

Report to the Council

Committee: Cabinet

Date: 1 November 2016

Subject: Safer, Greener and Transport

Portfolio Holder: Councillor G Waller

Recommending:

That the report of the Safer, greener and Transport Portfolio Holder be noted.

Community Safety and Safeguarding

Attendance by Essex Police District Commander for Brentwood and Epping Forest at the next Communities Select Committee Meeting

At its next meeting on 8 November 2016, taking place at 7.00 pm in the Council Chamber, the Communities Select Committee will be receiving a presentation from Essex Police District Commander for Brentwood and Epping Forest, Chief Inspector Denise Morrissey, on the policing of the Epping Forest District and current local policing issues and concerns.

Following the presentation, members will have an opportunity to ask the District Commander questions about policing the District. At its last meeting, members of the Select Committee agreed the areas and issues that they would like to discuss with the District Commander. As requested by the Committee, CI Morrissey has been given advance notice of the matters that the Committee wishes to discuss, in order to give her sufficient time to prepare her responses and to therefore make the discussion and any possible outcomes useful and meaningful.

At the same meeting, the Select Committee will also be considering and discussing the Epping Forest District Community Safety Partnership's Annual Report.

I know that the Chairman of the Select Committee has extended an invitation to all members with an interest in policing in the District to attend the Select Committee meeting, and I encourage them to do so.

Safeguarding

Our Safeguarding team had an extremely busy September, with a further increase in the number of concerns identified across the Council. Many of these were complex in nature, requiring a significant amount of time in liaison with internal colleagues as well as Social Care and Mental Health workers.

A particular increase has been seen in the number of cases relating to 'cuckooing' involving drugs. This is where perpetrators prey on vulnerable adults and often use coercive tactics to obtain access to their homes, where they take up residence to carry out drug dealing and other criminal activity. In most cases, cuckooing is identified through anti-social behaviour complaints, where neighbours report issues of noise and disturbance late at night and frequent visits to a property.

There has also been a significant increase in hoarding cases, several of which have been Council tenants, as opposed to owner occupiers or people living in private rented

accommodation. Staff have found the recently adopted Southend, Essex and Thurrock (SET) Multi Agency Hoarding Guidance Assessment tools helpful in grading the level of problems uncovered and this has helped the team secure support from Essex Social Care, including payment for cleaning and clearance of properties.

Cases relating to poor mental health are also on the increase and a pilot mental health training session led by Essex MIND was provided for staff in October, to see whether this would be helpful for all Council staff who deal with these issues on a daily basis.

We have found that recently it has been necessary actively to challenge social workers dealing with some of our local safeguarding cases; this has included an issue regarding decisions taken for an elderly lady with dementia, who was deemed to have 'capacity', when it was identified by several of our staff that this was not the case. Following the challenge, Essex County Council agreed to host a professionals' meeting, at which, a consensus was reached that the lady did not have mental capacity and would need to have a Deprivation of Liberty Standards assessment undertaken.

A further challenge was successful in respect of the need to re-open a child neglect case. However, this took several months of sustained pressure from the Safeguarding team.

Sadly, we have found that there appears to be an increase in alcohol misuse amongst our older population, which is often mistaken for dementia/mental health problems and can be time consuming and difficult to address. Isolation and resultant depression can be a key factor in alcohol misuse amongst the elderly and there are significant gaps in service provision to support people in these circumstances. It is hoped that the Council's Action Plan from the Impact of Ageing Population Study, will go some way to addressing these local issues.

On a positive note, the introduction of a new safeguarding system for the Council's repairs teams has been very successful. All teams now undertake a 'Tool Box' training session (provided in-house), which is a mini-safeguarding overview, focussing on issues such as hoarding, neglect and domestic abuse. If staff witness anything that they are worried about whilst working in a tenant's property, they will complete a report card and refer this to their line manager, who will undertake a work inspection visit, which provides an opportunity to assess whether a concern needs to be formally reported.

This new process has given repairs staff the confidence to report concerns, whereas previously they were worried about repercussions.

Safeguarding statistics for September 2016.

