



Council Briefing Note 15<sup>th</sup> November 2023

**CLIMATE & ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY—  
COUNCILLOR ADRIAN ENGLAND**

Members, we will not be back here until 28<sup>th</sup> Feb. The heating is going on and inflation has not gone into reverse – it is still sky-high at two and a half times the Bank of England target. COP28 takes place at Expo City, in Dubai, from 30<sup>th</sup> November to 12<sup>th</sup> December. We stand at an average 1.28 degrees rise in global temperature, since industrialisation. Countries have agreed – at Paris in 2015 – to try to hold global temperatures to no higher than 1.5 degrees above pre-industrial levels.

The World Meteorological Organisation now reports a 66% likelihood of exceeding the 1.5 threshold in at least one year between 2023 and 2027. Unfortunately this is a real “smoke and mirrors” moment – there is still too much smoke and we need to look in the mirror, because it is obvious we need to respond to this overshoot, since the UK is not insulated from global markets or climate phenomena.

In Dacorum our drainage systems cannot cope with rain as heavy as frequently it is now, running off roofs and roads and concrete where grass and planting and trees were original features.

Climate Emergency UK recently released rankings to reflect what councils have achieved in tackling climate change. The average score for district councils was 29%. We ranked 33%, 44<sup>th</sup> out of 164 district councils and 4<sup>th</sup> in Hertfordshire.

The higher-scoring districts reached the 50% and 60% bands, so Dacorum cannot rest on any laurels. CEUK concludes principally that more government funding is needed to help councils achieve NetZero in their operations by 2030 and across their populations by 2050.

We have now completed a significant review of all actions being undertaken across DBC to help deliver our ambitions in the Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy and have established a new focused portfolio of projects and programmes that will have the greatest impact on achieving our ambitions. We have also established robust governance and reporting processes to ensure there is focused oversight and accountability on this topic.

I plan a paper to Scrutiny Committees for January, in order to benefit from their overview on this, but for now here is the update:

### **Sustainable transport:**

It was often said at Full Council before May that as Dacorum was not a Transport Authority it could not act on air quality. However, the council is now placemaking with air quality and domestic parking congestion in mind, looking for ways to improve the alternatives, so that using a car is a choice, not a necessity.

- Local Cycling & Walking Infrastructure Plane (LCWIP). Walking and cycling networks maps are approved for engagement. We will be engaging with the public through ESRI story mapping early next year.
- Active Travel Improvement – I pay tribute to John Morrish, parish councillor in Kings Langley and Andrew Freeman of HCC for getting the towpath re-surfaced between Red Lion Lane in Nash Mills, and Kings Langley, with support from CRT and HGC.
- Bus Improvement: HCC are now talking to Dacorum Borough Council about how to get bus services up to 15 minute intervals (ie “just turn up”) in Dacorum. HCC are looking to invest locally because we have signalled this is a priority. It will take time, but we are also activating partnership links with Intalink.

- A new bus service is coming to Dacorum later this year HertsLynx is a new demand responsive transport (DRT) service. There are no fixed timetable or routes, instead passengers choose where and when they want to go within a designated operating area. This service is designed to increase access for residents to employment, education, healthcare and shopping and reduce social isolation for residents living in rural areas where there is limited or no access to existing public transport services. This has been successful in areas of North and East Hertfordshire and is expanding to Dacorum, initially as a pilot project, and will be providing transport links to Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring by the end of the year.

### **EVCPs:**

- The first of a new batch of Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) for Dacorum are up and running in Tring and the Old Town, Hemel Hempstead, with Leverstock Green next in line later in November; 19 car parks are included in the programme. Very early usage reports are encouraging.
- We are working closely with HCC to identify additional on street locations throughout Dacorum that would be suitable for EVCP's. HCC are submitting a business case end of November and should receive funding in March 2024, to be allocated across Hertfordshire.

### **Communities:**

- We are holding our third annual DCAN event on 20th November. Instead of showcasing, we are excited to start The Big Conversation, learning from DBC's residents and understanding how we can support the borough to reach NetZero, sharing with residents the actions that we are taking as a council where it arises.
- We are planning to use a thermal imaging camera to show properties 'before' and 'after' effect of energy saving measures. As Hemel has thirteen "archetypes" in the New Town residential streets, we are able to use certain house and flats as great examples.
- The results of Solar Together Round 2 were nearly 6,000 registrations from homeowners, for a quotation on solar panels, with Dacorum again ranking third behind St Albans and North Herts, keeping ahead of East Herts with our 839 registrations – 14% of Hertfordshire demand.
- We are speaking with GUCE about piloting a transition street in Dacorum. Transition Streets bring neighbours together to reduce their carbon footprint and save money, through taking practical action together.

### **Neighbourhood:**

- DBC are exploring the possibility of Air Quality measurements being set-up outside Swing Gate Lane, in preparation for establishing of a Green Screen in 2024/25 and the opportunity to measure and report the effect on air quality for children.
- Work has started on a Nature Recovery Strategy and Action plan. Officers had a positive meeting with HMWT in discussing the development of the County Nature recovery strategy and the role we can play together as a district to lead on the shaping of the action plan and the strategic approach. The first step will be an audit of our assets with further discussions for the development of the Dacorum strategic approach.

### **Internal/Governance:**

- We were the first borough council in the UK to achieve a Silver level of 'Carbon Literate Organisation' accreditation, and it is time to renew and extend this. The CEE team have organised this training for the new cabinet, and recently-joining directors and heads of service, to equip management with the insights and arguments to propel transformative decision-making, which safeguard future generations.
- Additionally two mandatory training modules are set to be rolled out to all DBC staff via DENNIS - Carbon literacy and net-zero and Environmental Awareness at work.

### **Homes: (Decarbonising)**

- Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) - wave 1 of the programme which involved spending £1.5m grant and council money decarbonising 24 homes completed earlier this year, with 90% of these homes upgraded to EPC A standard and 10% at EPC B. These works prioritised a 'fabric first' approach, increasing insulation to improve energy efficiency and prevent the conditions for damp. We are now working to decarbonise more homes with SHDF wave 2, with the first lot of homes in this wave to be completed by March 2024