

A glittering red carpet premier launched Epping Forest Youth Council's latest project, We R Safe.

Youth councillors have produced five 60 second films highlighting support and guidance for young people to build confidence and resilience around their personal safety. All of the films are now showing on You Tube.

An impressive list of guest speakers were in attendance including the High Sheriff, Dr James Bettley, Deputy Lord Lieutenant of Essex, Michael Chapman, Chief Constable Ben-Julien Harrington and Cllr Richard Bassett, chairman of Epping Forest District Council.

The evening kicked off with a red carpet route to a reception at the council's civic offices. Dress code was strictly smart with optional black tie, just like the BAFTAs!

Afterwards the films were premiered in the Council Chamber. They covered five Rs - Realise, Run, Report, Resist, Resilience.

Realise: remain alert and aware of your surroundings at all times. Be alert, not distracted!

Run: don't worry about your image. If your instincts tell you to run away...then run.

Report: Don't waste time, report it, 999, 101, 0800 555 111, Text 61016, 0800 789 321

Resist: support services for young people include #consequences, an EFDC initiative delivered to all secondary schools in the district.

Resilience: bouncing back from difficult experiences by seeking the help of the many support services and community groups in EFDC.

This innovative project grew out of a consultation with 80 secondary school pupils at the 2017 youth conference and a subsequent debate at an Epping Forest Youth Council meeting. It links with their earlier drugs awareness project and some of its findings.

Praising the project Cllr Nigel Bedford, cabinet member for Community and Partnerships said: "We cannot stop our children being exposed to challenging situations. They are out there and as our children get older they are exposed to so many influences, from TV, social media and friends. We hope that increasing awareness of the risks and problems that can occur will help our young people to make better decisions, and as a result achieve better outcomes."

The project scooped an award and a grant of £1,000 from the High Sherriff of Essex earlier this year.