

## 4. SAFER CLEANER GREENER STANDING PANEL

***The Safer, Cleaner, Greener Standing Panel consisted of the following members:***

Councillor J Lea (Chairman)

Councillor H Brady (Vice Chairman)

Councillors K Chana, R Gadsby, B Jennings, L Mead, A Mitchell, S Neville, M Sartin, B Surtees and E Webster

The Lead officer was Qasim Durrani, Assistant Director, Technical Services.

### ***Terms of Reference***

1. To approve and keep under review the “Safer, Cleaner, Greener” initiative development programme.

*(Note: this development programme will encompass the three main issues and will therefore include matters such as:*

- (i) environmental enforcement activity*
- (ii) safer communities activities*
- (iii) waste management activities (in addition to WMPB information))*

2. To keep under review the activity and decisions of the Waste Partnership Member Board and the Inter Authority Member Working Group.
3. To receive reports from the Waste Management Partnership Board in respect of the operation of and performance of the waste management contract
4. To monitor and keep under review the Council's progress towards the preparation and adoption of a sustainability policy and to receive progress reports on the Council's Climate Change Strategy from the Green Working Group.
5. To receive and review the reports of the Bobbingworth Nature Reserve (former Landfill site) Liaison Group.
6. To act as the Council's Crime and Disorder Scrutiny Committee and to keep under review the activities of the Epping Forest Safer Communities Partnership as a whole or any of the individual partners which make up the partnership and:
  - That one meeting a year be dedicated as Community Safety Committee meetings.
7. To monitor and review the new Local Highways Panel.
8. To receive the minutes of the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) for the purposes of monitoring the work and progress of the partnership.
9. To monitor and review the minutes of the Police and Crime Panel.
10. To receive copies of the Leisure Board minutes.

***The Panel scrutinised a number of important issues over the last year, which included:***

**(i) Road Traffic Accidents** – At their first meeting of the year in July 2014 the Chairman welcomed Adam Pipe, the Casualty Reduction Manager from Essex Police and PS Simon Willshire. They were there to talk about the work Essex Police were doing with the road traffic collisions data for the Epping Forest area.

The Panel noted that the traffic sections were having a difficult time as they were not seen as a priority by central government and had to deal with cuts in their resource budgets. They were to get down to 80 from the current 160 officers for the County and to 10 motorcycle units, with only 2 officers responsible for commercial vehicles. They were also down to 9 special constables responsible for casualty reduction.

Mr Pipe's section was also responsible for the road side safety cameras and carried out camera offences investigations. The cameras were not just for fines and a lot of the people caught this way were told to take safety courses by the courts. They were creating all sorts of courses for low level offenders from cyclists, to motorcyclists and drivers, all based around educating them and modifying their behaviour.

Part of their job was to reduce the number of people killed or seriously injured (KSI) on Essex roads through enforcement, education and engagement. Partly this would be down to the maximum use of re-education for the low end offenders and ensuring, where possible, that top end offenders were brought to justice.

The meeting noted that a disproportionate 26% of KSIs were motorcyclists who made up only a small percentage of motorised road traffic. They were also noticing an increase in drunk drivers at present.

In the Epping Forest area, in 2014 so far there had been 35 KSIs. There had been 40 for 2013. As for cyclists, so far this year there have been substantially less KSIs than last year, which was encouraging. There had been quite a few pedestrian accidents so far this year especially in the Loughton area, a densely populated urban area.

They also identified those persons who used the road network to commit crime.

**(ii) Anti Social Behaviour Case Review Model** – Also at their July meeting the Panel noted that new legislation on Anti-social Behaviour, the Crime and Policing Act 2014 (formally known as 'Community Triggers') received royal assent on 13 March 2014. The Act was designed to introduce simpler, more effective powers to tackle anti-social behaviour and provide better protection for victims and communities.

Within the Act are new responsibilities for the relevant bodies including the District Council, the police, clinical commissioning groups, health providers and registered social housing providers.

To ensure agencies took a more joined up, problem solving approach, Safer Essex had agreed to develop a consistent County-wide approach across all agencies who are involved in the use of the new legislation; providing victims of anti-social behaviour with a coherent and effective response regardless of where they lived in Essex.

It was important to note that the District Council would play a key pivotal role in this process by taking the lead over the other agencies, including Essex Police, in

recording, collating and responding to all Anti-social Behaviour Review requests from the public.

**(iii) Waste Contract Update** – The meeting received a rundown on the latest of the new waste management contract awarded to BIFFA. The Cabinet had agreed on 19 May to award the contract to Biffa Municipal Limited. Following the publication of the decision on 21 May there was the Alcatel mandatory standstill period. This was to allow any unsuccessful bidder to challenge the decision made by the Council. It was noted that no challenges were made to the awarding of the contract and the contract had now been formally awarded to them. The unsuccessful bidders had a debrief session on 3<sup>rd</sup> July. This was attended by SITA, SERCO and Ubaser.

