

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 29 October 2020

**Subject:** Housing and Communities Portfolio

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor Holly Whitbread

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## **Recommending:**

**That the report of the Housing and Communities Portfolio Holder be noted.**

I am delighted to report that crime offences for burglary, personal robbery and shoplifting have significantly dropped over the past year and the excellent work of our Community Safety Hub, which includes our officers and funded policing team has significantly contributed to this.

### **Community Resilience**

Levels of ASB have continued to be high across the district as have occurrences of bogus callers and issues of youth nuisance. North Weald in particular has seen a spate of youth problems and this has been addressed in a number of ways including distribution of letters to key ringleaders. Officers have spent considerable time with PCSO's working in communities targeting these incidents, including at Jubilee Court in Waltham Abbey, where a spate of bogus caller incidents took place.

Due to the excellent work undertaken earlier in the year, cases of Mansion House parties have decreased, but an extension to the Closure Order for Hills House, Water Lane, Roydon is due to be submitted in court on 15<sup>th</sup> October.

### **EFDC Policing Team**

The team are supporting EFDC colleagues in the enforcement of Covid breaches in town centres and key locations in the district and assist Council-lead enforcement at key licenced premises on Saturday nights, to review COVID measures and address any breaches.

Following a significant rise in local catalytic convertor thefts during September across the south of the district, the team are leading Operation Accordion, which is an intelligence-led initiative involving key patrols to target offenders. This is a difficult crime to target as the offences are quick and the offenders are tactically aware so rotate vehicles/index numbers.

Halloween plans are in place for the team in conjunction with the Community Police Team and it is likely that COVID legislation will be used to disperse groups.

### **Safeguarding**

Incidents of safeguarding continue to be high relating to both children and adults and mental health problems are an ongoing feature across both safeguarding and incidents of ASB. The potential of a further lockdown is a real concern for local families where domestic abuse is known.

### **CCTV**

Use of our mobile systems has risen and we are actively supporting work to assess footfall levels in our local high streets, as part of work to help recovery of local high street business. We are also working on replacement of the ageing Debden Broadway systems, with an anticipated completion date of March 2021.

Planning permission has now been granted for a new CCTV Column and 3 Cameras at North Weald Airfield and installation has started on this work. CCTV footage is also supporting the local Police team with the following incidents of crime

- Identifying suspects in youth gang related fight in Debden Broadway.
- Tracking suspects involved in a serious assault on Epping High Street
- Assisting Police on tracing vehicle movements on alleged vehicle hi-jacking in Debden area.
- Collating evidence for Police on Catalytic Convertors removed from vehicles on Limes Farm Estate Chigwell.

### **Environmental Enforcement**

Incidents of fly-tipping escalated throughout the summer months and particularly in respect of household building waste. This resulted in a backlog of cases for the team to deal with and additional staff resource has therefore been brought in, for a period of 6 months.

In respect of longer-term issues, both East Herts DC and EFDC have been subject to a number of fly tipping incidents over the last 18 months by the same individual who lives in Harlow, with both enforcement teams spending a considerable amount of time on this. Through dedicated collaborative work between the two authorities, the perpetrators vehicle was seized in Harlow on 24 September 2020 for a number of offences, including the use for fly tipping. Hertfordshire Police were planning to arrest the suspect for these offences, but found that he had been arrested earlier that day by Essex Police, in conjunction with a murder investigation. Our Environmental Enforcement and East Herts team jointly interviewed him regarding the 10 waste offences after this (with possibly 30 charges forthcoming). The cases are being prepared for consideration by the legal teams to be heard together, and we hope to be able to crush the vehicle.

On 1 October, our Environmental Officers joined forces with Essex Police's Rural Engagement Team at London Road, Stapleford Abbots to tackle unauthorised waste carriers, fly tipping and other crimes that impact the rural community. During the exercise, 20 vehicles were stopped in a 5 hour operation, which were likely to be transferring waste. 1 FPN was issued for no insurance and 1 for expired substantive driving licence. One vehicle was seized for having no insurance, and an arrest was made for a positive sample of a roadside drugs wipe test. 6 vehicles that were stopped were suspected of committing waste offences and will be issued with notices to produce their authority to transport waste and waste transfer notes. Failure to do so will result in the issuing of fixed penalty notices.

The officers also worked with Environmental Health and our Policing Team in the visits to licenced premises as part of the Covid Regulations and Licencing compliance checks. The officers will continue to support these visits, particularly as the new regulations have a requirement for a maximum noise level from music, which needs to be measured.