

**MINUTES of the meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 15<sup>th</sup> March 2011 at 7.00pm.**

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**Present:** Councillors Pauline Tolson (Chair), Stephen Veryard, James Halden (substituting for Diane Revell), Steve Liddiard, Mike Stone and Sue Gray.

**Apologies:** Councillors Diane Revell and Gerard Rice. Supt Ivor Harvey

**In attendance:** Councillor Yash Gupta – Portfolio Holder for Environment  
L. Magill – Head of Public Protection  
A. Bamber – Essex Probation Service  
D. Freestone – Transportation Manager  
M. Boulter – Principal Democratic Services Officer

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**21. MINUTES**

The minutes of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny meeting held on 18 January 2011 were approved as a correct record.

**22. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST**

a) Interests

No interests were declared.

b) Whipping

No interests were declared.

**23. PROBATION SERVICE**

The Probation Service briefly outlined Community Payback to Members and the following key points were highlighted:

- Offenders undertook activities that contributed to the community and in most cases, helped introduce them to basic work practices such as being punctual.
- Community Payback was generally used for low risk offenders so that the public were not put at risk.
- Anyone could suggest community payback activities, including councillors.
- In Thurrock alone, some 25, 706 hours were worked through the probation service last year.

- These hours had included cutting back undergrowth from cycle paths, clearing snow, removing fly tips and decorating the Tilbury Resource Centre.

The committee held a general discussion on Community Payback and through this learnt that the Council worked with probation to ensure offenders undertook the correct work at correct sites.

The Probation Service Representative explained how offenders were assessed in order that they were given work that reflected their physical abilities and skill set. All offenders were over eighteen although the Service did work in partnership with the Youth Offending Service to find appropriate work for under eighteens.

Following questions from the Committee it was confirmed that there was capacity in the service to undertake more community work and any suggestions were encouraged. It was added that for Community Payback to have added value it was desired that the offenders complete the project from start to finish and also meet people who benefitted from their work.

**RESOLVED: That the Probation Service be thanked for their work and the presentation noted.**

#### 24. CCTV CAR

The report was presented by the Portfolio Holder for Environment, who fully supported the CCTV Car initiative. The Committee was informed of a site visit Thurrock Council had made to Basildon Council to look at their CCTV car. It was discovered during this visit that the car was very profitable and had created £38,000 profit for Basildon. The car could be used for a number of enforcement issues and not just parking. It was predicted that the set up cost for a similar car in Thurrock would be £55,000 and officers and portfolio holder were keen to hear the views of the committee on the car.

Councillor Halden thought the car would be useful and could be used in conjunction with the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership (TCSP) to achieve strategic aims of the Council in relation to safety and enforcement. He also felt that a trial would not be desirable considering the amount of work required to input all the relevant data into the systems. Officers responded that, on the strength of evidence from other councils, a trial was not necessary. However, Councillor Liddiard thought a trial was very important because it involved IT systems, which were always best tested first. He suggested that a trial could run for a month and the Council could borrow a car from a neighbouring council or from the companies selling the product.

The Committee recognised the high maintenance costs for the car, especially tyre use and suspension problems. However, officers stated

that the type of car used would be fully investigated to find a suitable match. It was also clarified following questions that Thurrock would not need to pay parking costs for the car (it would be parked in the underground car park at Civic Offices) and there were options to employ new or existing staff to operate the car.

The Committee as a whole agreed that the CCTV car was a good product to have, although Councillor Liddiard did raise a number of considerations. Namely:

- The car had to tackle known problems within the borough and could not be used to enforce restrictions that were not set out in council policy.
- Although income would be generated, he felt the existence of good parking at Lakeside would mean that Thurrock's revenue would be less than that of Basildon.
- The IT department should be fully consulted on the back office equipment required for the CCTV Car.
- The car would cause a lot of complaints to councillors, so all parties needed to fully support the car from the outset.

The Committee recognised there might be a peak in income and then it would tail off as people changed practices. However, Havering Council was three years into using a CCTV car and had just purchased another. Some councillors recognised that changing attitudes was the key aim of the car rather than generating as much income as possible.

Councillor Tolson suggested the car could be used for fly tips, un-netted lorries and Domestic DIY rubbish after the Easter holiday. The Committee also recognised the possibility that the car could reduce confrontation between enforcement officers and the public which could reduce stress.

The Committee was informed that there was an appeals process and officers agreed to look into issues where there was no parking spaces near public facilities such as the Grays Medical Walk-in Centre.

Sponsorship was briefly discussed and it was highlighted most businesses would not want to be associated with the car.

**RESOLVED: That the Committee agree to the CCTV car and ask officers to develop a business case to be considered at Cabinet in June 2011.**

**25. THURROCK COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP (TCSP)  
STRATEGY 2011/14 AND STRATEGIC ASSESSMENT 2010**

The TCSP reviewed its work and the crimes committed in Thurrock every year. The following key points were highlighted from the assessment:

- Serious acquisitive crimes (including burglary and vehicle theft) were still a key issue in 2010.
- Anti social behaviour was falling but remained a key issue for residents.
- Sexual crime, hate crime and domestic violence were all under-reported.
- Car cruising in West Thurrock was still a problem.
- Re-offending rates were slightly higher in Thurrock than other parts of Essex but the re-offending rate for persistent offenders had reduced.
- Work on tackling illegal money lending had just started.

The five priorities of the Strategy, following on from the assessment were:

- Reduce Anti-social behaviour
- Improve community safety through education, engagement and prevention
- Reduce re-offending
- Reduce serious crime and domestic abuse
- Tackle hate crime

These priorities represented the input of all partners and broadly aligned with the national priorities.

Officers explained that under-reporting of certain crimes were known and the Partnership were trying to increase reports of these types of crime by raising awareness and working with third sector organisations.

Councillor Veryard felt that crime could only be successfully tackled if there were more police on the streets. Officers were not able to comment on police manpower but did state that the Partnership worked on education and awareness raising, crime prevention, enforcement and visibility.

There was a debate on the resource levels of the TCSP compared to the priorities. Officers stated that bids were being considered on projects this week and this would give a better indication of the resources needed for specific activities. The Strategy itself did not go into that level of detail but would be revised every year to reflect the resources available.

The Committee raised a number of specific examples of policing issues, such as vehicle crime at Lakeside, racist allegations and youth nuisance that officers responded to and promised to progress outside the meeting.

A brief debate took place on community protection officers and it was explained that these officers were being tasked with different aspects of enforcement in blocks of time, therefore, ensuring they covered all their remit and worked efficiently. It was added that the three vacant posts were being filled in the near future.

**RESOLVED that the recommendations of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Assessment and Strategy 2011-14 be noted.**

## **26. WORK PROGRAMME**

The Committee briefly discussed the work programme for next year and agreed that an invitation to the Highways Minister to attend a meeting to discuss the rubbish on the A13 and A1089, as well as a report on private derelict buildings should be tabled.

**The meeting finished at 9.03pm.**

Approved as a true and correct record

**CHAIRMAN**

**DATE**

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact  
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