

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 October 2018 at 7.00 pm

Present: Councillors Lynn Worrall (Chair), Angela Lawrence (Vice-Chair), Qaisar Abbas, Mike Fletcher and Elizabeth Rigby

Apologies: Councillor Ben Maney

In attendance: Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways
Phil Carver, Strategic Lead Enforcement and Community Protection
Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager
Daren Spring, Assistant Director – Street Scene & Leisure
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.

7. Minutes

The minutes of the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 5 July 2018 were approved as a correct record.

The Chair referred Members to the 10 October 2018 Cabinet Agenda, Quarter 1 Corporate Performance Report 2018/19, Page 86, Paragraph 3.4, Off Target Indicators section and stated that the Cleaner, Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee had considered a paper and proposals to address reducing recycling but had not agreed as part of the recommendation that this was a national trend. The Chair stated this paragraph as worded could be misleading. Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways, apologised for any misunderstanding that the wording was not meant to be misleading and had raised the Chair's concern with the Portfolio Holder.

8. Items of Urgent Business

No matters of urgent business were received.

9. Declaration of Interests

No interests were declared.

10. Environmental Enforcement Update

Phil Carver, Strategic Lead Enforcement and Community Protection, presented the report which provided Members with the opportunity to review

the performance, service achievements and future priorities for the Environmental Enforcement Team. Members were referred to the increase in maximum fines for Fixed Penalty Notices made by Government, with effect from 1 April 2018.

Councillor Fletcher thanked the Officer for the report and questioned the 36% non-payment figure of the fixed penalty notices. Phil Carver stated that being half way through the year payments could still be made and the figure would go down. Thurrock Council had also now agreed to extension times on how fines were being paid. Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways, stated Thurrock did not take early payment discount and charged the maximum amount available. That the Council had a good success rate on prosecution for non-payment and this was followed up with press statements raising awareness that successful prosecution took place for non-payment.

Councillor Fletcher questioned whether early payment discounts may bring in more payments. Julie Rogers stated that the situation was continually being monitored.

Councillor Abbas asked how effective the Public Space Protection Order was in Grays Town Centre. Phil Carver stated that perception of activity in the Town Centre was different to that being reported. He advised that Officer Patrols took place on a regular basis to try to combat any fear residents may have and to remove street drinking. Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager, stated the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership had taken different approaches to combat street drinking with the public space protection order and patrols by Officers were being effective.

Councillor Abbas questioned the damage being done by HGV drivers parking on footpath and grass verges and how fines were not being issued. Phil Carver stated that where damage had been identified the Environment Enforcement Officers would deal with the situation and issue the appropriate fine. This would be the same situation for any damage caused by any other vehicle.

Councillor Lawrence questioned how long it should take to remove abandoned cars. Phil Carver stated that following the notice period being issued, 7 days for public land and 15 days for private land, abandoned cars should be removed within 48 hours by private contractors employed by Thurrock Council.

Councillor Lawrence asked what action would be taken of encampments parking on and ruining grass verges. Phil Carver stated that there was legislation in place with Thurrock Council having to go through the court process. Once an encampment had been reported a Section 77 notice would be issued with an Environment Enforcement Officer accessing that site every day to monitor any criminal damage. Any such criminal damage would then be reported to the Police.

Councillor Lawrence stated that residents need to report more incidents.

Councillor Lawrence stated how dangerous it had become down Broxbourne Parade with learner HGV's using this road as part of their route and asked whether the Council could help to solve this issue as no response had been provided when Councillor Lawrence had reported it. Councillor Fletcher agreed that a letter from Thurrock Council may have more of an impact compared to just one Councillor's letter of complaint. Julie Rogers stated that the Council had no powers in this regard but asked for details to be passed to her and she would write to request route changes or variations. Councillor Lawrence requested that she be kept in the loop of all correspondence.

Councillor Rigby questioned whether the low prosecution rate had improved. Phil Carver stated that the Council had seen improvements following the recruitment of a further two Officers but stated this was a difficult area which relied on evidence and witnesses reporting incidents. Julie Rogers stated that fly-tipping was difficult to address and that residents should continue to report incidents as seen and to ensure that anyone removing rubbish from their homes they asked to see a Waste Carriers Licence. A poster campaign will be undertaken in this respect and guidance was available on the website regarding how to dispose of rubbish legally. The Council's street cleansing team were now trained to search and safeguard fly-tipping evidence until the Enforcement Team can attend and take over. The evidence is then held for prosecution purposes.

