

## Select Committee Agenda



### **Stronger Communities Select Committee Tuesday, 15th September, 2020**

You are invited to attend the next meeting of **Stronger Communities Select Committee**, which will be held at:

**Virtual Meeting on Zoom**  
on **Tuesday, 15th September, 2020**  
at **7.00 pm** .

**Georgina Blakemore**  
Chief Executive

**Democratic Services  
Officer**

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#### **Members:**

Councillors D Sunger (Chairman), J McIvor (Vice-Chairman), A Beales, I Hadley, J Lea, A Mitchell, D Plummer, S Rackham, J Share-Bernia, J H Whitehouse and D Wixley

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**SUBSTITUTE NOMINATION DEADLINE: 6.00PM**

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#### **WEBCASTING NOTICE (VIRTUAL)**

**Please note: this meeting may be filmed for live or subsequent broadcast via the Council's internet site - at the start of the meeting the Chairman will confirm if all or part of the meeting is being filmed.**

**You should be aware that the Council is a Data Controller under the Data Protection Act. Data collected during this webcast will be retained in accordance with the Council's published policy.**

**Therefore by participating in this virtual meeting, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should ensure that their video setting throughout the virtual meeting is turned off and set to audio only.**

**In the event that technical difficulties interrupt the virtual meeting that cannot be overcome, the Chairman may need to adjourn the meeting.**

**If you have any queries regarding this, please contact the Corporate Communications Manager on 01992 564039.**

**1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

This virtual meeting is to be webcast. Members are reminded of the need to unmute before speaking.

The Chairman will read the following announcement:

“I would like to remind everyone present that this meeting will be broadcast live to the internet (or filmed) and will be capable of repeated viewing (or another use by such third parties). Thereby by participating in this virtual meeting, you are consenting to being filmed and to the possible use of those images and sound recordings for webcasting and/or training purposes. If members of the public do not wish to have their image captured they should ensure that their video setting throughout the virtual meeting is turned off and set to audio only.

Please also be aware that if technical difficulties interrupt the meeting that cannot be overcome, I may need to adjourn the meeting.”

**2. APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE**

**3. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

To report the appointment of any substitute members for the meeting.

**4. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

To declare interests in any item on the agenda.

**5. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING (Pages 5 - 20)**

To agree the notes of the meeting of the Stronger Communities Select Committee held on 21 July 2020.

**6. TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMME (Pages 21 - 24)**

(Chairman/Lead Officer) The Overview and Scrutiny Committee have agreed the Terms of Reference and work programme for this Select Committee. Members are invited at each meeting to review both documents.

**7. SIX-MONTH REPORT ON THE WORK OF THE COUNCIL-FUNDED POLICE OFFICERS (Pages 25 - 28)**

To consider the attached report on the work of the Council-funded Police Officers over the last six months.

**8. CUSTOMER SERVICE STRATEGY - Q2 (Pages 29 - 32)**

To consider the attached report regarding ‘What our customers are telling us’ and an update on Customer Strategy.

**9. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

To note that future meetings of the Stronger Communities Select Committee will be held at 7.00pm on the following dates:

- 14 January 2021; and
- 30 March 2021

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**EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL  
NOTES OF A MEETING OF STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE  
HELD ON TUESDAY, 21 JULY 2020  
IN VIRTUAL MEETING ON ZOOM  
AT 7.00 - 9.03 PM**

<b>Members Present:</b>	D Sungler (Chairman), J McIvor (Vice-Chairman), A Beales, I Hadley, D Plummer, S Rackham, J H Whitehouse and D Wixley
<b>Other members present:</b>	S Kane, A Patel, H Whitbread, R Brookes and S Murray
<b>Apologies for Absence:</b>	J Share-Bernia (Vice-Chairman of Council)
<b>Officers Present</b>	N Dawe (Chief Operating Officer), R Pavey (Service Director (Customer Services)), D Fenton (Service Manager (Housing Management & Home Ownership)), F Ferrari (Public Health Improvement Officer), J Leither (Democratic Services Officer), V Messenger (Democratic Services Officer) and N Cole (Corporate Communications Officer)

## **1. WEBCASTING INTRODUCTION**

The Chairman reminded everyone present that the meeting would be broadcast live to the internet and that the Council had adopted a protocol for the webcasting of its meetings.

## **2. SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS**

There were no substitute members reported at the meeting.

## **3. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

There were no declarations of interest made pursuant to the Council's Code of Member Conduct.

## **4. NOTES OF PREVIOUS MEETING**

Cllr D Wixley stated that he didn't have any issues with the notes of the last meeting but would like to advise the Select Committee on an issue he had raised at the last meeting regarding page 12, Item 29 of the notes, Community Safety Partnership Annual Report.

He stated that at the last meeting he had referred to the nitrous oxide cannisters which were being used and littered all over the district and asked what could be done to prevent this.

The Epping Forest Youth Council had been working on a project regarding nitrous oxide cannisters and they had produced a booklet which was sent to the three MP's who cover the Epping Forest District and the Police and Crime Commissioner. The outcome of the project was it could only be dealt with in the Houses of Parliament and today I heard on the radio that MP's will be debating this in Parliament. This is

excellent news especially as our Epping Forest Youth Council have played a part in getting this to be debated in Parliament.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That the minutes of the meeting held on 4 February 2020 be taken as read and signed by the Chairman as a correct record.

**5. TERMS OF REFERENCE & WORK PROGRAMME**

The Chairman, Councillor D Sunger advised that the Terms of Reference and Work Programme for the Select Committee had been agreed by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on the 22 June 2020.

**(a) Terms of Reference**

The Committee were informed that the Terms of Reference set out the core areas of responsibility and the scrutiny role of the Stronger Communities Select Committee.

