

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 25 April 2017

Subject: Safer, Greener & Transport

Portfolio Holder: Councillor G Waller

Recommending:

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

Community Safety

High Sheriff of Essex Awards

The Council's excellent J9 Domestic Abuse training programme has been awarded a grant of £750 from the High Sheriff of Essex Fund to provide training for call centre staff at the Department of Work and Pensions national customer call centre in Basildon, to help identify and support victims of domestic abuse.

Lorna Rolfe, High Sheriff of Essex, together with Chairman of Essex County Council Councillor John Aldridge, presented Caroline Wiggins with the cheque at an evening dedicated to recognising the voluntary organisations and people that have made major contributions to reducing crime and increasing safety within communities, at a ceremony held at Hylands House in Chelmsford, when she was also presented with a special trophy for her contribution to Community Safety.

CCTV

As part of the Council's seven year CCTV Strategy, the CCTV team have recently completed a range of CCTV installations including full coverage of the Green Block at Limes Avenue, an Automated Number Plate Recognition system at the entrance to the Limes Farm estate and new car park CCTV systems in Traps Hill, Loughton and Lower Queen's Road, Buckhurst Hill.

Work that is nearing completion includes a system at North Weald playground in support of North Weald Mums Group, who raised all of the funding required themselves, and CCTV installations in three car parks (Quaker, Darby & Cornmill) in Waltham Abbey as part of the car park improvement scheme.

Other key work includes the development, design and quotation for improvements and enhancements to the Civic Offices CCTV system, including new CCTV to cover vulnerable external areas of the buildings, and work on the final design for the Epping High Street CCTV system, which is expected to be completed in May.

The Council now operates, maintains and manages 49 CCTV schemes across the district, has 629 cameras in operation and owns ten rapid deployment systems and three covert systems.

Over the last few months, CCTV has realized a range of successes, including the following:

- it helped arrest a male who had robbed an elderly lady in Debden and has subsequently received a custodial sentence;
it captured two males allegedly committing criminal damage, theft and assault at Stuarts Market shop in Debden, to be dealt with at Crown Court;
- it captured the jewellery robbery in High St, Epping (live scene information provided via Airwave radio by CCTV staff)
- theft from a motor vehicle in Cottis Lane car park; identification of person and vehicle details captured and passed to the police.
- fly-tipping captured on new CCTV system in Green Block.
- a number of insurance cases also dealt with.
- 67 recorded downloads in the first quarter of this year.

The team has recently completed a seven week covert operation within the district which has successfully captured criminal activity. Images have now been passed over to other enforcement teams and agencies to further an investigation.

Partnership working and hot-desking arrangements:

I am pleased to report that our hot-desking arrangements with police and other partners are working well. The Police Partnership Analyst, who was previously based full time in our Community Safety office, still regularly works there. Essex Police's Crime Prevention Tactical Advisor (CPTA) has settled in well and is using the facility on a regular, but not permanent basis. He is now collaborating with our Community Safety Team and the Police Headquarters Strategic Designing Out Crime Officer to assist the Communities Directorate to achieve the Secured by Design Gold Standard on new housing developments that are currently under construction across the district. Sites in Waltham Abbey have recently been inspected and are on course to achieve this standard. The CPTA will now take local responsibility for the oversight of future developments in Epping, North Weald and Stanford Rivers and is well placed to carry out this work, allowing him to resolve any issues that arise.

Regular networking is working very well between the Community Safety team and Essex Police, and we now have very well established links with the District Management Team through daily briefings and tasking call conferences. In addition, we have developed professional and effective working relationships with the Community Policing Team, Integrated Offender Management, Operation Raptor (Gangs Intervention Team) and the Intelligence Team. Further links have been forged with Operation Juno, which is a pro-active team tasked with arresting outstanding wanted domestic abuse offenders. I am encouraged that early indications suggest that there have been a number of notable arrests for this team, based on intelligence supplied by Community Safety.

Through the Community Safety team's regular police networking, it is becoming an initial point of contact and a focal hub for many police departments, ensuring intelligence and investigation demands are effectively serviced, and enabling the team to have a bigger picture of policing activity in the district. This has been achieved by putting time into building professional relationships, having appropriate information sharing protocols and promoting confidence among the police in the integrity of our team, as all are vetted to a high standard.

The Office of the Essex Police and Crime Commissioner has agreed to provide funding of up to £4,000 for video conferencing equipment to assist the Community Safety team at the Civic Offices. This equipment, including cameras and monitors, will enable the team to link in to meetings across the Essex Police estate, leading to a considerable increase in effectiveness.

Social Media

The Community Safety team is working on two social media groups – for the Community Safety Partnership and for CCTV - enabling it to engage with sections of the public that have not always been easy to reach in the past.

Safeguarding

There has been a significant increase in new safeguarding cases reported during March, rising to a figure more than double that for February. The team is finding that many more requests are being received to provide advice to staff and occasionally members.

The new system of reporting by the Council’s repairs staff is proving to be very effective and our contractors have been provided with 200 ‘Concern Cards’ for their use. Repair staff concerns are not always related to safeguarding, but where there are other issues recorded such as tenancy problems, animal welfare and also cannabis use, the Safeguarding team is able to act on the information provided.

