

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 21 December 2017

Subject: Safer, Greener and Transport

Portfolio Holder: Councillor S Kane

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

Community Safety

Anti-social Behaviour (ASB)

Our ASB Investigators continue to be in high demand and recently worked in conjunction with our local Community Policing Team in targeting a tenant in Sandford Avenue, Loughton. The officers had already secured a Closure Order on the property which permitted the tenant to remain on the premises. However, he continued to allow breaches of the order to take place. On one occasion police attended and arrested 2 males in breach of the order. One provided a reasonable excuse and was released, but the second person was charged and received a total of 12 weeks imprisonment. The male released was suspected to have close connections with drug suppliers and had a string of firearm convictions including possession of a 9mm handgun and sawn off shotgun. As a result further collaborative work was carried out between Community Safety, EFDC legal services and Community Policing Team.

Community Safety returned to court to seek an order to ban the tenant from his own property. Whilst at court the Community Policing Team raided the address and arrested the occupant for vehicle crime in the local area. Whilst the person was in custody, Chelmsford Magistrates Court granted the full order which banned the habitual occupier from his own property.

As a result of the tenant being in custody it allowed time for locks to be changed and when the tenant was charged with theft from motor vehicle offences, bail was refused, as he was considered as 'no fixed abode.' He was remanded in custody to a magistrates court where he pleaded guilty to theft from motor vehicles and motor vehicle interference. He received a suspended prison sentence.

Possession proceedings for the property took place on 28th November, where Edmonton County court granted forthwith possession on absolute grounds, brought about by the serious nature of anti-social behaviour evidenced. The tenant did not attend and the council was awarded costs of £451.00. The council have no duty to re-house the tenant on the grounds he will be considered intentionally homeless. The operation was monitored and recorded on council re-deployable CCTV and demonstrated a professional co-ordinated multi-agency approach to dealing with serious anti-social behaviour. This entire case took significant police and council resources to resolve and was done so using the full range of anti-social behaviour powers and utilising the very close working partnership that exists between council and police teams.

Update on Hillhouse ASB Case Reviews

In my last report, I mentioned the two ASB Case Reviews at Hillhouse, Waltham Abbey that we had instigated following the serious youth nuisance on the estate. I am pleased to report, that significant progress is being made and a design for access control for the flats above the shops, together with other recommendations for improvement on design, are now being considered. I can also report that our Community Safety Team is working with all stakeholders on the Leisure Centre construction project at Hillhouse and have held constructive meetings around designing out crime. As a result the design is being slightly amended to accommodate those recommendations and to allow additional public space CCTV to be incorporated in the final building.

Domestic Abuse and Violence

The Community Safety Team work in conjunction with our volunteer/active citizen to offer referral pathways for Safer Places, Housing, police and other agencies for victims of crime, domestic abuse and violence. Work undertaken includes carrying out security surveys for vulnerable residents who may be victims of crime but don't meet the high-risk criteria for active intervention. Usually the victims will be medium risk and a full security and risk management survey is carried out on their homes and some cost effective upgrades provided. This is supported by our HomeSafe scheme which is managed by the council's Care team. The Community Safety Team also support the police with visits to high-risk victims and provide the same level of service.

CCTV

Our CCTV supplier RVTV is currently undertaking the 6 x month servicing of the Council's CCTV equipment, which is 80% complete and all systems are currently operational.

We have reviewed the amount of downloads that have been made and provided to the police, insurance companies and for our own use over the current year and these already amount to more than in 2016/17, with 340 lots of footage downloaded at 30/11/17.

Examples of where the Council's CCTV footage has been critical to supporting the work of the police includes CCTV images provided in respect of the recent armed robbery at Nat West in Epping and snapshot images of youths causing serious ASB during the Halloween 'operation pumpkin' night. In addition these images have been submitted to a local school and Epping Forest College. A further important download was handed to the police in regard to an alleged Rape in Bakers Lane, Epping, where our CCTV tracked the victim and suspect from club 195 to the car park over three camera systems. This Police investigation continues.

