

WELWYN HATFIELD BOROUGH COUNCIL  
ENVIRONMENT OVERVIEW AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 30 JANUARY 2017  
REPORT OF THE DIRECTOR PUBLIC PROTECTION, PLANNING AND  
GOVERNANCE

PEST CONTROL UPDATE

**1 Executive Summary**

- 1.1 This report provides members with information relating to the pest control service provided by the council appointed contractor, SDK Environmental Ltd (“Dial a Pest”). It highlights the extent of pest control treatments and activities during the period March 2016 to November 2016. It also provides information on the levels of pest control enforcement action undertaken by the council’s Public Health and Protection Service during the same period.

**2 Recommendation(s)**

- 2.1 For members to note the report, the performance of the contractor and the work and services that have been provided.
- 2.2 For future update reports to be provided annually.

**3 Explanation**

- 3.1 The duties on Local Authorities are to keep their own land free from rats and mice and to enforce that other owners/occupiers do the same.
- 3.2 The Council provides a subsidised contracted pest control service that is available to householders, regardless of tenure, throughout the district. This service also provides treatment for Council owned land and buildings and assists in the Council fulfilling its statutory functions under the Prevention of Damage of Pests Act 1949 (PDPA). The service runs independently from the Council with customers needing to contact the contractor’s call centre directly to arrange and pay for treatment.
- 3.3 This report updates members on this service and demonstrates the demand for pest control treatments since March 2016.
- 3.4 Public health problems and consequences associated with pest infestations remain the same today as they were in Victorian times. The public health significance of pests is widely documented. Rats, mice, flies, fleas, bedbugs and cockroaches are detrimental to residents` physical, social, health and wellbeing.
- 3.5 Without effective pest management, pest infestations will increase and will result in increasing incidents of pest borne disease, damage to buildings and risk to food businesses.
- 3.6 Pest control remains an important public service to residents of the Borough and is of particular relevance to the most disadvantaged. The service is also

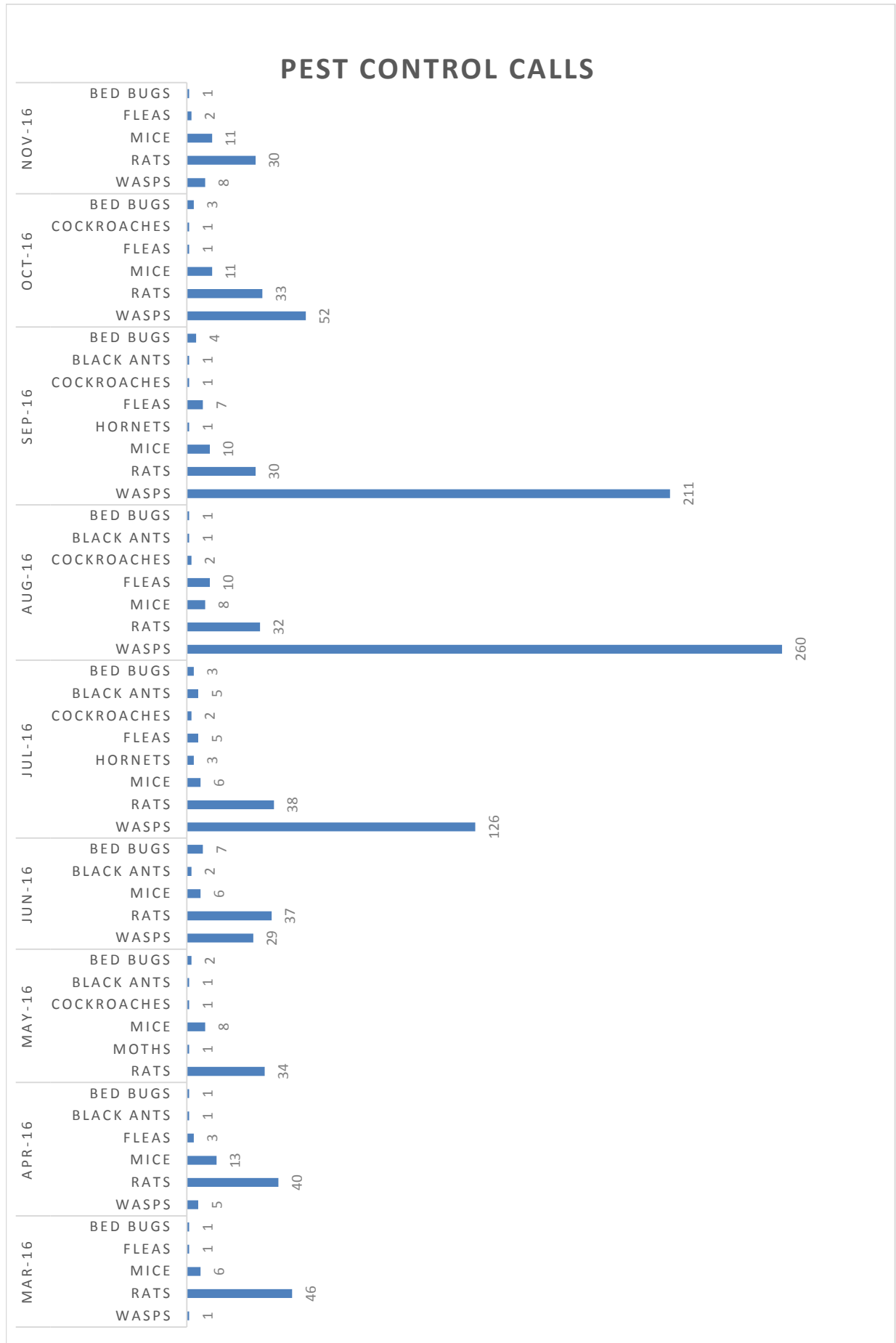
important to meet future challenges brought about by climate change and by increased movement of goods, animals and people. In providing this affordable service the council will continue to play a key role in protecting public health.

