

**FULL COUNCIL – 2023/2024**

**ACTION POINTS FOR PORTFOLIO HOLDERS**

<b>Date of meeting</b>	<b>Action point</b>	<b>PH responsible for action</b>	<b>Response / Investigation Ongoing</b>
February 2024	Cllr England to arrange for the 4 simple steps information to be provided to Democratic Services for distribution.	Cllr England	<p>In answer to Cllr Douris' question, Hertfordshire Waste Partnership's WorthSaving campaign highlights that households can save up £720 a year by following four simple steps to save.</p> <p>These steps are:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• Plan - check what you have.</li><li>• Shop for what you need.</li><li>• Store in the best way.</li><li>• Eat what you have.</li></ul> <p><a href="https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/recycling-and-waste/wasteaware-campaigns/worth-saving.aspx">https://www.hertfordshire.gov.uk/services/recycling-waste-and-environment/recycling-and-waste/wasteaware-campaigns/worth-saving.aspx</a></p>
February 2024	Cllr Tindall to arrange for the data regarding number of tenants in commercial properties that are on payment plans to be provided to Democratic Services for distribution.	Cllr Tindall	Number of Commercial Tenants accounts on Payment Plans is 228.
February 2024	Cllr Tindall to arrange for the data regarding bad debt provision for commercial assets to	Cllr Tindall	At the start of 2023/24 financial year the bad debt provision for commercial properties was £0.583m. In 2023/24 debts written off total £0.066m, leaving a provision of £0.517m. As part of the final accounts process for year end, the Finance Team and the service will review the level of debt and provision required and the provision will be topped up as

	be provided to Democratic Services for distribution.		required. The provision is set based on assumptions around the value of debt and the age of the debts for the service.
February 2024	Cllr Dhyani to arrange for confirmation of whether the rent increase letter sent out was informing residents of a rent increase, or consulting on the potential for a rent increase.	Cllr Dhyani	The rent letters issued to tenants were to notify of a change in rent charges and not a consultation on proposed charges. These letters were issued in line with the Housing Rent Standard requirement to give 28 calendar days' notice to tenants of rent increase. The new charges will be applied from the start of the new financial year. If any tenant has concerns about their rent they should make contact with their Income Officer to discuss this further.
November 2023	Cllr Barradell asked if there was data available of fixed penalty notices, specifically dog fouling outside of Hemel Hempstead and Berko.	Cllr Bromham	In the previous financial year, out of 3015 FPNs issued, 96% of FPNs were issued in Hemel Hempstead and Berkhamsted. 0.4% of the total were for dog fouling and 0.3% were for not carrying dog poo bags. 82% were for tobacco-related litter.
November 2023	Cllr Birnie asked if trading standards could offer regular reports on the selling of nicotine products to underage people	Cllr Bromham	Trading Standards (in Herts. County Council) said that vapes have been seized from 6 premises in Dacorum in current financial year and continue to do Test Purchasing for under age sales of vapes. Schools have been encouraged to report instances of children found in possession of vapes to a particular Herts CC email. HCC are considering how to share press releases on this topic to District/Borough Council Colleagues/ Members. I hope that UK government regulations will deter the use of disposable vapes among those who were not previously smokers and reduce incidence of these problematic devices in litter and waste-streams.
November 2023	Cllr Douris referenced the point in the report “: HCC are now talking to Dacorum Borough Council about how to get bus services up to 15 minute intervals (ie “just turn up”) in	Cllr England	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.  ...and said that you were pleased I had used the plural. You then asked me which services:

	Dacorum” He asked if Cllr England could tell them which particular bus services these were		I look forward to inviting you to join me for a trip to and from Luton on the 721 and/or Stevenage on the 302, in the New Year?
September 2023	<p>Cllr Timmis asked if the electrical vehicle charging points will be limited in time or if cars can charge overnight.</p> <p>Cllr Tindall stated that this will depend on the particular charging point and that the portfolio holder could provide a more detailed response</p>	Cllr Tindall	<p>I’m delighted to see these first three Osprey EV charging points go operational earlier than expected. Tring leads this wave of modern infrastructure being installed right across Dacorum, helping local residents, shoppers and other visitors to be confident in leaving behind vehicles which require outdated fossil fuels.</p> <p>The following public car park locations are included in the current programme:</p> <p><b>Hemel Hempstead</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Wood Lane End car park</li> <li>• Alexandra Road car park</li> <li>• Queensway car park</li> <li>• Park Road</li> <li>• Bellgate neighbourhood centre</li> <li>• The Queen’s Square neighbourhood centre</li> <li>• Durrants Hill car park</li> <li>• Leverstock Green village shops</li> <li>• Water Gardens</li> <li>• Cowper Road</li> <li>• The Gables car park</li> <li>• Henry Wells Square</li> <li>• Bennetts End neighbourhood centre</li> <li>• High Street Car Park</li> </ul> <p><b>Berkhamsted</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• St John’s Well Lane car park</li> </ul> <p><b>Tring</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Frogmore Street (East) car park</li> <li>• Forge Car Park</li> </ul> <p><b>Kings Langley</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Langley Hill car park</li> </ul>

