

Report to the Council

Subject: Safer, Greener, Highways

Date: 6 November 2012

Portfolio Holder: Councillor G Waller

Recommending:

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

Safer Communities

We are now just over a week away from the election, on 15 November, of the first ever Police and Crime Commissioner for Essex. I hope that, despite the public showing only limited interest so far, there will be a satisfactory turnout, since this will be a very important role over the next three and a half years. All of the candidates have websites where their backgrounds are set out as well as, importantly, their views on community safety and their priorities for their term of office. I would urge councillors and members of the public to view the information on www.choosemypcc.org.uk and to cast their votes in this important election.

I have recently attended the second Safer Essex CSP workshop where the Reducing Re-offending and Domestic Abuse community budget business cases were discussed. These have been made available for comment and endorsement by Safer Essex partner organisations and were submitted to Whitehall at the end of October.

CCTV cameras installed in The Broadway have reaped dividends by enabling the Council to provide information to the police following recent incidents of disorder, resulting in arrests.

The Panel appointed to conduct the Domestic Homicide Review to which I referred in my last report held its first meeting on 1 October, when Mrs Ann Haigh was appointed to chair it. The next meeting of the Panel will take place on 12 November.

Highways and Parking

The new Local Highways Panel has now been established and its most recent meeting was on 1 November. The Panel consists of seven County and an equal number of District Members. I would remind Members that the Panel is led by the County Council although we are providing the necessary support. Members of the Panel have devoted much time and effort to consultations with town and parish councils to identify appropriate local schemes to take forward.

I attended meetings on 4 October 2012 of the Joint Working Committees for On and Off Street Parking of the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP). Members will be aware that responsibility for on and off street parking enforcement operations transferred from the District to NEPP on 1 October 2012. I can inform Members that the transfer went well and there are no issues with enforcement operations across the District.

I also attended the NEPP Joint Working Sub Committee for Traffic Regulation Orders on 18 October in Colchester. The Committee had a large number of schemes for

consideration - some 300 across the Partnership, and Epping Forest alone had 51 requests from residents for on street parking restrictions. I am pleased to say that all eight of the top scoring schemes put forward by the District were approved by the Committee, and NEPP officers will now carry out further feasibility work on these schemes. I have asked that the relevant ward Members are consulted before a public consultation on any scheme is carried out. I intend to take a report to Cabinet on 3 December, setting out the way in which requests for schemes from the District should be vetted and approved in the future.

I am pleased to say that the Epping Parking Review is essentially complete, that some minor correction works remain outstanding and these will be carried out shortly. Members from Buckhurst Hill are currently being consulted on the best way forward in implementing that Review and there will be another meeting with all ward Members shortly. I am hopeful that once the scope of the scheme is agreed, design work can commence.

I have also had meetings with Members from Loughton to discuss parking issues in general, including the Loughton Broadway Review.

Community Transport

There is concern that a shortage of volunteers may limit the number and range of services provided, and a recruitment campaign is being planned.

Further work remains to be carried out before Epping Forest Community Transport can achieve the independent status which has been its objective for some time.

Partnership working with Harlow Community Transport to fulfil the school contracts which began in September 2012 has operated successfully to date.

Countrycare

Two very successful environmental education sessions with local schools have recently taken place. The first of these, commissioned by Ongar Town Council and involving pupils from Chipping Ongar Primary School, saw them building bird boxes and learning about birds, before they visited Cripsey Brook Local Nature Reserve (LNR) to see the boxes installed. The second, with Braeside School in Buckhurst Hill, enabled the pupils to learn about the different types of habitat at Linder's Field LNR, as well as the management techniques employed. In both cases the pupils were very enthusiastic about what they had learned.

Countrycare has also started its programme of traditional hedgelaying at sites in Roding Valley Meadows LNR and Epping Upland Millennium Garden.