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# Spatial Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

<b>Report for:</b>	Spatial Planning and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee
<b>Title of report:</b>	Q4 Environmental and Community Protection Update
<b>Date:</b>	13 <sup>th</sup> June 2023
<b>Report on behalf of:</b>	Councillor Robin Bromham, Portfolio Holder for Regulatory and Community
<b>Part:</b>	I
<b>If Part II, reason:</b>	N/A
<b>Appendices:</b>	
<b>Background papers:</b>	
<b>Glossary of acronyms and any other abbreviations used in this report:</b>	

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<b>Corporate Priorities</b>	<p>A clean, safe and enjoyable environment</p> <p>Building strong and vibrant communities</p> <p>Ensuring economic growth and prosperity</p> <p>Providing good quality affordable homes, in particular for those most in need</p> <p>Ensuring efficient, effective and modern service delivery</p> <p>Climate and ecological emergency</p>
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<b>Wards affected</b>	All
<b>Purpose of the report:</b>	<b>1.</b> To provide members with the performance report for quarter 4 in relation to Regulatory Services.
<b>Recommendation (s) to the decision maker (s):</b>	<b>1.</b> For information only.
<b>Period for post policy/project review:</b>	

## **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 Enforcement, Statutory Nuisances, Contaminated Land, Drainage, Private Water Supplies, Infectious Diseases, Air Quality Management, High Hedges). Team Manager- Sarah Stefano, team of 7 FTE's and 3 temps (1 Vacancy).
- Operations Team (Public Health, Pest Control, Animal Welfare, Dog Warden Services, Environmental Enforcement and management of District Enforcement Littering and PSPO Enforcement Contract). Team Manager, Dawn Rhoden and Team of 5.5FTE and 2 Temps.
- Corporate Health, Safety and Resilience Team (Internal Health and Safety Advice, Technical Support, Emergency Planning and Business Continuity). Team Manager, Russell Ham and Team of 3.4 FTE and one vacancy.

## **2 Environmental and Community Protection – Q4 Performance Indicators**

2.1 ECP09, Number of High risk food hygiene inspections carried achieved within the quarter was 80%. The Food Safety Recovery Plan has been running to target and is due to see the remaining small back log of low risk premises resolved by Q2 23/24.

## **3 Environmental Health Team - Sarah Stefano**

- 3.1 During Q4 the Team were continuing to follow the Food Recovery Plan. The Team continue to receive a steady flow of new Food Business Registrations and participated in the register your business publicity campaign. Contractors are continuing to inspect new businesses funded from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund as part of the recovery plan following Covid-19 Pandemic.
- 3.2 Air Quality Steering Group was held in March 2023. Our Scientific Officer David Carr continues represent us on the Defra Advisory Group on the development of Best Available Techniques (BAT) with respect to Air Quality to enable influence at a national level as well as being the Chair of the Herts and Beds Air Quality Group. The Annual Air Quality Status Report for 2023 (which details the figures from 2022) has been drafted and is being internally reviewed before submission DFERRA for approval.
- 3.3 The Team continuing to support the Local Resilience Forum Working Groups for Covid-19 also attend District Outbreak Planning Meetings and Winter Planning Groups.

- 3.4 Locations for the 3 Particulate Matter Monitoring Devices were agreed with Hertfordshire County Council to be Swing Gate School, Bennetts End Road and Lawn Lane. These will be installed in the new financial year. DBC will have access to the data from these locations once they are up and running. The capital bid to purchase a new Real Time Analyser was successful and location in Apsley Air Quality Monitoring Area has been agreed. The Annual Status Report 2022 was reviewed and accepted by DEFRA.
- 3.5 A food premises agreed to Voluntary Surrender 30KG of ready to eat meat products that were stored out of adequate temperature control in Hemel Hempstead Town Centre. Officers worked with Food Business Operators to ensure public safety and that this meat did not enter the food chain. No formal enforcement action was necessary to secure public safety at that time.

#### **4 Corporate Health and Safety Team**

- 4.1 Corporate Health Safety and Resilience Board was held in March 2023. Corporate Health Safety and Resilience Policies were reviewed with minor changes, they were agreed by the committee and sent to Senior Leadership Team for ratification. Policies included,
- Corporate Emergency Plan
- 4.2 Funding from the Contain Outbreak Management Fund was secured to plan for potential future pandemics. Resilience training for Corporate Leadership Team has been arranged for Q4 from the Emergency Planning College. This has been completed with very positive feedback received from the leadership Team. Health and Safety Training has also been arranged for Team Managers and above to better support managers in the event of new and emerging risks including pandemic Flu or further waves of Covid. This has been partially completed with metrics still standing at 85%.
- 4.3 Natasha Beresford (Assistant Director – Housing Operations and Safe Communities) on behalf of the Corporate Management Team attended Multi-Agency Exercise Operation Lemur run by Hertfordshire Fire and Rescue Services with the Local Resilience Forum to test our plans in the event of a National Power outage.