CCTV Projects

EFDC Pay Car Parks: I am pleased to advise, that Cornmill & Darby Drive Car Park CCTV systems are being installed at present, along with new and improved lighting. Both car parks should be completed by mid-December.

Hill House, Waltham Abbey: The external CCTV design for our new leisure complex is underway.

High Street, Epping: We are at the planning application stage, for 3 new CCTV columns to be erected, in order to extend coverage of the High Street and to fill several coverage gaps in between the Civic Offices and Tesco's.

Norway House, North Weald: A new 3 phase CCTV system is currently being planned and designed, which will include upgraded coverage of the original building, plus external chalets and the new single occupancy pods that are planned for next year.

Civic Building, Epping: CCTV is currently being upgraded throughout the building including a new control centre (within the Superintendents Office). There will also be an additional 10 external cameras to cover a number of vulnerable areas, for security purposes. This work is expected to be completed by Christmas.

Mobile CCTV: Our re-deployable camera systems have been used to assist in the enforcement of property orders at Sandford Avenue and Barrington Close, Loughton.

Partnership Working:

Our CCTV team are currently providing consultation support to Epping Town Council, Uttlesford District Council, Ongar Town Council and Genesis Housing Assoc with various CCTV matters.

Safeguarding

We are continuing to identify an extremely high level of safeguarding cases in the district, with **45** new cases this month involving; 7 Children, 22 Adults and 16 children and adults involved. From these, 16 referrals were made to social care; 2 to the Police and 3 to partner agencies. We also made 1 enquiry and 1 professional challenge to children and adult's social care. In total since January 2017, the Council has identified/received 355 safeguarding concerns.

To give Council an idea of the types of cases we are dealing with, I have listed some examples below;

- Allegation from Mother that her child's Father abducted their son; later, Mother accused him of raping her. Required liaising with two housing teams; the Police and social care. New issues to do with this case required attention almost daily for two weeks.
- Housing raised concern about a Council tenant known as a hoarder, who'd been arrested for making threats to a male and female) and carrying a blade in public. He'd also taken a blade to his doctor's surgery. Police confirmed this, so safeguarding immediately told housing repairs and assets, and two external contractors (Gracelands and Your Living Room) to not go to the property until further notice. They also informed his female Mental Health Worker (who had never met him and was going to do a lone visit that week) about the issues, and his social worker. He was eventually given a suspended sentence. This highlighted the importance of inter-agency info sharing to keep everyone safe.
- A tenant who kept going to the housing office appearing confused and was at risk of losing his home (rent arrears) was referred to social care a year ago. It transpired he was an alcoholic and this year, he has been a victim of mate crime ie. local drug addicts moved in and sold his white goods. Safeguarding worked with Housing, Sheltered Housing, ASB Team, local PCSO, Family Mosaic and Social Care to provide support over several months, even putting up a camera. Recently another drug addict moved in after we evicted him from a council home. Unfortunately, he has capacity and doesn't want help removing the new addicts so there's nothing more we can do.

Safeguarding Training:

Member training was delivered November and it is hoped to provide an additional training session for Members in Spring 2018.

Countrycare

I am pleased to report that Countrycare and several other Council departments have come together to plan a new community project. The project will hopefully involve local residents and school children in the launch and ongoing management of a new green space by St Johns Secondary school in Epping. The space will include a learning area made from natural products harvested from nature reserves, a wildflower area and a small woodland. Environmental education and activities will be organised to engage with the school children.

A member of the Countrycare team gave a presentation to North Weald Bassett Rural Preservation Society about the work Countrycare has undertaken on the local sites. Officers ran the latest tree warden meeting on 11th October with 13 Tree Wardens in attendance. Topics discussed included the recent East Anglian Tree Wardens' forum, the launch of the Tree Charter and our contribution to it, future tree planting within the district and the value of trees.

Countrycare officers attended a Fire Extinguisher training refresher and one officer attended a non-native invasive species course to benefit from the latest best practice for removal of these species.

