



OUR PLAN FOR DACORUM

2024-2028





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Find us on Facebook, X, LinkedIn, YouTube and Instagram.

Leader introduction

Welcome to Our Plan for Dacorum: 2024-2028. Dacorum has a renewed ambition, despite the constraints of Local Government funding and traditional expectations of local councils. We have two important missions to adopt through this plan. The first mission is putting our residents at the heart of everything we do, and the second is empowering local communities to have a real say on our services and the borough.

How will we achieve this?

This document sets out our plans and ambitions for the next four years. These will form the basis of our activity and decisions as we strive to reach our potential as a great place to live and work and as a thriving business community.

It sets out a series of commitments on which our residents and partners will rightly want to hold us to account. We will help residents and partners do this by being open about our progress and performance and honest about the challenges we face.

While the delivery of public services has become more challenging as budgets have been reduced, we face up to those challenges positively and proactively in the knowledge that Dacorum's resources are more than just income and expenditure and includes citizens' insight and intelligence.

At its core, this plan commits us to putting our residents at the heart of all we do. **Dacorum Borough Council will be a Local Authority that listens to you and acts with you on your concerns.** We are also committed to modernising how we work so that it is easier for you to engage with us and get what you need whether that be digitally, over the phone or face to face.

Dacorum has so much going for it and a huge amount of potential – this plan seeks to unlock that potential through a series of considered and impactful actions. We believe these can make a big difference across the whole borough. By the halfway mark of these four years, we want residents, businesses, partners and visitors to see how Dacorum is changing positively and rapidly.

An important local priority is responding to the climate emergency. Our buildings and systems are

not efficient and sustainable enough, which further adds to the cost-of-living crisis.

We have made this a central part of all that we do as we work towards our 2030 net zero target. As well as working on our own Council carbon footprint, we want to help our residents and communities to also prepare to avoid costs. Not only will this help our Borough and planet but can crucially help us all save money.

We live in a very green borough with many natural assets. We want to preserve them and add to them while also ensuring that everyone can enjoy them. Our exciting plans around leisure, active travel and green spaces will help make Dacorum a healthy and enjoyable place to live.

Our plan recognises the importance of housing to the quality of life and life chances. A new local plan, work around the 12,000 homes we own and manage as well as wider improvements to our towns will help provide well-maintained and affordable homes, where people want to live.

We look forward to working with the community, colleagues and partners to deliver our ambitious plan for Dacorum over the next four years.



Cllr Adrian England
Leader of the Council

What is a Corporate Plan

The Corporate Plan (Our Plan for Dacorum: 2024-2028) is a key element within our strategic decision-making process. It outlines our priorities for the next four years as well as providing a focus for service delivery and performance.

Service Plans and Operational Strategies

Our service plans and operational strategies set out how individual teams will deliver their objectives. These flow directly from the priorities set out in this document and they describe the key objectives and activities for each service area. They also highlight the performance indicators that will be used to assess progress and any risks which we need to manage.

Performance and Progress Monitoring

We closely monitor progress against delivery of these plans and performance against our key objectives. This will assure that we are on track for delivery.

These are considered regularly internally and reported to members. We will provide regular progress and performance updates on our website, social media and in Dacorum Life (email).

The Medium-Term Financial Strategy (MTFS)

This is our key financial strategy. It considers the financial implications of our Corporate Plan as well as providing a framework to ensure we manage our money in the most efficient and effective way. The strategies and assumptions in the MTFS inform the annual budget-setting process.

The council has a strong sense of identity and has worked hard to protect our front-line services, whilst facing significant government funding reductions combined with high demand pressures.

We know that funding from central Government faces a period of renewed uncertainty. We will continue to identify and deliver further income generating ideas and service efficiencies to deliver the medium-term savings requirement of £3.9 million, while maintaining core services.



Our Borough

Dacorum's population is split across three main urban towns of Hemel Hempstead, Tring and Berkhamsted, and surrounding villages. Almost 80% of land in Dacorum is classified as rural with 60% of the land designated as green belt.

