

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 1 November 2017

Subject: Safer, Greener & Transport

Portfolio Holder: Councillor S Kane

Recommending:

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

Countrycare

Since the last report Countrycare has held a few events.

The annual moth and bat night was held in Epping Green Millennium Gardens and was attended by about 30 people. Shame it started raining at 9pm. But people still got to see a variety of moths that had already been attracted to the lights and a group of people had been on a bat walk.

Mammal Morning was held at Chigwell Meadows where a variety of small mammals were found in the morning and owl pellet dissection took place after breakfast.

Twenty-five Thornwood Toddlers were entertained with bug-hunting and twenty Ongar scouts visited Bobbingworth Nature Reserve for some bird activities, bug hunting and games.

Nazeing Triangle LNR continues to improve with the creation of a disabled access pathway, a hibernaculum and a new interpretation board. The pond plants have taken well and we look forward to laying the hedge. The grant portion of the project is done.

Four tree wardens and a member of staff attended the annual Tree Forum run by the Tree Council. Talks were held on topics such as the value of trees and the Tree Charter that is soon to be launched. Then there was a tour of sites that the Suffolk Tree Wardens manage to share information and experiences.

Volunteer days on Thursdays have been continuing with project days in Epping Upland, Willingale Road Community Orchard, Roughtally's Wood and Chigwell Heath. The hedgelaying season has just started. Two days have already been spent in Belhus Chase harvesting stakes and binders for hedgelaying by coppicing hazel.

Parking

Additional off street car parks in Loughton Broadway

I am pleased to report that the funding allocated as part of the Council's Parking Strategy has enabled the creation of additional 69 pay and display car parking spaces in the Loughton Broadway area. The tariff is a combination of short and long stay, to strike a balance between the parking requirements of shoppers and all day visitors/employees. These new parking spaces will increase the capacity of our car parks.

I am aware of the concerns of local Members and the Loughton Broadway traders with regards to commuter parking and the impact this maybe having on the small businesses. I am keen to address this urgently however I would like to make an informed decision and avoid a knee jerk reaction. I have asked officers to urgently carry out a parking usage survey and make recommendations for changes.

Loughton Broadway Parking Review

Phase 1 of the Parking Review, consisting of new parking restrictions on a number of roads, had been successfully implemented. Unsurprisingly this has resulted in the displacement of commuter and all day parking elsewhere. I have had a meeting with the local Members to consider next steps in readiness for Phase 2.

North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP)

As Members are aware each of the Member District of NEPP can nominate up to three schemes twice a year. At the time of writing this report it was my intention to nominate, having consulted with the relevant Town/Parish, District and County Members, the following schemes:

Parking Restriction Schemes:

- 1) Cleall Avenue, Waltham Abbey, 60155
- 2) High Road, Buckhurst Hill (consideration of school Zig Zap instead of DYL), 60064
- 3) Albion Hill, Loughton, 60085

Resident Parking Schemes:

- 1) Ivy Chimneys Road, Epping, 60151
- 2) Lincolnsfield, Epping, 60148
- 3) Lower Swaines, Epping, 60049
- 4) Market Place, Abridge, 60149
- 5) Algers Mead/Algers Close, Loughton, 60000

I would like to remind Members that there are further processes before a scheme can be implemented: further site surveys, preparing preliminary designs for consultation etc. The process, owing to the statutory requirements and resource pressures, schemes have to be fully funded by NEPP, could take up to 18 months.

Car Parking Strategy update

The Council agreed significant investment to improve its car parks. New LED and/or CCTV works have already been completed in Traps Hill Car Park, Loughton, Basons Lane and The Pleasance, Ongar and Queens Road Lower, Buckhurst Hill. Procurement process for installation of LED lighting and a CCTV system for car parks in Waltham Abbey are nearly complete and these works will commence shortly.

Community Safety

Anti-social Behaviour

The Community Safety Team continues to be dealing with a very high level of work which has seen 567 cases dealt with over the last year in comparison to 528 in the previous year, which represents an increase of 7%. Anti-social behaviour (ASB) has made up a large

proportion of the increase. However, our work on tackling ASB has been assisted by the tools and powers of the ASB Crime and Policing Act 2014, which we can use to address a range of issues, some of which are detailed below.

