

## **Minutes of the Meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 5 July 2018 at 7.00 pm**

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**Present:** Councillors Lynn Worrall (Chair), Angela Sheridan (Vice-Chair), Qaisar Abbas, Mike Fletcher, Ben Maney and Elizabeth Rigby

**In attendance:** Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways  
Claire Harvey, Strategic Lead for Waste Services  
Daren Spring, Assistant Director – Street Scene & Leisure, Environment & Highways  
Alli Stanford, Contracts and Business Development Team Leader  
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting may be filmed and was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

### **1. Minutes**

The minutes of the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 22 February 2018 were approved as a correct record.

### **2. Items of Urgent Business**

No matters of urgent business were received.

### **3. Declaration of Interests**

No interests were declared.

### **4. Linford Household Waste & Recycling Centre - 12 month update following in-source**

Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways, thanked Beau Stanford-Francis and his team for their hard work in completing the report and advised that Beau had subsequently left the employment of Thurrock Council. Julie Rogers updated Members on the progress and performance of the Linford Household Waste and Recycling Centre since it had been returned under the Council's control in June 2017. Julie Rogers detailed the ongoing improvements and the redevelopment programme that had been identified in the report.

The Chair thanked Julie Rogers for the report and noted that the current site was old, possibly not fit for purpose and required improvements and hoped that the planned developments would provide this.

The Chair stated that the current members of the committee had not seen the proposed development plans and asked that these be sent to all Members. The Chair also requested a site visit to the Linford Centre and this would be arranged by democratic services.

Councillor Sheridan stated that she had visited the site this week and although the Council had taken steps in the right direction the site was dreadful and the permit scheme was not working successfully. Councillor Sheridan questioned why the trial week had not continued for longer and why there were no signs at the site advising residents of the permitting scheme. She also felt that there should be a facility to issue permits on site. Councillor Sheridan also questioned how the centre would cope with the increase in potential homes being built in the borough.

Councillor Rigby agreed that permits should be issued on site.

Julie Rogers stated reports and plans presented to Members at the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee in October 2017 and to Cabinet in December 2017 would be forwarded to Members for information and would be happy to host a visit to the Linford Centre. Julie Rogers confirmed that the indicative plans formed part of the pre-planning application.

Julie Rogers stated that the trial week had not continued as less than 8% of residents who were allowed to access the site subsequently applied for a permit. She also advised that the site did not have broadband facilities currently which prevented issue at site currently. While the trial was in place congestion had been caused on the access road by residents queuing to get onto the site and that safety of the site was paramount. Julie Rogers stated complaints were not being received and where Councillors are receiving complaints they should encourage residents to use the Council's complaints procedure. She advised that the site license was at risk if the Council continued to allow abuse of the site by trade and the Council must do all they can to protect it. The current turnaround on permits was seven days, she acknowledged the frustration for residents and advised the team were doing all they can to reduce the timescales involved and are focussed on an automated solution as soon as possible.

Julie Rogers stated the installation of the copper line had now taken place, and in the next few weeks broadband would be live. This would provide a great opportunity for the automatic number plate recognition system which would monitor vehicles coming onto the site. Signage for the site was in the design process and would be installed in the next couple of weeks.

Councillor Abbas questioned whether residents still had to provide identification of address before using the Linford Centre. How had the figures for the decrease in fly tipping in the borough been calculated and asked if records were kept for follow up enforcement, should a waste load be refused at the site. He also stated that the Council could have done more than just putting notification of the permit scheme in Council Tax Bills.

Julie Rogers stated awareness had increased on the site; vehicle registrations of rejected loads were taken by staff and body worn cameras captured the information required. In instances of fly tipping this information could be used to match up with offenders. Julie Rogers stated the exercise carried out in 2017 had targeted activity on the site and offenders were identified as people travelling in from outside the borough. That fly tipping figures were based on van loads and the criteria set by DEFRA.

Councillor Abbas asked what further steps could be undertaken. Julie Rogers stated for every fly tipping incident reported a member of the team would visit and record all the evidence and call in enforcement officers if required to explore such evidence. If evidence was sufficient action would be taken and include prosecution where appropriate. Further awareness for local residents will take place to discourage them paying cash for items to be disposed of and the need to check that person had the appropriate waste disposal license. If evidence was found in fly tipped waste and was linked back to that resident they could be liable for fines and potential prosecution. Work with the communications team was taking place for signage in hotspot areas and CCTV activity would be increased as a deterrent, where appropriate.

