



COUNCIL BRIEFING NOTE – 19 February 2025

PEOPLE & TRANSFORMATION PORTFOLIO – COUNCILLOR CAROLINE SMITH-WRIGHT

People

Significant service achievements since the last Council meeting:

- New mandatory management training programme (Inspire) has been launched, first cohort of managers will commence in February 2025.
- A new Staff Volunteering Scheme has been approved and will be launched in February 2025.
- Revised staff induction process approved which is due to be launched in February 2025.
- New Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Strategy approved by the Strategic Leadership Team. Next stage is to consult with Member which will commence in March 2025.

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

- **Local Government Pay Award 2024/25** - Pay award agreed and implemented on December 2024 for staff. Next round of negotiations has begun. Summary of the 2024/2025 agreement is below
 - Increase of £1,290 (pro rata for part-time employees) to be paid as a consolidated, permanent addition on Dacorum's pay scales from SCP 6 to 35.
 - Increase of 2.50 per cent on all SCPs from 36 and above.

KPI's for last month:

- Staff Turnover continues to remain low (10% per year)
- Sickness absence remains stable and in line with previous years.
- Job vacancies continue to decrease (8%)
- Agency worker usage continues to decrease (7%)

Digital

Significant service achievements since the last Council meeting:

The Digital restructure went live in December with all internal recruitment completed this month. Vacant posts are out for external recruitment, and we anticipate having a fully staffed Digital, Data and Technology (DDaT) service by June 2025. The restructure brings additional resources to strengthen our cybersecurity posture and will increase the support we can provide to services developing their 3-5 years technology roadmaps. In addition, the restructure brings in new resources focused on data automation. The digital team resources have been made permanent recognising the need to raise the skills and confidence of our workforce as we move more of our customer processes online.

KPI's for last month:

- Percentage of Priority 1 & priority 2 incidents resolved in less than 2 days – 100% in December 2025

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 \(dacorum.gov.uk\)](https://www.dacorum.gov.uk). Residents can stay up to date about all the news and information from the Council by signing up to our weekly newsletter (Dacorum Life [Newsletter Sign Up - Dacorum Borough Council](#)) to get news and information direct to their inbox.
- Community Engagement - Engagement with our residents and local communities is important to help shape our services and influence the work we do across the borough. Consultations over this period include our Draft Local Plan (Reg. 19), Budget 2025/26, Sports and Leisure Strategy and Adventure Playgrounds. We have a dedicated community engagement platform ([Let's Talk Dacorum](#)) where you can find all our consultations and engagement opportunities.
- Civic event - Delivery of Remembrance Sunday and Parade on 10 November 2024. Remembrance Sunday is a national opportunity to remember the service and sacrifice of all those that have defended our freedoms and protected our way of life. The parade marched from the Rainbow Stage in Hemel Hempstead town centre, and concluded at the War Memorial at St John's, Boxmoor. The parade included dignitaries Commodore Tim Hennessey RN DL, Deputy Lord-Lieutenant for Hertfordshire, the Mayor, local MP, Cabinet, Members, veterans and over 300 participants from community and voluntary groups. The event was attended by over 1,000 residents.

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

- Launch of [Our plan for the future](#) (Corporate Plan 2024-2028)

Transformation

Significant service achievements since the last Council meeting:

