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Spatial Planning and Environment

Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Spatial Planning and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Q3 Environmental and Community Protection Update
Date:	16 th March 2022
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Julie Banks , Portfolio Holder for Regulatory and Community
Part:	I
If Part II, reason:	N/A
Appendices:	
Background papers:	
Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:	

Report Author / Responsible Officer

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Corporate Priorities	A clean, safe and enjoyable environment Building strong and vibrant communities Ensuring economic growth and prosperity Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery Climate and ecological emergency
Wards affected	All

Purpose of the report:	1. To provide Members with the performance report for quarter 3 in relation to Environmental and Community Protection
Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):	1. For information only.
Period for post policy/project review:	

1 Introduction/Background:

1.1 For the purpose of this report, 'Environmental and Community Protection' includes the following services:

- Environmental Health Team (Covid 19 Outbreak Control, Food Safety, Health and Safety, Statutory Nuisances, Contaminated Land, Drainage, Private Water Supplies, Infectious Diseases, Air Quality Management, High Hedges)
- Operations Team (Public Health, Pest Control, Dog Warden Services, Environmental Enforcement, Covid Advisors)
- Corporate Health, Safety and Resilience Team (Internal Health and Safety Advice, Technical Support, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity).

2 Environmental and Community Protection – Q3 Performance Indicators

- 2.1 93.5% (142/152) of noise cases were closed within 60 days. This is similar to last quarter.
- 2.2 75.97% (Total 1848 Food Premises) of food premises have a rating of 4 or 5. This has declined in the pandemic due to a backlog of food premises that have not been inspected. The higher risk premises have been prioritised for inspection, along with premises we have received complaints about, resulting in a lower percentage of premises achieving the higher rating. In line with the Food Service Recovery Plan, the highest A rated premises have all been inspected ahead of the March deadline. 10.2% of food inspections due in the quarter were visited within the quarter. This is now being addressed by the Food Recovery Plan.
- 2.3 94% (1114/1174) of requests into the department are responded to within three working days. The department has been working hard to improve this statistic and with recent appointments to the department's vacancies we are optimistic that this will improve further.
- 2.4 91% (581/634) of fly-tips are assessed within 3 working days and 100% of planning application consultations were responded to within 20 days.
- 2.5 66 Accidents were reported to Corporate Health and Safety Team in Q3. 5 of those were reported to the HSE. Four of these are related to manual handling issues and the remainder was a slip, trip or floor.

3 Environmental Health Team

- 3.1 Sarah Stefano was appointed as Team Leader for Environmental Health and is due to start in Q4. Ciaran Corkerry was appointed and started his role as Lead Officer Environmental Protection in Q3. The service was unable to appoint to the Student Environmental Health Officer Role.
- 3.2 Food Premises in Apsley undertook to have a voluntary closure for a week to rid the premises from cockroach infestation. The team supported the business to make necessary improvements to reopen as soon as was safe to do so.
- 3.3 Local Test and Trace Service supported the national service, the service was set up to deal with 80 (240 case a quarter) cases a month. You can see that this was far exceeded (1093) meaning that resources were pulled in from the wider Environmental and Community protection Team to support this work. The local test and trace service was suspended on 17th December due to the fact the increasing numbers were unsustainable for the business model and national test and trace look on the model.

No. of visits to workplaces with COVID cases	2
No. of T&T cases referred to DBC (as of 4pm on 29/10/21)	1093
Insufficient contact details provided for DBC to follow up	40
Contact details acquired through liaison with other departments	37
Phone calls to cases	1083
Emails to cases with link to survey on-line	281
Completed Questionnaires	511
Door Knocks including isolation/welfare visits	239
Cases reported to the Police	23

- 3.4 Work was undertaken to meet the targets of the Food Service Recovery Plan. Additional Contractors were brought in to help the service deal with the backlog of new food premises that has started within the pandemic, leaving the permanent staff to focus on the high rated food premises, complaints and compliance visits.
- 3.5 Rupert Brown, trading as RB Fencing, was ordered to pay a fine of £6,000, a victim surcharge of £170 and costs of £2,500 at St Albans Magistrates on Wednesday 10 November. The company admitted using council land to deposit commercial waste including green waste and fencing materials on an electrical substation at Broadfield Road, Hemel Hempstead before it was disposed of in skips from December 2017 to June 2020.
- 3.6 Dacorum Sports Trust pleaded guilty at crown court to Health and Safety Offences on the 29th November 2021. The investigation arose after 2 serious climbing incidents at the XC Centre Hemel Hempstead. After a third reduction due to the guilty plea, DST were fined £33,333 plus £170 victim surcharge and £41,953.70 in Council costs.

