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Paul Hodson, Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Notice of a Meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee

Date: Friday 7 March 2025

TOWN COUNCIL

Dear Councillor,

A meeting of the **Finance and General Purposes Committee** will be held on **Monday 17 March 2025**, at **Grove House in the Council Chamber** at **7:00 PM**. To view the meeting live or afterwards use this link: <u>livestream</u>. Members of the public and press are also welcome to attend in person. Members of the public may ask a question during the public session, either in person or online via MS Teams. If you would like to ask a question, please contact the Council via <u>democratic@dunstable.gov.uk</u> or 01582 513000 by 4 pm on Friday 14 March 2025.

This meeting will be filmed by the Council and broadcast live and will be capable of repeated viewing. If you are seated in the Council Chamber it is likely that the cameras will capture your image. By your presence you are deemed to consent to be filmed, and to the use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting or training purposes.

If you address the committee in person or via Teams, your contribution will be recorded and broadcast, unless this is during a private session, as permitted by the Access to Information provisions.

Please see the below QR code to access the full agenda:



Yours faithfully

Paul Hodson

Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Members are reminded when making decisions that the Public Sector Equality Duty 2010 requires Members to have due regard to the need to: Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct that is prohibited by the Act, advance equality of opportunity between people who share a characteristic and those who don't, and to foster good relations between people who share a characteristic and those who don't.

AGENDA

086/25 Apologies for Absence

087/25 Declarations of Interest

088/25 Public Question Time

089/25 To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 20 January 2025

Finance and General Purposes Committee January - Minutes.pdf

090/25 Action Tracker – to receive updates on previous actions

Action Tracker.pdf

091/25 Finance Report

Finance Report FGP 17 March 2025.pdf
Finance Report FGP 17 March 2025 - Appendix 1.pdf
Finance Report FGP 17 March 2025 - Appendix 2.pdf

091.1/25 Financial Regulations

Finance Report FGP 17 March 2025 - Appendix 3.pdf

092/25 Compliance and Facilities Report

Compliance Report FGP 17 March 2025.pdf
Compliance Report FGP 17 March 2025 - Appendix 1.pdf
Compliance Report FGP 17 March 2025 - Appendix 2.pdf

093/25 Tender for Waste Management

Waste Services Contract - Decision Report

094/25 Marketing and Communications Report

Marketing Report March 2025.pdf

094.1/25 Marketing and Communications Strategy Report

<u>Marketing and Communications Strategy decision report.pdf</u>
<u>Dunstable Town Council Marketing and Communications Strategy- Appendix 1.pdf</u>

095/25 Reference Up Reports

Reference up from CS Committee.pdf

096/25 Reports from Outside Organisations:

Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Attwell

Dunstable International Town Twinning Association

– Town Mayor and Councillors Hollick and Kenson Gurney
Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Wendy Bater
Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors O'Riordan and Alderman
Ashton Schools Foundation – Councillors Hollick and Alderman
Chew's Foundation – Councillors Brennan and Kenson Gurney
Poor's Land Charity – Councillors Kenson Gurney and Jones
Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity – Councillors Kenson Gurney
and Jones

Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive – Councillor Kotarski

097/25 Motion to exclude press and public

RECOMMENDED In terms of Schedule 12A, Local Government Act 1972, the following items will be likely to disclose exempt information relating to establishment and contractual matters and it is, therefore, RECOMMENDED that pursuant to the provisions of the Public Bodies (Admissions to Meetings) Act 1960 the public and press be excluded.

- 098/25 Creasey Park Finance Report Including Bad Debt
- 099/25 Grove House Building Works Report
- 100/25 Date of the next meeting Monday 16 June 2025 at 7.00 pm

To: All Members:

Peter Hollick (Council Member), Wendy Bater (Council Member), Kenson Gurney (Council Member), Matthew Brennan (Council Member), John Gurney (Council Member), Philip Crawley (Council Member), Liz Jones (Council Member), Johnson Tamara (Council Alderman (Council Member), Gregory Member), Louise O'Riordan (Council Trevor Adams (Council Member), Mark Davis (Council Member), Matthew Neall (Council Member), Michelle Henderson (Council Member), Nicholas Kotarski (Council Member), Richard Attwell (Council Member), Robert Blennerhassett (Council Member), Sally Kimondo (Council Member)

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

MINUTES OF THE MEETING OF THE FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

HELD ON MONDAY 20 JANUARY 2025 7:00 PM

Present: Councillors Gregory Alderman (Chair), Nicholas Kotarski (Vice-Chair), Louise O'Riordan (Mayor), Sally Kimondo (Deputy Mayor), Peter Hollick, Wendy Bater, Matthew Brennan, John Gurney, Liz Jones, Johnson Tamara, Michelle Henderson and Richard Attwell.

In Attendance: Paul Hodson (Town Clerk and Chief Executive), Lisa Scheder (Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer), Georgia Pearson (Democratic Services Manager), James Slack (Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager) and Rachel Connor (Marketing and Communications Officer)

In Attendance: Nil

(Remotely)

Public: 2

030/25 - Apologies for Absence

Councillors Kenson Gurney and Phillip Crawley

031/25 - Declarations of Interest

Councillor Liz Jones declared an interest due to being a member of Rotary Dunstable

032/25 - Public Question Time

2 members of Rotary Dunstable were in attendance

033/25 - To consider the Council becoming a corporate member of Rotary Dunstable (deferred from last meeting) following a presentation from Rotary

Councillor Tamara entered the Chamber at 7:09 pm

The Council received a presentation from Alan Corkhill, Club President and David Foottit, Club Secretary of Dunstable Rotary Club, explaining the work that they do and the benefits to the Council of becoming a corporate member of Rotary Dunstable.

Members thanked Mr Corkhill and Mr Foottit for their time and presentation.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: That Dunstable Town Council become a corporate member of Rotary Dunstable at a cost of £180 per annum.

034/25 - To approve as an accurate record the minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18 November 2024

The Minutes of the meeting of the Finance and General Purposes Committee held on 18 November 2024 were approved as a correct record and were signed by the Chair.

035/25 - Action Tracker - to receive updates on previous actions

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the ongoing actions described in the tracker.

036/25 - Finance Report

The Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer summarised the report to members.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

- i. To note the revenue budget position for the period from 1 April 2024 to 30 November 2024.
- ii. To note the balance of the Council's earmarked reserves as of 31 December 2024
- iii. To note the outcome of the First Interim Internal Audit for financial year 2024/25
- iv. To note the current investments

037/25 - Corporate Services Budget Proposal Report 2025/26

The Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer summarised the budget proposal for 2025/26. Members discussed the budget proposed in detail.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to reduce the originally proposed Grove House reserve contribution by a £20,000 for 2025/26, by using current year forecast budget underspend.

The Town Clerk and Chief Executive summarised the below amendment recommendations to Members outlined within the report.

It was previously proposed to amend the reserves adjustment by the Council agreeing to build its reserves over a three-to-four-year period. By phasing the accumulation of general reserves, the maximum amount needed would not be taken in the first year of the budget. This approach would reduce the precept increase in the current year and level out the financial impact over the following years.

It was proposed, seconded and

NOT RESOLVED: to phase the accumulation of the minimum required General Reserve of 25% of the salary budget over a three-to-four-year period.

It was previously proposed to make a reduction in publication costs, that the Council should.

It was proposed, seconded and

NOT RESOLVED: to reduce the number of Talk of the Town publications from three per year to two, generating a saving of £10,137.

Members discussed the use of the ground floor areas of Grove House that were not currently leased out. Officers were investigating the potential of weddings being held in additional to commercial and community hires.

It was proposed that the Finance and General Purposes Committee should review whether to proceed with developing plans to raise income from hiring the Council Chamber and wedding room for general use as well as weddings.

It was proposed, seconded and

NOT RESOLVED: to review this approach with a view to immediately seeking a tenant for the vacated ground floor rooms.

Councillor Alderman proposed the following amendment:

"The below amendment, offer an estimated annual saving of £1,000 to Dunstable's taxpayers:

Amendment -to the budget for 107 Democratic Management and Representation -

- 2.1 4501 Mayoral Transport reduction from £3,500 to £3,000
- 2.2 4502 Mayoral Allowance from £4,500 to £4,000

It was proposed, seconded and

NOT RESOLVED: to reduce the budget for Mayoral Transport (107 4501) from £3,500 to £3,000 and to reduce the budget for the Mayoral Allowance (107 4502 from £4,500 to £4,000.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to adopt the updated draft budget proposals and fees and charges for Corporate Services for 2025/26, as well as indicative budget proposals for the following three years.

038/25 - Overall Budget Proposal 2025/26

The Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer summarised the report provided. Members thanked officers for all their hard work to reduce the budget

from the initial level proposed. Several Members noted the time and effort all Members had put into scrutinising and commenting on the draft budget and expressed their thanks for the commitment shown and the achievement of reducing the budget.

Members wished The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager, as well as the Grounds Operations Manager, well for their future endeavours and thanked them for all of their hard work and support.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED:

That the following changes to the originally proposed budget be made:

- 1.1.1. A reduction of £20,000 from the Community Services Budget be made by removing the budgets for the Fortnight of Fun and Youth Festival (Minute 007/25).
- 1.1.2. A reduction of £78,454 from the Grounds and Environmental Services be made budget by reducing the contribution to the Vehicles reserve, removing the Grounds Apprenticeship post and reducing the grounds overtime (Minute 019/25)
- 1.1.3. A reduction of £20,000 from the Corporate Services budget be made by reducing the contribution to the Grove House building maintenance reserve.

To approve the proposed budget of £3,282,168 as detailed in the report for 2025/26, including the changes above, to be presented to Council for approval (at appendix 2).

039/25 - Compliance and Facilities Report

The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager summarised the report to Members. He passed on his thanks to all Councillors who he has worked with over the past years.

Since the report was written the Environmental Working Group had met. The consultant would be providing a list of objectives and actions with time periods which the Council can take to reduce carbon impact and progress against those actions will be presented to the relevant committee for what the council can achieve by 2030. It was agreed by the working party that the Corporate Plan's carbon net zero target objective should be reviewed and that the Environmental Working Group will not meet again.

Councillor Jones asked when the external painting of the front of Grove House would take place. It was advised that due to the priority of external works at the back of the building this will be considered once these works are complete, but the work was being

considered.

The committee were asked whether they would like a Carbon assessment report presented at the March 2025 committee with the opportunity to review the corporate plan objective to be Carbon Neutral by 2030.

Action: The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager to provide a Carbon assessment report to March's committee.

040/25 - Corporate Risk Log Report

The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager summarised the report to Members.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to approve the risk management arrangements and corporate services risk assessment provided within the repot.

041/25 - Marketing and Communications Report

The Marketing and Communications Officer summarised the report.

042/25 - Reports from Outside Organisations:

Citizen's Advice Management Committee – Councillor Attwell

Councillor Attwell advised Members that Citizen's Advice is saving Central Bedfordshire Council over £1 million per year.

<u>Dunstable International Town Twinning Association – Town Mayor and Councillors</u> Hollick and Kenson Gurney

Councillor Hollick advised Members that he and the Deputy Mayor had just returned from a Twinning visit in Porz, Cologne. They plenty about the relationship between Porz and Cologne. They are celebrating their 50year anniversary this year. Both the Mayor of Porz and the Mayor of Cologne have had an invitation extended to them to visit Dunstable in May 2025 for the Annual Council Meeting.

Hospice at Home Management Committee – Councillor Bater

Councillor Bater advised members that everything is going really well; Hospice at Home are celebrating their 40th anniversary next year.

<u>Ashton Almshouses Charity – Councillors O'Riordan and Alderman</u> No update

Ashton Schools Foundation – Councillors Hollick and Alderman

Councillor Alderman advised that both he and Councillor Hollick visited Manshead school recently; all the monies has been spent on items which have really transformed the school.

<u>Chews Foundation – Councillors Brennan and Kenson Gurney</u>

Chews Foundation offers financial grants for families who cannot afford school uniform of equipment.

Members were required to vote on the continuation of the Finance and General Purposes Committee due to passing the 2.5 hours limit.

It was proposed, seconded and

RESOLVED: to continue the meeting.

Poor's Land Charity – Councillors Kenson Gurney and Jones

Councillor Jones advised members that the next meeting will be held in February to discuss the monies which will be given to residents on Maundy Thursday.

<u>Lockington Charity and Marshe Charity – Councillors Kenson Gurney and Jones</u> Councillor Jones advised that the next meeting will be held in March where the inspections of properties in Church Street will commence. Applications for grants have been submitted for white goods in order to help those families who need it most.

<u>Dunstable and District Scout Council Executive – Councillor Kotarski</u> Councillor Kotarski advised he attended the Scouts' Christmas Party.

043/25 - Date of the next meeting - Monday 17 March 2025 at 7.00 pm

The meeting closed at 9:34 PM

Committee	Minute	Date	Action	Action Full	Responsible	Update	Status
FGP	193/24		Communications	Councillor Brennan asked if adding old pictures of Dunstable into Talk of The Town could be considered.	The Communications and Marketing Officer	To be considered for 2025, beginning with the 40th Anniversary edition in July	Complete
FGP	194/24	16/09/2024	,		The Town Clerk and Chief Executive	The History Society are developing plans with partners to provide a living exhibition as part of Heritage Open Day in September.	Ongoing
FGP	039/25	20/01/2025	Carbon assessment	The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager to provide a Carbon assessment report to March's committee.	The Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager	This work will be reported as part of the regular Compliance report to FGP, along with relevant updates to the correct committee.	Ongoing

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 17 MARCH 2025

FINANCE REPORT

Purpose of report:	То
	1.1) provide a revenue budgetary control report
	1.2) provide detail of the Council's earmarked reserves
	1.3) seek approval for amendments to the Financial Regulations
	1.4) recommend to Full Council to appoint the Internal Auditor for
	financial year 2025/26
	1.5) provide detail on current investments

1. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 1.1. To note the revenue budget position for the period from 1 April 2024 to 31 January 2025.
- 1.2. To note the current balance of the Council's earmarked reserves as at 31 January 2025.
- 1.3. To consider and approve the amended Financial Regulations.
- 1.4. To recommend to Full Council the appointment of the Internal Auditor for the financial year 2025/2026.
- 1.5. To note current investments.

2. BACKGROUND

2.1. This budgetary control report summarises the net expenditure against the budget for each service area as at 31 January 2025. This forms the basis for the projected outturn at the end of this financial year taking account of current known variances.

3. REVENUE BUDGETARY REPORT

3.1. The summary at Appendix 1 shows the net expenditure at 31 January 2025 per service area and gives an indication of the anticipated outturn against budget, taking account of seasonal variances and known commitments for the remainder of the financial year.

- 3.2. The summary shows a forecast revenue underspend at the end of the financial year of £233,647, which takes account of the takes account of the National Pay Award for 2024/25 agreed in October 2024 which has resulted in a saving on the budgeted salaries for the current financial year, along with a substantially greater income achieved from interest on the Council's reserves than was budgeted as well as the savings from the Priory House budget during the repair works.
- 3.3. At the Council meeting on 3 February 2025, Members approved the budget for 2025/26 as well as the contributions totalling £205,871 to reserves using the forecast underspend from the current financial year.
- 3.4. Within Corporate Services, the overall variance is forecast to be £60,253 underspent. Significant variances to the budget are as follows:
 - Staff Costs is due to be underspent by £28,851, mainly due to the pay award agreed being less than budgeted together with known vacancies.
 - Central Services are predicted to be overspent by £25,298; this is due to the budgeted service charge income not being achieved due to the loss of Creasey Park, together with the cross over of the IT contractors and termination fees incurred and asset valuations required but not budgeted.
 - Grove House is due to be overspent by £1,105; this is mainly due to the loss of rent due to one tenant vacating in year, offset by an underspend on utilities.
 - Corporate Management is due to overachieve by £55,363, largely due to an increase in investment and bank interest received to date and forecast to achieve throughout the year.
 - Democratic Management is due to be underspent by £2,443, mainly due to an underspend on Civic Hospitality due to the Annual Council Meeting venue being free of charge in May 2024.
- 3.5. Within Grounds and Environmental Services, the overall variance Is forecast to be £36,201 underspent. Significant variances in the budget are as follows:
 - Grounds Staff Costs are predicted to be underspent by £29,960 due to the pay award agreed being less than budgeted together with vacancies throughout the year.
 - Allotments is due to be underspent, due to reduced utility costs and repairs and maintenance
 - Cemetery is due to overachieve by £69,079, mainly due to burial income exceeding budget.
 - Recreation Grounds forecast to overspend by £21,816, mainly due to the Creasey Depot lease and associated costs not budgeted,
 - Town Ranger Service is due to be £4,649 overspent due to additional machinery servicing, fuel and general maintenance costs.
 - Bennett Memorial Recreation Ground Splash Park is due to be overspent by £38,412. This is mainly due to the manager salary not being included in the original budget, together with increased costs for opening out of season, not budgeted.
- 3.6. Community Services the overall variance is forecast to be £137,193 underspent, significant variances to budget are as follows:

- Staff Costs are forecast to be underspent by £2,509, due to the pay award agreed being less than budgeted.
- Older People's Support Service is due to be underspent by £4,738, mainly due to reduced transport costs, offset by reduced numbers of members during the first half of the year.
- Grove Corner is due to be underspent by £2,032, mainly due to the pay award agreed being less than budgeted.
- Events is due to overachieve by £1,143, due to additional income generation for sponsorship and concessions.
- Priory House is due to underspend by £126,047, due to the savings on salary costs offset by underachieving on income due to ongoing works and partial closure of the building
- Town Centre Services is due to overachieve by £3,639, this is mainly due to sponsorship secured in year as well as savings on staff costs due to the pay award being less than budgeted.
- HSHAZ will be overspent by £1,000, due to final staffing costs associated with the ending of the 4-year programme overlapping.

4. RESERVES

4.1. The schedule enclosed at Appendix 2 provides detail of actual contributions to, and expenditure from, reserve funds as at 31 January 2025.

5. INVESTMENTS UPDATE

5.1. Dunstable Town Council's current bank and investment account balances as 31 January 2025 were as follows:

Account	Balance	Interest earned in month	
Current Account	£10,000.00	-	
Business Reserve Account	£478,331.73	£378.85	
CCLA Deposit Account 1	£101,087.86	£406.19	
CCLA Deposit Account 2	£2,165,639.28	£10,684.68	

6. FINANCIAL GOVERNANCE

- 6.1. Councillors should, as a minimum, view and audit the Council's accounts on a quarterly basis.
- 6.2. The last quarterly financial Councillor audit was completed on 5 March 2025 with the Chair and Vice Chair of Finance and General Purposes Committee, Councillors Alderman and Kotarski, together with Councillor Jones, taking part. The Councillors carried out a 'mini audit' which included requests for financial information on various purchase ledger invoices paid.

- 6.3. As Chair of the Committee, Councillor Alderman and the Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer signed the bank reconciliations for the third quarter 2024/25, verifying the amounts to the bank statements provided.
- 6.4. Further quarterly meetings will be arranged, and all Councillors on Finance and General Purposed Committee are invited to be part of any future Financial Governance Audits they are available for.

7. INTERNAL AUDIT

7.1. Members will be aware that the Council have been appointing Auditing Solutions Ltd for the provision of an Internal Audit Service for many years, and have a successful, productive relationship. Members are asked to approve the appointment of Auditing Solutions for a further one year – for financial year 2025/26, with a view that officers will explore alternative options for finance software and tender for the provision of Internal Audit for the following year.

8. FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

- 8.1. The National Association of Local Councils (NALC) produced updated Model Financial Regulations in 2024. Officers have cross referenced the current financial regulations adopted by Dunstable Town Council and created a new version to align with NALC's model version, which will better assist in future updates. The amended version can be found at Appendix 3 of this report.
- 8.2. Members should note items in **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
- 8.3. Members should note the following additions or specific amendments to the regulations:
 - 4.8 Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.
- 8.4. Members are asked to approve the amendment to the regulations for 'withdrawal from any earmarked reserves shall be agreed by the relevant committee'. This is a change to the current practice, whereby any request for expenditure from a specific reserve relevant to a committee other than Finance and General Purposes, is referenced up for approval to Finance and General Purposes. This amendment would improve order processes and reduce the delay often created as a result of needing to take to through two committees.
- 8.5. Members are therefore asked to consider and approve the amended version of financial regulations.

