

Cabinet - 14th June 2010
Braintree District - Green Heart of Essex

Agenda Item 6a

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Financial Implications:- £250,000 has been set aside (£125,000 capital and £125,000 revenue). Other sources of funding may be available for the future and these are currently being investigated.

Equalities Implications:- None arising from this report.

Legal Implications:- None arising from this report.

Options:- None arising from this report

Risks:- Ensuring all of the required projects are in place for public launch date.

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

We want to create a district that has cleaner streets, towns and open spaces. Where residents and businesses take responsibility for their impact on their neighbourhood. Where children and adults know it is wrong to drop litter. A district with more trees for future generationsa district we can all be proud of.

Introduction to Phase One – Green Heart of Essex

Phase one covers the plans that get us to launch date and 3 months beyond.

Plans are progressing under each of the 6 work streams in the Green Heart of Essex programme in preparation for a public launch on June 18th (Braintree), June 19th (Halstead) and June 26th (Witham). This update concentrates on the components which will visible to residents and will be part of the launch plan. Other work is being developed which will roll out after the launch and will form subsequent phases of the Green Heart programme. This will ensure good work doesn't get overshadowed in the launch phase and will help ensure media coverage and residents interest in the Green Heart is sustained week after week.

Cleaner

In summary the “Cleaner” aspects of the Green Heart will take the lead at the public launch. The Green Heart has been a catalyst for a focus on smarter ways of working. This has

identified opportunities for reorganising how the Clean team operate to improve performance and visibility of the clean team. The launch focuses on the problem and cost of cleaning and clearing litter (£1 million per year) and introduces the See it – Report it service. The service improvements are outlined in the plan below.

Green Heart budget position

To date £75,000 has been allocated from the Green Heart revenue budget and £30,000 from the capital budget to develop the aspects of the plan outlined in the report

Measures

Levels of litter and numbers of See it – Report it submissions will be reported monthly throughout the campaign. They will be published on the Green Heart of Essex area of the website.

A regular residents' perception measure will also be introduced pre and post launch

Greener

There will be a second launch in the Autumn (Phase Two) to introduce the Greener workstream to the public. However many existing projects over the summer will be included in the Green Heart campaign.

Green Heart budget position

Existing work is being carried out using existing budgets and at the moment no allocation from the Green Heart budget is required. This will change as plans for Phase Two are developed

Enforcing

Extra high visibility enforcement will be a key part of the launch and ongoing programme. Details of the progress made are covered in the body of the report.

Green Heart Budget position

The enforcement programme uses existing budgets and resources. However the opportunity to buy in CCTV capacity is being looked at and so an allocation of £15,000 from the capital budget is being allowed for.

Measures

It is clear from the latest DEFRA report published by the government that Braintree punches above its weight in terms of environmental action and enforcement (source : Flycapture 08/09). We will be making all actions and prosecutions transparent to the public on the Green Heart section of the website. This will be updated monthly so residents can monitor our progress

Involving

We have made contact already with many of our target groups : Police, Greenfields, ECC, some parishes, certain schools and businesses, staff and members. Highlights so far include active support for the campaign from Tesco and McDonalds. Progress is detailed below.

Green Heart Budget position

An allocation of £4,000 revenue is required from the Green Heart budget to develop the support materials for residents, groups and businesses. As plans with individual partners firm-up, additional funding will be necessary.

Measures

We will report monthly and publish on the Green Heart website the number of organisations who have signed up to the Green Heart and will revisit regularly their progress and successes

Green Heart Launch and Campaigns

The launch focuses on the problem and cost of litter and introduces the See it Report it service to residents. It will be supported by a dedicated Green Heart area of the website containing all the information residents and groups will need. The “See it – report it” service will be published from launch. Other campaigns and opportunities will roll out after the initial phase

Green Heart Budget position

An allocation of £8,000 from the revenue budget and £5,000 from the capital budget has been allowed for, to support the launch programme and initial campaigns and information materials.

Measures

The visibility of the Green Heart programme will be measured at launch and post launch

A regular “residents’ perception” measure will also be introduced pre and post launch

Measures including visits to website, number of See it Report it notifications and numbers of residents supporting the Green Heart will also be reported.

DECISION

To accept the recommendations and plans outlined for Phase One in the plans below

Corporate Implications			
Financial:	See the Funding statement at the end of the report		
Legal:	None arising from this report		
Equalities & Diversity:	None arising from this report		
Customer Impact:	Customers will see an improvement in the cleanliness of the district		
Environment & Climate Change:	The programme will have a positive impact on the local environment and climate change		
Consultation/Community Engagement:	Place survey		Partners
	Peoples Panel		
	Public		Staff
Key Decision:	Yes/No		
Public/Private Report:	Public/Private – [Insert relevant paragraph number]		
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CLEANER – Update on progress

Residents will see:

