

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 25 April 2019

Subject: Community & Partnerships Services Portfolio

Portfolio Holder: Councillor S. Kane

Recommending:

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

Community Resilience

Fly-tipping

Fly tipping continues to be prevalent across the district and two recent successes in prosecution demonstrate the difference in size and severity of these:

- Robert Walker of Bob's Skips, Basildon was fined £10,000, ordered to pay £8,300 towards the costs of the clean-up of the fly-tipped rubbish and £6,532 in costs.
- A fly tip of a mattress in Oakley Court, Hillyfields Loughton that was heard in court in early April (after 2 warrants out for arrest due to no show of person responsible), resulted in the perpetrator pleading guilty to the fly tip and receiving a fine of £320, costs of £600 and victim surcharge of £32 (Total £932).

Community Safety

Community Safety have recently completed a complex investigation which was originally submitted under ASB Case Review legislation involving anti-social behaviour, drug use and intimidation of residents occupying flats in Smarts Lane, Loughton. The investigation included enquiries with a local school and with their co-operation, eleven suspected perpetrators were identified and received warning letters from Community Safety which seems to have resolved the issue.

As part of cross border intelligence meetings chaired by the councils ASB Officer, an individual was identified who was strongly suspected of being involved in dwelling burglary in both Epping Forest and Redbridge. As a result, the councils Community Safety Team mounted an operation with Metropolitan police colleagues to try and locate the suspect. I am pleased to report that our team working on quick time information from Essex Police intelligence unit were able to track a suspect to a premises in Ilford. Working with a Metropolitan Police dog unit they searched the property and found the suspect hiding in a wardrobe. He was arrested and has subsequently been charged with a high value dwelling burglary in Chigwell. I believe this really shows the value of working with the Metropolitan Police on cross border issues. I also have to pay credit to the councils Community Safety Team as they instigated these meetings and remain the lead organisation in co-ordinating them.

CCTV

I am pleased to confirm that the CCTV on the new Single Occupancy PODS at Norway House is now commissioned and completed in good time for the letting of these new homes.

Two more car parks (Bakers Lane & Cottis Lane) upgrades have been completed as part of the car park improvement project and the team are currently assisting Ongar Town Council with the replacement and design of a new CCTV system to be monitored by EFDC and this

service will be charged for. Planning permission has been approved for Epping High St CCTV, so this project is moving forward now. I am pleased to report that CCTV installed at Waltham Abbey Leisure Centre and Hill House shops has been used quite extensively already, including for incidents of ASB where objects were thrown at a Police vehicle and to capture use of a Quad Bike in a pedestrianised area and vehicle damages in the car park.

Additional income has been raised due to the 50% increase in chargeable CCTV requests from insurance companies and we have retained our fees at £120 per review, which is in line (or above) fees charged by other local authorities.

CCTV has also been used as part of the wider Community Resilience agenda where a number of successful prosecutions and penalty fines were issued, related to fly-tipping and the dumping of waste.

Economic Development

Economic Strategy: Officers have been working with external partners to develop a strategy for 'place' that aims to future proof economic success and enable growth in sectors that are priorities for the district. A consultation document 'Nurturing Growth' has been drafted to promote discussion and comment on the key opportunities, challenges with regards to the local economy. It also addresses the steps that the council together with its partners could take to support appropriate growth. Officers are currently finalising this document. A consultation is then planned with a final strategy to be presented to Cabinet in June for approval.

Tourism and Visitor Board: The Visit Epping Forest (www.visiteppingforest.org) website is the main portal for visitor information, building awareness and advertising of destinations, attractions, services and events across the district. A review of the last 12 months data of the new and enhanced site has shown traffic up by 31% and a total of around 150,000 users. The content has grown substantially on the website with increased information in all areas plus additional editorial features. The 'What's On' section, listing events across the district from a wide variety of providers, remains one of the sites most accessed areas.

A cross-border tourism group has been established involving elected members and officers from Broxbourne, East Herts, Harlow, Uttlesford and Epping Forest. This group has commissioned value studies to gauge current tourism and visitor performance across the whole area. Using the standard Cambridge Model, this reveals income to the combined local economies of £880 million supporting over 15,000 jobs. £226 million of this is generated in the Epping Forest District, an increase of 7% on the previous year in a climate where other comparable areas have shown a decline in tourism-related income. However, partners are aware that our employment in this growing sector remains below the national average of 10% and are committed to working collectively to drive up performance. Partners have reached out to major private sector companies and are in discussions to secure two main sponsors for the programme going forward.

Green Arc: The Green Arc was an initiative to promote and coordinate investment in green infrastructure running from the Thames to Barnet. The One Partnership has recently taken over the project, a consultant to lead work, commissioned using funding inherited from the Arc, has been employed and steps are being taken to establishing a Steering Board to take work forward.

Community, Culture & Wellbeing

New Strength and Balance Project for Local Care Homes

Funding has been received from Active Essex to deliver a new project to improve mobility and increase older people's levels of physical activity in residential care homes. Five local care homes have signed up to the scheme to date, with more scheduled to come on board. Initial

sessions are delivered by the Council's qualified exercise instructor. Activity Coordinators based in the individual care homes then attend a 2-hour training session to enable them to deliver safe and effective classes to their residents on a regular basis. The care home staff all receive on-going mentoring and are provided with a range of resources to ensure the long-term sustainability of the project.

