



Council Briefing Note Wednesday 28<sup>th</sup> February 2024

CLIMATE ACTION AND OPPORTUNITY – COUNCILLOR  
ADRIAN ENGLAND

### Climate and Ecological Emergency programme

#### **Significant service achievements since last Council meeting:**

#### **Dacorum CAN - we are saving waste, saving CO2, and saving money.**

In total Dacorum is on track to have saved over £300,000 by 2026/27 via energy efficiency investment, and these benefits will contribute even more to Council budgets each year, from the capital and revenue investment. With the new CEE Reserve, we expect to identify opportunities to leverage ever greater, lasting and perennial savings.

That kind of saving gives us better budget choices than would otherwise be available.

It is better to spend the saving on investing to unlock more energy saving, compounding the efficiency, but it also gives the Council self-sufficiency, should reform of Local Government financing fail to materialise.

The CEE Portfolio reported to scrutiny at Finance & Resources on 7<sup>th</sup> February and primary reporting and scrutiny will move to SPaE, as from the Full Council Meeting on 28<sup>th</sup> February. Scrutiny Chairs please note that as this is a cross-cutting programme, different reports may naturally fit F&R or H&C.

We are in an El Nino year and unsurprisingly the temperature figures for January (and 2023) have exceeded records again.

Just 6 years to 2030, and it just makes sense that with 2050 being the UK Government's legal commitment, there must be milestones we will need to reach on the way to the middle of the century.

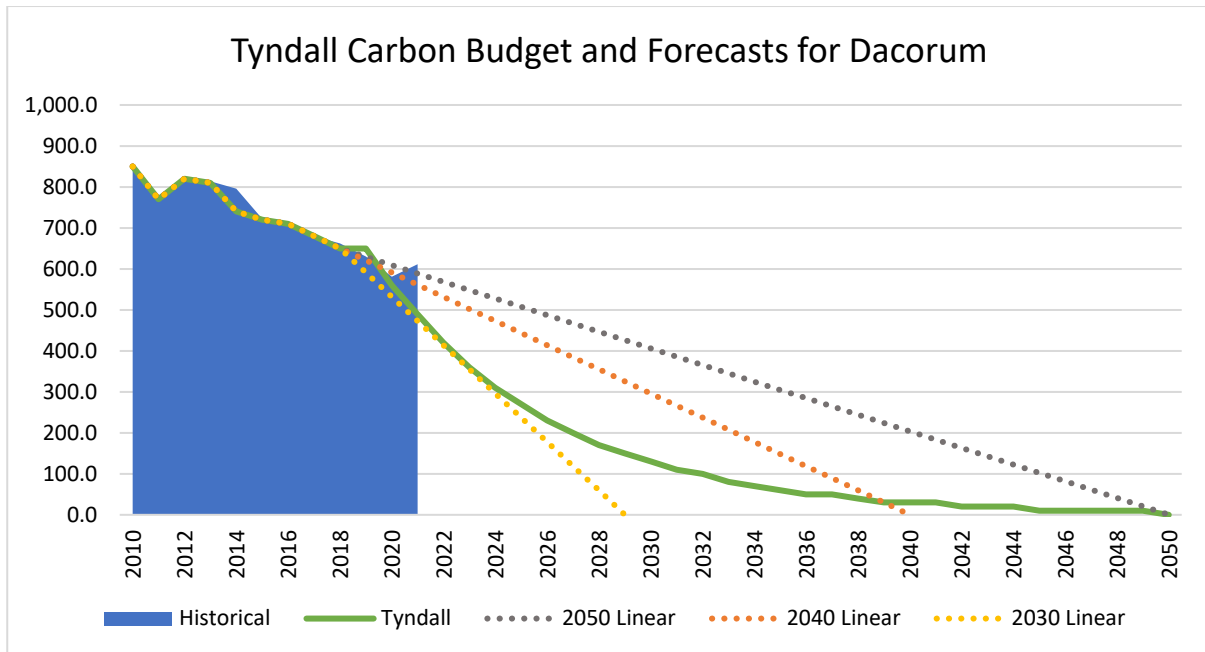
The less good news here is that we are behind our "Tyndall" trend line, and we will find necessary progress opportunities become harder to realise, so we need to get ahead of a linear trend to net Zero by 2050.