Closure Notices: The Act enables the Council to serve Closure Notices on local properties where it is identified that they are being used for a range of crimes. In recent weeks, two notices have been served on council properties in Epping and Loughton and these allow the council and police to control and restrict access to problem properties where serious nuisance, disorder or criminal behaviour occurs or is likely to occur. These 'Notices' are authorised by Senior Council Officers and provide a 48 hour window, whereby the Council can seek a 'Closure' Order from the Court, which if granted, allows the Council's Housing team or social landlords to seek possession of a property on absolute grounds (subject to any human rights appeal). Breach of an Order is a criminal offence and perpetrators can be arrested by police, including the tenant.

This is a powerful piece of legislation which is very effective in controlling serious anti-social behaviour and 3 orders have been granted to date, at Prescott Green, Loughton, Birch View, Epping, Sandford Avenue, Loughton and a further joint order with Essex Police at Marlescroft Way, Loughton.

Community Triggers: These are part of the ASB Act and enable local residents to trigger intervention by Community Safety if they feel that any ASB is not being dealt with satisfactorily. We currently have two Community Triggers under Anti-social Behaviour Case Reviews that are related to disorder at Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey and these have been in place for 2 x months and require ongoing attention. Work around these Triggers is being addressed through a comprehensive action plan, which involves the local Policing team as well as the Council's Housing, Legal and Neighbourhood teams and we are in regular contact with the two applicants. As part of the action plan, a re-deployable camera with anti-vandal grille has been installed in the Hillhouse shopping area and although greeted with some resistance from one of the case review applicants, has now proved to have a positive impact and continues to deter groups of youths from congregating and causing nuisance in the area.

A survey was also carried out by Community Safety and Essex Police Strategic 'Designing Out Crime' Officer around the flats and shops at Hillhouse and recommendations have been made in relation to improving some design aspects of this locality. A specification for access control to the flats above the shops has been obtained and is currently under consideration. Police have also carried out a survey of residents and businesses at Hillhouse at the request of Community Safety and the results are currently being analysed. There was a good response to the survey, with 31 returns, of which 18 expressed an interest in joining a Neighbourhood Watch scheme. This has been passed to the Essex Watch Co-ordinator to action who we have an excellent working relationship with. (The officer hot-desks in the Community Safety office at least twice a week).

Additional support has been provided to the local community police team, with the deployment of Parkguard, (a private CSAS accredited security company) and we have developed a joint plan for Halloween and Fireworks night, which covers Hillhouse and other areas of the district. This will include live monitoring of public space through our CCTV Officer, support in dealing with ASB and support for vulnerable residents over this period, with personal visits from Community Safety and our volunteer Active Citizen following any referrals from the police.

Secured By Design

The Community Safety Officer continues to work with Essex Police Designing Out Crime Officers in achieving Secured By Design awards for our new build properties and I am pleased to report that the new flats at Harveyfields, Waltham Abbey, has just achieved this standard and we are awaiting the award certificates. The collaboration with our Community Safety Team and Essex Police Designing Out Crime Officers was recently featured at the national Association of Public Service Excellence conference and Planning and Building Control Today newsletter as an example of best practice.

<https://www.pbctoday.co.uk/news/building-control-news/a-crime-prevention-programme-for-a-safer-built-environment/35252>

Safeguarding

Our dedicated Safeguarding Officers (1.5 FTE) have also seen a significant increase in workloads, including dealing with cases related to ASB, with many individual referrals taking a considerable amount of time to deal with due to the complex issues generated. The team have noticed a growing increase of reported cuckooing/mates crime cases. These involve the befriending and manipulation of vulnerable individuals in order to obtain benefit monies or the use of the premises to supply drugs from. Many of these cases can result in the victims being seriously assaulted to prevent them reporting the activity to the authorities.

Training: We recently hosted a multi-agency training conference at the Civic Offices involving Social Housing providers, Police, Probation/Community Rehabilitation Company, Health and Mental Health Services. The training was very well received and highlighted the professional involvement each agency can provide in such cases. The training allowed some excellent networking and the ability to identify key contacts and processes.