EFDC Safeguarding Referrals – March 2017

Total number of ongoing live cases with the Safeguarding team for this period
..... **37**

Total number of new concerns received by the Safeguarding team for this period: 35

(NB. the statistics below only apply to new referrals received this month)

No. of children-only concerns (where children were victims):	7
No. of adult-only concerns (where adults were victims):	24
No. of concerns that involved both (adult and children were victims):	4
Total no. of children involved:.....	17
Total no. of adults involved:	32
No. of new cases referred to Essex Social Care:	12
No. of new cases referred to Police	0
Referral to Mental Health Service:	0
Referral to other external agencies (eg. Family Mosaic; CQC; GP)	0
Updates sent to agencies where victim/perpetrator already known/on-going: ...	1
Referred to MARAC:	1
Not referred (doesn’t meet threshold/not safeguarding at this time):	21

Categories:

Welfare concerns:	4	Physical Abuse:	0
Domestic Abuse:	6	Self Neglect/Hoarding:	8
Mental Health/Mental Capacity:	6	Homeless:	4
Neglect:	0	Substance Misuse:	1
Emotional/Psychological Abuse:	2	Exploitation/cuckooing:	0
Financial Abuse:	1	Child Sexual Exploitation:	0
Sexual Abuse:	0	Suicide/self-harm threats:	3
Modern Slavery/trafficking:	0	Other	0

Countrycare

Since my last report Countrycare has held some varied volunteer project days. Of the EFDC owned sites, time has been spent at Thornwood Common, Roughtallys Wood and Chigwell Row Wood. Regrettably the Thornwood Common day was simply to replant up an area with 150 trees that had been vandalised and the trees removed by someone with a chainsaw. At Norton Heath a very successful dead hedge was created along the boundary of the site which is both rustic and good for wildlife.

At Mutton Corner, a project continued to clear bramble for Essex County Council and liberate hornbeam coppices. Bluebells have already come up in the areas cleared in January. At Abbotts Drive a tunnel has been created through a thorny scrub area forming a circular path around the site, and more work will take place next winter to open up this site further. One day at this site was unfortunately cancelled on health and safety grounds due to high winds.

The dipping platform at Nazeing Triangle LNR was installed as part of the pond regeneration project. The next step is to plant up with native wildflowers around the edge of the pond, and this will be done with the help of volunteers in May.

All four members of the team took their chainsaw refresher course and passed with flying colours.

Energy Efficiency and Fuel Poverty

Home Energy Conservation Act

EFDC has completed its Home Energy Conservation Act (HECA) report for 2017. This is a bi-annual report to the Government to update what each local authority has been doing to reduce the energy usage in its housing stock. There is an action plan each authority puts together of ambitions for the next two years, plus an update of its previous actions. The reports are signed by the local authority's Chief Executive and submitted to the Secretary of State.

Since the 2015 report, the EFDC Housing team has managed to do the following:

- Replace 200 old gas heating systems with new efficient, A-rated boilers
- Ensure that none of our housing stock is in the lowest EPC (Energy Performance Certificate) band G, and only a handful of properties are in the F band
- Carry out ECO (Energy Company Obligation) work on 767 properties, putting in additional loft or cavity wall insulation, with some Government funding
- Install double glazing and upgrade doors to airtight uPVC in many properties
- Replace 142 inefficient electric storage heaters (for those not on the gas grid) with efficient renewable air-to-water systems in several properties.

Over the next two years the Council will continue to improve its housing stock in order to help residents who may be at risk of fuel poverty to keep their homes warm.

Green Corporate Working Party

The Working Party continues to operate across departments within EFDC. Some things from the commitments and actions plan include:

- A new round of Essex Energy Switch will start in May. This is a scheme to help local residents purchase lower-cost electricity through a county-wide auction. In our district

there are relatively low numbers who take this up each year. We will continue to promote the Switch, especially to those we feel would benefit.

- The roll out of smart meters across the country is gaining pace. EFDC are arranging training for the Private Sector Housing teams for any queries residents may have. The smart meters are being installed by individual energy companies, meaning that residents will have meters installed at different times depending on their company.

Parking

Off Street enforcement

I am pleased to inform Members that the mobilisation of the NSL Limited contract for enforcement and associated activities in the Council car parks was successful and the new service commenced from Saturday 1 April. I met with the Civil Enforcement Officers and NSL managers before the commencement of the service, and shall be updating members in due course about the performance of this very important contract.

Loughton Broadway Parking Review

The first phase of the review consists of addressing issues at eight locations that are experiencing severe parking problems, often due to inconsiderate commuter parking. Traffic Regulation Orders for the following were advertised on the 23rd March 2017: Oakwood Hill Road, Oakwood Hill Industrial Estate, Honeycroft, Lenthall Road, Rectory Lane, Chigwell Lane, Colson Road and Torrington Drive.

North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP)

Each member of NEPP can nominate three minor parking restriction schemes twice a year; additional resident parking schemes can be considered, subject to having majority resident support. At the most recent meeting of the Joint Committee on 30 March, I was able to nominate five schemes: Abridge Road, Theydon Bois, Stradbroke Grove/The Meadway, Buckhurst Hill, Tidys Lane, Epping, Stonnards Hill, Epping and Milton Street, Waltham Abbey.

Parking outside schools

The NEPP meeting on 30 March received an update from the South Essex Parking Partnership (SEPP) on their initiatives to deal with the inconsiderate and unsafe parking outside schools. They have undertaken a trial project called 3PR (3 Parking Rules), these being: Care, Consideration and Caution when parking in and around schools when dropping and picking up pupils. The scheme is still in a trial stage in the SEPP area, but I shall be watching it closely, and once the Committee decides to introduce such a scheme in the NEPP area, I will be keen to nominate a number of schools in the Epping Forest district.