

MINUTES of the meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 27 July 2010 at 7.00pm.

Present: Councillors Pauline Tolson (Chair), Diane Revell, Stephen Veryard, Sue Gray, Mike Stone and Steve Liddiard

In attendance: J. Nicolson – Joint Commissioning Manager
A. Murphy – Head of Environment
M. Boulter- Principal Democratic Services Officer

1. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

a) Interests

No interests were declared.

b) Whipping

No interests were declared.

2. VIOLENCE AGAINST WOMEN AND GIRLS STRATEGY (VAWG) 2010/2011

The Committee was informed that the strategy was a living document that was always being developed to respond to need within Thurrock. The strategy co-ordinated all activities taking place in response to violence against women. For example, the magistrates' court at Grays was being moved in April 2011 to Basildon and this would affect the ability of victims and witnesses to attend. The strategy would need to accommodate this.

There were three key elements to the strategy, namely prevention, provision and protection. There were encouraging signs that the quality of service had improved and that there was a greater take up of the service by residents. An early action plan was drawn to the Committee's attention and it was explained that this action plan contained set objectives and measurable aims for delivery by March 2011.

Councillor Veryard asked whether the strategy accommodated men and boys who also suffered violence and it was responded that these groups did receive a service, although their need was different to those of women and girls. For example, it was rare for a man suffering

domestic violence to require refuge or accommodation from a third party as they tended to find it themselves.

With regards to forced marriages and female genital mutilation, officers clarified that there was no religious basis for these acts and the council and partners had every right to stop them. It was added that the Council worked closely with the police and that senior police officers were part of the strategy group that co-ordinated services for this issue.

Following another question, officers confirmed that over time the Council would develop firmer statistics so that it could measure if services were successful in reducing instances of violence and abuse.

There was a brief discussion around planned savings in the service and it was clarified that the budget for the violence against women service had been taken back into the safer partnership general fund. Therefore, the same funding was still available but it was retained by the wider partnership.

With regards to job centre staff working in partnership with the Council it was explained that these staff members were trained to recognise drug misuse or safeguarding issues and had the relevant contact details to inform the proper authorities.

RESOLVED that the Committee endorse the Violence Against Women and Girls Strategy 2010/11.

3. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP SCRUTINY RESPONSIBILITIES

The report set out the responsibilities and powers of the Committee as set out in legislation.

RESOLVED: That the Committee agrees that as a minimum its role is to:

- i) Consider Councillor Calls for Action**
- ii) Consider actions undertaken by the responsible authorities within the Community Safety Partnership**
- iii) Make reports and recommendations to the Local Authority and responsible partners with regards to those functions**
- iv) Develop a work programme in consultation with the Community Safety Partnership on the list of issues of local concerns it wishes to cover during the year, for example anti-social behaviour**

4. THURROCK COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP PERFORMANCE REPORT

The Committee was informed that the Council had completed a very successful year and the number of reported crimes had fallen by 17%. This equated to 1300 less victims. It was also reported that Thurrock had less recorded crime per 1,000 residents than the average for England and Wales. Officers highlighted that vehicle crime, which was a key concern in Thurrock, had reduced significantly and this was mainly due to closer working with security staff at Lakeside.

Other crimes/ issues that had decreased included:

- Fly tipping was down 17% and the response by Thurrock Council staff was now classified as being 'very effective', which is the highest standard.
- Anti-social behaviour leaflets had informed communities of what the Council had achieved.
- Firework related incidents had decreased and last November there were no prosecutions related to fireworks and no-one was admitted to hospital with firework related injuries.
- The treatment for adult drug users has improved greatly over recent years and, on a number of indicators, is one of the best in England and Wales..
- There was a 44% reduction in reports of racially motivated crime.

The Committee congratulated officers on this good work and had a brief discussion on perceptions of anti-social behaviour. It was agreed that everybody had a different view of what anti-social behaviour was and it was difficult to get a totally accurate picture.

The Committee was briefly updated on initiatives to improve crime prevention and this included an anti-social behaviour (ASB) postcard to gather information on perceptions of ASB and what residents would like to be done about it. There were also community engagement days, partnership walkabout days and the 'You Said. We Did' campaign. Councillor Stone stated he had attended the Grays Riverside walkabout day and had been very impressed with the enthusiasm of the teams.

RESOLVED that the report be noted.

5. WORK PROGRAMME

RESOLVED: That:

- i) Tackling Health Inequalities, Prevent and Allotments Provision be provided as briefing notes.**

- ii) **A review of waste collection and fly tipping be scheduled for September's meeting.**
- iii) **Short term projects on waste collection and PCSOs are organised for August.**
- iv) **A task and finish group on Littering be arranged for October/ November 2010.**
- v) **The report on the Cleaning and Greening Panel be deferred to November's meeting.**

The meeting finished at 8.24pm.

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIRMAN

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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