- 3.7 The existing contract covers a range of pests and is available to all borough residents. The contract also covers communal parts of properties managed through the community housing trust. Additionally, the contract provides pest control services for council owned land and buildings (excluding the museum).
- 3.8 The contract with SDK expired on 31 March 2015. A Member Procurement Board was set up in 2014 to oversee the procurement of a new contractor to provide pest control services. The Procurement Board awarded the new four year contract to SDK Environmental Ltd commencing on 1 April 2015.
- 3.9 The new contract enabled the charges for pest control services to all residents of the Borough to remain the same, there has been no increase. This was one of the key objectives of the contract procurement process.

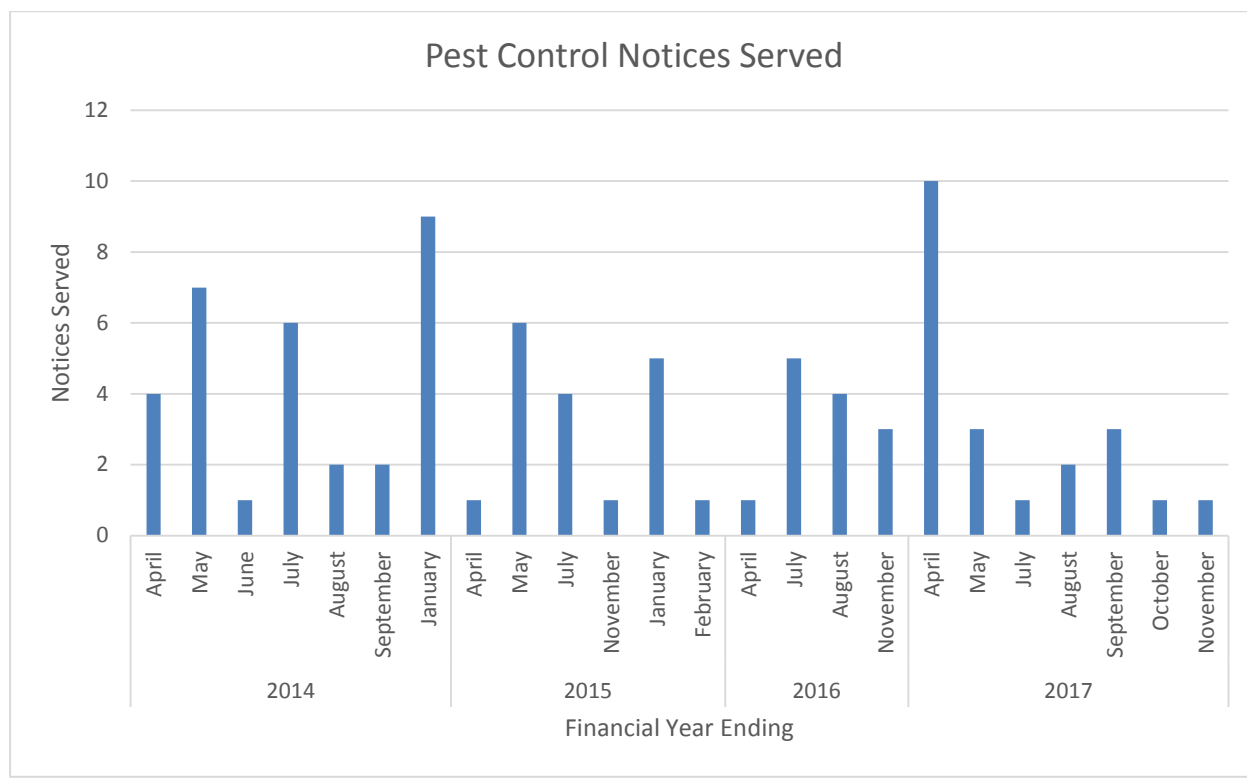
<b>Pest control charges 2015 - 2016</b>		
<b>Type of pest</b>	<b>Domestic Premises Price (including VAT)</b>	<b>Domestic Premises Concessionary prices (including VAT)</b>
Rats	£30	Free
Mice	£30	£15
Wasps (one nest)**	£35	£18
Additional Wasps nests (if treated at the same time)	£10 per nest	£10 per nest
Hornets	£30	£15
Fleas	£30	£15
Cockroaches	£30	£15
bed bugs	£30	£15

