internally – e.g. managing a community fridge. However, by encouraging local groups to take on these types of projects, and providing support, funding and resources where possible, these initiatives are able to be delivered more effectively.

In November we launched the first Green Community Grant scheme. This allowed community groups to apply for pots of up to £2000 to help with their environmental projects, with a total pot of £10,000.

The scheme was specifically set up to support projects in our community which benefit the environment, as well as Dacorum’s residents. The purpose is to encourage and enable local groups to ‘*think global and act local*’ whilst tackling environmental challenges. In order to apply for funding, proposed Green Community Grant projects needed to demonstrate that they would actively help towards the mitigation of the Climate and Ecological Emergency locally. Projects were required to fit at least one Key Environmental Theme:

- Energy and emissions
- Transport
- Biodiversity
- Waste and consumption

The projects with the greatest environmental impacts scored more highly. Projects also needed to demonstrate that they would be working with local residents on these sustainability issues to engage, enable and/or educate. Projects scored more highly if they could demonstrate that they would meet the following Community Benefits:

Making new connections – such as engaging with people who would not normally be involved in sustainability issues

Being more active – such as encouraging people to get more active than they normally would be, or try a new activity.

Learning – such as developing new skills or delivering a programme of education.

Volunteering – giving people an opportunity to engage with their local community through volunteering

The application window ran from 1 December 2020 – 31 January 2021. In total there were 17 applications and of these, seven were successful. These were:

1. Community Garden and Bike Project, Apex

Project overview: “Community Garden / Get on your bike” is a two-stage project to help Active Dacorum Hub become a ‘greener’ venue and for Apex and its partner organisations to reduce their carbon footprint.

Stage 1 will be to create a ‘Community Garden’ outside the Active Dacorum Hub – originally starting with two planters but hopefully growing over time. This would provide an opportunity for the surrounding community to grow local food.

Stage 2 involves installing a shipping container by the Hub which would be multipurpose – it would provide a secure storage space for visitor’s bikes as well as community bike hire, an area to host a bike repair scheme, and an area to store community garden equipment.

The shipping container would be stored next to an existing shipping container and modified so that it can harvest rainwater, have a grass roof, living walls and big hotels. Lessons learned from this could then be supplied to the existing shipping containers.

As part of the condition of funding, we proposed that Apex also offer bike confidence classes, which they have agreed to.

2. Mixed Meadow Grazing Project, Sunnyside Rural Trust

Project overview: A 1.5-acre plot of land that will be converted into an area of high biodiversity value through a variety of conservation management techniques – such as grazing and using scythes. Community partnerships with various local groups and schools would be carried out, along with regular volunteer surveying.

3. Allotment wilding project, Chaulden Allotments

Project overview: Working with Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust, this group plan to support plot-holders through a variety of educational methods in order to help them learn more about eco-friendly gardening, how to improve the biodiversity of their plots, encourage crop-sharing and improve plot-holders overall gardening knowledge.

The group are keen on establishing a blue-print that can be rolled out to other local allotment groups. The work will involve educational resources and interactive sessions.

4. Community Fridge, Viking Fitness

Project overview: The Community Fridge project will involve a team of volunteers regularly collecting food from local supermarkets and other food businesses that is still good to eat but would otherwise be thrown away. This food is then brought to a central location and be made available for anyone who wants it.

Food waste is a high source of carbon emissions and so this has a high environmental benefit, as well a strong community-focused one also.

5. Planters and local active travel engagement, Boho Boxmoor

Project overview: There are two elements to this project...

- To install two planters on Boxmoor high street which will provide an opportunity for communal gardening initiatives, as well as improve the aesthetics of the area.
- To have QR code signage in these planters, as well as throughout the local area which will direct towards the community group's website and encourage people to discover a variety of local walks. These routes will be updated regularly in order to tie in with seasonal activities. The aim is to encourage the Boxmoor community to explore the local environment through active travel and learn about its ecology.

