



Epping Forest District Council

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SAFER CLEANER GREENER



A Strategy for the Future



 **Epping Forest
District Council**

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INTRODUCTION

FORWARD FROM THE LEADER + PHOTO

INTRODUCTION FROM CE + PHOTO

WHAT IS SAFER CLEANER GREENER?

When you ask people what they want from their local Council they will say things like:

"We want our streets and open spaces to be clean and safe"

"We want to keep the trees and woodland that make our District special"

"We want to see less rubbish and litter"

"We want you to do something about anti-social behaviour"

"We want less graffiti"

"We want our district to be a safe place for ourselves and our children"

The standards of common living spaces we share with our fellow citizens, the places we visit & eat in and the places we go to enjoy ourselves, are indicators of how we view our district.

Quite simply what people want is:

"SAFER, CLEANER, GREENER."

WHY SAFER CLEANER GREENER?

STRATEGIC CONTEXT:

The Government is committed to action to make public spaces safer, cleaner and greener to enhance the quality of life in our neighbourhoods, towns and cities. It will do this by:

- Establishing an inter-departmental Ministerial team for improving coordination of policies and programmes across Government that will deliver safer, cleaner and greener public spaces for everyone;
- Ensuring that funding for these policies and programmes is in place and delivers the outcomes required against a rigorous system of performance measurement;
- Making the legislation fit for its purpose - balancing rights and responsibilities with the power to deliver and the possibility of redress;
- Making sure that public spaces are accessible to all members of our society, able and disabled, young and old.

"The quality of public spaces affects all of us wherever we live and work. Safe, well-maintained and attractive public spaces have a critical role in creating pride in the places where we live which, in turn, is essential to building community cohesion and successful communities."

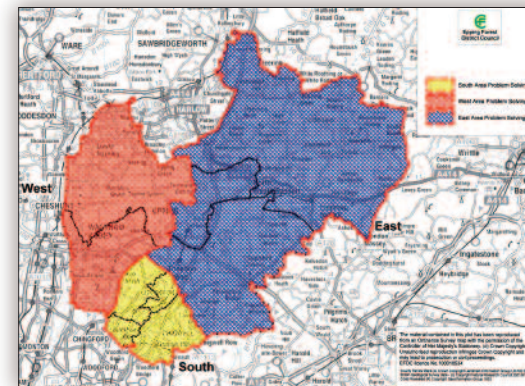
Living Spaces - Cleaner, Safer, Greener, 2002 - a report which sets out the Government's approach to making cleaner, safer, greener public spaces.

LOCAL CONTEXT

The Council has made it clear that it wants the Safer, Cleaner, Greener agenda taken forward as a priority. There are a number of initiatives which will enable this including:

- the provision of our Neighbourhoods Team with its own Team Manager;
- enabling our Environment and Neighbourhood Officers to take more enforcement action;
- making enforcement officers clearly identifiable;
- establishing a clear distinction between contract compliance and environmental enforcement roles;
- involving other Directorates in the reporting of environmental problems;
- the formulation of a Local Biodiversity Act Plan;
- the formulation of a Climate Change Strategy;
- the introduction of local tree strategies;
- Countrycare partnership projects;
- new food recycling service;
- Joining the SCG network with the County Council and other Essex districts.

A key element of the Directorate structure is for certain services to be delivered on a locality basis. Given the geography of the district, it was considered that for neighbourhood services to be delivered effectively, the district should be divided into three Area Problem Solving Groups – East, West and South.



Area Problem Solving Groups

POLICY

Safer: We will work with our partners to provide a safer district. We will tackle issues of anti social behaviour using early intervention and employing Anti-Social Behaviour Orders and Acceptable Behaviour Contracts where necessary.

We will provide education to our younger residents through our crucial crew and reality road show events.

Cleaner: We will continue to improve our green open areas and public spaces by dealing with environmental crimes such as fly tipping, graffiti, dog fouling and other types of anti-social behaviour.

We will achieve this through partnership working, education and enforcement. We will reduce the amount of waste found in the district by removing it ourselves or causing it to be removed as soon as possible.

Greener: We will ensure that a sustainable approach is taken in all our activities and encourage others to do the same. We will manage and deliver our services in an environmentally friendly way.

