



www.dacenvforum.org.uk

**Dacorum Environmental Forum
Full Meeting – 10th July 2008**

MINUTES

Attendance

Phil Pennington	DEF Chairman
Norman Cutting	Berkhamsted Citizens' Association
Paul Harris	Friends of the Earth
Sylvia Davidson	Water Group
Cllr David Nobbs	Chipperfield Parish Council
Roger Hands	Water Group/Box Moor Trust
Cllr Brian Jones	Northchurch Parish Council
Mary Dyson	Lions Club Berkhamsted
Jenny Habib	Chiltern Society
Cllr Michael Clark	Dacorum Borough Council
Jean Blackman	Friends of the Earth
Cllr Garrick Stevens	Berkhamsted Town Council
Lizzy Savage	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Bert Chapman	Dacorum Borough Council
Andy Hardstaff	Countryside Management Service
Gruff Edwards	New Conservation Society
Richard Blackburn	Dacorum Borough Council
Tim Vaughan	Tring and Berkhamsted Cycling Campaign
Marion Baker	Friends of the Earth
Veronica Allan	Friends of the Earth/Tring in Transition
Bridget Wilkins	Berkhamsted Transition Town
Adrian Whyte	Interested Party
Hazel Johnson	Great Gaddesden Parish Council
Alan Johnson	Green Party

39. Apologies

Martin Hicks	Herts Biological Records Centre
Rudolf Kirst	Hemel Hempstead GM Action Group
Cllr Carole Green	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Richard Roberts	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Neil Harden	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Alan Anderson	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Fiona Guest	Dacorum Borough Council
Vicki Teal	Dacorum Borough Council
Cllr Alan Fantham	Northchurch Parish Council
Lis Dorer	Swan Care
Dennis Harvey	Hemel Nature

Gerald and Olive Darvill	Friends of the Earth
Greta Brown	
Peter Thring	CPRE Hertfordshire, Chiltern Society

40. Welcome

Phil Pennington welcomed everybody to the meeting.

41. Minutes from the Meeting held on 27th March 2008 and Matters Arising

The minutes from the meeting held on 27th March 2008 were approved.

There were no further matters arising.

42. Update on Supermarkets campaign

Gruff Edwards reported that following the decision at the last Full Forum meeting, a joint letter to supermarkets had been written between DEF and DBC. The letter had been sent to all major supermarket chains that had stores within Dacorum (Tesco, Sainsbury's, Asda, Waitrose, Marks & Spencer and Iceland).

G. Edwards reported that three responses had been received from Sainsbury's, Waitrose and Tesco. He presented a summary of the responses, which is attached to the minutes. He reported that Tesco had accepted the invitation to attend a DEF meeting and E. Savage had contacted them with potential dates.

G. Edwards then presented ideas of how to take the campaign forward. This included sending out a press release and for Tesco to attend a meeting.

Jenny Habib asked what happens to commercial waste.

Councillor Chapman explained that the Council has a duty to collect household waste but not commercial waste. He stated that the Council do however encourage businesses to look at recycled products, encourage contractors to take recycling and lobby the supermarkets and Government for more recycled products.

J. Habib questioned why the Business rates were not used for commercial recycling

Cllr Chapman explained that this was because business rates went to Central Government.

Adrian Whyte pointed out the problems with both biodegradable bags and oxydegradable bags, highlighting the difficulties with choosing one material over another.

Outcome

G. Edwards to send a press release to the local paper.

43. Dacorum Cycling Strategy – Tim Vaughan

Tim Vaughan, the Chairman of Tring and Berkhamsted Cycling Campaign (TBCC) conducted a presentation on the need for the Dacorum Cycling Strategy. A copy of the presentation is attached. Tim showed a map developed with the help of

Groundwork demonstrating the potential cycling routes for Dacorum. To summarise the presentation:

Tring and Berkhamsted Cycling Campaigns merged earlier in the year, having been running for 11 years and 4 years respectively, to pool resources, share ideas etc.

They are running an event in September in Berkhamsted, Bike Fest, mainly aimed at children.

