

Minutes

Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee

13th July 2022 at 7.15pm



Present

Councillors	Present	Councillors	Present
J Abbott	Apologies	T McArdle	Yes
J Baugh	Yes	Mrs J Pell	No
G Courtauld (Vice-Chairman)	Apologies	Mrs J Sandum	Apologies
A Hensman	No	Mrs L Walters	Yes
Mrs M Cunningham (Chairman)	Yes		

Prior to the commencement of the meeting, the Chairman wished to welcome Councillor J Abbott as the newest Member of the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee, further to the departure of Councillor P Thorogood.

6 **DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

INFORMATION: There was one Interest declared:-

Councillor T McArdle declared a Non-Pecuniary Interest in respect of Agenda Item 5, Annual Report of the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership, as the owner of the Swiss Bell Public House in Mountbatten Road, Braintree.

7 **MINUTES**

DECISION: The Minutes of the meeting of the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee held on 11th May 2022 were approved as a correct record.

8 **PUBLIC QUESTION TIME**

INFORMATION: There were no questions asked, or statements made.

9 **TO PROVIDE THE 2021-22 ANNUAL REPORT OF THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP**

INFORMATION: The Chairman welcomed Tracey Parry, Community Services Manager, and Caroline Elias-Stephenson, Head of Housing and Communities, to the meeting. Tracey was then invited to introduce the annual report of the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership (CSP).

Members were informed that the CSP was made up of representatives from Braintree District Council, Essex Police, Essex Fire & Rescue Service, National Probation Service, Mid Essex CCG, Essex County Council (Partnership Lead and Secondary education),

Community360 and Eastlight Community Homes. The role of the CSP was to work together in order to help protect local communities from crime and help people to feel safer.

The CSP had a statutory requirement to undertake an annual strategic assessment, as per legislation in the Crime and Disorder Act Revised 2006. The assessment collated and analysed statistical and contextual data from a range of partners and was used to inform key findings and recommendations for priorities going forward. The priorities of the CSP for 2021/22 were as follows:-

- Tackle the trafficking of drugs in the community;
- Increase confidence in identifying and reporting hidden harms, and;
- Drive down violence and disorder within the community.

Despite the various challenges still being posed by Covid, the CSP had been able to deliver more of the projects within its Action Plan than it had been able to in the previous year. For instance, opportunities had arisen for closer partnership working and alternative ways to deliver projects in order to ensure that the Braintree District remained a safe place to live, work and visit.

One of the key achievements was the Local Exploitation Group, which aimed to provide early intervention to vulnerable young people at risk of Child Sexual Exploitation (CSE) or Criminal Exploitation (CE) before it could escalate to 'high risk' levels. During 2021/22, the Group had been able to identify individual young people and provide funding for them to access interventions with the aim of reducing their level of risk. Other achievements included the countywide Operation Henderson campaign, a joint initiative being undertaken by the Essex Safeguarding Children Board, British Transport Police, Essex Police, the Violence and Vulnerability Unit, Rail Operators, Local Authorities, Essex Youth Service and the Children's Society. The aim of the operation was to raise awareness of the vulnerability of young people to exploitation and abuse at stations and transport networks in parts of Essex. Members were advised that in future, this type of operation would become an annual event to continue raising awareness with the hope of reducing the number of young people being exploited.

In other areas, an educational theatre group, Tic Box Productions, performed 'The Bruise You Can't See' at secondary schools in order to help inform young people on how to spot the signs of healthy relationships domestic abuse. The play was watched by more than 1,100 students in Years 10 and 11 at seven secondary schools across the District. Due to its success, Eastlight Community Homes, who had organised the play, were intending to arrange a similar performance in 2022/23 with a different theme. On the subject of weapons awareness, it was reported that the St Giles Trust had delivered a weapon awareness session to 90 children in Year 6 which focused on debunking myths and stereotypes around crime, weapons, gangs, county lines and related issues by challenging messages in social media and popular culture and exposing the realities of negative choices such as carrying a weapon.

The CSP continued to ensure that those working within the Braintree District had the necessary knowledge and awareness of 'hidden harms' in order to prevent crime and protect the vulnerable. Frontline professionals from across the CSP were invited to attend an 'Every Contact Counts' awareness session which was delivered by Children & Young People First, and funded through the Essex Violence and Vulnerability Unit. It was added that around 50 professionals working within the District attended the session.

