

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Subject: Safer, Greener and Transport

Date: 26 April 2016

Portfolio Holder: Councillor G Waller

Recommending:

That the report of the Safer, Greener and Transport Portfolio Holder be noted.

Community Safety

Domestic Homicide Review

When a homicide arises as a result of domestic abuse, it falls upon the local Community Safety Partnership to undertake a Domestic Homicide Review. I must inform Council that unfortunately a death which appears to be the result of another domestic homicide has occurred within the Epping Forest District and I have therefore begun the process to establish a further Review Panel, in accordance with Home Office guidance. A suitable chairman and a report writer have been identified, and work will commence shortly to consider and seek to understand the circumstances behind the tragic death of a Theydon Bois woman, with a view to determining whether or not the death could have been avoided and what lessons can be learned for the future.

Information Point at Civic Offices for Police Enquiries

With the implementation of new policing arrangements from 1 April, we have unfortunately seen the closure of Epping police station and closure of the front desk at Loughton police station. Although Loughton will remain as the base for community police officers and a range of other police staff, we understand that Epping police station will eventually be sold.

The police have indicated that around 150 visits per week were made to Epping police station by members of the public wishing to make enquiries, report crime and other concerns, and to present documents, for instance in cases where vehicles have been seized for no insurance or because of defects.

Although the Council is not in a position to compensate for the loss of direct access to the police, we can offer a basic information service from the Civic offices in order to assist our residents with reporting crime and concerns. Officers are therefore currently making arrangements for a trial information service, to run for three months, which will include access to our information kiosk in the atrium to report issues such as crime, minor traffic incidents, lost property etc. Our reception staff will be on hand to assist the public in using the kiosk and will also be able to signpost callers to a range of other services or indeed to our Community Safety team.

This arrangement is being formalised with the police through a memorandum of understanding and will be under review from its commencement. However, in the longer term, if this service is something in which the Council wishes to be more fully involved, there

may be cost implications and it is suggested that this is considered within the remit of the Customer Contact Centre under the Transformation programme.

CCTV

The Council's CCTV service continues to be a huge success in terms of identifying perpetrators of crime, with our CCTV footage now regularly being supplied to the police for incidents arising especially in the context of the night time economy. Work is under way to recruit a trainee CCTV assistant following Cabinet agreement to make funding available for a three year post.

Safeguarding

The following safeguarding cases have been dealt with by our safeguarding team during March, with several cases once again requiring intensive staff time. These tend to be cases involving older and vulnerable adults with issues of self-neglect and hoarding in their homes.

Total no. of concerns received by the Safeguarding Team for this period:	18
No. of children-only concerns (where children were victims):	6
No. of adult-only concerns (where adults were victims):	9
No. of concerns that involved both (adult and children were victims):	3
Total no. of children involved:.....	16
Total no. of adults involved:	13
No. of new cases referred to Essex Social Care:	13
No. of new cases referred to police	0
No. of multi-agency referrals made (e.g. to police and Essex Social Care):	1
Referred to MARAC only:	0
Referred to MARAC and Essex Social Care (where child involved):	0
Referred to MARAC and Essex Social Care (where adult involved):	0
Referrals to other external agencies (e.g. Family Mosaic; CQC; GP, MHT):	3
Updates sent to agencies where victim/perpetrator already known/on-going: ...	0
Not referred (doesn't meet threshold/not safeguarding):	1

Categories

Welfare concerns:	5	Physical Abuse:	0
Domestic Abuse:	2	Self Neglect/Hoarding:	3
Mental Health/Mental Capacity:	3	Homeless:	4
Neglect:	0	Substance Misuse:	0
Emotional/Psychological Abuse:	0	Exploitation:	0
Financial Abuse:	1	Child Sexual Exploitation:	0
Sexual Abuse:	0	Care Meetings (on-going):	0

Countrycare

Countrycare has continued with its well attended regular volunteer days. Since the last Report, these have taken place at Bobbingworth, Springs Pond Wood, Home Mead, Sheering Copse, Linder's Field, Norton Heath, Roughtalley's Wood, Church Lane and Weald Common. There has also been hedge laying at Weald Common.