Councillor Fletcher stated when he had used the Linford Centre over the last 6 to 9 months he had not been asked for any identification. Alli Stanford stated that the security over the permit scheme had taken priority but would check with staff on site that this process was being undertaken.

Councillor Fletcher stated residents should be made more aware of the permit scheme before they actually get to the site. That communications should be improved and the link on the web site more readily available. Councillor Fletcher questioned whether there was any delay in the planning application. Julie Rogers stated that work was still ongoing and on track to be presented to the Planning Committee in October.

Councillor Fletcher questioned the limited amount of space and the access road into the Linford Centre and had consideration been made to change this point of access. Julie Rogers stated the provisional plans addressed the access point with a middle lane being introduced for traffic turning right and the route through the site would change.

Councillor Maney welcomed the project and the services that are currently being provided and relied on by Thurrock residents. He questioned whether the Linford Centre was ideally situated and what consideration had been taken into account when looking at longer term needs and the importance of keeping the site open while redevelopment took place. Julie Rogers confirmed that alternative sites had been looked at and the conclusions of these would be included in the comprehensive plans that would form part of the planning application. Julie Rogers stated that consideration was currently being given as to whether the site could safely operate a limited service during redevelopment and if it could not alternative temporary sites were being considered as a plan B.

Councillor Maney questioned why the other recycling centre had closed so quickly after opening and whether the Council had missed an opportunity to find another alternative site that would provide better services in the long term. Julie Rogers stated she was unable to comment due to this being undertaken prior to her joining Thurrock and would pick this item up with the team.

The Chair agreed with Councillor Maney that the Council could have potentially missed the opportunity of considering alternative sites.

The Chair questioned the safety and wellbeing of staff at the Linford Centre and how this would continue to be addressed when the proposed changes happen. Julie Rogers stated that staff were happier since the service had been brought back in house, working in a much safer working environment. Alli Stanford stated that staff were sometimes put in difficult positions and that the security were there to take this pressure off staff. That the security staff were well trained on how best to deal with difficult situations.

Julie Rogers stated that security had been brought in following an investigation and to deal with the repercussions of the permit scheme being introduced and would stay on site for as long as felt necessary.

Councillor Sheridan shared an incident with the committee that had occurred on site over the last couple of days. Julie Rogers stated that investigations would take place and anticipated that it was an isolated incident.

The Chair asked Members to agree on the recommendation made in the report.

## **RESOLVED**

**That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the content of the report.**

### **5. Recycling - Current position and planned actions**

Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways, referred Members to the report and updated them on the current position on recycling rates and stated that Thurrock Council, like other local authorities in the United Kingdom, had experienced a decline in levels of recycling. With the key focus of activity being a dedicated communication and education programme. Julie Rogers stated that the key approach for the coming year would be to continue to increase recycling rates with all the challenges she outlined and improve the quality of dry recycling materials, be addressing contamination.

The Chair thanked Julie Rogers for the report.

Councillor Sheridan stated the sticker idea was good and it was great to see that schools were getting involved. Councillor Sheridan observed that the current stickers on bins had worn out and asked whether these could be

replaced. That the Council should be more aware when distributing rubbish sacks to local forums that these were recyclable waste sacks.

Councillor Rigby questioned how contamination was detected. Julie Rogers stated that generally the crew would lift the bin lid and identify if contamination was evident. Where contaminated bins were identified these bins would be locked out. Julie Rogers stated that work with the communications team was taking place to better inform residents of the key contaminants and educate residents as to the appropriate bins for these items.

Councillor Fletcher stated the Council should follow their own rules and provide recyclable waste sacks to local forums, groups and businesses. Those local businesses were confused and required clearer guidance on how best to recycle and asked whether these forums could help to educate residents. Julie Rogers stated a trial to test clear sided euro bins was underway, particularly in communal areas. These could be also used as an educational tool and filled with contaminated items to demonstrate to such forums and was happy to commit to attendance at forums to educate and encourage recycling.

Councillor Abbas questioned whether Julie Rogers believed the national target of 50% of all household waste to be recycled reused and composted was achievable. Julie Rogers stated that where she had worked previously the authority was the worst nationally for recycling at 11%, through a complete change of collection to fortnightly collections and a paid for garden waste service, in year one they increased to 45% and currently sit comfortably at 55%. Therefore the figure could be achieved but it would depend on appetite for change.

