

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 13 July 2017 at 7.00 pm

- Present:** Councillors Roy Jones (Chair), Cathy Kent (Vice-Chair), Gary Collins, Terry Piccolo and Michael Stone
- In attendance:** Councillor John Allen for Item 6 Only
Mark Earwicker, Technical Fire Safety Department, Essex Fire Service for Item 6 Only
Steve Cox, Corporate Director of Environment and Place
Gavin Dennett, Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager
Daren Spring, Street Services Manager
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.

Councillor Jones welcomed all Members and Officers to the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee and Councillor Allen, a member of the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committee in attendance for Item 6, Fire Service.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 11 May 2017 were approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

No matters of urgent business were received.

3. Declaration of Interests

Councillor C Kent declared a non-pecuniary interest as she was an Outside Body representative on the Essex Fire Authority.

Councillor Collins declared a non-pecuniary interest as he was a member on the Prevent committee.

4. Terms of Reference

Members agreed the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee Terms of Reference.

5. Fire Service

Councillor Jones welcomed Mark Earwicker from the Technical Fire Safety Department of the Essex Fire Service and stated that the Cleaner Greener and Safer and the Housing Overview and Scrutiny Committees had requested that the Fire Service attend the first available committee following the horrific fire scenes that were witnessed with the fire at Grenfell Towers in West London.

Councillor Jones stated that politics should be put to one side so that all Members, Officers and Services should work together to try and alleviate any fears that Thurrock residents may have and to ensure that all residents who live in tower blocks are fully aware of the emergency procedures.

Mark Earwicker reported the following to Members:

- That following the tragic fire at Grenfell Towers, a significant amount of work had been undertaken to reassure the public, look at what happened and to ensure that this event did not happen again.
- Still waiting for the interim report on the fire although information had been made available to the Fire Services and the National Press as to the cause of the fire.
- The reason for the spread of the fire was still under investigation. The Building Research Establishment had undertaken a specific number of fire tests on cladding performances.
- The Government had set up an Enquiry Panel which had now received their own Terms of Reference. A Technical Team had been set up to give advice to this Panel.
- Following the fire at Grenfell Towers, a critical team had been set up in Essex to analyse information that came out from this tragedy.
- In Essex, the Fire Service were approached to look at tower blocks from a public prospective and to ensure buildings were technically up to standard.
- The Chief Fire Officer sent letters to all Council's chief executives offering services and for their engagement with the fire service.
- Similar letters were sent by the Technical Fire Safety Department to Housing Departments to ensure engagement with residents was also taking part and a point of contact was available.
- A Themed Audit Programme was set up to look at what high rise buildings were within the County. As part of the risk assessment undertaken those tower blocks with ten or more storeys were given priority for inspections and then the five to nine storey buildings.
- Today in Essex, a full fire service audit had been completed on the 59 premises which had 10 or more storeys and these had been undertaken with the community officer in attendance. Engagement with residents had been made to offer support, advice and offer home safety visits for those required.
- The Community Safety Team had visited 128 buildings, knocked on just under 6000 doors and had received 148 referrals for home safety visits.

- The Community Safety Team had also carried out 65 audits on premises that ranged from five to nine storeys with 123 outstanding. These should be complete within the next two to three weeks.
- No reports received that Thurrock high rise blocks had the aluminium composite material cladding similar to that of Grenfell Towers on them.
- That 12 blocks were confirmed as having cladding but these were made from a resin-based material which had the highest possible fire rating.
- That the 15 blocks in Thurrock had been visited with minor defects detected which could range from a door closure or an emergency light that had not illuminated and stressed that these would not cause any reduction in safety to those buildings.
- That three out of the five to nine storeys had been visited with 17 still to be carried out within Essex.
- A lot of work had been undertaken with public reassurances by the Fire Service personnel, crew and volunteers.
- That the web site had been updated with animations to bring the leaflet to life.
- Concluded that at this time consideration would be to undertake all the remaining checks.

Councillor Jones thanked Mark Earwicker for his report and asked who the members were that formed the Community Safety Teams and what umbrella of the Fire Service did they fall under. Mark Earwicker stated that the Team consisted of ex-operational officers, non-operational officers and volunteers. This team sat under the domestic arm of the fire safety to which this came under the Director of the Fire Service.

Councillor Collins queried if the cause of the fire was known. Mark Earwicker stated that the cause was a fridge on the fourth floor but a full investigation was underway to which the results were still waited on.

Councillor Collins questioned what was being done for those private properties that had been converted to flats. Mark Earwicker stated that this should form part of the building regulations and risk inspection programme. If Members had any concerns they should be reported and would be looked into.

