

AGENDA ITEM: 7

SUMMARY



Report for:	Housing and Community Overview & Scrutiny Committee
Date of meeting:	31st October 2012
PART:	1
If Part II, reason:	

Title of report:	Performance Report Quarter 2 – Regulatory Services
Contact:	Cllr Neil Harden, Portfolio Holder for Residents and Regulatory Services Author/Responsible Officers: Steven Baker, Assistant Director (Legal, Democratic & Regulatory) Rita McGinlay, Group Manager (Regulatory Services)
Purpose of report:	To provide Members with the performance report for quarter 2 in relation to Regulatory Services.
Recommendations:	That Members note the report.
Corporate objectives:	Resources and Value For Money; Optimise Resources and Implement Best Practice.
Implications:	Financial: None.
'Value For Money Implications'	Value for Money: Monitoring Performance supports the Council in achieving Value for Money for its citizens.
Risk Implications	Risk Assessment completed for each service area as part of service planning and reviewed quarterly.
Equalities	Equality Impact Assessment completed for each service area

Implications	as part of service planning and reviewed quarterly.
Health And Safety Implications	None.
Consultees:	
Background papers:	Quarterly Performance Report – quarter 2 (attached).
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

1. Background

1.1 For the purpose of this report, 'Regulatory Services' includes the following services:

- Environmental Health (Food Safety, Health and Safety, Statutory Nuisances, Contaminated Land, Drainage, Private Water Supplies, Infectious Diseases, Air Quality Management)
- Private Sector Housing (HMOs, Illegal Eviction, Private Sector Landlord Issues, Improvement Grants, Disabled Facilities Grants, etc)
- Home Energy Conservation
- Pest Control
- Stray Dogs / Dog Warden Services
- Clinical Waste
- Cesspool Emptying
- Environmental Enforcement and High Hedges
- Emergency and Business Continuity Planning.
- Street Trading

2. Regulatory Services Performance Indicators

There are no significant performance issues to bring to Members' attention arising in quarter 2. There has been slight slippage in a couple of areas, REG01 – percentage of abandoned vehicles removed within 24 hours and REG02 – percentage of high risk food premises inspected that were due in the quarter. These have been investigated. Regarding REG01 - An opportunity for a service level improvement has been identified and is now being implemented. With REG02 – this is simply due to peaks and troughs in the work programme; it has been a very heavy quarter. The Council has no control over this, as premises are rated against a national scoring scheme. The Food Safety Team is still on track to reach its end of year target.

3. Food Safety

3.1 It was reported in Quarter 1 that officers had served a food premises Prohibition Order, to close a food premises that presented a significant health risk due to a serious rat infestation. There has been a lot of investigatory work carried out during Quarter 2, to enable the Council to take the most appropriate course of enforcement action.

3.2 The Food Safety Team has also dealt with an unprecedented amount of health certification work during Quarter 2. This requires officers to carry out certain checks on food products to certify that they are 'fit' to be exported to non-EU nations. There is a cost recovery element to this service.

3.3 Authorised Food Safety Officers have all been re-trained on the procedures and risks of Sous Vide processing (under vacuum). This is an evolving technology that brings significant food safety risks (*Clostridium botulinum*) if not properly controlled.

4. Private Sector Housing

Unfortunately, the downward trend in illegal eviction complaints has now reversed and officers are busy dealing with this area of work again. The end of Quarter 2 also saw an increase in general private sector housing complaints, often regarding seasonal issues, including tenants living in damp and mouldy properties. Legal action against a landlord for running an unlicensed (unsafe) house in multiple occupation, is still being pursued. The Council is awaiting further advice from Counsel.

5. Dog Warden

5.1 Officers ran a very successful campaign during Animal Action Week. A road show was held from Wednesday 4th to Sunday 8th July, across various suitable locations. Once again, partners from RSPCA, the Cat Protection League, Appledown Animal Rescue, PDSA and Hertfordshire Constabulary, joined our Dog Warden in promoting key messages about animal welfare and responsible ownership. This year, officers were also joined by Housing colleagues, to promote the jointly produced draft Pet Policy for Council tenants. The Dog Warden offered discounted / free micro-chipping, (having negotiated 400 free microchips from the Dogs Trust), the Cat Protection League offered free neutering vouchers and PDSA offered free dog health checks.

5.2 The stray dog service was awarded the RSPCA Silver Footprint Award this year. This is the third year running that the Council has been awarded by the RSPCA for the quality of its service.

5.3 Dog fouling continues to be targeted, based on reported data and feedback from our waste contractor. Bennetts End has been the most recently targeted area, with a week long campaign in August, rolled out again in October. Work will continue in encouraging responsible dog ownership. Anecdotally, officers have reported that the number of offenders is proportionately very low. It is planned to capture this data during future campaigns, rather than just exception reporting, to enable better perspective.

6. Environment Enforcement

6.1 Officers have been busy dealing with fly tipping offences. Two surveillance projects have been running, which resulted in one fly tipper being caught on camera tipping up to 5 tonnes of waste. Officers are awaiting Police co-operation with this.

6.2 A further 14 Police and Criminal Evidence Act interviews have been conducted following intelligence gathered from fly tipped waste. These will be pursued and the most appropriate action will be taken.

6.3 During Quarter 2, officers hosted the Herts Fly Tipping Working Group Forum; an opportunity to share best practice and seek opportunities for service improvements.

6.4 Officers have issued 4 Fixed Penalty Notices for littering. Additionally, a week long campaign was held with one business in Hemel Hempstead that was creating a problem with smoking litter. Through a preventative approach, this problem has been dealt with. Similar initiatives have been run with schools in the borough. These have been successful so far.

7. Home Energy Conservation

7.1 A Warm Front mailing was sent to benefit claimants in July, advising them of the heating grant scheme and how they could access this.

7.2 Officers submitted an article and banner advert to Dacorum Digest in August, offering free insulation. These were printed on the front page.

7.3 Officers have worked with colleagues at Watford Borough Council and Hertfordshire County Council, to produce a Hertfordshire bid for £0.5 million funding to deliver the Warmer Homes, Healthy People campaign. The decision will be notified to us shortly.