

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 22 February 2018

Subject: Safer, Greener & Transport

Portfolio Holder: Councillor S Kane

Recommending:

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

Countrycare

Winter work is going well on the sites Countrycare manages. With the help of our volunteers we have achieved some good habitat management.

In Chigwell Row Wood the rides were cleared of bramble and encroaching silver birch and some glades were opened up. In Home Mead blackthorn was cleared and used as a dead-hedge at the boundary of the reserve. Hawthorn, spindle and hazel trees were planted to create an understorey in a bare area of the wood and wood anemone and wild garlic bulbs were planted to give ground cover. At Nazeing Triangle we freed up the hedge of bramble in preparation for laying, resized the gate for wheelchair access and finished the path that was paid for by the Tesco grant. At Old Shire Lane the streams and ponds were cleaned out for better water flow and to allow more oxygen to reach the water and a few trees were felled to create less competition for the remaining ones. We created an orchard at the Millennium Garden in Epping Green by clearing bramble and dog rose from an area of fruit trees discovered in the meadow. Coppicing hazel and pulling of birch saplings took a day at Norton Heath along with creating a dead-hedge and making safe some trees after high winds. At Linder's Field we created better access for machinery on to the site and planted 100 trees.

The hedge laying season continues with hedges finished at Church Lane LNR and Home Mead LNR

On the 4th January, during a woodland task, we planted a tree for the late Gary Waller. It is in Sheering Copse, a woodland that he was keen for us to manage and indeed helped us to do so on volunteer days in the past. Countrycare and the volunteers wanted to mark their appreciation of the support and enthusiasm Gary had had for the Service. Councillor Stalker and the clerk to the parish council came along to help dig.

Parking

Additional off street parking in Loughton Broadway

Following a meeting with the local Members designs for one new and one existing pay and display car parks in Vere Road have been agreed. These plans will now be finalised and a formal planning application will be submitted. Once permission is obtained arrangements will be made for procuring contractors to carry out the necessary works. It is estimated that an additional 42 spaces will be created as a result of this project.

Off street parking surveys in Loughton Broadway

The Council commissioned a survey of the Broadway Car Parks to get more information on the concerns of Local Members and traders regarding the lack of parking due to use of commuter of the Burton Road and Vere Road Car Parks. The surveys, consisting of vehicle monitoring and driver interviews, were carried out on January 22nd, 26th and 27th 2018. I shall share the outcome of the surveys with Members and consider future options.

North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP)

Members will not be surprised that out of all the potential schemes across NEPP this Council has the highest number of schemes. Over the years we have tried to and have been successful in getting more than the normal share of scheme. Each authority gets to nominate 6 schemes a year and we have in the past had more schemes approved.

However I am conscious that some of the schemes on our list date back many years and it is not always clear that sufficient local support exists. Some schemes consist of a single resident request. I therefore propose to review the scheme list in consultation with local Members and try and remove schemes that may not have local support. With that in mind I will be requesting meetings with groups of Members to try and go through schemes in their area.

Community Safety

Staff Re-structure

There is currently an office re-structure underway within Community Safety, which will see both of the current ASB Investigators reducing their working hours, to accommodate better work/life balance. However, a further investigator has been recruited to cover the available staff hours and she brings a wealth of experience of housing law and dealing with front line ASB cases, having worked with our team on a number of investigations. This recruitment will maintain full time staff coverage across the working week and we believe this will further enhance our high level performance and delivery.

In addition, and in line with Transformation and the LGA recommendations for Decision Making Accountability for the Council, we have re-aligned some roles in the team and particularly safeguarding, as it was identified that both the full time and part time safeguarding roles need to be dealing with the high volume, day to day concerns and referrals, rather than management work such as review and development of policies. This work is now undertaken by the Community Safety Manager and Assistant Director

Anti-Social Behaviour

Following an excellent period of work with the Metropolitan Police (Metpol) Safer Neighbourhoods Team, the ASB Officer (South) has supported an application made by them at Colchester Magistrates Court, for a Criminal Behaviour Order for a male frequenting Limes Farm Estate. The application was successful and included evidence in relation to a series of ASB carried out at Limes Farm, by the male from the Hainault area, who has been banned from the estate due to the likelihood that he will bring gang related activity with him. Notices have been posted locally by Community Safety advising and reassuring residents of the ban and requesting that police are called, if he is sighted. Any breach of prohibition is a criminal offence with police having the power to arrest. The penalty for a breach of order is 6 months imprisonment, or a fine, or both, at Magistrates Court, or 5 years imprisonment or fine (or both) if on indictment at Crown Court. This shows the value of the excellent cross border intelligence sharing processes our investigators have developed with Metropolitan, Essex and British Transport Police services.