As part of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990, Section 106 was introduced requiring funds to be provided by developers to support infrastructure. Stag Lane, a substantial development in Berkhamsted, is a recent example of success. British Waterways used the £50,000 to develop the towpath. Northfield Road in Tring has not been so successful and it is considered that an adopted cycling strategy would be beneficial as leverage.

A draft cycling strategy was prepared in 2005, but has not yet been adopted. TBCC have spoken to the Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee and the Strategic Planning & Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee. T. Vaughan reported that Councillor Denise Rance confirmed that it would be looked at in February 2009. T.Vaughan was concerned with this date as he reported that Dacorum are already behind much of Hertfordshire in getting a cycling strategy adopted.

TBCC's priorities are:

- Safe routes to schools;
- Cycle lanes in town centres;
- Speed limit in towns reduced to 20 mph to increase tranquillity and feeling of safety;
- Towpath along the canal; and
- Getting more routes up to Ashridge.

Richard Blackburn responded regarding S.106, stating that money collected for sustainable transport usually has to be directly linked to the development. He considered the first thing would be to adopt the strategy, hopefully later in the year, but noted that a lot of implementation will be through Herts Highways.

Outcome

TBCC invited to take a report to the Environment Overview & Scrutiny Committee on behalf of DEF.

44. Local Development Framework – Richard Blackburn

R. Blackburn, Development Plans Manager, made reference to the paper circulated prior to the meeting. He then went on to discuss where the Local Development Framework had got to, as summarised below:

In 2004 DBC published the Local Plan. In the same year the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act significantly changed the planning system requiring a Local Development Framework to be produced.

Since then the Development Plans department have completed a number of necessary studies and consultations; including a consultation on the Core Strategy in

May 2006, and the consultation on new sites with reference to potential growth, jointly with St Albans, in November 2006.

In May 2008, the East of England Plan was published, a policy document the DBC has a requirement to follow. The Plan highlighted Dacorum as an area for growth, with the development of 12,000 dwellings to be built between 2006 and 2021, with the possibility of a further 5000 dwellings by 2031. Although the proposals are currently being legally contested there is a requirement to conduct a Strategic Green Belt Review. Around Hemel Hempstead, strategic housing sites need to be identified on the scale of new neighbourhoods, which will be planned in a progressively detailed basis.

R. Blackburn reported that Development Plans are in the process of developing the Core Strategy, which will take until 2011. The Core Strategy will be a broad development strategy across the Borough. It will include a housing programme, settlement and countryside strategies, policies supporting sustainable development and climate change and an implementation plan.

As part of the development of the Core Strategy there will be a series of consultation phases. R. Blackburn is attending all Forums within the Dacorum Partnership to ask for help and input. Development Plans will be consulting on the options stage later in the year.

R. Blackburn asked that the members of DEF respond to the questions asked within the briefing note.

J. Habib, stated that she is the Treasurer of the London Greenbelt Council and noted that she is upset about the incursions. If it has to be done, it needs to be done really well. She stated that she was taught to plan communities not just housing.

R. Blackburn agreed with J. Habib. He stated that the high level principles must be right and then taken down to detailed stages. He mentioned the difficulty that the thresholds set for schools etc. are set quite high.

Paul Harris asked how many of the 17,000 homes would be on brownfield and whether Bovingdon Airfield had been considered as an option.

R. Blackburn stated that by building at Bovingdon airfield it would promote a separate settlement. He said that it may be considered as part of the review of the regional plan. With reference to building on brownfield he considered it was likely to be a 60:40 ratio brownfield:greenfield in line with Government policy.

Roger Hands noted that the document would be crucial to the future of the area and asked whether Development Plans had the ability to produce the level of work in terms of officer numbers to ensure that the document is something we will be proud of.

R. Blackburn confirmed that he has a good team, whom recognised their strengths and limitations. They will continue to employ experts where necessary, they have a critical friend, conduct internal diagnostic checks and continually scrutinise.

G. Edwards stated that DEF's opinion had been asked during the consultation for the East of England Plan and asked R. Blackburn what impact their response had had and whether it had been included in DBC's consultation response.