In terms of the night time economy, Essex Police had launched a new anti-drug spray which was funded by the CSP and was the first of its kind in Essex. Officers from Braintree Community Policing Team visited licensed premises and public venues throughout Braintree and Witham town centres in January 2022 in order to coat surfaces that were often used for recreational drug taking, such as in bathrooms.

Lastly, it was reported that the Braintree District Community Safety Hub (the Hub) had continued to maximise the benefits of collaborative working with partners. It was reported that membership of the Hub had again increased during the past year and included representation from partner organisations of the CSP, other statutory services and the voluntary sector.

Further to the report, Members were invited to ask their questions of Tracey. The following information was subsequently provided:-

- In terms of 'hot spots' for crimes such as child exploitation, this could range from local parks to shopping centres, as well as along transport links with easy access to London or the coast, such as trains.
- In respect of the anti-drug spray, this was an initiative undertaken by Essex Police over the last year which was funded by the CSP. The local community policing team visited licenced premises, particularly those where recreational drug taking was a known issue. Members in the licensed trade were advised to contact the Community Services team if they wished to use the spray in any local licensed premises.

On behalf of the Committee, the Chairman thanked Tracey and Caroline for the report and commended the work of the partners that comprised the CSP as it brought many benefits for the District, the extent of which might not be fully realised by residents.

DECISION: That the Partnership Development Scrutiny Committee reviewed the annual report and made any recommendations to Cabinet.

REASON FOR DECISION: To provide an overview of the work of the Braintree District Community Safety Partnership delivered during 2021/22.

10 **SCRUTINY REVIEW INTO LITTER MANAGEMENT ACROSS THE BRAINTREE DISTRICT – FIRST EVIDENCE GATHERING SESSION**

INFORMATION: The Chairman was pleased to welcome Ros Alam, Marketing and Engagement Officer, and Tania Roberge, Marketing and Communications Manager, to the meeting. Ros and Tania were in attendance in order to provide a presentation for Members which regarded the various 'litter' campaigns that the Council had undertaken over the previous ten years and the partnerships that had been developed as a result.

During the presentation, reference was made to the Green Heart of Essex campaign (Green Heart), one of the earlier litter management campaigns implemented by the Council, the success of which helped to pave the way for future litter management campaigns. The Green Heart programme launched in 2010 in response to a number of factors, such as the high cost associated with keeping the District clean and tidy (£1.3million) and the results of the 2008 'Place' survey, which indicated that customer satisfaction levels around cleanliness were decreasing at 64%. The Green Heart programme lasted for a period of two years, and its ambition was to make the District one of the cleanest and greenest in the UK with an investment of £250,000.

The ambition of the Green Heart was to be achieved by:-

- Encouraging partners, businesses and residents to get involved;
- Implementing a joined up cross-Council approach to service delivery, and;
- Encouraging everyone to take responsibility for keeping the District clean.

The programme involved strong partnerships from Parish and Town Councils, voluntary groups, Essex County Council, Highways Agency, neighbouring Councils, Eastlight Community Homes (then Greenfields Community Housing), businesses (e.g. McDonalds), schools and market traders. A number of littering 'hotspot areas' were identified across the District, such as Galley's Corner in Braintree, which led to the creation of the Galley's Corner Partnership. After approximately six months of campaigning, which involved night time observations with the Police, issuing fines, providing car litter bags, sharing advice, the Council recorded a reduction in littering of 47%.

Schools across the District were signed up to the programme and introduced a zero tolerance approach to litter, with litter picks and competitions, and work was also undertaken with housing associations to implement littering 'blitz' days at various housing estates. Over 200 volunteers (known as Green Heart Champions) were also signed up to the programme in order to conduct litter picks within their local areas.

As part of the Green Heart programme, a number of education campaigns were undertaken by the Council, which included the controversial but successful 'Report the Tosser' campaign. The campaigns were then followed by a reporting mechanism designed to empower people to report cases of littering and/or dog fouling; as a result, over 1,200 reports were received.

The outputs from the Green Heart programme included: Green Heart branding applied to vehicles, uniforms and litter bins; a pledge to support signed by residents and businesses; installation of new larger litter bins along the A12 and A120; bee and butterfly friendly shrubs; installation of new cigarette bins in town centres, and Parish Councils planted a host of golden daffodils and Jubilee Oaks. In terms of the overall outcome of the programme, the District saw a reduction in litter of 55%, customer satisfaction levels for cleanliness rose from 64% to 87% and the District as a 'Place to Live' rose from 85% to 92%.