October also saw the launch of Countrycare's Best Practice Guidelines for Volunteers to further improve safety on site. This includes tips on how to efficiently and safely manage bonfires and small tree felling.

Volunteer days on Thursdays have been continuing with project days in Epping (Swaine's Green), Waltham Abbey (Old Shire Lane and Abbots Drive), Ongar (Springs Pond Wood), Buckhurst Hill (Linder's Field) and North Weald (Roughtalley's Wood).

The hedgelaying season is now in full swing. Over 1000 stakes and binders were harvested at Belhus Chase for projects throughout the District and two days have been spent hedgelaying in North Weald at Weald Common Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Church Lane LNR.

Since the last report Countrycare has begun event planning for next year including some partnership events with the Burial Park in North Weald.

Parking

Additional off street parking in Loughton Broadway

I reported last time that additional pay and display car parking spaces had been created in the Loughton Broadway area. Officers are working on proposals to submit planning application next year to create more parking spaces by demolishing a walled area and some garages in Vere Road which will create approximately another 30 spaces.

Local Members and the Loughton Broadway traders have expressed concerns over commuter and worker parking and the impact this maybe having on the small businesses. I am keen to address this urgently and in order to make an informed decision the Council commissioned an external consultancy firm to carry out surveys on The Broadway Car Parks. Once their report is received officers will be able to make recommendations for further action.

Loughton Broadway Parking Review

Phase 1 of the Parking Review, while resolving some parking issues has resulted in displacement of commuter and all day parking elsewhere. It has been agreed with Members that once the car park usage survey mentioned above has been received a meeting will be held with relevant Members to plan for Phase 2.

North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP)

At the most recent Joint Committee meeting of NEPP on 23 November the following schemes were approved.

Parking Restriction Schemes:

- 1) Cleall Avenue, Waltham Abbey;
- 2) High Road, Buckhurst Hill (consideration of school Zig Zap instead of DYL); and
- 3) Albion Hill, Loughton.

Resident Parking Schemes:

- 1) Ivy Chimneys Road, Epping;
- 2) Lincolnsfield, Epping;
- 3) Lower Swaines, Epping;
- 4) Market Place, Abridge; and
- 5) Algers Mead/Algers Close, Loughton.

I would like to remind Members that there are further processes before a scheme can be implemented: further site surveys, preparing preliminary designs for consultation etc. The process, owing to the statutory requirements and resource pressures, schemes have to be fully funded by NEPP, could take up to 18 months.

Car Parking Strategy update

As part of the Car Parking Strategy the Council agreed significant investment to improve its car parks and associated infrastructure. I am pleased to inform Members about the following works:

- 1) Traps Hill Car Park, Loughton, New CCTV and LED Completed;
 - 2) The Pleasance Car Park Ongar, CCTV installed awaiting LED Lighting;
 - 3) Basons Lane Car Park, Ongar, CCTV installed awaiting LED lighting;
 - 4) Queens Road Lower, Buckhurst Hill, CCTV systems upgraded;
 - 5) Darby Drive Waltham Abbey new CCTV and LED Lighting currently being installed;
- and
- 6) Cornmill Car Park Waltham Abbey CCTV and LED lighting being installed.

Festive Market Changes:

The Council is mindful of the needs of local shops and small businesses at this time of the year. To facilitate Town and Parish Councils and local business the following has been agreed:

Friday 24th November, Ongar Christmas Market – Parking was free in the Council Car Park in Pleasance Lane.

Friday 1st December:

- Queens Road Upper Car Park Buckhurst Hill – the car park was free
- Cottis Lane Car Park, Epping - the car park was free after 12:00 noon for the Epping Christmas Fayre
- Vere Road Car Park – the car park was free after 12:00 noon for Broadway Christmas Market.

Saturday and Sunday Enforcement in December:

In keeping with previous years the Council has made all the car parks free of charge on every Saturday and Sunday in December.

Although the car parks are free the Council's enforcement contractor will enforce for safety for example: out of bay parking or parking in in disabled bays without a badge