6. Wildflower verge, Northchurch Parish Council (NPC)

Project overview: To convert the 700m roadside verge that runs between Dudswell and Cow Roast into a wildflower verge and associated management related to this. This area is maintained by NPC and the project would be in partnership with Sunnyside Rural Trust and involve a number of local volunteers.

7. '56 Club' - Gardening Club, Wigginton Parish Council

Project overview: The goal of the project is to encourage 56 households in Wigginton (10% of the areas population) to sign up to the gardening club. Seeds would be provided to each family that signs up, and information and resources would be shared also. Project plans include educational talks, a seed swap, a produce exchange stand and use of a spare allotment plot for those with no growing space at home.

We plan to work closely with the successful groups and help them to promote their projects in order to raise their project's profile, as well as inspire others.

As this initial scheme was a success in terms of attracting interest and some excellent projects, we plan to run the grants annually moving forwards – keeping as £2,000 maximum per group. The current budget of £10,000 is currently provided from the Climate and Ecological Emergency budget. It is proposed to ask Cabinet to consider that for 2021/22 that the budget be doubled (to be funded through the existing budget). A report will be brought to Cabinet in time to consider within the budget setting process 2022/23 whether it wishes there to be a separate budget for this in future years or a corresponding increase to the corporate Climate and Ecological Emergency budget .

5.4 Dacorum Climate Action Network

The development of Dacorum's Climate Action Network (Dacorum CAN) has not been able to move forward due to the pandemic affecting public interaction. However, we are planning to host a launch event in November to coincide with the United Nations Climate Change Conference which is taking place in Glasgow (COP26).

The event would be a presentation and networking opportunity for members of the public to learn about what Dacorum are doing and find out about how they can get involved. We would invite various local environmental groups to have stalls. We will ask that the community groups who have received Green Community Grant funding each do a short presentation about their project, how the funding has helped them, and how people can get involved with them.

6. Sustainable Transport

In Dacorum, transport is responsible for 43% of the borough's total greenhouse gas emissions. Focussing on transport will be a key part of the Climate Emergency work. This will involve reducing car use and increasing active travel (such as walking and cycling).

A Sustainable Transport group has been established in order to focus on projects and initiatives that fall under this area. This group will meet quarterly and has two sub-groups – one dedicated to Behavioural Initiatives and another dedicated to Electric Vehicles.

6.1 Behavioural Initiatives workstream

The Behavioural Initiatives theme will focus on researching and developing initiatives which will increase active travel (such as walking and cycling) and decrease car use. There are a variety of initiatives to explore both internally for staff, as well as externally to promote to residents and organisations.

Research and recommendations from the Learning from Lockdown survey will help to shape the work plan for this group. A range of cycling initiatives will be explored, including supporting bike confidence classes, rewards-based initiatives and bike-hire schemes. Discussions are underway with an organisation that is interested in using Dacorum for an e-scooter hiring trial, which is backed by the Department of Transport.

6.2 Green Transport Policy

One of the first key objectives for this group will be the creation of a Green Transport Policy for staff. This will aim to enable and encourage staff to reduce their carbon emissions. Various initiatives will be explored, such as car sharing and cycling schemes.

This work will involve relaunching the bike pool scheme. A policy for relaunching this has been drafted and will be reviewed by the Behavioural sub-group.

6.3 Electric Vehicle (EV) Work stream

The Electric Vehicle (EV) theme will focus on the creation of an Electric Vehicle Strategy. The objective for the creation and development of this strategy will be to help guide us in terms of how many chargepoints we need to expect to be putting in, where they need to go, what types we should have, how to manage them, etc.

The government recently brought forward the end date for the sale of petrol and diesel engines to 2030, which adds to the pressure of rolling out sufficient infrastructure now.

Around two thirds of the borough have 'off-street' parking available to them, such as driveways, which means that they can charge EVs at home overnight. However, for 39% of Dacorum's households (approximately 25,000 homes) this is not an option to them - we will need to ensure that there are sufficient plans in place to cope with this rising demand.

The number of ultra low-emission vehicles (ULEVs) registered in Dacorum rose 31% from 2019 to 2020.