- 3.10 Regular quarterly contract review meetings are held between the Council and SDK. These are an effective way of managing the contract and building a good client/contractor relationship. Issues ranging from quality control, technical advice, vulnerable people, complaints and approach to complex cases are discussed. Agreed minutes are kept from these meetings.

3.11 The graphs below set out the numbers of pest control calls made for treatment and pest type for the period March 2016 to November 2016.



3.12 Statutory pest control enforcement work is carried out in response to investigations regarding private land where the owner/occupier is unwilling to take action to eliminate a pest infestation or where food and harbourage for rats or mice is present. The chart below shows the number of notices served under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 (PDPA). It relates to the number of formal notices served.



3.13 Customer service feedback is assessed on a quarterly basis.

#### 4 **Legal Implication(s)**

4.1 The council is not obliged to provide a pest control service, but is under a legal duty to keep its own land free from rats and mice and to enforce the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949 throughout the borough.

4.2 The council and contractor are generally required to comply with the Health and Safety at Work etc Act 1974. Sometimes this results in certain requests for service not being undertaken by the Contractor due to risk to their staff. For example, they will not enter unboarded lofts or work at height where there is a risk of injury.

4.3 There is also more specific legislation relating to use of pesticides which needs to be complied with, for example the Control of Pesticides Regulations.

## **5 Financial Implication(s)**

- 5.1 None directly arising from this report. A budget is in place to deliver the contract and to provide day to day enforcement activities. As with any area of enforcement if a major case were to occur then this would incur additional budgetary expense.

## **6 Risk Management Implications**

- 6.1 The risks to public health from certain pests are well understood and documented. The council pest control contract can assist with reducing such risks.
- 6.2 The council is at risk of legal challenge if it fails to meet its legal duties under the Prevention of Damage by Pests Act 1949
- 6.3 Inappropriate use of pesticide products can create risks to children and wildlife, employing the services of a competent contractor reduces this risk.

## **7 Security & Terrorism Implication(s)**

- 7.1 Certain pesticide products could be potentially be used for inappropriate purposes, employing the services of a competent contractor reduces this risk.

## **8 Procurement Implication(s)**

- 8.1 The pest control contract was tendered through the appropriate council procedures under the supervision of a member procurement board. The contract was awarded to SDK Environmental Ltd again following this process.

## **9 Climate Change Implication(s)**

- 9.1 As the climate changes it is likely that the range of pests we will see in the UK may change. This may have longer term implications for the scope of the contract and the services which are provided.

## **10 Link to Corporate Priorities**

- 10.1 The subject of this report is linked to the Council's Corporate Priorities "maintain a safe and healthy community" and "protect and enhance the environment and is linked to statutory provisions under pest control legislation.

## **11 Equality and Diversity**

- 11.1 An Equality Impact Assessment (EIA) has been carried out in connection with the council pest control service. The results of that EIA have been used to inform the contract provision, especially as regards to vulnerable clients

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