Councillor Piccolo questioned what enforcements were in place when private owners did not engage with the Fire Service as part of safety checks. Mark Earwicker stated that private owners are formally requested to attend but following that legal action may need to be taken.

Councillor Kent questioned whether the process undertaken had been effective in the high rise blocks. Mark Earwicker stated that the responsibility fell on that responsible person and that person had to ensure that the risk assessment was in place and that they complied with building regulations.

Councillor Kent asked what enforcements could be put in place for those residents parking inconsiderately around the surrounding areas of rise blocks.

Mark Earwicker stated that no specific feedback had been received from crew members about parking but leaflets were left on vehicles that were inappropriately parked in dangerous areas. Unfortunately the Fire Service had no powers on parking enforcements.

Councillor Allen asked what defined a minor defect. Mark Earwicker stated that a minor defect would be possibly a fire door closure or a light not illuminating. Mark Earwicker stated that Thurrock had come out well as part of the investigation with only minor defects with these being common in such large buildings.

Councillor Piccolo questioned whether a register could be kept of any major alternations made to high rise blocks or high rise buildings. Mark Earwicker stated that these alternations would form part of the building legislation and regulations and could be obtained through these means.

Councillor Kent asked that if a call from a high rise fire had been made for an Aerial Ladder Platform would this have sufficient crew to man it if crews from Grays, Orsett and Corringham were already in attendance at a fire. Mark Earwicker stated that if an Aerial Ladder Platform was required it would be called for and would either come from Southend or Chelmsford.

Councillor Jones thanked Mark Earwicker and the Essex Fire Service for the work undertaken and appreciated all the efforts made.

Mark Earwicker and Councillor Allen left the committee room at 7.45pm.

6. Fly-Tipping of Alleys - Public Health Enforcement

Gavin Dennett briefed Members on the report that was being presented following a Motion that was passed at the 28 June 2017 Full Council that called on the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee to conduct a full review of fly-tipping in private alleys. Members were asked to agree the terms and timescale for this review.

Gavin Dennett explained that over recent months the number of incidents of fly-tipping or unauthorised rubbish disposal in alleys had been reported to the Council and that there was no current policy on the approach that Officers should take to resolve such service requests.

Members were referred to the proposed review timescales and how the review panel would be made up of Officers that would work alongside a member of the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee and report back to committee by October 2017.

The Chair asked for member nominations for the Review Panel. A nomination was made by Councillor C Kent to which all Members agreed with the proviso that all members can communicate and input through Councillor C Kent and that the appropriate feedback would be provided. Councillor C Kent thanked

members and agreed that the members would work together and have a joint input.

Steve Cox stated that this would be inclusive process where all members would have the opportunity to contribute when the report was returned to Committee in October 2017.

Councillor Collins referred members to the principal options and stated that residents may not be the owner of the property and should it not then be the landlord that would need to pay. Gavin Dennett stated that the options relate to the occupiers of the property and not the current owners.

Councillor Stone asked how the review would be taken forward after October 2017. Gavin Dennett stated that the review would make any necessary recommendations and what further consideration would need to be made to accommodate these.

Councillor Jones asked how neighbouring boroughs were tackling this issue. Gavin Dennett stated that this would form part of the review and feedback would be provided.

Councillor Piccolo suggested that potential fly-tipping material could be photographed and used as evidence if found fly-tipped. Gavin Dennett stated that the team were being as imaginative as possible and that this was already taking place alongside CCTV to deter individuals.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the motion and agree the terms and timescales of the review.**
- 2. That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that Councillor C Kent would be the Member on the Review Panel.**

Gavin Dennett left the committee room at 8.05pm.

7. Thurrock Community Safety Partnership

Steve Cox presented the report that updated Members on the increase of crime for the year 2016/17 when compared against the previous year with Thurrock having a lower crime rate per one thousand residents than our comparator community safety partnerships.

Members were referred to the three priorities that were identified by the partnership's Strategy Assessment which would allow Thurrock to develop and plan the activities to address the priorities whilst providing value for money and intelligence led approach to community safety.

Councillor Jones stated that the Youth Offending Team was a fantastic group that concentrated on stopping youths from reoffending.

Councillor Collins asked Officers for the number of convictions of crime that had been reported. Officers would provide this information to Members.

Councillor Collins commented that the report could have provided Members with updated figures on the number of victims and who the perpetrators were.

Councillor Collins stated that the Safety Impact Assessment had made no provision to men and asked that this was looked into urgently.

Councillor Piccolo stated that as part of the safety partnership it was important to work with youth offenders on anti-social behaviour issues to prevent them becoming further involved in more serious crimes.

Steve Cox stated that the poor performance of the 101 telephone service had been raised with Essex Police and was confident that this issue was being addressed.