The safeguarding officers have just completed delivering a bespoke training package to our trades team. This involved the customisation of a simplified reporting system which has worked very well and is being used by our Trades team to report Safeguarding concerns. The Safeguarding Team are now working with the Repairs Manager to encourage our Gas Contractor to use our Safeguarding Concern Card to report issues.

The Home Office have recently developed an online e-learning Prevent training package, which representatives of the Council's Corporate Safeguarding group are in the process of completing. Once they have undertaken this training, it will be rolled out across EFDC.

Hoarding: EFDC and Harlow Council jointly lead on hoarding awareness for all councils in Essex and have established a West Essex Hoarding Panel in order for West local authorities to better manage a multi-agency response to serious hoarders. The Practice Manager from the Essex Safeguarding Board attended the latest meeting and said "We finally seemed to get the right people in the room and make some practical progress. Assuming we can keep up the momentum and get the same people to the next meeting I think this is going to become a really useful panel."

EFDC Safeguarding Referrals – September 2017

Total no. of NEW concerns received by the Safeguarding Team for this period: 26.

No. of children-only concerns (where children were victims): 8

No. of adult-only concerns (where adults were victims): 14

No. of concerns that involved both (adult and children were victims): 4

Total no. of children involved: 15

Total no. of adults involved: 19

No. of new cases referred to Essex Social Care: 9

No. of new cases referred to Police: 1

Referrals to Mental Health Service: 1

Referral to other external agencies (e.g. Family Mosaic; CQC; GP): 2

Although the team received fewer cases this month, they have taken up twice as much time due to their complexity.

CCTV

A range of installation projects have been undertaken by the CCTV team over the last few weeks with several others underway, including the following;

- **Epping High Street** – Digital Air Wi-Fi survey carried out successfully. Planning permission is the next stage for new CCTV columns and the extension and replacement of the High St CCTV system.
- **Limes Farm, Yellow Block Flats**– A new CCTV system is currently being installed (16 cameras) and completion is expected by end of October 17.
- **Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey, Leisure Centre/Shopping Precinct** – CCTV Deployable camera installed in secure unit and design for new CCTV to cover the new leisure centre is at early design stage.
- **Bobbingworth** (former landfill site) - Full 7yr CCTV upgrade is completed.
- **Cornmill, Quaker Lane & Darby Drive Car Parks** Waltham Abbey - CCTV and Lighting project - All three sites are awaiting tender returns (expected 27th October 2017)... Contractor appointment and works expected to commence Nov/Dec 2017
- **Norway House, North Weald** - CCTV 'ageing system' replacement works. Works commence Jan 2018. This work will also incorporate plans for CCTV on the new single occupancy pods that are planned next year.

The CCTV team has also been involved in a range of other work in conjunction with the local Policing team and other more specialised police, including;

- The team assisted Met Police (Flying Squad) to identify movements of a suspect involved in cash and transit robberies.
- Insurance companies have purchased CCTV footage from the Council for various road traffic collisions, most recently a vehicle/motorbike accident in Debden.
- An 8 metre high column has now been re-installed at the bottom of Debden Broadway after the recent completion of the roadworks. This will provide further coverage of the bottom of the Broadway, Chigwell Lane & Rectory Lane using three cameras.
- Mapping of all CCTV cameras operated by EFDC is almost complete with only three sites left to plot. Project expected to be completed by Christmas 17.

Our CCTV was successfully used in evidence at Chelmsford Crown Court, in relation to an investigation into a case where serious injury was caused by dangerous driving in High Road, Loughton, where a male was sentenced to 18 months imprisonment and disqualified from driving for 43 months.

Essex Police District Commander: Members are reminded that on 7 November 2017, Essex Police District Commander will be attending the meeting of the Communities Select Committee starting at 7pm in the Council Chamber. All Members are welcome and are able to submit questions in advance of the meeting to Adrian Hendry, Democratic Services by email at democraticservices@eppingforestdc.gov.uk