Councillor J H Whitehouse advised that at the meeting in October 2019 she had asked for a list of the policy review and development and relevant projects that were already taking place so that Members knew which topics were encompassed by this Select Committee and could then decide if there was anything that the Select Committee Members would like to know more about. She also stated that she had also reminded officers at the meeting on 4 February 2020 and to date nothing had been presented to the Select Committee.

The Customer Services Director, R Pavey advised that he would speak to the lead Officer, N Dawe and bring something back to the next Select Committee.

**(b) Work Programme**

The 2020/21 work programme would be updated following each meeting to reflect the ongoing progress. The items on the current work programme had been assigned deadline dates for when the Committee would consider these items throughout the year and it would evolve to include suggestions from the Committee.

Councillor J H Whitehouse advised that she would prefer to see a quarterly report of the Customer Services update to either accompany the presentation or instead of the presentation as she felt there were far too many presentations and not enough reports for the Select Committee to scrutinise.

**Resolved:**

- (1) That a list of the policy review and development and relevant projects would be distributed to Members of the Select Committee as soon as the information was available;
- (2) That the Terms of Reference of the Select Committee be noted; and
- (3) That the Work Programme of the Select Committee be noted.

## 6. GROW COMMUNITY GARDEN

Heidi Chow, Project Co-ordinator of the Grow Community Garden was invited to give a presentation to the Select Committee to demonstrate the voluntary work that she did in the community.

The Grow Community Garden were a community food growing project based in Loughton. Their vision was to bring people from across the community to a safe and supportive environment to grow organic vegetables together.

In April 2016 Loughton Town Council offered a piece of land in Loughton to the Grow Community. The land was an overgrown piece of waste land covered in weeds and brambles. They accepted Loughton Town Council's offer and work began in clearing the land and making it into the community garden that it was today. The Grow Community applied and were successful in securing grants through the Council's Grant Aid Scheme, this has enabled the group to grow the scheme and provide essential equipment to be able to continue. Recently they been able to buy and erect a poly tunnel which gives the only shelter on the land and enables the volunteers to shelter and protects the young vegetable plants from the weather elements.

There were two sessions which ran weekly on Wednesdays and Saturdays and they were open all year round. Under normal circumstances this project was a drop in basis and all volunteers were provided with lunch and refreshments. Since Covid-19 they have still been open, practising social distancing and asking volunteers to bring in their own food and drink.

People of all ages volunteer and they have a say in the construction and planning of the site. A range of community events were held throughout the year such as:

- Easter egg hunt which has been running for 3 years; and
- Family and children workshops.

We have partnerships with schools, colleges and offenders who pay back to the community by doing supervised work in the district. Attending weekly were people from ELC Loughton Day Centre who support people with learning disabilities and autism and Oak View School in Loughton who support 3-19 years olds with special educational needs.

The food that was grown was taken home by the volunteers who attend the group and anything left would be donated to the local community.

### Benefits of community food growing

- Builds community especially for people who were socially isolated;
- Promotes health and wellbeing;
- Helps build skills - intergenerational skill sharing, helps unemployed people to build skills and confidence; and
- Sustainable environment – learning how to grow organic vegetables.

The Grow Community brings people together in all walks of life, it builds confidence and self-esteem helping people to interact with each other, learning new skills, sharing ideas and treating each other with respect.

The Chairman thanked Ms Chow for attending the Select Committee and for giving a very interesting presentation to the Select Committee. He asked if they had a website and thought it would be a good idea to promote this initiative to other Councils. Heidi Chow advised that their website was [Growloughton.org.uk](http://Growloughton.org.uk)

Councillor S Rackham asked how many volunteers attended the Grow Community Garden and what could the Select Committee do to help this group.

Ms Chow stated that there were approximately 25 volunteers across the two days they were open. There were also approximately 12 volunteers from Oakwood School and 7 from ELC Loughton Day Centre who attended on Wednesdays.

Last year there were over 300 visitors to the Grow Community who came by recommendations and social media advertising.

The Council have given so much support to this project from the Grant Aid funding, last year we were able to buy the materials to build height beds to make the project more accessible for wheelchair volunteers.

Councillor D Wixley stated that access to the site was land owned by Loughton Town Council and also Epping Forest District Council so he advised Heidi to contact the Town Council to make sure that disabled access would still be available.

Heidi Chow confirmed that she had written to the Town Council and asked if their access gates could be moved, she was still waiting to hear back.

Councillor S Murray advised that he had seen this project grow from when it started in 2016. I have seen people that were unemployed develop their social skills and go on to find permanent employment. It was the projects decision for what they could sustain elsewhere but this was a Loughton project supported by Loughton Town Council and I am sure they would be able to help and advise other parts of the district to set up similar projects.

Councillor Murray also stated that he would like to report on a slightly different issue in a few meeting of the Council I have been urging Members to join the Covid Crises and about how wonderful the mutual aid groups were and the person behind those mutual aid groups was Heidi Chow, the initiative that she took in setting up these groups was phenomenal.

Councillor R Brookes asked if the volunteers had done safeguard training regarding the vulnerable adults and children that attended the project.

Ms Chow advised that because the Group was under a charity restore community there was a nominated safeguarding person that attended the Group and given safe guarding to all of our volunteers. Oak School and ECL Loughton brought their own adult carers with them to support, help and guide them.

The Chairman thanked Heidi Chow for attending the meeting and giving such a refreshing and informative presentation.

**7. EPPING FOREST DISTRICT COUNCIL'S HOUSING COMMUNITIES - THE IMPACT OF COVID-19**

Deborah Fenton, Service Manager, Housing Management and Home Ownership presented a report to the Select Committee regarding the impact of Covid-19 and the

delivery of services relating to income delivery and asked the Select Committee to note the report.