R. Blackburn could not confirm at the time what information had been included in the response.

Norman Cutting ask whether Hemel Hempstead General Hospital would be factored into future plans, mentioning his concern with the size.

R. Blackburn stated that they had tried to enlist the help of the regional health authority but it is their view that the growth is marginal. DBC will work with the Primary Care Trust to ensure that local provisions are considered.

P. Pennington asked the Forum to consider Richard's questions, both as individuals and as representatives of other environmental organisations and send responses to E. Savage. The responses will then be collated by the steering group and passed to R. Blackburn.

Outcome

All members are invited to answer R. Blackburn's questions as individuals or on behalf of environmental organisations. Please send responses to E. Savage for the Steering Group to collate.

45. Dacorum Partnership – Andy Hardstaff

Andy Hardstaff made reference to the action plan and proposal that had been sent out prior to the meeting.

Andy Hardstaff reported that he and E. Savage had started to develop an action plan matrix from the aims and objectives agreed within the 'Promoting a Cleaner and Healthier Environment' theme of the Sustainable Community Strategy.

He invited members of the Forum to put forward suggestions for actions that could be achieved over the next three years to meet the aims. It might be something that is already happening in individual environmental organisations, which DEF may be able to add value to. It may be a new initiative that you might like to see. A. Hardstaff stated that if members have ideas please pass them to E. Savage or alternatively come along to the next action-planning meeting. Future meeting dates will be sent out to Members in the near future.

A. Hardstaff then presented on the cross-cutting themes of the Sustainable Community Strategy (SCS). He explained that through the Local Area Agreement £1 million would be available, over two years, for actions taken through the SCS. He explained that he considers that DEF are ideally placed to bid for some of the money to help with projects linked to action on climate change. The presentation is attached to the minutes.

Outcome

All members are invited to put forward suggestions for projects that could be included in the action plan. Please provide any suggestions to E. Savage by Friday August 15th 2008 so that they can be collated for the next action-planning meeting to be held on Thursday 11th September 2008. All members are welcome to attend the action-planning meeting, please let E. Savage know if you are interested.

46. DEF Water Group – Roger Hands

Roger Hands mentioned that at a recent landowners meeting he was pleased to see that water infrastructure was addressed.

He reported on a recent meeting with Three Valleys Water regarding the River Gade. He reported that Three Valleys had been working on developing 7 options for the River Gade and had handed all of the information back to the Environment Agency to take it to the next stage and implementation. He has been asked by the Environment Agency to conduct further research.

For more information please see the DEF water group's website: www.defwatergroup.org.uk

47. Any Other Business

47.1 Herbicide – Sylvia Davidson

Sylvia Davidson alerted the Forum to a recent article in the Observer regarding a herbicide, Aminopyralid manufactured by Dow AgroSciences, which has been contaminating gardens and allotments across the country causing damage to vegetables. The contamination has inadvertently been caused through the application of manure. The herbicide has entered the food chain via horses fed on hay that has been treated, the manure then used by organic gardeners in good faith. It may also affect meat, milk and poultry products. For more information she suggested visiting: <http://www.guardian.co.uk/environment/2008/jun/29/food.agriculture>

47.2 Dacorum Youth Environment Forum – Lizzy Savage

Lizzy Savage mentioned that she and Phil Pennington were developing a youth forum with links through the local schools, to discuss environmental issues, share ideas and set the agenda for the annual youth environment conferences. It is the intention that any information will be fed into the Full Forum meetings.

47.3 Press Releases – Paul Harris

Paul Harris requested the Forum's agreement that he may send a press release stating DEF's position on both Post Office closures and the changes in flight paths. The Forum agreed.

48. Next Meeting Date

The next meeting of the Dacorum Environmental Forum will be on Thursday 16 October 2008 at 7.30pm in the Bulbourne Room, Civic Centre.

Note: The Agendas and Minutes from the Dacorum Environment Forum meetings can be found at www.dacenvforum.org.uk

The meeting closed at 9.45pm