

Report to the Council

Subject: Community Wellbeing

Date: 19 February 2008

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ms S-A Stavrou

Item: 6(d)

Recommending:

That the report of the Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder be noted.

Winter Weather

The recent spate of winter weather has been the cause of some concern in relation to possible flooding issues and officers in emergency planning and land drainage sections have been monitoring the regular reports from the Meteorological Office and the Environment Agency to ensure that the Council was alerted as quickly as possible to potential problems in the District.

Between 11 January and 21 January, three flood watches (the lowest level of warning) were received in respect of the River Roding and the River Lee and its tributaries including Nazeing Brook. During this period the Council received six requests for sandbags. Of these requests for sandbags, two were considered to be valid immediate flooding concerns, requiring an emergency response.

The first was to Theydon Bois Primary School on 11 January, when one of their relocatable classrooms was at risk from surface water flooding following a period of heavy rain. The works Unit delivered approximately 20 sandbags from the Council's emergency planning stock within an hour of the request being received.

The second request was from a property in Matching Green that had flooded internally from an ordinary watercourse on 11 January. The duty Land Drainage Officer was initially alerted via the 24hour security control officers at 6 pm. After confirming the nature of the incident with the resident the Council's land drainage contractor was mobilised immediately to deliver 10 sandbags to mitigate against continued flooding.

All other requests for sandbags during the period were not deemed to require an emergency response. In these cases the enquirer was given the contact details of sandbag suppliers so they could prepare for the defence of their property against potential flooding.

Emergency Transport

I am pleased to announce that an agreement has been concluded with Voluntary Action Epping Forest for the Council to be able to utilise the community transport fleet of mini-buses at times of urgent need as part of its response to an incident that requires emergency transport.

The ability to call upon the fleet, on a 24 hour basis 365 days a year, will be a valuable addition to the resources available to the Council and is an important

demonstration of how partnership working with the voluntary sector can benefit the residents of the District

Limes Farm

The situation remains calm and the community is working with the Community Association and the Limes Farm Neighbourhood Action Panel (NAP). A Youth NAP has been started on the estate and this is a first for the Division. The Youth NAP has identified the opening of the Community Police Office on Friday and Saturday nights as the main priority. Funding is being sought from the District's CRDP to fund a third officer on a Friday night for nine weeks.

Buckhurst Hill Underpass

Following two serious crimes involving personal attacks and theft at the underpass, steps have been taken to ensure that all lighting is in service. Discussions have been opened with London Underground with regard to:

- (a) basic maintenance;
- (b) additional security measures; and
- (c) structural integrity.

CDRP Strategic Assessment

The Council is required to act as Lead Authority in the development of the annual assessment. This document considers a wide range of community safety issues and sets out an action plan for the CDRP for the next 12 months. The public perception questionnaire has been produced and has been circulated to all CDRP partners and to district, town & parish members for comment. The closing date for the return of the questionnaire was 15 February 2008. The Assessment document has to be published by April 2008.

Dispersal Orders

An application has been received from Essex Police for the renewal of the dispersal orders in Debden and Loughton.

Safer, Cleaner, Greener

A report was submitted to the February cabinet meeting setting out the initiative. This report needs to be read alongside the Cabinet reports on Directorate restructures. The Cabinet report also suggests that Overview and Scrutiny should monitor this initiative.