

Report to the Cabinet

Report reference: C/105/2007-08.
Date of meeting: 4 February 2008



Portfolio: Leader of the Council.

Subject: Corporate Initiative - Safer, Cleaner and Greener.

Officer contact for further information: John Gilbert (01992-564062).

Democratic Services Officer: Gary Woodhall (01992-564470).

Recommendations:

(1) That, in support of the Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative, approval be given to the following:

(a) additions to the establishment of:

(i) one CCTV Operations Officer;

(ii) two Antisocial Behaviour Investigation Officers;

(iii) one Environment & Neighbourhood Officer; and

(iv) a Rapid Response Unit;

(b) the associated proposals for training, service branding, equipment, vehicles and on-going running and maintenance costs; and

(c) the continued development of the waste and recycling service to include a review of the garden waste collection service and the collection of food waste as a recyclable material;

(2) That, subject to the recommendations above, approval be given to the following for inclusion in the 2008/09 budget:

(a) a revenue Continuing Services Budget growth bid in the sum of £250,000;

(b) a revenue District Development Fund growth bid in the sum of £30,450; and

(c) a capital growth bid in the sum of £23,000; and

(3) That the Overview and Scrutiny Committee be invited to consider the most appropriate means of monitoring the Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative.

Background:

1. The Cabinet at its meeting in on 12 November 2007 (Minute 110 refers) agreed that the provision of services related to the "street scene" should be better integrated and provided on a locality basis. It was further resolved that a report be brought forward to this Cabinet meeting as part of the Directorate restructuring.

2. This report builds upon the restructuring of the Environment & Street Scene

Directorate and the report elsewhere on this agenda. Recommendation 5 of that report is as follows:

“To note that the above proposals have been designed to accommodate further structural change resulting from the Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative, which will be the subject of a further report.”

Proposals:

3. The Environment & Street Scene Directorate restructure report, in paragraph 9 sets out the core proposals for taking the Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative forwards. These include:

- (a) a new Neighbourhoods Team with its own Team Manager;
- (b) an expanded role for existing technical / enforcement officers to encompass the new Cleaner Neighbourhoods legislation and the recent review of the Rogers Report and enforcement priorities;
- (c) enforcement officers to be clearly identifiable;
- (d) a clear distinction between contract compliance and environmental enforcement roles; and
- (e) the involvement of other Directorates in the reporting of environmental problems.

4. Furthermore, paragraph 10 identifies the need for the Council to raise the profile of its environmental enforcement activities using the new powers made available to it through the recent Cleaner Neighbourhoods legislation.

5. Through the assimilation of existing Technical Officer posts and transfers from the Waste and Licensing Teams, the Neighbourhood Team has a compliment of a Team Manager and six Environment & Neighbourhood Officers. A key element of the Directorate restructure is for certain services to be delivered on a locality basis, using the current Area Plans Sub Committee areas as the model. Given the demographic makeup of the District, it is considered that for neighbourhood services to be delivered in this way, seven front line Environment & Neighbourhood Officers (ENOs) will be required providing two each for the east and west areas and three for the southern area. This proposal will require the addition of another ENO on the establishment making seven in total (*recommendation (1)(a)(iii)*).

6. It is clear that the public wish and indeed expect to see environmental problems dealt with as quickly as possible. A number of years ago the Council established special environmental budgets some of which was used to create an immediate reaction service dealing with small fly tips, cleansing of street furniture and the such like. It is proposed to recreate this approach through the development of a “Rapid Response Vehicle” which will be able to provide a similar or improved service in respect of issues such as:

- (a) small fly tips or small amounts of dumped rubbish;
- (b) cutting back of encroaching vegetation;
- (c) cleansing of street furniture;
- (d) graffiti removal; and
- (e) fly posting / illegal advertisement removal.

7. Through this approach it is intended that by dealing quickly with smaller scale environmental problems, residents will see a difference in how the District looks and

communities will be encouraged to keep their own areas clean. This should help to foster some additional “civic pride” and make the District both cleaner and greener (*recommendation (1)(a)(iv)*).