Parkguard Patrolling

Subsequent to Cabinet agreement on 7th December to provide funding for additional uniformed patrols of the district, I am pleased to report that the Council has instructed Parkguard, a police Community Safety Accredited uniformed Security Company, to support the district in patrolling ASB hot-spot areas. Initial deployments have been in Epping market due to the frequency of purse dippers targeting the elderly and initial feedback has been very positive from market stall holders and users.

Whilst patrolling the market, officers were able to render first aid and assist an elderly man who had been struck by a car, ensuring the requirement of exchanging details under the Road Traffic Act had been complied with and the injured party taken care of. Patrols are now being extended to other hot-spot areas in the district which include Limes Farm where they will provide public engagement, reassurance and intelligence gathering. They will also ensure reporting of any breaches of the Criminal Behaviour Order. Other areas for deployment are The Broadway, Loughton, Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey and St Margaret's Hospital as part of their Epping deployment where youths have been disrupting services.

The Parkguard Officers are being deployed according to need across the district, on a week to week and day to day basis.

CSE Training

Community Safety have recently hosted two CSE training events in the Council Chamber, which were extremely well attended by Council staff and a range of partners, including representatives from National Probation Service, Community Rehabilitation Company (CRC), Metpol and staff from Transport for London. The training was delivered by the CSE Lead from Essex County Council and was extremely well received by all attendees.

Safeguarding

Following a huge escalation in the number of safeguarding concerns being identified by staff across the Council in November - December 2017, which saw numbers increase to around 45 per month, the number of referrals has stabilised back down to a more manageable amount of around 25 for January. However, it appears that many cases referred to the Safeguarding Team are now very complex and rely on the support and engagement of a range of statutory partners to address them. One such case has been included below for information.

Our Safeguarding Team raised a concern with Essex Police Child Triage Team, in respect of a 14 year old boy from the district, who had gone missing. It is known that the boy was (and is still as far as we know) being groomed by gangs and that he had already been sent to Southampton and Worthing to deal drugs. The case has been referred to Essex Missing and Child Exploitation Group (MACE) and staff attended an Initial Child Protection Team Meeting, where it was agreed that he would be put on a Child Protection Plan for Neglect, which is the closest category that fits his situation. Ongoing liaison is in place with social care and Essex Police on this case.

CCTV

During January our CCTV team received 31 requests for CCTV footage, including from the Police, in relation to a number of incidents in the district, as follows;

- Clear images were provided of a male who is wanted for offences including theft in Epping High St.
- Serious Assault (GBH) in Epping High St, full incident and clear images of victim and perpetrators.

- CCTV captured good images of an assault by door staff on a patron from Club 195. (Police Licensing Team carrying out investigation)
- Various Road traffic incidents captured and passed to Police and Insurance companies for collisions, dangerous driving etc.
- CCTV from Pyrles Lane has led to an arrest of a male who had carried out a street robbery on an elderly person in Debden.
- Clear images of males involved in alleged cash robbery in Buckhurst Hill, passed to Crime Bureau for further investigation.

Specific CCTV Projects:

CCTV Design is now almost complete for both the leisure centre car park and the shopping area in Hill House, Waltham Abbey and the Tender will be sent out end of February to beginning of March.

Phase 1 of the new CCTV system for Norway House will commence on 19th Feb. This is a 3 phase project, which will include CCTV for the new single occupancy pods.

A new CCTV maintenance contract is being procured and will be in place by Oct 2018

Design is finalised for Epping High Street and the next step is to gain planning permission for three new 6m columns to be situated between the Thatched House and Tesco's.

We are currently awaiting the lighting tender for Quaker Lane Car Park in Waltham Abbey and CCTV is ready to install.

Waltham Abbey Darby Drive and Cornmill car parks are complete now and fully operational and we have already had 5 successful uses of footage, for fly-tipping, a vehicle break in and an ongoing investigation into a rough sleeper in Darby Drive.

Fly-tipping: A number of cameras are being deployed to capture large scale fly-tipping in some areas of the district, this is ongoing.

CCTV Strategy 2015-2022: This is currently being reviewed due to the continued growth and demand for CCTV across the district.

Partnership Support: CCTV support has recently been given to Uttlesford District Council, Genesis Housing Association and Ongar Town Council with various CCTV issues, including design, process and policy guidance.

Other Community Safety Partnership Working

Community Safety continue to maintain excellent links with various police teams including Operation Raptor (Gangs Unit), operation Juno (pro-active domestic abuse arrest team), Designing out Crime Officers, intelligence officers, Integrated Offender Management and most importantly the Community Policing Team. Further excellent links have been established with Metropolitan Police Hainault Safer Neighbourhoods Team and British Transport Police.