

<b>13 March 2012</b>		<b>ITEM 6</b>
<b>Cleaner, Greener &amp; Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee</b>		
<b>WORKING TOWARDS A CLEANER, GREENER AND SAFER THURROCK</b>		
<b>Report of:</b> Andrew Murphy and Lucy Magill		
<b>Wards and communities affected:</b> All	<b>Key Decision:</b> Not Applicable	
<b>Accountable Head of Service:</b> Andrew Murphy, Head of Environment, Lucy Magill, Head of Public Protection		
<b>Accountable Director:</b> Bill Newman, Director of Sustainable Communities		
<b>This report is</b> Public		
<b>Purpose of Report:</b> To report on actions taken by the Environment Department and Public Protection to support the Corporate priority of creating a cleaner, greener and safer Thurrock for all residents.		

## **EXECUTIVE SUMMARY**

This report has been compiled to provide an account of the actions and programmes that have been undertaken by the Environment Department and Public Protection to further the Corporate priority of creating a cleaner, greener and safer environment for residents. To this end the report will detail specific actions taken and the impacts of those actions.

### **1. RECOMMENDATIONS:**

**1.1 It is recommended that the actions contained in the report be noted.**

### **2. INTRODUCTION:**

**2.1** The Thurrock Council Corporate priorities include a commitment to ensure a safe, clean and green environment. The actions to support this priority sit predominantly within the Environment and Public Protection Departments. The section below provides a detailed account of the activities of those

departments over the past financial year, which have contributed to the delivery of this priority.

### **3. ACTIONS:**

#### **3.1 Environmental Health and Trading Standards**

- Firework checks Trading Standards Officers checked that all outlets selling fireworks were doing so safely and only to individuals over 18.
- Bogus Callers – No Cold Calling Areas (NCCAs) have continually been rolled out at suitable places, particularly sheltered housing complexes, across the borough to safeguard vulnerable residents from the risk of Bogus Callers. As part of the establishment of NCCA's police and trading standards officers work with residents before and after to provide relevant help and information to allow them to feel confident in dealing with situations. Success stories include a referral from partners in Safeguarding Adults services alerting Trading Standards to a potential con of an elderly resident who was being charged £6,000 for her drains to be cleared.
- His Church – fake designer clothes seized by Trading Standards were donated to charity His Church who rebrand them with their logo to be donated to vulnerable young people and families. The donation was made to TRUST.
- Trading Standards worked with Essex Fire and Rescue to carry out free testing ensure electric blankets being used in the borough were safe.
- Rogue Traders Week – Trading Standards carried out a number of operations
- A multi-agency operation involving the England Illegal Money Lending Team, Trading Standards, Licensing and Essex Police seized taxis and arrested a 60-year-old man around suspected illegal money lending and theft.
- Out of Hours Noise Nuisance line – launched for the summer months the line (open Friday and Saturday night from 9pm to 3am) has been extended to the end of March 2012 as a trial.

#### **3.2 Community Protection, Licensing and Drugs and Alcohol**

- Thurrock Council Officers, often in conjunction with Essex Police, have gained a number of successful prosecutions including 4 ASBO's against individuals, 2 prosecutions for fly tipping, 3 noise and environmental prosecutions and 1 prosecution for failing to comply with licence conditions
- Operation Pitstop – In conjunction with Essex Police the Community Protection Team carried out five undercover operations targeting underage drinkers and in particular adults that buy alcohol for those underage. This act of proxy alcohol purchase is a criminal offence punishable with a maximum fine of £5,000.
- Dispersal Orders – a new dispersal order was introduced to Tilbury in July covering parts of the town centre and giving police additional powers to disperse groups of youths. In November 2011 there were arrests in two separate incidents for breach of a dispersal order in Tilbury and Grays.
- Community Protection Officers continue to tackle fly posting and fly tipping. A number of appeals have been made for information relating to incidents.

- Dedicated patrols – For the week between Halloween and Bonfire Night the Community Protection carried out dedicated patrols in response to calls reporting ASB. An average of five calls were attended each night with 25 stop checks carried out, 50 units of alcohol, cigarettes and fireworks were seized from young people under 18.
- Pub Watch was launched in Grays with Stanford following later in the year. The scheme also supported B.O.B.B (Behave or Be Banned) offers licensed premises the opportunity to share best practice and specifically target troublemakers.
- Licensing Officers worked in conjunction with VOSA to carry out safety inspections on Thurrock taxis.
- Thurrock DAAT supported the Essex Rethink Your Drink campaign with information distributed to doctor's surgeries and pharmacies highlighting "safe" drinking levels.
- Community Protection Officers alongside Essex Police used Automatic Number Plate Recognition to stop suspect vehicles.
- Community Protection Officers working in conjunction with Essex Police to tackle car traders posing as private sellers who leave cars for sale at the side of the road.

