

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 22 April 2008

Subject: Community Wellbeing Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Ms S-A Stavrou

Item: 7(d)

Recommending:

That the report of the Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder be noted

(a) Safer Communities Issues

Overall, figures show that crime is going down in the Epping Forest District and detection rates are going up. The overall crime level has fallen by 10%, anti-social behaviour by 11% and detection rates have risen from 2004 figures by 28%.

Limes Farm

On Limes Farm the Special Action Group is working well through its three sub-groups; community engagement, environment and communications. Anti-social behaviour has dropped by 20% and complaints have reduced since November last. However, some of this downturn could be due to the weather. It is reported that criminal damage and graffiti on the estate has significantly reduced.

Buckhurst Hill Underpass

Meetings have taken place between EFDC, British Transport Police and LUL representatives regarding works to the underpass.

CDRPS Assessment

The Council is required to act as the Lead Authority in the development of the annual Crime & Disorder Partnership Assessment. The final document has to be published by April 2008. An Executive Summary is being prepared alongside a partnership plan and this will be available shortly.

Renewal of Dispersal Orders

Both dispersal orders were renewed from 1 March in a seamless transition to the two preceding orders. Both will remain in force until 1 August. These are the only two orders live in the District and this should ensure more rigorous policing.

Youth Council

An application for submission to the Youth Council is currently being completed in order to facilitate our interaction with the Youth Council and this is being processed as quickly as possible.

Neighbourhood Policing 'On The Buses'

A new Transport Action Group has been formed to work in partnership to address any anti-social behaviour or issues regarding transport. These measures have been taken to ensure travelling on public transport in the Epping Forest area remains a safe and enjoyable experience.

(b) National Concessionary Bus Pass Scheme

At the Cabinet Meeting of 12 November 2007 it was decided that the benefits to be provided to pass holders in the district should be as set out in the National Scheme. The National Scheme has a start time of 9.30am and does not include provision for companion passes. Since then, petitions have been made at the Council and to individual members to bring forward the start time to 9.00am and to include passes for companions. It was argued that adhering to the national guidelines disadvantaged many communities who suffered from restricted bus services and also those with the greatest mobility problems.

The original decision was subsequently reviewed and at the Cabinet Meeting on 14 April it was agreed:-

- (i) That the Council enter into negotiations with Essex County Council and bus operators to amend the start time of the concessionary bus pass scheme in the Epping Forest District from the statutory time of 9.30am to the earlier time of 9am; and
- (ii) That in addition to the statutory benefits of the National Scheme the Council further enhance the scheme by offering companion passes, although such passes will only be issued to applicants in receipt of the higher rate of the mobility element of Disability Living Allowance (or for those over 65 in receipt of attendance allowance).

Following on from this decision, negotiations have been undertaken successfully with Essex County Council, MCL and the operators and the change to 9am and the issuing of companion passes should now take effect from 1 May. This slight delay is necessary to enable operators to revise their instructions to drivers.

(c) Grant Aid

I am pleased to confirm that after the last Grant Aid allocation the remaining balance in this year's budget is £395. Applications are still being received and will be considered in the forthcoming year.

(d) Emergency Planning

The Pitt Review

The Cabinet, at their meeting on the 10 March, received a comprehensive report of the 15 recommendations and over 70 interim conclusions contained in The Pitt Review. The Council's response to these was agreed and this has been

communicated to the Pitt Review Team. We are now awaiting the final report by Sir Michael Pitt that is due to be published in June or July this year. I would remind members that Cabinet have agreed that any implications arising out of the final report will be referred to the Overview and Scrutiny Committee for consideration.