

CABINET MEMBER REPORT TO COUNCIL – 28th JUNE 2010

Agenda Item 9(i)

CABINET MEMBER: Cllr Mrs Wendy Schmitt

CABINET PORTFOLIO: Clean, Green and Safe

Portfolio covers:-

- Community Development
- Community Safety
- Community Facilities
- Children and Young People
- Clean and Green
- Landscapes and Countryside
- Regulatory Functions

REPORT COVERS ACTIVITY DURING PERIOD COMMENCING 31st MARCH 2010 AND ENDING ON 14th JUNE 2010

COMMUNITY DEVELOPMENT

The Community Group at Nottage Crescent held a very successful Easter Event, with competitions for the residents of all ages including lambs for petting. The group goes from strength to strength.

Talks are being held with Great Notley Parish Council regarding a Creative Community Project in that area.

I attended a community event at Glebe Hall organised by Greenfields and attended by the Communities Department, Essex Police and other partners, this was very well attended by the public

COMMUNITY SAFETY

On the 16th April I received from Essex Police The Safer Car Parks Award, for the district.

Leaflets have been distributed promoting Community Payback and Community Development.

Ms Goodwin gave a presentation on the POD project to the Essex Criminal Justice Board event 'Working Together for Justice', this was very well received.

At the Crime and Disorder Reduction Partnership, now re named the Community Safety Partnership by the Government, a draft protocol for Scrutiny of Crime and Disorder Matters was given by Cllr M Gage, Chairman of the Scrutiny Committee and Mr S Bore. Concern was raised by the proposed Government cuts.

Crucial Crew will take place from 5th-16th July, the sets are, first aid, smoking, water safety, fire safety, bullying, shoplifting, road safety, alcohol and drugs.

The CCTV system in Halsted is now operational.

COMMUNITY FACILITIES

There has been a successful transfer of the Car Park in Sible Hedingham to the Parish Council. Discussions with the Parish Council in Earls Colne are progressing well, and an update will be available in the near future.

Discussions are also progressing well with regards to the transfer and development of a number of other facilities in the district, regrettably due to the sensitive nature of negotiations more details cannot be revealed at this time, but members will be updated as soon as it becomes possible.

CHILDREN AND YOUNG PEOPLE

I had a session with the BDC Modern Apprentices on 'What can be done to encourage younger people to become Councillors'. I gave my views and then a healthy and interesting discussion took place.

On the 5th of May I opened a new play area in Rivenhall and on 13th May one in Bridport Way, Braintree. Children from the 2 local Primary Schools attended and trialled the equipment giving it their approval.

On 26th May I had the great privilege and pleasure of chairing the panel of judges at the semi finals of the Jack Petchey's Speak Out Challenge. The event has been running for 6 years and this year 20,000 year 10 teenagers from every state school in Essex and London are given a day's training in public speaking and listening. The event at Notley 6th Form College was the regional semi final and 16 young people spoke on an extremely varied selection of topics. The winner was Bethany Holt of Hedingham School, 2nd Nathan Giles Donovan of Newport Free Grammar and 3rd Abigail Ruggles of Alec Hunter Humanities College, the calibre of all contestants was first rate. Bethany will speak at the finals in London in July, we wish her the very best of luck.

CLEAN & GREEN

Templars Estate

I attended, along with Cllr. Lager & Cllr. Dr. Evans, a community clean up at Templars Estate, Witham, organised by BDC and Greenfields Community Housing Association. This involved the Police, our Street Wardens, operational front line staff, enforcement officers, Dog Wardens, staff from Greenfields and members of the Templars Community Association. The whole estate was thoroughly cleaned over a two-day period and a significant amount of waste and litter was removed.

Highway Verge Cutting

The Spring cut of all the highway verges in the District commenced in May and was completed early June. With direct control of the management and operation of the service for the first time, this enabled us to improve coordination of the work with our litter-pickers, who maintained direct contact on a daily basis with the external grass cutting contractor. The next scheduled cut is due in the Autumn.

Cleaning of A12

Members will be aware that we have a Service Level Agreement with Colchester Borough Council to undertake litter-picking of verges and lay-bys and emptying of the litter bins along the A12. This entails a 26 mile round trip from Braintree - via Colchester - to Chelmsford and back again, working to a scheduled programme. During the period 12 April 2010 to 7 June 2010 CBC removed 3.28 tonnes of litter. This demonstrates the extent of littering along the A12 and also the effectiveness of the partnership.

Cleaning of A-roads

Following a successful pilot at the end of April, a new cleaning programme has been introduced on the A-roads to litter-pick on an 8-week cycle, in addition to any reactive work carried out. A meeting with the Highways Agency, specifically in relation to the A120, is being organised by officers to consider how a multi-agency approach can be agreed with the aim of achieving better use of resources and significant improvements in the standards of cleanliness along this road.