LOCAL CONTEXT

It is clear that the public wish and indeed expect to see environmental problems dealt with as quickly as possible.

Our "Environmental Response Unit" enables us to provide a service in respect of issues such as small fly tips, cutting back of encroaching vegetation, cleansing of street furniture, graffiti removal and fly posting / illegal advertisement removal.

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 helps to foster some additional "civic pride" and make the district both cleaner and greener.

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. Our two Anti-social Behaviour Investigators enable the Safer Communities Team to do this.

The Council has a new formal CCTV policy and operational framework which is already seeing success in assisting the Police deal with criminal activity.



Our CCTV Operations Officer whose role is to develop policies and operational procedures and to ensure that all the CCTV systems within the district are effective and properly co-ordinated, will do this.

Jointly funded CCTV surveillance van



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY SAFER?



One common thread, which runs through the safer agenda, is the fear of crime. Contrary to public opinion many crimes are decreasing in number.

What is it that makes our residents feel unsafe?



High on the list is anti social behaviour. Many people fear groups of youngsters on the streets, when in fact all they need is somewhere to go and socialise with their friends.

The increase in drug abuse and the rise in the culture of binge drinking linked with crime in general are also given as reasons for not feeling safe. We have listened to Central Government but have included other aspects of our enforcement role in the definition of "safer". We feel that to properly address the "safer" agenda a wider view is more appropriate.



Consequently our strategy has regard to our licensing function together our roles in ensuring health & safety and food safety.

Our Environment and Neighbourhood Officers are our front line in this area but we also encourage all our officers to be our "eyes and ears" on the district.



SAFER – NOW AND THE FUTURE

SAFER – NOW AND THE FUTURE



Epping Forest District Safer Communities Partnership (SCP) is a collaboration of organisations and groups working together to make Epping Forest District a safe and pleasant place to live. It forms part of the Epping Forest Local Strategic Partnership.

The Partnership is required by law to carry out an annual strategic assessment of crime and disorder in the District. The assessment enables the SCP and its partner agencies to execute various options for enforcement, early intervention, education, prevention, deterrence and public reassurance.

The assessment takes into account crime data from the police and other partner organisations. We also consulted with residents of Epping Forest, stakeholder organisations and community groups.



We identified our priorities by an examination of level of crime, including changes in those levels over time. We also took account of the concerns expressed by the community and partners.

Our baseline figures are taken from 2007 Home Office statistics. As a result we set our priorities for 2009/10 to reduce:

- robbery by 5%;
- domestic violence by 5%;
- hate crime by 12.5%;
- assaults by 5%;
- serious violent crime by 5%; and
- domestic burglary by 5%.

In addition we aim to reduce anti-social behaviour by 5% and to target substance misuse.



Partnership funded Smart cars

Police intelligence has revealed that known offenders carry out a large proportion of crime.

We will target our most prolific offenders (adults and young people) living within the District with the aim of stopping their criminal behaviour. This will have a positive impact on the crime rates in Epping Forest District.

We aim to target the fear and perception of crime. The fear of crime and disorder is disproportionate to the actual amount of crime in Epping Forest District and this has a negative impact on quality of life. Press releases will be issued to publish SCP achievements and details of good work being carried out in the District.

Our anti social behaviour investigators and CCTV operations officer will build on the past successes of the Safer Communities Team.

This will help us to target anti social behaviour more effectively and to consolidate our CCTV systems.



Safer Communities Team



It is essential that we engage young people in our agenda. We have already made contact with the Youth Council and we stage the annual crucial crew event for year 6's school pupils. We have already piloted on one Reality Roadshow event and we hope to offer more events to other schools in the district for Year 10 students.

SAFER – NOT ONLY BUT ALSO

There is more to “safer” than just crime and anti-social behaviour related matters.

Environmental Health staff keep you safer by undertaking routine food hygiene inspections of all local food businesses. We investigate complaints of dirty conditions, poor food handling practices and food poisoning.

We offer advice to traders and in some instances ensure works are carried out to raise the standards of the premises. In the most severe cases we will prosecute rogue traders in the Courts.

