

<b>Committee(s):</b> Ordinary Council	<b>Date:</b> 28 <sup>th</sup> July 2021
<b>Subject:</b> Environment, Enforcement & Housing Committee	<b>Wards Affected:</b> All
<b>Committee Chair:</b> Cllr Maria Pearson	
<b>Report of:</b>  Greg Campbell – Corporate Director (Environment & Communities) Email: <a href="mailto:greg.campbell@brentwood.gov.uk">greg.campbell@brentwood.gov.uk</a> Tel: 01277 312738  Dan Cannon - Community Safety Manager • Community Service Team Email: <a href="mailto:daniel.cannon@brentwood.gov.uk">daniel.cannon@brentwood.gov.uk</a> Tel: 01277 312692	<b>For Information</b>

### **Brentwood Borough Council Woodland Development**

Brentwood Borough Council are continuing to develop their woodland creation plans and have recently worked with and partnered Thames Chase and Lower Thames Crossing to secure the planting of 150,000 trees at Hole Farm Warley in a site approximately 250 acres wide. This will create a new country park for the borough.

We will also be seeking in 2021/2022 to plant up to 10,000 trees in Hutton Country Park. And the Community Trailer along with our Arboriculturist and support staff will be at the playing fields Wash Road Car Park in Hutton on the 13<sup>th</sup> July 2021 between 3pm and 6pm to meet residents and answer any questions about the proposed woodland.

Following this our arboriculturist will be arranging a tour of the Hutton Country Park proposed woodland site on a day later in July or August.

The Council will also be holding a seminar in September, the itinerary and agenda is presently being worked up. This will provide the opportunity for residents to hear from experts and listen to our plans for further tree planting in the borough. And lastly our Arboriculturist will be attending the Summer Family Days to promote the woodland environmental initiatives that Brentwood are delivering.

### **Electric charge points**

Following the agreement by committee to go out to procurement for the provision of over 20 Electric Vehicle Chargers in Council owned car parks across the borough earlier this year the initial stage has been completed.

We are using the Crown Commercial Framework for procurement in this exercise which whilst lengthy does create reassurance that the Council will have covered

most issues we are aware of. It is important that we get this contract correct prior to inviting bids. This will minimise any queries from bidders and avoid any ambiguity at contract award, which could cause lengthy delays in implementation. This will be for a considerable period in order for the companies to realise value on their investment. The Council do not therefore want to be in a contract that does not work for it nor its residents.

The initial stage of this procurement has been completed and we have had 19 expressions of interest. The second phase will go out in July and responses are expected back early August with awarding early September. Shortly after awarding we shall have a timeline of when the EV Chargers are likely to be installed and where.

## **Community Safety Partnership**

### **ASB Issues**

There has been a slight rise in Community ASB, particularly around the Coptfold Road Multistorey Car Park. Good work from the Community Safety Team (CCTV) and Essex Police to identify one offender. Courts have reopened allowing the team to progress with some cases currently sitting with legal.

### **School Projects**

As restrictions begin to ease, workshops and projects are beginning to be delivered in schools. Projects organised from last year's budget will be delivered in schools before the end of Summer Term. New projects and ideas will be brought to the next CSP Strategy Group at the end of July. Below are examples of some of the projects being funded, as well as these there will be projects based around knife crime and other key issues within the community.

- **Power of Love** – The Power of Love is a production based on real-life stories in raising awareness around healthy relationships, domestic abuse, safe sex and more. We currently have 3 out of 4 schools booked in for March.
- **Outreach** – The Essex Youth Service provided outreach work during and after lockdowns. The aim was to engage with young people and discuss issues around ASB, COVID-19 as well as gather information about local problems.

### **Out of Hours Patrols**

The team continue to patrol OOH assisting partners such as SEPP, Essex Police, Licensing and Environmental Health. This OOH patrols focus on parking contraventions, Anti-social Behaviour, Covid-19 breaches and the Night Time Economy.

## **A12 Litter picking**

### **Summary**

Major trunk roads (A12) are under the control of Highways England for repairs and maintenance. This includes all aspects, from road surface repairs, drainage, line marking, vegetation clearance, safety barriers, etc. The only function that does not fall upon Highways England is litter picking, bin emptying in lay-bys and fly-tip removal. This falls upon local authorities as they are classified as the PLA (Principal Litter Authority).