8. The Safer Communities Team has done exceptionally well with the current limited resources available to it. However, public expectation of the ability of the Council to react positively to issues such as crime and disorder and anti-social behaviour continues to grow as does the Government’s requirements for Councils to work closely with the other enforcement agencies in dealing with these matters. The existing officer team of three cannot meet the current workload, and if current and future demands are to be met then additional resources are required, with the need for two Anti-social Behaviour Investigators to be added to the establishment (*recommendation (1)(a)(ii)*).

9. There has been considerable growth in CCTV systems throughout the District. However, this has not taken place in a controlled way, resulting in a proliferation of private and public systems with no policy framework or resources to support them. The public see CCTV as an effective deterrent to anti-social behaviour and the Police rely on the evidence provided from CCTV images in support of their enforcement role. However, it is becoming clear that the existing uncontrolled implementation of CCTV is unable to provide the benefits from the investment with the key difficulties being:

- (i) a lack of maintenance resource resulting in cameras not being operational; and
- (ii) accessing the data for evidential purposes when required.

10. It is now essential that the Council formulates a formal CCTV policy and operational framework and adequately resources the maintenance of equipment. It is therefore proposed to add to the establishment a CCTV Operations Officer whose role will be to develop policies and operational procedures and to ensure that all the CCTV systems within the District are identified and properly co-ordinated (*recommendation (1)(a)(i)*).

11 Paragraphs 3 to 8 above have set out the principles and the staffing resources required to deliver the improved and new services and a revised Neighbourhoods structure chart is attached at Appendix 1. There are however additional resource requirements associated with taking the overall initiative forwards. These are:

- (a) officer training;
- (b) officer and service “branding”;
- (c) vehicle(s) and equipment; and
- (d) operational day-to-day costs.

12. If the Council is to undertake a wider enforcement role using the new legislation, officers will be required to undertake additional training to enable them to undertake their expanded role. Encams (formerly the Tidy Britain Group) provide a range of training especially for this type of activity and it is essential that the officers in the Neighbourhoods Team undertake the relevant courses. Furthermore, it is also important that officers required to undertake enforcement, including the appropriate use of fixed penalty notices, are accredited through the Essex Police Community Safety Accreditation Scheme.

13. If the Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative is to be successful it has to be visible to our residents and people coming to the District. The idea of formal uniformed wardens has been considered in the past by the Environment Scrutiny Panel and was rejected as being inappropriate for this District. However, there is merit in ensuring that officers undertaking these and related services are clearly seen to be undertaking those roles. In addition, it is a requirement of the Essex Police Accreditation Scheme that officers are clearly identifiable

through a less formal type of uniform. It is suggested that a way forward might be through the issue of marked protective clothing such as fleeces and reflective jackets. Any such proposal would need the approval of Essex Police. Whilst this is a change for some officers for many it is not, since some already wear protective clothing which is clearly marked with the EFDC logo and/or service name.

14. A key element of the initiative is the proposal for the Rapid Response Vehicle. This vehicle would be clearly marked and have a contact telephone number for residents to report environmental problems. The vehicle would require a range of equipment to enable the operative to undertake his/her role.

15. All of the above carry an on-going revenue cost to maintain service delivery. These include insurances, fuel, cleaning materials, protective equipment and so on. There will also be a need for year on year continued training and support (*recommendation (1)(b)*).

16. In addition to the above proposals it is necessary to continue with the development of the waste management service and in particular widening the scope of recycling services, looking at alternatives to sacks for garden waste and adding food waste to the materials collected as recyclables. These developments will be considered by the Waste Management Partnership Board, which will in turn make recommendations to Cabinet. In previous years the Government has made specific grant available to enable these service developments. This money was allocated through the Local Area Agreement processes. For 2008/09 onwards this money has been identified but incorporated within the general revenue support grant settlement. This is identified in the resources tables below as "Service Development" in the sum of £59,310 (*recommendation (1)(c)*).