9. **EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS**- none

10. FINANCIAL IMPACT

10.1. These are inherent in this report.

- 11. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS none
- 12. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS- none
- 13. **HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS** none
- 14. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS- none
- 15. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS** none
- 16. APPENDICES
- 16.1. Appendix 1 Summary of Net Revenue Expenditure at 31 January 2025
- 16.2. Appendix 2 Summary of Earmarked Reserves at 31 January 2025
- 16.3. Appendix 3 Amended Financial Regulations
- 17. BACKGROUND PAPERS
- 17.1. NALC publishes updated Model Financial Regulations for local councils
- 17.2. <u>Procurement Information Dunstable Town Council</u>

18. AUTHOR

Lisa Scheder – Head of Corporate Services and Responsible Financial Officer lisa.scheder@dunstable.gov.uk

Dunstable Town Council

Summary of Actuals vs Budget

Friday, January 31, 2025

Cor	porate	Servi	ces
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Service Area	Budget 2024/25	Actuals to Date	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance
Staff Costs	(505,964)	(412,577)	(477,113)	28,851
Central Services	(101,561)	(105,185)	(126,859)	(25,298)
Grove House	(34,616)	(28,394)	(35,721)	(1,105)
Corporate Management	(73,085)	(6,164)	(17,722)	55,363
Democratic Management & Representation	(24,600)	(11,903)	(22,158)	2,443
Capital & Projects (inc loan charges)	(104,582)	(100,072)	(104,582)	0
Grand Total	(844,408)	(664,295)	(784,155)	60,253

Grounds and Environmental Services

Service Area	Budget 2024/25	Actuals to Date	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance
Staff Costs	(906,293)	(735,413)	(876,333)	29,960
Allotments	2,425	4,565	5,285	2,860
Cemetery	54,280	133,784	123,359	69,079
Recreation Grounds	(74,565)	(42,971)	(96,381)	(21,816)
Town Centre and Gardens	(32,195)	(14,092)	(33,018)	(823)
Town Ranger Service	(12,760)	(12,166)	(17,409)	(4,649)
Capital & Projects	(139,950)	(164,059)	(139,950)	0
Sub Total	(1,109,058)	(830,352)	(1,034,446)	74,612
Income: Creasey Park - Football	283,622	(2,966)	(3,196)	(286,818)
Costs: Creasey park - Football	(114,080)	(1,020)	(1,020)	113,060
Income: Bar & Catering	288,049	281	281	(287,768)
Costs: Bar & Catering	(457,591)	5,455	3,937	461,528
Sub Total	0	1,750	2	2
Bennett Memorial RG Splash Park	(37,919)	(73,671)	(76,331)	(38,412)
Grand Total	(1,146,977)	(902,273)	(1,110,776)	36,201

Community Services

Service Area	Budget 2024/25	Actuals to Date	Year-end Forecast	Year-end Variance
Staff Costs	(310,818)	(243,188)	(308,309)	2,509
Older People's Support Service	(27,840)	(14,684)	(23,102)	4,738
Community Engagement (inc Grants)	(31,207)	(20,180)	(29,175)	2,032
Grove Corner	(20,340)	(16,361)	(22,554)	(2,214)
Events Programme	(162,931)	(146,307)	(161,788)	1,143
Priory House	(329,774)	(174,762)	(203,727)	126,047
Town Centre Services (inc Special Markets)	(131,906)	(94,699)	(128,268)	3,639
Public Conveniences (Ashton Square)	(6,775)	(4,288)	(6,475)	300
High Street Heritage Action Zone	(13,688)	(14,688)	(14,688)	(1,000)
Capital & Projects	(99,436)	(91,473)	(99,437)	(1)
Grand Total	(1,134,715)	(820,630)	(997,523)	137,193

DTC Grand Total	(3,126,100)	(2,387,198)	(2,892,453)	233,647

192,631

Precept (2,933,469)

			Balance as at	Contributions	Expenditure	Bal as at		Committed	Bal after
	Description	Officer	01.04.24	Revenue/ Other	in year	31.01.25	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Amount	committed
310	General Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£757,573			£757,573	Council 05.02.24- Minute 47/24- £192,631 contribution to 24/25 budget & contributions to reserves totalling £145,112	-£337,743	£419,830
311	Corporate Plan Development Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£5,000		-£5,000	£0			£0
	Vehicles Reserve	HofGES	£80,017	£18,142	-£63,990	£34,169	FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24- bal of £28,347 for 2 replacement vehicles & 1 additional ride on mower (of £92,337 approved)	-£28,347	£5,822
313	CPCFC Reserve	TC&CE	£33,965		-£30,998	£2.967		-£2,967	£0
	Christmas Lights Reserve	HofCS	£2,094	£8,434	£0	£10,529	5 year replacement lighting plan 21/22-25/26; Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= release of £8,731 for replacement and repairs of lights	-£9,095	£1,434
315	Street Dressing Reserve	HofCS	£5,427	£5,000	-£7,911	£2,517	FGP 16.09.24- Minute 194/24= bal of reserve £2,517 for 40th anniversary street dressing (of £7,467 approved)	-£2,517	£0
316	Downside Building Maintenance Res	HofCS	£53,002	£3,000	-£3,233	£52,769	FGP 12.06.23- Minute 141/23= £36,679 & £8,792.55- for 2nd phase roof repairs	-£45,472	£7,297
			,	·	20,200	Í	Chairmans Approval 17.04.23= bal of £2,000 roof		
317	Grove Corner Building Maint Reserve	HofCS	£34,565	£4,000		£38,565	survey & development plans (of £5,000 approved) Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £5,357 for improved	-£2,000	£36,565
318	Building Security Systems	HofCorp	£5,357			£5,357	security for Grove House	-£5,357	£0
319	Cemetery Memorial Safety	HofGES	£1,500	£1,575		£3.075	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £3,075 for periodic inspections and subsequent works	-£3.075	£0
						,	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £9,000 for		
320	Priory House Tearooms Equipment	HofCS	£7,434	£3,000	-£1,434	£9,000	replacement of kitchen/catering equipment	-£9,000	£0
321	IT/Equipment Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£55,902	£20,000	-£74,689	£1,213	FGP 18.03.24- Minute 84/2= bal of £1,213 for new IT contract (of £75,902 approved)	-£1,213	£0
322	Older People's Day Care Svce	HofCS	£12,325			£12,325	Revenue budget committed= £1,200	-£1,200	£11,125
	· · · ·	TC&CE / HofCorp	£0	£20,000		£20,000	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £20,000 for future election costs due to CBC	,	£0
323	Election Reserve	Посогр	£U	£20,000		220,000	essential repair and maintenance works (of £226,550	-£20,000	ž.U
324	Grove House Building Reserve	HofCorp	£177,550	£49,000	-£27,799	£198,751	approved)	-£198,751	£0
325	Priory House Works Contingency	HofCS	£29,864			£29,864	FGP 12.06.23- Minute 141/23= £29,864- for Priory House contingency	-£29,864	£0
	Mayoral Reserve	HofCorp	£3,000			£3,000	FGP 19.01.15-Minute 24 - to be retained for transport/allowance as required	-£3,000	£0
	Priory House Exhibition	HofCS	£11,149			£11,149	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £11,149 for programme of future exhibitions	-£11,149	£0
329	Performance Area Reserve	HofCS	£609		-£609	£0			£0
330	Town Twinning Reserve	TC&CE / HofCorp	£8,739		-£350	£8,389	Retained for twinning activities to be determined		£8,389

<u>Dunstable Town Council - Reserves Summary 2024/25</u>

	Description	Officer	Balance as at 01.04.24	Contributions Revenue/ Other	Expenditure in year	Bal as at 31.01.25	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed
ŀ	Description	Officer	01.04.24	Revenue/ Other	iii yeai	31.01.23	Communication rogianime of works, etc	Amount	Committee
							FGP 12.06.23- Minute 141/23- Bal of £980 for 23/24 work requirements (from £17,090 agreed)		
221	Tree Reserve	HofGES	£4,448	£15,000	-£2,980	£16,468	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £15,488 for programme of tree inspections and subsequent works	-£16,468	£0
331	Tiee Reserve	TIOIGES	24,440	£15,000	-£2,960	210,400		-£10,400	£U
							FGP 20.01.20- Minute 8- Bal of £4,723 for improvement works (from £26,668 agreed);		
							Council 29.06.20- Minute 85- £15,000 agreed for Priory Gardens Pergola Repairs; FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24- bal of £12,960 for		
222	Open Spaces Improvement Plan	HofGES	£59,089	£40,000	-£50,577	£48,512	Pergola and Kneerail project in Priory Gardens (of £35,600 agreed) + £10,000 external contribution	-£42,683	£5,829
332	Open Spaces improvement Flan	TIOIOLO	239,009	£40,000	-230,377	240,312	Chairmans Approval 08.07.22= bal of £9,446 - lease of	-242,003	£3,029
							bean machine (£10,000 approved); FGP Minute 41/23 23.01.23-£21,200- drainage, infill		
							and electrical works; FGP Minute 41/23 23.01.23- £205,000- tendering		
333	Priory House Building Reserve	HofCS	£235,646	£29,357		£265,003	process for additional works	-£235,646	£29,357
334	Pavilion Buildings Maintenance Res	HofGES	£23,644	£15,000	-£3,012	£35,632			£35,632
335	Church Street Phone Box Maintenance	HofGES	£5,000			£5,000	FGP 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £5,000 for Church Street phone box maintenance	-£5,000	£0
		TC&CE / HofCorp	Ĺ				Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £1,000 for future requirements		£0
337	Member Training Reserve	поісоір	£1,000			£1,000	requirements	-£1,000	£U
							FGP Minute 107 20.06.22= bal for 5 year infrastructure improvement programme (upto £42,800 approved)		
338	Allotments Reserve	HofGES	£23,300	£5,000	-£4,675	£23,625	(includes £5,000 pa contributions to 26/27)	-£12,256	£11,370
339	Investment Account Interest	TC&CE	£13,261	£4,187		£17,448	Interest accrued on ringfenced deposit account		£17,448
		TC&CE /							
341	Outdoor Leisure (non play) Reserve	HofGES	£10,319	£12,000	-£7,268	£15,052	Council 15.04.24- Minute 99/24= £300 for purchase of		£15,052
342	Memorial Kerbs Reserve	HofGES	£461			£461	memorial kerbs	-£300	£161
343	Cemetery Building Maintenance Res	HofGES	£12,281	£5,000		£17,281			£17,281
344	Fencing Maintenance Reserve	HofGES	£0	£7,000		£7,000			£7,000
Ī					0000 504		HSHAZ scheme programme / HAR 1 Priory House	040.470	
346	HSHAZ/Priory House HAR	HofCS	£3,341	£860,666	-£820,534	£43,473	works programme- to future claim	-£43,473	£0
348	Unfulfilled Orders	HofCorp	£3,351		-£2,399	£953	Unfulfilled orders committed in previous year/s	-£953	£0
		TC&CE /							
	Neighbourhood Development Earmarked Reserves Total	HofCorp	£10,888 £1,691,105	£9,112 £1,134,472	-£7,333 -£1,114,790	£12,668 £1,710,787		-£1,068,527	£12,668 £642,259

<u>Dunstable Town Council - Reserves Summary 2024/25</u>

		Balance as at	Contributions	Expenditure	Bal as at		Committed	Bal after
Description	Officer	01.04.24	Revenue/ Other	in year	31.01.25	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Amount	committed

Capital Receipt - Sale of Land at Meadway

	Description	Officer	Balance as at 01.04.24	Contributions Revenue/ Other	Expenditure in year	Bal as at 31.01.25	Commitments/Programme of works, etc	Committed Amount	Bal after committed
371	White Lion Land Landscaping	HofGES	£10,000			£10,000	Council 05.12.22 Minute 210- creation of new reserve from capital receipt received July 2022	-£10,000	£0
372	New Cemetery Development	HofGES	£36,776	£116,000	-£5,415	£147,361	FGP 18.09.23- Minute 187/23= balance of £31,360.5 for development of the new cemetery (of £36,775 approved)	-£31,361	£116,000
373	Grounds Depot Extension	HofGES	£100,000			£100,000	FGP 17.06.24- Minute 141/24= Depot Extension	-£100,000	£0
374	Luton Road MUGA	HofGES	£42			£42	Council 05.12.22 Minute 210- bal of £1,873 for a MUGA at Kingsbury Recreation Ground (previously known as Luton Road) (of £100,000 approved)	-£42	£0
375	NEW - Priory House Furniture	HofCS	£26,000			£26,000	Council 17.04.23 Minute 104/23- creation of new reserve from capital receipt received July 2022	-£26,000	£0
376	NEW - Kingsbury Pavilion Refurbishment	HofGES	£170,000		-£1,000	£169,000	Council 17.04.23 Minute 104/23- creation of new reserve from capital receipt received July 2022	-£169,000	£0
	NEW - Splash Canopies	TC&CE	£2,873		-£2,816		FGP 12.06.23- Minute 141/23- bal of £57 for purchase and installation of Splash Canopies, benches and parasols (from £18,000 approved)	-£57	
	Capital Receipts Total		£345,690	£116,000	-£9,231	£452,460		-£452,460	£0

S106/External Funding/Ringfenced Expenditure specified by funding body

350	Developers Contributions- CAP	HofGES	£11,723		-£11,723	£0			£0
351	CPCFC Capital	TC&CE	£83,641		-£83,641	£0			£0
352	Development Contributions- REV	HofGES	£34,316			£34,316	£8,000 committed in 23/24 revenue budget from Bal of £22,129 for Willoughy (from S106 £47,645) Bal of £4,038 for Court Drive Landscaping (from CBC £15,000)	-£12,038	£22,278
570	Joint Committee Fund	HofCS	£50,021	£38		£50,059	Bal in holding code as committed Joint Committees fund only = not DTC	-£50,059	£0
	S106/External Funding Total		£179,701	£38	-£95,364	£84,375		-£62,096	£22,278
			£2,216,496	£1,250,510	-£1,219,385	£2,247,621		-£1,583,083	£664,538

Key:

- = Finance and General Purposes Committee
 = Grounds and Environmental Services Committee
- = Community Services Committee

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCIAL REGULATIONS

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These Financial Regulations were adopted by the council at its meeting held on [enter date].

1. General

- 1.1. These Financial Regulations govern the financial management of the council and may only be amended or varied by resolution of the council. They are one of the council's three governing policy documents providing procedural guidance for members and officers and shall be observed in conjunction with the Council's Standing Orders.
- 1.2. Councillors are expected to follow these regulations and not to entice employees to breach them. Failure to follow these regulations brings the office of councillor into disrepute.
- 1.3. Wilful breach of these regulations by an employee may result in disciplinary proceedings.
- 1.4. In these Financial Regulations:
 - 'Accounts and Audit Regulations' means the regulations issued under Sections 32, 43(2) and 46 of the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and then in force, unless otherwise specified.
 - "Approve" refers to an online action, allowing an electronic transaction to take place.
 - "Authorise" refers to a decision by the council, or a committee or an officer, to allow something to happen.
 - 'Proper practices' means those set out in *The Practitioners' Guide*
 - Practitioners' Guide refers to the guide issued by the Joint Panel on Accountability and Governance (JPAG) and published by NALC in England or Governance and Accountability for Local Councils in Wales – A Practitioners Guide jointly published by One Voice Wales and the Society of Local Council Clerks in Wales.
 - 'Must' and **bold text** refer to a statutory obligation the council cannot change.
 - 'Shall' refers to a non-statutory instruction by the council to its members and staff.
- 1.5. The Responsible Financial Officer (RFO) holds a statutory office, appointed by the council. The RFO;
 - acts under the policy direction of the Finance and General Purposes Committee;
 - administers the council's financial affairs in accordance with all Acts, Regulations and proper practices;
 - determines on behalf of the council its accounting records and control systems;
 - ensures the accounting control systems are observed;

- ensures the accounting records are kept up to date;
- assists the council to secure economy, efficiency and effectiveness in the use of council resources; and
- produces financial management information as required by the council.
- 1.6. The council must not delegate any decision regarding:
 - setting the final budget or the precept (council tax requirement);
 - the outcome of a review of the effectiveness of its internal controls
 - approving accounting statements;
 - approving an annual governance statement;
 - borrowing;
 - declaring eligibility for the General Power of Competence; and
 - addressing recommendations from the internal or external auditors

1.7. In addition:

 The Council's banking arrangements, including the Bank Mandate, shall be made by the RFO and approved by the Council. Banking arrangements may not be delegated to a committee. They shall be regularly reviewed for safety and efficiency at an interval of not less than 4 years. The council shall authorise any grant or single commitment in excess of £50,000

2. Risk management and internal control

- 2.1. The council must ensure that it has a sound system of internal control, which delivers effective financial, operational and risk management.
- 2.2. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive, with the RFO, shall prepare, for approval by the council, a risk management policy covering all activities of the council. This policy and consequential risk management arrangements shall be reviewed by the council at least annually.
- 2.3. At least once a year, the council must review the effectiveness of its system of internal control, before approving the Annual Governance Statement.
- 2.4. The accounting control systems determined by the RFO must include measures to:
 - ensure that risk is appropriately managed;
 - ensure the prompt, accurate recording of financial transactions;
 - prevent and detect inaccuracy or fraud; and
 - allow the reconstitution of any lost records;
 - · identify the duties of officers dealing with transactions and
 - · ensure division of responsibilities.
- 2.5. At least once in each quarter, and at each financial year end, two Members shall be appointed to verify bank reconciliations (for all accounts) produced by the RFO. The

- members shall verify a sample of invoices, sign and date the bank reconciliations and the original bank statements (or similar documentation), as evidence of this. This activity, including any exceptions, shall be reported to and noted by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.
- 2.6. Regular back-up copies shall be made of the records on any council computer and stored online. The council shall put measures in place to ensure that the ability to access any employees account or computer is not lost if an employee leaves or is incapacitated for any reason.

3. Accounts and audit

- 3.1. All accounting procedures and financial records of the council shall be determined by the RFO in accordance with the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.2. The accounting records determined by the RFO must be sufficient to show and explain the council's transactions and to disclose its financial position with reasonably accuracy at any time. In particular, they must contain:
 - day-to-day entries of all sums of money received and expended by the council and the matters to which they relate;
 - a record of the assets and liabilities of the council:
- 3.3. The accounting records shall facilitate the efficient preparation of the accounting statements in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return.
- 3.4. The RFO shall complete and certify the annual Accounting Statements of the council contained in the Annual Governance and Accountability Return in accordance with proper practices, as soon as practicable after the end of the financial year. Having certified the Accounting Statements, the RFO shall submit them (with any related documents) to the council, within the timescales required by the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.5. The council must ensure that there is an adequate and effective system of internal audit of its accounting records and internal control system in accordance with proper practices.
- 3.6. Any officer or member of the council must make available such documents and records as the internal or external auditor consider necessary for the purpose of the audit and shall, as directed by the council, supply the RFO, internal auditor, or external auditor with such information and explanation as the council considers necessary.
- 3.7. The internal auditor shall be appointed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and shall carry out their work to evaluate the effectiveness of the council's risk management, control and governance processes in accordance with proper practices specified in the Practitioners' Guide.
- 3.8. The council shall ensure that the internal auditor:
 - is competent and independent of the financial operations of the council;
 - reports to council in writing, or in person, on a regular basis with a minimum of one written report during each financial year;

- can demonstrate competence, objectivity and independence, free from any actual or perceived conflicts of interest, including those arising from family relationships; and
- has no involvement in the financial decision making, management or control of the council
- 3.9. Internal or external auditors may not under any circumstances:
 - perform any operational duties for the council;
 - initiate or approve accounting transactions;
 - provide financial, legal or other advice including in relation to any future transactions; or
 - direct the activities of any council employee, except to the extent that such employees have been appropriately assigned to assist the internal auditor
- 3.10. For the avoidance of doubt, in relation to internal audit the terms 'independent' and 'independence' shall have the same meaning as described in The Practitioners Guide.
- 3.11. The RFO shall make arrangements for the exercise of electors' rights in relation to the accounts, including the opportunity to inspect the accounts and display or publish any notices and documents required by the Local Audit and Accountability Act 2014, or any superseding legislation, and the Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 3.12. The RFO shall, without undue delay, bring to the attention of all councillors any correspondence or report from internal or external auditors, unless the correspondence is of a purely administrative matter

4. Budget and precept

- 4.1. Before setting a precept, the council must calculate its council tax budget requirement for each financial year by preparing and approving a budget, in accordance with The Local Government Finance Act 1992 or succeeding legislation.
- 4.2. Budgets for salaries and wages, including employer contributions shall be reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at least annually in the autumn for the following financial year.
- 4.3. No later than December each year, the RFO shall prepare a draft budget with detailed estimates of all income and expenditure for the following financial year, along with a forecast for the following three financial years, taking account of the lifespan of assets and cost implications of repair or replacement.
- 4.4. Unspent funds for partially completed projects may only be carried forward by placing them in an earmarked reserve with the formal approval of the full council.
- 4.5. Each committee with budgetary responsibility shall review its draft budget and submit any proposed amendments to the Finance and General Purposes Committee not later than the end of December each year.
- 4.6. The draft budget, with any committee proposals and three-year forecast, including any recommendations for the use or accumulation of reserves, shall be considered

- by the Finance and General Purposes Committee and a recommendation made to the council.
- 4.7. Having considered the proposed budget and three-year forecast, the council shall determine its council tax requirement by setting a budget. The council shall set a precept for this amount no later than the end of February for the ensuing financial year.
- 4.8. Any member with council tax unpaid for more than two months is prohibited from voting on the budget or precept by Section 106 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 and must disclose at the start of the meeting that Section 106 applies to them.
- 4.9. The RFO shall issue the precept to the billing authority no later than the end of **February** and supply each member with a copy of the agreed annual budget.
- 4.10. The agreed budget provides a basis for monitoring progress during the year by comparing actual spending and income against what was planned.
- 4.11. Any withdrawal from any earmarked reserve shall be agreed by the relevant committee.

5. Procurement

- 5.1. **Members and officers are responsible for obtaining value for money at all times.** Any officer procuring goods, services or works should ensure, as far as practicable, that the best available terms are obtained, usually by obtaining prices from several suppliers.
- 5.2. The RFO should verify the lawful nature of any proposed purchase before it is made and in the case of new or infrequent purchases.
- 5.3. For a contract for the supply of goods, services or works where the estimated value will exceed the thresholds set by Parliament, the full requirements of The Public Contracts Regulations 2015 or any superseding legislation ("the Legislation"), must be followed in respect of the tendering, award and notification of that contract.
- 5.4. Where the estimated value is below the Government threshold, the council shall (with the exception of items listed in paragraph 5.10) obtain prices as follows:
- 5.5. For contracts estimated to exceed £50,000 excluding VAT, the Town Clerk & Chief Executive or RFO shall seek formal tenders from at least three suppliers OR advertise an open invitation for tenders in compliance with any relevant provisions of the Legislation. Tenders shall be invited in accordance with the council's Procurement Policy, summarised at Appendix 1.
- 5.6. For contracts estimated to be over £25,000 excluding VAT, the council must comply with any requirements of the legislation¹ regarding the advertising of contract opportunities and the publication of notices about the award of contracts.

¹ The Regulations require councils to use the Contracts Finder website if they advertise contract opportunities and also to publicise the award of contracts over £30,000 including VAT, regardless of whether they were advertised.

