

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 September 2023 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Valerie Morris-Cook (Chair), Joycelyn Redsell (Vice-Chair), Cathy Kent and Maureen Pearce and Aaron Green (substitute for Councillor Hurrell)

Apologies: Councillor Mark Hurrell, Sheila Coates, Interim Director – Public Realm - Transformation

In attendance:
Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager
Michael Dineen, Assistant Director Counter Fraud, Enforcement and Community Safety
Rhiannon Whiteley, Senior Democratic Services Officer

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.

28. Minutes

The minutes of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee meeting held on 13 June 2023 were approved as a correct record.

29. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

30. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

31. Essex Police - Verbal Update

Officers clarified that the District Commander would respond to questions and provide an update as part of the next item on the Annual Report of the Community Safety Partnership. The Chair therefore moved on to the next item.

32. Annual Report of the Community Safety Partnership

The Community Safety Partnership Manager introduced the Annual report and explained that it provides the following: -

- an opportunity to review the performance in 2022/23
- to provide an insight into priorities and activities to address them in 2023 /24
- an opportunity to pose questions to the Community Safety Partnership Manager and District Commander.

Please refer to the Committee Meeting recording which can be found on the following link to view the full presentation:

[Thurrock Council - Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee, 07/09/2023 - YouTube](#)

Members raised the following key points: -

- Members queried what they can do to help promote the activity of the Community Safety Partnership and what role members should play in encouraging reporting.
- Members queried with the District Commander what advice can be given to residents to prevent their cars from being stolen. The District Commander encouraged residents to report off-road biking, Anti-social behaviour, littering to members and the police through online reporting. If residents see a motorbike on the pavement, they should call 999 as that could cause injuries. If the police don't receive information they cannot respond. The District Commander explained that they received 25 reports of bikes on Orsett Heath so resources were directed there, a child was injured in Chadwell St Mary and unfortunately only one report had been received of off-road bikes in that area in the past 6 months when in fact residents have since reported occurrences are much more frequent than what has been reported. The police direct resources based on reports and data received.
- The Head of Community Safety, Emergency Planning and Resilience added that reports and intelligence can also be used to apply for funding.
- The District Commander confirmed through the Essex Police website residents can report matters to the police online instead of using 101 or 999.
- Essex Police have a Facebook and Twitter page where they publicise what they are doing including engagement events, highlight good stories and witness appeals.
- Members were advised that crime prevention advice is given at engagement events. Neil Brand is the Community Safety Engagement Officer who attends the 'Let's Talk' events.
- Members were advised that there has been a 16.4% rise in vehicle crime. The Lakeside car parks are a hotspot.
- The District Commander advised that residents do not keep valuables in their car or on display, make sure their car is locked, turn off the keyless setting and keep keys away from the front of your house so the signal cannot be boosted.

- Members queried if petrol cars were being targeted over Diesel cars due to ULEZ. The District Commander responded that he did not have that data.
- Members raised that Anti-Social Behaviour has reduced according to the data but residents feel it has increased, members queried if this could be a result of residents now been scared of the repercussions in reporting. The District Commander clarified that the Police are data led. Residents can report anonymously through Crime Stoppers.
- Members raised the issue of off-road bikes in Purfleet, members noted that it is well known that this is happening, but it has not been reported. The Community Safety Partnership confirmed there is a problem with engagement in Purfleet, they have conducted pop-up events and nobody has spoken to them. Crimestoppers cards have been handed out. The CSP manager highlighted that Crimestoppers cards could be provided to members to hand out to residents.
- Members noted that in Blackshots the hardening measures have worked and the problem with off-road bikes have reduced.
- The District Commander confirmed that the perception data is provided by an independent survey company who speak to a proportion of residents
- Members queried the delay in collecting cars seized with police aware signs on them. The District Commander confirmed a decision has to be made as to whether it will be seized for forensics or not and this can cause delay.
- Members queried why schools are not maximising the opportunities from Essex Police and Fire service regarding crime prevention which is a free service. The TCSP manager requested that members raise this with schools and school governors – it is always included in the Headteachers bulletin. If there is an increase in hate crime in certain areas, schools will be approached by the Education Lead to see if the schools want someone to go in and deliver a talk. There is an outreach team that work in 3 schools in the borough regarding gang related violence. There is also a Gangs intervention worker. Multi-agency meetings are also offered termly to schools.
- Members recommended a by-annual report to monitor how things are going
- Members queried if alleyways could be identified which are not Council-owned or privately owned and the Community pay back team authorised to clear these. The TCSP manager confirmed that the Head of Clean and Green would have to answer this.
- The Chair requested that Sheila Coates attend future meetings as a Co-opted member when violence against women and girls is being discussed.
- The Chair queried the £490,000 underspend. The TCSP manager confirmed that the new burdens funding started in the April and they couldn't allocate the funding until a Needs Assessment was completed. The needs assessment was completed in September. The funding is always spent in arrears. The TCSP manager assured the committee the money has not been lost. There was also a need to recruit which

takes time. The TCSP manager noted that Sheila Coates has raised concerns that the criteria can be limiting on what you can spend it on, a report is being prepared to look at this and a collective response is being considered with other Local Authorities.

- Members queried what is done for men and boys regarding domestic abuse. The CSP manager confirmed that funding is led by data. All services are available to men and boys with the exception of the refuge. There is also a specialist male officer.
- Members raised if Neighbourhood Watch is being encouraged and queried how many active groups there are. The District Commander confirmed it is important. Roger Passfield is the Chair for Neighbourhood watch in Thurrock and disseminates information to those groups about crimes to watch out for. He also brings messages from Neighbourhood Watch to the police. The District Commander urged residents to report crimes and get involved with a Neighbourhood Watch group. There is also Speed Watch. The District Commander added that Neighbourhood Watch has moved on, neighbours have whatsapp groups where they share information or ring doorbell footage regarding any suspicions or concerns.
- Members requested that Roger Passfield should be invited to attend a future Committee meeting
- Members queried what environment ASB would cover. The District Commander confirmed this would be car cruising and off-road biking.
- Members queried the problems that have arisen in America regarding the issue of prescriptions for addictive painkillers documented in recent Television documentaries. The District Commander clarified that in the UK we have the NHS and painkillers are authorised by Public Health. In America prescription drugs go through the FDA and therefore it is different. The Community Safety Partnership Manager confirmed that she can liaise with the Director for Public Health regarding this and report back to the Committee.
- Members queried the response to those who are suffering from Human slavery. The District Commander responded that Operation Bluebird is Essex Police's response to those found in the back of lorries. The police work with the Border Force, the Home Office, the Modern Slavery team and TCSP regarding this issue. There is a multi-agency response to these issues. The TCSP manager raised that Essex wide training is being delivered on Modern Slavery and members should have received an email about this.
- The Chair noted that the report is very ambitious and queried how confident the CSP manager is in achieving it.
- The CSP manager responded that 9 priorities is huge and more than previous years. The Chair noted that all of the priorities matter and none of them could be dropped, the Council is under financial constraints, the Chair queried what can be done to help deliver them. The Head of Service for Community Safety, Emergency Planning and Resilience stated that it will depend on good partnership and working with different teams within the council. They cannot predict what any restructure may look like or the future financial situation and therefore can only comment on the situation as it is now. Financial constraints

may impact how and if they can deliver on all of the priorities. If there is a saving being considered officers asked members to question how it will affect the Community Safety Partnership.

- An additional recommendation was proposed by the Chair and agreed by all committee members that when the Council is delivering savings, an impact assessment should be completed around the Community Safety Partnership and its 9 priorities and how the savings affect the 9 priorities. This should also consider if it would cost the Council more down the line if a service is removed.
- The TCSP raised that an officer through safer streets is dedicated to Grays High Street who has engaged with the businesses and put in a lot of intelligence and without him it would have take the police longer to get the results that they have in Grays.
- The Chair raised that the reception desk at the Civic Offices was very vulnerable and queried the security measures provided. The TCSP Manager stated that she understood orders have been made for stab vests and body worn cameras, the relevant director to answer the query is Mark Bradbury (Interim Director of Place). Members raised the issue of security and safety in the Civic Offices.
- The committee members accept that in relation to recommendation 1.1 they have viewed the report and challenged it but refused to 'note' the report. It was agreed that the wording of recommendation 1.1 would be amended.

ACTION 1: Roger Passfield is invited to a future committee meeting

ACTION 2: The Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager confirmed that she can liaise with the Director for Public Health regarding the issue of addictive painkillers

RESOLVED:

- 1.1 That the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee accept that they have viewed the annual report and provided their comments and challenge around the performance of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership for the year 2022/23 and the Community Safety Partnership priorities agreed for the year 2023/24.**
- 1.2 Understand the role that elected members play in encouraging reporting by residents and have an awareness of our priorities (in particular hidden harms)**
- 1.3 Members promote the activity of community safety partners to create a safer Thurrock and reassure communities.**
- 1.4 That the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend that when the Council is delivering savings, an impact assessment is completed around the**

Community Safety Partnership's 9 priorities and how the savings affect them.

33. Work Programme

The Chair requested a bi-annual report from the Community Safety Partnership.

The Chair requested a waste strategy update.

The committee members requested that a representative from the Clean and Green Service attend the next meeting.

The meeting finished at 8.30 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**