

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 3 October 2019 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors John Kent (Chair), Allen Mayes (Vice-Chair), Mike Fletcher, Angela Lawrence and Elizabeth Rigby

Apologies: Councillor Garry Hague

In attendance: Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways
Dulal Ahmed, Housing Enforcement Manager
Jahur Ali, Recreation and Leisure Manager
Phil Carver, Strategic Lead Enforcement and Community Protection
Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager
Jenny Shade, 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.

40. Minutes

The minutes of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 July 2019 were approved as a correct record.

41. Items of Urgent Business

There were no items of urgent business.

42. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Lawrence declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to Item 7 – Report of Park Improvement Programme Update, Appendix 1, as the Horndon Rec was her local park.

43. Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Update

Michelle Cunningham, Community Safety Partnership Manager, updated Members on the performance, both qualitative and quantitative, of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership in 2018/19 and provided an insight into the priorities for the Partnership for 2019/20.

Councillor Mayes queried the funding for Neighbourhood Watch and questioned why the Neighbourhood Watch Coordinator had been told that no

further funding would be available. Michelle Cunningham stated that funding of £2800 had been given to the scheme last year for road signs. That a further bid had been made for signs but it had become apparent that not all previously funded signs had been put up so it had now been agreed that funding would be provided for each watch as and when signs were required and this would continue to be scrutinised by the Community Safety Partnership.

Councillor Fletcher referred to the increases in the victim based crime and acknowledged that the Police were doing a great job but asked what the community could be doing to assist. Michelle Cunningham stated that the Police were undertaking stop and search which had increased the possession of weapon figures and stated that the figures for burglary were falling. There was a volunteer community conference being held with workshops on gangs, four evening meetings would be held with CVS across the borough to include local forums and the community, work had been carried out with Grays Riverside, Chafford Hundred Community Church and funds had been provided to the Youth Cabinet as knife crime had been raised by them as a priority.

Councillor Fletcher stated that more work should be undertaken within schools. Michelle Cunningham stated that the uptake with schools had been slow. She had attended a head teachers briefing to discuss the draft protocol development for schools and for exclusions. That there was plenty of work being undertaken that was not costly but required the schools to take up these opportunities.

Councillor J Kent queried with Michelle Cunningham what the community event was. Michelle Cunningham stated it was the Community CVS Conference held at Orsett Hall on the 7 October. Councillor J Kent asked whether any Member were aware of the event.

Councillor Rigby questioned whether the community support officer had been introduced before or after the last figures had been released. Michelle Cunningham stated that the figures were published up to the end of March 2019, the Town Centre Policing Teams started in July 2019 with work underway to look at the impact that they had made. Councillor Rigby asked when these figures would be available which would identify if there had been a decrease in crime. Julie Rogers stated she had met with the Police this week who had agreed to undertake a campaign which would identify the output of their work and this would be released shortly.

Councillor Lawrence questioned whether there was any evidence of offenders having mental health related issues that had been a contributing factor to the crime figures. Michelle Cunningham stated that contact could be made with the Youth Offending Service who would have this information.

Councillor Lawrence stated that more help should be available in schools as there was only so much a teacher could do and questioned whether there could be some form of counselling at schools that pupils could attend.

Michelle Cunningham stated that Children Services would deal with the schools needs for mental health concerns and the schools wellbeing service had just started and had come into place. That every school would be completing a Needs Assessment around mental health and action plans would be worked on throughout the year. Michelle Cunningham stated that she had met with POWER who worked across Essex who dealt with referrals from 8 to 13 year olds which was an early offer of help. Also work was being undertaken with the Educational Welfare Officers looking at those children not attending school due to their own or their parent's mental health and confirmed that a lot of work was being undertaken by Children's Services.

Councillor J Kent stated that mental health was an important issue and questioned the recommendation that had been asking Members to recognise the links that had been made to the Thurrock Health and Wellbeing Strategy but asked what those links were and where those links had been identified in the report. Michelle Cunningham stated that more links were being made with Julie Rogers now a member on the Health and Wellbeing Board where this report and a report on gangs would be presented. That the Director of Public Health would be preparing an annual report this year focusing on gangs. That work had been undertaken on the cross links and priorities and there had been a lot of cross over especially within the parks to ensure access to all open areas. Julie Rogers stated the report had made reference to the change of objective and stated in her role on the Health and Wellbeing Board had seen similar links, especially around mental health, where these had been picked up and would take this point away to ensure that closer links were referred to in future overview and scrutiny reports.

Councillor Fletcher asked for more evidence that teams were working across departments to ensure that all issues were addressed. Julie Rogers stated that in the work streams undertaken all considerations were taken into account and would ensure that greater references of any conversations between teams were made in future reports.

Councillor Fletcher stated it would be good to see more evidence of teams working together across departmental boundaries that address these issues. Michelle Cunningham stated that this was already happening in the Youth Offending Service.

Councillor J Kent stated that any crime, especially violent crime, would need a public health approach to be undertaken to resolve it. Councillor J Kent referred to the evidence from Glasgow where the public health approach had been undertaken which had driven down crime against the national trend and stated his disappointment that the Council were not moving in the same direction. Councillor J Kent referred to the figures of the Violence against a Person that worked out to 15 a day in Thurrock and questioned what the success would look like next year in regards to the safety partnership.