She advised that the report set out the impact of Covid-19 on the collection of rent, in particular it highlighted the increase when compared with the same period in 2019. The report also gave some insight into the impact on the income of individuals as indicated by the increase in Universal Credit claims.

The report provided an overview of the measures being taken to support residents whilst also working to protect the rental income, therefore providing some certainty for the HRA account.

### **Incoming telephone calls**

The emergence of Covid-19 and the lockdown in March of this year led to an understandable level of concern and worry for the residents of the Council, which cumulated in a significant increase in telephone calls, up by over 100% in March. The analysis of calls pointed to many residents being concerned about their ability to pay their rent due to being furloughed or losing their jobs. A small number of people were confused regarding the Governments message around mortgage and credit card holidays, this led to the team diverting resources to cover the vast increase in telephone calls. Although the number of calls have dropped dramatically since the beginning of the Covid-19 outbreak, the volume of calls was not yet at a pre-Covid-19 level, this was impacting on the team's ability to provide targeted services to those people who have levels of debt.

### **Universal Credit**

The evidence highlighted that Covid-19 has had a significant impact on the income of the Councils' residents and an increase in the numbers of applicants claiming Universal Credit, it should be noted that there was a delay of at least 5 weeks before an applicant receives their first Universal Credit payment, thereby increasing rent arrears in the short term. Claimant of Universal Credit can ask for a loan, but this loan would have to be paid back out of their Universal Credit payments over the next 12 months, thereby reducing the claimants Universal Credit claim for the next 12 months.

### **Managed Universal Credit Cases**

Further to the increase in overall cases there had been an increase in the number of managed cases. Officers can request to manage payments on behalf of residents who were struggling with managing their Universal Credit payments, these were usually people with vulnerabilities. Additional support was being offered to all residents who were experiencing difficulties, this was in addition to the Council's current responsibilities under the pre action protocol.

### **Overall Impact on rent arrears**

Compared with income received at the same time last year the increase in arrears was as follows:

March	13%
April	19%
May	19%

This would suggest a levelling out of arrears which was positive given that lockdown restrictions were only just beginning to be lifted. The team were continuing to take a supportive approach towards residents in arrears, evictions and possession hearings have been suspended, however we were serving notices on residents who we assess as 'won't pay' rather than 'can't pay'. Further action on these cases will take place as soon as the suspension was lifted and the Courts reopened.

The team were currently fully staffed and there were no immediate plans to increase staffing levels to aid the recovery of rent arrears, however this will be kept under review.

The Chairman thanked the Council for taking a sensitive approach in the recovery of rent arrears and asked if Universal Credit was paid weekly or monthly.

D Fenton replied that Universal Credit was paid on a monthly basis. She added that the Income Recovery Team would offer support to residents as it was important that residents would be able to maintain their tenancies.

The Chairman stated that if residents weren't able to pay their rents due to the current climate they should be given every opportunity and as much help need to maintain their tenancies. He asked how were the Council going to deal with the residents that 'won't pay'.

D Fenton advised that Officers would continue to take a stern approach to the residents that 'won't pay'. Officers would refer residents to debt management agencies for example the Citizens Advice Bureau, whilst still trying to work with these residents to encourage them to pay their rent as the Council do not want to make people homeless.

Councillor D Plummer stated that the 5 week waiting period for the first payment of Universal Credit was a real struggle and although you can ask them for a loan you have to pay it back. In my opinion the Universal Credit system was designed with the best intentions but it doesn't really work.

D Fenton advised that the 5 week or more wait for the Universal Credit payment contributed to residents getting into rent arrears but the Council were mindful of this and in tune with what our residents were telling us.

Councillor R Brookes asked if the Officer had a rough idea out of the residents in arrears how many of them were on a payment arrangement with the Council.

D Fenton advised that she didn't have that data to hand but she would arrange for that to be circulated at a later date.

## **8. CUSTOMER SERVICES - Q1 UPDATE**

R Pavey, Service Director (Customer Services) gave a presentation on the Customer Service, Stronger Community Quarter 1 update. He advised the Select Committee that the report provided an update on the Quarter 1 Customer Services performance.

### Key messages

During Quarter 1 there had been a 34% reduction in the Contact Centre staffing levels due to , sickness, staff leavers and a delay in recruiting new staff due to Covid-

19. Staff were brought in from other service areas and the team achieved 49.44% first point resolution of customer calls.

Complaints received were reduced by 20 from the previous quarter, which may partly be due to the fact that all Managers have now received training on diffusing situations to prevent them turning into an official complaint.

#### Our current performance

The website received 230,179 hits, there were 119 complaints received due to temporary broken links, missing information on composting, a requirement for a third bin, missing addresses on the waste calendar and accessibility issues with the self-service portal for Council Tax and Business Rates, these issues have now been resolved.

#### First point resolution

The team had achieved 49.44% first point resolution of customer calls compared to the same quarter for 2019/20 of 37.31%. There had been a gradual increase over the last three months:

April	45.98%
May	48.33%
June	54.33%

As more areas transition into the contact centre the team were upskilled to resolve more queries at first point of contact.

#### Compliments and Complaints

Many compliments had been received on waste for maintaining services during the Covid-19 pandemic.

In Q1 there had been 41 complaints received in Q4 of 2019/20 61 complaints had been received. Recently managers had received training on defusing situations so that an official complaint would not be raised. 88% of complaints were resolved in Q1 compared to 92% in Q4 of 2019/20.

#### Complaint trends

Planning received the most complaints by residents unhappy with applications from neighbours.

Waste received complaints regarding contaminated recycling, waste not collected and 2 insurance claims where Biffa had hit parked cars.

Revenues received complaints from customers unhappy that they were not getting business grants quickly enough or not qualifying for a business grant.