Councillor Rigby asked what kind of evidence could be used to prosecute someone. Phil Carver stated a letter with someone's address on or a witness evidence statement.

Councillor Rigby stated would flood lighting help in known fly-tipping common areas. Phil Carver stated that where there are hot spots and poor lighting, this was being considered for preventative measures.

Julie Rogers stated that fly-tipping was happening in broad day light with residents not realising they are witnessing a criminal offence.

Councillor Lawrence questioned whether the proposed injunction would reduce the time taken to remove future illegal encampments. Phil Carver stated should an illegal encampment come into the borough following an injunction sufficient notice would need to be provided, if they did not leave they would be breaking the high court order and the Courts would be involved, which would make the timescales to remove quicker.

Councillor Lawrence questioned whether the borough injunction would be for public and private land. Phil Carver stated predominately for public land and vulnerable areas which were being mapped.

Councillor Fletcher questioned the timescales for the proposed target hardening for sites in Ockendon. Julie Rogers stated that following the removal of illegal incursions, work had to be undertaken to identify what target

hardening should take place. This work was previously carried out by internal resources, but due to other pressures, this was now being contracted out which had caused a slight delay. Daren Spring apologised for the slight delay as the Council had been reliant on timescales from private contractors, but he committed to respond to Councillor Fletcher as soon as dates were confirmed.

The Chair questioned the low number of non-compliant businesses being issued with fixed penalty notices compared to the stats provided. Phil Carver stated that compliance and education had taken place with some of those businesses for them to sign up to agreements and comply with their duty of care of disposing of their commercial waste. Prosecutions took place for those who chose not to comply.

The Chair stated that fly-posting and graffiti needed to be addressed in the borough and asked if permission was given for putting up posters. Phil Carver stated that the Thurrock web site detailed those that could apply to put up posters. Environment Enforcement Officers had already stopped events being advertised over the last week with 7 fixed penalty notices being issued for such events. Phil Carver stated that significant improvement had been made and that this issue continued to be addressed as it arose. Julie Rogers stated that Keep Britain Tidy assessed the borough on graffiti and fly-posting and the last scores were within target.

The Chair stated that those residents being targeted and issued with a fixed penalty notice under the public space protection order would likely be those that would not pay them. Phil Carver stated that fixed penalty notices should not be issued to anyone with no fixed abode and that the Police undertake the name and address checks when required, that said fines were being paid in this regard.

RESOLVED

That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the performance and service achievements and supported the future priorities for Environmental Enforcement which were linked to the Council's Priorities.

11. Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Update Report

Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager, presented the report which provided Members with an update on the performance of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership in 2017/18. The report also outlined the key focuses and continued priorities for the partnership for 2018/19.

The Chair stated her concerns with the Victim Based Crime figures and asked what the detection rate figure would be. Michelle Cunningham stated she would check this figure with Essex Police and if public the information would be forwarded to all Members.

In Michelle Cunningham's opening comments she advised Members that she would be keen to see the Prevent member group re-established. The Chair was keen to see the Prevent member group re-established and that the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee took the lead on it and asked whether Thurrock should be worried about high referral numbers. Michelle Cunningham confirmed that there had been no referrals to Channel this year.

The Chair questioned whether victim based crime figures could be broken down into wards and be publically available. Michelle Cunningham stated a link with this information could be circulated to all Members.

The Chair questioned whether the secured doors in the communal blocks were necessary as they looked unsightly. Michelle Cunningham stated the Housing Team would be best to respond, but understood residents preferred the secured doors instead of the damaged doors of previous.

Councillor Abbas questioned the decrease in number of anti-social behaviour incidents in the report. Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways, stated that the figures provided were those reported to Essex Police.

Councillor Abbas questioned was the increases in recorded crime due to local Police not being seen around the borough. Michelle Cunningham stated that the Police were making themselves more visible with additional patrols and engagement including use of a mobile unit.

Councillor Rigby referred to the victim based crime figures and questioned whether any allowance had been given due to the increase in the population in Thurrock. Michelle Cunningham stated this information was available by 1000 population from the Home Office and the data covered all crime types however this report was not public a copy could be sent to Members.

