

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 14 July 2021 at 7.00 pm

Present:	Councillors Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), Jane Potheary (Vice-Chair), Steve Liddiard, Maureen Pearce, Elizabeth Rigby and James Thandi
Apologies:	None
In attendance:	Phil Carver, Strategic Lead Enforcement and Community Protection Gavin Dennett, Strategic Lead - Public Protection David Kleinberg, Assistant Director for Counter Fraud & Investigations Leigh Nicholson, Assistant Director of Planning, Transport and Public Protection Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer

Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's website channel.

1. Minutes

The minutes of the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 4 February 2021 were approved as a correct record.

2. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

3. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

4. Parking Enforcement vehicle removals

Phil Carver presented the report that set out proposals for the Council to commence the use of vehicle removal in the Council's parking enforcement approach in specific incidents. The report sought the approval for the Parking Team to remove vehicles parked in contravention with priority removals to those classed as persistent evaders or if a vehicle was parked in a manner that was obstructive or dangerous to other road users, in line with legislative powers and best practice.

Councillor Redsell thanked Officers for the good report and asked where the specific areas were in Grays that the report referred to. Phil Carver provided Members with a brief list of roads in Grays and stated a more definitive list could be made available to Councillor Redsell if she so wished to see it.

Councillor Redsell commented that residents were more likely to ignore a PCNs but would pay to have their lifted vehicle returned.

Councillor Thandi questioned whether automatic number plate recognition was used in Thurrock and asked what the process was for those vehicles where residents stated they were not the registered keeper. Phil Carver stated that automatic number plate recognition was not currently used in Thurrock but was currently being looked into for vehicles illegally parking outside of schools. There was a statutory process for parking where the DVLA would be contacted to get the registered keeper details and that persistent evaders knew that if they did not register their vehicle with the DVLA the result would come back as unregistered keeper. This would be pursued and DVLA would be contacted again. Councillor Thandi questioned why details of taxed vehicles were not known as this information would be held by the DVLA to which Phil Carver stated this was the information being supplied by DVLA. David Kleinberg stated there were 1000s of vehicles on roads that had not been taxed, had no registered keeper, no MOT or with no insurance and it was those vehicles that were impacting on the space in Thurrock.

Councillor Potheary thanked Officers for the report and welcomed the new measures and continued to ask for clarification on whether paragraph 3.5 (a) and (d) would both be aimed at persistent evaders. Phil Carver confirmed that it applied to all on that list, from (a) to (d), a PCN would be issued and then the removal of the vehicle. It would be the priority to remove those vehicles of persistent evaders.

Councillor Rigby questioned the number of times a PCN was given before the vehicle would be removed. Phil Carver stated it would be three or more outstanding PCNs.

Councillor Pearce questioned those vehicles being issued with PCNs were new or old cars to which Phil Carver stated it was a mixture of both. Councillor Pearce questioned whether Thurrock Council could keep those cars and sell them. Phil Carver stated that if the vehicle's value was more than £1500.00 it would go to auction and Thurrock Council would receive that money back. This was controlled by the Vehicle Removal Contract.

Councillor Liddiard questioned whether removing old vehicles the Council was being charged more than the vehicle was worth. Phil Carver stated those vehicles would go for scrap and Thurrock Council would receive any monies back.

Councillor Potheary questioned paragraph 3.5 (a) whether this would include paths to which Phil Carver stated that it would.

Councillor Potheary questioned the order of (a) to (d) of paragraph 3.5 and stated that "(d) non permitted vehicles parked in a disabled bay" should be moved up the list as this could affect the quality of life for a disabled person. Phil Carver agreed this was a good point and could move up the list but reiterated that all five areas would have the same priority and would be dealt with in the same way.

Councillor Liddiard questioned when would the new measures come into effect and questioned whether warning letters would be issued prior to vehicles being removed. Phil Carver stated that work still needed to be undertaken before this came into effect such as liaising with services to ensure the appropriate publicity was undertaken to make residents aware

and working with the transport development teams to ensure signage was in place.

Councillor Redsell thanked Officers again for the good report and would like to see a Briefing Note updating the committee on progress in a few months' time.

RESOLVED

That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee are requested to:

- 1. Recommend to Cabinet to approve Thurrock Council's Parking Team to execute enforcement action against vehicles parked in contravention with priority vehicle removal of persistent evaders as suggested by the Department for Transport within its statutory guidance.**
- 2. Recommend to Cabinet to adopt the policy to remove vehicles which are parked in contravention of restrictions where a PCN may be issued if the vehicle is also parked in a manner that is obstructive or dangerous to other road users.**

5. Thurrock Council Animal Welfare Review

Gavin Dennett presented the report that stated in May 2021 the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee received a report on the work of Public Protection that related to animals and as a result of that report the Committee determined that it should form a working group to review the Council's Animal Welfare Policy. This working group was formed and comprised of Councillor Rigby, as chair, and Councillors Van Day and Fletcher. The working group met on several occasions to review the Council's Animal Welfare Policy.

Councillor Potheary thanked Officers and Members for their contributions to this Policy and commented that it was good it was now up to date. Councillor Potheary questioned the wording in the section on horses and requested that this be checked with the Legal Department on the accuracy. Gavin Dennett confirmed the legal implications of the report had been signed off by the legal department but agreed to check and send any update to Councillor Potheary.

Councillor Potheary referred to the executive summary of the Policy and stated that the following additional information could be considered for inclusion into this part of the Policy (1) links to the wildlife section of the Local Plan and (2) refer to the Motion raised by Councillor Rigby at February 2020 Council on the high use of fireworks in the borough that was causing distress and injury to pets and wildlife with an impact on air quality.

Councillor Pearce questioned whether a licence was required to breed cats to sell in Thurrock Housing properties to which Gavin Dennett stated a licence would not be required but certain conditions would be covered in tenancy agreements.

Councillor Redsell questioned whether checks would be undertaken on animal prizes at circuses or fairs in the borough to which Gavin Dennett informed Members that an additional heading "Animals as Prizes" had been included into the Policy "*Animals as Prizes - The Council would prohibit the use of animals as prizes at circuses, fairs and for any other activities of a similar nature that take place on its land and will discourage this on other land within Thurrock where it had powers or influence*". Gavin Dennett also stated that conditions would be written into the letting agreements of any such land used for these events. That this was already been undertaken by the Leisure Services Manager and checks against such conditions would be undertaken.

Councillor Redsell thanked the working group and officers for all their hard work to get the Policy up to date.

RESOLVED

That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet to adopt the revised Animal Welfare Policy for Thurrock Council.

6. Work Programme

Members discussed the scrutiny review and work programme.

Councillor Potheary requested an update on recycling levels to which Councillor Redsell stated this could be covered in the "Street Cleansing Strategy" item scheduled for the October meeting.

Councillor Potheary requested an update following the IPRI climate and fairness report to which Councillor Redsell stated could be covered in the "Impact on Air Quality in lockdown in the borough" item scheduled for the October meeting.

Councillor Potheary requested that Essex Police attend a committee so that members can raise their concerns and ask questions around the safety within the borough. Democratic Services would liaise with Michelle Cunningham and report back to the committee.

Councillor Liddiard requested an update on the air quality within the borough, particularly in Tilbury to which Councillor Redsell stated could be covered in the "Impact on Air Quality in lockdown in the borough" item scheduled for the October meeting.

Councillor Liddiard requested an update on the responsibilities that now fell within the remit of the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Sports & Leisure.

Councillor Redsell suggested that an invite be extended to the portfolio holder for the next meeting.

The meeting finished at 7.41 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**