- Progress is being made on the Future Dacorum Transformation programme, with services collaborating to redesign processes and develop enhanced self-service capabilities. Currently, 15 projects are being delivered across various services within the organisation, including areas such as Council Tax and Business Rates, complaints, Environmental Services and Housing. The designs are now being handed over to the digital team, with the aim of launching improved service access for customers this summer.
- To further embed our Customer Promise commitments across the Council, we have introduced mandatory Customer Services training for all staff. Additionally, we are collaborating with HR to enhance our customer service culture by developing Customer Champions within different departments. These champions will receive advanced training and work to instill excellent customer service practices among all staff members.
- The team has led the Council's annual service planning process. This involved collaborating with colleagues across the Council to determine the activities that services will deliver in the coming year and how these activities align with our Corporate Plan priorities.
- We have enhanced our performance management and project delivery processes. Regular director-led meetings now review BAU activities and project delivery, escalating performance issues to Senior Leadership when necessary.
- We have been consistently meeting the KPI for call wait times, reducing the length of customer wait times. A Customer Service training officer has been permanently appointed, enabling consistent, planned, and continuous training for Customer Service Representatives. This ensures that the Customer Service Unit is prepared for peak times. The role will provide staff with necessary training support and focus on upskilling staff to maintain minimal wait times.
- Automated text surveys have been introduced for customers calling the CSU via mobile phones. This allows us to receive instant feedback from customers to improve our services. All feedback, positive or otherwise, is shared with the team and back offices to demonstrate the service being provided on their behalf.

KPI's for last quarter:

- Stage 1 response times for complaints improved to 92% last quarter, up from 52% the previous year, exceeding the 90% target.
- There has been a decrease in Stage 1 complaints being escalated to Stage 2, achieving 6.67% against a target of keeping escalations below 10%.
- Stage 2 response times improved to 74% last quarter compared to 60% the previous quarter. Efforts are ongoing across all teams to improve this further and there is confidence in achieving the target in the next quarter.
- Call wait times were further improved, achieving 232 seconds against a target of 420 seconds

CEE

Significant service achievements since the last Council meeting:

- Worked with teams across the Council to identify opportunities for greatest impact on carbon reduction and sustainability initiatives, utilising the climate change and resilience fund. This went to Cabinet on 28th January and the report has been referred to full council for release of reserves.
- The Green Community Grants opened for applications in November 2024 and will close on February 14th. The grant values available range from £3,000 to £10,000. This funding range has facilitated applications requiring substantial financial support, such as building retrofits or solar panel installations.
- The Low Emission Vehicle Infrastructure (LEVI) fund, valued at approximately £6 million for Hertfordshire, continues to make progress in partnership with Hertfordshire County Council. The objective of this central government grant is to enhance access to on-street electric vehicle charge points across the country, particularly in areas that are less commercially viable due to their geographical location.
- Regarding Electric Vehicle Charging, Dacorum Borough Council is developing its independent position, separate from the LEVI Fund. The CEE team is assessing how new charge points on housing land could be managed going forward. Additionally, the charge points installed across our car parks for destination charging are largely operational, with some sites pending due to issues with UK Power Networks or Hertfordshire County Council. Insights gained from this project have informed our stance on Electric Vehicles.
- The Hertfordshire Local Area Retrofit Accelerator (LARA) project has concluded its design phase. Partners across Hertfordshire have collaborated to develop a strategy aimed at accelerating housing retrofits. The final strategy will be shared with stakeholders and distributed to Councillors once it is ready.
- The Low Carbon Skills Fund, supported by a £50,000 grant from Salix, is nearing completion and has enhanced the Council's understanding of decarbonisation investment in its built assets. Future investments in built assets will be guided by the Strategic Asset Review.

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

- The Solar Together bulk-buy scheme is open to registrations until Friday 4 April 2025. This offers discounted solar panels to homeowners and businesses across Hertfordshire. It is critical that there is high interest in the scheme to secure the most competitive price for solar panels from the installers. In 2023, a total of 2120 kilowatts of solar electricity generation were installed, predicted to save 10,435 tonnes of carbon dioxide over 25 years. Councillors are requested to promote the scheme as widely as possible, more details can be found on www.solartogether.co.uk/dacorum
- The Dacorum Climate Action Network event is scheduled for Monday 10 March 2025. The theme is "Nature on the Brink," featuring various speakers and stallholders from across the district. There will be interactive events, talks, networking, and plant-based catering and refreshments. Councillors are welcome to attend with their ward residents, registrations for the event can be accessed at by clicking here: [Dacorum Climate Action Network](#)