

MINUTES of the meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 7 November 2013 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors Cathy Kent (Chair), Simon Wootton, Wendy Curtis, Mike Stone and Pauline Tolson and Gerard Rice

In attendance: Councillor Angie Gaywood – Portfolio Holder for Public Protection
Councillor Victoria Holloway – Portfolio Holder for Environment
G. Dennett – Public Protection Manager
L. Magill – Head Of Public Protection
J. Gilford – Waste Manager
M. Boulter – Principal Democratic Services Officer

8 MINUTES

The minutes of the Cleaner, Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 11 July 2013 were approved as a correct record.

9. URGENT ITEMS

During the discussion on the minutes, the committee requested an update on bin collections. Officers explained that collection rates and processes were improving and the Council was largely hitting the industry standard of 98% collection. It was hoped this would improve further in coming months. Councillor Curtis noted how much the bin collections in her ward had improved in recent weeks.

10. DECLARATION OF INTERESTS

a) Interests

No interests were declared.

b) Whipping

No interests were declared.

11. DESIGNATED PUBLIC PLACE ORDERS (DPPOs) REVIEW

Currently there were eight DPPOs in place in Thurrock. The monitoring of the effectiveness of these orders by police was not exact as the DPPO areas did not entirely coincide with the police beats in the area. Alcohol related anti-social behaviour had reduced in the areas where there were DPPOs, although there was no firm evidence to link this reduction with the DPPOs.

New legislation would soon be introduced replacing DPPOs with Community Protection Orders (CPOs). CPOs had a wider use and would be used for a variety of measures, including alcohol and dog fouling amongst others. In addition, CPOs had a condition to ensure regular offenders in relation to alcohol anti social behaviour would seek treatment for alcohol abuse. Members of the committee questioned how the police would be able to enforce these offenders to take treatment. Officers explained that guidance was due out on this although it was reasoned that a multi-agency approach would be able to help provide treatment to people reluctant to be treated.

The Committee recognised that DPPO signs could act as a deterrent without action from the police and this was something that communities had valued in past consultations. The Committee also noted that should the Council wish to remove a DPPO it would need to undertake an extensive consultation with the community affected.

RESOLVED that:

- i) Members note the reductions recorded in alcohol-related Anti-social behaviour in those wards with DPPOs and the level of use made of them by police.**
- ii) Members retain the DPPOs currently in place, pending the introduction of anticipated legislation in 2014 and the Community Protection Orders (CPOs) that will replace them.**

12. POLICE COMMUNITY SUPPORT OFFICERS (PCSOs) MATHC FUNDING REVIEW

Councillor Wootton, chair of the review, introduced the report. He outlined the aims of the review, namely to investigate the value of the Council's contribution to PCSO services in Thurrock. The review clearly found no evidence of the Council providing additional value with its funding. Councillor Wootton had been impressed with the engagement and responses of stakeholders and thanked the Member and officer teams involved.

The Committee noted that the number of PCSOs had reduced over time and that the option for funding four PCSOs was set because the rise of inflation and salary levels over time had meant that it was unlikely the Council could fund seven PCSOs anymore. The Committee also noted that Essex Police would cease match funding from April 2014.

Councillor Rice reported that at a previous meeting attended he had heard the Chief Constable state that there was a desire to have one PCSO per ward, which could drastically reduce the number of PCSOs in Thurrock. The Committee and especially Councillor Wootton agreed that the Council would need to lobby the Police to ensure it got its fair share of PCSOs, whatever strategy the Police decided to implement.

Councillor Tolson stated that she had already asked PCSO powers to be broadened, as outlined in one of the recommendations. Officers concurred and added that the change of PCSO powers was within the remit of the Chief Constable and on previous occasions the Committee's requests had not been actioned further.

Debate continued and it was clarified that PCSOs finished their shifts at midnight although they would invariably be off the street from around 11pm. Other Members highlighted that their PCSOs were very good and proactive and that they should be encouraged to use bikes or walk much more than they do vehicles as this increased visible presence. Cllr Gaywood stated that she had raised this with the Chief Inspector for Thurrock and had seen a reduction in the use of vehicles.

It was also clarified that after April 2014 match funded posts would be moved into the vacant police funded posts that were currently available in the force. This meant that there would be no redundancies because of the removal of match funding.

The Committee recognised the value and hard work of all PCSOs and the portfolio holder highlighted the good work in reducing underage sales and that she would request the Chief Constable to attend a future full council meeting to outline his budget proposals for next year.

The Committee concluded the debate by discussing the special constabulary and agreed to seek more information on their numbers and use within Essex Police.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) The review report is noted.**
- ii) The options and associated recommendations within the review report be agreed and commended to Cabinet.**

13. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee briefly discussed the use of snares within Thurrock and officers explained the information they were trying to find relating to enforcing a no snares policy within Thurrock.

RESOLVED That the work programme be noted.

The meeting was finished at 7.55pm.

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIRMAN

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Matthew Boulter, telephone (01375) 652082,**