Councillor Fletcher stated that a change in perception was vital in the borough. Julie Rogers stated that Thurrock continued to work in partnership with Essex Police, at the recent Police Fire and Crime Commissioner meeting with residents the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner had discussed the increase in the number of Police in the borough, which would assist in addressing this.

Councillor Fletcher suggested that the Council approached schools in the borough about how the message could be spread about domestic abuse. Michelle Cunningham confirmed she had spoken to Changing Pathways regarding this.

The Chair questioned whether the decrease in the number of racial offences was down as incidents were not being reported and asked whether Thurrock had a Hate Crime Officer. Michelle Cunningham stated that this was an under reported crime with work being undertaken on promoting how incidents could be reported and how incidents could be reported anonymously. Michelle Cunningham stated that the Hate Crime Officer for Thurrock was Suzanne

Parson who was well supported with working with the community and advisory groups and had 150 Hate Crime Ambassadors who had undertaken the hate crime awareness training. Michelle Cunningham also added that the Prevent training for Council Officers now included hate crime.

RESOLVED

- 1. That the Cleaner Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the performance of the Thurrock Community safety partnership for 2017/18 and supported the three priorities for 2018/19 that were linked to supporting the delivery of the Police Fire and Crime Commissioner's priorities.**
- 2. That the Cleaner Greener and Safer overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the continually changing landscape and challenges that were faced by Thurrock Council and its partners to combat an increase in violent crime.**

12. Linford Household Waste & Recycling Centre - Site Redevelopment Update

Daren Spring, Assistant Director of Street Scene and Leisure, presented the report which provided Members with an update on the progress of the redevelopment of the Household Waste and Recycling Centre at Linford. Daren Spring stated it was intended for the planning application to be heard at the January 2019 Planning Committee following the planning application being submitted on the 5 October 2018.

The Chair stated that Members had attended a site visit and how impressed they had been with the changes made since the site had been brought back in house in June 2017. Members had the opportunity to talk to staff who stated they were happy to be now working for Thurrock Council. The Chair thanked all the staff for their involvement and enthusiasm. The Chair suggested a road sweeper be used on the site.

The Chair questioned whether the new redevelopment site would be big enough based on the proposed Local Plan and the forecasted population increase into the borough. The Chair questioned whether in the future a further site may be required.

Julie Rogers, Director of Environment and Highways, stated that based on the contractors forecasted figures, the design, the feasibility studies and the use of the currently unlicensed area of land to the side of the current site the proposed scheme would address the needs of the borough. Julie Rogers stated that the needs would be continually monitored and progress reports would be brought back to the Committee.

The Chair questioned how fly-tipping would be monitored when the redevelopment work was being undertaken. Julie Rogers advised fly tips are already monitored on a regular basis. Previous work had illustrated the

majority of commercial waste being presented at the site was coming from out of borough, since the permitting scheme was introduced the monitoring had not shown increase, as was presented to a previous Cleaner Greener and Safer Committee. The Chair also questioned the need for a temporary site while redevelopment work took place. Julie Rogers stated that the safety of staff and residents was paramount whilst the redevelopment work was being undertaken. As plans progressed and development schedules were better understood the Director of Environment and Highways would be clearer about the position and would report back to the Committee in this regard.

Councillor Fletcher agreed that monitoring of fly-tipping was crucial whilst the re-development work was being undertaken. Julie Rogers stated that fly-tipping was monitored on a regular basis based on the criteria set by DEFRA. Julie Rogers stated that a consideration going forward and subject to planning application would be a small trade element being introduced onto the site.

Councillor Lawrence stated how impressed she had been when visiting the Linford site and how friendly the staff had been.

Julie Rogers thanked Councillor Lawrence for the feedback and would pass back to the teams.

Councillor Abbas questioned how the facilities would cope with the proposed increase to houses in the borough. Julie Rogers stated that the feasibility study undertaken would accommodate the borough's needs and that monitoring would continue and if concerns arose an alternative site could be considered at that time.

Julie Rogers thanked her Officers for the good reports that had been presented tonight. The Chair seconded that.

RESOLVED

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

13. Work Programme

Members agreed to the work programme published in the Agenda.

The meeting finished at 8.20 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**