**(iv) Recycling in Flats and Multiple Occupancy Dwellings** – The Panel received a verbal report on the current state of recycling in flat blocks in the District. There were a total of 7,400 flats in the District and some of these were not able to have suitable containers put in to collect the recycling. 80% of flats that were suitable for having recycling containers have now got them and officers were exploring ways to put some containers in the other 20% of flats. They were also looking at ways to put in food recycling but there had been problems with contamination. Recycling bins were being redesigned along with new literature and leaflets to educate the residents in the flat blocks.

**(v) Update on the Environment Agency River Roding Strategy** – In October the Panel received an update on the Environment Agency's River Roding Strategy telling members that the Environment Agency (EA) would be adopting the recommendations of the River Roding Strategy. They would be writing to all properties and landowners within the boundary of the River Roding's flood plain, advising them of the strategy recommendations and how the implementation would impact on their property. This strategy would benefit 1000 properties in the catchment but unfortunately some properties would remain at high risk or in a few cases have an increased risk of flooding. They would be working with those property owners to offer advice and guidance to ensure they were aware of the risks and the steps they could take to minimise these.

Once the River Roding Strategy was fully implemented it was likely that there would be impacts on the district and resourcing implications for the Council.

**(vi) Key Performance Indicators 2014/15** - The specific Key Performance Indicators (KPI) for each quarter of the year that was appropriate to this Panel were noted. This was the first year that these specific indicators had gone to the Panel since being agreed by last year's Overview and Scrutiny Review Task and Finish Panel.

**(vii) CCTV – 3 Year Action Plan** – At their January 2015 meeting the Council's CCTV Operations Officer updated the Panel on the CCTV three year action plans. The Panel noted that the use of CCTV had helped in the investigation of some unpleasant crimes, including a violent assault on a taxi driver in Epping. A lot of these investigations had led to arrests directly attributable to the use of CCTV.

Relevant CCTV footage was made available to the Police and other responsible authorities.

The Panel noted that:

- Loughton High Road now had high definition cameras installed along its length and this had proved useful so far;
- The museum in Waltham Abbey will have high definition cameras installed and the current system at North Weald Airfield would also be improved;
- Officers were looking to stream the live CCTV footage back to the Civic Offices so that they could be monitored in real time;
- There were now about 450 cameras across the district, with the police asking for about 253 downloads of incidents last year;
- The Council has recently completed a self assessment on its CCTV services and has found itself to be in good shape as an authority;
- The Council was now receiving more and more requests from insurance companies for CCTV footage and officers have now started charging for these images;
- For any operations using covert surveillance, magistrate's authorisation would have to be sought. The Council had also developed its own policy for this. A recent success for the use of covert surveillance was the catching of a long term fly tipper;
- Officers were updating the way people could request CCTV footage by using the council's website. This was now a clearer and quicker way to request footage by way of a web form and a generated unique reference number; and
- We would be helping Waltham Abbey Town Council with their CCTV systems during the coming year.

**(viii) Enforcement Activities Update** – The Panel received an update on the Council's enforcement activities. The figures remained fairly constant over the periods shown, fly tipping remained an ongoing problem and the council tended to publicise successful prosecutions to act as a deterrent. The report detailed some of the more successful prosecutions.

**(ix) Air pollution** – At their meeting in February 2015, the Panel received a report that was in reply to the querying of the amount of air pollution in our district and in particular the levels of particulate pollution in Epping Forest, attributable to 6% of all deaths.

They noted that officers carried out an assessment every 3 to 4 years based on PM<sub>10</sub> particulates.

Research showed that particulate pollution reduced life expectancy by two years and could also be the cause of serious illnesses. The current Mayor of London had an objective to achieve an ultra low emissions zone in London. However, it was noted that our power to influence this issue was very limited because of the motorways and commuters going in and out of London.

It was also noted that there was a need for a safer set up for cyclists in our area, the rural roads were just too dangerous. It was highlighted that 'Sustrans' the transport charity were looking into this at present in the Epping area.

**(x) Engineering and Drainage** – the panel received a presentation by the Council's Drainage Manager on the Council's role in alleviating the risk of flooding in the district and what the Engineering, Drainage and Water Team (EDWT) did.

The Panel noted that EDWT provided a discretionary 24/7 – 365 emergency flood response standby service to deal with out of hours flooding incidents involving

Council owned assets or to assist members of the public, where appropriate. They would respond to all types of flooding incidents, working closely with the Environment Agency where necessary

*(See case study for full details)*

**(xi) Key Performance Indicators 2014/15** – Over the year the Panel considered the performance of the Key Performance Indicators for 2014/15 relevant to the council services that the panel monitors on a quarterly basis.