Councillor Jones asked that the Secretary of State be chased for a reply to a letter sent requesting an update on the poor 101 telephone service.

Councillor Piccolo stated that residents should be made aware and encouraged to use the on-line 101 service instead of the telephone service to report incidents. This would build up intelligence of events and residents would have an email receipt as proof of their incident being reported.

Steve Cox stated that residents should be encouraged to report any crime or anti-social behaviour so that intelligence of events could be formed and services being allocated appropriately.

Councillor Jones stated that elderly residents who had no on-line facilities would still be encouraged to use the 101 telephone service and not to be put off with the waiting times.

Councillor Jones commented that the crime performances need to be more accurate to include all information such as reported anti-social behaviour incidents.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee note the performance of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership for the year 2016/17.**
- 2. That Overview and Scrutiny committee support the three priorities of the Community Safety Partnership for the year 2017/18, which were:**

- i. **Reduce Youth offending and re-offending of adults and young people to address volume crimes of violent crime, both with and without injury and Domestic burglary.**
 - ii. **To reduce harm to and safeguard vulnerable victims from: Domestic abuse, Sexual offences including rape, Child sexual exploitation and abuse (CSE), Gang related violence, Hate crime, Anti-social behaviour, Cyber bullying, Honour based abuse ie. forced marriage and female genital mutilation and Serious Organised Crime in relation to Modern day slavery & Human Trafficking.**
 - iii. **Violent extremism (Prevent agenda).**
3. **That Overview and Scrutiny committee note the links that have been made to support delivery of the PCC's Priorities.**

8. Clean It, Cut It Update

Daren Spring presented the report that provided Members with an update on the progress of Clean It, Cut It with an overview of the current status and outlined the service aspirations for the future which sought to address the improved perceptions of street cleanliness, grounds maintenance and parks, playgrounds and open spaces.

Councillor Jones thanked the Officers and all the crews for the fabulous job undertaken and that residents could now see the improvements made.

Councillor Jones asked Officer who would be responsible for keeping the Manorway tidy. Steve Cox stated that this was currently in discussion but at present it was the Council's responsibility. Going forward a meeting had been scheduled with DP World to ensure that all organisations were clear on the delivery of this service.

Councillor Jones stated his support for Keep Britain Tidy that was coming to Thurrock.

Councillor Jones questioned whether operations undertaken by Kingdom were being kept an eye on following bad press. Steve Cox stated that reassurances had been received from Kingdom and the Council would keep track on these for the remainder of the pilot.

Councillor Stone asked Officer whether the Council would collect rubbish that local residents had picked up from alleyways. Daren Spring said yes that would be possible but would prefer that rubbish be bagged. These bags could be supplied by the Council. Steve Cox said the Council would be happy to help and this could form part of the review.

Councillor Collins echoed Councillor Jones comments that the service was undertaking some excellent work and appreciated the work done. Councillor

Collins asked whether there were costs relating to Keep Britain Tidy coming to Thurrock and was this cost a benefit to residents. Steve Cox stated that this was a sensible investment and an inspiration to keep the borough tidy.

Councillor Piccolo backed the Keep Britain Tidy scheme in Thurrock and stated that those parks rated as good should not be forgotten and neglected.

Councillor C Kent asked Officers whether any responses had been received from Highways England who had the responsibility for cleaning the A13 from Wennington through to and including the A1089. Steve Cox stated that the Council had not received the responses they would have liked. Following the difficulty of trying to pin Connect Plus down, a meeting had been scheduled for next week to discuss a more frequent cleaning regime of these areas.

Councillor C Kent asked whether Grays Beach would be up and running for the summer holidays. Steve Cox stated that assurances had been given by Anglian Water that any similar flooding incidents would not happen again.

Councillor C Kent questioned whether the administration's spending on Clean It, Cut It campaign had been value for money and what plans to educate youngsters to respect and have pride in Thurrock. Steve Cox stated that the team had undertaken an excellent job and that a further survey would be sent out to residents to understand their perceptions of the campaign.

Daren Spring stated that work with colleges was underway to educate young people on recycling and littering.

RESOLVED

That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Members noted the performance in relation to the Clean It Cut It element of the Clean It Cut It Fill It programme since last reporting to committee in October 2016.

9. Work Programme

The Chair asked Members if there were any items to be added or discussed for the work programme for the 2017-18 municipal year.

Members agreed to add a report on Fly-Tipping of Alleys to the 12 October 2017 Committee.

Councillor Piccolo requested a report on Community Facilities be added to the work programme for 22 February 2018 Committee.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the item Fly-Tipping in Alleys will be added to the work programme for 12 October 2017 Committee.**

2. That the item Community Facilities will be added to the work programme for 22 February 2018 Committee.

The meeting finished at 8.43 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