- 5.7. For contracts greater than £10,000 excluding VAT the budget holder shall seek at least 3 quotes;
- 5.8. where the value is below £10,000 excluding VAT, the budget holder shall try to obtain 3 estimates which might include evidence of online prices, or recent prices from regular suppliers.
- 5.9. Contracts must not be split into smaller lots to avoid compliance with these rules.
- 5.10. The requirement to obtain competitive prices in these regulations need not apply to contracts that relate to items (i) to (iv) below:
 - i. specialist services, such as legal professionals acting in disputes;
 - ii. repairs to, or parts for, existing machinery or equipment;
 - iii. works, goods or services that constitute an extension of an existing contract;
 - iv. goods or services that are only available from one supplier or are sold at a fixed price.
- 5.11. When applications are made to waive these financial regulations to enable a price to be negotiated without competition, the reason should be set out in a recommendation to the council or relevant committee. Avoidance of competition is not a valid reason.
- 5.12. The council shall not be obliged to accept the lowest or any tender, quote or estimate.
- 5.13. Individual purchases within an agreed budget for that type of expenditure may be authorised by budget managers as set out in the Council's Scheme of Delegation.
 - The Council shall maintain a scheme of delegation which sets out the spending limit for each budget manager. The scheme may be amended by the appropriate Head of Service and/or RFO to account for staffing changes. The Finance and General Purposes Committee shall review the Scheme of Delegation at least annually.
- 5.14. No individual member, or informal group of members may issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.15.No expenditure may be authorised that will exceed the amount provided in the revenue budget for that class of expenditure other than by resolution of the Finance and General Purposes Committee. During the budget year, the RFO, having considered fully the implications for public services, may move unspent and available amounts to other budget headings or to an earmarked reserve as appropriate ("virement"). Specific budgets may be overspent, with the RFO's approval, providing that the overall budget is forecast to be within budget. All budget virements exceeding £25,000 and any overspends exceeding £1,000 will be reported to the Finance and General Purposes Committee. In cases of serious risk to the delivery of council services or to public safety on council premises, the Town Clerk and Chief Executive or the RFO may authorise expenditure of up to £100,000 excluding VAT on repair, replacement or other work that in their judgement is necessary, whether or not there is any budget for such expenditure. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive or RFO shall report such action to the Chair as soon as possible and to the relevant committee as soon as practicable thereafter.

- 5.16.The Town Clerk and Chief Executive, RFO and Heads of Service are authorised to incur expenditure on the council's annually agreed capital/revenue reserve programme on transactions of £10,000 or less, having discussed the issue first with the appropriate standing committee chair. Any proposed expenditure above £10,000 from allocated reserves; any expenditure from the general reserve; or any other reserves expenditure determined by the standing committee's chair as needing prior committee approval, must first be approved by the relevant standing committee.
- 5.17.No expenditure shall be authorised, no contract entered into, or tender accepted in relation to any major project, unless the council is satisfied that the necessary funds are available and that where a loan is required, Government borrowing approval has been obtained first.
- 5.18.An official order shall be issued for all work, goods and services (excluding VAT) unless a formal contract is to be prepared, or an official order would be inappropriate. Copies of orders shall be retained, along with evidence of receipt of goods.
- 5.19. Any ordering system, including order books, can be misused and access to them shall be controlled by the RFO.
- 5.20.A member may not issue an official order or make any contract on behalf of the council.
- 5.21.All officers are responsible for always obtaining value for money. An officer issuing an official order shall ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, the best available terms are obtained in respect of each transaction.

6. Banking and payments

- 6.1. The council's banking arrangements, including the bank mandate, shall be made by the RFO and authorised by the council; banking arrangements shall not be delegated to a committee. The council has resolved to bank with NatWest. The arrangements shall be reviewed periodically for security and efficiency.
- 6.2. The council must have safe and efficient arrangements for making payments, to safeguard against the possibility of fraud or error. More than one person must be involved in any payment, for example by dual online authorisation or dual cheque signing. Even where a purchase has been authorised, the payment must also be authorised and only authorised payments shall be approved or signed to allow the funds to leave the council's bank account.
- 6.3. The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring that all invoices for payment are examined for arithmetical accuracy, analysed to the appropriate expenditure heading and verified to confirm that the work, goods or services were received, checked and represent expenditure committed by an official order. The RFO shall take all steps to settle invoices submitted, and which are in order, within 30 days of receipt.
- 6.4. Personal payments (including salaries, wages, expenses and any payment made in relation to the termination of employment) may be summarised to avoid disclosing any personal information.
- 6.5. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive and RFO shall have delegated authority to make fund transfers within the councils banking arrangements. The RFO will ensure that a schedule of payments over £500 be presented to two members of Finance and

- General Purposes Committee on at least a quarterly basis for viewing and verification. Invoices are provided on request.
- 6.6. Members are subject to the Code of Conduct that has been adopted by the Council and shall comply with the Code and Standing Orders when a decision to authorise or instruct payment is made in respect of a matter in which they have a disclosable pecuniary or other interest, unless a dispensation has been granted.

7. Electronic payments

- 7.1. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive and RFO shall have delegated authority to process payments in respect of all authorised items of expenditure as and when, and on a timely basis, to ensure that all invoices are paid in accordance with terms as far as is practicable
- 7.2. All payments shall be affected by BACs. In exceptional circumstances where payment is required by cheque, these shall be signed in accordance with the Bank Mandate.
- 7.3. Where internet banking arrangements are made with any bank, the Town Clerk and the RFO shall be appointed as Systems Administrators. The bank mandate approved by Full Council shall clearly state the officers and Councillors authorised to approve transactions, and the value of those transactions
- 7.4. Corporate credit cards and trade card accounts opened by the Council shall be specifically designated to named officers, as approved by the Town Clerk or RFO, and shall be subject to automatic payment in full each month. No employee or councillor shall disclose any PIN or password, relevant to the council or its banking, to anyone not authorised in writing by the council or a duly delegated committee.
- 7.5. The Systems Administrator shall arrange for a finance officer to set up all items due for payment online. A list of payments for approval, together with copies of the relevant invoices, shall be provided to an authorised signatory.
- 7.6. A full list of all payments over £500 made in a month shall be published on the Council's website.
- 7.7. With the approval of the RFO or Town Clerk and Chief Executive, regular payments (such as gas, electricity, telephone, broadband, water, National Non-Domestic Rates, refuse collection, pension contributions and HMRC payments) may be made by variable direct debit. The review of variable direct debits shall be reviewed by the Finance and General Purposes Committee at least every two years.
- 7.8. Account details for suppliers may only be changed upon written notification by the supplier verified by the Finance Officer. This is a potential area for fraud and the individuals involved should ensure that any change is genuine.
- 7.9. Members and officers shall ensure that any computer used for the council's financial business has adequate security, with anti-virus, anti-spyware and firewall software installed and regularly updated.

7.10.Remembered password facilities, other than secure password stores requiring separate identity verification, should not be used on any computer used for council banking.

8. Cheque payments

- 8.1. A signatory having a family or business relationship with the beneficiary of a payment shall not, under normal circumstances, be a signatory to that payment, whether online or by cheque.
- 8.2. To indicate agreement of the details on the cheque with the counterfoil and the invoice or similar documentation, the signatories shall also initial the cheque counterfoil and invoice.

9. Payment cards

- 9.1. Any Debit Card issued for use will be specifically restricted to the Town Clerk & Chief Executive or Head of Service and will also be restricted to a single transaction maximum value of £500 unless authorised by council or finance committee in writing before any order is placed.
- 9.2. Corporate credit cards will be specifically restricted to use by the Town Clerk & Chief Executive and Heads of Service and any balance shall be paid in full each month.
- 9.3. Personal credit or debit cards of members or staff shall not be used except for expenses of up to £250 including VAT, incurred in accordance with council policy.

10. Petty Cash

- a) The RFO or Finance Officer may provide petty cash to officers for the purpose of defraying operational and other expenses. Requests for payments made shall be forwarded to the RFO or the Town Clerk & Chief Executive or Finance Officer with a claim for reimbursement. Vouchers for payments made from petty cash shall be kept, along with receipts to substantiate every payment.
- b) Cash income received must not be paid into the petty cash float but must be separately banked, as provided elsewhere in these regulations.
- c) Payments to maintain the petty cash float shall be recorded on any schedule of payments.

11. Payment of salaries and allowances

- 11.1.As an employer, the council must make arrangements to comply with the statutory requirements of PAYE legislation.
- 11.2. Councillors allowances (where paid) are also liable to deduction of tax under PAYE rules and must be taxed correctly before payment.
- 11.3. Salary ranges shall be agreed by the council, or a duly delegated committee. No changes shall be made to any employee's gross pay, emoluments, or terms and conditions of employment without the prior consent of the council or relevant committee.

- 11.4. Payment of salaries shall be made, after deduction of tax, national insurance, pension contributions and any similar statutory or discretionary deductions, on the dates stipulated in employment contracts.
- 11.5. Deductions from salary shall be paid to the relevant bodies within the required timescales, provided that each payment is reported, as set out in these regulations above.
- 11.6.Each payment to employees of net salary and to the appropriate creditor of the statutory and discretionary deductions shall be recorded in a separate payroll control account or other separate confidential record, with the total of such payments each calendar month reported in the cashbook. Payroll reports will be reviewed by at least two officers, one being the Town Clerk and Chief Executive or the RFO, to ensure that the correct payments have been made.
- 11.7. Any termination payments shall be supported by a clear business case and reported to the council.

12. Loans and investments

- 12.1. Any application for Government approval to borrow money and subsequent arrangements for a loan must be authorised by the full council and recorded in the minutes. All borrowing shall be in the name of the council, after obtaining any necessary approval.
- 12.2. Any financial arrangement which does not require formal borrowing approval from the Secretary of State (such as Hire Purchase, Leasing of tangible assets or loans to be repaid within the financial year) must be authorised by the relevant committee, following a written report on the value for money of the proposed transaction.
- 12.3. The council has adopted a Treasury Management Policy in accordance with relevant regulations, proper practices and guidance. The policy shall be reviewed at least annually.
- 12.4. All investment of money under the control of the council shall be in the name of the council.
- 12.5. All investment certificates and other documents relating thereto shall be retained in the custody of the RFO.
- 12.6. Payments in respect of short term or long-term investments, including transfers between bank accounts held in the same bank, shall be made in accordance with these regulations.

13. Income

- 13.1. The collection of all sums due to the council shall be the responsibility of and under the supervision of the RFO.
- 13.2. The council will review all fees and charges for work done, services provided, or goods sold at least annually as part of the budget-setting process, following a report from the RFO or Town Clerk & Chief Executive. The RFO shall be responsible for the collection of all amounts due to the council.

- 13.3. Any sums found to be irrecoverable, including any bad debts are not submitted to the council for approval to be written off except with the approval of the RFO and shall be written off at the end of the financial year. The council's approval shall be shown in the accounting records.
- 13.4. All sums received on behalf of the council shall be deposited intact with the council's bankers with such frequency as the RFO considers necessary. The origin of each receipt shall clearly be recorded on the paying-in slip or other record. The exception to this is for insignificant cash sums received for recharges which may be deposited into the petty cash. Similarly, if deemed necessary for the needs of the business, the RFO may transfer sums received to the petty cash for other service requirements, ensuring clear and transparent recording.
- 13.5. Personal cheques shall not be cashed out of money held on behalf of the council.
- 13.6. The RFO shall be responsible for ensuring VAT is correctly recorded in the council's accounting software and that any VAT Return required is submitted form the software promptly, in accordance with the rules applicable to a VAT registered body.
- 13.7. Where significant sums of cash are regularly received by the council, the RFO shall ensure that more than one person is present when the cash is counted in the first instance, that there is a reconciliation to some form of control record such as ticket issues, and that appropriate care is taken for the security and safety of individuals banking such cash.

14. Payments under contracts for building or other construction works

- 14.1. Where contracts provide for payment by instalments the RFO shall maintain a record of all such payments, which shall be made within the time specified in the contract based on signed certificates from the architect or other consultant engaged to supervise the works.
- 14.2. Any variation of, addition to or omission from a contract must be authorised by [the Town Clerk & Chief Executive] to the contractor in writing, with the council being informed where the final cost is likely to exceed the contract sum by 5% or more, or likely to exceed the budget available.

15. Stores and equipment

- 15.1. The Head of Service or Manager for each service or premise shall be responsible for the care and custody of stores and equipment in that section and ensure that the officer allocated responsibility for those stores shall maintain such stocks as consistent with minimum operating requirements.
- 15.2.Delivery notes shall be obtained in respect of all goods received into store or otherwise delivered and goods must be checked as to order and quality at the time delivery is made.
- 15.3. The RFO shall be responsible for periodic checks of stocks and stores, at least annually.

16. Assets, properties and estates

16.1. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive shall make arrangements for the safe custody of all title deeds and Land Registry Certificates of properties held by the council.

- 16.2. The RFO shall ensure that an appropriate and accurate Register of Assets and Investments is kept up to date, with a record of all properties held by the council, their location, extent, plan, reference, purchase details, nature of the interest, tenancies granted, rents payable and purpose for which held, in accordance with Accounts and Audit Regulations.
- 16.3. The continued existence of tangible assets shown in the Register shall be verified at least annually, possibly in conjunction with a health and safety inspection of assets.
- 16.4.No interest in land shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law. In each case a written report shall be provided to council in respect of valuation and surveyed condition of the property (including matters such as planning permissions and covenants) together with a proper business case (including an adequate level of consultation with the electorate where required by law).

No tangible moveable property shall be purchased or otherwise acquired, sold, leased or otherwise disposed of, without the authority of the council, together with any other consents required by law, except where the estimated value of any one item does not exceed £2000. In each case a written report shall be provided to council with a full business case.

17. Insurance

- 17.1. The RFO shall keep a record of all insurances effected by the council and the property and risks covered, reviewing these annually before the renewal date in conjunction with the council's review of risk management.
- 17.2. The Town Clerk and Chief Executive or RFO shall give prompt notification of all new risks, properties or vehicles which require to be insured and of any alterations affecting existing insurances.
- 17.3. The RFO shall be notified of any loss, liability, damage or event likely to lead to a claim, and shall report these, where applicable, to the council at the next available meeting. The RFO shall negotiate all claims on the council's insurers, in consultation with the Town Clerk & Chief Executive.
- 17.4. All appropriate members and employees of the council shall be included in a suitable form of security or fidelity guarantee insurance which shall cover the maximum risk exposure as determined by the council, or duly delegated committee.

18. Charities

18.1. Where the council is sole managing trustee of a charitable body the Town Clerk & Chief Executive and RFO shall ensure that separate accounts are kept of the funds held on charitable trusts and separate financial reports made in such form as shall be appropriate, in accordance with Charity Law and legislation, or as determined by the Charity Commission. The Clerk and RFO shall arrange for any audit or independent examination as may be required by Charity Law or any Governing Document.

19. Suspension and revision of Financial Regulations

19.1. The council shall review these Financial Regulations annually and following any change of the Town Clerk and Chief Executive or RFO. The Town Clerk and Chief

- Executive or RFO shall monitor changes in legislation or proper practices and advise the council of any need to amend these Financial Regulations.
- 19.2. The council may, by resolution duly notified prior to the relevant meeting of council, suspend any part of these Financial Regulations, provided that reasons for the suspension are recorded and that an assessment of the risks arising has been presented to all members. Suspension does not disapply any legislation or permit the council to act unlawfully.
- 19.3. The council may temporarily amend these Financial Regulations by a duly notified resolution, to cope with periods of absence, local government reorganisation, national restrictions or other exceptional circumstances.

Appendix 1 - Tender process summary

(detail included in the council's Procurement Policy

<u>Procurement Information – Dunstable Town Council</u>)

- Any invitation to tender shall state the general nature of the intended contract and the Town Clerk & Chief Executive or RFO shall obtain the necessary technical assistance to prepare a specification in appropriate cases.
- 2) The invitation shall in addition state that tenders must be addressed to the relevant manager in the ordinary course of post, unless an electronic tendering process has been agreed by the council.
- 3) Where a postal process is used, each tendering firm shall be supplied with a specifically marked envelope in which the tender is to be sealed and remain sealed until the prescribed date for opening tenders for that contract. All sealed tenders shall be opened at the same time on the prescribed date by the relevant manager in the presence of at least one member of council.
- 4) Where an electronic tendering process is used, the council shall use a specific email address that will be monitored to ensure that nobody accesses any tender before the expiry of the deadline for submission.
- 5) Any invitation to tender issued under this regulation shall be subject to Standing Order [insert reference of the council's relevant standing order] and shall refer to the terms of the Bribery Act 2010.
- 6) Where the council, or duly delegated committee, does not accept any tender, quote or estimate, the work is not allocated and the council requires further pricing, no person shall be permitted to submit a later tender, estimate or quote who was present when the original decision-making process was being undertaken.

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 17 MARCH 2025

CORPORATE COMPLIANCE AND FACILITIES REPORT

Purpose of report: For information

1. FACILITIES

Grove House

- 1.1. Brasier Freeth (the Councils appointed Building Surveyors) have progressed with contractors to complete the initial drawing up a specification of works for the rear parapet wall repairs. It was hoped that a tender process would take place, leading to a proposed contractor approval at this committee meeting however the initial works are taking longer than originally planned. Officers are hopeful that a tender exercise for the works can progress within the next few months, pending any findings on consent required, with a view to bring a contractor approval to committee in June 2025.
- 1.2. As Members are aware, there is currently scaffolding on the front of the building. This has been erected by one of the Councils regular suppliers to investigate the water ingress to the front elevation, in particular the section of the wall to the ground floor toilets and first floor kitchen area. Officers have a meeting scheduled on 10 March 2025 to assess the findings from the first phase investigations so will give a verbal update at the committee meeting.
- 1.3. Following previous reports on the use of the ground floor space at Grove House, Members will be pleased to note that the premises licence has been submitted and once received, officers can apply for the wedding licence to enable the Council to hold ceremonies at Grove House.

2. PROJECTS AND PROCUREMENT

2.1. The Council issued a tender request for management of all the Council's waste in January and a separate report will be presented to this committee requesting approval for officers' recommendation for the preferred provider.

3. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY

3.1. The Council received an updated Carbon Baseline Assessment report in January 2025 and Ian Bryne, Energy and Carbon Consultancy Services, provided an inperson presentation to the Environmental Working Group on the Council's recent carbon footprint assessment. The presentation covered the main areas where emissions come from within the Council, i.e. buildings, vehicles, and the time of year energy is used across all services. A copy of the report and presentation can be found at Appendix 1 and 2 of this report.

- 3.2. Following the end of the contract at Creasey Park Community Football Centre in March 2024, the Council's footprint has reduced by 10%, compared to the previous assessment in 2022. The consultant commented on the good work that the Council had done since the last assessment.
- 3.3. The working group discussed how much more carbon reduction could realistically be achieved through physical changes to buildings taking account of constraints such as managing historic listed buildings, budgetary provision and the wide range and type of services the Council provides to the community. The working group formed the view that the Council's Corporate Plan objective of working towards achieving carbon neutrality by 2030 may not be entirely realistic and consideration should be given to revising the objective to reflect these constraints.
- 3.4. It was agreed that the consultant would provide a plan of more achievable and realistic actions to continue to reduce carbon where possible.
- 3.5. In addition to the work undertaken by the Consultant, the Town Clerk and Chief Executive and the Head of Grounds and Environmental Services have, very recently, received an introductory presentation to optimising carbon storage using existing soil and vegetation in green spaces and through new green space projects. There is potential to consider how this might offset carbon emissions to assist continued progress towards carbon neutrality.
- 3.6. Furthermore, the working group discussed whether there was a need to continue meeting as a group given that any future action plan could be monitored by this Committee through the compliance and facilities information report.
- 3.7. Taking account of the above it is intended that a more detailed report, to consider and develop these issues further, be presented to this Committee later in the year and once the new Corporate Compliance and Performance Manager is in post.

4. APPENDICES

- 4.1. Appendix 1 Carbon Assessment Report 2023/24
- 4.2. Appendix 2 Carbon Assessment presentation January 2025

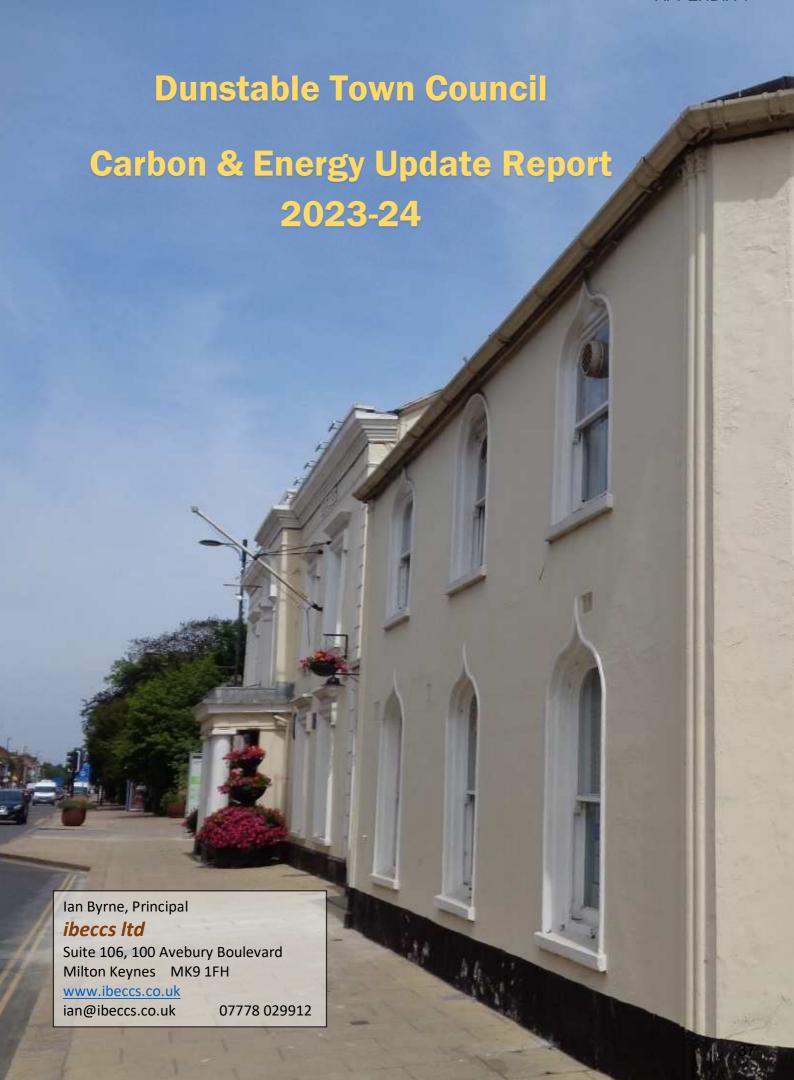
5. BACKGROUND PAPERS

5.1. Finance and General Purposes Committee – 23 January 2023

6. AUTHORS

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Dunstable Town Council: Carbon & Energy Update Report 2023-24

IBECCS is pleased to provide an updated carbon and energy report for Dunstable Town Council, primarily focused upon the financial year to 31 March 2024 (i.e. 2023-24).

