

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 13 December 2011

Subject: Safer, Greener and Highways Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Penny Smith

Recommending:

That the report of the Safer, Greener and Highways Portfolio Holder be noted

Community Safety

Epping Forest Safer Communities Partnership organised a number of events to raise the profile of domestic violence during the week 21 to 25 November. These included the opening of a one stop shop in Loughton Broadway staffed by partner agencies with children's activities and information stands. On 25 November there was a small ceremony outside the Civic Offices to raise awareness of the seriousness of domestic violence and its consequences. Four doves were released to symbolise the four tragic deaths in Essex this year as a result of domestic violence.

Since the incidents of disorder in the summer, Essex Police, supported by EFDC Safer Communities Team, have carried out two planned operations in the Loughton Way area of Loughton to arrest those identified on Council public space CCTV. Four people have been arrested and bailed. A second operation around high visibility and increased patrols in the area was carried out to identify persistent nuisance behaviour and to provide reassurance to residents and shopkeepers. One young person has signed up to an Acceptable Behaviour Contract overseen by the Safer Communities Team. A site survey has been conducted to identify improvements in security required at the location.

The Broadway Loughton CCTV Regeneration Project is now going through the procurement process. The Safer Communities Team has now started the consultation process with local residents and details of the planned enhancements will on display at both Loughton and Debden Libraries for perusal.

The Safer Communities Team is hoping that there will be a partial installation of CCTV in Epping High Street before Christmas, and is working with the Epping Town Council and the Council's Facilities Team to achieve this.

Epping Forest Safer Communities Partnership Strategic Assessment for 2012-13 has been completed. Analysis has shown a reduction in overall crime of just over 4% which, in real terms, is 342 offences. In these difficult economic times we have seen increases in acquisitive crime (e.g. burglary, theft) although commercial burglary is bucking the trend and has fallen 2.5%. Anti-social behaviour has seen a significant decrease of over 12% from 4,561 to 3,896 recorded incidents, this being on top of a 7% reduction in the previous year. Overall, all this is a good outcome, demonstrating once again the benefits of partnership working.

Parking matters

The final traffic regulation order for the Epping Parking review was published on 6 October 2011. County Highways officers have since prepared final scheme designs for the signing and lining works and carried out site visits with the contractor. Final preparations are being carried out to commence

works on 16 January 2012. I am having regular meetings with County officers and will be providing regular progress reports to Members.

This Council has also recently published its off street parking traffic regulation order which was approved by Cabinet at its meeting in November this year. This too has a statutory consultation period and as soon as that period is over, officers will collate the responses for my consideration. Once I am content with the Order, the Director of Environment & Street Scene and the Director of Corporate Support Services have delegated authority to sign and seal the Order.

The PricewaterHouseCooper report on income optimisation generated a lot of local concern regarding their proposals to increase car parking charges and/or amend the way charges are applied. Cabinet, at its meeting on 5 December, will consider a recommendation from the Finance & Performance Management Cabinet Committee to maintain the current freeze on car parking charges, which has been in place for the past three years. I will report verbally on the outcome of that consideration.