By the end of quarter three, the Panel noted that of the KPIs that fell within the Safer Cleaner Greener Scrutiny Panel area of responsibility their position was:

- i) 7 (78%) of indicators achieved the cumulative third quarter target;
- ii) 2 (22%) of indicators did not achieve the cumulative third quarter target;
- iii) 8 (89%) were currently anticipated to achieve the cumulative year-end target.

## ***Case Study: Engineering and Drainage***

In February 2015 the Council's Drainage Manager, gave a presentation on the Council's role in alleviating the risk of flooding in the district and what the Engineering, Drainage and Water Team (EDWT) did.

A note from the planners outlined the role of planning in flood risk prevention. It was noted that Local Plans should be supported by a Strategic Flood Risk Assessment and policies to manage flood risk from all sources. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set strict tests to protect people and property from flooding, which all local planning authorities were expected to follow. Where these tests were not met, national policy was clear that new development should not be allowed.

In terms of day-to-day development management, planners assessed applications using mapping data made available by the Environment Agency. In addition recent guidelines issued by government requires all local authorities to consult with their Lead Local Flooding Authority; in our case it was Essex County Council, on development of 10 dwellings or more, to assess flood risk from surface water, groundwater and ordinary watercourses and to promote sustainable drainage proposals.

The EDWT provided a discretionary 24/7 – 365 emergency flood response standby service to deal with out of hours flooding incidents involving Council owned assets or to assist members of the public, where appropriate. They would respond to all types of flooding incidents, working closely with the Environment Agency where necessary.

It was noted that there were three Flood Alleviation Schemes (FAS) in the district that were the responsibility of the Council, and that:

- They were built in high risk areas, with properties at risk of flooding;
- The levels of water in the storage areas at two of the sites were monitored 24/7, 365 by telemetry and recently installed CCTV;
- In addition there was the Loughton Brook Scheme, which was statutorily classified as a Reservoir and was managed by the Environment Agency.

In addition to the FAS the EDWT monitor and maintain (with the Council's Term Contractor) the council's 50 storm grilles and approximately 2,500km of ordinary water courses.

It was also noted that:

- We were the only District in Essex with its own Byelaws on Land Drainage;
- As an authority we liaise with Thames Water, Essex County Council (Highways), Affinity Water, Environment Agency (& other organisations);
- Under the Environmental Protection Act 1990, the Council was statutorily obliged to inspect and assess potentially contaminated land sites within its boundary;
- Local Authorities must set out its approach as a written strategy;
- There were thought to be several thousand potentially contaminated land sites, due to historic contamination, with 91 landfill sites;
- Local Authorities also had a statutory duty under the Building Act 1984 and the Public Health Acts to ensure buildings had adequate drainage and that blockages, defects and pollution from sewage were properly dealt with;
- In October 2011 most private sector sewers transferred to Thames Water; the Council was still responsible for all rural drainage systems and for many situations where there were drainage problems in urban areas;
- EDWT provided investigation and enforcement services on private sewers that fell outside the jurisdiction of Thames Water;
- The poor performance of Thames Water meant that officers often had to get involved with problems that should have been dealt with by Thames Water;
- EDWT maintain the Council's own drainage records and also have access to the Thames sewer maps;
- EDWT have recently purchased a vehicle and have replaced their old CCTV equipment to assist with flooding and drainage work;
- The Council's Local plan should take into account climate change over the longer term which would include flood risks;
- EFDC have their own Flood Risk Assessment Zones (FRAZ) set out in its Local Plan;
- The FRAZ have been identified and mapped by officers;
- These FRAZ were not the same as the Environment Agency Flood Zones;
- EDWT officers assessed planning applications and if the development falls within a FRAZ a flood risk condition would be recommended;
- The Council encourages all developers to follow the principals of Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS) in designing facilities for the handling of rainwater runoff;
- The Government had recently decided to remove the responsibility for delivering SuDS from the Local Lead Flood Authority (ECC) and strengthen the planning system – which has placed the responsibility back on us;
- The Flood and Water Management Act (April 2010) was intended to implement Sir Michael Pitt's recommendations following the widespread flooding of 2007. This flooding was largely caused by surface water runoff overloading drainage systems.

It was noted that there was disjointed help offered from the Highways Agency. Officers also noted that what problems they had encountered in carrying out their work had mainly been the inefficiency of the Highways Agency and Thames Water. There was only so much our officers could do without any co-operation.

In conclusion the Panel confirmed that they wanted Thames Water to come to a future meeting.