#### What customers were telling us

Covid-19 was the major topic of customer feedback. In recent weeks the focus had moved from lockdown to the reopening of local high streets, including the hospitality industry. In common with other Local Authorities, Epping Forest District Council have recovery plans that meet with mixed online reactions.

While many local residents understand and support the local and national response to Covid-19, a critical group believe that many of the steps advocated to reduce and halt the spread of the disease were unnecessary.

These comments were common across social media channels nationally and internationally. It was important not to take such comments as being necessarily a reflection of wider public mood or opinion.

For example and by contrast, following the launch of the Safer Spaces Commonplace consultation up to 6 July, the website received 2,021 visitors with 658 contributions and agreements.

Third-party Facebook comments and feedback suggested higher levels of support for Covid-19 recovery measures proposed by the Council.

58% of respondents supported measures to reduce traffic speeds and volumes to help aid social distancing, with 43% noting they would support measures that sought to reallocate road and parking space for walking and cycling more permanently.

Interviews with councillors on BBC Essex produced further feedback indicating our steps to cut parking charges as part of wider high street recovery measures were much more popular than social media would suggest.

The negatives were:

- Customer frustrations at the length of time some of the service areas take to respond;
- Recycling Centres not open; and
- Waste calendar doesn't always download on the website.

The positives however were encouraging:

- Housing staff in repairs were extremely helpful and proactive;
- Efficient service when ordering bins;
- Helpful advice around business grants and where to find information;
- Excellent response to the Covid-19 situation providing food parcels and prescriptions to those who needed it most;
- Sensible approach by the Council to waste services and continuing special collection services;
- Informative website and easy to pay rent and council tax; and
- Easier to report, pay, book, apply for services as was proved by customers that were using the online services much more.

### What's next

#### **People**

- Recruitment of new L1 Team Manager (Member & Service Delivery); and
- Training for new Contact Centre staff to bring team to full capacity – the team have been severely hit with resourcing issues, new starters were undergoing training with the team and would be fully trained by the end of August, additional vacancies were being recruited for.

### Customer Strategy

- Behavioural training for all front line staff on key skills; active listening, being credible and reliable, taking ownership, defusing and resolving difficult situations, external training provider to be secured; and
- This training will help improve customer service skills for all employees dealing with both internal and external customers and be delivered using Zoom and Teams technology.

R Pavey advised that this was a brief overview of the work that was ongoing throughout the Customer Services area progressing to enhance the customer experience.

Councillor S Kane stated that in the early stages significant changes had been made due to Covid-19. Our customers were being asked to change the ways they were contacting us and ways they pay their rent and council tax.

The Chairman added that the Council's officers had adapted well to the new way of working.

Councillor S Kane stated that we were in the early stages at the way the Customer Services were approaching our customers and we have made a very promising start considering the way Covid-19 impacted on everyone and I was looking forward to see the progress improve as we go along.

The Chairman added that the new way Officers have adapted in supporting our residents during this Pandemic had been very encouraging to the new ways of working.

Councillor D Wixley asked what was the current staffing situation in the Customer Services department like now as at the last meeting it had been reported that the team was not fully staffed.

R Pavey stated that some members of the Customer Services Team have moved to other positions within the Council and there have been people reaching retirement age but the current situation was far more resilient now than it had been with new members of staff being trained and the willingness of other services across the Council in supporting the Customer Services Team had really helped and was appreciated.

The Chairman asked if a written report could come to the next meeting so that Members may scrutinise it before hand and have any questions they wished to ask at the meeting.

R Pavey confirmed that a written report would come to the next meeting and asked members to advise him if there was any other information that they would like provided in the report.

Councillor S Murray reported that he kept a record of phone calls he received from residents this normally equated to 6 calls a week and approximately 330 calls a year. In the last 6 months, since Covid-19 he had received over 500 calls which equated to 16 calls a week, they were not all for the District Council some were for the County Council.

R Pavey stated that if there was anything the Customer Services team could pick up from Councillor Murray then please pass it on.

Councillor J McIvor asked if it was possible for the Select Committee to know any of the areas that were consistently disappointing residents for example departments or singular issues, also for any departments that were exceeding expectations.

R Pavey stated that there was two strands to that Performance would be the remit of the Stronger Councils but we could provide an update on the customer experience. Customer Services provide the complaints data through this meeting, planning tend to be high up as people don't like the decisions made. Presently as an organisation we do not monitor compliments but I will go back to the Customer Services team and see what data we can put together.

The Chairman stated that it would be nice to recognise the officers that do over and above to facilitate a customer.

Councillor J H Whitehouse requested that a copy of the slide presentation be circulated to the Select Committee.

R Pavey confirmed that a copy of the slides would be sent out to the Select Committee as soon as possible.

The Chairman requested that a written report come to the next meeting of the Select Committee.

**9. ANNUAL PRESENTATION ON THE EPPING FOREST HEALTH & WELLBEING STRATEGY 2018-28**

Fabrizio Ferrari, Public Health Improvement Officer gave an annual presentation regarding the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-2028.

The Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Board was made up of representatives from Epping Forest District Council, Essex County Council Public Health, the West Essex Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and a wide range of health providers and third sector organisations.

In March 2018, following an extensive consultation, the multi-agency Board formally adopted and launched the Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Strategy 2018-28.

The Strategy set out the partnership's vision, priorities and aims to improve the health and wellbeing of everyone living in the district, with a particular focus on tackling the health inequalities that exist.

To facilitate the development and delivery of projects and initiatives to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents, three multi-agency Action Groups have been established as follows:

- Start Well Action Group (Pre-birth to 19 years)
- Be Well Action Group (19 – 65 years)
- Age Well Action Group (65+)

The Epping Forest Health & Wellbeing Board and Action Groups annually review key local priorities and develop Action Plans in line with these. Consistently across all

age ranges priorities continue to be; the need to support positive mental health, increase physical activity, combat loneliness and isolation and encourage healthy relationships. A priority specific to the Age Well Action Group continues to be the need to support older people to live healthy, happy lives independently in their own homes for as long as possible.