### 3.3 Partnership Working

The Thurrock Community Safety Partnership's Strategy for 2011/14 sets out five priorities which will help to deliver the ultimate aims of:

- Helping people to feel safe and be safe
- Reduce crime – particularly alcohol fuelled and domestic abuse.

Working with our statutory partners and voluntary and community groups throughout the year we have held/implemented a number of events and projects which address at least one of the key priorities:

- Stay Safe operations led by the Youth Offending Service in partnership to target young people on the streets and deal with youth nuisance
- We held our statutory Meet the People event which gave partners including Essex Police, Essex Fire and Rescue and Thurrock Council, the opportunity to explain how crime and safety issues are affecting the community. Attractions included Essex Police Interceptor Car and Essex Fire and Rescue's chip pan demonstration.
- Partner Walkabout Days continued to be held with experts on the ground in specific areas to deal with residents concerns and issued and wherever possible solve as many of these on the day. PWADS were held in Purfleet, Chadwell St Mary, North Grays, Stanford and Tilbury. Almost 100 bags of rubbish (4 tonnes) have been cleared, more than 500 postcard questionnaires distributed with 200 completed, 165 hours of hi-visibility patrolling and 160 hours of community payback work completed. The High Sherriff's visited a Walkabout Day and afterwards she described the council as "well led with a dedicated team determined to make things happen and that as High Sheriff, representing the Queen's interests in law and order, it is wonderful to know how effectively Thurrock Council is creating a safer environment for all who live there."

- We continue to work with our partners, members, community and business representatives to prevent Counter Terrorism and held an event which highlighted the need for to communities, partners, business and organisations to work together.
- We continue to attend Community groups with targeted messages including advice on Personal Safety Day
- Work with the Youth Offending Service has continued with a number of notable successes particularly using restorative justice for young offenders to pay back victims and the communities affected by crime
- Prison! Me! No Way! was held at two Thurrock Schools to give pupils a taste of how crime can really affect their lives. Hosted by real prison officers the pupils are treated like real prisoners throughout the day.
- The Thurrock Alcohol Strategy has been drafted with our partners in health and focuses on six priorities under the headings Prevention, Enforcement and Treatment.
- Reg Bailey – author of the Government commissioned “Letting Children be Children” report addressed representatives about the sexualisation of children.
- Hate Crime was highlighted with new leaflets and posters advertising what is hate crime and how it can be reporting including through a third party. This was also promoted through our One Thurrock event.
- Learning Disability Stay Safe – three events have been held to provide crime and safety advice and information in an easy to understand format for the audience with learning disabilities. Organised in conjunction with Thurrock Lifestyle Solutions CIC and Thurrock Learning Disability Partnership Board the unique event provided every attendee with a personal safety plan they completed throughout the day and took home as a reminder.

### **3.4 Street Cleanliness**

The key measure of Street Cleanliness for local authorities is called NI 195. The indicator covers litter, detritus, graffiti and fly-posting, and is based on the percentage of areas within review tranche that fall below a particular level. Smaller scores indicate better performance.

Thurrock NI 195 scores – particularly for litter and detritus have shown dramatic improvement since 2008/09, the details are presented in the table below.

	<b>08/09</b>	<b>09/10</b>	<b>10/11</b>	<b>11/12 - Estimated</b>
<b>Litter</b>	19	8	8	5
<b>Detritus</b>	29	21	14	10
<b>Graffiti</b>	8	5	3	2
<b>Fly posting</b>	2	0	1	1

In addition to the steady improvements in the quality of cleanliness of streets, shop parades and town centres in Thurrock, the cost of this service per

household has declined over the past 3 years and is currently amongst the lowest in the Country as per data received from APSE.