POPULATION

155,100

AGE PROFILE

24.2%

Under 20

17.3%

Over 65

ETHNICITY AND RELIGION

86.8% White

13.2% BME
(Ethnic minority)

Christian **46.4%**

Muslim **3.1%**

Hindu **1.6%**

AWARD WINNING PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

62 play areas including:

4 adventure playgrounds

6 Green Flag parks

2 Queen Elizabeth II Fields in Trust



ACTIVE BUSINESSES

8,105

JOBS

134,000

Low unemployment
(2.9%)

650 businesses at
Maylands Business Park

ECONOMIC ACTIVITY STATUS

62.4%
In employment

2.9%
Unemployed

34.7%
Economically inactive
(% of people aged 16
years and over)

COMMUNITY SURVEY 2022

89%
Of residents are satisfied
with the local area as a
place to live

74%
Of residents are satisfied
with the way the council
runs things

Our Council

ELECTED MEMBERS

51

Elected Councillors

25

Wards across the Borough

COUNCIL SERVICES

140

Services provided by
the Council

2,000

Average number of planning
applications received per year

COUNCIL-OWNED HOMES

10,329

CUSTOMER SERVICE CONTACT

116,537 Telephone
calls received per year

19,246 Email
enquiries per year

3,128,321
Views of our website
per year

PARKS AND OPEN SPACES

20,000
Trees managed

68 Green spaces

62 Play areas

6 Green Flag parks

2 Queen Elizabeth II
Fields in Trust

25 Car Parks
All with Park Mark
for safety



FUNDING

10.6%

Dacorum Borough Council
receives 10.6p in every
£1 of Council Tax collected.
Hertfordshire County Council
receives 77.8p and The Police
and Crime Commissioner for
Hertfordshire receives 11.6p

£19.11

The amount the average
household (band D) pays
per month for all Dacorum
Borough Council services

WHERE OUR MONEY COMES FROM:

£20.85m Fees, charges and contributions

£6.05m Investments (properties and interest)

£2.92m

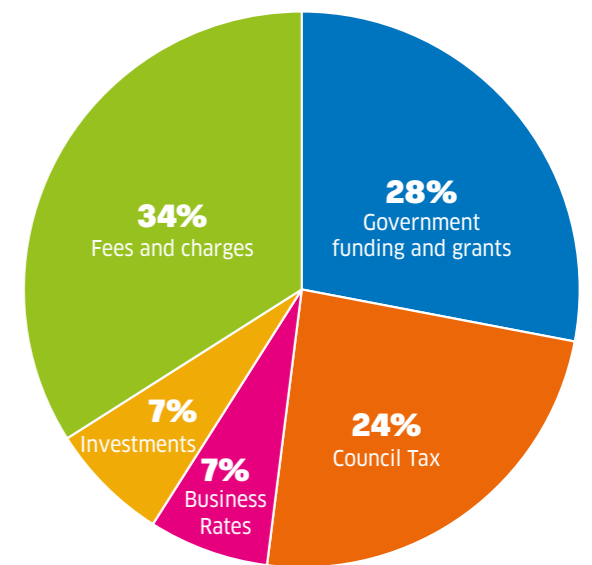
Government
funding and
grants

£13.34m

Council Tax
(including
adjustments)

£4.39m

Business Rates





Our Values

We have a set of values and supporting behaviours which are core to what we do and how we behave.

These will underpin the delivery of this plan, how we deliver services and engage with residents and guide the recruitment and training of our staff. This is what you should expect of us as your Council.

Our core values and behaviours

Honesty

We will be honest and act with integrity

Accountable

We will be accountable to each other to get things done

Nurturing

We will nurture Equality, Diversity and Inclusion

Ambitious

We will be ambitious for our places and our people

Customer Focus

We will put the needs of the customer first and be a customer focused organisation

Support

We will support each other and work together

Our Priorities

Our priorities make it clear to you what our ambitions are for the Borough. They also direct our staff as to what to focus on when they are designing and delivering services, and they guide us when making decisions. They have been set by your elected Councillors, taking into account the opportunities for our Borough and what matters most to our residents:

- Community engagement:**
Engage with residents and partners to have a real say on our services and the borough
- Service improvement and delivery:**
Running the Council efficiently and putting residents at the heart of everything we do
- Vibrant communities:**
Foster arts, culture and leisure opportunities
- Sustainable future:**
Take action on the Climate and Ecological Emergency
- Clean, safe and green:**
Provide a clean, safe and green-focused environment
- Homes to be proud of:**
Enable well-maintained and affordable homes, where people want to live
- Proud and thriving borough:**
Realise our potential as a great place to live and work with a thriving business community

In delivering these priorities we commit to taking an evidence-based approach, using data where possible, consulting with residents and partners as appropriate and making decisions based on a sound understanding of the detail and experience from elsewhere.