Michelle Cunningham stated that no target had been set for measuring violent crime with the decrease in the number being the target but would need to be based on like for like measurements which it currently was not. That the

Director of Public Health would be writing a report on gangs and looking at plans on going forward.

Councillor J Kent stated he was not confident that links had been made to Thurrock's Health and Wellbeing Strategy and requested that an update report be presented at the 6 February 2020 committee. Members agreed.

RESOLVED:

- 1. That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the performance of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership for the year 2018/19**
 - 2. That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny committee supported the four priorities of the Community Safety Partnership for the year 2019/20, which are:**
 - Tackling Offending**
 - Violence and Vulnerability**
 - Local Community and Visibility**
 - Counter Extremism and Terrorism**
 - 3. That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee were not confident that links had been made to Thurrock's Health and Wellbeing Strategy and requested that an update report be presented at the 6 February 2020 committee.**
 - 4. That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee recognised the requirement to work collaboratively across Essex on the Police and Fire Crime Commissioners Violence and Vulnerability framework.**
- 44. Linford Household Waste & Recycling Centre - Site Redevelopment update**

Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways, provided Members with the current status of the redevelopment project at the Linford Household Waste and Recycling Centre.

Councillor J Kent thanked Julie Rogers for the report.

Councillor Mayes stated his concern that not having a temporary solution in place may increase fly-tipping rates.

Councillor Lawrence questioned whether the contractors would be thoroughly checked. Julie Rogers stated that the Council followed a Procurement Regulation Process.

Councillor Lawrence questioned whether the £2.6m was the final amount or was there a contingency fund. Julie Rogers clarified that the total figure was a

£3.6m allocation, there were two Cabinet reports agreeing the total figure. Julie Rogers agreed and assured Members that she would look at the temporary solution with the contractors, there were a number of opportunities, as outlined in the report being considered.

Councillor J Kent stated his concern that the report implications had been signed off but the potential project costs could be out by nearly 50%. Julie Rogers apologised to the Chair, she had identified an error and sought clarification from Finance Colleagues, after papers were published. She assured that this would be addressed with the officer concerned.

Councillor Lawrence asked whether local companies and local labourers could be involved in the project. Julie Rogers stated that this was a specialist field and until the procurement stage had been completed it would not be known which companies had submitted proposals.

Councillor J Kent questioned what consultation had been undertaken with Ward Members. Julie Rogers stated that Ward Members had attended a consultation session and were given the opportunity to look and engage on the project.

Councillor J Kent asked that Ward Members be contacted again so that they were given the opportunity to have a say on the potential temporary solution. Julie Rogers agreed to arrange this.

Councillor J Kent commented that the Permit Scheme seemed to be making it harder for residents to access the site and questioned whether the scheme could be reviewed. Julie Rogers updated Members on the reasons why the Permit Scheme had been introduced and commented the scheme had removed a lot of trade waste being taken onto the site, a reduction in van size fly-tips had been seen, that said a review could be considered with the new site.

RESOLVED

That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the report.

45. Park Improvement Programme Update

Jahur Ali, Recreation and Leisure Services Manager, updated Members on the progress made to the parks, play and open spaces in Thurrock. The Park Improvement Programme had identified 11 priority parks across the borough that required investment over a three year period and referred Members to Appendix 1, the Park Improvement Phase 1 Timeline. Jahur Ali also referred Members to the two objectives of the programme and stated the approach taken for each site would be different but had welcomed the engagement from Friends of Thurrock Parks, community forums and the wider public.

Councillor Lawrence asked if there was a set budget for each park. Jahur Ali stated there was an overall budget but the amount spent on each park would be different, due to the size and different equipment at each site and confirmed that residents had been given the opportunity to have their say on the parks delivered so far and would get a chance to input on the future projects..

Councillor Lawrence stated that the £75,000 spent on Horndon Rec seemed a lot of money and had received comments that residents were unhappy that the play area had not been fenced off which now allowed dogs to foul in that area. Councillor Lawrence stated that if the budget had been scheduled and budgeted better the residents of Horndon Rec could have got what they deserved. Jahur Ali stated that a launch event had taken place with over 70 residents attending who had welcomed the park. He advised that residents had not been told that the fence could not be replaced around the play area. Jahur Ali informed Members that play equipment was very expensive to purchase and had been fitted to British Standard. Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways stated that there were few providers, cost of play equipment was expensive and there are strict procurement rules in place, it should be remembered that when purchasing play equipment, safety was paramount.

Councillor Fletcher stated his concern that the timescales to improve lighting at these parks was only at procurement stage and questioned whether this should have been anticipated better to get the lighting sorted before going into the winter months. Jahur Ali stated that long term impact and costs were being assessed prior to installing LED solar lighting. The contractor was being verified and rapid work to install these lights would continue into parks.

Councillor Rigby questioned when the others parks in the borough would be rolled out. Jahur Ali stated that the 11 parks on Appendix A would be rolled out with existing funding. Capital bids were being made for other parks, the outcome would be known in February 2020.

