

# ***Report to the Council***

**Committee:** Cabinet

**Date:** 25 September 2018

**Subject:** Safer, Greener & Transport

**Portfolio Holder:** Councillor S. Kane

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## **Recommending:**

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

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## **Countrycare**

Since the last report Countrycare has worked on eight different sites with its volunteers. There were a few days raking as it's grass cutting season but also some fence and gate construction. The weather has been so hot we had to cancel one of the volunteer days on advice from the Met Office. The days were well attended with an average of 14 volunteers per task.

It has been the event season. We ran a Treasure Hunt in Chigwell Row Wood attended by 17 children having to carry out nature tasks before being rewarded with treasure. The Birdie event went well at the Epping Green Millenium Gardens, attended by 20 children, who all took home nests they had made themselves. The annual Teddy Bear's Picnic involved 15 children bug hunting, tree decorating, making wildlife masks and having their faces painted. We have also had two events in partnership with Communities for children held at Bobbingworth Nature Reserve and the annual moth and bat night.

Countrycare was approached by "Project Beeswax7" which is an investigation into the feasibility of identifying wild pollinator species automatically by their buzzes using computers. Some new software has been developed to aid the research and it was tested out at Church Lane LNR in late August. This helped the researchers to identify what some of the problems and restrictions might be and for them to adjust the present model to overcome them.

On the staffing front there have been many changes. Kevin Mason retired after eight years service and we had a send off for him on a volunteer day at Norton Heath. He has been replaced by Tom Simon who is settling in well. Joanne Garrad has just left us to go to a job much closer to home in Cambridge. We are recruiting for her replacement.

Survey work has been continuing with the reptiles at Willingale Road Allotments and the butterfly transects.

The Tree Warden Scheme has been going well and we have been measuring and mapping trees in Roughtallys Wood LNR to inform management for the future.

Two members of staff attended the Ancient Tree Forum course about the biodiversity value of decay in trees

## **Parking**

*Visitor and Staff Travel Plan:*

I am pleased to report that there has been a healthy response to the recent Staff Travel Plan consultation covering all Council owned sites. We had a response rate of 66% which is very positive. The survey responses are currently being analysed and the final report will be available in October. This will then allow us to consider options for achieving our objectives.

Loughton Broadway Parking Review:

Designs for the second phase of the parking review are finalised and public consultation will commence in October when the proposed changes will be advertised locally.

North Essex Parking Partnership (NEPP):

I have previously reported on the need to reduce the long list of parking restriction schemes for the District. I have met with some groups of Members to review the schemes in their area. I shall continue these meetings to ensure our list is up to date.

At the next meeting of NEPP in October we will have the yearly opportunity to nominate our six schemes. Officers have collated the scheme list for our District and are currently consulting Members in whose Ward the highest scoring schemes are. The following schemes are currently listed to be nominated at the October Committee meeting. There are twelve schemes on the list out of which six will qualify automatically under NEPP criteria and the remaining six we will nominate against our allocation.

The schemes that you shall soon be receiving the details for are:

- 1) Hill Road Theydon Bois,
- 2) Blackacre Road, Theydon Bois,
- 3) Epping New Road,
- 4) The Windsors,
- 5) Blackmore Road,
- 6) Whitehills Road,
- 7) Stag Lane,
- 8) Palace Gardens,
- 9) Spareleaze Hill,
- 10) Stewards Green Road,
- 11) Nursery Road Connaught Avenue and Shaftesbury as one scheme,
- 12) Abridge Road, Station Hill and Graylands.

Epping Town Parking Review:

The parking scheme for Epping Town has just been re-advertised and letters sent to all residents within the review area. This also includes a revised scheme for Tidys Lane Epping. The consultation period for these closed on the 21<sup>st</sup> September. I am meeting with Ward Members early in October to discuss the outcome of the consultation and agree next steps.

### Parking Tariff Review:

Members will have seen the parking tariff review report that I presented at Cabinet on 6 September. Some Members expressed reservations with some of the proposed changes and I am pleased to say that following discussions with them I have their support to take the recommendations forward.

Increasing parking charges is not an easy decision and I have considered carefully the reasons behind the tariff uplift. I am pleased to report that we have kept the lower bands of tariff, stays of up to 2 hours, unchanged which will benefit around 85% of our car park users. I am also proposing to use the additional income in improving and enhancing the environment in the car parks.

### **Community Safety**

My Portfolio Holder report this month, will focus particularly on the work of our directly funded police officers, as I am sure Members will welcome an update on how the team has been performing since its introduction in June, this year.

### **EFDC Funded Police Officers**

I am very pleased to report that our integrated Community Safety Hub is working extremely well, with IT systems running efficiently and the daily deployments from the Civic Offices meeting our local priority needs. Our sergeant and constables are all very experienced and have settled into their new working environment very well. In fact they appear to be a seamless fit and I am delighted to say they are working as one team with the councils Community Safety Officers, which is providing advantage to other departments within the authority as well. I have ensured the officers have not been recruited from Epping Forest District police establishment levels therefore ensuring the stretched mainstream police numbers remain up to strength.

