

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date 21 February 2019

Subject: Community & Partnerships Services Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor S. Kane

Recommending:

That the report of the Community & Partnerships Services Portfolio Holder be noted.

Environment & Neighbourhoods

Fly-tipping

To help promote compliance with waste duty of care, the Government has now introduced a new fixed penalty notice (FPN) to deal with household waste/fly-tipping offences. The aim of this law is to cut off the supply of waste that householders give to rogue traders, by requiring householders to check that the company they employ are an authorised waste carrier. This is a legal obligation on householders that previously could only be dealt with by prosecution or formal caution.

The FPN is now being used, with a default level of £200 and will be offered to most first time offenders, as a quick method of dealing with this offence, without any criminal record and court time. Investigating officers are often faced with an excuse that a householder (or business) did not record who they gave their waste to and therefore the fly-tipper cannot be traced. Guidance notes make it clear that if residents cannot demonstrate that who they gave their waste to was authorised i.e. at least provide their details as a starting point, it will be fair to assume they have failed in their duty of care. We have said before that “Your waste, is your responsibility”. This new FPN emphasises that is the case. The message is simple, householders must check, consider, record to protect themselves and reduce fly-tipping by rogue traders. Further information available at: www.gov.uk/government/publications/household-waste-duty-of-care-fixed-penalty-notice-guidance

“Wanted” poster:

“Wanted posters” showing CCTV images of individuals “carefully” fly-tipping various items near to a bin store in Springfields, Waltham Abbey, have had several successes. Two offenders have already paid FPN’s of £200 and two more suspects are due to be interviewed, with four more posters currently in place. This particular site has now been clear of fly-tipping for a longer period than usual and officers are hopeful that the combination of warning letters, signs, an article in Housing news, new “wanted” posters and fines, will finally result in a reduction in fly-tipping.

It remains to be seen if the outcome is a change in poor behaviour and a reduction in fly-tipping overall, or simply re-locating the tipping to another area. Colleagues in Housing are in the process of installing new more explicit signs across the district, in Council owned bin stores. Later in 2019, we intend to ask Members to review the penalty levels for fly-tipping and household waste duty of care offences, which are currently at default levels set by Government e.g. £200 compared with a maximum level of £400 that can be set by Members.

Community, Health & Wellbeing

Employee Wellbeing:

As part of the Corporate Employee Wellbeing Strategy, an online Employee Health and Wellbeing Survey is being made available to all staff, to complete in February. The survey will give staff the opportunity to have their say in the development of a new healthy lifestyles programme and results will be used to develop a programme of activities and events for the Council's employees over the next 12 months. The programme will also involve the recruitment of Workplace Health Champions across all directorates who will liaise with their colleagues to give all staff the opportunity to shape the programme.

Memory Yoga

New yoga sessions aimed at people living with Dementia have been developed and have commenced roll out in the district. Memory Yoga gives people with Alzheimer's the chance to release stress, relax and have fun. Carers are also welcome to these sessions. The sessions are available every Tuesday at Loughton Cricket Club from 10am -11.30am.

Nordic Walking

Funding has been secured from Active Essex to develop new Nordic Walking sessions. Nordic Walking was originally a summer training activity for cross-country skiers and is based on using specially designed walking poles in a way that harnesses the power of the upper body to propel participants forwards as they walk. It is now a recognised way to turn a walk into whole-body exercise and it can be done by anybody, anywhere. Nordic Walking is suitable for people of all ages and fitness levels, with classes ranging from gentle walks for people with health concerns, to workout walks, which are a great way to improve fitness, lose weight and tone the whole body. The new weekly walks are currently being planned and will commence in March on a Tuesday morning.

Community Workshops for Adults in 2019

A programme of monthly evening workshops for adults has been developed for 2019. The workshops are an excellent opportunity for people to learn new skills, reduce social isolation and have fun. Workshops this year will include; Food for Feet, truffle making, botanical leaf painting, BBQ fruit and vegetable garnishing art, fan making, crochet, bowl making, floral art, Victorian book art and soup making. All workshops will take place at the Hemnall Street office in Epping on a Tuesday evening.

Buckhurst Hill Social Inclusion Project, Community Crochet

Building upon the work of the Buckhurst Hill Social Isolation Project, a community crochet class has been established in the Monkham's Pub, Buckhurst Hill. The popular weekly session takes places on a Tuesday morning and people have the opportunity to learn how to crochet, gain more confidence and make new friends.

Cardiac Risk in the Young (CRY)

CRY is a charity that aims to raise awareness of cardiac issues in young people. The aim is to prevent young people from sudden cardiac death through awareness, screening and research and to also support affected families. Community & Partnerships staff are supporting Della Tudisca, a local bereaved mum from Buckhurst Hill, to secure funding to run a screening event in June at Grange Farm, Chigwell so that over 200 young people (aged range 14-35) may be screened for any potential cardiac risks.

Strength and Balance Project for Care Homes

A new project to improve mobility and increase older people's level of physical activity in residential care homes will shortly be delivered. The project is funded by Active Essex and 5 local care homes have expressed an interest in being part of the project to date. A qualified exercise instructor will visit each care home and deliver 7 weeks' of activity sessions to residents. Alongside this staff will train up Activity Co-ordinators based at the care home to be able to deliver safe and effective classes to their residents on a regular basis. This will include them attending a FABS course called 'Move it or Lose it' on 29th and 30th March. Activity cards will be developed as a resource for the care homes and will be distributed to Activity Co-ordinators to assist them planning their own sessions, therefore ensuring the long-term sustainability of the project.