Following the Covid pandemic the Board was keen to focus even more on a whole systems approach in order to support local communities and residents to meet the challenges ahead.

Epping Forest Health and Wellbeing Strategy key priorities

The strategic priorities were to:

- Improve the mental health of residents of all ages
- Increase physical activity
- Tackle loneliness and social isolation
- Increase safe and independent living at home.

Health and wellbeing Board Structure

Epping Forest Health and Wellbeing Board - Improve Mental Health - Increase Physical Activity - Increase safe and independent living at home
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Start Well Action Group (ages 0-19)	Be Well/Work Well Action Group (ages 19-65)	Age Well Action Group (Ages 65+)
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase Physical Activity</li> <li>• Reduce obesity</li> <li>• Improve sexual health and healthy relationships</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase Physical Activity</li> <li>• Reduce obesity</li> <li>• Improve mental health</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Increase Physical Activity</li> <li>• Reduce social isolation</li> <li>• Improve safe and independent living at home</li> </ul>

Health and Wellbeing in Epping Forest

**Physical Activity:** 60.5% of adults were physically active, however only 21.8% of adults were doing enough physical activity to benefit their health and wellbeing. The guidance came from the Chief Medical Officer, he advised that by exercising 3 times a week for 30 minutes would benefit health.

**Obesity:** This was a huge issue both nationally and locally. 63.9% of adults in the district and 17.9% of 10-11 year olds were overweight or obese.

**Smoking:** 20.2% of adults were smokers.

**Dementia:** 1,780 people aged over 65 in Epping Forest were thought to have dementia. This figure was estimated to rise to 2,770 by 2030.

**Life Expectancy:** This was estimated at 7 years lower for men and 3.5 years lower for women in the most deprived areas of Epping Forest compared to the more affluent areas of the district.

#### Health & Wellbeing Strategy Successes

Over the last year the Board has worked through the Health & wellbeing action groups and on a variety of multi-agency projects and have delivered upon the strategy and its priorities.

- Increasing Epping Forest Primary Schools uptake of the Daily Mile Programme. This was an initiative to get children to walk, run or cycle a mile a day.
- Increased educational support for schools and young people around sexual health and healthy relationships.
- Increase in referrals to the Active Living Programme – EFDC Lifestyle change programme. People who do no exercise at all were encouraged to do 30 minutes per week and increase this week by week until they were doing 3 x 30 minutes each week.
- Expansion of the My Weight Matters programme across the district. This was an Essex County Council programme around helping people manage their weight and about supporting people to reduce weight and manage their weight successfully by themselves.
- Development of residential homes physical activity programme - highlighted as a model of best practice in Essex. We train activity coordinators in residential homes and the aim was to increase physical activity within residential homes.
- Epping Forest District Council awarded funding as lead organisation for our strength and balance programme across West Essex working with our partners and that contract was worth £90,000 for this year. The aim was to deliver physical activity programmes with the community to reduce falls.

#### Waltham Abbey and Ongar Health & Wellbeing Programmes

During the Pandemic the Board have had to suspend meetings to allow partners to work on their response to the Covid-19 Pandemic. The Board and the action groups have now re-established and met in July, there has been a Board meeting and two action group meetings.

Pre Covid-19 the Board agreed to embark on a programme of work using a whole systems approach to tackle health inequalities and were looking at working on two specific areas in the Epping Forest District.

The wards had been identified as Paternoster in Waltham Abbey and Shelley in Ongar. This approach had been highlighted and endorsed as a model of best practice by the Director of Public Health at Essex County Council and builds on the success of the pilot project that was done around social isolation in Buckhurst Hill where lots of agencies came together to work on that project.

Community consultations had begun with over 150 households in both areas. The doorstep conversations were conducted by staff from the Community, Culture and Wellbeing service. The aim was to find out people's needs as we emerge from

Covid-19 and the lockdown. Data could only give so much information and we needed to find out from people what they would need from the District Council and wider partners and begin to build a picture of what was going on within our district and particularly those two wards.

The findings of the consultation will be shared with partners to develop a multi-agency action plan to deliver against the needs of each area.

That was just a brief overview of where the Health & Wellbeing Board were at and the programme of work that we will be embarking on over the next few months.

The Chairman thanked F Ferrari for a very comprehensive update and thanked him for the work that he and the team were doing. I would like to ask the Chairman of the Health & Wellbeing Board, Councillor A Patel if he had anything to add.

Councillor A Patel advised that he had been a member of the Health & Wellbeing Board for four years and Chairman of that Board for the last two years. During this period of time the Board has really started to establish itself within the community and what has enabled us to get to this level was that we were now able to demonstrate that working with partners from the CGG, Essex County Council, Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, together we were really moving forward and doing good in the community.

This was a non-statutory function of the District Council which was run on a limited budget, it was therefore credit to the officers that actually represent the District Council in what they were achieving and some of the initiatives that they were now leading on.

One of the key drivers as a Health & Wellbeing Board and being the representative on that Board for the District Council had been 'how can we as a District Council support you', how can we get involved. We had some real momentum behind us and then Covid-19 came about which halted our progress. I was very happy to see that Board meetings and partner meetings had now resumed and I am looking forward to what the future holds for the Health & Wellbeing Board.

The Chairman added that we as a Council have really got this right, the enormous amount of work the officers take on and complete helping the very young to the very old, training others to carry on with work for people in social care. I would like to thank you, Councillor Patel for leading this great initiative and for the work Councillor H Whitbread also contributed to this project.

Councillor H Whitbread stated that she was really please to take on health as part of my Portfolio, I think health and housing were intrinsically linked so it was really good to see some joined-up thinking between the Council Directorates and I am really looking forward to working with the team.