6.4 On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS) Funding

The government is providing funding for the installation of EV chargepoints through the On-street Residential Chargepoint Scheme (ORCS), which we will be applying to in 2021-22.

The scheme supports local authorities with capital costs of procurement and installation of on-street electric vehicle charging points for residential use in areas without off-street parking. This can include public car parks.

We are liaising with the Energy Savings Trust (EST) who administer the scheme and are able to offer support and advice regarding the creation of both ORCS applications, as well as the EV strategy.

The maximum funding available is for 75% of the capital costs of procuring and installing a chargepoint and this funding previously was limited to £100,000 however this cap has recently been removed. The remaining 25% must be secured via sources other than OLEV funding. Sourcing this 25% of project costs is something which we would need to identify and secure before submitting an application. Larger applications will still be considered on a case by case basis.

BP Chargemaster, the organisation that currently manage our existing charge points have offered to pay for this 25% funding if we adhere to their conditions. Their priority is installing charge points in car parks. The maximum amount OLEV will fund per single or double headed chargepoint is £6,500.

Demonstrating value for money in the application is key to securing approval. Funding will be broadly awarded on a first come first served basis and the project, including installations, should be complete by March 2022. For this reason, this application work will be a priority for the EV sub-group to work on. It

is proposed to ask Cabinet to consider if a bid should be submitted based on the installation of charge points in Council car parks which would require £25,000 match funding for the £100,000 grant.

6.5 Electric Vehicle Residents Survey

An online Electric Vehicle Residents Survey was launched in February to help us understand the short-term and future needs for residents. The survey takes five minutes to complete and all residents are encouraged to take part, regardless of whether they have an EV already or not.

The creation of a survey such as this was advised by the EST as one of the first steps to take when planning an ORCS application. This is required in order to develop an understanding of where there is a need for EV chargepoints, both now and in the future, as well as provide evidence to support the application to justify that the chargepoints are required.

The survey is live on our website and there is no end date, it will remain a permanent fixture so that we have a consistent method for collecting this type of information from residents. In the first week of it being live it received over 750 responses.

6.6 Electric Vehicle Infrastructure

6.6.1 Field Dynamics - Jumpstart

In order to support the development of the EV strategy, we are working with a specialist net-zero consultancy called Field Dynamics. They have a new service called '*Jumpstart*' which is specifically aimed at supporting local authorities with developing their EV chargepoint plans.

JumpStart is a structured, data-led approach that will build an evidence foundation specifically for Dacorum. This structure will utilise our local knowledge and key national data sets and then be processed through a series of objective analysis sessions. It will give us all the information we need to deliver on these EV challenges to the point of operational hand-off. It will be a constant resource for us to reference to whenever we need objective, data based, accurate evidence to back up our approach.

The information will provide a useful baseline to help guide all future EV work, regardless of whether the chargepoints will be managed by Dacorum BC, Herts CC or external companies.

This information will also be useful for supporting ORCS applications.

6.6.2 Street lights and bollard EV chargepoints

We are currently liaising with EV chargepoint companies that specialise in working with local authorities in order to retrofit street lights or install bollards. This method significantly reduces the capital costs associated with installing EV infrastructure.

Dacorum own over 800 street lights - the majority of the street lights are allocated to estate footpaths, alleyways, garage areas and car parks. Approximately 50 may be suitable for EV residential charging locations.

Through the ORCS funding scheme, council-owned car parks that have public access 24 hours a day are permitted to be used for EV chargepoint installations. 19 of the 28 council-owned car parks could therefore be potential EV chargepoint locations. 5 of these car parks already have EV chargepoints.

We are currently liaising with Hertfordshire County Council to determine whether they would give permission for their street lights to be used in this way.

6.6.3 Plough Roundabout Car Wash

A site has been identified as potentially being suitable for an all-electric charging forecourt. The area is currently a car wash by the Plough Roundabout. Discussions are underway with interested businesses.