In June we will publish two years of BEIS figures. But for now here is the update to 2021:

Dacorum's emissions increased in 2021 and the emissions are above all the scenarios shown in the graph. Dacorum is 100 kilotons over the Tyndall pathway, and slightly over the least ambitious pathway of net-zero by 2050. 2021 was an anomalous year with COVID restrictions and a surge in economic activity in the latter half, so the next reporting period of

2022 will be more reliable to analyse progress. Nonetheless, this makes meeting the Paris-aligned Tyndall pathway much harder in this decade.

The chart below shows historic carbon emissions from Dacorum Borough, with four different pathways to net zero. “Tyndall” is the most ambitious, aligned to the COP21 Paris agreement, in 2015. The other three pathways, linear routes to net zero by 2030, 2040, 2050, are shown in dotted lined. Dacorum Borough’s trajectory is downward, but well above the ambitious Tyndall pathway.



**Local sit rep, mention**

The £1.16m Climate Generation Reserve has been published in the 2024/25 budget. As tempting as it is to spend it all on investing in our energy-efficiency and renewables generation, this fund may also be used to support the resourcing of work to bring in grants and match-funding to achieve strategic Climate Generation goals. Identified direct savings from its investment will be repaid to the reserve, so that the effects of acting on climate change are measured.

Consultants CLS were commissioned in 2021 to identify potential measures that can be implemented and associated benefits it would achieve and reported in spring 2022. A number of recommendations were made which identified the potential to make a total of £150k annual savings on energy bills through a total investment of £617k, giving a four-year payback, followed by many-fold income return.

£40,000 has been invested in implementing some of these revenue budget recommendations so far, which is generating more than £34,000 of repeated annual savings in energy bills. With additional Capital investment opportunities relating to Leisure Centres, which could boost the total repeating annual benefit to £461k.

Given two years have surpassed since the CLS report recommendations were made, costs have increased by about 30%, energy prices have also increased from about ~12p/kWh to ~30p/kWh or more, therefore the payback period would now be quicker and expected energy savings higher.

The council is working with the Greater South East Net Zero Hub (GSENZH) and Tallarna to develop an updated, prioritised, and financed Net Zero programme to decarbonise our built assets by 2030. Some measures, such as solar and heat pumps, previously recommended by the consultants will form part of this prioritised plan, but there are a further 23 quick win measures, including thermostatic radiator valves, BMS controls, glazing and insulation, worth £22,000 (figures correct in 2022, the team are awaiting updated quotes) which we will be implementing as soon as possible. The total energy efficiency savings realised to date as well, as these quicker win measures planned, will save around £314,000 cumulatively by the end of 2026/27 financial year.

## **Planning policy**

We have been using our influence through our planning policy and planning processes to integrate climate change mitigation and adaptation and wider benefits, for example, using the Local Plan to reduce the need to travel and a focus on providing sustainable transport.

