

<b>Committee(s):</b> Ordinary Council	<b>Date:</b> 13 <sup>th</sup> December 2023
<b>Subject:</b> Chairs Report for Clean & Green Committee	
<b>Committee Chair:</b> Cllr Barry Aspinell	

### Lower Thames Crossing

Lying adjacent to the Brentwood Enterprise Park is the proposed route of the Lower Thames Crossing, the purpose of which is to alleviate congestion at the Dartford Crossings and is set for a decision next spring (dependant on the date of the General Election, or not).

At a presentation I attended with planning colleagues, along with officers, we listened to the proposals and I am pleased to say that National Highways are taking the climate emergency that we in Brentwood have already declared seriously. Not because Brentwood has taken this step, but because they are committed to carbon reduction at all levels of this route – in construction of the concrete and steel that is needed in the provision of the 34 bridges that will be required and in the equipment necessary for construction. Their earth moving equipment is planned to be driven by hydrogen and/or electric along with many other carbon reducing measures.

### Hole Farm Community Woodland

A further example of National Highways climate initiatives is their purchase of Hole Farm, Great Warley, which will be leased to Forestry England in perpetuity and in conjunction with Thames Chase, it is intended to plant over 150,000 new trees. This planting will be undertaken by Thames Chase, in partnership with Brentwood's Woodland Management team. I asked if there was room to discuss a solar panel farm and they agreed to be in touch to explore this idea.

### High Street Toilets

The previous Conservative Administration closed the High Street toilets permanently due to a fire breaking out and various acts of anti-social behaviour. Unfortunately, no plan was put in place to refurbish and re-open them in the future.

Responding to residents' requests that this valued council facility is re-opened, a programme of refurbishment and cleansing has been put in place. This is nearing its completion, with the installation of some new equipment. A dedicated attendant has been allocated to maintain the facilities as well as undertaking additional High Street cleansing.

### Fly-tipping

Fly-tipping throughout the borough has seen an increase this year so this administration has risen to the challenge and has removed more than 200 additional fly tips compared to the same period last year. I attended a public meeting in

Navestock, where the village hall was packed. Residents expressed their frustrations and anger over the deterioration of their community due to this increased criminal behaviour. Officers of Brentwood Council's Waste Management and Enforcement teams were present, along with the Police. Together we assured those residents everything is, and will be done to reduce their concerns considerably by introducing various means, including a speedier attendance to fly-tips. To this end, this council is looking at appropriate new equipment to deal with these situations, which will be taken to our budget setting meeting this year. Also, to assist in reducing this behaviour is the introduction of additional CCTV cameras to cover various sites within the Navestock area, which has only been possible due to the excellent work carried out by our enforcement team in acquiring additional funding to facilitate their purchase.

Navestock Parish Council have also funded four additional cameras that can be moved to various hot spots. Our enforcement team patrol the area daily along with Essex Police Rural Team.

I met a couple of weeks ago with concerned residents of Navestock and the Parish Council Chair to discuss ways to improve their community and agreed that there would be a regular monthly communication provided to their group, who in turn would relay the information to the remainder of the village. They agreed with our Enforcement Team's camera installation and location and also that the Council's proposals to introduce a smaller, more appropriate vehicle to remove fly tips was a sensible way forward. They recognised that their village is just one small area of the borough and that the efforts the Council are putting in are disproportionate to the wider borough area, but it was also acknowledged that if we can, together, resolve this issue to a satisfactory level it would be a system we could put in place elsewhere within the borough, i.e., Warley and other rural areas that experience similar criminal behaviour.

### Climate Emergency – Success

Due to this administration's decision to declare a Climate Emergency for Brentwood, rather than ignoring the issue and hoping it goes away, we have started the process of introducing measures to reduce our carbon emissions. To that end, the Clean & Green Committee are being asked to change fuel used in our fleet to Green Diesel, which has an immediate effect on carbon emissions, but we won't rest there, we will look at all alternative fuels and means of carrying out the valued services to the residents of Brentwood whilst also respecting our environment.

Solar Panels are agreed to be installed on the Brentwood Centre roof and additional EV chargers have been commissioned. Contractors have informed me that by the time of reading this report they will be installed in King Georges and Chatham Way car parks. Additionally, we are in contact with other climate emergency groups throughout the County and beyond to discuss best practice and to implement successful measures rolled out elsewhere. To this end, a data collection process is being undertaken and our Environment Officer is suggesting best practice will be for all committees to take into consideration the climate change impact on decisions they make. This is an obvious issue regarding planning, and I know that our officers and members deal with this regularly, but we must be vigilant and every application

needs to be addressed in this way, along with decisions taken through our other spending committees. Additionally, I would ask the Chair of Audit & Scrutiny to take on the task of spot-checking our committee decisions to ensure compliance.