#### **5 Operations Team**

- 5.1 27 Stray dogs were collected by the authority in Q4. 10 were returned to owners and 17 were rehomed. 43 Dangerous Dogs complaints were received and investigated as well as 107 Animal Welfare concerns.
- 5.2 7 Community Protection Warnings were served, and 3 Microchipping of Dogs Notices.
- 5.3 We continue to see an uptick in Filthy and Verminous complex cases, a further 13 in Q4. Officer's work with multiple agency partners to ensure that risk to Public Health is removed, preference as always is working with residents however enforcement action is taken where necessary to secure public health. These cases are particularly time consuming and difficult to resolve.
- 5.4 We are very proud that Ben Stevens and the Environmental Enforcement team were shortlisted for a Keep Britain Tidy, Excellence in Enforcement Award. The team missed out on the top award and were pipped to the post by a much larger London Borough of Greenwich. As members will be aware this team is now the most proactive Enforcement Team in Hertfordshire has recently introduced a new way of enforcing littering making a modest income for the team to reinvest in enforcement activities and has been recognised as one of the best Teams this year by Keep Britain Tidy a national organisation. This has really supported the Councils objectives and the place based strategies. The Team members are Ben Stevens, Paul Coates, Chris Briancon, Julie Fear (Temp) and Abdullah Khalil (Temp) and Team is led by Team Manager Dawn Rhoden.
- 5.5 Dumitru Dragomir, of Botley Road, Hemel Hempstead, pleaded guilty at St Albans Magistrates' and was ordered to pay a fine of £200 and costs of £552.84 for Fly-tipping offences. The Court heard on

Wednesday 1 March 2023 that in August 2022, an Environmental Enforcement Officer inspected a fly-tipping report of a box and sacks dumped in a passing place along Holtsmere End Lane, Hemel Hempstead. Within the waste, correspondence was found including Dragomir's address. We issued him with a £312 Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) for failing to demonstrate householder duty of care responsibilities when disposing of domestic waste. The FPN was not paid so we then sought prosecution for the offence.

- 5.6 JXI Construction Ltd of New Bedford Road, Luton, pleaded guilty to the unauthorised deposit of controlled waste on Coles Lane, Flamstead. The court heard how on Sunday 14 August 2022, a person driving a sign-written Mercedes Sprinter van was caught on our covert cameras dumping a large pile of assorted waste containing cardboard, wood and black bags on the rural lane. As part of the investigation, the company was traced but despite several attempts the company director failed to fully engage with officers, including failure to respond to a legal notice requesting details of the driver and the vehicle involved. This forced us to seek prosecution for the offence. The company was fined £3,700, and ordered to pay costs of £2,561 and victim surcharges of £1,480.
- 5.7 Harris Dadd, of Woodwhite Way, Hemel Hempstead pleaded guilty to the unauthorised deposit of controlled waste. On 27 June 2022, an officer attended a report of a fly-tip in Windmill Road, Markyate. The officer found a large amount of mixed building waste, and during the inspection managed to trace this to a residential property in Hemel Hempstead. Further investigation at the address identified that Dadd had been employed to work there and had removed an amount of waste from this address. Dadd initially denied the offence when interviewed by our Environmental Enforcement team. He was fined £930, and ordered to pay a victim surcharge of £373 and costs of £900.
- 5.8 Dacorum Borough Council has once again achieved gold standard in the annual RSPCA Paw Prints awards. Both the Regulatory Services Animal Welfare service and the Housing teams have been recognised for good practice, exceeding basic and statutory service requirements with the aim of achieving higher animal welfare standards.
- 5.9 District Enforcement on behalf of Dacorum Borough Council started its running a series of Good Citizen Prize Draws throughout 2023. The Prize draw scheme started late last year and we were delighted to confirm that the first 2 winners had been drawn. The Good Citizen Prize Draw entry is free and by way of District Enforcement enviro-crime officers handing out entry cards when witnessing good behaviours demonstrated by members of the public in relation to all our PSPO designated areas or the correct disposal of litter. Lucky winners will receive a retail gift voucher to the value of £80.
- 5.10 District Enforcement Officers took part in the Great British Spring Clean on 25<sup>th</sup> March in Silk Mill Way to support positive behaviours with regard to littering.
- 5.11 District Enforcement have served 637 Fixed Penalty Notices on those that chose to litter or breach the Councils Public Space Protections Orders in Q4.
- 5.12 35 prosecutions were brought by the council for littering or public space protection order offences. 100% of these cases were successful in court 33 were taken through the single justice procedure and 2 cases were referred to St Albans Magistrates Court following initial 'not-guilty' pleas. Mr Peter Keen was found guilty of littering offenses on the 30<sup>th</sup> March 2023, due to limited means was ordered to pay a £25 fine, £25 court costs and £35 victim surcharge to be paid in increments of £5 a week. Mr Shawn Elliot pleaded guilty in court and was awarded a conditional discharge (This means that, if the offender commits another crime, they can be sentenced for the first offence and the new one) this will be for 6 months plus a £22 victim surcharge.

**7 Options and alternatives considered**

No options to consider, for information only.

**8 Consultation**

N/A

**9 Financial and value for money implications:**

N/A

**10 Legal Implications**

N/A

**11 Risk implications:**

N/A

**12 Equalities, Community Impact and Human Rights:**

There are no Human Rights Implications arising from this report.

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

N/A

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

N/A

**15 Conclusions:**

Report to be noted by the Committee.