

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee of the 14 December 2021, held on the 20 January 2022 at 7.00 pm

- Present:** Councillors Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), Steve Liddiard, Maureen Pearce, Elizabeth Rigby and James Thandi
- Apologies:** Councillor Jane Potheary (Vice-Chair)
- In attendance:** Daren Spring, Assistant Director – Street Scene & Leisure
Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager
Marcelle Puttergill, Performance and Support Management, Environment and Highways
Vincent Taylor, Strategic Lead for Clean and Green Services
Cheryl Wells, Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being recorded, with the audio recording to be made available on the Council's website.

17. Minutes

The minutes of the Cleaner Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 7 October 2021 were approved as a correct record.

18. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

19. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

20. Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Update

Michelle Cunningham presented the annual report of Thurrock's Community Safety Partnership which provided the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee the opportunity to review the performance, both qualitative and quantitative, against the priorities in 2021. Members were informed that data provided in the report continued to be incomparable, due to the changes in restrictions put in place due to COVID over the last 12 months, which had impacted on levels of crime committed and reported. This was based on changing restrictions in relation to COVID and had resulted in crime types experiencing unprecedented significantly reduced or increased levels. The priorities for 2021/22 remained as previous year with one amendment to include Organised Immigration Crime. The current priorities for the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership were - Violence Against Women and Girls,

Tackling Violence and Vulnerability, Local Community and Visibility, Tackling Offending and Counter Extremism and Terrorism. The priority around Violence Against Women and Girls reflected the gender bias of the nature of this crime. Essex Police reported that in 75% of reported domestic abuse the victim was female however it was important to note and Members were assured that services in Thurrock offered support to all genders and updates and reviews published by the Home Office would continue to reflect any recommendations locally. Through the Thurrock Council investment, we continued to have additional resources through the Anti-Social Behaviour Officer within the Community Safety Partnership and four additional Town Centre Police Team officers covering Tilbury and Purfleet. Off road nuisance motorbikes continued to be a key priority for Thurrock Council and Essex Police due to the impact it had on residents and communities across the borough. Fortunate to be awarded £432,000 Safer Streets Government funding for Grays, had allowed improvements to CCTV, street lighting, engagement with business through shop safe radios and community engagement officers.

Councillor Liddiard questioned the sample used on the police satisfaction survey to which Michelle Cunningham stated she did not have that information to hand but would share with members outside the meeting.

Councillor Liddiard referred to sexual violence and questioned whether there had been an increase in the reported figures or whether the figures were historical to which Michelle Cunningham stated this was an under reported crime and there had been a drive to increase confidence for people to come forward. There continued to be a big gap between victims that came forward and engaged with SERICC and those that report to the Police.

Councillor Liddiard asked if there was the feasibility of councillors or residents be able to monitor CCTV feeds live for their area to which he was informed this would not be allowed as this would be against our DPA and GDPR regulations, the CCTV operators were not licensed to carry out surveillance of this type.

Councillor Liddiard referred to the drug and crime activity and anti-social behaviour that takes place in the alleyways in Tilbury and questioned what was being done to address those issues. Michelle Cunningham stated that where there was evidence of reports, debris of drug taking or reports of people hanging around then CCTV could be directed there, be referred to the community police team and the environment enforcement officers. Michelle Cunningham asked Councillor Liddiard to let her know of any particular areas of concern. Councillor Liddiard questioned whether any increase in crime had been reported since the youth club had been closed to which Michelle Cunningham stated that due to the pandemic this would be difficult to measure but youth clubs were beginning to open up again and would ask whether some comparison data could be provided from different wards.

Members discussed poor or damaged street lights in areas within the borough to which Members were informed these could be reported on-line and referred

to the Essex Police StreetSafe which was a pilot service for anyone to anonymously report any public places where residents had felt or feel unsafe, because of environmental issues for example street lighting, abandoned buildings or vandalism and/or because of some behaviours, e.g. being followed or verbally abused. Members were referred to the following link to access this service [StreetSafe | Essex Police](#) .

Councillor Pearce questioned whether there were any reported Modern Day Slavery or Human Trafficking within Thurrock to which Michelle Cunningham stated no incidents had been reported last year to the National Referral Mechanism for Adults but this was not to say this was not happening as these could be hidden due to the pandemic.

Councillor Redsell referred to the successful bid of £432,000 Government funding as part of the Safer Streets and questioned whether officers could apply to which Michelle Cunningham stated this had already been allocated within the bid for CCTV and street lighting where lighting was poor and would make a big improvement. Areas would be publicised on completion.