COMMUNITY ENGAGEMENT

Engage with residents and partners to have a real say on our services and the borough

Where we are:

- We launched a new digital engagement platform, letstalk.dacorum.gov.uk in 2024. We have already consulted our residents on parking, the local plan, walking and cycling provision, our 2024/25 budget and community safety.
- We have a wide range of regular newsletters which residents and partners can sign-up for or access on our website including our weekly Dacorum Life email for residents which is delivered to over 14,000 subscribers.
- We have a strong presence on social media with over 29,000 followers across Facebook, X, Instagram and LinkedIn.
- We have a balanced budget and a medium-term financial strategy in place for three years.
- We are becoming an increasingly commercial Council, allowing us to be more financially resilient.

Over the next four years we will:

- Involve you as we develop our services further - these developments will centre around what residents want and need and how they behave.
- We will be an 'Open Council' - where possible we will live stream meetings, publicise performance and plans and encourage participation.
- Explore informal opportunities for residents and Councillors to meet.
- Introduce a Dacorum Youth Council to give our young people a voice.
- Aim to find creative, varied and effective ways of engaging with residents and community organisations so that your views are heard.
- Continue to review our services to ensure that we are making the most of all commercial opportunities.
- Complete a review of all our strategic assets, which will form the basis of our future commercial and regeneration strategies.

What difference will this make to you:

- You will be informed and know what is going on.
- You will have many more opportunities to tell us what you think and, in turn, be able to see how your voice has contributed to decision-making.
- You will be able to engage with us as we make improvements, helping us to design services that work for you.
- Community groups will feel listened to and involved.
- A Council that maximises its commercial opportunities will be able to continue to deliver services while not relying solely on Council Tax.
- You will have a Council that is financially sustainable, so you can be confident that service delivery will both continue and improve.
- Your communities will be listened to and be encouraged and enabled to share their views.



SERVICE IMPROVEMENT AND DELIVERY

Running the Council efficiently and putting residents at the heart of everything we do

Where we are:

- We recognise the importance of delivering our services in a way that suits residents. We are delivering a transformation programme that puts you at the heart of everything we do.
- We have adopted and are embedding customer focus as one of our key values so that each and every staff member is resolutely focused on delivering good service.
- We recognise the importance of improving access to our services from anywhere, at any time, on any device.
- We have improved our telephone system to make it more customer friendly and informative, enabling our customers to get the information or service they want much more easily.
- We are rolling out a new Digital Platform which will allow us to significantly improve our digital capabilities and allow us to deliver services much more effectively to you.

Over the next four years we will:

- Involve our customers when designing our processes and services.
- Continue to improve our telephone access so that it is simpler and better connected to our other technology.
- Improve availability of services online. This will allow customers and residents to interact with the Council more easily and effectively at times that suit them best.
- Introduce and improve technology to automate routine tasks, improve response times, and enhance overall service delivery.
- Improve our website to minimise the effort required by customers to obtain information, use our services or resolve an issue.
- Redesign how we deliver services so they are easy to use. We will give our staff the right tools so they find it easier to serve you.
- Publish a Customer Charter, setting out the customer service standards we hold ourselves to.

What difference will this make to you:

- It will be easier and quicker to get what you need from the Council, whether you wish to do it digitally, over the phone or in person.
- You will be able to make a request, view your records, and monitor progress. We will tell you what you will receive and by when.
- You will be able to submit requests 24/7.
- It will be much easier to find out information about Council services and events.
- Our processes will be more efficient and cost effective, freeing up staff time to deliver the services that are important to you.
- We will listen to your feedback and act upon it. We are committed to delivering services that are effective and designed around what you want and need and how you live your lives.



VIBRANT COMMUNITIES

Foster arts, culture and leisure opportunities

Where we are:

- We have a growing creative sector.
- The Council run the iconic Old Town Hall Theatre in Hemel Hempstead which has provided theatre experiences for the community since 1978 and currently delivers a programme of live theatre, music, comedy, dance and film.
- The Borough is home to a wealth of superb open spaces including the Ashridge Estate, Tring Park, Boxmoor, the Tring Reservoirs and the Grand Union Canal.
- Our leisure centres at Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted, Tring, the Little Hay Golf Course and the XC Centre at Jarmans Park, alongside our four adventure playgrounds, provide the backbone of leisure facilities to residents and visitors.
- We have a vibrant and active Voluntary and Community Sector (VCS).
- We run and support a series of events across the Borough.

