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Strategic Planning and Environment Overview and Scrutiny Committee

Report for:	Strategic Planning and Environmental Overview and Scrutiny Committee
Title of report:	Q1 Environmental and Community Protection Update
Date:	6 th September 2023
Report on behalf of:	Councillor Robin Bromham, 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:	

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Corporate Priorities	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 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
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Wards affected	All
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Purpose of the report:	1. To provide members with the performance report for quarter 1 in relation to Regulatory Services.
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 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 Interim, Claire Saunders and Team of 3.4 FTE and Two vacancies.

2 Environmental and Community Protection – Q4 Performance Indicators

2.1 ECP09, Number of High risk food hygiene inspections carried achieved within the quarter was 87.25%. 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. This has seen significant improvements in the backlog caused by Covid-19 work.

3 Environmental Health Team - Sarah Stefano

3.1 During Q1 the Food Standards Agency revoked the post Covid- 19 recovery plan and Local Authorities will now be expected to comply with all elements of the Food Law Code of Practice and Practice Guidance. The team had made above expected progress on the plan and will be clear of backlog by Q2 23/24. The Team continue to receive a steady flow of new Food Business Registrations and participated in the register your business publicity campaign.

3.2 The Annual Air Quality Status Report for 2023 was submitted for approval and ratification from DEFRA. Work continues with partners on the installation of the new air quality analyser (Aspley) and PM 2.5 monitors (Swing Gate School, Bennetts End Road, and Lawn Lane). Report on Air Quality drafted and issued to Chair of SPAE Committee.

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.

4 Corporate Health and Safety Team

4.1 Russell Ham Team Manager has left the Council after 5 years we would like to express thanks for all the hard work Russell has put into the service. Interim arrangements have been put in place, Claire Saunders will be interim Team Manager.

4.2 Interim Consultant Claire Saunders was appointed to review Health and Safety Arrangements in the Council. Claire has met with 35 Managers, Union representatives and employees to understand Health and Safety Culture at DBC. Her results will be reported to Senior Leadership Team.

4.3 All departments have been tasked with completing annual self-audits for Health and Safety alongside review of Service Business Continuity Plans and Business Impact Assessments. These will then be reviewed by Corporate Health and Safety.

4.4 The Team have worked with other district and borough councils to implement a memorandum of understanding between all partners in case of Emergency Plan Activation, agreements for mutual aid.

5 Operations Team

5.1 21 Stray dogs were collected by the authority in Q1. 9 were returned to owners and 12 were rehomed. 27 Dangerous Dogs complaints were received and investigate as well as 62 Animal Welfare concerns.

5.2 8 Community Protection Warnings were served, and 5 Microchipping of Dogs Notices.

5.3 We continue to see a reduction in Filthy and Verminous complex cases, a further 6 in Q1 (13 in Q4). These are domestic premises in any tenure that are either filthy or verminous in nature. Filthy or verminous premises are properties that are considered verminous (including rats, mice, insects or parasites including their eggs, larvae and pupae) or in such a filthy condition as to be prejudicial to health (usually means that there is rotting food, human or animal excrement inside the property). These premises usually require a multi-disciplinary team (MDT) of professionals to deal with the issues from a variety of partner agencies.

5.4 Report prepared for SPAE Committee on Littering and Public Space Protection Order Enforcement.

5.5 District Enforcement have served 500 Fixed Penalty Notices on those that chose to litter or breach the Councils Public Space Protections Orders in Q1

5.6 On 5 July 2023, at St Albans Magistrates' Court, Edward Meredith, of Priory Orchard, Flamstead, pleaded guilty to the unauthorised deposit of controlled waste in Caddington Common on 5 November 2022. Meredith was ordered to pay a total of £2,222, which consisted of a £1,230 fine, £500 costs and a victim surcharge of £492.

5.7 Regulatory Services have chaired a multi departmental task force that have been working on improvements in Gadebridge Park. Officers from this team alongside officers from district enforcement and police colleagues have increased visibility in the park following a period of increased littering and anti-social behaviour. Colleagues work closely with Clean, Safe and Green staff to deter negative behaviours and reports received from Clean Safe and Green staff are that litter has reduced and behaviours improved in the vicinity. Fixed Penalty Notices have been served in the area for littering and breach of Public Space Protection Order.

- 5.8 21 prosecutions were brought by the council for littering or public space protection order offences. 100% of these cases were successful in court 21 were taken through the single justice procedure. £3220 total fines, £2985.15 total costs and £1288 total Victim surcharges.
- 5.9 On 14th June 2023 at Hatfield Remand Court, Dacorum Borough Council successfully prosecuted Mr Jake Putman of Hasedines Road, Hemel Hempstead for a fly tipping offence that occurred last year. Mr Putman was picked up by Police and the same day brought before the court on an arrest warrant issued by St Albans Magistrates Court in May 2023. Putman pleaded guilty to the unauthorised deposit of controlled waste in a garage block in Paston Road, Hemel Hempstead on or before the 4th September 2022. The defendant was fined £480, ordered to pay costs of £500 and a victim surcharge of £192. The court heard that on 5th September 2022 an Environmental Enforcement Officer attended the garage block in Highfield following a report of a flytip. There the officer found a large pile of dumped household rubbish, including packaging with the defendants details on it. Mr Putman was issued a £400 Fixed Penalty Notice for the offence but failed to pay and engage with the Council despite reminders. The council referred the matter to Court where Mr Putman did not attend Summons to St Albans Magistrates Court on 1st March 2023 nor an adjournment on 10th May 2023. At the second hearing, the Council were granted a request for a warrant of arrest due to his non-attendance.

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.