Council Briefing Note - 13 November 2024

TRANSFORMATION (PEOPLE, CLIMATE & ECOLOGICAL EMERGENCY) PORTFOLIO COUNCILLOR CAROLINE SMITH-WRIGHT

People

Significant service achievements since the last Council meeting:

- New management competencies have been agreed by the Strategic Leadership Team.   These will be factored into a new mandatory training programme which will be launch in the New Year.

- We have set up a staff values and behaviours delivery group to help further embed these within the Council's desired culture – The Strategic Leadership Team has recently approved three new staff schemes drafted by the group – Staff volunteering, staff recognition and a mentoring scheme for staff development. Implementation has commenced on implementing the staff volunteering scheme.

- The Strategic Leadership Team has approved a new customer service training programme in line with customer charter and a new approach to undertaking Equality Impact Assessments. Both will be implemented across Autumn and Winter.

Strategic or significant operational matters which the service would like Full Council to be aware of:

Local Government Pay Award 2024/25

- Unison and Unite members voted to reject the employers' full and final pay offer. They are both balloting their membership on whether to take industrial action – closes mid-October 2024.

Digital

Significant service achievements since the last Council meeting:

- The Digital Team has rolled out a new mobile app that can be downloaded to users' personal mobile devices. Bring your own Smartphone (BYOS) represents a significant shift in workforce technology supporting remote and hybrid work arrangements by enabling our workforce to work flexibly in a way that better meets customer need. This new app enables our entire workforce (including Councillors) to access work emails, take calls and manage their diary securely without having to log onto their laptop.

- Next step will be to reduce the number of devices on our estate. People who work predominantly on Wi-Fi will no longer need access to a DBC mobile device. Users who work in the community will continue to have access to a mobile device (phone or tablet) which we plan to review and upgrade over the next 12 months.

Communications & Engagement

Significant service achievements since the last Council meeting:

- External Communications – Continued support across all services, supporting on communication, marketing and engagement activities for corporate projects, campaigns and operational service delivery. View our website for all news during this period All news (dacorum.gov.uk)

- Delivery of 50 Fest to celebrate 50 years of Dacorum - highlight of 50 Fest was a spectacular parade, featuring a wonderful array of colourful handmade puppets, led by community groups and performers. In Market Square, there was a variety of local market, food and drink and community stalls. There was also a wide range of entertainment and activities on offer in Market Square and the Water Gardens, including a BMX stunt show, acrobatic street dancers, Cloud 9 inflatables, high ropes and fairground stalls.

Transformation

Significant service achievements since the last Council meeting:

- We celebrated National Customer Service Week with a range of activities, drop-ins at the Forum and blog posts to ensure all staff across Dacorum recognise the importance of delivering excellent customer service

- We have introduced a new mandatory Customer Service training module for all staff to complete and introduced a new 'Customer Promise' which sets out a series of commitments to ensure we can improve customer experience across the council.

- We continue to implement measures to improve customer experience, introduce better self service capabilities and enable process efficiencies through our Future Dacorum transformation programme. Significant progress has been made on our Year 1 road map relating to the transformation of services and our Digital Platform.

  - We are improving our process for reporting abandoned vehicles, including automating processes via our Digital Platform
  - We have created self-service options for Council Tax, and we are now expanding more self-service options in relation to Benefits and Business Rates
  - We are developing a new system to enable easy search and renting of our garages
  - Establishing a new corporate complaints system that will improve the user experience for customers whilst enabling a more efficient process to investigate and respond to complaints
  - We are also ensuring that work on self-service capabilities is linked to our IVR so that customers can have a consistent experience regardless of the entry point into the Council.

- Average call wait time in Q2 was just under five minutes (290 seconds) against a target of seven minutes (420 seconds). This was lower than the previous quarter's wait times of six minutes (367 seconds) and less than half of the average call wait time of 12 months ago when it was over ten minutes (611 seconds in Q2 2023)

Climate and Ecological Emergency

Significant service achievements since the last Council meeting:

- Various feasibility surveys grant-funded by Salix into gas-consuming built assets worth £50K. These studies prepare the CEE team to apply for Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme for the most competitive assets. Further built asset investment will be shaped by the Strategic Asset Review.

- Our understanding how we can transition the vehicle fleet from Internal Combustion Engine (ICE) to electric has progressed. Environmental Services is arranging a site survey to establish charging capacity at existing sites, and the Depot Transformation project identifies ideal times for vehicle transition in the fleet replacement programme.

- The Local Cycling and Walking Infrastructure Plan (LCWIP) has completed stakeholder engagement and will go to public consultation in January and February 2025.

- We are engaged in the Local Area Retrofit Accelerator (LARA) project with partners across Hertfordshire. LARA's goal is to produce a strategy to increase speed of housing retrofit.

- The Green Community Grant is relaunching in November 2025, in line with Round Three of the Community Grant. The grant value available to applicants has increased, widening the scope of projects which could be funded.

- Our Electric Vehicle Charge Points in car parks, 12 sites are operational. Three further sites due by end October, six sites delayed with outstanding issues with UKPN or Herts County Council.

- We are working closely with Hertfordshire County Council (HCC) to identify additional on street locations throughout Dacorum that would be suitable for EVCPs. HCC have been allocated £6m of funding through the Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) funding.

Strategic or significant operational matters which the service would like Full Council to be aware of:

- The CEE team is developing tools to provide better assurance on the climate programme, in response to the recent audit. This includes a practical roadmap to net-zero as an organisation, project ranking tool, and more rigorous reporting.