Following the conclusion of the Green Heart programme, the Council was keen to continue with its partnership working and develop a more Essex-wide approach under the title of 'Love Essex' in order to identify and foster new partnerships. Accordingly, the 'Cleaner Essex' group which was comprised of all 15 Essex Local Authorities, all Essex McDonalds, KFC and Dominos and independent local businesses was formed. Some of the benefits of partnership working in this respect, such as shared expertise, economies of scale and sponsorship opportunities, were also touched upon.

In 2017, the focus of the Love Essex group shifted from littering to fly-tipping, due to an increase in cases of 16% in 2016 and the significant costs associated with clearance. As a result, the Council adopted Keep Britain Tidy's 'Crime Not to Care' campaign which was implemented across Essex. The aim of the campaign was to educate the general public about the impacts of fly tipping and make them aware that they were, by law, responsible for the disposal of their rubbish. The campaign was advertised via the press, social media, banners, vehicle livery and local roadshows. As a result of the campaign, the average number of fly tips in Essex decreased by 15%, and by 7% in Braintree. The campaign

subsequently went on to be nominated in the Keep Britain Tidy awards in regard to its partnership working.

In respect of the Braintree District, a number of other campaigns that had been undertaken were also referenced, which included anti-dog fouling campaigns (e.g. work with the 'Friends of Flitch Way') and, in the aftermath of the Covid-19 pandemic, a new anti-litter campaign which aimed to reduce the amount of PPE waste. The PPE waste campaign was linked back with past campaigns such as 'Report the Tosser' and strengthened with new messages about the impacts of masks and other forms of PPE waste on the natural environment. It was added that the Council still encouraged and recruited Green Heart 'Champions,' the numbers of which were constantly increasing.

To summarise, Members were provided with a list of the factors which comprised a successful marketing campaign, such as: a good campaign slogan, budget, staff resources, cross departmental working, follow-ups on enforcement issues and monitoring and evaluation.

The full presentation may be viewed via the link below to the Council's YouTube Channel:-

<https://www.youtube.com/watch?v=z0CjXBo9Sec>

Further to the presentation, the following information was provided in response to the questions raised by Members:-

- During the Green Heart of Essex campaign, all businesses were contacted in order to ask them to take responsibility for their litter; primarily, this approach was targeted at fast food outlets, public houses and betting shops, or any premises where it was thought there would be a large amount of litter.
- In terms of littering, 'hotspot' areas were targeted during the campaigns. Areas where there was a lot of littering were identified first (e.g. such as Galleys Corner) and a partnership was then established with the businesses in those areas. It was added that the issues identified at the time were not necessarily specific to younger people; in fact, much of the littering that had been identified took place in the District's town centres, especially where there was a busy nightlife. Members were asked to let the Council know if they were aware of any local 'hotspot' areas for littering in their Wards.
- Members were advised that the 'triggers' for new litter campaigns were a combination of factors; for example, in the past, the Marketing team had worked closely with the Council's Street Scene team, who would inform them of any reoccurring issues or emerging trends regarding litter. When the smoking ban was first implemented, a campaign was undertaken around smoking related litter. Similarly, when a number of fast food outlets began opening up, a campaign was conducted around car littering. The team would also link in with national campaigns, which could be accessed free of charge.
- Once a campaign had finished, monitoring work would be undertaken for a few weeks afterwards, unless feedback indicated that monitoring needed to be extended (e.g. feedback from the Operations team). Whilst it was possible to reintroduce or 'reinvent' past campaigns, long-term campaigns often became less effective if the same messages were being circulated. As such, the Marketing team tried to vary the

campaigns that were undertaken in order to keep littering messages 'fresh' and eye-catching.

- Members were informed that over the past 10 years, the Council had conducted at least one litter specific campaign each year, if not more, some of which had been centred on the Braintree District, whereas others were Essex-wide and national campaigns (e.g. 'Keep Britain Tidy').
- The Marketing and Communications team were responsible for much of the Council's social media coverage around litter. The team also managed social media interactions and press releases around successful littering prosecutions, which helped to ensure that enforcement action taken by the Council was being highlighted to the public alongside deterrent campaigns.

At the end of the session, the Chairman expressed her grateful thanks on behalf of the Committee to Ros and Tania, both for their insightful presentation and for their contributions to Members' evidence gathering. Before leaving the meeting, Ros and Tania provided Members with a number of 'car litter' bags that had been designed by the Marketing and Communications team and used as part of one of the Council's previous littering campaigns.

The meeting commenced at 7.15pm and closed at 8.20pm.

Councillor Mary Cunningham
(Chairman)