Introduction and Scope

This report builds on the previous one produced in October 2022 which established energy use and a carbon footprint for the baseline year of 2021-22. Where data for the intervening year (2022-23) was readily available it has been included into relevant sections of this report to enable trends to be observed. Essentially the scope of this report is:

- 1. An updated assessment of Dunstable Town Council's greenhouse gas emissions and carbon footprint for the two financial years ending on 31 March 2024. For the most recent financial year, the estimated carbon footprint has been extended to provide an estimate for all Scope 3 emissions.
- 2. A review of actions taken since the baseline review (and the indicative list of opportunities for emissions reductions).

Some existing data has been re-baselined to take account of the loss of the Creasey Park Community Football Centre. No changes have been made as a result of the resumption of a more normal service level following the end of the COVID lockdowns, nor to take effect of the ongoing renovation works limiting the use of Priory House.

Greenhouse gas (GHG) emissions have been calculated from energy and other inputs largely using the factors contained in the DESNZ/Defra business conversion factors, which are updated each summer, using the factor appropriate to the financial year under review. National (location-based) factors have been used for all utilities, including electricity and water, as explained in the document below.

A full Energy & Carbon audit was not undertaken in this re-assessment. However, a physical visit was made to Dunstable in early autumn 2024 to review progress since 2022, and to discuss barriers to progress or new opportunities.

I would like to thank James Slack and his colleagues in the Council for the support preparing this report.

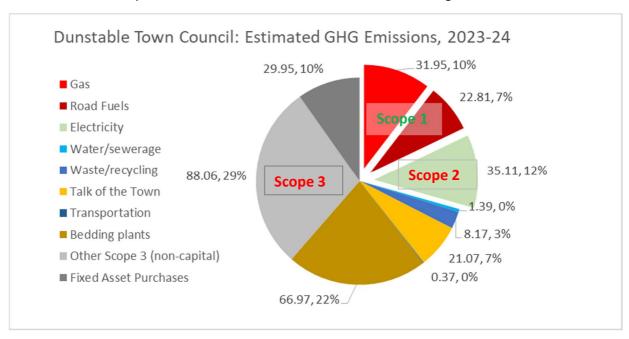
Note on Terminology and Measurement Units

This report uses the following terms which may need explanation in the context of the Council:

Carbon dioxide	The most common greenhouse gas contributing to damaging climate change,
(CO ₂)	resulting mainly from the combustion of fossil fuels such as oil or natural gas.
	All emissions are measured in tonnes or kilograms of carbon dioxide equivalent
	(tCO₂e or kgCO₂e), and converted from underlying energy in kWh.
Greenhouse gas	Any of the seven types of gas known to contribute to global climate change.
(GHG)	Carbon dioxide is by far the most common, but there are also emissions of other
	gases such as methane and nitrous oxide associated with energy use.
Scope 1 emission	GHG resulting from the direct combustion of fuels by the Council (or from
	"fugitive emissions" such as leakages of refrigeration compressor gases.
Scope 2 emission	Indirect emission of a GHG resulting from the use of electricity or supplied heat.
Scope 3 emission	Indirect emission of a GHG from any other source resulting tom the Council's
	activities. These can include utilities such as water, services such as
	transportation, or any other purchase by the Council. They may also bring in
	indirect sources such as employees' travel to work, or service users' travel.
Carbon footprint	A figure representing the total GHG emissions attributable to the Council (not
	just carbon dioxide); in effect the sum of Scopes 1, 2 and 3 emissions.

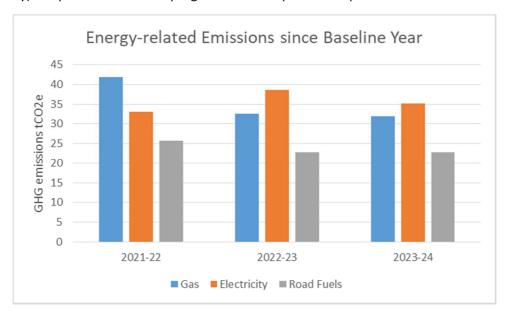
Executive Summary

The total carbon footprint of the Council for 2023-24 is estimated as being:



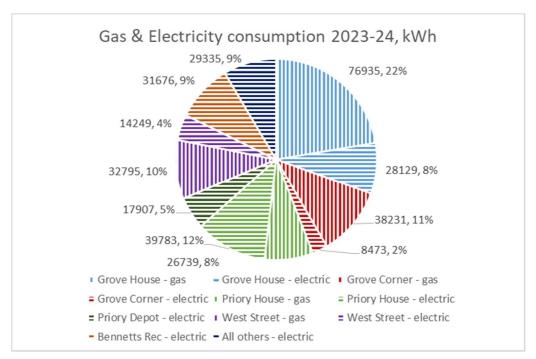
Total emissions (all Scopes) are estimated to have reached just over 300 tCO₂e; for comparison the total per capita emissions for the 2023 calendar year were estimated by the Office of National Statistics to be just over 7 tCO₂e. The 2023-24 estimate for the Council covers a wider range of Scope 3 emissions than in the previous, 2021-22, report so is not directly comparable. In common with almost all other organisations, indirect Scope 3 emissions represent the majority of those attributable to the Council, although they are much harder to control and subject to a higher degree of uncertainty; accordingly most of the content of this update report will focus on Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions associated with energy use. At this point, it is worth noting that over 50% of total emissions appear to arise from activities (the purchase of bedding plants and other general purchases) that were not brought into the scope of the previous report.

If we narrow the focus to energy related emissions, associated with the use of energy (gas, petrol/diesel and electricity) it is possible to look at progress since the previous report:



This data excludes the Creasey Park Community Football Centre in all three years, although energy bills were being charged to the Council until the start of the current financial year. This shows a decline in the use of gas, a slight fall in road fuels¹ – although it has not been possible to extract any Creasey-related activity from these, and an upward blip in electricity use in the middle year (2021-22). Although the chart is expressed in CO2 equivalents, the conversion factors published by Defra/DESNZ have varied little over the three years. A more detailed analysis of the energy consumption, including an attempt to relate it to weather conditions, is included in the main body of the report.

Focusing on the building energy-related elements, and leaving the data in terms of energy consumed², it is possible to show a breakdown by location (with the proviso that some of the billing details are a little opaque):



On the chart vertical shading represents gas; horizontal shading electricity, and each colour represents a building (or group of buildings). The key message is that for gas-heated buildings, the gas consumed exceeds electricity consumption, except for Priory House which was largely unoccupied in the winter of 2024. Now that the Council is no longer responsible for Creasey Park CFC, Grove House has become the largest energy user. The new boiler (being installed in October 2024) may help redress this balance. And as noted two years ago, the heating in the Grove Corner Youth Centre appears to be exceptionally inefficient taking into account the floor area (and comparing it also to the electricity consumed). The Bennetts Rec Splash Park continues to be a significant user of electricity in summer months.

Budgetary constraints have limited actions than can be taken to reduce the carbon footprint (or energy use). The new boiler in Grove House should help considerably, but is less future-proofed than a ground source heat pump would have been, had land and finance been available. Close monitoring of monthly data may also indicate other areas for improvement, and it is possible that a more efficient boiler will reduce the need for auxiliary heating, such as fan heaters, improving the electricity consumption as well.

Dunstable Town Council: Carbon Footprint & Energy Audit

IBECCS Limited, November 2024

¹ The move to bulk purchasing white diesel has also reduced the certainty around road fuel data.

² The carbon intensity of gas and electricity per kWh of energy delivered is similar, at 0.1829 and 0.20705 kgCO₂e/kWh respectively, using the official UK Government emission factors. This is significantly different from the situation 10 years ago when the electricity factor was almost double that for gas, reflecting the decarbonisation of the grid, as coal has been replaced by renewable energy.

Carbon Footprint & Energy Audit

This section is split into four sections – an overall review of the carbon footprint and energy consumption (Scopes 1 & 2), then a more detailed look at the emissions from gas heating, a short section on Scope 2 electricity, and a final part estimating the wider Scope 3 (supply chain) emissions.

Overview

The executive summary shows attributable emissions by Scope as a pie chart for 2023-24; the longer term data is in the table below:

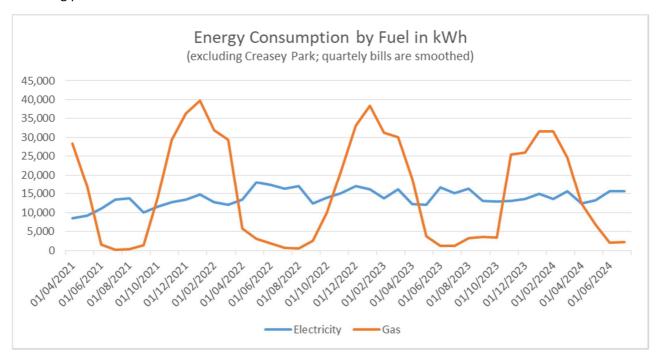
Carbon Footprint 2023-24			Partial	Baseline	Restated	Data
	2023-24	2023-24	2022-23	2021-22	2021-22	Quality
	tCO2e	tCO2e	tCO2e	tCO2e	tCO2e	
Scope 1						
Gas	31.95		32.62	55.98	41.89	Good
Road Fuels	22.81		22.81	25.72	25.72	Fair
		54.76	55.43	81.70	67.61	
Scope 2						
Electricity		35.11	38.61	54.28	33.04	Good
Scope 3						
Water/sewerage	1.39		0.55	4.53	3.61	Fair
Waste/recycling	8.17		25.08	n/a	n/a	Poor
Talk of the Town	21.07		21.07	24.5	24.5	Fair
Business Travel (mileage)	0.37		n/a	0.13	0.13	Fair
Other Scope 3 (non-capital)	155.03		n/a	n/a	n/a	Poor
Fixed Asset Purchases	29.95		9.86	54.30	54.30	Fair
		215.99				
Estimated Total		305.85	206.04		250.80	
Scope 1 & 2 (energy-related en	missions)	89.87	94.04	135.98	100.65	

The 2023-24 estimate includes additional Scope 3 estimates for non-capital purchases, beyond those considered in the baseline, which were limited to water, business travel and *Talk of the Town*. There are still significant data limitations on all Scope 3 categories, but this is not an uncommon problem, and will be discussed later on. The grey baseline data includes Creasey Park CFC for continuity with the previous report, but it is excluded in the Restated 2021-22 column and elsewhere in this report. The Fixed Assets purchase estimate for 2021-22 has not been restated; it related substantially to just 3 items, of which the Goupil G4 electric vehicle alone accounted almost half the total, whichremains with the Council.

In contrast, metered data is generally of good quality, and improving, so that the four electricity meter points (76 Grove House, Meadway Allotments, Chapel and Grove House itself) that were previously only receiving quarterly bills, now receive them monthly. However, the Chapel, Luton Road Recreation Ground and Meadway Allotments still only have estimated bills. As noted before, if possible a move to smart metering would enable a closer watch on energy consumption across the estate.

Building Energy Consumption

Gas and electricity consumption, expressed in kilowatt-hours (kWh) – the standard billing unit – has, since the baseline yea (and including the first 4 months of the current financial year)r followed the following pattern:



This shows the expected sawtooth pattern, with gas consumption being highly seasonal and electricity more constant across the year. Although it is less obvious on the blue line, there is a small seasonal peak in June, July and August each year, owing to the electricity used by the Bennett Splash Park pumps.

The chart covers a 40 month period, to show the effect of three full heating seasons, although the primary analysis is on the two financial years to 31 March 2024. Given that there have been some efforts to reduce consumption, it is encouraging to see an apparently lower peak consumption in 2023-4 than a year earlier.

Scope 1: Gas consumption (Heating)

However this is unadjusted consumption and does not take into account the effects of weather – the most recent winter was wet, but relatively mild. It is possibly to normalise the data using something called "degree days" – where for each day in a month the difference between the actual temperature and a deemed normal temperature of 15.5°C is summed³ – but when days are warmer than the reference temperature, a figure of zero is used. Dunstable falls into Degree Day region 1 for the UK, and if monthly gas consumption against monthly degree days is plotted, we can see a close correlation.

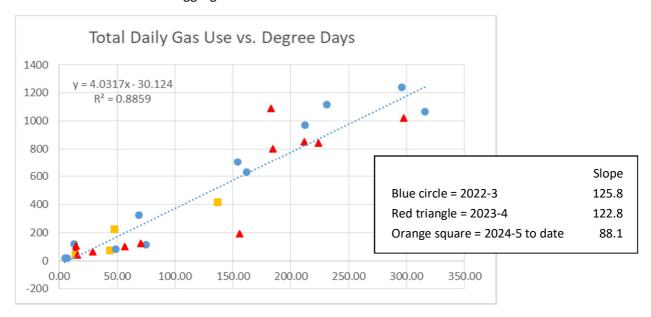
On this, and the subsequent graphs in this section, blue discs represent 2022-23, red triangles 2023-24, and amber squares the first few months of 2024-25. (The baseline year has not been included, for clarity.) Although there are some variations and one significant outlier (the figure below the trend line at 156 degree days, which represents April 2022) we can see there is a reasonably close correlation between heating degree days (on the x axis) and the total average daily gas consumption (on the y-axis, in kWh) across the four sites. The coefficient of correlation R² is 0.8859, which is sufficiently high to

Dunstable Town Council: Carbon Footprint & Energy Audit

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³ Strictly, these are heating degree days. In warmer climates the reverse principle is applied to produce cooling degree days using a similar process against a higher reference temperature. A 15.5°C base for heating takes into account intra-day fluctuations and typical gains from occupants.

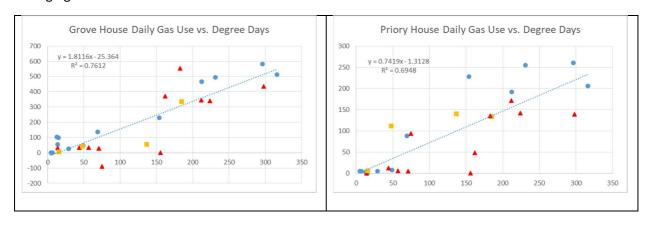
show a strong relationship; it could be higher, but the works at Priory House weaken the link as can be seen when the sites are disaggregated.

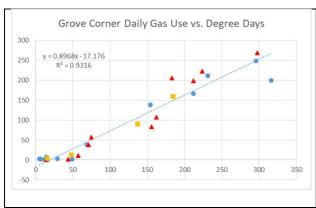


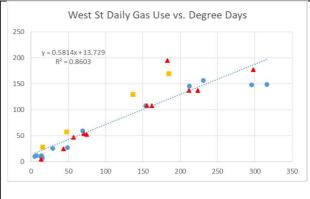
The chart provides a way of forecasting the daily gas consumption for a day of any particular temperature below 15.5°C, by reading the value off the trendline – so, for example a temperature of 10°C is 5.5°C below the reference temperature and would be expected to require around 650 kWh to heat all the Council buildings with gas central heating.

The colour coding is splits the data between the financial years. Again, from a first glance, it looks as if the blue dots (2022-23) are a little higher than the overall trendline, so would imply that more gas was needed than in the most recent year (red triangles), although the recent consumption does appear to be more variable. Looking at the slope of the trendline for just the financial years confirms this, with 2023-24 having a slope that is about 2.3% less than the previous year – so other things being equal, it would suggest a 2.3% improvement, year on year. There is too little data from 2024-25 to make any reliable forecast, although it has started well.

Unfortunately, aggregated data often masks differences. If the data is disaggregated between four locations (Grove House, Priory House, Grove Corner, and the two adjacent buildings in West Street), again looking at daily figures based on monthly consumption we see some quite different patterns emerging:







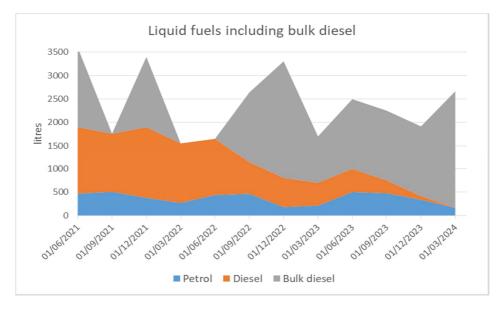
Grove Corner is very well correlated, and the flat lining on the left of the chart suggests that no heating gas is used until temperatures reach almost 2°C above the reference temperature. Taken together the cemetery and caretaker's lodge buildings also closely follow external temperatures, but there appears to be a worrying trend developing in the current financial year, as can be seen by the four orange squares on the chart veering away above the historical trendline. Given they are relatively mild months, this may revert to the norm, but is worth watching closely.

Grove House shows a moderate degree of correlation, but with some outliers – April 2022, which was lacking any reported gas use and February 2024, with unusually high gas use, considering the weather.

Priory House is apparently more random. This can be attributed to the works that were undertaken in 2023-4, leading to some months with abnormally low consumption (and it also has an April 2022 gap). This suggests that the aggregated favourable consumption may be due to special circumstances, rather than an overall reduction in gas use.

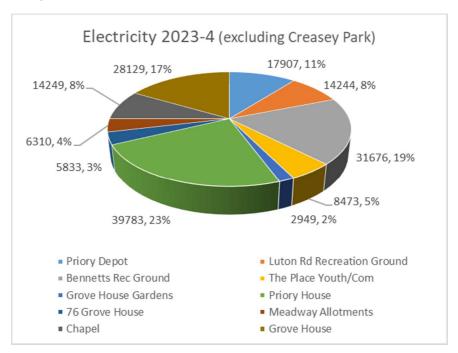
Scope 1: Liquid fuels

The move to bulk purchase of road diesel has led to there only being data for petrol through the Fuelmate cards. This had resulted in a sharp drop in data quality, as typically there is just one bulk delivery of diesel per quarter. However, it is understood that since the summer (2024) weekly mileage data is being captured for each vehicle as part of an enhanced safety check. For 2022-23, the best than could be done was to look at quarterly fuel data. This may have led to a seasonal lag, so that if, for example, grounds maintenance use of diesel peaked in the July- September quarter, this would be reflected in an increased purchase of bulk fuel (the grey area in the chart) in the following quarter:

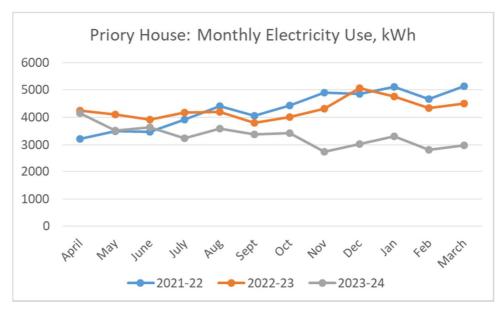


Scope 2: Electricity consumption

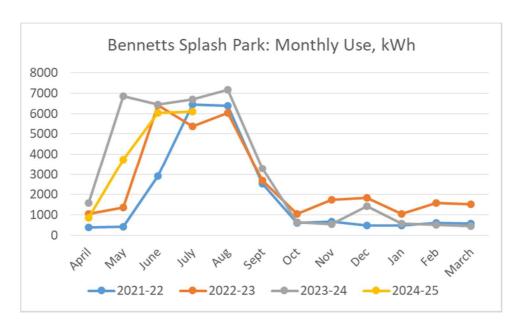
Electricity is currently metered across 10 sites:



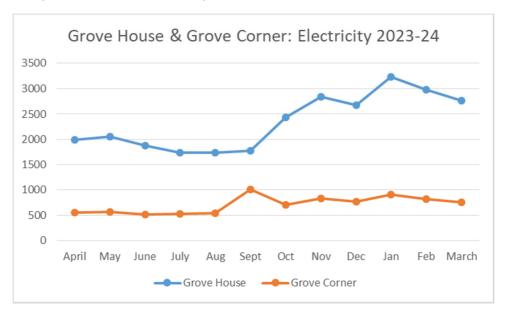
Despite ongoing works, Priory House is the largest user of electricity, largely because of the café and which includes home baking, as well as a range of fridges, freezers, dishwashers and other commercial catering equipment. Electricity consumption has been quite constant since the end of the last lockdown, as more office staff returned to work in Spring 2022. As with gas, any apparent improvement is possibly due to less being used at Priory House during its refurbishment and with the closure of the TIC, as can be seen from lower 2023-24 consumption than 2022-23:



As mentioned earlier, the location with the most abnormal pattern of consumption is Bennetts Recreation Ground with its Splash Park:



The red, amber and grey lines show how residents have benefitted from successively earlier opening of the facility, but that here is inevitably an energy (and carbon) cost by doing so – consumption in May and June 2023-24 was over 9,900 kWh more than two years earlier, responsible for about 1% of the total carbon footprint of the Council (all Scopes).