Councillor Abbas asked whether the bin stickers could identify the contaminated items. Julie Rogers stated a balance had to be made to ensure that the Key Performance Indicators for collection were still being met, crews adding stickers to bins and identifying contaminated items could slow the collection process.

Councillor Maney questioned whether a breakdown list of each ward in the borough could be provided that would identify the worst contaminated areas. Julie Rogers stated that currently the days of the week identified the worst contaminated areas. With the introduction of the PDA system this would be able to accurately record by household and identify those residents not participating with recycling so only those properties would be targeted long term.

Councillor Rigby questioned whether alternative approaches could be considered to understand resident's perceptions to recycling.

The Chair stated that signs could be provided that identified the costs of recycling that may encourage more residents to do their bit.

The Chair stated that bins in cemeteries should form part of the brown bin review.

The Chair questioned how the decline of usage of brown bins in the winter months could be addressed.

Daren Spring stated that a bin review was being undertaken which would address recycling bins and educate residents how best to use the recycling bins currently in situ in the high street and some recreational areas. Euro size bins for cemeteries had now been sourced and would be used within the cemeteries. Educating residents would be ongoing in all areas in terms of what items can and cannot be put in the bins.

Julie Rogers stated that there was a significant drop off of the use of brown bins in the winter months, with predominantly small amounts of food waste being presented. Julie Rogers agreed to review the brown bins and come back with proposals to reflect ideas from the committee for further consideration. The intention was for the reduced resource requirement to be implemented in educating and encouraging behaviour change to increase recycling.

Councillor Sheridan asked why residents could not apply for a further or a larger brown bin. Claire Harvey stated that this facility was available now to residents and could be ordered on-line from the Council's web site. Councillor Sheridan stated the web site was confusing and had to be made more simplified for residents.

Councillor Maney supported the weekly bin collections but thought it futile to collect brown bins weekly in the winter. This item should be added to the work programme to enable Cabinet to make any further decisions.

The Chair also endorsed that the review would not reduce staffing.

The Chair asked Members to agree on the recommendations made in the report.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee received the report for information and comment.**
- 2. That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to receive a report back on the proposed pilot scheme in February 2019.**
- 3. That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed to attend a site visit of the Linford Recycling Centre.**

## **6. Work Programme**

The Chair asked Members if there were any items to be added or discussed for the work programme for the 2018-19 municipal year.

The Chair requested that an update report on the Community Safety Partnership be added to the 4 October 2018 Committee.

The Chair requested that a report on Anti-Social Behaviour and Gang Related Violence be added to the 4 October 2018 committee.

The Chair requested that an update report on Recycling to include Brown Bin Review be added to the 7 February 2019 committee.

The Chair requested that a report on the Bartec System be added to the 7 February 2019 committee.

Councillor Abbas requested that a report on Fly Tipping in Thurrock be presented.

Councillor Rigby requested that a report on Air Pollution be presented.

The Chair requested that a report on Refuse Collections be presented.

The Chair requested that a report on Ground Maintenance and Street Cleansing, to include Keep Britain Tidy, be presented.

Councillor Maney requested that a report on Parking on Verges be presented. Julie Rogers stated this item may fall under the Planning Transport and Regeneration Overview and Scrutiny Committee and would advise Members at the next committee.

## **RESOLVED**

- 1. That the item Community Safety Partnership be added to the 4 October 2018 Committee.**
- 2. That the item Anti-Social Behaviour and Gang Related Violence be added to the 4 October 2018 committee.**
- 3. That the item Fly Tipping in Thurrock be added to the 6 December 2018 committee.**
- 4. That the item Air Pollution be added to the 6 December 2018 committee.**
- 5. That the item Ground Maintenance and Street Cleansing, to include Keep Britain Tidy, be added to the 6 December 2018 committee.**

6. That the item Refuse Collections be added to the 7 February 2019 committee.
7. That the item Recycling to include Brown Bin Review be added to the 7 February 2019 committee.
8. That the item Bartec System Update be added to the 7 February 2019 committee.

The meeting finished at 8.22 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIR**

**DATE**

Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
Democratic Services at [Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk](mailto:Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk)