

Community Safety and Enforcement Plan

Report of the:	Chief Operating Officer
Contact:	Damian Roberts
Urgent Decision?(yes/no)	No
If yes, reason urgent decision required:	N/A
Annexes/Appendices (attached):	None
Other available papers (not attached):	None

Report Summary

This report sets out a proposal for a more effective and coordinated approach to the Council's community safety role, including tackling antisocial behaviour and environmental crime in the borough.

Recommendation (s)

- (1) To approve the approach set out in this paper to deliver a more effective and coordinated approach to the Council's community safety role.
- (2) To delegate to the Chief Operating Officer in consultation with the Chair of Strategy and Resources authority to seek external funding on behalf of the Council to help underpin this work.

1 Implications for the Council's Key Priorities, Service Plans and Sustainable Community Strategy

- 1.1 The proposals set out in this report will contribute to the delivery of the Council's corporate priorities including helping to protect the local environment and providing a more effective response to environmental crime and antisocial behaviour that will enhance public confidence. It also contributes to achieving greater value for money.

2 Background

- 2.1 As one of the safest places to live in the country, Epsom and Ewell enjoys relatively low levels of crime and antisocial behaviour. However, when these issues do occur, they are usually highly visible, create significant public concern and if not addressed at an early stage, can attract further, more serious problems.

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- 2.2 These concerns can include litter, flytipping, environmental nuisance such as damage to communal green spaces, poorly maintained front gardens, and the use of some premises for inappropriate activities that cause anti social behaviour.
- 2.3 The Council already had an important role in dealing with antisocial behaviour and environmental nuisance and has the opportunity to draw on a range of statutory powers to help tackle this.
- 2.4 It is interesting to note how many different Council functions have an important enforcement role, these include:
- 2.4.1 Environmental Health (statutory nuisance)
 - 2.4.2 Food Safety
 - 2.4.3 Licencing
 - 2.4.4 Private Sector Housing
 - 2.4.5 Planning Enforcement
 - 2.4.6 Community Safety
 - 2.4.7 Operations (environmental street scene including dealing with litter)
 - 2.4.8 Rangers
 - 2.4.9 On-street and off-street Parking Enforcement
 - 2.4.10 Building Control (building structures)
 - 2.4.11 Legal team
- 2.5 It is proposed that the Council takes an evidence based approach to shaping its enforcement and community safety role. This includes accessing local intelligence and making the most of the significant local knowledge and community contacts that both staff and members have across the borough. This will ensure that the Council's actions are proportionate, are targeted in the right area, and reflect the genuine concerns of the local community.
- 2.6 The following table sets out some initial analysis of just 5 areas of environmental crime/anti-social behaviour in the borough. This highlights in particular the significant increase in concerns about flytipping and noise complaints.

Year	Fly tips	Litter reports	Dog Fouling	Noise complaints	Graffiti
2014-2015	401	602	64	489	148
2015-2016	758	705	106	319	110
2016-2017	920	486	59	334	124

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- 2.7 Although the analysis necessarily highlights each concern separately, in many cases these different types of anti-social behaviour and environmental crime happen simultaneously in the same location. For example, a licensing issue related to drinking, may also be linked to increased concerns about food hygiene, and further concerns about noise and litter outside the premises. Each of these would rely on input from separate functions within the Council and could be much more effective if properly co-ordinated.