The Council has been approached by a number of organisations interested in locating an 'electric forecourt' in the Borough – effectively a rapid charging station. These organisations already have a track record in installation. One has plans for over 100 electric forecourts being built by them over the next five years, and are keen to work within Dacorum and offer at least one, if not two electric forecourts.

The area which is most attractive commercially would be to have a large hub near Maylands so that it is in close proximity to the M1 junction as well as being close by to all of the businesses in the industrial estate who are likely to be switching to EVs faster than residents uptake. Interest has also been shown by the companies with regard to the former petrol garage at the Magic Roundabout (currently a carwash). We continue conversations with these companies.

7 Planning

Officers are undertaking feasibility work that will underpin a new Carbon and Biodiversity Offset Fund for the Council. Once established it will allow the Council to secure funds from developers which will be invested in carbon and biodiversity projects across the Borough.

7.1 Carbon Offset

Carbon offset funds arise when development fails to achieve the required targets for reducing carbon emissions on site, and local authorities are able to use planning policy to collect contributions towards compensatory offsite measures. Typically these are calculated as a set sum for each tonne of carbon the new building will emit. The funds are then used to finance carbon reduction projects within the local authority area. Milton Keynes Council was an early leader in sustainable planning policy scheme and introduced the first carbon-offset local plan policy in 2008, to help achieve its ambition to become carbon neutral by 2030 and mitigate for future greenfield development. Within the first 10 years, the scheme achieved carbon savings totalling over 6,600 tonnes and generated more than £1 million, funding energy-saving projects for local residents. A similar scheme for Dacorum could generate funds to help deliver the priorities of the Climate and Ecological Emergency Action Plan.

Officers are now examining several options for setting up the Offset fund, reviewing carbon pricing options and fund administration options and will report to Members in due course.

7.2 Biodiversity Offset

National planning guidance and the forthcoming Environment Bill require development to create a net gain for biodiversity, to be set at 10% above the baseline biodiversity for a site. Where these measures are not achieved onsite, payments can be made to a biodiversity net gain fund equivalent to the cost of achieving the required number of biodiversity units elsewhere.

Officers are considering options for setting up and administering this fund, including whether the fund is separate or joined with the Carbon Offset Fund.

Officers are also considering options to develop a Biodiversity net gain Supplementary Planning Document and we're working with The Herts & Middlesex Wildlife Trust to utilise the work they have been doing with other authorities in Hertfordshire.

Herts County Council is also leading a baseline biodiversity evaluation of land across Hertfordshire and separately providing advice on opportunities for increasing biodiversity on Dacorum managed green space. Officers have commissioned a local tree assessment and tree planting strategy. This background work will inform the Council's Biodiversity Strategy and identify priorities for allocating biodiversity net gain contributions. Bunkers Park has been identified as a future biodiversity enhancement project.

Officers will continue to develop options for progressing both including further feasibility studies into each.

7.3 Renewable Energy Map

In order to understand the potential for future renewable energy initiatives in the borough, we will be sourcing a consultant to survey the borough and create a report on this for us.

This information will put us in a good position ready for when we are able to establish to the Carbon and Biodiversity Offset Fund and create projects that feed into this.

7.4 Biodiversity

Central government policy developments are beginning to open up new opportunities for increasing biodiversity. The Environment Bill, once passed, will likely mandate a 10% biodiversity net gain from developments. It will be possible to deliver these gains both on the site of the development as well as on off-site locations.

In November, the Agriculture Bill 2020 passed into law. The Environmental Land Management Scheme (ELMS) set out in the bill lays out how farmers and land managers will in future be rewarded with public money when they provide 'public goods'. These goods could include better air or water quality, improved soil health, or thriving wildlife. The scheme is thus designed to help achieve the

aims of the 25 Year Environment Plan and the net zero emissions by 2050 commitment. Trials and tests have already begun ahead of a national pilot to commence in late 2021, and the scheme will be fully rolled out in 2024.

Both of these policy developments represent opportunities for biodiversity improvement, and thought of in conjunction, they open up particular possibilities around ways in which local authorities could work with farmers to enhance biodiversity on farmland (which is not currently defined as a habitat of principle importance in the Biodiversity 2020 **Strategy**).

8. Environmental Services

8.1 Clean, Safe and Green workstream

Climate Emergency Sub-Group – Environmental Services – update

CSG Summary of current projects and progress:

1. Tree planting (Three-year plan): a more detailed update is provided below. This is going to plan with the first batch of mass tree planting in the form of mature whips taken place in Gadebridge Park. This is in addition to specimen trees, which have already been planted as part of the scheme.
2. Northend Orchard: Unfortunately, this project is on hold due to COVID. With the Lock Down planned to be relaxed we will be able to progress this and start to look into the possibility of setting up a community group.
3. Allotments: CSG has completed the clearance works at Windmill Road Allotments and the site is now with the Estates Team. They are now looking to make plots available for the community.
4. Grass cutting of verges: This is underway on a project to map all these areas and to upload this data onto Cadcorp maps. A set of maps has been created showing all the areas we left uncut through the summer. This information now needs to be captured on a new mapping layer on Cadcorp. Work is underway with IT to create the layer, and capture the data/information. Once this has been completed enable us to plan better and resource accordingly. Once this has been completed it will we can look at the possibility of establishing more areas and trying to link them all up to create corridors.
5. Wildflower Areas/Meadows: The update for this is much the same as above with us mapping these and trying to create corridors rather than just having loads of isolated pockets which individual while nice are not practical. Once they are all linked up, we are hopefully that this will create wildlife corridors across the urban landscape.
6. Other projects:
 - Solitary bee project-
For the last 4 years, we have been part of <https://www.masonbees.co.uk/> a project that intends on increasing numbers of mason bees, as well as other solitary bees (Leaf cutter bees). We will be expanding this project to Tring and Berkhamsted. With houses planning to be installed in Canal Fields Park in Berkhamsted and in the Memorial Garden in Tring and the possible installation of one in Douglas Gardens EPD in Berkhamsted.
 - Pollinator friendly planting-More areas being planted (Douglas Gardens, Tring Memorial garden, Gadebridge Park). More housing

areas (especially new housing projects) directed towards pollinator friendly planting. A reduction in annual bedding to be replaced with more sustainable, pollinator friendly planting.

8.2 Tree Planting

Throughout January and February over 1300 trees have been planted as part of the Tree Planting Strategy, as well as separate projects. Of the trees planted, 915 were whips (2-3 year old trees) - these were all mixed native species including Hazel, Holly, Cherry, Hornbeam, Blackthorn, Hawthorn and Apple. A fence will be erected to protect the whips from unwanted attention, which can be removed after 5 -7 years. 210 trees were 'small' and 188 were 'standard' (2-3 metres tall).

- Gadebridge Park
 - 500 whips
 - 15 standard Cherry trees
- Keens Field
 - 415 whips
- Coronation Fields,
 - 30 standard trees – mixed species (Maple, Birch, Cherry, Lime, Rowan)
- Leys Road open space
 - 210 small fruit trees - to extend the area of existing trees within the space that already included some Apple and Cherry species. We've added further Apple and Cherry varieties and included Pear, Greengage and Plum. This will also be fenced in the short term. When available, the fruit can be picked as required by local residents.
- New Bunkers Park cemetery
 - 26 native standard trees
- Verge hardening schemes
 - 12 Standard trees
- Northchurch - funded by Nash Mills Parish Council
 - 3 Willows by the canal
 - 2 replacement trees
- Highway and Housing locations across the borough
 - Over 100 standard trees.

Between now and 2025 another 1000 native whips will be planted in Gadebridge Park combined with 30 more Standard trees, and 2000 whips in Bunkers Park. Highway and Housing tree planting will continue, subject to funding. Informal fruit tree planting will be progressed at Bunkers Park, close to the existing Hazel woodland.

This tree planting has been publicised through a press release. Signage is also in the process of being created which ultimately will be put by tree planting sites to signpost to our website, which will explain the progress being made and the borough's plans in more detail.