We also undertake a programme of food hygiene training aiming to raise standards by education.

Officers are also responsible for health and safety inspections in the majority of workplaces in the district. We undertake inspections to ensure reasonable standards are being maintained and that all all legal requirements are adhered to.



We undertake investigations of workplace accidents with a view not only to finding out what happened but also to preventing them happening again.

Safer also means maintaining the District’s flood alleviation schemes, providing a 24/7 emergency response service for dealing with flooding incidents, assisting residents of the district by providing sand bags, investigating the causes of flooding and taking enforcement action when required.



WHAT DO WE MEAN BY CLEANER?



Fly tipping is a modern day scourge.

It is dangerous, anti social and expensive to clear up (with the cost of clearance often falling to the innocent landowner). We encourage members of the public to supply us with information if they see fly tipping occur. In the last year we had over 1300 instances of fly tipping in the district.



Dog fouling can be hazardous to health and is generally offensive. Whilst the majority of dog owners are responsible a small number allow their dogs to foul our open spaces without clearing up the mess after them.



Over the years we have provided numerous bins in most of our open spaces for dog owners to use.

Fly posting is big business with posters being placed on empty shop windows, lampposts, other street furniture and bus shelters.

The Clean Neighbourhoods and Environment Act gives us powers to tackle this growing problem.

Graffiti, apart from being anti social, can be offensive especially if its intention is to enflame hatred. It is difficult and expensive to remove and because it affects the whole look of an area it encourages other types of anti social behaviour as well.



CLEANER NOW AND THE FUTURE

CLEANER NOW AND THE FUTURE



Environmental Response Unit

What can be done?

We are already working with our waste management contractor to raise the standards of cleanliness of our streets and our waste officers work to ensure that waste is disposed of correctly. We have a team of Environment and Neighbourhood Officers who will respond to many of the problems we encounter. These uniformed officers will be empowered to serve fixed penalty notices and will be a visible presence on our streets.



Using this approach they will see an improved and timely resolution to many of their complaints.

We have an environmental response unit, which will respond to the everyday problems that our residents tell us about such as small fly tips, graffiti, fly posting etc..



Graffiti cleaning contractor

We regularly employ a graffiti removal contractor to clean council controlled areas. However, if the graffiti is on private property we do not normally remove it unless it is of an extremely offensive nature.



Graffiti removal before and after



We are working in partnership with other agencies and businesses to achieve real results and improvements to our environment. Our partnership with Virgin Media to remove graffiti from their street cabinets is the first of what is hoped to be many such partnerships.

As part of the agreement Virgin Media supply the materials and pay the Council an amount per cabinet cleaned and we supply the labour. The money we receive is ploughed back into removing more graffiti from other areas.



GREEN AND SUSTAINABLE

In deciding what we can do to make the District greener we consider two separate but linked kinds of activities.

These are firstly actions to conserve and enhance the living environment; the trees, shrubs, grasses, herbs crops and water bodies which form the habitats on which everything else depends.

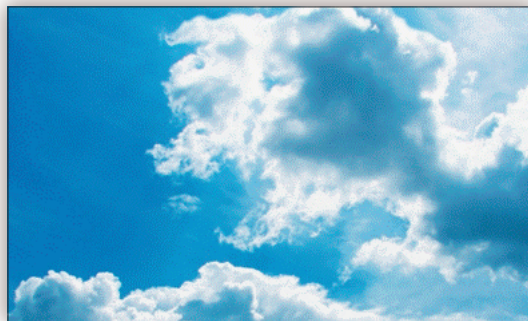
The second activity relates to sustainability, where we are thinking of the range of actions which we have to take to keep our world safe and healthy, for ourselves and future generations.

To face up to our responsibilities we are changing both our policy framework and the way we act.

A green and sustainable future depends on all of us making our own contributions. This, together with those of industry and government, can add up sufficiently to make a real and sustainable change in the impact that we have on our environment.

Climate change is, perhaps, the major issue of sustainability. The evidence of the importance of climate change as an issue and a threat to our future world being seems to be increasingly solid.

However, there are also other issues that we all have to solve including pollution of the land, water and air by chemicals, quite separately from global warming.