			<p><b>Markyate</b></p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Hicks Road car park</li> </ul>
September 2023	<p>Cllr Douris commented on the proposal for some car parks to have a minimum charge based on a longer period of time and asked if this was correct.</p> <p>Cllr Tindall stated that he would arrange for a written answer to be provided</p>	Cllr Tindall	<p>This is correct and is as set out in the proposals that went to Scrutiny and Cabinet in September 2023 and again in December 2023</p>
July 2023	<p>Cllr Symington to circulate cost of the strategic review to members.</p>	Cllr Sally Symington	<p>The work streams planned for the Strategic Asset Review (SRA) are reported in the Report to Cabinet 20 June 2023 and listed in Table 1 on page 5. In total, the costs for the SAR are estimated at £516k. These are being partly funded from existing budgets provided for by the previous administration. However, there is a shortfall across the Housing Revenue Account (HRA) of £95,500 and the General Fund (GE) of £115,500, giving a combined total shortfall of £211k. The HRA funding requirement is being funded by a one-off reduction to the 2023/24 HRA revenue contribution to capital and the GF funding requirement is being funded from the Dacorum Development Reserve.</p> <p>The Strategic Asset Review will enable the Council to make best use of Council assets to support the delivery of housing growth and regeneration throughout Dacorum; and to generate long term income streams that support service delivery for the benefit of Dacorum's communities.</p>
July 2023	<p>Cllr Bromham to provide written answer regarding timescale for verge hardening.</p>	Cllr Robin Bromham	<p>"I appreciate the amount of reported parking congestion we have on residential streets, and the effect that has, especially on pedestrians of restricted mobility. Our streets were not designed for the quantity and size/weight of modern vehicles.</p> <p>As this problem was neglected by the previous administration, and a backlog of potential schemes has built up, I have asked for policy options, based on evidenced parking congestion, desire-lines for pedestrians and co-ordination with the Local Cycling and</p>

			<p>Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) which is now being progressed properly by the new administration.</p> <p>I believe that the LCWIP will serve to reduce the need for reliance on cars for local travel, and hence support the choice to reduce levels of multiple car ownership.</p> <p>Thus, I am investigating the provision of more parking on residential streets where the need is shown to be most acute, with an ability to restore to grass or planting in the long-term.”</p>
July 2023	Cllr Wilkie to provide written information on fast-tracking to Cllr Johnson	Cllr Sheron Wilkie	<p>Further to the question from Cllr’s Anderson and Johnson in Full Council meeting on 12<sup>th</sup> July , please find my written response to all members as requested.</p> <p>In November 2022 Planning Officers provided a Member Briefing Note regarding fast-track appeals after a request from the previous portfolio holder Cllr Anderson – please find attached.</p> <p>Cllr Anderson and Johnson asked at FCM on the 12<sup>th</sup> July;</p> <p><i>‘In the last year there have been two highly controversial planning appeals in Kings Langley that have been fast-tracked. The fast-tracking process has been used for some years, but this is the first time it has been used for cases where the officer’s recommendation has been overturned by Development Management Committee, and the decision to fast-track an appeal against the decision of Development Management Committee is made by Dacorum Planning Department, not the Planning Inspectorate. The fundamental problem with the process is that the appellant gets another opportunity to include disputed information, but neighbours and ward councillors who have objected to the application are denied a role in the fast-track process. They are denied a fair hearing. The previous portfolio holder banned fast-tracking controversial appeals, resulting from the first case, but this ban would appear to have been discontinued. Does the portfolio holder agree with me that fast-tracking these cases is fundamentally unfair, and will the portfolio holder reinstate the ban to stop this from happening?’</i></p> <p>As per the Member Briefing in 2022:</p> <p><i>‘A householder appeal is an appeal against the refusal of planning permission for development attached to a dwelling or within its grounds (i.e., householder planning applications); or against conditions attached to such planning permissions. The householder appeal service was introduced in April 2009 to streamline the procedure</i></p>

