

5 September 2016		ITEM: 5
Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee		
Trap Racing Event		
Wards and communities affected: All	Key Decision: Key	
Report of: Gavin Dennett – Environmental Health and Trading Standards Manager		
Accountable Head of Service: Lucy Magill – Head of Residents Services		
Accountable Director: Steve Cox – Corporate Director of Environment and Place		
This report is Public		

Executive Summary

During the weekend of 30/31 July 2016 a large scale unpermitted trap racing event took place along the Manorway in Corringham. Thurrock Council has a zero tolerance approach to such unauthorised activity in the Borough.

Available Police resources over this weekend did not allow for an enforced dispersal of participants and spectators and effective prevention of this unlawful event. This report considers options to prevent a recurrence of unlawful racing at this location and elsewhere in Thurrock.

Thurrock Council and Essex Police are working in partnership to address these issues and are jointly preparing a draft protocol to guide our joint response.

1. Recommendation(s)

The Scrutiny Committee is invited to comment on the following recommendations:

- 1.1 That Thurrock Council will not countenance unpermitted trap racing to take place in the Borough and will implement measures at its disposal to prevent it. The Council urges any organisations or individuals that wish to use the Highway for these or other similar purposes to seek the necessary permissions and licences.**
- 1.2 That Essex Police and Thurrock Council continue to work in partnership to share intelligence about any unauthorised future trap racing in the**

Borough and that Essex Police commit to deploy the necessary resources to prevent a repeat occurrence.

- 1.3 That the Council instruct officers to consider the potential imposition of further legal restrictions on the use of the Manorway by way of a Public Spaces Protection Order or a suitable Injunction.**
- 1.4 That the Council pursue all road network management options, including traffic calming to prevent future unauthorised trap racing in the Borough.**
- 1.5 That a working protocol between Thurrock Council and Essex Police to guide our partnership approach to such unlawful events and gatherings in the Borough be prepared.**

2. Introduction and Background

- 2.1 During the weekend of 30/31 July 2016 a large group assembled in the vicinity of the Manorway in Corringham with the intention to hold a race meeting for horse drawn traps. In the up run to this event the Council became aware of the intention to hold such a meeting from rumours circulating in the community. Exact details of the numbers involved and the timing of the event were not known at this time.
- 2.2 As no permission had been sought to close the Manorway at this point by an event organiser, that no such permission would be granted at such short notice and in light of the disruption to residents and businesses that this event would cause, the Council passed the information regarding the potential for this event to the Police in the week leading up to the 30 July.
- 2.3 Whilst Police attended the Manorway over the weekend during the course of the racing the operational decision of the Police on Saturday was to permit the event to continue on the basis that with the resources at their disposal they could not safely enforce a cessation of the activity. The intention of the Police at this point was to enforce the provisions of the dispersal order, previously put in place, at 9.00am on the morning of Sunday 31st July to prevent or curtail further racing activity after this time. This did not happen and resulted in the racing activity continuing on Sunday morning until such time as the racing had finished when the Police deployed public order officers to facilitate the dispersal of those assembled.
- 2.4 The impact of the unauthorised trap racing on the local community over that weekend was considerable. Residents reported feeling intimidated and upset by the noise and anti-social behaviour, as well as the rubbish, including human waste, from a large unauthorised encampment in Springhouse Road that preceded the trap racing. They were also denied access to the road network for the duration of the racing on both days and concerned at possible illegal activities that were reportedly taking place.

3. Issues, Options and Analysis of Options

- 3.1 The potential for further unlawful events of this nature at this location is now a significant concern for residents and businesses in the area.
- 3.2 The provision for the mobilisation of sufficient police public order resources over weekends and in the run up to unauthorised events, involving large numbers of people, would be an effective and flexible way to deter the organisers of unpermitted events of any description and allow for the enforced dispersal of participants should the events commence in defiance of lawful police instructions. Should Essex Police find themselves to be over committed to public order operations across the county when such events occur the facility exists for the Chief Constable to call on mutual aid support from neighbouring forces.
- 3.3 At the same time as petitioning the Chief Constable to make provision for the policing of such events the Council should explore the potential to introduce appropriate traffic calming measures at this location to render it unsuitable for trap racing whilst maintaining its function as an access road for the residents and businesses in this area. Points to be considered as part of this study are:
- Will traffic calming measures at this location impose a disproportionate burden on other road users including HGV traffic to businesses that use this road.
 - Will the cost of such measures be proportionate with the public benefit derived from the protection of this section of road from unlawful events.
 - Could an effective scheme of traffic calming realistically be achieved.
 - Would consultation on such a scheme demonstrate support for this course of action by residents and businesses.
 - Could the implementation of traffic calming at this location simply push the activity further up the Manorway to locations which could lead to a higher level of disruption from unauthorised events.
- 3.4 The imposition of legal restrictions on the use of the Manorway for events by way of a Public Spaces Protection Order ('PSPO') or suitable Injunction could provide additional powers for police teams charged with preventing illegal use of the highway for trap racing at this location.

4. Reasons for Recommendation

- 4.1 The availability of sufficient police public order resources for mobilization and deployment across Thurrock and the surrounding areas of Essex would provide the capacity to control or stop unpermitted events and other public disturbances.
- 4.2 Traffic management measures such as the reduction of the speed limit applying to this road and subsequent adjustments to the road layout could be effective in making it unsuitable for trap racing events.

4.3 The imposition of restrictions via a Public Spaces Protection Order or Injunction could provide additional and alternative enforcement options for the Police.

5. Consultation (including Overview and Scrutiny, if applicable)

5.1 Consultation with the Police and Thurrock Council officers was undertaken as part of the preparation of this report.

6. Impact on corporate policies, priorities, performance and community impact

6.1 As these events give rise to the generation of litter by the participants the prevention of this activity will contribute to the Councils priority to Promote and Protect our Clean and Green Environment.

7. Implications

7.1 Financial

Implications verified by: **Carl Tomlinson**
Finance Manager

The cost of the proposed action and traffic calming works would need to be funded within existing budgets.

7.2 Legal

Implications verified by: **Vivien Williams**
Planning & Regeneration Solicitor

1. The introduction of any traffic calming scheme designed for this area would need to comply with the Highways (Traffic Calming) Regulations 1999.
2. The Council has the power to impose a PSPO on the condition that it is satisfied that activities carried on in a public place are having a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the vicinity, or it is likely such activities will be carried out. It must be satisfied the effect is or is likely to be of a persistent nature, is likely to make such activities unreasonable and justifies the restrictions. In making a PSPO the Council must follow the procedure set out in the Anti-Social Behaviour Crime and Policing Act 2014.
3. The Council is currently investigating and gathering evidence to obtain an injunction against unauthorised encampments. As an alternative or in addition to a PSPO it could seek to include a term prohibiting these events from being carried out if there is appropriate evidence available to support the inclusion of such a term.

7.3 **Diversity and Equality**

Implications verified by: **Steve Cox**
Corporate Director of Environment and Place

This report focuses on activities that are constrained by law and therefore do not impinge on any cultural, racial or other legal considerations.

7.4 **Other implications** (where significant) – i.e. Staff, Health, Sustainability, Crime and Disorder)

This proposal would have a beneficial effect on the reduction of crime and disorder.

8. **Background papers used in preparing the report** (including their location on the Council's website or identification whether any are exempt or protected by copyright):

- None

9. **Appendices to the report**

- None

Report Author:

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