4 Corporate Health and Safety Team

- 4.1 Team have continued to support the Council Services with the constant changes brought about by the Covid Legislation and supporting guidance documents. The Team carried out compliance audits with front line services and supported events running in the borough.
- 4.2 Health Safety and Resilience Committee nominated and voted for Health and Safety Champion.
- 4.3 The Team provided Health and Safety Training to Herts Valley Clinical and Commissioning Group.
- 4.4 The Annual Review for the Corporate Covid Risk assessment was carried out by the Team. Policy review was carried out for Electricity and Portable Appliance Testing Policy, and the Corporate Emergency Plan.
- 4.5 The team participated in a Buncefield Multi-Agency Major Incident response exercise.
- 4.6 Fire Policy was presented to SPAE OSC. This will now be subject to Portfolio Holder Decision.
- 4.7 Service Level Business Continuity Plans have been refreshed with lessons learned from dealing with Covid-19.

5 Operation Team

- 5.1 25 Stray Dogs were dealt with in Q3, 13 were rehomed by the authority the remainder were reunited with their owners.
- 5.2 Animal Welfare Officers took a prosecution for animal welfare offences. Four Dogs were seized, one unfortunately passed away, one was rehomed and other two were kennelled until the outcome of the case. They have since been rehomed. The dogs were kept in filthy conditions in crates, for extended periods. The house was hoarded and conditions were poor. Mr FLITTON was ordered to a 12 month community order, 100 hours of unpaid work, £300 costs and a £95 victim surcharge. Mrs TOWERS was ordered to a 12 month community order, 30 RAR (rehabilitation activity requirement) days, £120 fine, £300 costs and a £95 victim surcharge. Miss RICHARDSON was ordered to a 12 month community order, 30 RAR (rehabilitation activity requirement) days, £120 fine, £300 costs and a £95 victim surcharge. All three were disqualified from keeping and owning all animals for life.
- 5.3 Proactive dog patrols started in the weeks leading up to the launch of the PSPO pilot. Time was taken to engage with the dog walking community across the borough.
- 5.4 Animal Welfare Officers have been supporting Housing Staff in implementing Pet Policy and responsible pet ownership amongst our tenants.
- 5.5 5 Fixed Penalty Notices were served for Fly-Tipping in Q3 and 8 abandoned vehicles removed. Three outstanding warrants in place for defendants not appearing in court. This are being pursued regularly with Hertfordshire Police.
- 5.6 The Littering and Public Space Protection Order Enforcement Pilot was launched on the 1st November following a week of public awareness and engagement activities. During this time period the District Enforcement Officers have patrolled for 974 hours covering all wards and have issued FPN's in 12 different wards The following shows the types of offence within the 2 month period.

Offence Type	Offence Type Count
Littering-Chewing Gum	<u>1</u>
Littering-Cigarette	<u>139</u>
Littering-Cigarette Butt	<u>446</u>
Littering-Confectionary Packs	<u>2</u>
Littering-Discarded Food	<u>9</u>
Littering-Fast Food Related	<u>1</u>
Littering-Food Wrapper	<u>1</u>
Littering-Non-Alcoholic Drinks Related	<u>1</u>
Littering-Other Litter	<u>3</u>
Littering-Other Offence	<u>2</u>
Littering-Rolled up cigarette	<u>35</u>
Littering-Snack Packs	<u>3</u>
PSPO-Cycling or Skateboarding (PSPO)	<u>138</u>
PSPO-Dog Fouling (PSPO)	<u>2</u>
PSPO-Dogs Exclusion Zones	<u>2</u>
PSPO-Dogs on Lead by Direction	<u>3</u>
PSPO-Spitting (PSPO)	<u>30</u>
PSPO-Street Drinking	<u>2</u>
PSPO-Sweet Wrapper	<u>1</u>
PSPO-Urinating or Defecating	<u>2</u>
Total:	823

5.7 Covid Advisors continues to support businesses with Covid Compliance, visiting 397 business premises in Q3. They also continue to provide self-isolation support visits (566) for those suffering with Covid-19.

6 Options and alternatives considered

No options to consider, for information only.

7 Consultation

N/A

8 Financial and value for money implications:

N/A

9 Legal Implications

N/A

10 Risk implications:

N/A

11 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:

There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

12 Sustainability implications (including climate change, health and wellbeing, community safety)

N/A

13 Council infrastructure (including Health and Safety, HR/OD, assets and other resources)

N/A

14 Conclusions:

Report to be noted by the Committee.