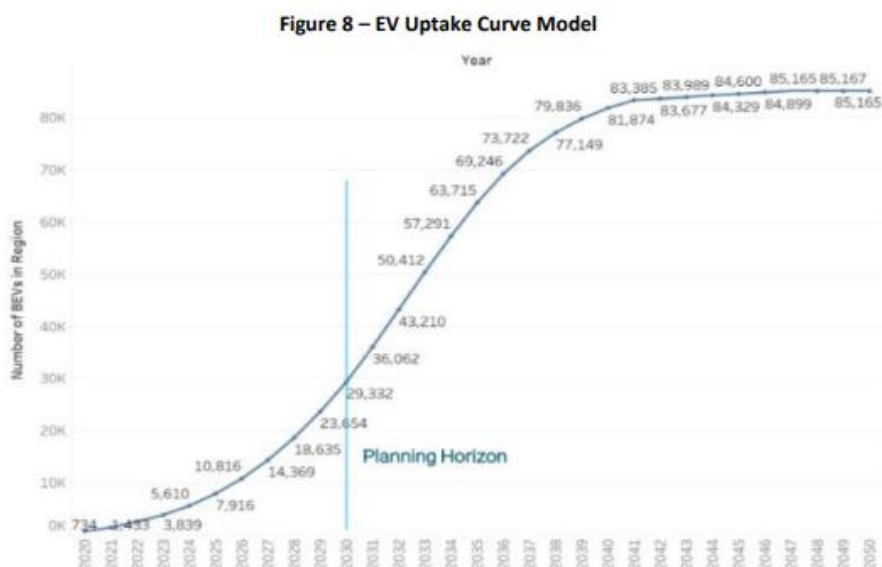
Members will know we carried out a successful consultation on our forthcoming Local Plan for Dacorum – the Revised Strategy for Growth – towards the end of 2023. Over the coming months, the Local Plan Task and Finish Group will be working with officers to shape the content of a full version of the Local Plan for consultation later in 2024 and then for submission to the Secretary of State (for Levelling up, Housing and Communities) in early 2025.

We believe that our new and revised strategy for growth offers many opportunities for delivering sustainable transport and energy efficiency in new housing and other developments. Building on the technical study from 2010 on opportunities for District Heating, now known as heat networks, we will be presenting to Council later in the year new policies to encompass a range of requirements that the Council will be seeking in new, especially major, developments.

## **EVCPs:**

- The next Electric Vehicle Charging Points (EVCPs) for Dacorum are being installed now, through to March in neighbourhoods across Dacorum. These were originally meant to be installed in 2022. Five rapid sites are now live and five fast sites have started install this month. The rapid charging hub is planned for installation this summer.
- Growth in EV adoption is very high, from a low base, and even without significant Government subsidy support (unusual in leading economies) it is heading from 3.3% (1-in-30) of all cars on the road now, to 4.3% (1-in-23) next year, probably 1-in-10 by 2027 and 1-in-4 by 2030.
- My projections, based on 23% of new registrations in Jan 2024 being EVs, with these new registrations hitting the open second-hand market three years later. An uptake curve (Figure 8) below, was developed by Department for Transport and presents a

model for update of Electric Vehicles in Dacorum.



- Users will aim to keep their batteries between 20% and 80% for best battery-health, so the opportunity for a partial charge at a convenient time when there is something else to be doing should be a behavioural shift, and that should benefit café and retail near EVCPs, bringing new/different custom from the Zap Map, for instance. An hour-long charge would cost about £3.60 and give up to 30 miles – enough to complete a journey home and would ensure a paying EV driver a prime space, or a quick 15-minute charge will cost about 90p, giving 7 miles of range.
- We are working closely with HCC to identify additional on street locations throughout Dacorum that would be suitable for EVCP's. HCC has been allocated £6m through the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund. HCC has submitted an outline business case demonstrating how the funding would be used and we have contributed to this a draft list of locations to their business case. The LEVI fund prioritises off street locations, as such the list is comprised of locations in car parks at community centres or shopping areas, with a few of on street chargers where there was no off-street option available nearby to suit residents. The idea is that this fund will be used to distribute charge points much more closely to residents' homes, ensuring they're within a walkable distance and prioritising areas where residents do not have off street parking.
- HCC has clarified a few areas in their application and the updated version is currently in review at the Office for Zero Emissions Vehicles LEVI board. Following this HCC will be issued 90% of the allocated funding. HCC plan to procure on behalf of the Districts and Boroughs and are drafting an agreement for us to sign. Once signed the project will start moving forward with the site selection and procurement.
- HCC have completed the recruitment of two sustainable partnership officers who will act as the first point of contact for DBC and provide the required support and project management.