Countrycare has taken on two new sites this year; one behind the new St John's School in Epping which will be managed as a wildflower area, and the other by the allotments on Abbots Road in Waltham Abbey. The latter is currently an area of neglected woodland/scrub and will be managed as woodland and grassland.

Essex Wildlife Trust and Butterfly Conservation have come together to deliver the 'Buckthorn for Brimstone' campaign, aiming to plant hundreds of common buckthorn (*Rhamnus Cathartica*) shrubs across the district, over the coming months. The shrubs will act primarily as the sole food plant of the beautiful Brimstone butterfly but also to support many bird and small mammal species, which will also feed on the buckthorn fruits. The campaign is part of the wider Living Landscapes vision. The Brimstone is legendary because of its ability to find the required common or alder buckthorn shrub on which to lay its eggs. Inspired by this project, Countrycare has planted buckthorn at Bobbingworth Nature Reserve, Sheering Copse, Church Lane LNR, Thornwood Common, Weald Common and Willingale Road Community Orchard.

On 16 March a Countrycare staff member, Kevin Mason, attended the Capel Manor College Careers Day, speaking to students about the kind of work Countrycare does and how to become involved. On 18 March Countrycare volunteers, together with staff members Abigail Oldham and Kevin Mason, attended the Civic Awards ceremony, having been nominated for an award. I am delighted that the volunteers were presented with an award as Team of the Year.

Countrycare's environmental education programme kicked off this year on 30 March with its annual Easter Scavenger hunt. This year it brought 17 children and their parents into the wood to hunt for laminated eggs and to answer the riddles and quiz questions written on them.

Environmental Charter

The Council's Green Corporate Working Party is currently reviewing the draft of an Environmental Charter and associated Environmental Commitments and Actions plan. The Charter takes account of current EFDC environmental policies, the EFDC Climate Change Strategy, the Working for our Future aims and objectives, and the environmental elements of the draft Local Plan. Once the Charter wording and associated Commitments and Actions are approved by the Green Corporate Working Party, it will go to the Management Board for review. The Charter is based on a national framework, Climate Local, which is the successor to earlier local authority climate commitments.

Conservation

Now that the Waltham Abbey Conservation Area Character Appraisal is complete and has been approved by Cabinet, the Conservation Officer and her assistant have turned their attention to the designation of a new conservation area in Buckhurst Hill, centred on St John's Church and the pond. A character appraisal is being written for the area and the team will be undertaking public consultation, something which is especially vital because it is a brand new designation. Work on a character appraisal for the Chipping Ongar Conservation Area is also ongoing.

Some guidance documents on shopfront and signage design in historic areas, and general advice for owners of historic buildings, is being prepared. Work on the shopfront design guide has started, but conservation area character appraisals are currently taking priority.

These strategic projects run alongside the section's continuing development control work including commenting on planning applications, pre-application submissions, and answering more general enquiries about the historic environment.

Car parking

Car parks strategy

The project to install new LED lighting and CCTV systems in all Council car parks has fallen behind schedule. CCTV designs have been finalised, but further work is required to the LED lighting connections.

Loughton Broadway Parking Review

At its meeting on 3 March, Cabinet agreed to commence work on the Loughton Broadway Review. Very useful meetings have taken place with ward members, and further meetings will be held with them to discuss the implementation strategy for the scheme.

North Essex Parking Partnership

The Council has formally given notice to leave the off street element of the North Essex Parking Partnership from 31 March 2017. The Council Car Parks Portfolio Holder Advisory Group, which provided valuable support during the preparation and implementation of the car parking strategy, will be working with me on the build-up to the change in arrangements for the management of the car parks, including enforcement and cash collection.