Senior Safety Day

Two of the Council's new Community Champions helped staff organise and promote a Senior Safety Day at St Giles Church, Nazeing in March. Over 50 senior residents attended and were reminded how to keep safe in and around their homes. Guest speakers from Essex County Fire & Rescue Service, Essex Police, Crime Stoppers and Neighbourhood Watch covered topics including; crime prevention, scams and fire safety. The event culminated with Arc Theatre Company performing a short piece which raised awareness of the various types of scams people may encounter, and gave older residents advice on how to avoid becoming a victim of these. Feedback from all participants was extremely positive. A further event is being planned for May and will take place in the Chigwell area.

Easter Holiday Programme

The Council's Easter Holiday Activity Programme provided a range of opportunities for children and young people to take part in including; multi-sport days in Epping and Loughton, Play in the Park sessions in partnership with local town and parish councils, a craft camp and Easter themed workshops. There were also a variety of activities on offer for children and young people with disabilities through the Council's Disability Inclusion Project including; Bounce & Swim, multi-sports, "Canal- ability" and Suntrap activity days.

Buckhurst Hill Social Isolation Project

A key finding from the Social Isolation research work in Buckhurst Hill was that residents wanted opportunities to meet new people through informal local activity sessions. As a result, a beginners yoga session has been set up at St James Church Hall in Buckhurst Hill, 6.30pm to 7.30pm every Wednesday. The first session took place at the beginning of April with 28 people attending. The session is open to all ages and abilities and is £5 per session.

Grant Aid

Grant Aid funding for 2018-2019 was fully allocated with a total of 37 groups receiving a share of the £83,450 available. A record 45 applications were received during the last financial year and this included 23 organisations applying for Grant Aid for the first time. Countless residents will benefit from the grants awarded, with successful groups supported to purchase items such as; sports, arts & crafts equipment, litter picking tools and safety resources, along with the provision of services, such as counselling. Successful groups were welcomed at the Grant Aid Celebration event in March, providing the opportunity to network and hear more about the excellent work delivered by community groups in the district.

Epping Forest Youth Council

The Youth Council's Drugs Project Report has been published and widely distributed to Members, MP's, Town and Parish Councils, the High Sherriff of Essex, the Essex Police & Fire Commissioner, Neighbourhood Action Panels, resident's associations, schools and youth groups. Feedback on this piece of work has been excellent.

On 6th March the Epping Forest Youth Council received a High Sheriff Award and £1,000 in recognition of its latest WeRSafe Project. This current project includes the production of a personal safety guide for local young people. Youth Councillors are producing a series of short YouTube personal safety films which will be launched on Monday 8 July at the Civic Offices. The launch event will include a preview of the films, a demonstration of the updated interactive on-line Epping Forest Youth Activities Map and a marketplace of stalls showcasing local youth groups and activities.

#Consequences Programme

The Community, Health & Wellbeing Team has delivered #Consequences sessions to all seven secondary schools in the district. #Consequences is a personal safety awareness programme for Year 9 pupils which addresses key issues such as; child sexual exploitation, County Lines and gangs. Council staff work in partnership with a specialist London-based youth organisation and theatre company to deliver a robust educational session which aims to highlight to young people the consequences of their decisions and actions and how to stay safe, well and resilient.

National Lottery Heritage Fund success

The Museum, Heritage & Culture Team has successfully secured £70,000 from the National Lottery Heritage Fund to support a project featuring the artist James Ward at Lowewood Museum. Ward lived in the Borough of Broxbourne for 30 years, and is widely recognised as the greatest animal artist of the nineteenth century. The project will include; work with local community groups, the production of an artist resources box to support victims of stroke and an exhibition at Lowewood Museum opening this September, showcasing works held at Lowewood along with loans from the Tate and Fitzwilliam Museum.

Museum re-location project progressing to Stage 1 Lottery Bid

A joint Expression of Interest submission from EFDC and Broxbourne Council to the National Lottery Heritage Fund to explore the relocation of Lowewood Museum has been met with approval. An invitation to develop a formal Stage 1 bid has been extended and work is underway in order to meet the deadline for submission by August with notification of further progression expected by the end of November.

Exhibitions and Museum Programmes

The recent “Snapping the Stiletto” exhibition at Epping Forest District Museum will conclude with a charity auction for local domestic abuse charity, Safer Places, on Friday 10 May. The auction will include signed shoes from Actress Dame Helen Mirren and athlete Sally Gunnell, OBE. The current exhibition at the District Museum is “Man on the Moon” marking the 50th anniversary of the first men to land on the moon.

During February and March Museum volunteers contributed 468 hours to the service which equated to over £3,900 of in-kind support. Volunteer work included; collections care, work on visitor welcome guides and garden enhancement work.

Education Programme

Talks on Museum collections and Walter Spradbery: Artist in War and Peace, were delivered to groups at Buckhurst Hill U3A, Roding Valley U3A, Buckhurst Hill Young Wives Club and the Western Front Association. During February and March, 729 pupils engaged with the programme of history and dance workshops. Pupils from Upshire Primary School continued working on an Arts Award Project, funded by the Royal Opera House Bridge. A new workshop for schools investigating the role of soldiers who served in nursing roles in the First World War was delivered for Burleigh Primary School in Waltham Cross.

Motiv8 Dance Show

Over 200 dancers performed to sold-out audiences at the annual youth dance showcase, Motiv8, on 25th and 26th March at New City College in Loughton. Marking the 10th consecutive year the show has been staged at the College, the evening was themed “Epping Forest – Our Natural Environment” and featured a diverse range of performances from children and young people aged 5 – 25 years old. As well as live performances, two films were shown. One focused on the Museum’s movement sessions for over 55s, highlighting how dance is for all ages and abilities. The other was produced as part of a recent event in the heart of Epping Forest, inspired by the life of local artist Walter Spradbery with dance pieces from Flux Dance Collective and Year 6 pupils from St John’s School Buckhurst Hill.