

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 8 October 2015 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Roy Jones (Chair), James Baker and Pauline Tolson

Apologies: Councillors Michael Stone

In attendance: Sean O'Callaghan, Chief Superintendent Essex Police
Gavin Dennett, Head of Public Protection
Richard Parkin, Head of Housing - Community & Needs
Kenna-Victoria Martin, 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.

9. Minutes

The Minutes of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 28 June 2015, were approved as a correct record.

10. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

11. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

The Chair of the Committee informed those present that he was going to rearrange the agenda to take item 6 before item 5.

12. Update Discussion on Travellers in Thurrock

Councillor Jones, Chair of the Committee opened the item explaining that at the previous meeting, Members received an Urgent Item following events where travellers were moved from the Dagenham and Barking area and made their way to Thurrock; he continued by stating Members sought that Officers from Essex Police attended the next meeting for an update.

The Chair then invited Chief Superintendent O'Callaghan to update the Committee, during which he explained that as a result of the incursion the assistance Chief Constable Morris Masson, who was responsible for operational policing within the County requested that a review of the Police response to the matter be conducted.

Chief Superintendent O'Callaghan continued to outline that in his role of Area Commander he invited an external colleague to conduct the review, to enable him to receive a clear understanding of how his Officers conducted the event.

Members were informed that following the review 14 recommendations were to be taken back to Chief Officers for a further review of how the Police deal with such encampments. The review also identified, that the four Senior Officers who each made decision with regards to the events, did so correctly in relation to Section 61 of the Criminal Justice and Public Order Act.

The Committee were further advised that the recommendations included internal changes in relations to responses to such matters and ensuring that appropriate vehicles are used for access to specific sites.

Chief Superintendent O'Callaghan informed Members that Essex Police strengthened communication links with the Metropolitan Police and were sharing information with regards to evacuation of travellers from sites. He continued to notify the Committee that visits had been carried out with Council Officers to potential sites and all parties were working closely with the Essex County Traveller Unit.

Councillor Tolson stated that it was encouraging to hear that communications between Essex and Metropolitan Police had been reinforced. She queried if the Council would get the same information if Travellers leaving from Basildon or Brentwood were to head towards Thurrock.

Chief Superintendent O'Callaghan explained that both areas were under the same Police Commander boundaries, so any intelligence would be shared across all boroughs. He continued to add that information was received directly from Scotland Yard to the Control room at Chelmsford either to himself or his 4 colleagues.

The Chair of the Committee sought as to whether the Police had had been successful in locating who had been responsible for the damaged caused at the Sports Centre. Chief Superintendent O'Callaghan confirmed that the investigation was currently still on going and at the present time no arrests had been made.

The Chair of the Committee thanked Chief Superintendent O'Callaghan, for attending the meeting.

13. Intercepting Unsafe Goods At Ports - Thurrock Trading Standards Work At Border Points

The Head of Public Protection introduced the item to the Committee informing Members that the report was for information with regards to the ongoing works by the Trading Standards Team in London Gateway and Port of Tilbury.

Members were advised that Thurrock's Trading Standards Team were now in their third year of delivering the Safety at Ports project on behalf of the

National Trading Standards Board (NTSB); with works fully funded by an external grant from NTSB. The Committee were further advised that the team received £55K funding for the current financial year 2015-2016 of which a large percentage was spend on testing costs.

It was explained to the Committee that team prevented unsafe products, including a range of cosmetics, toys and electrical items, entering the UK. With complex matters product may be required to be sent away for testing to identify the unsafe aspects such as carcinogenic ingredients in cosmetics or lead in paint on toys for young children.

The Head of Public Protection mentioned that since April 2013, 9,809 carcinogenic skin lightening creams had been intercepted at Tilbury and Gateway ports. It was highlighted that Officers were currently awaiting formal confirmation a further 136,800 units of cosmetics which had been identified as containing cancer causing ingredients.

The Committee were notified that the previous Chief Executive received a letter of thanks from Lord Toby Harris, chair of the National Trading Standards Board for the work Thurrock's Trading Standards team had undertaken and the contribution to the UK economy.

Councillor Tolson enquired as to how Officers knew which containers to open when carrying out searches. The Head of Public Protection explained that cargo on ships were listed on computer systems; which enabled Trading Standards and Border Forces to pinpoint imports and exports.

Members were further advised that the Council was working with Local Authorities in Suffolk and Felixstowe to highlight which cargo maybe required to be checked. Officers also carried out random checks to highlight dangerous products if they had a history.

Following additional questions from the Committee it was identified that the funding provided by the NTSB covered the investigations, staffing and testing which may be required to be completed.

Resolved that the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Note the work the Trading Standards team have undertaken in support of the Product Safety at Ports project**
- 2. Continue to support Trading Standards and their work in relation to this project.**

14. Work Programme

Members discussed the work programme for the municipal year and the following reports were agreed:

- Fly Tipping & Fly Posting within the Borough (including an update on Cory Wharf) – 21 January 2016
- Cleaning up Town Centres – 21 January 2015
- Anti-Social Behaviour & working with the Police – 17 March 2016

The meeting finished at 7.35 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**