## **Background**

Brentwood has endeavoured to introduce a programmed cleaning schedule over many years but has always been faced with health and safety issues due to the nature of the A12 and the fast-flowing traffic. This has presented a major problem as safe systems of working have dictated that litter pick should only be undertaken with lane closures in place. This requires agreement from Highways England (HE) for implementations and this will only be granted in the night-time. As Brentwood Councils Street scene service is comparatively small in terms of staff numbers it is difficult to deploy staff to work through the night as this leaves statutory day time schedules unachievable due to rest periods and working time directive for staff.

## **History**

Brentwood undertook a full litter pick of the A12 in 2018 with assistance from Thurrock Council at a cost of circa 37K. This was for one litter pick.

Brentwood did arrange to implement a lane closure in the day-time over 5 weekends in 2019 but this was cancelled by HE at the last minute due to concerns over traffic flow. Since this time, it had been difficult to arrange the litter picking with HE

Further, it does not assist the Council when other authorities are undertaking their litter picking of major trunk roads including the A12 with what appears to be unsafe working methods. The state of the A12 in Brentwood compared to other parts of the A12 has raised some complaints from residents.

## **Current Actions**

The laybys are litter picked and the litter bins emptied on a weekly basis. Recently Brentwood Council has installed new secure wheeled litter bin stations in most laybys to help combat the heavy usage of these laybys, especially by goods vehicles who stop overnight or for rest breaks in the day.

Brentwood officers have also been working closely with HE and their contractor Ringways to bring a solution to the litter picking of the A12. Officers originally contacted Ringways directly to arrange for them to undertake the litter picking as they have the expertise and the experience of working on trunk roads, further Ringways have the appropriate and necessary equipment and fully trained staff. However, HE felt that this was not inline with the current contact they have with Ringways and that any works orders should go through them. Brentwood had no issues with involving HE and have now managed to engage with HE to authorise the works at a cost of approximately £12,000 per litter pick. This includes a £3,000 admin/handling fee from HE.

It is intended that a quarterly litter pick will be carried out, after an initial litter pick which will take place late June/early July 2021. Brentwood will also work alongside Ringways on a planned full road closure that will take place on 28 June 2021 to clear litter from the central reservations.

Brentwood's CEO and leader are also petitioning DEFRA and requesting that the 'Secretary of State' amends the Environment Protection Act (EPA 89) to allow litter picking of trunk roads to be removed from PLA (Principal Litter Authorities) responsibility and placed entirely under the relevant highway holders (Highways England's) control. This is something that officers from HE also believes would be the best approach to delivering a complete maintenance programme for trunk roads in the future.

### **Summer Litter Actions**

It became apparent that the easing of lockdown restrictions meant that many residents began walking and visiting local parks. Initial restrictions meant residents had to remain local for exercise or going out.

The lifting of restrictions and the use of our parks and pavements have seen an incredible increase due to this which has seen an increase in the amount of general litter being created. This litter has often been left by bins when they are overflowing or just dropped on the floor.

Looking forward to the uncertainty of the next few months it is expected that many families and residents will remain in Brentwood during the summer and make the most of our parks and the local area. This we believe will be even more evident at King Georges where the 'Splash Pad' and 'Adventure Play' are due to open in the coming months.

In order to combat this expected issue and keep up with the increasingly difficult litter situation the Council are engaging with a number of actions to manage the situation this summer.

These actions are set out below but not exhaustive and may alter or be increased if necessary, during the summer months.

Heavily used and frequently overflowing bins have been identified. These bins are those which have most use and have experienced most abuse over the last few months due to high footfall or are because they are accessible from open spaces. To combat this issue an additional litter bin emptying round has been introduced to compliment the current litter bin collection rounds.

- Signage for the affected bins encouraging people to take litter home when the bins are full will be deployed. In addition, there will be a sticker notifying of the day or days that the bin is emptied.

- The hours of our High Streets operatives have been staggered to ensure they cover a longer working day to ensure the bins are emptied more frequently.
- Larger bins have been deployed at King Georges Park to deal with the increased use and officers are investigating bunkered bins to future proof the park litter bins, especially with the introduction of the new splash park and additional play areas. Further consideration of digital bins will be investigated to see if these will enhance the service and make it more efficient.
- We are seeking temporary litter picking operatives from the recovery fund to be available throughout the summer on set busy days (Thursday to Sunday)
- Continued patrols by the National Enforcement Service to discourage poor behaviours will continue.
- The situation will be monitored regularly over the summer to see if the measures are having the desired effects and identify if any additional measures need to be considered.