



Council Briefing Note 15th November 2023

**NEIGHBOURHOOD SERVICES –
COUNCILLOR ROBIN BROMHAM**

The new Neighbourhood operations Directorate has a new team of senior managers and is already starting to have an impact in relation to ways of working, focusing on partnership and collaboration as well as performance.

Neighbourhood Management

- The Parks team have been working in partnership with the Natural History Museum. As part of this, a day was organised at Miswell Park in Tring with pupils from Goldfield Infant and Nursery School taking part in preparing and planting wildflower seed, wildflower turf and bug hunting.
- CSG staff is working in partnership with Butterfly Conservation to increase our meadows and support invertebrate life. We are currently working on the long-term management of Bunkers Park and Chipperfield Common with the aim to cover other sites as well later.
- We are also working very closely with Box Moor Trust at Bunkers Park. Our hazel coppice produce is used in their waterways management and their Belted Galloway cattle are hosted on our sites. We will continue to explore ways to work closely together and follow a joined-up approach for the use of our adjacent sites.
- We continue to support our friends groups and volunteers for the management of our sites as they add much value to what we do.
- A tree management review was carried out to improve how we can protect our stock and keep residents safe. A significant issue facing Dacorum is Ash Dieback caused by a fungus attacking ash trees. This is a national issue and a plan is being prepared to manage the issues in the short and long term.
- We had a significant improvement in performance in quarter two for removal of fly-tip; 486 fly tips were reported in Q2 and 93% of these were cleared within the 7-day target, which is still below the target of 95% but a significant increase on quarter one where the service achieved 77%.
- Substantial improvement also for graffiti removal: In quarter two, 57 reports of graffiti were received and the 95% target for removal was achieved. This is an improvement on quarter one where 89% was achieved.

Environmental Services

- DEFRA announced its new reform called Simpler Recycling, with improved conformity of methods of waste collection which should improve overall efficiencies. The guidance suggests that all districts will collect food waste separately, as Dacorum already does. It also creates opportunities to work with businesses, who are required to recycle all recyclable waste streams, excluding garden waste and plastic film by March 2025.
- Overall, we are experiencing an increase in performance with our waste collection with an increase of household recycling rate, a decrease in residual waste collected and reports of missed collections decreasing. In particular, the figures for reported missed bin collections was averaging 127 per 100K in Q2 this year, which is a decrease of 206 year on year, with 22/23 Qtr 2 at 333 missed bins.

Regulatory Services

- Regulatory Services continues to be very effective in its enforcement duties. In the 1st quarter of the year, the team served 14 waste crime fixed penalty notices, the majority being for fly-tipping. Through our enforcement contractor, District Enforcement, we served 785 Fixed Penalty Notices on those that littered or breached the Councils Public Space Protections Orders.
- The Team have continued to work hard toward improving food inspection rates since the COVID -19 pandemic when the staff were diverted towards infection control work. This now back at target levels. One noticeable result is that Mr Thangarajh Nesarajah of Lemon Plaice, Bellgate, Hemel Hempstead pleaded guilty to 11 charges relating to various breeches of the Food Safety and Hygiene (England) Regulations at St Albans Magistrates Court on the 25th October 2023. The magistrates accepted that the breeches amounted to very high culpability in accordance with the sentencing guidelines and the defendant was sentenced to pay a total of £12,000.
- Alongside enforcement, partnership working is deterring antisocial behaviour and working on prevention. Regulatory Services have chaired a multi departmental task force which has been working on improvements in Gadebridge Park and the Water Gardens working together with colleagues within the Council in CSG, enforcement contractors and police colleagues to organise patrols and increase visibility, engaging positively with the community. The Regulatory Service Team continues to support the Local Resilience Forum Working Groups for Covid-19 and also attends District Outbreak Planning Meetings and Winter Planning Groups.
- A review of the Health and Safety Policy is in progress. Staff and services across the Council have been involved in the review and a report will be prepared in due course.