8.3 New Trees and Woodlands Policy

The new Trees and Woodlands Policy was recommended for approval by Members at the Strategic Planning & Environment Overview & Scrutiny

committee in February. The policy contains information about the management of public trees and also guidance for residents as to how they can manage their own trees.

The previous policy was published in 2015. The new policy recognises the role that tree management will play within the Council's Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy. It also introduces the CAVAT (Capital Asset Value for Amenity Trees) valuation system, which enables a monetary value to be placed on a tree. Where damage or destruction of public trees occurs, we will seek full compensation from those involved to the full CAVAT value. Residents are therefore advised to check with our Trees and Woodlands team before undertaking any planned tree works.

In addition to the full policy document, a shorter summary document which contains policy statements and answers to common tree issues is also available on the website for residents in the hope that they refer to this before submitting an enquiry to the Trees and Woodlands department.

9. External Workstream

9.1 Biodiversity Baseline

The Hertfordshire Climate Change and Sustainability Partnership (HCCSP) subgroup on Biodiversity, identified that there is a need to develop the next steps that the group can take together in order to increase biodiversity across the county.

With habitats and wildlife remaining under pressure from pollution, pesticides, and loss of suitable land (amongst other things), there is a clear need to establish where we are as a County with regards to biodiversity.

A county-wide biodiversity baseline is the HCCSP's first step in forming an understanding of where we could develop strategic sites for biodiversity and ensure that gains from developments are maintained within Hertfordshire and as close to the development site as possible. This baseline will act as the foundation of our exploration into maximising these opportunities.

The objectives of the baseline are:

- To establish a county-wide biodiversity baseline to understand the state of biodiversity in Hertfordshire. All land will be surveyed during this baseline assessment, not just council land.
- For areas of land to receive a biodiversity unit score, to allow us to easily illustrate future increases or decreases in biodiversity in the future
- Production of a detailed report from the contractor that carries out the auditing and access to all data collected

Once this work is completed and we have a county-wide baseline and a consistent measuring tool, we can then look towards mapping specific opportunities for increasing biodiversity. Whether we do this work together through the HCCSP on a county-wide basis, or on a more localised basis will be determined in the future.

The cost to each local authority is £4000 and has already been agreed through all members of the HCCSP. The contract is out for tender and should be awarded by the end of June. The finalised reports are expected to be provided within the 2021/22 financial year.

10. Hertfordshire County Council - Green Spaces Audit

Hertfordshire County Council will be using the company CMS to carry out an audit of all the council-owned green spaces in Hertfordshire. We will be able to request that any of our green spaces are included in this, not just large sites, and the information will be provided to us for free. The Sustainable Hertfordshire team are funding this work.

A dedicated team will visit the sites to survey them and suggest ecological improvements that could improve the areas biodiversity. It is expected that most changes will be suggested at the boundaries of existing sites so that recreational activities will not be affected. Suggested changes could include mowing changes, woodland planting, hedgerow planting, pollinator friendly changes, etc. This work will complement the baseline audit that HCCSP are working on. The surveys are expected to be carried out over the summer. It is expected that the information will be ready by autumn/ winter 2021.

10.1 Hertfordshire Tree Canopy Information

Hertfordshire County Council are working alongside volunteers on a desk-based GIS project to map the percentage of tree canopy cover for each ward. They will be providing this information to us for free.

This information will help us to set goals and standards – for example, we could state that we want each ward to have a minimum of 20% tree cover and use this with our tree planting targets.

10.2 External Tree Reports

We have appointed Treeconomics, the biggest urban tree specialists in the sector, to carry out two pieces of work for us. This work will be carried out in 2021-22 Quarter 1.

10.3 Biodiversity Strategy

In order to fully utilise the forthcoming ecological information from the HCCSP biodiversity baseline, the HCC biodiversity audit and canopy cover data, the external tree reports and our internal wildflower mapping work, we will be creating a Biodiversity strategy.

The creation of a dedicated strategy will help us to plan future work and how this could be funded via the Carbon and Biodiversity Offset Fund and the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) income.