Councillor Redsell questioned what concierge managed the Council's CCTV to which Michelle Cunningham stated these were managed by the council.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the performance of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership for the year 2021 and the ongoing areas of concern and actions in place to mitigate.**
- 2. That Overview and Scrutiny committee had the opportunity to discuss areas of concern for consideration by the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership when reviewing priorities for 2022/23, which will be based on the strategic assessment.**
- 3. That Overview and Scrutiny Committee recognised the ongoing risks that a changing environment pose to community safety and assure themselves that alongside the Police and Crime Plan and Violence and Vulnerability framework we continue to work collaboratively to mitigate the risks posed.**

That members of the Committee approved Thurrock Council's statement on Modern Day Slavery and recommend to Cabinet for approval.

21. Fees and Charges Pricing Strategy 2022/23

Daren Spring stated the report had set out the charges in relation to services within the remit of this Overview and Scrutiny Committee. Charges would take effect from the 1 April 2022 unless otherwise stated. In preparing the proposed fees and charges, Directorates had worked within the charging framework and commercial principles set out in section three of the report and had taken into account the effect that Covid-19 had and would continue to

have on services, residents and the local economy. Further director-delegated authority would be sought via Cabinet to allow Fees and Charges to be varied within financial year in response to commercial requirements. Members were referred to the full list of proposed charges detailed in Appendix 1, and the proposed deletion of any current fees and charges were detailed in Appendix 2.

Councillor Redsell thanked Daren Spring and spoke about the ticketing system at Thameside Theatre and how the box office should be open for those with no access to the on-line booking system. Daren Spring stated the box office was open Tuesday to Friday, 2.00 to 3.00pm and on Saturday from 10.00am to 3.00pm.

Councillor Redsell questioned whether there were any plans for Thurrock to have its own crematorium to which Daren Spring stated a feasibility study had been undertaken to look at a potential area.

Councillor Redsell referred to an area of flats where there were currently 42 bins used by residents and questioned whether bigger bins could be strategically placed to replace these. Daren Spring stated this would be dependent on the location of the bin storage and how secure this was but would be happy to speak with Councillor Redsell outside the meeting.

Councillor Liddiard referred to fly-tipping and questioned whether to help the Council recover monies that discounts on bulky collections could be reduced for those residents on benefits to which Daren Spring stated bulky items could be disposed of, for free, at the Housing Waste and Recycling Centre and in comparison with other authorities, Thurrock's bulky collection rates were very competitive.

Councillor Rigby questioned whether any new allotments would be available into the borough to which Daren Spring stated there were no plans for any new ones at present as it was hard to find the right location. There were a lot of allotments in the borough which were self-managed.

Members discussed football pitches in the borough and how some were being blocked-booked by non-Thurrock residents and all members agreed that Thurrock residents should have priority over non-Thurrock bookings. Councillor Thandi questioned whether there were any 3g pitches in the borough to which Daren Spring stated there were none but this would be looked into.

Councillor Liddiard questioned whether the portfolio holder would consider reducing fees and charges for sporting activities for those users who were unable to pay the full amount.

Councillor Thandi asked whether the number of fly-tipping reports had gone up or down this year to which Daren Spring stated he did not have those figures to hand but could provide to members if required.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the revised fees, including those no longer applicable; and comment on the proposals currently being considered within the remit of this committee.**
- 2. That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted that director delegated authority will be sought via Cabinet to allow fees and charges to be varied within a financial year in response to commercial requirements.**

22. Thurrock Roadside Memorials and Floral Tribute Policy

Daren Spring stated the policy statement outlined what was intended to be a sensitive but controlled approach to the management of roadside memorials and tributes on Thurrock's roads and on Thurrock owned land. Thurrock recognised that there are differing and sometimes strongly held views about this matter and in putting forward this policy it had sought to adopt an approach that seeks to take into account a diverse range of views and concerns.

Members discussed this item and all agreed this was a very sensitive topic that needed to be handled with utmost care and compassion. The following points were also discussed:

- Members agreed that the policy would replace the existing policy to remove tributes after 30 days but that enforcement action to remove tributes would be taken against those who do not comply with the policy.
- Members agreed that a bench, tree or plaque would be an acceptable alternative as a permanent memorial, if a suitable location was available and agreed by Thurrock Council.
- That bereaved families affected must be spoken to about the new changes and agreed this should be undertaken by the Essex Police Family Liaison Officers who were the experts so that this could be undertaken in the most tactful and compassionate way.
- Councillor Liddiard suggested that local forums or groups should manage the guidelines themselves, as these were the people who know the situation/emotion levels the best.
- Committee were concerned they would be known as the "heartless" council.
- Forums and community groups should also be spoken to about the changes.
- All, apart from Cllr Liddiard, agreed with the recommendation.
- The chair requested that the committee be kept up to date on feedback received from those affected.