Grove House is the third largest user of electricity after Priory House and the Splash Park. It has only been on monthly billing since January 2023, so it is too early to make sensible inferences about energy

use. However it is noteworthy that, unlike Priory House or Grove Corner, it has a significant increase in consumption during the winter months, peaking at just over 100 kWh per day in January and February. This may be just due to lighting, or it may reflect the continuing use of portable heaters, given the somewhat uneven distribution of radiators and poor glazing with solid walls. It is recommended that this should be monitored during the coming winter (2024-25) once the more efficient boiler is in place.





The most even monthly consumption can be found at the Priory Depot, attributable in part to the recharging of the electric grounds vehicles, such as the Goupil micro pickup shown here. As the most recent acquisitions are an electric eco sweeper and a diesel power Ausa dumper, this is not expected to change significantly.

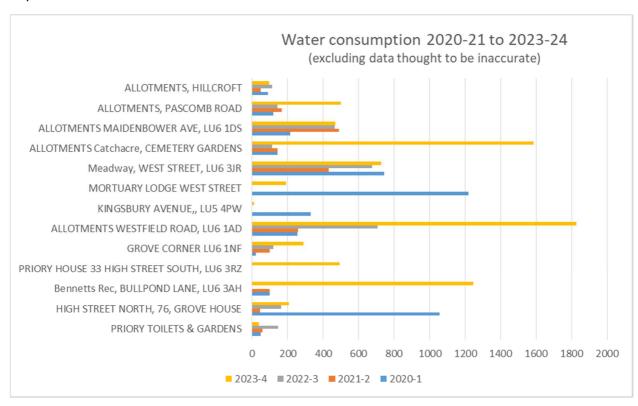
In each of the last two years, Luton Road recreation ground has recorded a spike in consumption in March, but this can be attributed to billing being largely based on estimates. Recommendation 17 from 2021-2 suggested that there should be better metering; it is understood that Yu Energy have now completed the installation of half hourly meters in all locations except Luton Road (Kingsbury Pavilion).

There are no matters to comment on in relation to the other locations, including West Street, although it is understood that a formal lease will be granted to Men in Sheds at Meadway, which may lead to their assuming direct responsibility for their electricity bill.

Scope 3: Water, waste and other specific items

Water

In common with many town councils, Dunstable has a relatively high use of water compared to other utilities, owing to its provision for the allotments and the Splash Park. Water data is not of high quality, since it is largely based supplier estimates, and the move from Castle Water to Everflow has not made any difference:



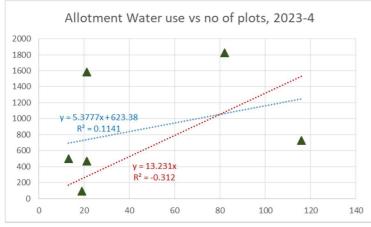
The data in the chart omits figures that appear to be most inaccurate, but does highlight that for some locations demand appears to be much higher in 2023-24 than previously. This might be expected for the allotments to depend on the weather, but overall 2023 was a warm and rather wet summer. Although June was the UK's warmest and fourth sunniest on record, July and August were unsettled with July in particular very cool, dull and wet (the Met Office provisionally makes it the sixth wettest on record). August included two named storms, Antoni and Betty, bringing unseasonably wet and windy weather.

Looking just at the data for the last two financial years in tabular form:

Location address	Last actual read	Sewer- age %	2023-24 water volume	2023-24 sewer volume	2022-23 water volume	2022-23 sewer volume
PRIORY TOILETS & GARDENS, LU6 1NF	23/01/2024	95%	39	37	147	140
76, GROVE HOUSE High Street North,LU6 1NF	23/01/2024	95%	208	198	165	157
BULLPOND LANE,,LU6 3AH	28/02/2024	0%	1247	0	0	0
PRIORY HOUSE 33 High Street South,LU6 3RZ	15/05/2023	95%	492	467	0	0
GROVE CORNER, High Street North,LU6 1NF	28/07/2023	95%	288	274	118	112
WESTFIELD ROAD,,LU6 1AD	28/07/2023	0%	1827	0	706	0
KINGSBURY AVENUE,,LU5 4PW	28/09/2023	0%	12	0	0	0
MORTUARY LODGE West Street,LU6 1PB	30/01/2024	95%	191	181	0	0
WEST STREET,,LU6 3JR	22/02/2024	0%	728	0	677	0
CEMETERY GARDENS, WEST STREET,LU6 1SJ	31/01/2024	0%	1585	0	112	0
ALLOTMENTS MAIDENBOWER AVE,LU6 1DS	20/01/2024	0%	468	0	464	0
ALLOTMENTS, PASCOMB ROAD,LU6 1EQ	28/07/2023	0%	501	0	144	0
ALLOTMENTS, HILLCROFT, LU6 1TS	28/01/2024	0%	94	0	111	0
			7680	1157	2644	409

Sewerage has been assumed to be a 95% return of water supplied where connected; Everflow use this figure but Castle Water used a value of 90%. The key difference is that no bills were received against the "Bullpond Lane" meter: this covers the Splash Park at Bennetts Recreation Ground.

Another concern about the data is revealed when plotting water supplied against the number of allotments available for rent (this does not take into account the variable size of allotments, as most are of a uniform size):



Allotments	Plots	Est. m ³
Catchacre	21	1585
Hillcroft	19	94
Maidenbower	21	468
Meadway	116	728
Pascomb Road	13	501
Westfield Road	82	1827
TOTAL	272	5203

This shows almost no correlation between the number of allotments available for rent by residents and the water supplied, as reported: the blue line is the best fit, but would appear to show a large demand even if there were no allotments. The red line forces this through the origin (no allotments means no water demand), but then has a negative coefficient of correlation. Subject to the proviso that trendlines

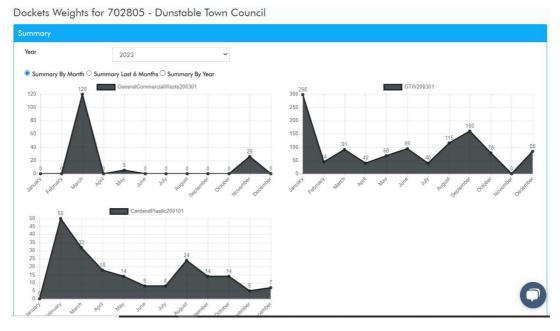
with six data points may be unreliable, it does suggest that more accurate metering may be helpful, if only to spot potential leaks.

However, this is not a major concern when it comes to the carbon footprint of water, as UK water has a low carbon intensity. In the absence of recent regional data, the national averages have been applied, using Defra/DESNZ emission factors:

	202	3-24	2022-23		
	Water	ater Sewerage Water S			
Total volume (water or sewerage) m ³	7680	1157.1	2644	408.5	
UK Government conversion factor	0.15311	0.18574	0.176685	0.201	
Scope 3 water & sewerage emissions in tCO2e	1.18	0.21	0.47	0.08	

Waste

Waste is another area where supplier data is of doubtful quality. Logging onto the Cawleys website enable users to see attractive charts showing, inter alia, the weight of waste disposed of by month (calendar year 2023 is shown below):



Pie charts by month prove that the units are recorded in kilograms – however they just do not appear large enough so, for example, were there only 7kg of recycling and 85kg of waste across the entire council – 10 locations – in December 2023? There is also a mismatch with some of the billing – for example, dog (faecal) waste and glass recycling do not appear on any of the charts, nor do any additional skips, although it is just possible that there were none collected in the financial year (Cawleys' bills show two skip collections in 2024-5 to date, and one in 2022-23). Dockets randomly describe waste as being General Commercial (top left) or General Trade Waste (top right) – recycling is bottom left; the three charts use quite different scales. An isolated bill for Creasey Park shows a single collection of 4 tonnes – far more than for the e=rest of the council for the entire year.

With these provisos, it is possible to apply Defra/DESNZ factors to provide estimates:

Estimates by financia	Waste	Recycling	Defra	factors	Waste	Recycling	
		Kg	Kg	Waste	Recycling	tCO2e	tCO2e
2022-23		1028	151	21.28081	21.280807	21.88	3.20
2023-24		1124	151	6.41061	6.41061	7.21	0.97

Uncertainty is compounded by Defra providing complet3ly different figures for the two financial years, and applying the same emissions factor for waste combusted or recycled.

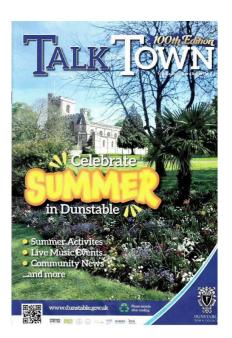
It is understood that a new contractor is being sought for waste collections, and it is recommended that they should be asked to provide a sample report beforehand, and the ability to distinguish clearly between collection sites, which include Dunstable market (but not the various allotment sites). In general, incineration is still considered to have a lower footprint than landfill.

Talk of the Town

Dunstable Town Council produces a quarterly magazine, *Talk of the Town*, which on average runs to 24 A4 pages and is printed on 100gsm recycled stock with a silk finish. This is the primary means of communicating with residents so is highly valued.

A modified footprinting approach has been used to estimate Scope 3 9indirect) emissions associated with the magazine. Specific data has been used for the type of paper used, and then an assumption made about emissions associated with printing onto that paper based on apportioning costs between paper and printing. No allowance has been made for any distribution costs (or emissions associated with transporting the magazine) to residents:

Talk of the Town	2023-24
Average number of pages	24
Page size (=2 pages, as printed both sides)	A4
Area per sheet (m²)	0.0626
Paper weight (gsm)	100
Weight per copy (g)	75.096
Print run	70,000
Editions per year	4
Total weight per year (t)	21.03
Factor applied (tCO₂e/t)	0.66
Paper CO ₂ emissions (tCO ₂ e)	13.88
Printing - assume 50% of cost	£16,592
Printing factor (from UK Government SIC tables)	0.4337
Printing emissions	7.20
TOTAL emissions - print + paper (tCO2e)	21.07



Despite an increase from 16 to 24 pages, this is a slightly smaller footprint than the previous estimate as it uses the specific emission factor for Cocoon Silk 100% recycled (supplied by Arjo Wiggins in the UK). For the table in the overview, it has been assumed that the parameters for 2022-23 are identical to the most recent year.

Business travel (employee mileage)

Between April 2023 and March 2024 employees were reimbursed for 1,366.9 on council business in private cars. The single Defra/DESNZ national average emission factor of 0.2686 tCO₂e/mile, for a car of unknown size and fuel has been used to convert this to equivalent emissions of 0.37 tCO₂e. Based on the 2021-22 data, this will be a slight overestimate, as employees tended to dive smaller petrol cars than the single national average figure, but any error will be negligible. There were no records of other business travel by train, bus or aeroplane.

An employee travel to work survey has been provided to the Council, as these are an optional part of Scope 3 emissions.

Other Scope 3 emissions (non-capital)

To help place the Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions in context, the carbon footprint estimate this year has attempted to look at all sources of emissions, including those arising from all purchases of goods or services. Purchases which give rise to Scope 3 emissions, other than those from clearly identified sources such as water, waste or transportation, will be referred to "other Scope 3 emissions" for convenience. They exclude costs such as rates or VAT and a basic estimate of these emissions can be made based upon the cost of the goods or services, broken down by category.

There are two underlying sources of data: European databases, such as Exiobase 3, which incorporate quit detailed estimates for a finite number of products, or the UK Government conversion factors for kilogrammes of CO2 per pound spent, by SIC code, drawn up annually by national statistics based on total UK national emission estimates, attributed down to each activity. The former is likely to be more granular, but often uses quite old data. It tends to be used as the primary data source for commercially available "black box" spend-based calculators, which are augmented by the results of specific product studies. The latter has the benefit of being specific to the UK, but some of the categories are very broad or ill-defined, rolling several SIC codes into a single factor. Given that IBECCS is only producing a high level estimate of Other Scope 3 emissions, we have chosen the National Statistics/SIC route, having first extracted goods or services for which more accurate data is available. The table of factors can be downloaded from https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/uks-carbon-footprint; currently 2021 is the most recently available year, and it should be reasonably representative of UK emissions, notwithstanding the COVID-induced dip.

Dunstable provided a summary of expenditure broken down by cost centre (location or council activity) and nominal code (type of expenditure). Using an Excel pivot table, this produced a summary by nominal code, and these were then manually mapped to the most appropriate Standard Industry Classification code in order to create an estimate of emissions.

The output from this process is shown in **Error! Reference source not found.Error! Reference source not found.** on the following page. This needs viewing with some caution, as it is the first time this exercise has been attempted so data and conversion factors are both of uncertain quality. It is also worth highlighting one major flaw of the spend-based approach; buying a high quality lower carbon alternative (such as organic food, or some recycled products) often costs more than a mass-produced alternative, so is erroneously attributed a higher carbon footprint. However, with that in mind, it is instructive to look at what the data is telling us.

Of the £938,965 of non-staff expenditure in 2023-24, around £464,467 (almost exactly 50%) related to other scope 3 activities – essentially purchases other than utilities, rent/rates and Talk of the Town. Collectively these purchases were responsible for in the region of $155 \text{ tCO}_2\text{e}$, compared to around 30 tCO₂e from fixed asset purchases (a figure with an even greater degree of uncertainty) and 90 tCO₂e from energy-related emissions.

One item stands out in the table below – bedding plants. The methodology produces a figure of almost 67 tCO₂e for this single category. While this may be an over-estimate, plant grown in heated greenhouses in winter, often imported from the Netherlands by truck, supplied in polypropylene pots, and sometimes using peat as the growing medium can add up to an unexpectedly high carbon footprint per plant (or per pound of expenditure).

Estimate of Other Scope 3 emissions using a spend-based approach

·										
		Cost		Incl	Include			Factor		
	Sum of Cost	Centres		ude	value	_	SIC Description		Est. tCO2e	Comments
Advertising - Recruitment	£406	1	4030	1	£406		Advertising and market research services	0.124	0.05	
Bedding Plants	£28,934	1	4043	1	£28,934		Products of agriculture, hunting and related servi	2.315	66.97	Note high result, but highest factor - high uncertainty
Bowling Green Maintenance	£0	1	4044	1			Services to buildings and landscape	0.193	-	
Cleaning	£51,554	11	4016	1	£51,554		Services to buildings and landscape	0.193		NACE 81.2, general building cleaning, subset of 81
Cultural/National Event	£10,149	1	4035	1	£10,149	90	Creative, arts and entertainment services	0.329	3.34	Assume for Coronation celebrations, etc.
Electricity	£163,606	11	4014	0	£0				-	
Eqpt/IT Maintenance/Support	£47,409	2	4037	1	£47,409		Computer programming, consultancy and related	0.153	7.27	Assume mainly software support, rather than hardware
Equipment Hire	£9,403	2	4039	1	£9,403		Rental and leasing services	0.177	1.67	
Equipment/Materials/Tools	£44,921	15	4040	1	£44,921	28	Machinery and equipment n.e.c.	0.445	20.00	Presume this is small capital goods, mainly metal & plastic
Gas	£40,111	6	4015	0	£0				-	
Health & Safety	£10,997	1	4006	1	£10,997	82	Office administrative, office support and other bu	0.189	2.08	Services or goods (or mixed)? Assume services
Insurance	£54,649	1	4026	1	£54,649	65.1-2	Insurance, reinsurance and pension funding servi	0.088	4.82	
Licences	£4,088	5	4027	1	£4,088	74	Other professional, scientific and technical servic	0.163	0.67	Not clear what type; might relate to software, too
Maintenance Contracts	£43,958	13	4036	1	£43,958	95	Repair services of computers and personal and ho	0.123	5.41	No easy fit; motor vehicle factor is higher
Miscellaneous Expenses	£3,439	4	4020	1	£3,439	82	Office administrative, office support and other bu	0.189	0.65	
Newsletter	£33,184	1	4033	0	£0				-	Separate estimate for printing Talk of the Town
Overtime	£76,346	3	4005	0	£0				-	n/a - part of salaries
Play Areas Equipment/Maintenan	£17,753	1	4046	1	£17,753	95	Repair services of computers and personal and ho	0.123	2.18	No easy fit; motor vehicle factor is higher
Postage	£1,141	1	4022	1	£1,141	53	Postal and courier services	0.264	0.30	
Printing	£1,375	1	4024	1	£1,375	18	Printing and recording services	0.434	0.60	
Publicity / Marketing	£16,928	10	4032	1	£16,928	73	Advertising and market research services	0.124	2.10	
Rates	£53,909	7	4011	0	£0		-		-	In effect local taxation so omitted
Rent Payable - Depot	£11,000	1	4013	0	£0				-	Omit, although utilities and other costs are included
Repairs & Maintenance	£39,431	13	4038	1	£39,431	45	Wholesale and retail trade and repair services of	0.297	11.72	Other mainenance has used the lower personal category
Security	£10,198	7	4018	1	£10,198	80	Security and investigation services	0.112	1.14	
Stationery	£2,722	2	4023	1	£2,722		Paper and paper products	0.756	2.06	high factor, but pens, staplers etc may be high too
Subscriptions/Publications	£9,382	2	4025	1	£9,382		Services furnished by membership organisations	0.215	2.02	
Telephones/Data Links	£23,894	15	4021	1	£23,894		Telecommunications services	0.173	4.14	
Training	£23,186	2	4007	1	£23,186	85	Education services	0.188	4.37	
Tree Planting/Surgery	£5,000	4	4041	1	£5,000		Services to buildings and landscape	0.193	0.96	This is lower than for the provision of plants above
Vehicle Fuel	£10,088	2	4045	0	£0				-	, , , , , , , ,
Waste Disposal	£63,654	12	4017	0	£0				-	
Water	£22,420	10	4012	0	£0				-	
Website	£3,730	1	4034	1	£3,730		Computer programming, consultancy and related	0.153	0.57	
(blank)				Ħ			, ,		2.57	Average factor in kgCO2e/£:
Grand Total	£938,965	170	4025		£464,647				155.03	0.334
	_555,565	_,,			0 .,0 17				200.00	0.33 1

Scope 3: Fixed (Capital) Asset Purchases

Capital asset purchases are often a significant component of Scope 3 emissions for organisations that are not engaged in manufacturing or retailing goods. Dunstable is no exception. The approach is generally to identify the largest items and estimate emissions individually, then to group all other capital items by general type. It is rare for manufacturers to provide a carbon label, so where the weight and materials of items are known, this can used as the basis for estimation; otherwise the ex-VAT cost is often the starting point.

In 2023-24 there were 45 items added to the fixed asset register, with a total cost of £93,291 before VAT. The seven largest items, each costing £4,500 or more (i.e. at least 5% of the total) had a total cost of £74,024, so collectively accounted for just under 80% of the fixed asset additions by value. Other items have been grouped by nominal accounting code, although in some cases this is not terribly helpful, as – for example – kitchen equipment appears to fall across more than code (presumably based on whether for internal office use or one of the cafés), portable air coolers were applied to two different codes, and the Grove House video entry system was groups with a playground jumping mat. Having said that, as the values are relatively low, the potential error is small:

Major purchases	Weight kg	2023-24	Factor	Embodied CO ₂
Ausa dumper	1510	£19,385.00	0.416	8.06
Eco Sweeper (electric)	665	£16,577.80	0.416	6.90
100m Bow top Fencing (assume 1.2m)	1647	£6,341.99	1.8	2.96
(assume 37 concreted posts)	740		0.9	0.67
Sunshades awnings (two bills)	124	£18,000.00	6.8	0.84
Hurricane Swing	150	£6,723.00	1.8	0.27
3 aluminium soccer goals	435	£6,996.46	6.8	2.96
		£74,024.25		22.66
Smaller items from nominal codes				
Electrical & similar		£3,334.50	0.365	1.22
Office Furniture & similar		£15,932.09	0.381	6.07
		£93,290.84		29.95

Note: Where a weight is shown in italics, the estimated embodied CO₂ is based up that figure; otherwise the factor is based upon the cost (a spend-based method).



Data quality using this approach is categorised as low, but is adequate for a carbon footprinting exercise. The one concern is that there may be omitted assets (shown right) relating to the Kingsbury Park play area, which opened in September 2023 according to the Council's website (see images left).

2022-23 Fixed Asset Additions

By their very nature, fixed asset additions do not occur at regular intervals, and for smaller organisations can fluctuate significantly from year to year, not least based on the availability of grants. In 2022-23, the gross total of fixed asset acquisitions came to £44,867, less than half that in the most recent year. Moreover, £18,600 of this figure related to assets at Creasey Park, so should be excluded from the comparison. Of the remaining Town Council assets added of £26,267, some £9,500 related to electronic or AV equipment in Grove House, including a grant-funded screen display and floor stand, which



was the largest single non-CPCFC asset added in the year at £3,730 (see image, with webcam attached, another fixed asset purchase in the year).

There were no other items individually costing more than £1,500 – the next most expensive was a replacement Slush machine at the Splash Park (£1,499).

Prior Year Excluding CPCFC		2023-24	Factor	Embodied CO ₂
Electronic & AV at Grove House	1	£9,500.11	0.365	3.47
All other Council additions	£	16,766.92	0.381	6.39
	£	26,267.03		9.86

Review of Previous Recommendations

Although this is to some extent a re-baselining, especially with the disposal of Creasey Park CFC, the general recommendations from 2021-22 are included in an Appendix. The list was not expected to be implemented in the short term, so it is not surprising that most have not been implemented owing to budgetary or other constraints. Of the lower cost ones, we note that there has been progress made with installing better metering (#17 on the list) and that the kitchen in Grove House now includes guidance on energy conservation (right, #16).