It has been highlighted by officers that land availability is a concern and so part of the strategy may be to look at purchasing areas of land. This will be possible through the BNG income.

We will be liaising with Hertfordshire and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) in order to create an effective strategy.

As part of the development of this strategy we will be exploring how we can engage with the public on this topic. This could involve community initiatives, working with schools, hosting events, establishing community groups, providing resources, running campaigns, etc. This public engagement work could also include surveying residents to gauge public opinions for activities such as grass cutting.

We will also explore providing additional training and resources to Clean, Safe and Green team members who carry out grounds maintenance but may not be aware of key plant species not to mow – such as orchids.

10.4 iTree Eco Inventory Report

Using a software model called iTree, Treeconomics are able to measure the structure and composition of Dacorum's council-owned trees and urban forests. They then calculate the benefits and ecosystem services they provide, and value them in monetary terms. This inventory will provide estimates of the ecosystem services provided by our trees, including air quality improvement, avoided stormwater run-off and most significantly to our Climate Emergency work, carbon storage. The carbon storage figure will be used to offset part of the borough's carbon footprint and is an important piece of our work to get us to net-zero emissions as an organisation by 2030.

Detailed information on species composition, and pest and disease resilience will also be detailed. The inventory report incorporates CAVAT information, and will help us to have clean data moving forwards. All of which will help to provide an evidence based approach in the development of informed urban forestry programs, management plans and projects.

Hertfordshire County Council have worked with Treeconomics to obtain this data for all of their highways land.

10.5 Tree Planting Strategy - Opportunity Mapping Report

Treeconomics will use a variety of data, including GIS, to identify hotspots for potential new tree planting. Hotspots are typically areas with low tree canopy cover, high levels of pollution, high social deprivation, or with an increased risk of flooding. They will work with us to generate a map, showing those areas most desirable for planting. This report will help us to focus future tree planting in the areas where there is the most need and least tree cover.

The outcome will be a detailed ward by ward report detailing potential and actual plantable space on public and private land and an indexed heatmap of tree planting opportunity. A set of all the GIS layers used to build up the map will be provided.

This information will be highly important, not only to help plan future tree planting work, but also to use as evidence in the event of applying for external

funding or working with other organisations, local councils, community groups, etc.

11. Internal Corporate progress

11.1 Sustainability Officer

Approval has been provided for the recruitment of a Sustainability Officer who will report to the Climate Emergency and Sustainability Programme Lead Officer. The new role will provide support for the delivery all future CEE projects and work-streams.

11.2 Staff Update Session

In November, during a virtual staff update session, a presentation was delivered to give all staff members an overview of the Climate and Ecological Emergency work stream. It is envisioned that this update will happen several times a year to increase staff engagement with the work being carried out.

11.3 Carbon Literacy Training (CLT)

Local authority specific Carbon Literacy Training sessions were offered to the Corporate Officers Group, all members of the CEE sub-groups and any other members of staff put forward by COG. This training was to ensure that our key decision makers are sufficiently equipped with an understanding around the causes and impacts of climate change, as well as solutions from a local authority perspective.

The Carbon Literacy Project was recognised by the UN at COP21, in Paris, where it was awarded as a TAP100, one of 100 worldwide Transformative Action Programs. The training is a certificated 8 hour all-day course split into four units. It was delivered via APSE virtually using Teams.

Unit 1 - The science behind climate change

Unit 2 - Global Climate Change Impacts: Understand policies globally, nationally and locally: the scientific consensus; the role of Local Councils; the policy position.

Unit 3 - Climate Change Action

Unit 4 - Influence from the frontline

In December, over 40 members of staff took on the training, including Dacorum's new CEO. Claire is the first CEO from a local borough council to have received this training. Due to high demand a third date has also been added for April which will bring us up to over 60 staff members trained. As a substantial percentage of the workforce will have been trained, this means we can explore getting the accreditation of a 'carbon literate organisation'.

The Carbon Literacy Project are currently developing a Councillor tailored version of this training and once this is developed we will work with APSE to offer these sessions to Members.