### Homes: (Decarbonising)

- £22.4M has been allocated in the HRA Business Plan to achieve Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) C by 2035 in social homes, prioritising those in fuel poverty for 2030, in line with the government's milestones. The service is currently developing the plan.
- The Council has delivered the first wave of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund (SHDF) investing over £1m decarbonising 24 homes, achieving an average EPC A.
- We are working to decarbonise 75 more homes with SHDF (Social Homes Decarbonisation Fund) wave 2, with the first lot of 30 homes in this wave to be completed or underway by April 2024. This is currently on track.
- Dacorum have successfully levered in a further £580,000 of government grants to deliver phase 2. The first tranche of 30 dwellings consists of 8 homes at Blackwell Road & 22 at Curtis Road. Work will include energy efficiency measures such as external wall insulation, loft insulation, draught proofing, heating controls, improved ventilation and solar PV installations. Government funding is being used where possible, but it often comes with constraints which limit its effect in widening the benefits.
- The team is currently working to identify a further 45 properties.
- Upgrading gas boilers to hybrid heat pumps and installing solar is already part of our BAU and planned in 12 more schemes up to 2030. An additional £500K per year to 2030 is needed to complete these works in all schemes. The Council has allocated £500K for 24/25 so that the planning for the work can commence.

## **Communities**

- We are using a thermal imaging camera to show properties 'before' and 'after' effect of energy saving measures. The housing/assets team have finished their data cleansing as part of the EPC C work and have established that there are 20 archetypes for social homes. The team have requested thermal imaging at a number of properties to show the before and after of different types of measure such as EWI and cavity wall insulation. We hope to have some case studies to be deployed in comms to support and advise homeowners, at the end of summer.
- Update on Transition Street in Dacorum. Transition Streets bring neighbours together to reduce their carbon footprint and save money, through taking practical action together.
- DCAN hosted its third annual conference and networking event in November, with a focus on community climate action. More than 90 people attended the event in November.

## **Neighbourhood**

- While Government changes to recycling have been postponed to 2025, DBC knows that there are cost-of-living savings to be found in minimising waste – especially food waste. Almost a quarter of the average household rubbish bin is edible food waste. Hertfordshire Waste Partnership’s WorthSaving campaign highlights that households can save up to £720 a year by following four simple steps to save.
- A green screen project is underway, a living barrier around schools to reduce air pollution. Nash Mills has been identified as a pilot school, the team is in touch with providers confirming quotes.
- The council is also expanding wildflower areas - we now have 45, planting new trees - in 2023 we planted 130 trees and 2500 whips. 12,000 whips are planned to be planted in Bunkers Park, pond field in March. The recent HCC “Your Tree Our Future” giveaway totaled 5500 whips allocated to the area of Dacorum, with all to be planted in private property.
- Affinity Water and the Environmental Agency are pursuing chalk river restoration projects at the River Bulbourne and River Gade. The River Gade restoration is due to begin in spring 2024.

### **Sustainable transport:**

Dacorum is currently developing a Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) to encourage residents to cycle and walk more. Draft walking and cycling maps have been developed from data, now being combined with public consultation, which commenced on 29th January and closed on 26<sup>th</sup> February. At the time of writing there have been

- From week ending Sunday 11<sup>th</sup> February, there were 103 responses on cycling, 86 comments on walking and 23 comments on current cycling network.
- The Council is exploring the feasibility of the provision of E-bikes in the borough. The project is going through various internal approvals at the moment.

### **Fleet:**

- Route Optimisation for waste collection rounds has taken 5 vehicles off the road completely, and has saved over 8000 miles annually.
- An electric waste vehicle was trailed in January for 10 days and has shown that some routes do have the potential to be done with an electric vehicle. Officers are currently undertaking some feasibility work to establish options for potential electrification of the wider Council fleet.

### **Other:**

- Carbon literacy training has been delivered to all senior management and to new Portfolio Holders. Mandatory training for all staff members on Climate and Ecological Emergency has also been implemented.

**Strategic or significant operational matters which your service would like full Council to be aware of:**

- With a new CEE programme team in place, we have reviewed all of the existing actions identified to help deliver our CEE Strategy ambitions, establishing defined projects with key plans and timescales and a new robust governance structure to ensure we have appropriate oversight and accountability of the programme.