ACTION FOR BIODIVERSITY

Biodiversity, as well as being valuable for its own sake, can be seen as a core component of sustainable development, underpinning economic development, community well-being and local quality of life.

A rich and healthy natural environment contributes to the delivery of key services such as food production, provision of clean air and water and flood management and adds considerably to our sense of enjoyment and well-being.

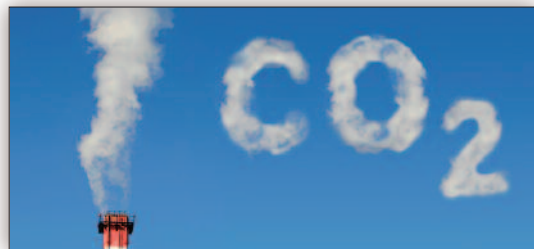
To make sure we take the most critical actions we have helped to produce the Epping Forest Biodiversity Action Plan, which gives a brief introduction to the biodiversity of the District and establishes a five year action plan

For many years we have been very careful to consider planning applications for their impact on nature conservation, landscape and trees. Damaging applications are refused, but where possible we ensure that changes are made and conditions imposed for protection and planting of trees, the conservation of habitat etc. We have also worked in partnership with local communities to produce, a series of four local tree strategies and action plans. Through Epping Forest Countrycare we undertake many community projects every year often in partnership with local organisations, planting hedges and improving local habitats for wildlife and plants.



In 2008 we published a revised version of our tree strategy, "Trees: Information, Objectives and Policies" to guide the Council's established work looking after its own trees as well as its planning responsibilities. This has now been linked to wider environmental action through the establishment of a Green Infrastructure Working Group.

As well as looking after street trees, trees on open spaces and a variety of small local nature reserves, we contribute to the management of the Roding Nature Reserve, together with the Essex Wildlife Trust.



SUSTAINABILITY

We already make an important contribution to a sustainable future through ensuring the construction of new dwellings that are more energy efficient, and improvements to the existing housing stock .

Our Building Regulations team are charged with bringing into practice the Government's policy of greener and more thermally efficient buildings, both domestic housing stock and commercial.

This policy reflects the commitments made in the Kyoto Protocol agreement of 1997 (legally binding in the UK in 2005).

As well as being a major contribution to cutting down on emissions of carbon dioxide into the atmosphere, action to cut energy use is also likely to lead to significant cost savings. Improving the energy efficiency of dwellings also help alleviate fuel poverty.



In October 2007 Epping Forest District Council signed the Nottingham Declaration on Climate Change.

The Declaration is a tool to secure commitment from UK Councils to tackle the causes and effects of climate change.

We have developed a climate change strategy that will be adopted in Spring 2009, which will help us fulfil this commitment and address the causes of effects of climate change in our District.



The first Green Festival first took place in Buckhurst Hill in September 2006, and it has since then been an annual event. The event is organised by the Council and Buckhurst Hill Town Centre Partnership and the local businesses in the area with the main objective being to promote a more environmentally friendly life style and the local businesses in the area. The number of people attending the event has increased every year making it a successful community event."

CLEAN NEIGHBOURHOODS AND ENVIRONMENT ACT - OUTLINE OF MEASURES

Crime & Disorder: Ensures that local Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnerships will take anti-social behaviour into account when producing strategies and gives local authorities new, more effective powers to deal with alleyways affected by anti-social behaviour.

Fixed Penalty Notices: Makes greater use of fixed penalties as an alternative to prosecution and gives parish councils the power to issue fixed penalties for litter, graffiti, fly posting and dog offences.

Fixed penalty notices can be issued for the following offences:

- Nuisance parking
- Abandoning a vehicle
- Dropping Litter
- Graffiti and fly-posting
- Failure to produce waste carrier's licence
- Failure to furnish waste transfer notes
- Offences in relation to waste receptacles

- Offences under Dog Control Orders
- Failure to nominate key holder (within an alarm notification area)
- Noise from dwellings
- Noise from licensed premises

Nuisance and Abandoned Vehicles: Gives local authorities the power to remove abandoned cars from the streets immediately and creates two new offences to help local authorities deal with nuisance parking.