Over the next four years we will:

- Develop plans to improve our leisure facilities ensuring they continue to meet local needs.
- Carry out a review of what the Old Town Hall Theatre can offer.
- Consider the provision of a new arts venue in the Borough.
- With partners, we will deliver an exciting events programme for the Borough.
- Continue to identify and improve cycling and walking routes to encourage more active travel. This will include investigating the feasibility of an e-bikes scheme for Dacorum.
- Further empower partners, including the voluntary and community sector, to develop great services, opportunities and facilities to meet the needs of residents.
- Develop plans for the future improvement of Berkhamsted Leisure Centre.
- Open the new DENS Day Centre, a facility designed to help local people with the cost-of-living crisis.

What difference will this make to you:

- By supporting voluntary and community organisations not only will services such as Citizens Advice and Relate continue to support local people, but it will provide training, development, employment and volunteering opportunities for our residents.
- Improved leisure facilities will help us to lead healthy and active lifestyles.
- A renewed and reinvigorated 'Arts offer' for the Borough.
- More and better local events to attend.
- More opportunities to see and make use of our countryside.
- More opportunities for walking and cycling.



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SUSTAINABLE FUTURE

Take action on the Climate and Ecological Emergency

Where we are:

- We are updating our Climate and Ecological Emergency Strategy so it can tackle the challenges that face us.
- We have just launched a new £1 million Climate Emergency Fund to help us support and take local climate action.
- We have an agreed programme of work to decrease emissions. We will be publishing our progress so you can see how we're doing.
- We have an energetic network of Dacorum residents, businesses, community and voluntary groups. We are growing, rejuvenating and supporting the Dacorum Climate Action Network (DCAN).
- We are working towards a comprehensive air quality strategy with our neighbouring councils.
- Introduced 150 new Electric Vehicle Charge Points in car parks throughout the Borough.

Over the next four years we will:

- Regularly publish the Council's carbon footprint to drive and demonstrate progress towards decarbonisation of Council buildings, vehicles and operations by 2030.
- Increase the use of renewable energy sources, such as solar panels.
- Work to improve energy efficiency of all our social homes, prioritising those in fuel poverty.
- Improve accessibility of electric charge points.
- Use the Local Plan to deliver environmental benefits in local developments.
- Develop a Nature Recovery Plan to protect and improve the natural environment.
- Support our residents, community organisations and businesses to achieve net zero by 2050 through advice and support.
- Improve local cycling and walking routes.
- Engage with and support residents to improve energy efficiency in their homes.
- Work with our young people through schools and groups to help them to play their part.

What difference will this make to you:

- Live in a healthier, cleaner environment.
- Improved health outcomes and increased wellbeing due to better air quality by using cycling and walking routes.
- Save money on energy bills due to greater energy efficiency in your home.
- Feel supported to switch to electric vehicles due to the increasing availability of charge points in Dacorum.
- Live in a greener environment with a focus on nature and sustainability.
- A community which is more sustainable and resilient to the impacts of climate change.
- Stay well informed about our climate activities and how you can contribute to a sustainable future.



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CLEAN, SAFE AND GREEN

Provide a clean, safe and green-focused environment

Where we are:

- We run waste services for the whole borough. We have one of the highest resident satisfaction rates in the County.
- We have the third highest recycling rate in Hertfordshire.
- We value our green spaces and are committed to improving them. We have planted over 4,000 trees in the last year and have started delivery of an investment programme to improve eight playgrounds across the Borough.
- We have introduced 'green screens' at a school to improve air quality.
- We are working with Hertfordshire County Council to strengthen environmental education and improve habitat intervention at schools.
- We have created 51 hectares of nature recovery areas by reducing grass cutting and encouraging wildflowers.
- We maintain 68 green spaces across the borough.
- We have been awarded six Green Flags for our parks signifying their exceptional standards of cleanliness, safety and community engagement.

Over the next four years we will:

- Complete a £1 million playground upgrade programme, transforming eight playgrounds in the Borough.
- Work with you to improve our greenspaces through the development of Alternative Nature areas with Natural England.
- Deliver a strategic approach for our open spaces and identify areas for tree planting.
- Deliver a Biodiversity Strategy and Nature Recovery Plan.
- Increase recycling rates and encourage more opportunities to reuse.
- Review our approach to enforcement to ensure that is fair and effective.
- Develop a Parking Strategy aligned with our commitment to the environment.
- Deliver our Future neighbourhoods programme to bring services and communities together to revitalise neighbourhoods.
- Work with the Environment Agency to improve the quality of the chalk stream that runs through Gadebridge Park.