With the refurbishment of the Community Safety Office, our police presence has provided the added value of drawing in the district's youth officer and the new Crime Prevention Tactical Adviser who are hot-desking together with the Essex Watch Liaison Officer. In addition the two weekly tasking meeting is held at the Civic Offices which also attracts the District Inspector, CID Detective Inspector and Integrated Offender Management Sergeant as well as our dedicated Community Policing Team Sergeant usually based at Loughton. A process has been devised where our directly funded Community Safety Team have a local tasking meeting prior to district tasking and this then feeds into the bigger picture of planned resource deployments across the district.

Since their arrival, our officers have learnt the various roles of council officers and initially patrolled with our ASB Investigators to get to know the area. On one such patrol in their first week, they arrested two males driving a vehicle on false plates in the Ongar area. Both arrested persons were charged with unauthorised taking of a motor vehicle. One offender was bailed to court and the other was remanded in custody, as there was an international arrest warrant for him.

The officers have also targeted a prolific shoplifting team regularly stealing from shops at the new Langston Road shopping park. Due to their presence in the area, they arrested two persons for shoplifting one of whom was cautioned and the other charged with theft and bailed to court. They have also provided a visible presence at a property that our investigators obtained a Closure Order on, due to the exploitation of the vulnerable tenant.

The whole team have also worked with the Community Policing Team (CPT) based at Loughton and CID in relation to a series of dwelling burglaries in the Loughton area where

elderly and vulnerable residents in sheltered accommodation were being victimised. The suspect was a female who sometimes purported to be working for the NHS to gain entry. Working together and using the council's public space CCTV images a woman was identified and arrested. She was charged with nine burglaries, three frauds, one theft and one battery. She appeared Chelmsford Crown Court and received a custodial sentence of 54 months.

A particularly disturbing incident the whole team dealt with involved an East European female presenting to the Civic Offices reception desk. After some engagement with Housing officers Community Safety Safeguarding officers were summoned. The officer attending was a trained Independent Domestic Violence Advisor and was able to befriend the woman and gain her trust discovering she may have been trafficked into the UK by a male she was living with. The male was offering her to his family and acquaintances for sexual acts. The woman was pregnant and had no-one to turn to. Our police team became involved with Community Safety and arranged for referrals under the National Referral Mechanism, safeguarding and liaison with specialist police investigation teams. The woman was provided food, drink and reassurance and then taken by our police officers to a safe house outside of the county, where a full investigation could be carried out.

Currently the whole team are working on a process of having court ready Criminal Behaviour Order applications ready for when prolific offenders are arrested and charged. The concept would be to have pre-drafted evidenced prohibitions available for arresting officers to include in the submission of cases to be heard at court. Work is underway with Essex Police's dedicated ASB Officer and the Crown Prosecution Service to determine an agreeable process. Our police team are acting as the county leads for this initiative which will benefit police and council alike.

Lastly, I would like to give you a flavour of interactions our police team have had with other council departments. They are currently working with Planning Enforcement and our legal team on providing support for enforcement work with Travellers which is likely to run over a considerable period of time. They have supported housing in relation to our properties subject to Closure Orders. They have worked with our Environment and Neighbourhoods officers in their investigations of serious fly-tippers. They have assisted our Licensing team with concerns about a persistent drink driver resulting in them arresting a male who is currently waiting to appear at court. I think you will agree, that early indications of this initiative are very positive.

### **Anti-social Behaviour**

The council have received two applications for Anti-social Behaviour Case Reviews also known as Community Triggers, in relation to addresses in Pyrles Lane Loughton and a professionals meeting and Review Panel meeting have been held. The case is complex and concerns a number of council departments including housing Environment & Neighbourhoods and Community Safety together with, police, Community Rehabilitation Company and Community Mental Health Team.

### **CCTV**

Following the resignation of one of the CCTV officers the team is currently under resourced and although recruitment is under way, the remaining officers are working close to full capacity in order to meet the demand for downloads and in progressing existing projects.

### **Safeguarding**

Our safeguarding team continues to receive a very high number of safeguarding referrals and concerns from staff across the Council. We had **38** new cases in August, which included

**6** child; **19** adult; **13** both concerns, involving **50** children and **34** adults. Out of these, 7 were new referrals to Essex Social Care, 10 to Essex Police; 3 to MARAC; and 8 to other agencies including Peabody Trust and Safer Places.

Mental Health concerns are still prevalent amongst a high number of cases and these tend to involve a wide range of officers from the council, NHS and social care. During August several cases included Hoarding and others serious ASB, which in one case was causing serious distress and fear for neighbours.

One case of Domestic abuse related to a couple in their early 90's, which really demonstrates that there is no age limit to abuse in the home.

It is however, very evident how useful the presence of Police officers is to the teams work and particularly in respect of referrals that are now being accepted by social care that wouldn't ordinarily have been taken forward. Of course this works both ways, as our Police officers are provided with intelligence on where key individuals currently reside, which they may not have otherwise known.