Councillor Mayes questioned whether different spends had been allocated to each park and had the money been distributed to accommodate all the 11 parks. Jahur Ali stated that there was a provisional budget for all 11 parks and spends were dependent on the size and the equipment required.

Councillor Mayes asked for clarification that there would be enough budget for each of the 11 sites. Julie Rogers advised that initially funding was spent in all parks to replace broken and missing equipment, she also confirmed that there was funding available for all 11 parks. Each park was different in size and some had equipment which could remain, others needed all new equipment. Officers were working with park groups and forums to inform the overall design and scope of work required. In some cases groups were bidding for funding, in some cases this required match funding and the Council were supporting groups in this way to ensure the funding was maximised.

Councillor Lawrence invited Officers to attend the Horndon Rec forum.

RESOLVED

That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the progress of the Parks Improvement Programme.

46. CCTV Public Identification Policy

Dulal Ahmed, Housing Enforcement Manager, presented the report that outlined the benefits of implementing a policy to tackle resident priorities such as Anti-Social Behaviour, fly tipping, criminal damage and public nuisance as CCTV was a powerful tool for addressing crime. Members were also referred to the legislation providing the Council with the powers to take formal action under its Enforcement Policy.

Councillor Lawrence thanked the Officers for the good report and questioned how officers could be certain that the persons were under the age of 18 years old. Dulal Ahmed stated that individuals would be identified first before any images were released, with photos only be released as a last resort as there were other methods that could be used to identify an individual. Work would be undertaken with the Children and Adult Services but the CCTV would be used for more serious offences such as fly-tipping where the driver of that vehicle would more likely be over the age of 18 years old.

Councillor Lawrence stated the Pro-Forma Checklist was very lengthy and had any thoughts be made to shorten the document. Dulal Ahmed stated the Checklist would need to be completed for each request to ensure the necessary safeguards were in place.

Councillor Lawrence questioned what would happen if a photo was released of an under 18 year old. Dulal Ahmed stated residents were encouraged to report and each individual would be investigated with information received being passed onto the relevant Council's enforcement teams to follow up. Any suspect being identified in the process of released CCTV images would be interviewed under the Police and Criminal Evidence Act 1984 code of practice.

Councillor Fletcher stated the process for approval looked lengthy and questioned how long the process would take and the effectiveness of it. Dulal Ahmed stated that this would depend on the methods used but the release of an image would be the last resort. Phil Carver, Strategic Lead Enforcement and Community Protection, stated that there were statutory times allowed for offenders to be investigated and proceedings to commence of the criminal act being complained of.

Councillor Fletcher questioned whether this policy had been used at other authorities and whether they had experienced any challenges. Phil Carver stated the policy had been used at his previous employment and there had been no issues.

Councillor Mayes questioned whether the Council could be sued for publishing images of persons under the age of 18 years old. Julie Rogers stated that if there was significant evidence that a person was under the age of 18 the image would not be used and that every precaution would be undertaken with the appropriate checks being carried out by the Council's Legal Team.

Councillor J Kent asked for assurance that the images would be used to help identify suspects and not be used to name and shame.

Councillor J Kent referred to recommendation 1.2 and where on the Council's website would the images be published. Dulal Ahmed stated this would be controlled through the Communications Team and sit within the normal Council platforms.

Councillor J Kent questioned whether there had been thoughts of using facial recognition software. Dulal Ahmed stated this software had not been considered as yet but could not be ruled out for use in the future.

The Chair requested that an update report be brought back to committee in six months' time.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted and commented on the implementation of a Public Identification CCTV policy for enforcement purposes.**
- 2. That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee note that images would be released in local publications and on the internet including the Council's website.**
- 3. That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee agreed that an Update Report should be brought back in six months' time.**

47. Verbal Update: Bin Collection Key Performance Indicator

Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways, stated the target for the Key Performance Indicator for Bin Collections had continued to improve with the current year's performance at 99.45%, the highest figure in five years.

Councillor Fletcher requested that recycling Key Performance Indicators should be taken into consideration.

Councillor Lawrence asked for an update on whether the stickers to bins would be renewed. Julie Rogers stated that a pilot was being carried out in communal bin stores where new imagery was being used to identify which bins residents should use. This pilot, so far is proving to be successful and discussions had taken place at the Waste Management Working Group. Julie

Rogers stated the 41% target was challenging as currently Thurrock were achieving a 37% recycling rate, which had remained consistent for the last 3-4 years.

Councillor J Kent stated that the performance rates should be recognised and for those men and women that undertook this job to be commended for the work that they undertake and requested that this message be passed back to them. Julie Rogers thanked the Chair and stated that this message would be included in the next Directorates monthly newsletter.

48. Work Programme

Members discussed the work programme and agreed:

Add the Land Strategy report to the 5 December 2019 committee.

Remove the Waste Vision and Strategy 2020-2030 report from the 5 December 2019 committee and add to the 6 February 2020 committee.

Add the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Update report to the 6 February 2020 committee.

Add the CCTV Public Identification Policy report to the first item of the 2020/21 municipal year work programme.

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**