What difference will this make to you:

- More green, open spaces and parks for everyone to enjoy.
- Neighbourhood centres will be improved and service provision will be joined up with communities.
- An even better waste service with improved recycling support, making it easier for you to recycle and reuse.
- Better playgrounds across the Borough.
- Improved biodiversity and greater accessibility to natural areas.
- Cleaner air through improvements to our biodiversity.
- A Parking Strategy and approach that is consistent, understandable and appropriate.



HOMES TO BE PROUD OF

Enable well-maintained and affordable homes, where people want to live

Where we are:

- We are a major social landlord. We own and manage 10,329 homes, with plans to build more social homes over the next two years.
- We have published our draft Local Plan to guide the amount of development to 2040.
- We have developed a new Housing Strategy with five key commitments:
 - 1 To become an excellent social landlord
 - 2 Champion safe, warm and dry homes
 - 3 Climate and ecological emergency
 - 4 Champion collaboration
 - 5 Seek to meet the diverse housing needs of everyone in Dacorum
- We are working more closely with residents (including through satisfaction surveys and engagement events) to understand their priorities and delivering on them.
- In October 2023, we held a successful Housing Open Day with over 500 people attending - we now plan to do this annually.

Over the next four years we will:

- Launch our new Housing Strategy in 2024.
- Make best use of the housing stock, putting the right people in the right homes.
- Understand our tenants voice through online engagement platforms, providing real time feedback, to enable swift action when things go wrong.
- Ensure there is more affordable housing in the borough.
- Make our homes energy efficient. All new build homes will be built to Energy Performance Certificate (EPC) level B: efficient and by 2035, all social rented homes will be EPC level C: moderately efficient.
- Improve our repairs and maintenance service including re-procurement of the repair service, to ensure we have the most suitable response and repair contractor.
- Strive to achieve 100% compliance with the Decent Homes standard year on year.
- Aim to adopt our new Local Plan by the end of 2026.

What difference will this make to you:

- The new Local Plan will enable the Borough to grow through the delivery of new homes, with a mix of sizes and tenures.
- We will deliver tailored housing services that meet the needs of our residents.
- Council tenants will have safer, drier and warmer homes. Repairs will be completed on time and to a high quality.
- There will be greater support for our most vulnerable residents.
- Energy performance will improve, meaning lower heating bills for our tenants and less of an impact on the environment.
- Greater opportunity to tell us what you think so that we can take it into account as we improve our service.



PROUD AND THRIVING BOROUGH

Realise our potential as a great place to live and work with a thriving business community

Where we are:

- We are bringing forward strategies for Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring.
- We have secured Garden Town status for Hemel Hempstead and are working together with our Partners to sustainably expand the town through the Hemel Garden Communities Programme. This will see around 11,000 new homes and up to 10,000 new jobs for the town.
- We have developed strategies to deliver regeneration in Two Waters and Apsley and Hemel Hempstead Town Centre.
- We announced in November 2023 that we are teaming up with the NHS to deliver a new Health Campus in Hemel Town Centre.
- We have the largest business park in Hertfordshire at Maylands which is currently home to more than 650 businesses that employ over 20,000 people.

Over the next four years we will:

- Complete our new Local Plan providing sustainable growth for our main settlements.
- Complete the Hemel Hempstead, Berkhamsted and Tring strategies in 2024 to improve and develop these towns.
- Work with St Albans City and District Council, Hertfordshire County Council, landowners and Hertfordshire Futures to bring forward the first stages of the Hemel Garden Communities programme.
- Deliver more sustainable travel options.
- Work with our communities and developers to shape regeneration in Hemel Town Centre, Two Waters and Apsley and Berkhamsted.
- Develop detailed proposals with our NHS partners for a new Hemel Hempstead Health Campus on the vacant Market Square site.
- Complete the Maylands Masterplan, to deliver high quality development with investment opportunities.
- Continue to work with Hertfordshire Futures, Chamber of Commerce and business organisations to maximise growth opportunities.

What difference will this make to you:

- The start of the revitalisation of Hemel Town Centre with a flowing local economy, higher levels of employment and good quality jobs.
- The first stages of Hemel Garden Communities will see new homes, business premises, public open space and transport improvements for Hemel Hempstead.
- Exciting new developments and regeneration across the Borough that people will be proud of, including much-needed new housing.
- The new Health Campus will consolidate NHS facilities into a single and accessible destination in the heart of Hemel Town Centre, regenerating a large vacant site, and revitalising the town centre.
- More new and high quality jobs will be provided at Maylands boosting the economy further.
- Improved sustainable travel options.

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www.dacorum.gov.uk



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