Total no. of concerns received by the Safeguarding team for this period:35

No. of children-only concerns (where children were victims):10

No. of adult-only concerns (where adults were victims):22

No. of concerns that involved both (adult and children were victims): 3

Total no. of children involved:25

Total no. of adults involved:25

No. of new cases referred to Essex Social Care:15

No. of new cases referred to Police 0

No. of multi-agency referrals made (eg. to Police and Essex Social Care): 0

Updates (sent to agencies where victim/perp already known/on-going):	2
Referral to Mental Health Service:	0
Referred to MARAC:	1
Referral to other external agencies (eg. Family Mosaic; CQC; GP)	2
Not referred (doesn't meet threshold/not safeguarding):	15

Categories

Welfare concerns:	4	Physical Abuse:	0
Domestic Abuse:	6	Self Neglect/Hoarding:	7
Mental Health/Mental Capacity:	6	Homeless:	3
Neglect:	3	Substance Misuse:	1
Emotional/Psychological Abuse:	0	Exploitation/cuckooing:	3
Financial Abuse:	1	CSE:	0
Sexual Abuse:	0	Organisational:	1
Modern Slavery/trafficking:	0	Noise	2

CCTV

A wide range of CCTV work has been undertaken across the district, including new installations and repairs, as forecast within the CCTV Strategy presented to Cabinet earlier in the year. The following provides an overview of this:

Ongar: New CCTV systems have been installed in Basons car park and Pleasance car park. These will be commissioned and operational by the end of October.

Traps Hill, Loughton: Installation of a new camera system begins on 24 October.

Oakwood Hill, Loughton: The CCTV work at Oakwood Hill depot is now complete. This is a 24 camera system, some of which has been transferred over from Langston Road. A new HD camera has also been placed in the MOT hanger for VOSA. CCTV designs have been submitted for car parks in Oakwood Hill Industrial Estate.

Waltham Abbey: New CCTV designs have been submitted for car parks at Abbey Gardens in Waltham Abbey on behalf of Lea Valley Regional Park Authority. Townmead facility has had a 4 camera CCTV upgrade; this has been completed and now protects the rear of the facility.

Pelly Court, Epping: A new CCTV system increasing the number of cameras from 16 to 19 is being installed at Pelly Court and commenced on 17 October.

Limes Avenue Estate, Chigwell: The complete CCTV and ANPR system design is now complete for Green Block and Limes Avenue junction, and an invitation to tender was sent out in the week commencing 17 October. It is anticipated that work will be completed by January 2017. This has been a sizable and complicated piece of work that has taken almost a year to develop.

Other Successes

- Mobile CCTV has captured strong evidence of a serial fly poster scheme and this is being further investigated by the Neighbourhoods Enforcement team.
- Covert CCTV has captured strong evidence of a serial fly-tipper, which has led to the arrest of one male, who has been interviewed under caution, carried out at Harlow Police Station, prior to prosecution.
- CCTV evidence has assisted with the prosecution by police for a criminal damage and attempted burglary offence. The male offender was given a compensation order and jailed for 4 weeks.

- CCTV has captured numerous offences by one individual and an arrest has been made. The Magistrates Court have referred the case to the Crown Court, due to the seriousness of the charges, which include theft of a motor vehicle, dangerous driving and no driving licence.

Airwaves Radio: An application has been made to Ofcom for a TEA2 licence to enable an Airwave radio to be located in the CCTV room. This will give the Council direct contact with police on the ground when dealing with incidents.

Pilot CCTV: The team is piloting a new 4 in 1 mobile CCTV camera from Rapid Vision Ltd. If successful, this will provide multiple camera coverage of a single area at a moment's notice.

Collaborative working with Essex County Council: EFDC are now working in partnership with Essex Highways with regard to sharing use of highways street furniture to support temporary CCTV. This has been a major breakthrough, and could lead to more success in tackling ASB and crime hotspots at short notice. A closure order at Prescott Green, Loughton is the first use made under this agreement.

Body Worn Cameras (BWC): A new policy is being drafted for the introduction of BWC to be used for land drainage officers as an initial area within the Council.