Epping Forest Youth Council:

A resource called "WE R SAFE" is a "Street Survival Guide" for young people which has been developed by the Youth Council. The project involves the production of 5 short films, which will be available free on YouTube. The clips aim to:

- encourage young people to report safety issues by clearly explaining the mechanisms around how to report an incident or crime
- encourage young people to trust their instincts and not be afraid to run away from a situation or say "No". The films explain to young people what to do if they find themselves in a situation that they don't want to be in.

The project highlights how Epping Forest young people may contribute towards building a SAFER community, going to SAFER schools, living in a SAFER environment and feeling SAFER. Additionally, the Youth Council recognised during their Drugs Project research, that local young people continue to need information about where, and how, to access the plethora of activities available in the district. Consequently, the Youth Council is currently reviewing their Tube Map style activities guide and this will be re-launched shortly.

Grant Aid to voluntary organisations:

The Council's Grant Aid Scheme continues to support the local organisations that provide services for our residents. The last awards have now been allocated to groups for the current financial year and, in total 46 groups and countless residents will benefit from funding totally £83,450. All successful groups will be invited to attend a celebration event to thank them for their hard work within the district. This year's Grant Aid Celebration Event will be held on Friday 8th March 2019 from 1 – 2:30pm.

Museums, Heritage and Culture (MHC)

Snapping the Stiletto Exhibition

The museum's current exhibition 'Snapping the Stiletto' opened to the public on Saturday 12 January. The exhibition has been produced in partnership with Essex County Council and explores the history of Essex women over the last 100 years. Exhibits within the museum include a signed letter from Gandhi to Muriel Lester, a former resident of Loughton.

As part of the exhibition, the museum has organised and is hosting a charity auction on Thursday 7 March to raise money for Domestic Abuse Charity, Safer Places. The auction will include signed shoes from Actress Dame Helen Mirren and athlete Sally Gunnell OBE. A number of local businesses have been very supportive with their support for this event.

Museum Heritage & Culture Volunteers

During December and January MHCs volunteer contribution totalled 291 hours which equates to over £2,400 in kind support. Volunteers are involved in a range of roles including collections documentation and digitization, looking after visitors and work on the museum garden.

Redevelopment of Lowewood Museum

As part of our Service Level Agreement with Broxbourne Borough Council, MHC are working on a bid to the Heritage Lottery Funds' re-branded National Lottery Heritage Fund, for a re-development of Lowewood Museum. The bid will be a circa £2-2.5 million project focusing on a relocation of the museum to the nearby Spinning Wheel site (which used to be Hoddesdon's Open-Air Swimming Pool). Broxbourne Borough Council have committed over £200,000 funding for this, and a Stage 1 application to the Heritage Fund will be submitted later this year. Benefits for EFDC include an increased management fee to reflect our work on leading on the bid, along with greater commercial and community outcomes for the service.

Economic Development

Digital Innovation Programme & Superfast Broadband

The new Phase 4a Superfast Essex broadband project remains at an early planning Stage although it remains the target that that all proposed works will be completed by July 2020.

A conference report has been produced following the Digital Innovation Zone Smart Place Seminar, 'Future Proofing Garden Towns Through Digital', which captures content of the day and the outcomes of the workshops, which will feed into a Garden Town section of the DIZ Digital Innovation Strategy, which is approaching completion and publication for consultation.

Officers have recently been working with colleagues at Essex County Council on a multi-million-pound bid to the DCMS Local Full Fibre Network programme, to boost connectivity in areas across the DIZ from hubs based at GP surgeries. This bid has already successfully navigated the initial government assessment stages and has been developed in detail, for consideration by the DCMS investment panel.

Economic Development Strategy

A strategy consultation document is being produced which will be used by the Council to consult with stakeholders and local residents, around future priorities and focus of economic development work. This is the initial phase of the development of a full Economic Development Strategy for the district which will focus on 'Place', setting out what the council will do and also identifying the focus for work across partners and stakeholders, where much of the impetus for growth and prosperity locally is located. This will link directly to the Local Plan and will include partners from the business community, ECC, the Local Enterprise Partnerships, Further and Higher Education and government departments. The strategy will also set out the sort of actions and initiatives the council, with the support of its partners, can take to stimulate and enable growth that is sustainable, fits with the aspirations and choices of residents and delivers prosperity everyone can share.

Tourism

One of the key objectives from the recent tourism conference was the need to build stronger partnerships with other councils in the area to promote tourism. A new Cross Border Partnership subsequently met on the 24th of January, with members from East-Hertfordshire, Broxbourne, Uttlesford and Harlow councils. Several key actions emerged from this meeting, including the need to look at adopting a cross-border tourism strategy that addresses local

infrastructure, joint marketing and building partnerships and the creation of a sub group to this board, with the intention of building joint marketing approaches. It was agreed to share information between the areas around tourism assets and establish baseline economic data on the value of the tourism visitor economy in the areas in the partnership. Initial analysis shows that this value will be well in excess of £500 million.

Visitor numbers to the 'Visit Epping Forest' website have significantly exceeded KPIs set internally. The trends have been for major visitors to the website during the summer and during weekends.

On May 8th and 9th Waltham Abbey Food Fair will be reinstated, it was previously known as the Cucumber Festival which last ran in 2012. It is expected that there will be around 5000 visitors to the event each day and officers are working with Waltham Abbey Town Council and Partnership, as well as other organisations running the event to support logistical preparations.

Green Arc

Work continues to develop the green arc project in conjunction with colleagues from the City of London and other organisations. External consultancy support has been secured using Green Arc funds. Officers are in discussion with a number of other organisations such as GLA (Greater London Authority) and other councils to establish a cross border, cross sector partnership and a new steering board to lead the programme. This work is being led by Cllr Nigel Bedford.