Members also agreed that Cabinet be made aware of the Committee's concerns and report should be dealt with sensitively.

RESOLVED

That the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend to Cabinet the adoption of the new Thurrock Roadside Memorials and Floral Tribute Policy.

23. Single Use Plastics Policy

Marcelle Puttergill presented the report that in October 2020, the revised Waste Strategy was adopted. The strategy outlined the proposed changes to the Waste Collection service to ensure that it remained compliant with Central Government Policy as well as providing a collection service aimed at maximising the rate of recycling and re-use of materials. An equally important part of the revised strategy, strongly championed by the cross party waste working group, was a commitment to eliminating and/or reducing reliance on single use plastics within the Council's offices and services. The report presented the Single Use Plastics Policy for consideration by this committee.

Councillor Redsell thanked Marcelle Puttergill for the report but stated it was the bigger firms, country wide that needed to be targeted in reducing their plastic usage.

Members agreed that Thurrock Council could reduce the reliance on single use plastics in the Council's offices and services. Members liked the innovative that focused on what the council could do and agreed this should be pushed forward and for the Council to lead by example.

RESOLVED

That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee recommend the approval and adoption of the Single Use Plastic Policy to Cabinet.

24. Scrutiny Review - Waste Strategy Implementation Verbal Update

As part of the scrutiny review it had been decided this committee would focus on the Waste Strategy Implementation where Members could discuss as this developed. Daren Spring provided members with the following updates:

- In November 2020, Cabinet agreed the new Waste Strategy and to progress with the following collection regime: Alternate Weekly Refuse Collection, Weekly Recycling Collection, Alternate Weekly Garden Waste Collection and Weekly Food Waste Collection.
- Cabinet also agreed that Thurrock Council would lead by example and act to reduce and where possible eliminate, single use plastics.
- Overall aim of the Waste Strategy would be to education, empower and enforce by reducing, reusing, recycling, recovering and disposal.
- Some of the operational changes would be the introduction of Separate Food-waste collections (September 2022), alternate Weekly General (green/grey bins) waste collections, weekly recycling collections remain

the same, however round rationalisation will be carried out to synchronise recycling and food waste collections on the same vehicle/day of collection, purchase of 20 x new collection-vehicles, new livery to reflect the relaunch of waste collections and promote recycling, provide greater capacity, replacing older vehicles from our existing fleet, 10 x 'Dual-compartments' for 'Food-Waste & Recycling' on same vehicle, 10 x Larger Refuse Collection vehicles, allowing some resilience for property-numbers increasing over coming years, renewal of current waste-disposal contracts to include separate food-waste collections with potential to provide greater efficiencies and alternate-weekly garden waste collections would remain.

- The new service roll out would include - tender for the supply & delivery of Food-Caddies – January 2022, new larger refuse-collection vehicles due for delivery (4x in Jan/6x in Mar) and would be put straight into service, Comms Strategy to commence to trickle-feed messaging around the new services – March 2022, new 'Vehicle-Naming' competition to be completed before school's close for Easter, Food-Caddies - Delivery out to residents by Contractors and collection the following week – September 2022.
- Information was provided on what household waste and recycling would go in which bin.
- The national target for recycling had been set at 50% with Thurrock yet to meet the target. There was clear evidence that fortnightly collections and the introduction of food waste led to an increase in the level of dry cycling.
- This committee would be updated on the implementation timescales, communication materials, vehicle livery and other project matters.

Councillor Redsell thanked Daren Spring for the update and questioned when the last time residents had been sent a bin sticker was or information that identified what went in each bin and the schedule of brown bins seems to have caused some confusion for residents. Members were informed that this information would have been sent out some 18 months ago following the recommendation from the Waste Management Working Group but were informed this information was on the council's website.

Members discussed the delivery of new vehicles and were looking at electric vehicles for the next phase and that a vehicle naming competition would be taking place.

Councillor Redsell state that this service always performed brilliantly and asked for this to be fed back to staff.

25. Work Programme

Members agreed on the work programme.

The meeting finished at 9.02 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**