			<p><i>for householder appeals, with quicker timescales for making an appeal, and the overall appeal decision-making process". In other words, a 'fast track appeal' is simply the process by which <u>ALL</u> householder appeals are heard. In that sense Cllr Anderson has misunderstood the fast-track appeals process as <b>this is not a process that Dacorum's Planning Department can choose.</b></i></p> <p>Cllr's Anderson and Johnson are correct that the appellant has a further opportunity to provide the Planning Inspectorate with their comments (their 'full case'). However, given the appellant will not previously have seen the Officer's report and the reasons for refusal it is in my view proportionate and proper that they have an opportunity to respond to these.</p> <p>Cllrs Anderson and Johnson are incorrect to say that there was a ban in place through the previous portfolio holder (Cllr Anderson), as it is not the Council / Planning Department that decides this process.</p> <p>As such, I have not lifted any such ban, nor do I have the powers to re-instate one.</p> <p>Moving on to the two specific cases referenced by Cllrs Anderson and Johnson:</p> <p>1) <b>22/00015/FHA</b>: 36 Belham Road, Kings Langley WD4 8BY</p> <p>This appeal was allowed on 21.02.23. The Planning Inspector agreed with the recommendation of Officers and concluded that the development would not adversely affect the character and appearance of the area. The key section is as follows:</p>
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6. I consider that the proposed two storey side extension incorporating the existing garage and extending to the rear elevation of the main house would be of a scale, height, bulk and design in keeping with the character of the existing house itself and the prevailing pattern of development along the street. The extended hipped roof would reflect the existing roof pitch and would be a visual improvement over the existing side dormer when viewed from the street. The size of the plot is ample to accommodate the increase in built form.
7. The proposed first floor rear extension over the existing single storey extension would be relatively modest in scale with a hipped roof and would be in keeping with the main house. It would be visible from the rear windows of properties in Hempstead Road over the long rear gardens but not from the street.
8. I conclude that the proposed extensions, together with the minor alterations to the chimney and rooflights and other openings, would not harm the character and appearance of the street scene or the wider area and that they are consistent with Core Strategy policies CS11 and CS12.

Therefore, this is simply an example of where Planning is not an exact science. Members, as is their right to do, reached a different view on the harm caused by the development to Officers. This is not uncommon and not due to a fast-track appeals system.

Design / impact on the character and appearance of the area are subjective assessments. Officers rely on their experience and knowledge of previous decisions to assess when a scheme tips the balance and becomes sufficiently harmful that it needs to be refused.

Officers have checked through householder planning appeals since the beginning of 2021 and there have been 4 householder appeals resulting from DMC Members reaching a contrary view to Officers. Three of these appeals were dismissed with one allowed.

2) **22/03760/FHA**: 29 Langley Hill, Kings Langley WD4 9HA

This appeal has not yet been determined. This one was refused for the following reason:

			<p><b>Reason(s) for Refusal:</b></p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>The proposed development by virtue of the rear facing balcony, will result in overlooking of, and an unacceptable loss of privacy to neighbouring residential properties. As such, the development fails to comply with Policy CS12 of the Dacorum Borough Core Strategy</li> </ol> <p>It is the Planning Officers position that regardless of the Planning Inspector's conclusion, any impact resulting from this development is very localised and that this development is not controversial in a wider sense.</p>
July 2023	Cllr Weston stated that she would provide a written reply to this question "What work was being done with Hertfordshire County to promote roles with young people	Cllr Carol Weston	<p>Hertfordshire County Council staff members regularly attend the Hertfordshire Head of Human Resources meetings and recruitment is a frequent item at the meeting. We had an external presentation on how to best use social media and LinkedIn to assist with recruitment. As a result we are now utilising a recruiter license which allows us to proactively contact candidates who match the job vacancy skill set and are open to work.</p> <p>There is other work continuing at the Council, which will support the recruitment/retention of young people. This includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Increase in the number of our national graduate development programme intake, from 1 per year to 3 per year.</li> <li>Continuing HR and management presence at career fairs</li> <li>We have a stage in recruitment approval process to ensure managers consider the option to amend the vacancy to a trainee/apprentice role.</li> <li>Bespoke marketing campaigns for graduate positions, latest one for the graduate environmental health officers. We received 12 applications.</li> <li>We offer apprenticeship training for staff and currently have 11 members of staff on apprenticeship courses.</li> <li>We offer a work experience programme for schools, this will be expanded in the next offer.</li> <li>We are exploring partnerships with local colleges/universities with an aim to provide a pathway to job opportunities with the Council.</li> </ul>



			<ul style="list-style-type: none"><li>• We have recently registered our interest in the planning graduate scheme run by the Local Government Association (LGA). This will be launched in the New Year.</li><li>• The appraisal process now includes a succession planning element to ensure that future training is bespoke to the needs of personal career development as well as job related training.</li></ul>
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