

Report to the Council

Subject: Community Wellbeing

Date: 28 June 2007

Portfolio Holder: Councillor Mrs S-A Stavrou

Item: 7 (d)

Recommending:

That the report of the Community Wellbeing Portfolio Holder be noted.

Graffiti

Demand for graffiti removal continues to increase. I have recently submitted a report to the Cabinet introducing a policy of limiting expenditure to removal of graffiti from the buildings etc for which the Council is responsible and any cases which occur elsewhere which are found to be particularly offensive in character.

This new policy is designed to allow the Council to manage the budget of £30,000 more effectively. Other agencies will have to assume responsibility for removal, something which has not always happened in the past. If the Council continues to try to remove graffiti wherever it occurs, the budget will very quickly be spent.

In previous years the budget has been overspent because of a well-intentioned desire to clear graffiti wherever it occurs. Steps are now being taken by the Crime & Disorder Reduction Partnership (CDRP) to deal with the question of prevention because I am convinced that spending ever increasing sums on removal will not get to the heart of the problem.

This is not the end of the story however as I am aware that Overview & Scrutiny is shortly to review the Government's "Cleaner and Greener Communities" initiative which will give the Council more opportunities of dealing with this problem.

Crucial Crew

This extremely successful event is due to be held over the fortnight of 11th and 18th June. Over 1350 pupils from 39 schools are attending this year's event, which this year is being held at Gilwell Park. Usually joint funded between the CDRP and the District Council, this year we have also received sponsorship from the Local Network Fund and local businesses. This will enable us to provide each child attending the event with a Junior Citizenship Handbook.

NAPS/JAGS

The Neighbourhood Action Panels are rolling out across the District. Joint Action Group meetings are now held fortnightly and notes from these meetings are available in the Members' Room. Acting Chief Inspector Ray is to provide a list of all forthcoming NAP meetings in the district.

Police Briefing Sheets

At a recent Police Community Consultative Group meeting some Councillors requested regular updates regarding crimes and public order incidents taking place within the District. A pilot regular information sheet will be circulated to all Councillors who wish to receive it via the Safer Communities Team. Due to data protection and other considerations these reports will be in broad terms only and will concentrate on major crime and disorder incidents. This scheme will be run for a few weeks and feedback from members would be appreciated.

Emergency Control Room

The Council now has a dedicated emergency control room at the Civic Offices that will be used as an initial co-ordination centre for any incident that may occur within the District.

Emergency Planning Officer – New Post

Following agreement for the post earlier this year, it has now been advertised. It is expected that interviews will take place early July with a view to an appointment being made for late summer/early autumn.

Pandemic Flu

As reported at a previous Council meeting, West Essex Primary Care Trust held a table top exercise on 14 May 2007 at which Council Officers attended. The exercise was designed to examine issues surrounding Pandemic Flu and was extremely valuable in terms of partnership working to understand how other agencies are preparing for this eventuality.

Staffing

Sarah Strong, the Safer Communities Assistant, is leaving at the end of this month and we will be arranging some temporary support until we appoint a permanent successor.