Councillor S Rackham thanked the Officer for his report saying that it was very interesting and asked in terms of deprivation and poverty with children, how did our figures compare to our neighboring councils.

F Ferrari advised that without looking at the statistics of other councils that he wouldn't be able give the exact figures.

Councillor H Whitbread stated that she had recently looked at some work on the statistics but obviously this district does have pocket of key deprivation in Shelley

Ward in Ongar and Paternoster Ward in Waltham Abbey and they do compare quite badly with the rest of Essex.

Councillor A Patel added that the beauty about the project that they were currently undertaking was the fact that they were actually knocking on peoples doors and talking to them, finding out what there needs were and how the Council and its Partners could help.

Councillor D Wixley stated that this strategy was over 10 years from 2018-2028 therefore during that time priorities may change with new ideas coming in especially in light of the Covid-19 issue.

F Ferrari advised that priorities would reviewed annually, and added as with anything in health it took a long time to make changes but this would be constantly reviewed.

Councillor J H Whitehouse stated that she was a member of the Ageing Well Group and it brought together people from lots of different organisations and was a very interesting Group to be a part of. I would like to refer to the strategy under the heading 'How will we measure our success', this was an item that needed to be addressed and asked if it could be included in the next report.

Councillor J McIvor asked with regard to the sexual health aspect in the report and as we come out of lockdown there will be a lot of socialising with younger people, what specific work was going to be done in the district to keep on top of giving the support available to young people, in relation to sexual health, which was there before lockdown.

F Ferrari advised that Epping Forest Youth Council were doing a consultation around this subject and they have amazing videos, 'Stay Safe' and all the other resources that they have been producing online. Over the lockdown period we have been working closely with Brook who were actually commissioned by Essex County Council to deliver sexual health services across the district and with extra funding from Public Health services, during the course of this year, were able to give more educational support. In schools it was a part of the school curriculum to be educated about sexual health, relationships and they were having to deliver that even though schools were in lockdown. The results of the Youth Council's consultation will help to know what else was needed.

We were constantly working in terms of all the action groups to promote the sexual health services that Brook were delivering across Essex.

Councillor S Murray stated that he realised there would be a difference in life expectancy but was absolutely staggered to have heard tonight that in the districts most affluent wards the life expectancy of the average male was seven years longer than the life expectancy of the average male in the areas of deprivation. He then asked if Members could see the health statistics that were available on a ward by ward basis. Secondly what steps were being taken on the serious matter of mental health problems in young people and what support were we giving them.

F Fabrizio advised that he could share links with Members which would potentially show you the information, one report that was interesting was the Health and Equalities briefing which was produced every five years by Public Health England and that was done at a district level and highlights wards, also Public Health England's website which was called Fingertips and you can find this by doing a Google search. I will also share with the Select Committee the Inequalities Briefing

which also has a lot of the information you have requested. In terms of mental health a lot of work has been done with a project the Youth Council have done and this was called the MyLife project. Recently Red Balloon have been helping to deliver that project and have received funding from an innovation award and they will be making an animated cartoon series for pre-school aged children around mental health and that will be going out nationally.

Clinical services were hugely stretched, mental health was probably the biggest issue of this generation. In terms of the work we were doing we were working with the various groups to see how we can help them with their capacity and to share information across the system. Mental Health was a priority at Board level in Essex it was recognised that there were huge issues.

**10. DATES OF FUTURE MEETINGS**

It was noted that future meetings of the Select Committee would be held at 7.00pm on:

- 15 September 2020;
- 14 January 2021; and
- 30 March 2020.

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## **STRONGER COMMUNITIES SELECT COMMITTEE**

### **TERMS OF REFERENCE 2020/21**

#### **Core Areas of Responsibility**

- (1) To provide scrutiny for the following corporate projects:
  - Customer Excellence - Delivering services that put the customer at the heart of everything we do;
  - Behaviours and Insights - Future-proofing the Council's service provision by understanding customer needs and expectations over the next ten years and beyond; and
  - Partnerships - Working with public, private and third sector partners to deliver and develop services to our community, businesses and visitors to the district including shared and cross-border working.
- (2) To monitor levels of customer satisfaction and provide scrutiny of services that are not performing to standard and develop proposals for their improvement. This will also include matters of concern that are identified by the Stronger Council Select Committee in its review of Corporate Key Performance Indicators.

#### **Scrutiny Role of the Select Committee**

- (1) To engage in policy review and development, with a focus on improvement and how this can be best achieved;
- (2) To develop a work programme each year that effectively scrutinises the areas of responsibility outlined above;
- (3) To consider any matter referred by the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, Cabinet or a Portfolio Holder and to make recommendations as appropriate;
- (4) To look outwards and show community leadership;
- (5) To consider the effect of Government actions or initiatives that affect the Select Committees areas of responsibility and the impact on customers, residents, businesses and visitors to our district, and to respond to consultation activities as appropriate;
- (6) To establish working groups and task and finish panels to undertake any activity within these terms of reference;
- (7) To undertake pre-scrutiny through the review of specific proposals of the Council and its partner organisations or other local service providers to help develop policy;
- (8) To monitor and review relevant projects and associated closure and benefits reports; and
- (9) To engage with the community and encourage community engagement.

