

## ***Report to the Council***

**Subject: Safer, Greener & Transport**

**Date: 30 July 2013**

**Portfolio Holder: Councillor Gary Waller**

---

### **Recommending:**

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

---

### **Safer Communities**

The Domestic Homicide Review of the death of Gillian Andrade in Loughton is now nearing completion. The Chairman, former District Councillor Mrs Ann Haigh, has now gathered all relevant information and, at the last meeting, members of the Review Panel met with an officer from Police Scotland (the new Scottish Police Service) to consider the issue of liaison between different forces. This is expected to be one of the key issues identified in the Panel's report, which will be submitted to the Home Office shortly.

Late June saw yet another extremely successful 'Crucial Crew' at Gilwell Park. This year, pupils in year 6 (aged 10/11) from all schools in the district including private schools, as well as home tutored children, attended, learning about matters such as home, water and road safety, interacting safely online, healthy eating and healthy relationships. In an excellent example of cross border service provision, we also invited children from a number of schools in Brentwood Borough, since they are no longer able to run these courses themselves. I would like to thank the Community Safety and Community Services Teams for all their hard work in organising the event and running it over a two week period.

In May this year the Council's Safer Communities Anti Social Behaviour (ASB) Investigators were informed by neighbourhood police of an ongoing situation involving a lady who is quadriplegic, living on the ground floor of her house, with a permanent live-in carer and no savings. She had been repeatedly targeted with low level ASB by youths who were using the thoroughfare at the front of her property to congregate and sit on her front garden wall. They were intimidating by their actions and occasionally would use some of the masonry from the wall as missiles to throw at the front of the house. The situation had continued for some time and, despite the best efforts of local police, the youths had not been deterred, leading to considerable distress on the part of the victim.

ASB Investigators carried out a visit to the victim and identified a suitable location for re-deployable CCTV. This was installed quickly by the Council's CCTV officers and brought an immediate cessation of anti-social behaviour. A further survey was carried out to identify a longer term solution and a plan formulated which involved obtaining some funding to remove part of the front wall and replace it with wooden palisade fencing, thus creating an undesirable - not to mention painful - place to sit. The fence was then reinforced with defensive planting. The work was carried out by the Council's Handyman service supported by the VAEF Safe & Sound Scheme. Additionally Mow and Grow will look after the garden. The victim has now had respite from the continuing ASB she was experiencing. This has been an excellent demonstration of EFDC & VAEF services working together to provide a long lasting solution to a problem that was otherwise likely to be a continuing drain on public resources.

We have received a petition from a number of anxious residents concerned about the adequacy of CCTV in the Limes Farm area. We will now pursue investigations into the matter and will report back, but two additional redeployable cameras have already been installed in response.

### **Highways and Parking**

Cabinet, at its meeting on 22 July, agreed to provide me with the authority to formulate a list of small highway and parking schemes which could be speedily nominated to the North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) for implementation. The list will comprise schemes that have been put forward for consideration by local communities and which have been technically assessed and ranked by officers from NEPP. I will then consult local district and town councillors to determine the local level of support for such schemes, and only those schemes where I consider local support exists will go forward for implementation. I intend that the list should include sufficient schemes to enable me to make nominations to NEPP throughout a 12 month period, this process ensuring that as and when NEPP resources become available, we will always be in a position to benefit by having agreed schemes available. I would add that as Traffic Regulation Orders will normally be required, there will still be a need for statutory public consultation to take place.

In my last report to Council in April, I mentioned the difficulties being experienced by visitors to Epping in finding a parking space due to pressure from commuter parking. I am pleased to say that I have since published a Portfolio Holder decision which will result in the Cottis Lane car park becoming wholly short stay, with a set of new tariffs. It will be a little while before we are able to implement this because of the need to review Traffic Regulation Orders, but I hope to minimise the delay before we see the changes implemented and Epping High Street shops and businesses benefiting.

Following a meeting arranged in mid-April, attended by Buckhurst Hill councillors and representatives of Essex Highways who are responsible for the implementation (including design and public consultation) of the Buckhurst Hill Parking Review, we have expressed our serious concern to the Director of Highways and Transportation at Essex County Council about the slow progress that has been made, delaying the public consultation that had been due to take place this month. Epping Forest District Council is at the forefront in using this new local authority procurement vehicle, and it is very disappointing that, although some preliminary designs have been prepared, no timeline for implementation is yet available. I would like to assure local Members that we shall do everything we can to bring the Review to fruition as soon as possible.

### **Crossrail 2**

Transport for London and Network Rail are presently consulting about two options for a future Crossrail scheme on a south-west north-east alignment, with an underground section in the centre of London (formerly known as the Chelsea - Hackney line).

With co-operation from the Portfolio Holders for Asset Management & Economic Development, and for Planning, I reported to the Planning Services Scrutiny Panel and the Overview and Scrutiny Committee, ensuring that information was included in the Council Bulletin, incorporating a copy of a presentation given at a meeting of the Enfield Essex Hertfordshire Border Liaison Group. I also attended an inaugural All-Party Parliamentary Group meeting at the House of Commons about the London Stansted Cambridge Consortium and Crossrail 2.

The Metro and Regional options included in the Crossrail 2 consultation no longer include the long safeguarded route making use of the Central Line to Epping. Many respondents have expressed support for the Regional option which follows the present West Anglia line at least as far as Cheshunt. Nevertheless, we remain concerned about the need for future investment in the Central Line, and for the Hainault Loop, not only within this District but also in neighbouring areas.

I shall look to update the Council about these important matters in due course.

### **Countrycare and Trees**

Work has been continuing in the Local Nature Reserves, with some interesting new species appearing. Roughtalleys Wood this year had the largest show of orchids in living memory, accompanied by Broadleaved Helleborine for the first time. In the same LNR, newts and dragonfly larvae were found in one of the newly restored ponds.

Ninety children from Chigwell Primary School spent three sessions creating a stag beetle habitat, planting wild flowers and building bee hibernation nests. Alderton Infants School had two sessions of building birdboxes from hand-made Countrycare flatpacks, with 60 pupils involved. Despite the use of full-size hammers, no serious injuries were reported, despite a great deal of noise! A 'Pondlife' session was held for 4-11 year olds at Nazeing Triangle LNR, involving a morning of pond dipping and species identification.

Another family event, 'Freshwater Forensics', took place over two days, a fortnight apart, in partnership with the Field Studies Council, to mark the 100<sup>th</sup> anniversary of the British Ecological Society, as part of their Festival of Ecology. Life below the waterline was compared in contrasting habitats of ponds and rivers, with children using the kick sampling technique to record what was found for the Open Air Laboratory (OPAL) survey. They also looked at how conservation groups are protecting the river banks from erosion, and had a go at it themselves.

The Council's tree wardens have started undertaking the OPAL survey into the health of trees in the District, co-ordinated by Imperial College London together with Forest Research and the Food and Environment Research Agency. By taking part in the national survey and submitting the results, the tree wardens are helping to discover more about the general health of our trees, as well as giving vital information about some of the pests and diseases that affect Oak, Ash and Horse Chestnut trees. Instruction from Countrycare was given on identifying other potential pests and diseases that could have a serious impact on local trees. A national survey of this kind has not been undertaken before, and it is likely that the trees surveyed by the tree wardens will not have been surveyed previously.