3 Proposal

- 3.1 There is an opportunity to strengthen the Council's existing enforcement and community safety role in a number of ways. This would enable the Council to:
- 3.1.1 Ensure that staff are properly trained and have the right processes in place to make use of the enforcement powers available to them, and to use them appropriately and effectively
 - 3.1.2 Identify additional powers that the Council may wish to utilise, including extending the use of Public Space Protection Orders and extending the use of Fixed Penalty Notices.
 - 3.1.3 Take a more coordinated approach to the Council's enforcement role, drawing on the input of relevant services, the Police and other statutory agencies in order to deliver a more effective and targeted approach.
 - 3.1.4 Consider how the Council may wish to improve its positive visibility within the community when undertaking enforcement activities, including the use of high visibility clothing with Council's branding, which is consistent across all enforcement functions.
 - 3.1.5 Help reduce the incidence of litter, flytipping, graffiti, and environmental nuisance such as poorly maintained gardens, damage to public green spaces, and use of premises for anti-social related activities etc
 - 3.1.6 Make greater use of local intelligence to identify current and emerging hot spots, including making more of the local knowledge of Ward Councillors, enabling earlier and better targeted enforcement activity and greater alignment to concerns felt in the community.
 - 3.1.7 Promote the Council's enforcement successes, including successful prosecutions, to help grow public confidence and deter future offenders.
 - 3.1.8 Identify any gaps in resources or access to specific enforcement powers, and access external funding where possible to help underpin the Council's approach.

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4 Benefits of this approach

- 4.1 There are significant additional benefits of taking a more coordinated and targeted approach to enforcement and community safety, namely:
 - 4.1.1 Better value achieved from the Council's existing enforcement functions by taking a more joined up approach.
 - 4.1.2 Greater knowledge and skills of officers in utilising existing and new environmental and anti-social behaviour legislation.
 - 4.1.3 More targeted, intelligence led approach – maximising the impact that can be achieved from the resources available.
 - 4.1.4 More confident and stronger engagement with the Police and other agencies about the Council's expectations.
 - 4.1.5 Higher visibility of the Council in keeping Epsom and Ewell "clean and green", "supporting our community", and supporting businesses and our economy".
 - 4.1.6 Increased enforcement action being taken and associated income which can be reinvested back into Council services.
 - 4.1.7 Successful reduction in incidents of anti-social behaviour and environmental offending, particularly in those hotspots where intervention by the Council has not succeeded in the past.
 - 4.1.8 Better trained staff, with greater multi skilling and greater scope to contribute across a wider range of areas.
 - 4.1.9 Higher satisfaction from local residents and businesses.

5 Formal arrangements for multi-agency working

- 5.1 There is an existing arrangement for carrying out the Council's statutory functions in relation to community safety and enforcement. This includes the **Community Safety Partnership for Epsom and Ewell**, operated across the East Surrey Councils attended by the Council, the Police and other statutory agencies. This group maintains an overview of crime and disorder, anti-social behaviour across the wider area and engages in the development of future policy.
- 5.2 There is also an existing operational arrangement, the **Joint Action Group (JAG)** which has an important role in coordinating a multi agency response to complex cases.
- 5.3 In seeking to strengthen the Council's approach to both these groups the following is proposed:

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5.3.1 A formal member appointment is made to the East Surrey Community Safety Partnership as part of the appointments agreed each year at the Annual Council meeting.

5.3.2 The Council will take greater ownership of the **Joint Action Group**, ensuring that its operational focus reflects Council priorities and ensuring that the Council is formally represented at Head of Service level to ensure that there is proper coordination of the Council's input from across all relevant enforcement functions.

5.3.3 To develop proposals for a Joint Enforcement Team (JET) type approach that reflects the priorities for Epsom and Ewell which are set out in this report.

Opportunity for external funding

5.4 A lot of progress can be made without the need for additional resources. However, some up-front investment would certainly help in accelerating what can be achieved. For example, additional funding could be utilised for:

5.4.1 Training and the development of procedure guides for staff

5.4.2 Uniforms with consistent high visibility corporate branding

5.4.3 Equipment such as upgrading existing CCTV cameras, purchasing new portable CCTV cameras, noise monitoring equipment and appropriate signage etc

5.4.4 Printing of warning and enforcement notices

5.4.5 Vehicle livery to increase the visibility and branding on vehicles used on enforcement activities.

5.4.6 Extending the use of body worn cameras (currently being piloted by carparking enforcement)

5.5 From discussions with the Borough Inspector, it appears that there may be some one-off funding available from the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office for **Joint Enforcement** work that could be used to help pump prime the Council's new approach. A funding application, aligned to Members' aspirations, could be made based on the approach to strengthening enforcement and community safety set out in this report.