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**Stronger Communities Select Committee  
Work Programme 2020/21  
Chairman: Councillor D Sunger**

No.	Item	Meeting Date	Progress and Comments	Programme of Meetings
1.	Presentation from the Loughton based group GROW Community Garden who help people who are socially isolated	21 July 2020	Organised by Cllr D Wixley  <b>Completed</b>	21 July 2020 15 September 2020 14 January 2021 30 March 2021
2.	Impact of Covid-19 on EFDC's Housing Communities	21 July 2020	Deborah Fenton  <b>Completed</b>	
3.	"What are our customers telling us?"	Q1 - 21 July 2020 Q2 - 14 January 2021 Q3 - 30 March 2021 Q4 - 2021/22	Quarterly report of customer satisfaction and feedback <b>Q1 - Completed</b>	
4	Health and Wellbeing Strategy – To consider outcomes for the district	21 July 2020	Fabrizio Ferrari / Gill Wallis  <b>Completed</b>	
5.	Universal Credit and its impact on our customers and services	15 September 2020 30 March 2021	Initial findings and recommended actions from the officer working group 6 monthly report  Rob Pavey	
6.	Customer Service Strategy	15 September 2020 30 March 2021	Update on Key objectives 6 monthly report	

7.	Six-month report on the work of the Council-funded Police Officers	15 September 2020 30 March 2021	Caroline Wiggins	
8.	Digital Inclusion	14 January 2021	Report on project progress and future strategy	
9.	Presentation from the District Police Commander	30 March 2021 - <b>TBC</b>	Annual Report	
10.	Community Safety Partnership annual report and review of the district Strategic Intelligence Assessment	30 March 2021 - <b>TBC</b>	Annual Report	
11.	Data insight led review of customer service outlets	30 March 2021	Report to deferred until the next municipal year. Options and recommendations for short, medium and long-term options	
12.	Service reviews as a result of performance concerns	<b>TBC</b>		
13.	A Group/Organisation to give a presentation on Post Traumatic Stress Disorders and who it affected	<b>TBC</b>	Gill Wallis	



## **Report to Stronger Communities Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 15 September 2020**

**Portfolio: Housing and Community Services -  
Councillor H Whitbread**

# SCRUTINY



**Subject: Bi-Annual Report on the work of the Council-funded Police Officers**

**Officer contact for further information: C Wiggins (01992 564122)**

**Democratic Services Officer: J Leither (01992 564756)**

**Recommendations/Decisions Required: None**

- (1) That the Communities Select Committee receives a six-month report on the work and range of operations of the Council's funded Police team.**

### **Report:**

The Council continues to fund the employment of an additional Police Sergeant and 2 Police Constables to supplement existing local policing resources. The team were incepted in July 2018 with an initial 3-year contract, which has now been extended for a further two years. The team are tasked in-line with District Community Safety Partnership (CSP) priorities which are identified through the Annual Strategic Assessment and aligned with the priorities set by the Police, Fire and Crime Commissioner's (PFCC). As well as working to those priorities, the team can be requested, via a tasking process, to support any Council department where there is an identified threat, harm or risk to staff. A service level agreement is in place to prevent abstraction of the officers except in extreme cases or high priority incidents. This also covers staff sickness and extended training periods through credit to the Council from Essex Police.

A joint tasking has been implemented on a fortnightly basis, in line with police tasking in which current tasks and new requests are reviewed. To date these tasks have included:

- High-visibility patrols in North Weald following a burglary spike. The team intercepted a perpetrator near to the scene of a recently reported burglary. The offender was sentenced to 4 years in prison for 2 burglaries in the district.
- Execution of a no-bail warrant on behalf of Planning. This was deemed as not a priority warrant for Essex Police but through the tasking process was able to be advanced by the team.
- Service of a business closure notice on a premises in Waltham Abbey being used to supply sexual services during COVID-19 lockdown.
- Joint working with Housing to investigate and enforce a problem property in Waltham Abbey which was the centre of ASB and drugs use/supply. The team served a Community Protection Warning followed by a Community Protection Notice. The incidents ceased from that point.
- In response to a spike in high value vehicle thefts highlighted through local tasking the team implemented Operation Moonstone. In the first week this resulted in the arrest of 3 suspects in a 'mission' vehicle and the recovery of two recently stolen Land Rovers in the district.
- Support to the Council with the application and service of a closure order in relation to a 'Mansion Party' venue in Roydon linked to violence and disorder.

When not deployed on tasks the team are assigned patrols in areas identified through risk terrain mapping which focus on areas of high-risk and high-harm crime and ASB. The team are highly skilled and have a great depth of knowledge of criminal behaviour and crime patterns in the district. Through the use of ANPR and intelligence analysis, the team have been able to pro-actively plan patrols and specifically target criminality in the district. This is unique from other district policing teams in that the agreement permits the team time to focus on specific community safety problems. This has resulted in significant arrests, high-value vehicle recoveries and disruption to criminal activity in the district.

As well as nurturing strong relationships with ANPR and intelligence teams within Essex Police, the team have established strong bonds with teams from the Metropolitan Police, British Transport Police and Hertfordshire Constabulary and regularly share intelligence and work collaboratively across all agencies. The team were deployed on Operation Moab on several occasions prior to COVID-19 with colleagues from Chingford Police and had a number of positive results against criminals using routes between Waltham Abbey and Chingford to commit crime in both areas. There are future plans, COVID-19 permitting, to resume the joint working with the Met Police.

Some highlights from the team's activity outside of the tasking process:

- Arrest of male in possession of a large kitchen knife in Waltham Abbey. During a foot chase the offender discarded the knife into the garden of a care home.
- Arrest of a male driving a car recently stolen in a burglary who was actively committing shoplifting offences at the time of arrest.
- Recovery of a recently stolen vehicle in a 'chop-shop' and arrest of three offenders who were in the process of dismantling a stolen Mercedes Sprinter van.
- Arrest of three males linked to numerous burglary and robbery offences in the district in a stolen vehicle.

On top of 'daily business' the team have also been local lead for three election processes to date and also took the lead for planning and executing the policing plans around Halloween 2019, Remembrance Day and the Epping Christmas Market. The team will deploy again this year but clearly there will be significant new challenges in 2020.