Litter: Makes it an offence to drop litter anywhere, including private land and rivers, ponds and lakes and gives local authorities new powers. The Act strengthens existing powers for local authorities to require local businesses to help clear up their litter. It confirms that cigarette butts and discarded chewing gum are litter.

Graffiti and fly-posting: Extends removal notices to include fly-posting and improves local authorities' powers to tackle the sale of spray paints to children. It strengthens the legislation to make it harder for beneficiaries of fly posting to evade prosecution.

LEGAL FRAMEWORK

Waste: Amends provisions for dealing with fly-tipping. Gives local authorities the power to issue fixed penalty notices. Introduces a more effective system for stop, search and seizure of vehicles used in illegal waste disposal and enabling courts to require forfeiture of such vehicles.

Dogs: Replaces dog byelaws with a new, simplified system which will enable local authorities and parish councils to deal with fouling by dogs, ban dogs from designated areas, require dogs to be kept on a lead and restrict the number of dogs that can be walked by one person. Gives local authorities, rather than police, sole responsibility for stray dogs.

Noise: Added powers to reduce nuisance caused by noise by giving local authorities powers to deal with burglar alarms and impose fixed penalty fines on licensed premises that ignore warnings to reduce excessive noise levels.

Miscellaneous: Enables local authorities to recover the costs of dealing with abandoned shopping trolleys from their owner. Extends the list of statutory nuisances to include light pollution and nuisance from insects

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006: In Part 3 of the Act we have a duty to conserve bio-diversity, including conserving natural habitats. The duty is one for a Council as a whole; the Act says that we must bear the need to protect bio-diversity in mind as part of everything we do, providing that this does not actually prevent us fulfilling our other functions.

Town and Country Planning Act 1990: Under this Act we have a particular duty to look after trees in relation to planning decisions; we also have powers to make Tree Preservation Orders. More generally when carrying out our planning function we have specific policies designed to protect and enhance the natural environment."

The Building Act 1984, and Building Regulations 2000: The Building Act 1984, and associated regulations create the legal framework for Local Authorities to control the standards of building to improve safety, but increasingly to promote much more efficient use of energy."

HOW DO WE GET THERE?

We must work together to drive down crime.

From instances of minor anti-social behaviour to serious crime and disorder, we must raise awareness of the problems and have the means in place to effectively deal with them



Jointly funded CCTV surveillance van



Crucial Crew Event

We must educate our citizens starting with our young people.

We must try to instil a sense of civic pride in our district. As adults we must lead by example and not accept a lowering of standards.

We must strive to recycle more, use less energy and look for the more environmentally friendly choice.

How many of us could go that extra mile perhaps by using energy efficient bulbs or leaving the car at home once in a while. Safer, Cleaner, Greener and fitter!



Blue Box Recycling

STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

ACTION:

To ensure that all identified hot spot areas in the district are patrolled by environment and neighbourhood officers at least once a week

To launch the Neighbourhood team and “Environmental response line”

To organise and stage a crucial crew and a reality road show event each year

To develop a coherent CCTV policy for the district

To lead the safer communities partnership by engaging with our partners and attending partnership meetings

To ensure that all offensive and racist graffiti is removed within 48 hours of receipt of notification

To organise and stage “feeling good, feeling safe” events for older people to help prevent them from becoming victim of crime

To work with our partners to reduce:

robbery by 5%;

domestic violence by 5%;

hate crime by 12.5%;

assaults by 5%;

serious violent crime by 5%;

domestic burglary by 5%.

anti-social behaviour by 5%

To implement and monitor the actions in the Council’s draft Climate Change Strategy

To introduce fixed penalty notices as an enforcement tool

To implement and monitor the actions in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan

TARGET DATE:

November 2009

August 2009

Annual

July 2009

On going

June 2009

April - September 2009

March 2010

Annually

September 2009

Annually

STRATEGY ACTION PLAN

WHAT CHANGE WILL YOU SEE?

As a result of the formation of the Environment and Neighbourhoods team you will see uniformed officers out and about in the district.

People who are caught persistently fly tipping, dropping litter, fly posting etc will be issued with a fixed penalty notice.