Cost, and the difficulty of accessing the various rounds of the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme (PSDS), have meant that opportunities for heat pumps have not been possible. With some listed buildings facing directly onto the High Street or public open spaces, air source heat pumps would be difficult to



locate, and ground source heat pumps would require considerable landscaping adjustments. They should however continue to be seen as medium solutions to heating Council properties (#3, #6). There still seems to be an opportunity for improving the heating system in Grove Corner Youth Centre (#3a). In the immediate term, a new gas boiler has been installed at Grove House, although at the time of IBECCS' visit in late September it was still be connected. As the pipework and controls had not yet been upgraded either, it was not possible to see improvements suggested before (#2). The new boiler is an Ideal IMAX XTRA 2 80kW floor mounted modulating condensing boiler, capable of operating at up to 97.7% efficiency at full load efficiency (and a nominal 108.3% part load), which represents a good commercial boiler.

Insulation remains difficult in the historic buildings (#1, and also for the refurbishment at Priory House). However it is understood that the Luton Road pavilion is likely to be e-roofed in the near future, and the opportunity should be taken to ensure that roof insulation of 300mm is included.



Opportunities were identified for replacing fluorescent strips and halogen spots in Grove House and Priory House (#4 & #7). This should still be done as part of ongoing works.

It was seen on the visit that there was still a substantial stock of older 2D compact fluorescent light, typically used for bulkheads, but also in some of the "crystal" effect fittings in Grove House.

Most were of either 13W or 28W, and would typically be replaced by a 9W or 18W LED (above). Given the very small savings and the significantly greater cost of the LEDC equivalents, it would be pragmatic to use the existing stock up, before sourcing LED version, and it is possible that the rice of the new type may still fall in real terms. The nominal life of an LED is however 30,000 hours (typically 11 years in a corridor) compared to 12,000 hours for the current fluorescent equivalent.

There were additional recommendations about the potential upgrade to the mess room as Creasey Park (#13), which is still in use (and in a portakabin). It is understood that future arrangements are still under review.

Opportunities for renewable energy

In 2021-22 the only recommendation around renewable energy was to consider opportunities for solar water heating at locations with changing rooms, notably Luton Road pavilion (#16). Although using roof space to generate solar electricity (using photovoltaics – PV) was discussed, it was omitted from the report owing to (a) lack of suitable roofs and likely issues with planning permission on the historic buildings (Grove House, Priory House and the West Street properties) and (b) concern about security for the playing field pavilions. Whilst this is still an issue, there may now be three opportunities that could be investigated further:

- (i) With the re-roofing of the Luton Road pavilion, it may be possible to integrate panels into the roof in a way which will be more secure and limit the risk of theft or vandalism;
- (ii) The more gently sloping roof on the café at Bennetts Recreation ground could be used for a small amorphous panel array. They are typically supplied in flexible rolls and bonded direct to the roof surface (unlike the more common polycrystalline glazed panels) so offer much better protection against theft or vandalism. The key advantage of days adding PV to this location is that peak generation (summer daytime) would match peak demand by the Splash Park pumps, which operate 7 days a week in summer, as does the café.
 - The roof is not ideally angled although the building faces just South of Southeast, the roof is angled backwards at a few degrees, so would be slightly worse than placing it on a flat roof. Care would also need to be taken that the trees behind the unit were not allowed to overgrow and shade any panels installed. Despite this, it should be worth inviting a supplier of flat roof bonded PV systems to consider whether it would make economic sense.
- (iii) Although not otherwise considered in this report, the Council owns the community centre at Downside, which the Ringside Boxing Gym occupies under a licence. This is a T-shaped building with one Southeast-facing roof (estimated at about 80m² in area) and one Southwest-facing roof (estimated at about 67m²). Neither roof suffers from overshading, and the building is closer to

others than, say, the Luton Road pavilion. Allowing for an approximate 80% coverage of each roof, a very rough calculation suggests that it could permit somewhere between 20 and 25kWp



of solar panels to be installed. On the Google aerial view the SW roof is highlighted. No detail is known about the electrical connection, such as whether it is two or three phase, or an=bout the energy demand of the current occupants. The building falls into the Caddington Primary 11kV substation area of the District Network Operator (DNO), UKPN. This zone is relatively unconstrained from the demand side, but its status for new supply connections feeding into the local grid is unknown – there are two solar farms at Caddington, close to Millfield Farm, totalling 9.999kW already located in the area.

Conclusion

There has been some progress made since the previous footprinting exercise, but this has been constrained by finance and the need to focus on matters such as the unwinding of the Creasey Park CFC arrangements.

On a like for like basis, Scope 1 and Scope 2 emissions from energy have fallen by approximately 10% over the two years, and although there may be some special circumstances associated with Priory House, they seem likely to fall further with the upgraded boiler at Grove House. There are still some relatively straightforward measures that could be taken, that should enable the downwards trajectory of emissions to continue.

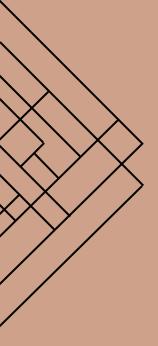
Appendix – 2021-22 Recommendations

This table excludes those relating to Creasey Park CFC.

#	Location(s)	Brief Description	Costs	Savings	Payback	CO ₂
Heat	ing/hot water sys	stems	•		-	
3	Grove House	Install GSHP (replacing boiler)	££££	££	\$	
2	Grove House	Insulate hot water pipework	£	£	22	•
3a	Grove Corner	Decommission rear boiler, either join	££ -	£ - ££	22	? -
		to newer condensing boiler or extend	££££			
		Grove House neat network				
6	Priory House	Install GSHP (replacing boiler)	££££	££	\$	
13a	CP Mess Room	Improve heating in mess room	££	£	222	③
15	Bennetts Rec	Improve controls in changing rooms	££	£	22	③
Insul	ation & building	fabric				
1	Grove House	Consider internal wall insulation	£££	£	\$	③
18	Meadway	Investigate options for adding cavity	£££	££	22	*
		wall/loft insulation if not present				
Light	ing					
4	Grove House	Replace remaining halogen spots and	£	£	222	③
		T12 tubes with LEDs				
7	Priory House	Replace halogens with LEDs in	££	££	22	
		exhibition room				
Rene	wable energy					
16	Luton Road	Add solar thermal water on SE roof	£££	£	\$	③
Gene	eral					
20	Vans	Replace vans/pickups with EVs when	££££	££	22	
		diesel ones reach end of life				
19	Vans	Improve monitoring of mileage	£	£	222	③
12	Equipment	Continue to select energy efficient	££	££	22	
		products when adding/replacing				
13	CP Mess Room	Consider well insulated replacement	££££	££	22	
		for portacabin				
17	Various	Obtain smart metering at locations				
		which are currently still billed quarterly				
5	All	Check equipment is not left on	£	£-££	222	③
		standby; appoint an energy champion				
		for each site				
(ev.						

Key:

Costs		Saving	S
££££	Over £10,000	£££	Over £500 per annum at that location
£££	£1,000-10,000	££	£50-£500 per annum
££	£100-1,000	£	Under £50 per annum
£	Under £100		
Payback		Carbon saving	
222	Fast – under 5 years		
22	Medium – 5 to 20 years		Moderate 0.1 to 1 tCO₂e per annum
\mathbb{Z}	Slow – Over 20 years	③	Low <0.1 tCO₂e per annum





Dunstable Town Council Updated Carbon Footprint Report

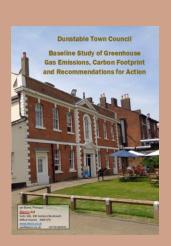
Ian Byrne
Principal, IBECCS Ltd
13 January 2025

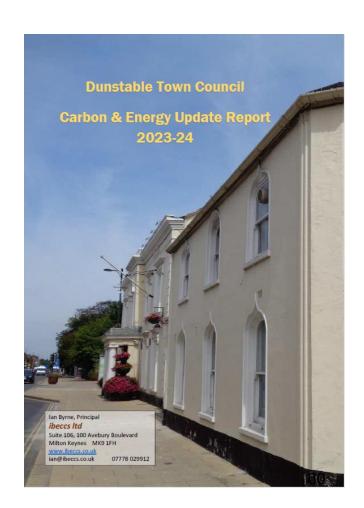


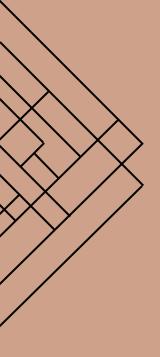
Summary of Report & Aims

ibeccs

- Commissioned in autumn 2024
- Scope to reconsider GHG emissions carbon footprint & recommendations
- Update from 2022 baselining study
- Based on 2023-4 data
- Around 90 tCO₂e in 2023-4 (Scopes 1/2)
 - Down from 94 tCO₂e in 2022-3 and 101 tCO₂e in 2021 2 baseline
- Prior recommendations largely unable to be implemented due to budgetary constraints
 - Some progress on low cost or behavioural measures



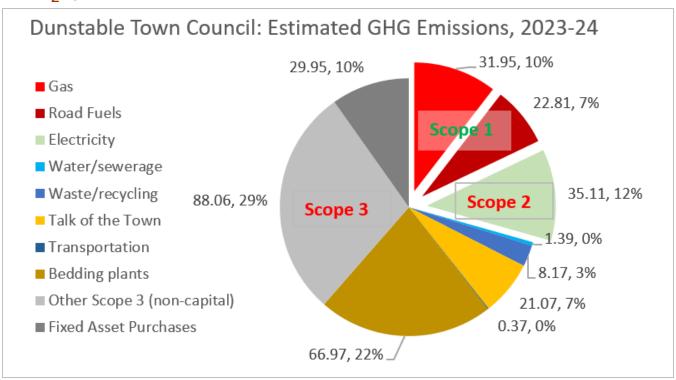




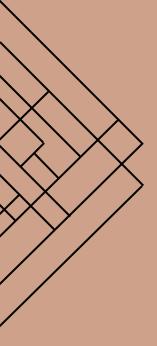
Where have emissions come from?



Breakdown by source of emissions – includes transport and expanded estimate of Scope 3 (219 tCO₂e):



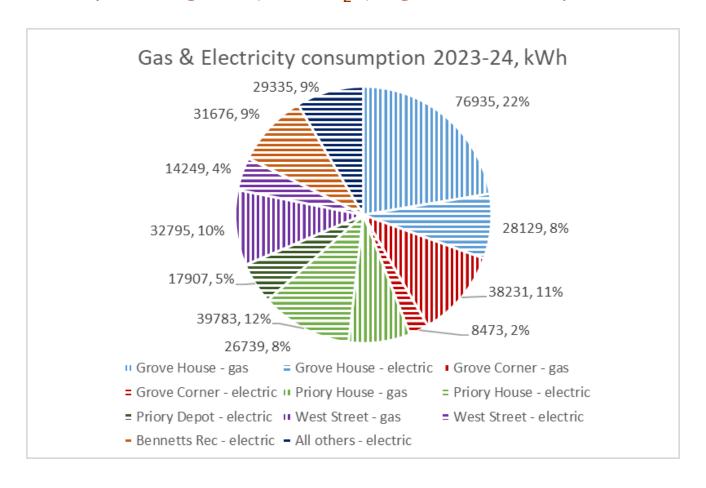
• It's quite normal for Scope 3 (from purchases of goods & services) to be much larger than Scope 1 & 2 (mainly energy-related) but will focus on latter in energy units

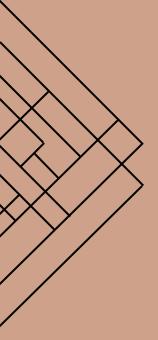


Where have emissions come from?



Breakdown by building/site (110tCO₂e) – gas & electricity

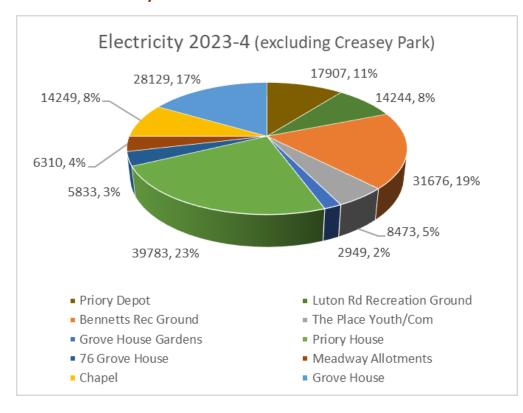




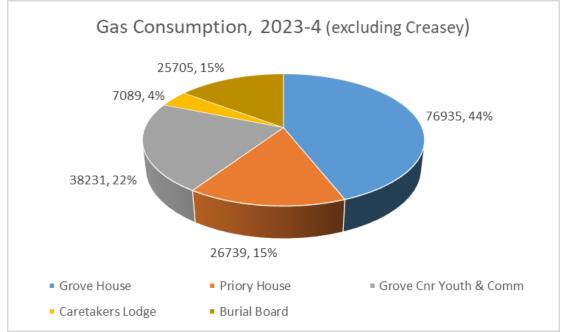
Where have emissions come from?

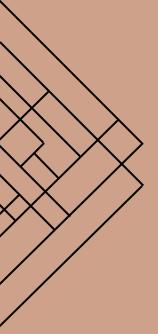


Electricity from all sites



Gas from fewer sites

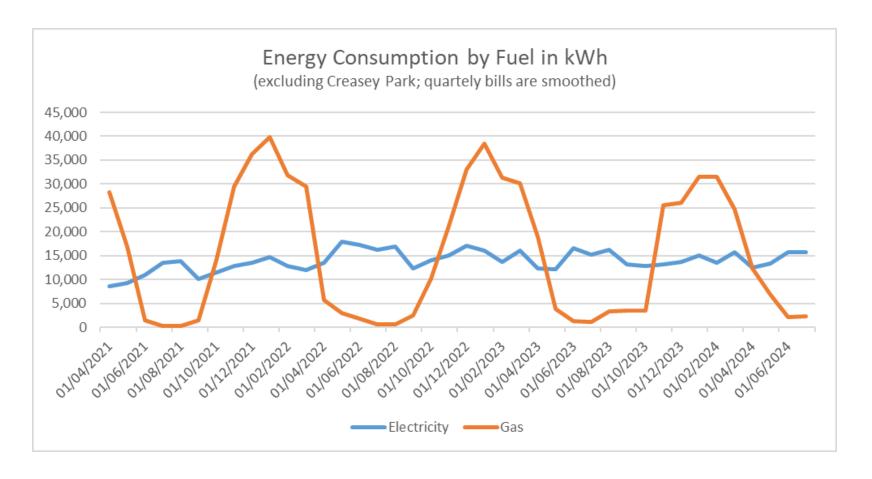


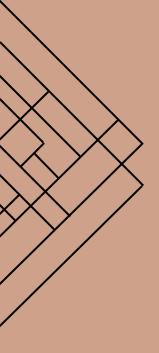


When are we using energy?



40 month record (since COVID effect ended)

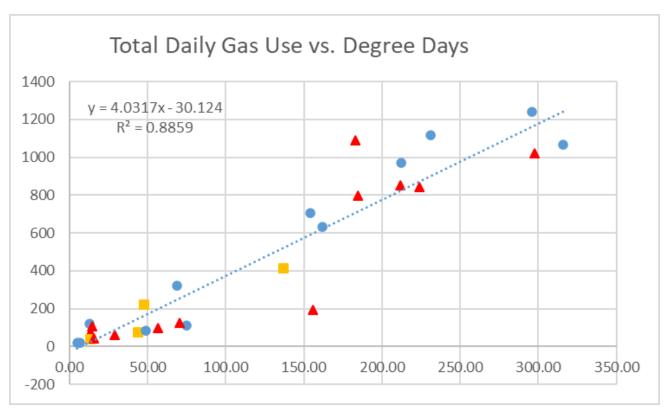




When are we using energy?



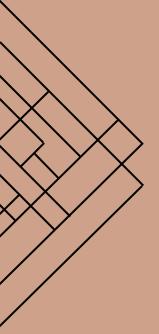
Gas in cold weather – reasonable correlation to external temperatures (by month)



Blue circle = 2022-3

Red triangle = 2023-4

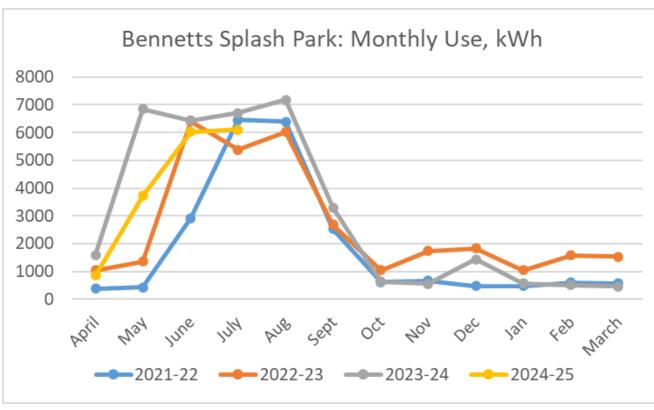
Orange square = 2024-5 to date



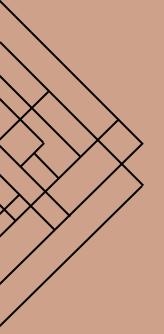
When are we using energy?



 Bennetts Splash park (and café) is a significant user in summer, and we have extended the operating season







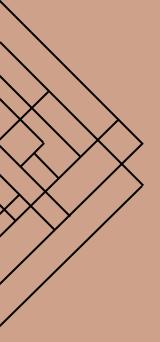
Action taken: Grove House





- New boiler installed (with difficulty) not yet operational when visited
- Need to see if this will make significant savings, and – potentially – reduce the need to spot electric heating

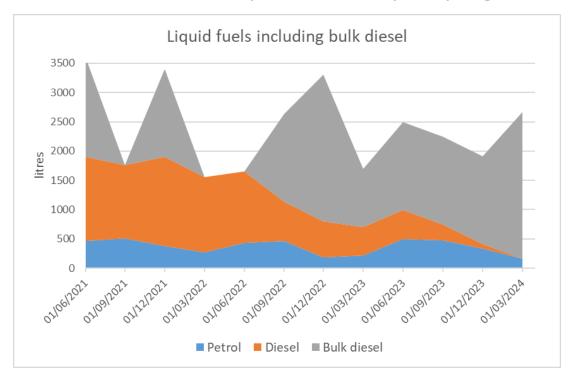




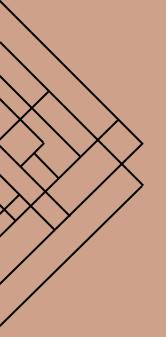
Transport



- No additions to EVs
- Move away from red diesel has freed tanks for road diesel – beginning to implement fuller records, as invoiced quantities only very high level:



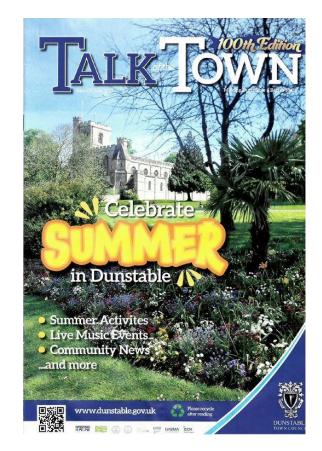


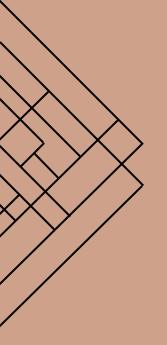


Scope 3 emissions



- Water & waste have a relatively small carbon footprint in UK
 - Observation about water consumption vs. allotment numbers
- Waste data from Cawleys of low quality
- Talk of The Town paper and printing– ~21tCO₂e
- Bedding plant sourcing may need consideration
- Other purchases in year capital items and Priory House renovations likely to be most significant
- High level "spend-based" exercise on Scope 3 (indirect) emissions
 - Data quality on any spend-based method is low, but useful for placing energy-related emissions into a wider context

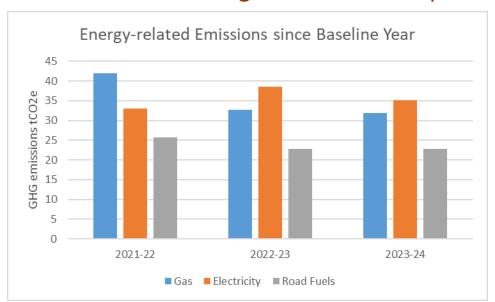




And finally

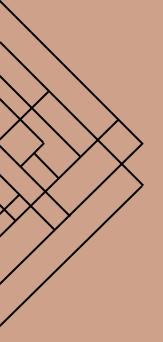


- Despite security concerns there may be opportunities for PV on roofs
 - Not just Bennetts Splash park café (linked to seasonal demand)
 - Potentially with re-roofing of Luton Road pavilion, or on Downside (leased asset)
- Keep up momentum on behavioural matters
- Trend showed something like a 5% YoY improvement:





- However given the historic nature of most buildings, net zero is not readily achievable
 - Would require full electrification and decarbonisation of UK grid in line with Government policy





Thank You!

Ian Byrne ian@ibeccs.co.uk

DUNSTABLE TOWN COUNCIL

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 17 MARCH 2025

WASTE CONTRACT

Purpose of report: To seek approval to award a 3-year contract for the collection and disposal of waste derived from all Council services.

1. RECOMMENDATION(S)

1.1. That Committee approves the award of a 3-year waste services contract to Contractor A, commencing on 1 April 2025.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. In January 2025 the Council invited tenders from waste contractors for the collection and disposal of waste arising from all Council services in accordance with the Councils Financial Regulations, Contract Standing Orders and Procurement Policy.
- 2.2. The Council received tender submissions from two waste contractors who will be referred to in this report as Contractor A and Contractor B.

3. TENDER EVALUATION OUTCOME

3.1. The evaluation of the tenders has been undertaken by Officers representing the three main service departments and in line with the assessment criteria set out in documentation made available to each contractor. Each tender submission was evaluated according to the following criteria:

Evaluation	Criteria	Weighting
Qualitative	Proposal and quality of	40%
	response	
Financial	Financial response	55%
Social Value	Equality, Diversity and Inclusion	5%

- 3.2. Contractor A scored the highest number of points overall.
- 3.3. It is therefore proposed that Contractor A is awarded a 3-year contract to provide waste collection and disposal services for the Council commencing on 1 April 2025.

4. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

4.1 Both contractors gave satisfactory responses for equality, diversity and inclusion questions, showing commitment to promoting equality of opportunity in their own employment and service delivery.

5. FINANCIAL IMPACT

The value of the tender submitted by Contractor A, based on collection and disposal rates and an estimated calculation of excess weight costs (based on 2024 actual totals) is below the 2025/26 budget provision. However, the actual 2025/26 outturn costs will be determined by the number of collections completed and the excess tonnage weights and associated charges. It is not therefore appropriate to assume at this stage that a budget saving can be achieved in the current financial year or in subsequent years. In addition, the contract will allow for an annual uplift in rates which will be reflected in future budget setting.

6. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

6.1. Both contractors submitted satisfactory environment, biodiversity and sustainability policies.

7. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

7.1. The tender exercise has been undertaken in accordance with the council's procurement policy.

8. HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS

8.1. Both contractors submitted a satisfactory health and safety policy and associated documentation.

9. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS - None

10. LEGAL IMPLICATIONS

10.1. Both contractors submitted satisfactory waste compliance and insurance documentation.

11. APPENDICES - None

12. AUTHOR

John Crawley – Head of Grounds and Environmental Services John.crawley@dunstable.gov.uk

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 17 MARCH 2025

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS

Purpose of report: For information

1. SOCIAL MEDIA

1.1. Dunstable Town Council's social media accounts continue to see steady growth in followers. The Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer continues to produce and share a variety of content with a mixture of images and engaging videos

Facebook page followers:

Dunstable Town Council	13,456 (+127)
Bennett's Café/ Splash Park	4,828 (+11)
Town Ranger Services	1,481 (+12)
Grove Corner	1,452 (+46)
Priory House	1,460 (+11)

Instagram followers:

Dunstable Town Council	765 (+21)
Bennett's Café/ Splash Park	23 (+10)
Grove Corner	4,920 (+2)

LinkedIn followers:

Dunstable Town Council 296 (+34)

TikTok followers:

Dunstable Town Council 148 (+28)

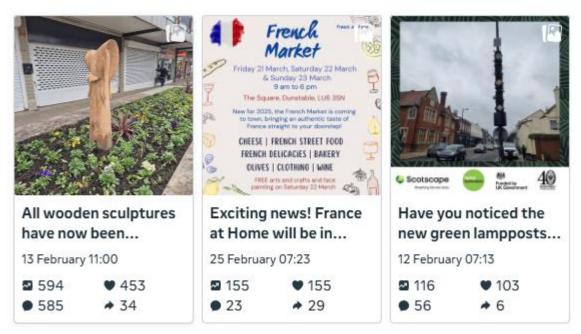
These figures are accurate as of 10 March 2025 and show how many followers have been gained since the previous report date.

1.2. Dunstable Town Council Facebook insights.

Top three social media Facebook posts from the last month (February 2025) by interactions:

- 1. All wooden sculptures installed
- 2. French Market
- 3. Living Pillars

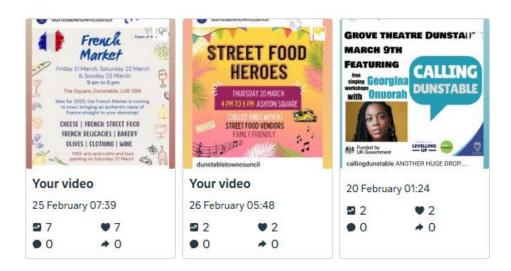
Top posts by interactions



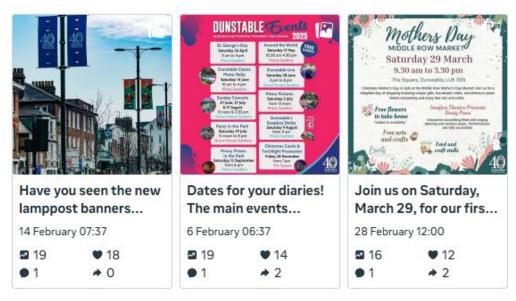
The wooden sculpture post was shared at 7 pm on a Thursday evening, making it noteworthy how much interaction and engagement it received. This could have been due to the subject, the content, or the time, the Corporate Marketing and Communications Officer will continue to test different times in the week of posting.

- 1.3. Top three social media Facebook stories from the last month (February 2025) by interactions:
 - 1. French Market
 - Street Food Heroes
 - 3. Calling Dunstable cross shared post

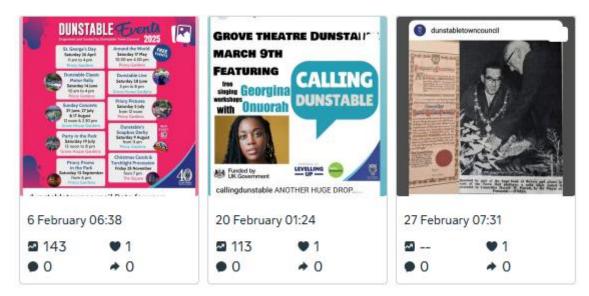
(7) Top stories by interactions



- 1.4. Top three social media Instagram posts over the last month (February 2025) by interactions:
 - 1. New High Street Lamppost Banners
 - 2. Overview of the 2025 events
 - 3. Mother's Day market
 - Top posts by interactions



- 1.5. Top three social media Instagram stories over the last month (February 2025) by reach:
 - 1. Overview of the 2025 events
 - 2. Calling Dunstable cross shared post
 - 3. Nominate Freewomen/Freeman of Dunstable
 - Top stories by reach



1.6. The Corporate and Marketing Communications Officers has been increasing our presence on LinkedIn and has this has been a significant increase in followers. We

have been utilising the platform to advertise job postings and generic news from the Town

Council.

2. INTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

2.1. The Marketing and Communications Officer is currently working on noticeboards in each site location with a rest area. These noticeboards will include the latest newsletter, details of the employee assistance scheme, Health and Safety information etc.

3. EMAIL MARKETING

- 3.1. Monthly Councillor newsletters continue to be sent with all relevant information which includes bulletins and Dunstable Town Council events. Officers would welcome feedback or suggestions on the Councillor newsletters.
- 3.2. A Town Council newsletter will be produced with a sign up integrated into the new website to ensure the public can keep up to date with regularly news and bulletins from the Town Council.

4. WEBSITE

- 4.1. The figures below show how users have visited the Town Council website in January and February:
 - 1. Events in February
 - 2. What's on
 - 3. Priory House
 - 4. Job Vacancies
 - 5. Creasy Park

Organic search (google, Bing etc.)	4,959
Direct:	2,834
Organic social (Facebook, Instagram)	2,065

 Mobile:
 63.4%

 Desktop:
 33.7%

 Tablet:
 3.0%

4.2. The new website is in development stage and the system should be ready to handover for content population on Friday 14 March.

5. EXTERNAL COMMUNICATIONS

- 5.1. The Corporate and Marketing Communication Officer is working on a branding style guide for other offices in the Council to use to ensure consistency across all platforms.
- 5.2. The What's on Window continues to be used regularly by the Town Council and other community groups.

6. TALK OF THE TOWN

- 6.1. The April edition is now in the design process with our supplier. Grove Theatre is advertising in the edition.
- 6.2. Three star coaches have expressed interest in advertising. Officers continue to seek other advertises for Talk of the Town.

7. AUTHOR

Rachel Connor – Corporate Marketing & Communications Officer communications@dunstable.gov.uk

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 17 MARCH 2025

MARKETING & COMMUNICATIONS STRATEGY

Purpose of report: For members to consider and approve the Marketing and Communication Strategy for Dunstable Town Council.

1. RECOMMENDATION

1.1. For members to consider and approve the Marketing and Communication Strategy for Dunstable Town Council at appendix 1.

2. BACKGROUND

- 2.1. Currently Dunstable Town Council does not have a marketing and communications strategy, and whilst the Council's communications are strong the adopting of a strategy will ensure a clear and consistent approach is taken throughout the organisation.
- 2.2. Effective communication is essential for the Town Council to engage with residents, businesses, and stakeholders. A well-defined strategy will ensure that all messaging aligns with the Council's vision and mission, reinforcing trust, transparency, and engagement within the community.
- 2.3. Adopting the proposed strategy will ensure that all messaging reflects the values and objectives of the Town Council. It will also enable the Council to leverage multiple communication channels—including digital platforms, traditional media, and community outreach—to reach diverse audiences more effectively.

3. EQUALITIES AND DIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

- 3.1. The Town Council has a public sector duty under the Equalities Act 2010 to ensure that discrimination is eliminated, equality opportunity is promoted and that where possible reasonable adjustments are made to achieve this. The Town Council must consider the needs of everyone in its day-to-day work which includes how it communicates with the public. This strategy supports the Council in achieving this duty by acknowledging that service areas know their different users best and will tailor approaches in their individual marketing and communications plans as well as noting that digital communications are more adaptable to specific needs of people with protected characteristics which is one of the reasons why the strategy recommends a digital first approach, whilst also encouraging a variety of methods.
- 4. FINANCIAL IMPACT none
- 5. ENVIRONMENTAL AND BIODIVERSITY IMPLICATIONS

5.1. Not only does the strategy endorse a clean and green approach, but it also states how a digital first approach will support the Council in achieving this.

6. POLICY AND CORPORATE PLAN IMPLICATIONS

- 6.1. The strategy aligns to the Town Council's corporate plan priorities one and six, as well as aligning to the Council mission and vision:
 - 1. Continuing to improve the organisational management, efficiency and environmental sustainability of the Town Council.
 - 6. To represent residents, businesses and community groups of Dunstable on key strategic issues facing the town.
- 7. **HEALTH AND SAFETY IMPLICATIONS** none
- **8. HUMAN RESOURCES IMPLICATIONS** none
- 9. **LEGAL IMPLICATIONS** none
- 10. APPENDICES
- 10.1. Appendix 1 Marketing and Communications Strategy
- 11. AUTHOR

Rachel Connor – Marketing and Communications Officer communications@dunstable.gov.uk

Dunstable Town Council Marketing and Communications Strategy

Vision: Making Dunstable a better place

Mission: Create a lively and vibrant town, promoting civic pride and improving the quality of life for all those who live, work and visit Dunstable

1. Introduction

Effective communication is essential for Dunstable Town Council to ensure residents are kept informed about services, key developments and any other news. It empowers our staff and councillors in their roles as representatives of the organisation, facilitating dialogue with our audiences to align them with the council's goals, and strengthens partnerships by ensuring our vision and priorities are clear. Strong communication enhances the council's ability to drive positive change and promote civic pride.

2. Strategic Aim

In line with Dunstable Town Council's mission and vision, the Council is committed to strengthening the town's reputation as a vibrant, welcoming, and progressive place to live, work and visit. The Council aims to engage the public, staff, and stakeholders through clear and consistent communication positioning itself as a reliable and trusted source of local information.

3. Key Strategic Objectives

The Town Council's key marketing and communication objectives will be:

- Raise awareness of services and assets provided by the council
- Build trust with residents by ensuring open communication and transparency
- Showcase Dunstable Town Council as a progressive, innovative, inclusive and community-focused organisation
- Promote Dunstable as a lively and vibrant town
- Strengthen the town's sense of community cohesion and civic pride
- Engage with our diverse residents through a variety of methods and approaches
- Increase local and national media coverage
- Proactively seek new audiences
- Internally and externally be informative and efficient

4. Key Messages

The Town Council's key messages will strengthen awareness of services promoting:

- An award-winning Town Council
- A clean and green Town Council
- A proactive, innovative and dynamic Town Council
- A trustworthy and honest Town Council
- Business empowerment
- Community and pride in Dunstable
- The Town Council as a trusted partner with committed staff and councillors
- Dunstable's diverse communities
- Democratic leadership
- Commercial aspects and opportunities

5. Audiences

Dunstable Town Council aims to provide proactive communications that effectively reaches a range of audiences. We acknowledge some audiences are harder to reach and engage with than others. This strategy aims to address this, whilst building on our current successful communications. Service areas will identify specific audiences and ensure that all messaging is precisely targeted to resonate with the right audience.

6. Tone of Voice

Dunstable Town Council communicates two distinct tones of voice, tailored for different purposes. Each tone is easily distinguishable, allowing us to choose the most appropriate voice depending on the audience and the context of the communication:

Corporate Tone

For communications related to council and committee meetings, critical crisis public relations and sensitive matters, a formal and informative tone is used to ensure trust and to reflect the Council's professionalism.

Service Tone

In contrast, a friendly, engaging, approachable and respectful tone of voice should be used across service areas to connect with a wider and more diverse audience. The style of tone may vary between different services. This ensures that our communications remain clear, accessible, and inviting for all residents.

7. Communication Methods

Dunstable Town Council uses a variety of communication methods to inform, engage, and connect with a diverse audience. A mixture of digital, print, and face-to-face methods ensures our messaging reaches residents, businesses, and stakeholders. These methods enable us to keep the community informed about council initiatives, services, news and events.

The Town Council analyses website traffic, social media followers, top performing social posts and issued press releases published.

To assess the effectiveness of our communication and identify areas for improvement, we will conduct resident and employee surveys to better inform our strategy. The council will also monitor emerging channels and opportunities to enhance audience engagement.

The insights gathered will be incorporated into service area marketing plans to ensure the successful delivery of our communication strategy.

Digital Marketing and Communications

The Town Council takes a digital-first approach because it's cost-effective, efficient, and environmentally friendly. It also allows us to respond more quickly to residents' needs and ensures we are accessible where most people expect to find us—online.

The Town Council does this by using e-newsletters, YouTube, social media, WhatsApp, an electronic What's on screen and the Council's website to inform and engage residents. These are used to deliver updates, livestream meetings, provide event details, and key service information, while continuously improving communication based on user feedback and analytics.

Print and Traditional Media

While we embrace a digital-first approach, it's important to recognise that some audiences may not have access to technology, so will not access the website or social media channels. The Town Council will continue to print a quarterly magazine 'Talk of the Town' which is delivered to Dunstable residents and local businesses.

Noticeboards and banners across the town which are managed by The town Council are regularly updated with events and activities.

Internal Communications

Effective internal communication is vital for Dunstable Town Council, as our staff play a crucial role as advocates for the organisation.

Keeping our staff engaged ensures they feel connected and valued as our ambassadors for the town helping to drive positive change and promote civic pride. In addition to service management communications, the corporate management team will ensure:

- A monthly internal newsletter
- Quarterly staff meetings led by Senior Management
- All-staff TEAMS channel

For Members, communications are of equal importance in their role as civic leaders for the Council. A monthly newsletter is sent and direct emails from the Town Clerk and Chief Executive form the principal methods.

8. Media relations and press engagement

Dunstable Town Council actively engages through the issuing of press releases to local press, media outlets, and trade/specialist magazines/organisations to keep the wider community informed about the Council's initiatives, events, and achievements.

9. Working with partners

Where the Council works with partners with their own marketing and communications approach the Town Council will take a partnership approach to effectively communicate jointly for mutual benefit.

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 17 MARCH 2025

REFERRAL REPORT FROM COMMUNITY SERVICES COMMITTEE

Purpose of Report: To recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to

allocate £1,000 from the 2025/26 civic hospitality budget for street

parties to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

1. SPENDING PROPOSALS

1.1. At the meeting Members received a report requesting approval to spend £1,000 from the 2025/26 civic hospitality budget for street parties to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day.

1.2. RESOLVED:

To recommend to the Finance and General Purposes Committee to allocate £1,000 from the 2025/26 civic hospitality budget for ten street parties to mark the 80th anniversary of VE Day within Dunstable.

Minute Number (062/25)

2. AUTHOR

Becky Wisbey
Head of Community Services
Becky.wisbey@dunstable.gov.uk

FINANCE AND GENERAL PURPOSES COMMITTEE

MONDAY 17 MARCH 2025

REFERRAL REPORT FROM PERSONNEL SUB-COMMITTEE

Purpose of Report: For Members to approve the updated Dignity at Work policy and the adoption of the Safer Recruitment policy.

1. POLICY UPDATES

Members reviewed the updated Dignity at Work policy and the new Safer Recruitment policy.

RESOLVED: i) that the amended Dignity at Work policy be recommended for approval by the Finance and General Purposes Committee.

- ii) that the adoption of the Safer Recruitment policy be recommend for approval to the Finance and General Purposes Committee
- iii) that officers seek advice from the Council's HR advisors regarding any additions that could made to the Dignity at Work Policy regarding how the policy relates to Members, and make appropriate recommendations to a future meeting of the Personnel Committee.

Minute Number (082/25)

2. AUTHOR

Kelley Hallam
HR& Payroll Manager
kelley.hallam@dunstable.gov.uk

Dignity at Work Policy

Dealing with bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation

This policy should be read in conjunction with the Council's Disciplinary and Grievance Procedures.

Purpose and Scope

Dunstable Town Council seeks to prevent all forms of bullying, harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation by or towards any employee, worker, volunteer, official, Member, contractor, visitor to the Council or member of the public. The Council is committed to developing a culture in which all are treated with dignity and respect and will take reasonable steps to prevent any harassment or discrimination of its employees. Any form of bullying, harassment or discrimination will not be tolerated or condoned by the Council.

Definitions

Harassment and bullying in the workplace can lead to poor morale, low productivity and poor performance, sickness absence, lack of respect for others, damage to the council's reputation and ultimately, Employment Tribunal or other court cases.

Bullying:

Bullying is any unwanted behaviour from a person or group that is;

- offensive, abusive, intimidating, malicious, insulting or humiliating;
- an abuse or misuse of power or authority that undermines, humiliates, or causes physical or emotional harm to someone.

Bullying can;

- Be a regular pattern of behaviour or a one-off incident
- Happen face-to-face, on social media, in emails or calls
- Take the form of physical, verbal and non-verbal conduct
- Happen at work or in other work-related situations
- Not always be obvious or noticed by others

It is possible someone might not know their behaviour is bullying. It can still be bullying even if they do not realise it or do not intend to bully someone.

However, legitimate, reasonable and constructive criticism of a worker's performance or behaviour, or reasonable instructions given to workers in the course of their employment, will not amount to bullying on their own.

Harassment:

In discrimination law there are three types of harassment;

- harassment related to certain 'protected characteristics'
- sexual harassment

• treating someone less favourably because they have submitted, or refused to submit to, sexual harassment or harassment related to sex or gender reassignment

Harassment is unacceptable even if it does not fall within any of these categories.

To be harassment, the unwanted behaviour must have either:

- violated the person's dignity
- created an intimidating, hostile, degrading, humiliating or offensive environment for the person

It can be harassment if the behaviour:

- is physical, verbal or non-verbal
- has one of these effects even it was not intended
- is a one-off incident

The following factors may be relevant in determining whether harassment has occurred:

- the circumstances of the situation
- how the person receiving the unwanted behaviour views it
- whether it is reasonable for that conduct to have that effect.

A person may be harassed even if they were not the intended "target". For example, a person may be harassed by racist jokes about a different ethnic group if the jokes create an offensive environment; or sexually harassed by pornographic images displayed on a colleague's computer in the workplace.

The Council has carried out an assessment to assess the risk of sexual harassment (including third party sexual harassment) and other different forms of harassment occurring in our workforce, including in different roles and service areas, the steps we could take to reduce those risks and which of those possible steps are reasonable. This risk assessment will be reviewed annually.

This policy should be read together with our Diversity and Equalities, Grievance and Disciplinary policies. We will provide training to all managers and staff to help them understand their rights and responsibilities under this policy and what they can do to create a work environment that is free of harassment, including sexual harassment, and bullying. We will also train managers to deal effectively with complaints of harassment, including sexual harassment, and bullying.

Harassment Related to a protected characteristic:

This type of harassment is unwanted behaviour related to any of the following protected characteristics:

- age
- disability
- gender reassignment
- race
- religion or belief
- sex
- sexual orientation

The law on harassment does not cover the protected characteristics of:

- marriage and civil partnership
- pregnancy and maternity

However, harassing somebody because of pregnancy or maternity would be harassment related to sex.

Harassment may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:

- a. racist, sexist, homophobic or ageist jokes, or derogatory or stereotypical remarks about a particular ethnic or religious group, religion or belief, or gender;
- b. disclosing or threatening to disclose someone's sexual orientation or gender identity against their wishes;
- c. offensive e-mails, text messages or social media content; or
- d. mocking, mimicking or belittling a person's disability.

Sexual Harassment:

Sexual harassment is unwanted conduct of a sexual nature.

Sexual harassment does not need to be sexually motivated; it only needs to be sexual in nature and may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:

- sexual comments or jokes
- displaying sexually graphic pictures, posters or photographs
- · suggestive looks, staring or leering
- propositions and sexual advances
- making promises in return for sexual favours
- sexual gestures
- intrusive questions about a person's private or sex life or a person discussing their own sex life
- · sexual posts or contact on social media
- spreading sexual rumours about a person
- · sending sexually explicit emails or text messages
- unwelcome touching, hugging, massaging or kissing

Less favourable treatment as a result of harassment:

This type of harassment is when someone experiences less favourable treatment because of how they responded to previous harassment.

It can apply whether the person rejected or 'submitted to' (accepted) the previous harassment.

Harassment happens when the person is treated less favourably than they would have been if they had not responded to the previous harassment in the way they did.

The previous harassment must have been either:

- sexual harassment
- harassment related to sex
- harassment related to gender reassignment

Under this type of harassment, it may be the same person who is responsible for the initial unwanted conduct and the subsequent less favourable treatment, or it may be two (or more) different people

An example of less favourable treatment as a result of harassment would be where employee receives several sexual advances from their manager but rejects them. A few weeks later at the employee's yearly performance review, the manager gives them a poor performance score. They are regularly praised by others for their hard work. This could count as harassment if the employee's poor performance score is because they rejected the manager's advances.

Unwanted conduct or behaviour:

Unwanted, unwelcome or uninvited conduct or behaviour can include;

- spoken words
- written words
- banter
- posts or contact on social media
- imagery
- graffiti
- physical gestures
- facial expressions
- mimicry
- jokes or pranks
- acts affecting a person's surroundings
- aggression
- physical behaviour towards a person or their property

Unwanted behaviour or conduct can include:

- a serious one-off incident
- repeated behaviour

The person being harassed might feel:

- disrespected
- frightened
- humiliated
- insulted
- intimidated
- threatened

Victimisation:

Victimisation means 'suffering a detriment' because you've done or intend to do a 'protected act'. A 'protected act' means taking action related to discrimination law. This includes:

- making a complaint of discrimination or harassment
- supporting someone else's complaint
- · gathering information that might lead to a complaint
- acting as a witness in a complaint
- saying something or giving evidence that does not support someone else's complaint

The law also protects a person from victimisation when someone else thinks the person has done or intends to do any of the things above.

'Detriment' is not defined by the legislation and could take many forms. Generally, a detriment is being treated badly. This could include, for example, being rejected for promotion, denied

an opportunity to represent the employer at external events, excluded from opportunities to undertake training, or not being given a discretionary bonus or performance-related award. The law only protects someone from victimisation if they've done something 'in good faith'. This means not acting maliciously.

Someone is not protected from victimisation if they:

- deliberately give false evidence
- deliberately make a false allegation of discrimination or harassment

Workers will not be subjected to disciplinary action or to any other detriment simply because their complaint is not upheld, and workers will only face disciplinary action if it is found both that the allegation is false and made in bad faith (that is, without an honest truth in its belief).

Victimisation may include (this is a non-exhaustive list), for example:

- a. Denying someone an opportunity because it is suspected that they intend to make a complaint about harassment/sexual harassment.
- b. Excluding someone because they have raised a grievance about harassment/sexual harassment.
- c. Failing to promote someone because they accompanied another staff member to a grievance meeting.
- d. Dismissing someone because they gave evidence on behalf of another staff member at an employment tribunal hearing.

Examples of Bullying and Harassment

Examples of bullying or harassment may arise from:

- Bullying or threatening behaviour, physical or verbal
- Verbal and written harassment through jokes, offensive language, gossip, slanderous or negative remarks
- Spreading malicious rumours, or insulting someone (particularly on the grounds of race, sex, disability, sexual orientation and religion or belief)
- Sharing information that is critical about someone to others who do not need to know
- Overbearing supervision or misuse of power or position
- Preventing employees progressing by intentionally blocking promotion or training opportunities
- Withholding information necessary to perform a job; unfair allocation of work; setting
 unrealistic deadlines; taking credit for the employee's work; or deriding the employee's
 work to senior managers in order to undermine the victim's position
- Deliberately undermining a competent worker by overloading and constant criticism
- Making threats about job security without foundation
- Visual display of posters, graffiti, obscene gestures
- Sending offensive material by e-mail or post
- Isolation or non-co-operation at work, exclusion from social activities
- Intrusion by pestering, spying, following an employee outside working hours

This list is not exhaustive. Every complaint will be judged on an individual basis taking into account the perception of the sufferer and the distress the action has caused.

Bullying and harassment may occur face-to-face, in meetings, through written communication, including e-mail, by telephone or through automatic supervision methods. It should be noted that harassment may not only occur within the workplace but also at a time and place associated with the workplace, for example, a work-related social gathering.

What is third-party harassment?

Third-party harassment occurs where a person is harassed/sexually harassed by someone who does not work for, and who is not an agent of, the same employer, but with whom they have come into contact during the course of their employment. Third-party harassment could include, for example, derogatory comments about a person's age, disability, pregnancy, colour, religion or belief, sex or sexual orientation, or unwelcome sexual advances, from a client, customer or supplier visiting the employer's premises, or where a person is visiting a client, customer or supplier's premises or other location in the course of their employment.

While an individual cannot bring a claim for third-party harassment alone, it can still result in legal liability when raised in other types of claims and will not be tolerated. The law requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment by third parties. All staff are encouraged to report any third-party harassment they are a victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy. Any harassment by a member of staff against a third-party may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal.

We will take active steps to try to prevent third-party harassment of staff. Action will include: warning notices to customers; information in terms and conditions; providing regular training for managers and staff to raise awareness of rights related to sexual harassment and of this policy; provide specific training for managers to support them in dealing with complaints; take steps to minimise occasions where staff work alone; where possible ensure that lone workers have additional support; carry out a risk assessment when planning events attended by clients/customers and/or suppliers. If any third-party harassment of staff occurs, we will take steps to remedy any complaints and to prevent it happening again. Action may include warning the harasser about their behaviour, banning them from our premises and reporting any criminal acts to the police.

Penalties

Harassment and Bullying are considered examples of serious misconduct which will be dealt with through the Disciplinary Procedure at Gross Misconduct level and may result in summary dismissal from the council for employees or through referral to the Standard Board of England, as a contravention of the Member's Code of Conduct which may result in penalties against the Member concerned.

Responsibilities

All parties to the Council have a responsibility to ensure that their conduct towards others does not harass or bully or in any way demean the dignity of others. If unacceptable behaviour is observed, then each individual can challenge the perpetrator and ask them to stop.

Tackling the issue informally

Harassment/sexual harassment and victimisation are unlawful and will not be tolerated. The law requires employers to take reasonable steps to prevent sexual harassment of workers in the course of their employment. All staff are encouraged to report any harassment/sexual harassment or victimisation they are a victim of, or witness, in accordance with this policy.

If they feel able to raise the problem informally, they can speak with the person responsible. They should explain clearly to them that their behaviour is not welcome or makes them uncomfortable. If this is too difficult or embarrassing, they should speak to their line manager (or another manager where it concerns them) or the HR & Payroll Manager who can provide confidential advice and assistance in resolving the issue informally or formally. If informal steps are not appropriate, or have not been successful, they should raise the matter formally under our **Complaints Procedure below** and it will be dealt with under that procedure. Keep a diary of all incidents – records of dates, times, any witnesses, your feelings, etc, and keep copies of any relevant documents, e.g., letters, memos, emails, notes of meetings.

In support of this policy, the Council undertakes to ensure that:

- Bullying, harassment, sexual harassment and victimisation are not tolerated
- All employees are informed of their personal rights and responsibilities under this
 policy through in-house training
- Managers act to prevent bullying and any type of harassment
- Employees are made aware of the relevant complaints' procedures outlined below
- Any allegation of bullying or harassment is investigated sensitively, constructively and confidentially
- Employees making a complaint of bullying or harassment, acting as a witness in a
 case of harassment, or assisting in an investigation are protected from any form of
 intimidation or victimisation. This may include protection of identity in extreme cases.

Following appropriate investigation, substantiated allegations of bullying or harassment will result in disciplinary action for employees up to summary dismissal.

Employees may be held personally liable for acts of harassment.

Formal Complaints Procedure

If an informal approach does not result in the bullying or harassment ceasing, or if an informal approach is considered impossible or inappropriate, the formal complaint procedure should be used.

Where the employee feels unable to resolve the matter informally any complaint about harassment or bullying should be raised with any of the following:

- Line manager
- Head of Service
- Town Clerk and Chief Executive
- HR & Payroll Manager
- Trade Union Representative

An employee who wishes to make a complaint of bullying against their line manager or other senior manager should raise the matter with a Head of Service or the Town Clerk and Chief Executive, i.e., a manager senior to the one being complained about.

The complaint may be made verbally in the first instance, though the employee making the complaint will be asked to put their complaint in writing confirming the dates and details of the incident(s) and any approaches made requesting the alleged harasser to stop.

The person to whom the complaint of harassment is made will ask the complainant to attend a meeting. The complainant may be accompanied to this meeting by a work colleague or trade union representative.

The meeting will be held within seven working days of the complaint being made and the purpose of the meeting will be to:

- Clarify the nature of the complaint
- Decide what investigatory action is needed
- Consider what temporary action should be taken to minimise contact between the two
 parties if requested by the complainant and/or if considered necessary by the
 manager. Where the allegations are deemed to be serious it may be necessary to
 consider suspending (with pay) the alleged harasser if they are an employee. This
 may be necessary from the outset.
- If the harasser or bully is a third party such as a customer or other visitor, we will consider what action may be appropriate to protect you and other staff pending the outcome of the investigation, bearing in mind the reasonable needs of the business and the rights of that person. Where appropriate, we will attempt to discuss the matter with the third party.

Investigation

The purpose of the investigation is to establish what happened and whether this constitutes bullying or harassment.

The investigation will normally be carried out by those who called the initial meeting, i.e., the employee's line manager, Head of Service or Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

The alleged harasser's Head of Service will be informed that an investigation into bullying or harassment is to take place.

The alleged harasser will be interviewed separately, as will any witnesses to the alleged behaviour. The alleged harasser will be given the opportunity to bring to the interview a work colleague or trade union representative.

The complainant may be interviewed again and will have the same right to bring a work colleague or trade union representative to the meeting.

Further consideration will be given during the investigation process to any temporary measure that needs to be put in place to relieve the stress on both parties for example, counselling, working from home or special leave. Any temporary measure put in place would not mean a reduction in salary or conditions of services.

A formal note will be taken of each meeting, which will be passed on the interviewee for their agreement to the minutes.

We will investigate complaints in a timely and confidential manner. Details of the investigation and the names of the person making the complaint and the person accused must only be disclosed on a "need to know" basis. We will consider whether any steps are necessary to manage any ongoing relationship and/or to provide protection between you and between other staff and the person accused during the investigation.

Outcome

The decision regarding the outcome of the investigation will be taken by the investigating officer.

The outcome will be notified in writing, in strict confidence, to the complainant, in so far as possible.

Examples of possible outcomes are as follows:

- Obtaining an undertaking from the alleged harasser that the unwelcome behaviour will stop
- Instituting formal disciplinary action which should normally be taken by the alleged harasser's Head of Service. The outcome of our investigation may be put on hold while disciplinary action is taken. Where the disciplinary outcome is that harassment/sexual harassment/victimisation/bullying occurred, prompt action will be taken to address it. They will also consider whether any additional measures need to be taken to prevent future sexual harassment of staff.
 - If doubts exist as to whether an offence has been committed the investigating panel may still wish to remind the alleged offender of the required standards of behaviour and consequences of contravention
 - The investigating panel may decide that the allegations in the complaint are unfounded or malicious
 - Training or counselling for either or both of the parties involved

Disciplinary Procedure

Disciplinary hearings related to bullying or harassment complaints will be governed by the Council's Disciplinary Procedure, subject to the following variation:

 In any meeting or discussion, both the complainant and the person against whom the complaint is being made, have the right to be accompanied by a work colleague or trade union representative.

Harassment/sexual harassment or victimisation may lead to disciplinary action up to and including dismissal without notice if they are committed:

- In a work situation.
- During any situation related to work, such as at a social event with colleagues.
- Against a colleague or other person connected to us outside of a work situation, including on social media.
- Against anyone outside of a work situation where the incident is relevant to your suitability to carry out your role.

We will take into account any aggravating factors, such as abuse of power over a more junior colleague, when deciding the appropriate disciplinary action to take.

If the complaint is found to be malicious the complainant will be the subject of action under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

Appeal Procedure

If the complainant is dissatisfied with the outcome of the harassment investigation, there is a right of appeal to the next level of manager above the one who carried out the investigation, with the Council's external Human Resources advisor acting in an advisory capacity.

Any such appeal must be made in writing, giving reasons for the dissatisfaction, within five working days of receipt of the letter confirming the outcome of the harassment investigation.

The complainant will be given at least seven working days' notice in writing of the time and place of the hearing.

The complainant will be entitled to be represented or accompanied by a Trade Union Official or work colleague of their choice.

The appeal hearing will be carried out in the following manner:

- The manager hearing the appeal will outline the procedure to be followed
- The investigating officer will summarise their findings and the reasons for their decisions
- The complainant will state their case and the reasons for their dissatisfaction with the outcome of the investigation
- The manager hearing the appeal will consider the evidence in private
- The manager hearing the appeal will make their decision and both parties will be recalled. The manager hearing the appeal will then announce the decision, giving the reasons and the arrangements for confirming the decision in writing

• The decision will be confirmed in writing as soon as possible

If the alleged harasser wishes to appeal against disciplinary action taken as a result of any subsequent Disciplinary Hearing, the appeals procedure under the Disciplinary Procedure should be used.

Follow up Action

It is important for the appropriate manager to check that the bullying or harassment has stopped and that there has been no victimisation. Regular contact should be maintained with the employee to assess how they are coping and to ensure that victimisation has not occurred. It may be necessary for the perpetrator to be moved to another position – if any sanction is short of dismissal. Only in exceptional cases should the sufferer be moved, unless it is with their agreement.

Victimisation against a complainant will result in formal disciplinary action.

Incidents involving the Council's Customers

Where a customer or supplier makes a complaint of bullying or harassment against an employee the employee's line manager should make enquiries in the first instance in line with the Council's Complaints Procedure. As a result of enquiries made, action may be taken under the Council's Disciplinary Procedure.

Where an employee makes a complaint of bullying or harassment against a customer or supplier, the complaint should be reported to the employee's line manager. The manager should investigate the complaint in accordance with this policy. The procedure should include:

- Interviewing any other employee who may have witnessed the incident
- Possibly interviewing the customer/supplier
- Providing support to the employee, e.g., through counselling
- Moving the employee, if only a temporary basis and if the employee requests it
- Where appropriate, making it clear to the customer/supplier what sort of behaviour the Council expects in future and what action will be taken for non-compliance

Should the employee making the complaint be dissatisfied with the decision made by their line manager, they have a right to appeal using the Appeal Procedure.

Incidents involving the Council's Members

Complaints of harassment by or against a Council Member will be dealt with through the Member's Code of Conduct or referral to the Standards Board.

Employees who wish to pursue a complaint of bullying or harassment against a Council Member should, in the first instance, discuss this with the Town Clerk and Chief Executive. If an employee feels they need support at such a discussion, they can be accompanied by a manager, a work colleague or a trade union representative.

Incidents involving the Town Clerk and Chief Executive

Complaints of harassment by or against the Town Clerk and Chief Executive would be dealt with by the Chairman of Finance and General Purposes Committee or the Chairman of the Council.

The complainant will be entitled to be represented or accompanied by a Trade Union Official or work colleague of their choice.

A full investigation of the complaint will be held by an officer as appointed by the Chair who is handling the process, with the Council's external Human Resources advisor acting in an advisory capacity.

Training and Guidance

Guidance on issues relating to bullying and harassment, including the complaints procedure, is available from the HR & Payroll Manager.

Training on issues relating to bullying and harassment, including the complaints procedure and the rights of both the complainant and the alleged harasser, is available to all managers and employees.

Protection and support for those involved

Staff who make complaints, report that they have witnessed wrongdoing, or who participate in good faith in any investigation must not suffer any form of retaliation or victimisation as a result. Anyone found to have retaliated against or victimised someone in this way will be subject to disciplinary action under our Disciplinary Procedure.

Employees have 24/7 access to confidential employee support and counselling, which is available on request for anyone affected by, or accused of, harassment/sexual harassment or bullying. The helpline number is 0800 328 1437 or book support online at: www.employeeassistance.org.uk (access code: Dunstable)

Support and guidance can also be obtained from the following external services:

- a. The Equality Advisory and Support Service (www.equalityadvisoryservice.com).
- b. Protect (www.protect-advice.org.uk).
- c. Victim support (www.victimsupport.org.uk).
- d. Rights of women (England and Wales) (www.rightsofwomen.org.uk)

Confidentiality

It is absolutely essential that anyone involved in making or dealing with a complaint respects its strict confidential nature. All complaints will be handled and investigated in a confidential manner and confidentiality must be maintained at all times.

Monitoring

Harassment complaints will be monitored in order to evaluate and review the effectiveness of this policy.

A review of the policy shall be undertaken each year (or as appropriate) and necessary amendments will be made by the Town Clerk and Chief Executive.

This will include monitoring the treatment and outcomes of any complaints of harassment, sexual harassment or victimisation we receive to ensure that they are properly investigated and resolved, those who report or act as witnesses are not victimised, repeat offenders are dealt with appropriately, cultural clashes are identified and resolved, and workforce training is targeted where needed.

Data Protection

The Data Protection Act 2018 sets out certain requirements for the protection of personal information against unauthorised disclosure.

The Council fully complies with this Act and any personal information provided will be used solely for the reasons stated in the Policy and will be kept in accordance with the requirements of the Act.

Information about a complaint by or about a staff member may be placed on their personnel file, along with a record of the outcome and of any notes or other documents compiled during the process.

Safer Recruitment Policy

Safer Recruitment Statement

Dunstable Town Council is committed to safeguarding and promoting the welfare of children, young people and vulnerable adults. We comply with the statutory legislative requirements and guidance, and we follow a rigorous selection process which seeks to discourage and screen out unsuitable applicants.

Safer recruitment

Our job descriptions and person specifications confirm individual responsibility for safeguarding the welfare and well-being of children, young people and vulnerable adults. All posts which may be considered as 'regulated' activity as defined in the Safeguarding Vulnerable Groups Act 2006 as amended by the Protection of Freedoms Act 2012 are subject to Disclosure and Barring Service (DBS) checks and the following recruitment process will be carried out.

Application stage

We require all applicants to complete our Application Form which seeks to elicit the information we require to undertake the shortlisting process and to assess the applicant's suitability for the post they have applied for. We only accept Curriculum Vitae in addition to, not as a substitute for completing our Application Form. We reserve the right to reject any applicant who has failed to fully complete our Application Form. Part of the application form includes self-declaration in respect of their criminal record.

Shortlisting

Only those candidates who meet the criteria outlined in the person specification will be shortlisted. If we identify anything of concern to us, then this will be raised and explored during the interview.

Interview

Shortlisted candidates will take part in an in-depth interview and selection process. Candidates will be asked to address any discrepancies, anomalies, or gaps in employment in their application form including their employment history. Candidates will be invited to discuss any disclosures that they have self-declared on the application form and any queries we may have arising from the information provided in their employment references.

Appointment

An offer of employment is conditional upon us being satisfied with the outcomes of all of the following checks:

Verification of the candidate's identity.

- An Enhanced Disclosure and Barring Service Certificate (DBS) including a Children's Barred list check, where applicable.
- Overseas criminal record and overseas professional registration checks where a candidate has lived (in the last 10 years), worked, or qualified overseas, where applicable.
- Verification that the candidate is not the subject of a prohibition order or section 128 direction made by the secretary of state.
- Compliant employment references. All referees will be asked to express if they would have any concerns with the candidate working with children or vulnerable adults or if there were any previous safeguarding concerns.
- Verification of qualifications and professional registrations relevant to the candidate's role.
- Verification of the candidate's right to work in the UK.

On appointment and annually thereafter, all colleagues are required to undertake safeguarding training, and to reaffirm and disclose any changes to their criminal record. Our contracts of employment place an ongoing requirement on all colleagues to immediately notify us if they are the subject of a police investigation, are released under investigation, or receive a caution or conviction.

Recruitment of offenders

All posts within Dunstable Town Council are, (by reason of The Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974 (Exceptions) Order 1975 (as amended)) exempt from the provisions of the Rehabilitation of Offenders Act 1974. This means that all applicants for employment with the Council must disclose all unspent cautions and convictions and all unprotected spent cautions and convictions. An explanation of when a spent conviction is unprotected is available on the Ministry of Justice website.

If relevant information (whether concerning previous convictions or otherwise) is volunteered by an applicant during the recruitment process or obtained through a DBS check, we will consider the following factors before reaching a recruitment decision:

- whether the conviction or other matter revealed is relevant to the position in question;
- the seriousness of any offence or other matter revealed;
- the length of time since the offence or other matter occurred;
- whether the applicant has a pattern of offending behaviour or other relevant matters;
- whether the applicant's circumstances have changed since the offending behaviour or other relevant matters; and
- the circumstances surrounding the offence and the explanation(s) offered by the convicted person.

If the post involves regular contact with children or vulnerable adults it is our normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of any of the following offences: murder, manslaughter, rape, other serious sexual offences, grievous bodily harm or other serious acts of violence, class A drug-related offences, robbery, burglary, theft, deception or fraud.

If the post involves a licensee responsibility, it is our normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted at any time of robbery, burglary, theft, deception, or fraud.

If the post involves some driving responsibilities, it is our normal policy to consider it a high risk to employ anyone who has been convicted of dangerous driving or of an offence of driving under the influence of alcohol or drugs, within the last 10 years.

Probation

All new employees will be subject to Dunstable Town Council's probation procedure for a minimum of six months but can be extended if required. The probation period is to enable the assessment of a colleague's suitability for the job for which they have been employed, which includes the monitoring and review of their performance of their duties, skills, qualifications, and experience outlined in the job description and person specification and their suitability to work with children, young people or vulnerable adults.

Recruiting Volunteers

The Council also undertakes safer recruitment of volunteers which follows the good practice as listed above for the safer recruitment of employees. Volunteers will need to complete an application form, have references followed up and have an appropriate DBS check together with completing safeguarding training before they can commence volunteering for Dunstable Town Council, whree applicable.

Equal opportunities

Dunstable Town Council recognises the value of, and seeks to achieve, a diverse workforce that includes people from all backgrounds. We take positive steps to create an employment culture in which people feel confident about being treated with fairness, dignity, and tolerance irrespective of their differences. This commitment extends beyond the relationship between the conduct of employees, potential employees, and the whole community. We are committed to the elimination of unlawful discrimination and the promotion of good relations between all.

General Data Protection Regulation

Dunstable Town Council is committed to ensuring that your privacy is protected. By signing a contract of employment, you understand that Dunstable Town Council, and/or agents appointed by the Council, process your personal data, including "special category personal data" as defined in the General Data Protection Regulation (GDPR), for the purposes of the operation, management, security and/or administration, as well as, complying with applicable laws, regulations, and procedures.