



Council Briefing Note 17th July 2024

NEIGHBOURHOOD OPERATIONS – COUNCILLOR ROBIN BROMHAM

The New Neighbourhood Operations Directorate is working on a number of key projects that will continue to strengthen operations and deliver quality services.

1. Neighbourhood Management

Green Waste

- 1.1 Green Waste (Garden waste) paid subscriptions went live on 1st March 2024 and the current subscription rate is slightly higher compared with the same period for the preceding year, at 33810 compared with the same period for the preceding year at 33087.

River Gade restoration

- 1.2 On Friday 24 May, the Environment Agency confirmation that their Full Business Case had gone through the assurance process, and they have been given the green light to proceed with the project. Officers are now awaiting a final programme of works. Main works are planned to commence in August. Officers are mindful that this is the busiest time of year in the park, so will be working closely with the Environment Agency to mitigate any risk both physical and to people's enjoyment of the park.

Green Flag Award and Anglia in Bloom

- 1.3 All our sites have now been judged for Green Flag Award and we await the results, which will be announced in late July – our existing Green Flag Award sites are Bunkers Park, Canal Fields, Chipperfield Common, Tring Memorial Garden and Water Gardens. We entered a new site this, which was Gadebridge Park. In addition to Green Flag Award, the council has also entered three parks into Anglia in Bloom (regional Britain in Bloom competition) this year – the three parks are Gadebridge Park, Water Gardens and Tring Memorial Gardens.

Playground Refurbishment Programme

- 1.4 Tenders have now been awarded and the projects will be delivered in two phases as outlined in the presentation to the committee in March. The first phase commences imminently with completion by the school summer holidays – the sites in phase one are Croft Meadow, Flaunden, Tower Hill, Woodhall Farm. One scheme was move forward from phase two (Apsley Lock) meaning five schemes will now be completed as part of phase one. The remaining phase two site is Durrants Hill. The schemes for Miswell Lane and Warners End Valley were put back out to tender and are due back in late June

Within each of the schemes awarded to date, there is inclusive equipment proposed in each scheme – officers are keen to build on this with any future schemes as well as including access to and from playgrounds.

Parking solutions

- 1.5 A draft policy/framework is now drafted and will be presented to a future meeting for comment before being formally adopted. The previous Verge hardening programme will now be called Parking Solutions Programme (or similar) to move away from the negative connotation of the definition of verge hardening, which can be perceived as not environmentally friendly and instead consider schemes and parking solutions for the local areas that can be other interventions, including using permeable materials for a more environmentally friendly interventions.

SANG Delivery

- 1.6 Following recent interviews, an appointment has been made to the SANG (Suitable Alternative Natural Green spaces) Delivery Officer. This role is key in delivering the commitments that have been made under SANG to support future housebuilding in the borough. We are awaiting confirmation of a start date but their initial focus of work will be to commence delivery of SANG obligations at Bunkers Park and seek the necessary permissions to commence works at Chipperfield Common.

Gadebridge Park Splashpad

- 1.7 Following some refurbishment works to the surfacing, the splashpad opened in early May and will be operational 7-days a week now until September. Despite the unseasonal weather, attendances at the facility have been good.

2. Regulatory services

2.1 Officers have been updated the current Contaminated Land Strategy to bring the strategy in line with current regulations and best practice. Changes included a more streamlined version and updated in line with current best practice. This has been benchmarked with other authorities.

2.2 The Local Authority Enforcement Monitoring System return has been completed and returned to the Food Standards Agency. The authority reports on resourcing and is benchmarked against other authorities on performance with regard to statutory functions within the food service. All high-risk inspections were completed by the team within the statutory deadlines. 54 Unrated inspections remain outstanding most of these businesses were not yet operating. 125 new businesses were registered within the borough in 23/24. The service issued 238 written warnings, served 1 hygiene improvement notice, carried out 1 voluntary closure and 1 Emergency prohibition order.

2.3 Officers are currently drafting the update Air Quality Action Plan and Air Quality Status Report for 2023 and an update will be presented at Scrutiny and further governance meetings in the Autumn.

3. Resilience

3.1 A resilience audit of Corporate Health and safety took place in 2023. After a discussion with auditors, officers provided evidence of documents and governance in place that supported a "Reasonable Assurance" rating. Dacorum Borough Council is working very closely with partners such as HCC, the Fire Service and Police to strengthen our preparedness in response to emergencies.