- More visible cleaning and litter picking taking place around the district, on main strategic routes and high visibility areas.
 - A reduction in the amount of litter lying around
 - An increase in the number of people who get involved in keeping their neighbourhood clear of litter
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- Cleaning hours will be extended from 7 am to 8 pm from June 18th.
At weekends cleaning hours will be 7am to 5 pm on Saturdays and 7am to 1pm on Sundays
 - Weekend cleaning will take place in Braintree, Witham and Halstead starting from June 19th including a “ man with a barrow “ in each of these towns for extra visibility
 - See it – Report it service will launch on June 18th for residents, staff and members to report problems. Methods of reporting a problem will include text, email, website, phone, Facebook and Twitter. This service will be available 24 hours a day, seven days a week.
 - Response times will be published on the Green Heart section of the website and residents reporting a problem will be advised of the time it will take to clear the problem. This service will be available from launch. A special “rapid response team” has been created to focus on clearing litter to our published response times.
 - An audit of all litter/dog/smoking bins is underway to identify areas where extra bins may be required. A more efficient cleaning schedule has been developed which means bins in high traffic/high visibility areas will be emptied seven days a week to reduce the number of occasions when bins overflow. This will apply to Braintree, Witham and Halstead town centres, lay-bys and the A120.
 - With our A12 partners a new cleaning methodology has been created and is being piloted which clears the A12 of litter on an 8 week cycle rather than a 13 week cycle.
 - Front line staff have identified known litter hotspots and work will start from launch to increase visible enforcement and publishing of these problem areas on Green Heart of Essex section of the website.
 - The Braintree bypass will now be litter picked twice a year and swept twice a year.

- Recycling litter bins will be trialled in Braintree, Witham and Halstead town centres from launch and a programme to clean all recycling centres twice a year will be started.

GREENER – Update on progress

Residents will see

- Improved appearance and landscaping of our gateways to Halstead, Braintree and Witham
- New play equipment in 6 more play areas
- More individuals involved in local initiatives to plant trees and bulbs
- Improved facilities in Witham Park
- Trees and attractive green spaces as part of the redevelopment plans for Braintree, Halstead and Witham

The new initiatives in the Greener work stream will be scheduled for an Autumn launch as this is the suitable time for planting. These will form Phase 2 of the programme. However some of the projects that will be delivered over the summer include :

- Consultation at Glebe Estate in Braintree and Templers in Witham regarding environmental improvements
- Opening of a new cycle paths at Beckers Green and Bradford Meadows
- Creation of a wildlife garden in Halstead Public gardens
- Opening of outdoor gyms in Braintree and Witham
- Work with Halstead in Bloom for national competition

ENFORCING – Update on progress

Residents will see:

- There will be a significant increase in the number of enforcement actions
- A combined team will take more enforcement action against people who create an environmental nuisance. The team will have a new and easier method of issuing notices and will be working with the Police, Greenfields and Essex County Council. wherever possible

- 3 street wardens have been recruited and are now working alongside the enforcement team and the operational team
- A pilot using a high visibility enforcement patrol is currently being trialled in Weavers Park, Braintree

- Proactive high visibility enforcement campaigns will be targeted at Galleys Corner and in the town centres in our known hot spot areas from launch in June.
- Dog fouling prevention events are taking place in Bradford Meadows and Great Notley on 7th and 8th June
- The accreditation scheme is being offered to all staff members
- A district wide anti-fly poster day has been arranged
- McDonald's staff have been briefed and supplied with the method to report offenders to our enforcement team. McDonalds have agreed to actively support the Green Heart in a number of ways

INVOLVING – Update on progress

Residents will see:

Campaigns to encourage residents to get directly involved in the Green Heart of Essex programme

Campaigns to encourage residents to show their support for the Green Heart of Essex programme

The involvement work stream includes many different groups. Plans have progressed so that :

- Residents will be invited to support the Green Heart with a Green Heart pledge and the opportunity to join a Green Heart activity.
- Greenfields are supporting the initiative and are launching the Green Heart to all their staff in early June with a special emphasis on the See it Report it service.
- Police – are supporting the initiative and all police staff are being briefed and will be issued with the See it Report it details.
- Businesses - for the initial launch a few main businesses are being targeted. So far McDonalds and Tesco have agreed to support the Green Heart in several different ways. Other target businesses we are approaching for launch are KFC, Sainsburys and Morrison's.
- Schools – meetings with head teachers of senior schools will be completed by the end of June to gain their support. The education programme will roll out to senior and junior schools in September with the start of the new term.
- Parishes – mailings to all parish councils have been sent out. The invitation thanks them for the work they already do and invites them to tell us about any local initiatives being carried out. A recognition scheme is also being developed which includes the Green Pennant scheme (from the Keep Britain Tidy Group)

- Staff and members – frontline staff, all staff and members have been briefed on the Green Heart programme in a series of conferences and have been invited to get involved in the Green Heart programme and make pledges.

Campaigns and the Green Heart launch

A public launch will take place in Braintree on 17th June (attended by the media), in Halstead on the 18th June and in Witham on the 25th June.

- The launch focuses on the problems of litter and dog fouling and launches to the public the new “see it –report it” service. The launch will be supported by a dedicated Green Heart website, cards for residents to pledge their support for the Green Heart and the See it Report it campaign. As well as members, the public launches will be supported by the Green Heart Clean team, the Green Heart Green Team and the Green Heart Enforcers.
- The Green Heart campaign identity, information, website and the first “see it – report it” campaign are being developed in preparation for the launch.
- A Green Heart issue of Contact is being published on the last week in June/first week in July

FUNDING

The overall programme is funded from the capital and revenue sources (£250,000). For Phase One we have allocated £87,000 in revenue and £50,000 in capital. We are also making use of existing budgets wherever possible.

Further funding will be allocated as Phase 2 plans are developed. However we will evaluate the success of Phase One – and may need to add weight or extra resource into the programme to ensure that we are meeting service expectations.

It is anticipated that this will be a 2 year programme and further one-off funding will be sought as part of the 2011/12 budget.