The CCTV policy will ensure that our use of CCTV across the district is coordinated this will mean that we will get more value for money and our systems will be used more effectively. You will see an increased number of problems solved by the use of CCTV.

You will see our mobile response unit in your area. You will see many of the environmental problems you bring to our attention resolved quickly.

A STRATEGY FOR THE FUTURE

The Council is taking a strategic approach to the Safer, Cleaner, Greener agenda.

Street scene and related services are considered as key to the way the district is seen and perceived by its residents, working population and visitors and Members wished to see, amongst other things, the better co-ordination of all street scene related services and the integration of the existing enforcement activities with those available under new environmental legislation. The structure helps us to deliver these key principles.

Our approach to 'neighbourhoods' is key in the delivery of a "Safer, Cleaner & Greener" Epping Forest. Through these and future arrangements it will be possible for real improvements in street scene to be achieved and for problems to be rapidly identified and dealt with.

One of the frequent criticisms received from the public and elected Members is that they have difficulty in determining who they should be talking to when they need a matter of concern or complaint to be resolved. To overcome this within the Environment and Street Scene Directorate each Assistant Director has assumed responsibility for a defined geographical part of the district.

Our Council has a reputation for not using its enforcement powers excessively. However, it is clear that the public and central government expect us to react quickly and effectively to deal with issues and to take a firmer approach to the use of the powers it has available to it to achieve real and visible improvements.

Members have provided a lead by requiring officers to set up a Safer, Cleaner, Greener Scrutiny Standing Panel with a remit to closely examine the initiative.

AND FINALLY...

SAFER, CLEANER, GREENER STANDING SCRUTINY PANEL:

The Safer, Cleaner, Greener Standing Scrutiny Panel consists of a group of Councillors whose remit is to deal specifically with these issues.

This group meets regularly to discuss current issues and to provide a steer for officers. The minutes of these meetings and the action plan for the panel are available on our website.

Neighbourhood Locality Areas: As has been mentioned our district has been divided into three areas. In order to provide consistency each area has been assigned to an Assistant Director.

We would encourage people to go through the normal channels in the first instance, however, if you are experiencing difficulties please contact the appropriate Assistant Director.

East area: Qasim (Kim) Durrani
South area: Jim Nolan
West area: Laura Macneill

We would value your contribution. If you have any views or thoughts about this strategy or the Safer, Cleaner, Greener agenda in general, please share them with us using the form at the end of this document.

We have found that by working in partnership with other organisations and individuals helps to improve the quality of the work we do.