6 Proposed actions for 2018/19

Governance

6.1 On-going committee ownership of the community safety and enforcement plan will be determined through a piece of work being coordinated by the Council's Chief Legal Officer. It is expected that this will be resolved in May this year.

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- 6.2 Nominate the Council's formal representative on the East Surrey Community Safety Partnership at the forthcoming Annual Council meeting.
- 6.3 Nominate the Head of Housing & Community Services be the Council's lead officer on the local Joint Action Group.
- 6.4 An officer board is established to coordinate the operational delivery of this plan chaired by the Chief Operating Officer with representation from relevant enforcement services

Resources

- 6.5 Work is underway to explore how available resources could be used more effectively to underpin and support this work.
- 6.6 Prepare an application to access potential one off funding from the Police and Crime Commissioners Office.

Intelligence

- 6.7 Undertake a base line study of anti social behaviour and environmental crime in the borough to identify trends and hot spots that can be used as evidence base to guide this work
- 6.8 Work with the police and other relevant statutory agencies to facilitate a greater sharing of information and intelligence to facilitate the more effective targeting and response to anti social behaviour and environmental crime in the borough.

New powers and processes and tools

- 6.9 Review the range of powers available to the Council and bring forward proposals eg for Public Space Protection Orders and any other additional enforcement tools that Council services wish to make use of in tackling anti-social behaviour and environmental crime..
- 6.10 Bring forward a new protocol for ensuring that there is an effective response to unauthorised encampments.
- 6.11 Develop the internal knowledge and capacity to better enforce penalties for breaches of legislation.
- 6.12 Review existing CCTV strategy and identify opportunities for further improvement.

Training

- 6.13 Bring forward new training plans for Officers and for Members that underpin the use of the Council's enforcement powers, but also includes the Council's key role in relation to Safeguarding, tackling Modern Day Slavery, Child Sexual Exploitation and engaging in Prevent (to tackle the risks of radicalisation).

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Communications

- 6.14 Promote the Council's enforcement successes internally and externally through press releases, use of existing print and on-line channels and through targeted campaigns.

7 Financial and Manpower Implications

- 7.1 The Council's 2018/19 budget was agreed by members in February 2018. Any additional financial resources for the proposed approach will be included in a funding application to the Police and Crime Commissioner's Office. Should the application be unsuccessful, Officers will work within existing resources.

8 Legal Implications (including implications for matters relating to equality)

- 8.1 There are no direct legal implications arising from the recommendations of the report.

9 Sustainability Policy and Community Safety Implications

- 9.1 Sustainable communities are communities that feel safe and are able to get on with their lives. This report sets out proposals to strengthen the Council's contribution to community safety within the borough.

10 Partnerships

- 10.1 The Council will draw on best practice from other parts of local government and will seek to build stronger working relations with a range of statutory agencies including the Police, Housing Associations, Adult and Children Services, and Mental Services, to help ensure that the Council is able to progress and robust and effective approach.

11 Risk Assessment

- 11.1 There are risks of not doing anything, as the Council would be vulnerable to criticism for not using its statutory powers and service functions effectively to address public concerns about anti social behaviour and environmental crime such as flytipping.
- 11.2 There is a risk that the Police may begin to over rely on the action that the Council is taking, rather than taking the required action themselves. However, it is much easier for a Council that understands its own powers and is already delivering on them, to hold other partners to account for their delivery.
- 11.3 The Council may not be successful in any funding bids. In this case, the Council will proceed at the pace that current resources allow, but still seeking to maximise the impact from these existing resources.

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- 11.4 There is a risk that the Council may be perceived as going too far with its enforcement responsibilities, and only “doing it for the money” it can generate from spot fines etc. There are examples of this perception in some parts of the country where one or two Councils have taken a more commercial approach to enforcement where a primary objective has been to maximise income. However, in Epsom and Ewell, the approach is grounded in responding to the priorities of residents, and taking a robust but sensitive approach to enforcement that inspires public confidence.

Ward(s) Affected: (All);