Essex Region CCTV Group: The Council's CCTV Officer has been voted as chair of this newly formed CCTV group. The group is made up of CCTV managers from across local authorities in Essex and Redbridge and will meet quarterly to discuss best practice and joint approaches to effective cost saving and use of CCT, with partner agencies. It is hoped that the group will also develop its own social media content.

New CCTV Assistant Officer: Terri Anne Gill joined the CCTV operations team in October, as the new career grade CCTV Assistant, agreed as part of the Council's CCTV Strategy 2015-2022. Her role will be to assist with day to day CCTV operations and administration.

Trees and Landscape

Members taking an interest in this year's Stirling Prize for architecture may not be aware of a connection between one of the shortlisted entries and pro bono work by the Council's tree specialist, Chris Neilan. Trafalgar House in Southwark is part of a major redevelopment of the Heygate estate, at Elephant and Castle. The design of the whole redevelopment prioritized the retention of trees, originally largely hidden behind the tower block housing, as a way of distinguishing the development, increasing its value and promoting sales. A key method of achieving that was to value all the trees at the outset, using Chris Neilan's CAVAT tree valuation method. This valuation has then been used throughout the process to ensure that trees were protected, and where this proved impossible, to set the level of compensatory tree planting in the wider area.

This initiative by one of the Council's senior officers is now widely adopted and having a beneficial effect far beyond our boundaries.

Countrycare

Since the last report Countrycare has appointed a new Countryside Assistant, Jo Garrad, and she is settling in well.

In September seven volunteer days were organised on our Local Nature Reserves and there was also a day cutting and raking the Ongar Community Orchard. The work parties continue to be well attended.

The team and a small group of volunteers spent two days coppicing hazel at Belhus Woods, a site managed by the Woodland Trust. Instead of payment, Countrycare took away the harvested stakes and binders for its own use over the winter for hedge laying on our sites.

Kevin Mason led a Lifewalk in Moreton, taking in Bobbingworth Nature Reserve, which was very much enjoyed by the 24 people who attended.

Abigail Oldham and Nicola Ceconi ran a Mammal Morning event in partnership with the Essex Wildlife Trust, and 17 people, including four children, attended the event that started at 7.30am on Chigwell Meadows. Small mammals were caught overnight in traps and released in the morning after they had been identified. Three wood mice, a bank vole and a shrew were found. After breakfast, the group were given owl pellets to dissect to identify the bones and analyse what species of small mammal they were from. The owl pellets were collected from the outside area of the control tower at North Weald Airfield where a tawny owl perches and drops its pellets.

Voting starts on 31 October in Tesco, Epping for the Tesco Bags of Help grant. Members are encouraged to vote for Countrycare's project to improve Nazeing Triangle Local Nature Reserve.

Car Parking

Council Car Parks

When approving the Car Parking Strategy, the Cabinet agreed to improve and enhance the Council's car parks, including upgrading of the CCTV systems and replacement of older lighting systems with new LED lighting. I am pleased to inform members that CCTV systems have now been upgraded in the Basons Lane and Pleasance car parks in Ongar.

The project to replace older lighting systems with new improved and efficient LED lighting has been slow to start due to staffing resource pressures. However, a new LED lighting design has been completed for the Traps Hill Car Park in Loughton and the installation work will commence shortly.

I can also inform members that a facility for chip and pin payments in all our car parks has now been put into effect.

I opened tenders for the provision of off-street parking enforcement and cash collection on 21 October 2016. The tenders are being evaluated, and the successful bidder will deliver off street parking enforcement across the District from 1 April 2017. I shall be reporting at the December Cabinet on the outcome of the tender assessment process.

Loughton Broadway Parking Review

I met with ward members on 3 October along with officers from the Council and from North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP) to discuss the final proposals for on-street parking restrictions in the Langston Road area. Members are in agreement that a small number of sites will have restrictions implemented in the first phase to address parking stress in the area. The wider area review will then commence.

TRO (Traffic Regulation Order) schemes

At the Joint Committee meeting of NEPP on 20 October, Councillor Richard Bassett, substituting on my behalf, nominated schemes for on-street parking control measures in several locations throughout the District.