Resource Details:

17. Details of the resources required to support the initiative are as follows:

(a) Staffing

Service area	Proposal	Cost
Neighbourhoods Team	Additional Environment & Neighbourhood Officer (G7)	£32,470
	Rapid Response Vehicle Crew (G5)	£23,670
Safer Communities Team	CCTV Operations Officer (G6)	£27,710
	2 X ASB Investigation Officers (G5)	£47,340
Total		£131,190

(b) Officer training

Service area	Proposal	Cost
Env & Neighbourhood Officers / Rapid Response	Police Community Safety Accreditation	£5,250
	Basic Encams Enforcement training	£5,000
	Chapter 8 Highways Safety training	£1,000
Safer Communities Team	Police Community Safety Accreditation	£1,500
	ASB Investigator Courses	£1,500
Total		£14,250

(c) Service "Branding"

Service area	Proposal	Cost
Env & Neighbourhood	Protective clothing etc	£6,000

Officers / Rapid Response		
Waste Management Team	Protective clothing etc	£4,500
Safer Communities Team	Protective clothing etc	£4,500
Total		£15,000

(d) Vehicles & equipment

Service area	Proposal	Cost
Neighbourhoods Team / Rapid response	Rapid Response Vehicle	£11,500
	Personal protective equipment	£200
	Tools and miscellaneous kit	£1,000
	Hand held computers + office SW	£10,000
	Graffiti removal equipment	£1,500
Total		£24,200

(e) On-going maintenance etc

Service area	Proposal	Cost
Neighbourhoods Team / Rapid response	On-going training	£5,000
	ICT	£1,000
	Branding	£1,000
	Rapid Response Vehicle	£7,500
	Equipment & maintenance	£5,000
Safer Communities	CCTV maintenance / replacement etc	£35,000
	Equipment & maintenance	£5,000
Waste Management	Service development (see note 1)	£59,310
Total		£118,810

18. The following tables take the above expenditure proposals and break them down into:

- (a) revenue District Development Fund (DDF) expenditure;
- (b) revenue Continuing Services Budget (CSB) expenditure; and
- (c) capital expenditure.

(a) Revenue District Development Fund

Service area	Proposal	Cost
Env & Neighbourhood Officers / Rapid Response	Police Community Safety Accreditation	£5,250
	Basic Encams Enforcement training	£5,000
	Chapter 8 Highways Safety training	£1,000
	Personal protective equipment	£200
	Tools and miscellaneous kit	£1,000
	Protective clothing	£6,000
Safer Communities Team	Police Community Safety Accreditation	£1,500
	Protective clothing etc	£4,500
	ASB Investigator Training	£1,500
	Total	£30,450

(b) Revenue Continuing Services Budget

Service area	Proposal	Cost
Neighbourhood Officers / Rapid Response	Additional Env & Neighbourhood Officer	£32,470
	Rapid Response Vehicle Crew	£23,670
	On-going training	£5,000
	ICT	£1,000
	Branding	£1,000
	Rapid Response Vehicle	£7,500
	Equipment & maintenance	£5,000
Safer Communities	CCTV Operations Officer (G6)	£27,710
	2 X ASB Investigation Officers (G5)	£47,340
	Equipment & maintenance	£5,000
	CCTV maintenance & replacement	£35,000
	Service Development (see paragraph 15 and note 1 below)	£59,310
	Total	£250,000

(c) Capital

Service area	Proposal	Cost
Env & Neighbourhood Officers / Rapid Response	Rapid Response Vehicle + livery etc	£11,500
	Graffiti removal equipment	£1,500
	Hand held computers etc	£10,000
	Total	£23,000

Note 1: The £59,310 allocated for waste management service development reflects the revenue allocation made available by Defra through the annual revenue support grant. In previous years this was allocated as a specific sum through the Local Area Agreement.

(d) Summaries

Revenue

DDF expenditure 2008/09	£30,450
CSB expenditure 2008/09 and onwards	£250,000
Total	£280,450

Capital

Capital expenditure 2008/09	£23,000
Total	£23,000

19. The above proposals can be funded from the overall savings arising from the second stage of the structural review but do not consider additional or supporting resources being available through Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership budgets.

Statement in Support of Recommended Action:

20. The proposals fully reflect Cabinet's wish to see the delivery of the Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative. Significant additional resources are proposed in order to ensure that the District's residents and visitors will see real differences in the way the district looks and that the Council is able to respond rapidly and effectively to environmental complaints and concerns. The proposals will also enable the Council to positively implement the additional powers provided by Government through its recent cleaner neighbourhoods legislation.

21. The principles and proposals set out are also take into account the recommendations of the Scrutiny Environment and Planning Standing Panel which looked into the Rogers Review (review of local authority enforcement priorities) and the options available to the Council for obtaining more effective environmental enforcement and the use of existing enforcement resources. The report of the Panel will be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on 31 January, with any recommendations being forwarded to the Cabinet for consideration at its meeting scheduled for 10 March 2008.

22. The resources required to deliver these proposals can be fully met through the savings made from the second stage of the Council's structural review thereby meeting Gershon requirements and enabling the reinvestment of some of those savings into improved frontline services.

23. If approved, the investment into this initiative is significant. It is therefore important that outcomes are carefully monitored and Members made aware of progress against key targets as well as assessing whether the investment into, for example, Police Community Support Officers is delivering the benefits expected. It is therefore suggested that Overview & Scrutiny Committee be invited to consider how this monitoring might best be undertaken, including extending of the terms of reference for the existing Standing Environment Panel or the creation of a new Standing Panel (*recommendation (3)*).

Other Options for Action:

24. Since this is a new initiative there are no alternatives suggested relating to the core principles set out. However, there are some options relating to the detailed service provision, including:

(a) negotiating with Sita (the Council's new Waste Service Provider) in respect of the provision of the Rapid Response Unit; and

(b) the provision of an additional officer as part of the Rapid Response Unit

25. There would be potential advantages in outsourcing the Rapid Response Unit, the most obvious one being the provision of cover for absences, annual leave etc. However, at this point in time, with the new contract still 'bedding in', it is considered that this option should be held in abeyance. Furthermore, with the prospective changes within the Council's Housing Maintenance Direct Services Organisation (DSO), it may be prudent to await the outcome of that process with the Rapid Response Unit potentially providing options to avoid redundancies and associated costs.

26. Similar considerations arise with regard to an additional Rapid Response Officer. Whilst this may be advantageous for the reasons set out above, there is a significant additional cost (in the region of £30,000 per annum) which could only be met through making further CSB growth available or by reducing the resources being applied to other areas, such as the Neighbourhood & Environment Team, the Safer Communities Team and/or the waste service development budget. It is therefore suggested at this time to go forward with the recommended resources but to review the options again prior to formal appointment processes to ensure that the Council obtains the best value outcome.

Consultation Undertaken:

27. This report is being provided to members of the Crime & Disorder Partnership. Views received will be provided at the meeting

Resource Implications:

Budget Provision: £250,000 CSB, £30,450 DDF and £23,000 capital (see report for details).

Personnel: 4 additional posts added to the establishment (see report for details).

Land: Nil.

Council Plan 2006-10/BVPP Reference: Green & Unique, Safer, cleaner, greener.

Relevant Statutory Powers: Environmental Protection and Cleaner Neighbourhoods legislation, Crime & Disorder Act 1998.

Background Papers: Cabinet report November 2007, report to Environment & Planning Scrutiny Standing Panel.

Environmental/Human Rights Act/Crime and Disorder Act Implications: The Safer, Cleaner and Greener initiative is intended to:

(a) enhance the environment through the speedier resolution of complaints and the appropriate use of a wide range of environmental enforcement powers; and

(b) to enable more effective working alongside a range of partners in dealing with antisocial behaviour and crime & disorder generally.

Thereby dealing with concerns raised by residents on a day-to-day basis and/or through public consultation exercises.

Key Decision Reference (if required): Key decision, as the expenditure threshold has been exceeded.