Street Wardens

Three full-time Street Wardens have been successfully recruited from the former Community Warden Service – Les Davies, Tony Lynch and Paul Richards – ready to commence operations from 18 June to coincide with the launch of the Green Heart of Essex campaign. Their new role will place greater emphasis on tackling enviro-crime through a more rigorous and robust approach to enforcement. The Wardens and their vehicles will be rebranded with the Green Heart of Essex signage. They are not area based, but will cover the whole District targeting areas of greatest need.

Allotments

Preparation is underway to create 30 new plots on the redundant site at Station Field, Braintree. This will involve installing a water supply and security fencing as well as cultivating and marking out the plots. The new site is due to open end November 2010. I also opened the new allotments at Cut Throat Lane, Witham.

Cemeteries

As a result of the increased charges applied from 1 April 2010, a large numbers of complaints have been received from customers of our grave maintenance service, many of whom had reluctantly had to cancel their maintenance agreement with the Council due to financial constraints. In conjunction with officers and Cllr. Michael Lager, two charges were reviewed and a reduction has been agreed. Consequently a lot of customers have been able to renew their maintenance agreement for a further 12 months.

Green Heart

As part of sessions to explain the Green Heart project and to ask for views on how to implement it I addressed the Street Scene and Waste Disposal operatives.

On the 8th and 9th of June at Bradford Meadows and Notley Country Park residents with dogs were talked to about the problems of dog fouling, dog bags and information regarding diseases was given out. These were attended by Dog Wardens, Street Wardens, Greenfields, members of Bradford Meadows Group, Cllr Butland and I.

The launch of Green Heart will take place in Braintree on 18th June, Halstead 19th June and Witham 26th June.

ENFORCEMENT

Building Control

Continued good news on the local building economy: there has been a sustained increase in the amount of building control applications submitted over the last two months of this financial year. The number of applications is up 25% compared with the same period last year.

Dangerous Structure

27th April 2010 - Daniel Way Silver End

A serious fire occurred resulting in 3 houses being severely damaged. Following a request from the police at 4.45pm, a Principal Building Control Officer attended and assessed the situation and deemed it necessary to instruct a local building company to attend site and erect scaffolding to secure the remaining unsupported gable wall and the site to ensure persons

were not endangered. In addition, Essex CC Highways were called to close an area of footpath beside the building. The officer had to remain on site until all the necessary works had been completed and did not leave until 11.15pm.

Licensing

Licensing Committee has recently agreed to go out to consultation on the introduction of an electronic “Knowledge Test” for all new drivers. The test will be designed to test a driver’s knowledge of the District and the legislation and to determine if they are a fit and proper person to hold a licence.

Licensing Enforcement at Stansted Airport

This was a multi-agency stop check organised by the Airport Police involving Licensing Enforcement Officers from BDC and a number of neighbouring local authorities, immigration officers, UK Border Force, Customs and Excise, Drug Dog Unit, VOSA, Traffic Police and the Public Carriage Office. This operation focused primarily on Taxis and Private Hire Vehicles.

In total over 100 vehicles were stopped and numerous offences were found, with several vehicles being seized for no insurance and four immediate prohibitions. In total **of the vehicles stopped, only 5 were licensed by BDC**. The only breach found was one driver who did not have his driver’s badge on him and he will be receiving penalty points.

This exercise shows that we are doing something right with our taxi trade and as a result of the operations, this Council has developed new connections and maintained those already made with the various agencies and we are recognised by these agencies as a Council that will attend these events and work together to protect the travelling public.

Environmental Health

Multi Agency Roadside Stop Checks

In May of this year, the Council’s Environmental Protection Officers attended a multi-agency roadside stop check on the B1018 between the A120 and Galleys Corner. As a result of the checks, they issued one **£75.00 Fixed Penalty Notice** on a member of McDonald’s staff for littering (flicking a cigarette butt onto the car park), a **£50 Fixed Penalty Notice** on a man for smoking in a place of work i.e. a van and a **£300 FPN** on a man for carrying scrap metal without a waste carrier’s licence.

In terms of Environmental Enforcement, the following actions have taken place over the last couple of months:-

- 26 informal cautions
- 16 Fixed penalty Notices
- 28 Statutory Notices
- 6 Prosecutions resulting in £2,000 worth of fines.

Note: *Members will receive a quarterly enforcement bulletin from the “Green Heart” Enforcement Team which will detail some of the above cases including photographs, so that members can see first hand the type of enviro-crime being committed throughout the District. The first edition is due out at the end of June.*

FURTHER INFORMATION ON THE CONTENTS OF THIS REPORT CAN BE OBTAINED BY CONTACTING:

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