District crime levels were affected by COVID-19 but the team have remained fully operational throughout and during the initial lockdown, made full use of the COVID legislation, mainly to target offenders who were already linked to other crimes. The issue of penalty notices was used as a disruption tool. The team have supported the Council with information sharing and deployment to any relevant COVID-19 breaches. Working in conjunction with the Council early intervention has been taken against a number of 'Mansion Party' venues in the district.

The last quarter has seen Essex Police post Community Safety Engagement Officers (CSEO) across the county. The Epping Forest CSEO is embedded with Community Resilience. The CSEO is tasked to work within the Community Safety Hub taking a lead on problem solving, working with partners and the community to reduce crime, ASB and protect people from harm within the district. This is done by supporting the CSP and Community Policing Team by ensuring that both have available all relevant information from police / joint agency systems and intelligence relating to local priorities. The CSEO will lead on promoting public participation and building trust and confidence in policing through engagement and collaboration with partners and the public. This is an innovative key role and the benefits to both organisations are already evident.

The Essex Police YTD figures are included in Appendix 2. Key figures below:

Offence Type	District	Force
Theft of Motor Vehicle	-25.4%	-22.2%
Burglary	-25.7%	-23.1%
Business Robbery	-30.8%	-40.0%
Personal Robbery	-19.0%	-21.1%
Anti-social behaviour	+17.1%	+7.4%
Shoplifting	-21.6%	-22.1%

**Reason for decision:** There is no decision related to this report.

**Options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Consultation undertaken:** A range of consultation was undertaken prior to the Council's decision to fund the additional police officers and this included with Nottinghamshire County Council, who had already funded a police team.

**Background Papers:** N/A

**Key Decision:** N/A

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## SCRUTINY



### **Report to Stronger Communities Select Committee**

**Date of meeting: 15 September 2020**

**Portfolio: Customer and Corporate Support Services  
Councillor S Kane**

**Subject: Customer Service Update Q2**

**Officer contact for further information: Susan Lewis**

**Democratic Services Officer: J Leither (01992 564756)**

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#### **Recommendations/Decisions Required:**

1. To note the update on 'what our customers are telling us' plus an update on our Customer strategy.

#### **Report:**

##### **What our customers are telling us**

###### **Customer frustration**

We have seen an increase in calls to the contact centre from customers who are frustrated that changes in services have not been communicated to them. All service areas have been reminded of the importance of putting themselves in their customer shoes and pro-actively telling customers of changes as well as informing the contact centre; this has been addressed with the relevant areas on each occasion.

###### **Paying cash**

35% of customers did not wish to channel switch to alternative payment methods and as a result we opened Broadway cash office two days a week, four hours a day to take cash payments. In the first two weeks 68K cash was taken and a steady stream of customers queued highlighting the demand for this service. This is a short-term solution and a longer-term solution is to be developed.

###### **Special collection waste service**

Positive feedback has been received via the customer contact centre that our special collection service is value for money.

###### **Topics via social media channels**

Potholes and pavement maintenance are a topic of frustration, customers still contact EFDC trying to get them fixed. Commonplace received much constructive feedback on the council's High Street Covid recovery options. The Bell Hotel featured heavily in local, social and national media coverage including The Times, The Mirror and the Observer. Flooding such as the recent flooding in Loughton High Road has seen a mix of posts, residents still have little understanding about the distinction between us and ECC, although in this case the situation is further complicated by Thames Water responsibility for the sewers.

Reports of fallen trees – usually associated with high winds have resulted in requests to have them removed.

## Customer Strategy

*Note the customer strategy was not launched to customers due to Covid-19 and a decision needs to be made as to the right time to do this.*

### **Phase 1 'Fix the Basics'; (Barriers buy in from service areas)**

All service areas were requested to conduct an internal customer service health check to identify areas for improvement and to encourage the 'think customer' culture change. Overall buy in has been lacking; the teams who did complete it have improvement plans which are reviewed quarterly and have reported on the benefits of doing so.

There is a requirement for this health check to be made mandatory – the consequences if we don't is that barriers are not identified, and customer frustrations are not fixed as highlighted above. Agreement will be sought from Leadership for this decision.

### **Phase 2 'Customer Shoes';**

We are still exploring options to find a suitable provider who can deliver an exciting innovative approach, using the latest technology (zoom) to deliver training in our current virtual world.

We need our employees to understand it is not WHAT they do but HOW they do it; the impact their behaviour, style and tone can impact the outcomes of customer interactions regardless of the method of interaction ie. verbal, face to face or written Key skills such as actively listen, taking ownership, being credible & reliable, doing what we say we are going to do and turning situations around when they go wrong, will be covered. An initial pilot will be launched with a mix of front-line staff across service areas. We have given prospective training providers the challenge of developing an e-learning training video in order to deliver this training cost effectively to all staff.

### **Benefits include**

- Improved employee understanding of Customer value
- Alignment to internal organisational values and behaviours
- Morale improved through gaining new skills
- Improved customer satisfaction and emotional loyalty
- Reduction in official complaints
- Officer time saving for complaints investigation

### **Phase 3 'Embracing New Technology';**

Priorities are being reviewed as part of ICT project prioritisation exercise.

### **Looking forward**

5<sup>th</sup> October sees the start of National Customer Service week, the aim of this week is to highlight the importance of customer service and a week of events will be planned along with the involvement of senior management. We hope to launch the customer shoes training pilot in the same week.

### **Key messages must include:**

- Complete your customer service health check and identify areas of focus in your areas to improve your customer service
- Everyone to buy in to the 'think customer shoes culture' – *every area has customers and is accountable for customer service not just the Customer Service team*
- Managers to role model; praising great customer service and identifying areas for improvement

**Reason for decision:** There is no decision related to this report.

**Options considered and rejected:** N/A

**Consultation undertaken:** N/A

**Background Papers:** N/A

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