

Report to Neighbourhoods & Communities Select Committee

Date of meeting: 15th September 2015

Subject: Crucial Crew Initiative

Officer contact for further information: G Wallis (01992 564557)

Committee Secretary: A. Hendry (01992 564246)



Recommendations/Decisions Required:

That the Committee notes the success of the Crucial Crew 2015 initiative, which is delivered to all children aged 10 years, at school within the Epping Forest District.

Report:

1. Crucial Crew is an annual initiative which is facilitated and delivered by the Council's Community Services and Safety teams. It is specifically designed to educate primary school pupils aged 10 (Year 6), in a range of personal safety, health and wellbeing topics, as research has identified, that the imminent transition of these pupils into secondary school is a particularly challenging period in their lives.

2. Crucial Crew has been provided in the Epping Forest District for over 10 years and is historically delivered over the same two week period in June, in line with agreed primary school timetables. In 2015 Crucial Crew ran from Monday 8th June to Friday 19th June inclusive. Every Year 6 primary school pupil in the Epping Forest district attends the half-day event and this year, 1351 Epping Forest pupils participated. Additionally, 13 schools from the Brentwood area paid to attend Crucial Crew, bringing a further 408 children into the project, to reach a total of 1759.

3. Pupils participate in 10 interactive scenarios delivered by a range of agencies, each of which lasts 10 minutes. Scenarios are reviewed and modified on an annual basis to ensure the themes covered are relevant and appropriate and take into consideration emerging trends or issues. In 2015 the scenarios delivered were:

- Online safety and cyber bullying – Essex Police
- Healthy relationships, incorporating domestic abuse issues – Safer Places
- Roads safety awareness – Essex County Council
- Water safety – RNLI
- Alcohol and drug awareness – AlcoHelp
- Bullying and peer pressure – Red Balloon Family
- Anti-social behaviour and environmental responsibility – EFDC
- Smoking awareness – ACE
- Fire safety – Essex County Fire & Rescue Service
- Safety around construction sites – Mears

4. Having participated in the 10 scenarios, pupils come together for a plenary session and answer a series of key questions which are directly linked to the topics that have been covered. Hand-held monitors are distributed to pupils enabling the percentage of correct answers to be displayed on a screen in real-time. The quiz serves to add to the fun, yet educational feel of the day and provides valuable monitoring information in respect of the

assimilation of the educational messages delivered. Overall, the interactive quiz questions were answered correctly by 93% of participating children.

5. Feedback is sought directly from participating schools in the form of a post-event questionnaire. This information is assessed annually and, where possible, improvements or appropriate changes are implemented as a result of the comments received. Overall, feedback from schools is resoundingly positive and specifically references the relevance and importance of the key messages delivered. With schools reporting that their curriculum time is increasingly tightly programmed, initiatives such as Crucial Crew are seen as a vital mechanism by which pupils are educated in wider community safety and wellbeing issues.

6. Every pupil who attends the event is provided with a Crucial Crew work book in order that the educational messages delivered may be re-visited and explored in more detail post event. Schools are provided with Teachers Information Packs which detail the lesson plans associated with each scenario and provide links to additional resources available in order that follow up classroom work may be facilitated.

7. In 2015, and for the previous 8 years, Crucial Crew has been staged at the Gilwell Park Scouting Headquarters at Gilwell in Epping Forest. Historically, this site has been one of the few venues in the district that has the space and facilities flexible enough to accommodate the layout of the separate scenarios, along with a large assembly area. The cost and availability of alternative venues is viewed annually. However, following recent notification of a planned increase in hire costs for Gilwell by approximately £2K in 2016, the alternative venue of Debden House will be piloted in 2016 at the same venue cost as 2015.

Reason for decision:

This report serves as an information item for the Neighbourhoods and Community Services Select Committee.

Options considered and rejected:

N/A

Consultation undertaken:

Consultation is undertaken with participants, schools and all partners involved in Crucial Crew,

Resource implications:

The individual agencies who deliver scenarios as part of Crucial Crew give their time freely for the full fortnight. The costs of the project are, therefore, as follows:

<u>Expenditure</u>		<u>Income</u>	
Venue hire	£ 8,000	Epping Forest school recharges	£6,714
Transport	£11,500	EFDC Community Safety Budget	£8,200
Pupil Work Books	£ 3,230	High Sheriff's Award	£1,000
Refreshments	£ 80	CSP (Balance for work books)	£2,320
	£22,810		£22,878

Budget provision: As above

Personnel:

Staff from the Council's Community Services and Safety teams organise and manage Crucial Crew, with support from the partner agencies listed.

Land:

N/A

Community Plan/BVPP reference:

Crucial Crew contributes to the Safeguarding agenda, as it relates specifically to the safety

and wellbeing of all children that live and go to school in the district.

Relevant statutory powers:

Background papers: N/A

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications:

As stated above, Crucial Crew plays a key role in delivering safety messages to children in their last year at Primary School and also raises awareness of safe conduct and behaviour.

Key Decision reference: (if required)

N/A