



Council Briefing Note – 17<sup>th</sup> April 2024

#### NEIGHBOURHOOD OPERATIONS – COUNCILLOR ROBIN BROMHAM

The new Neighbourhood Operations Directorate is working on several projects that will continue to strengthen operations and deliver quality services.

#### Future Neighbourhoods

One of the new initiatives that is being piloted is called Future Neighbourhoods. Neighbourhood working can take a variety of forms which focus largely on internal and organisational coordination and collaboration to ensure effective and efficient service delivery at a neighbourhood level. The initiative will support the development of a neighbourhood management model that aims to:

- Improve collaborative working across Council departments and teams
- Develop a way of working at a neighbourhood level that supports better engagement with ward councillors, residents and businesses
- Enable creativity in identification and resolution of issues at a neighbourhood level
- Use resources more efficiently
- Provide tangible outcomes which enhance wellbeing and pride in those communities

Phase-1 of this initiative has already taken place and included research into best practice for neighbourhood management and workshops and interviews with staff and Members. Each workshop and interview sought to understand existing approaches to neighbourhood management within Dacorum, exploring opportunities with different approaches to neighbourhood working. They also identified a pilot location within Dacorum to develop the model.

The location chosen for the pilot is the Heights, following criteria which included areas of deprivation, potential for regeneration, number of enquiries and casework and community safety priority areas.

Phase-2 will focus on assessing potential areas of improvement also building collaboration to facilitate delivery.

Other projects and initiatives within the Neighbourhood Operations directorate and their progress are listed below.

#### Neighbourhood Management

##### Arboricultural contracts

Officers have now completed the tender assessment for the Council's new arboricultural contracts. Four lots were let (2x general arboricultural lots, 1x woodland lot and 1x tree planting lot). These new arrangements, along with changes being made to the council's Tree Management Database, should allow works to be dealt with in a more efficient manner and allow better communication with councillors and residents. It is anticipated that the new contracts will go-live in May 2024.

##### River Gade restoration

The Environment Agency is working with Dacorum Borough Council and Affinity Water to restore the River Gade at Gadebridge Park, a globally rare and valuable chalk stream. The project will provide

multiple benefits, including improved habitats for wildlife, protection of water resources for people and the environment, and amenity for public to get closer to the river and enjoy nature. Representatives of the Environment Agency attended the Strategic Planning and Environment committee to present a more detailed plan of the works and timelines. It is anticipated that work will commence in Spring 2024.

### Partnership working

The Clean, Safe and Green team and Parks team continues to work in partnership with local groups and the third sector. We are working with Sunnyside Rural Trust on several projects including planting schemes, litter picking and undertaking a trial restoring original aluminium nameplates from around the borough.

Officers and Sunnyside Rural Trust are also working on a Dacorum Borough entry to Anglia in Bloom (a sub-group of Britain in Bloom). The Anglia in Bloom launch event was in March 2024 and the Dacorum entry will focus on the excellent work Sunnyside Rural Trust have been doing in delivering planting schemes on housing land. It will also give the Council an opportunity to showcase sites such as Gadebridge Park walled garden and the Water Gardens.

### Environmental Services

#### Herts Waste Partnership

Collaborative work continues with Herts Waste Partnerships relating the implication and implementation of the Simpler Recycling national guidance, the management of clothes swap equipment and events, monthly review of statistics and promotion of events including those linked to “national waste weeks”

The Partnership gives opportunity to share good practice and supports WasteAware social media campaigning.

#### Cupid Green –Waste Transfer site

During the week commencing 12<sup>th</sup> February the Environment Agency carried out a random inspection of our Waste Transfer Site at the Cupid Green depot. The depot passed the inspection with the auditors stating that is one of the best run sites they have seen.

### Health, Safety and Resilience

An audit of Corporate Health and Safety took place in 2023. The audit found that the documented processes align with the mitigating arrangements set out in the corporate risk register. After a discussion with auditors, officers provided evidence of documentation and governance in place that supported a “Reasonable Assurance” rating.