### **3.5 Parks and Play Areas**

- This year once again, 3 Green Flags have been awarded to parks within the Borough. They were awarded to Coalhouse Fort, Grays Beach and Langdon Hills. This is recognition of the quality of those sites.
- Further work has continued to update and improve the quality and range of play equipment included in parks across the Borough. Some of the programmes completed this year are:
  - Refurbishment of the West Thurrock Memorial ground including the play area the creating of a Buzz Zone and the tennis courts.
  - A skate park has been opened in Purfleet with a free running facility planned to open in April 2012.
  - Anchorfield play area has been updated with further improvements planned.
  - Linford Road Recreation Ground play area was refurbished.
  - New sand and water play features have been installed at Dilkes Park.
  - Langdon Hills playground in the woods has been installed with phase 3 of the programme scheduled to start in April 2012.
  - Aveley Recreation Ground, West Thurrock Memorial and Grays Beach have had successful bids for the more Adizone equipment to be installed before the end of the financial year.
  - A new park was created in Rainbow Road, Chafford Hundred. This park has been nominated for a national Open Space Award.
- New partnership working arrangements with 3 play companies have been established. The play companies will be working with communities and the Environment Department to develop 12 play sites. This includes sourcing external funding, consultation, design, build and a rebate system for future repairs to sites.
- Close work with 6 Friends of Parks groups has resulted in improvements to open spaces. This has included identifying sources of external funding, working parties and engagement with wider groups within the community.
- The Play Development Officer has worked in close partnership with youth services on sites with high incidents of Anti-Social Behaviour. The work has focused on reducing the number of incidents by engaging with youths and improving the facilities in those spaces.
- Dilkes Park and Anchorfield Recreation Ground have been nominated for Diamond Jubilee Status.

### **3.6 Greener Spaces**

- This year 47 new street Trees have been planted across the Borough.
- In addition, 9 new trees have been planted at Blackshots Recreation Ground.

- The number of bats that has been recorded in Hangman's Wood is the highest since 2003. A clear indication that the careful management of the woodland is improving conditions.
- The rides though Hangman's Wood have been mowed exclusively with a heavy horse to protect bats sites and prevent compaction of the trees roots.
- Natural England are submitting a High Level Stewardship Plan for the Coalhouse Fort SSSI site. This is in recognition of the excellent management of the sensitive areas.
- A rare mining bee has been identified at Coalhouse Fort. The Ranger for that park is working closely with Natural England to pioneer a management programme for the species. This is a unique experimental programme that is now in its third year.
- Two rare species of orchid have also been sited at Coalhouse Fort. Work is underway to encourage proliferation of these species.
- Coalhouse Fort also provides a healthy Water Vole habitat.
- 9 community volunteers have been recruited to work with the Ranger in the management of the SSSI site.
- Consultation has been completed on creation of additional sites of bio-diversity. The response from the community was very positive with South Ockendon Recreation Ground, Blackshots, Grays Town Park and Grays Beach being the areas nominated.
- Existing Bio-diversity sites at Davy Down, St Francis Way, Chadwell and the Oak and Ash Plantation continue to be monitored and closely managed.

### **3.7 Winter Maintenance**

- Although the winter has not proved as severe as those in the last two years, the Winter Maintenance team have worked long hours to ensure that during the period of icy weather roads were well treated. To date 50 gritting runs have been completed – each covering 260 miles. The majority of those runs were completed in February 2012.
- Community salt bins have been installed at 16 sites across the Borough.
- The snow plan covering shopping areas, town centres, OAP complexes and schools was implemented effectively.

### **3.8 Grass and Verges**

- The Service Level Agreement with Housing relating to more regular grass cutting is starting its second year. Feedback from Housing Caretakers and residents last summer was positive.
- The Grounds Maintenance teams are experimenting with a new herbicide chemical which suppresses pre emergent weed growth. This will reduce the number of times that areas need to be sprayed, reducing the cost as well as being more environmentally kind.

**4. CONSULTATION (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)**

4.1 The details included in the report have been provided by Officers within the Environment Department and Public Protection. No additional consultation has been undertaken in the preparation of the report.

**5. IMPACT ON CORPORATE POLICIES, PRIORITIES, PERFORMANCE AND COMMUNITY IMPACT**

5.1 The report details actions taken to support the Corporate priority of creating a cleaner, greener and safer environment in Thurrock.

**6. IMPLICATIONS**

**6.1 Financial**

Implications verified by:  
Telephone and email:

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Implications to follow.

**6.2 Legal**

Implications verified by:  
Telephone and email:

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**click this box once and type the e-mail address**

Implications to follow.

**6.3 Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by:  
Telephone and email:

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Implication to follow.

**6.4 Other implications (where significant) – i.e. Section 17, Risk Assessment, Health Impact Assessment, Sustainability, IT, Environmental**

There are no significant implications arising from the report.

## **7. CONCLUSION**

- 7.1 Much work has been and continues to be carried out by the Environment Department and Public Protection to ensure that Thurrock is clean, green and safe.

### **BACKGROUND PAPERS USED IN PREPARING THIS REPORT:**

- None

### **APPENDICES TO THIS REPORT:**

- None

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