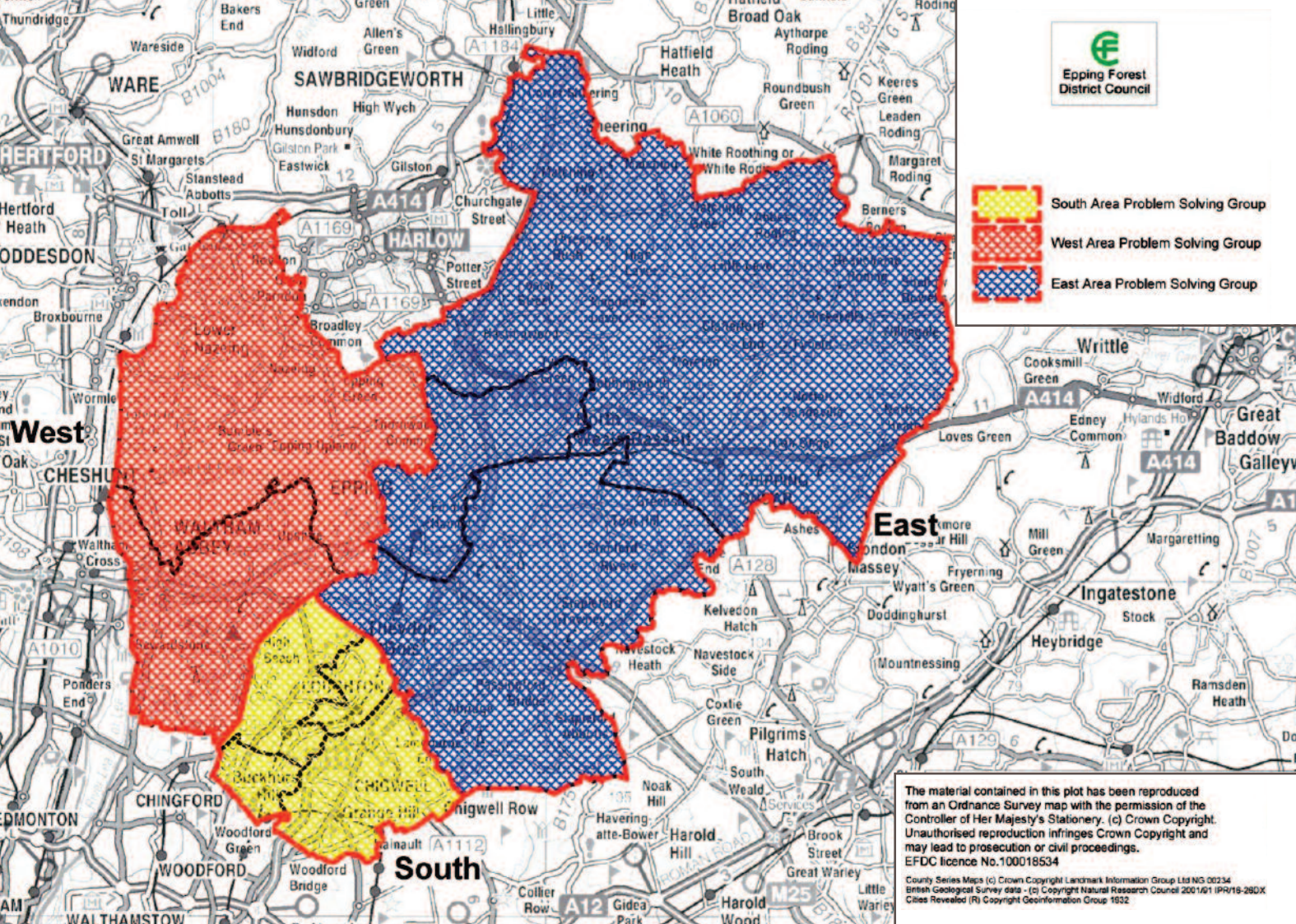
Please contact:

The Director of Environment and Street Scene, Epping Forest District Council, Civic Offices, High Street, Epping, CM16 4QF.

Telephone: 01992 564000

Email: contactus@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

If you wish to report a problem please use our dedicated environmental response line: 01992 564900



safer
cleaner
greener



Epping Forest District Council

CONTEXT OF THE STRATEGY

This strategy should be seen in the context of the many supporting documents which underpin it.

You may find it helpful to refer to:

- The Essex Local Area Agreement
- EFDC Community Plan
- Epping Forest District Community Strategy 2004 - 2021
- EFDC Best Value Performance Plan 2007-08
- Comprehensive Performance Assessment Improvement Plan 2006
- Environment and Street Scene Business Plan 2008-09
- Essex Joint Municipal Waste Management Strategy
- Epping Forest Crime and Drugs Strategy 2005-08
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan
- Epping Forest District Safer Communities Partnership Strategic Assessment

WHAT CAN I DO?

As citizens we all have a responsibility for our environment. Everyone can help by:

- actively setting an example;
- educating our children to be responsible for their actions;
- by example, making it socially unacceptable to drop litter or allow a dog to foul without clearing up after it;
- reporting incidents to the Council.

If you witness an incident please try to get as much information as possible. Information such as vehicle registration numbers, descriptions of person or dogs, time of day etc can be very useful in tracing the culprits. Having said this please do not put yourself in danger.

WHO SHOULD I CONTACT?

Please contact the Council. We have a dedicated response line for environmental problems:

01992 564900

Or you can write to us at: Epping Forest District Council
Environment and Street Scene, Civic Offices, High St,
Epping, CM16 4BZ

Or Email: contacts@eppingforestdc.gov.uk

HAVE YOUR SAY...

If you would like to comment on this strategy please complete this form and send it to the address on the back page.

Your comments:

Although it is not necessary, if you fill in your name and address we can provide you with feedback on your comments.

Thank you.

Name: Address:

..... Postcode:

Tel: Email: