

MINUTES of the meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 31 January 2013 at 7.00pm

Present: Councillors Steve Liddiard (Chair), Andrew Roast (substituting for Simon Wootton), Wendy Curtis, Mike Stone, Clare Baldwin and Pauline Tolson.

In attendance: Councillor Angie Gaywood – Portfolio Holder for Public Protection
Councillor Victoria Holloway – Portfolio Holder for Environment
L. Magill – Director of Environment
G. Dennet- Head of Public Protection
M. Jones – Finance Officer
M. Boulter – Democratic Services Officer

17. MINUTES

The Minutes of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee, held on 20 November 2012, were approved as a correct record.

18. DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Curtis declared a non-pecuniary interest in relation to item 7 by virtue that she sits on the committee for Thameside Theatre.

19. COMMUNITY SAFETY PARTNERSHIP REPORT ON INTEGRATED OFFENDER MANAGEMENT (IOM)

Officers stated that the Council supported the use of integrated offender management in conjunction with the troubled families initiative. It was confirmed that the troubled families initiative had not been running for very long but some of the families involved included offenders so it was a good use of services.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) The committee note the contents of the report.**
- ii) The Thurrock Member of the Police and Crime Panel is aware of this report and that they work with the Police and Crime Commissioner to ensure continued funding for the scheme.**
- iii) Thurrock Council support the joint working of IOM with troubled families to ensure that Thurrock's most vulnerable are supported.**
- iv) Thurrock continues to work across Essex with partners to explore the continued development of IOM**

20. THE EFFECTIVENESS OF THE COUNCIL'S CCTV

Members expressed a wish to go and see the CCTV facility mentioned in the report. Councillor Gaywood also expressed her thanks to Councillor Liddiard for undertaking the work on this, which was seconded by Councillor Roast. Members agreed that collaborating with businesses that also had CCT, to create a network, was a desired option.

RESOLVED: That:

- i) Officers should be sufficiently agile to take full advantage of those fast changing technologies at the heart of CCTV when funds allow to take.**
- ii) Members recommend that Thurrock Council should do everything it can to improve communication and understanding with Police Services.**
- iii) Members note that the working party would like to thank Essex Police and officers from Housing and Public Protection for their input.**
- iv) The CCTV team investigate partnerships to enable more cost effective CCTV installation and operation where trouble spots are remote from existing broadband facilities, e.g., car parks, railway operators, Lakeside Shopping Centre, private residential sites etc.**
- v) The CCTV team appraise Members of the CCTV working group of those local authorities that have CCTV beacon status that we may compare future operations to.**

21. BUDGET 2013/14 – 2014/15 SAVINGS AND CAPITAL PROPOSALS

Match Funding PCSOs

The proposal was to cease match funding for fourteen PCSOs. There was currently no guarantee that the PCSOs, if funded, would operate in Thurrock. However, Essex Police had stressed that they were keen to keep local knowledge within the area.

It was confirmed that Essex Police would also cease their funding for PCSOs if the Council did and they had already planned cuts in PCSOs numbers across Essex. The Police had also increased their precept to fund their service although they had confirmed there would be no increase in police officer numbers.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Community Safety Development Officer Post

This reduction in one staff member meant that an area of work around community safety, including organising events such as the walkabout days, would cease. Officers stated that work undertaken by the post holder could not be undertaken by other members of the Public Protection Department and therefore the removal of the post would not impact greatly on other members of staff. Statutory Section 17 work would need to be fulfilled in another way across the Council.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Tree Maintenance

Tree maintenance would be reduced to cover only health and safety issues. There was an opportunity to sell the team's expertise to private companies and this would be developed over time. Members pointed out that this could also apply for grass cutters.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Cessation of Public Protection Overtime

Officers highlighted that the cessation of overtime for these teams would require significant contractual changes to allow them to cover out of hours work without accruing overtime payments. The saving could not be achieved for next year but it was an option that needed further work and investigation.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Community Partnership Contribution

The proposal was to save a small amount of money which was superseded by a direct grant to the partnership. Councillor Gaywood assured the Committee that she had worked with the Police Commission to ensure funding for the partnership was kept up for the next twelve months, although it was likely to change after that.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Various Budgets

The Council planned to increase its income from services such as tree maintenance, winter gritting and collection of trade waste and offer this as a saving. Officers stated that the collection of trade waste was growing but it was key for the service not to grow too quick and at present, the Council was focussing on offering its services to schools.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Grass cutting

The saving would reduce grass cutting by 10% with grass being cut on a thirty day cycle as opposed to a twenty day cycle. Some areas would cease to be cut and developed into biodiversity areas. Officers confirmed that the Council owned the heavy machinery required to cut longer grass.

Members generally did not support this proposal stating that Thurrock would begin to look untidy and Councillor Curtis raised issues of fire hazards if grass was left to grow too long. Councillor Tolson suggested that if the collection of trade waste was increased by a suitable amount, the money made could offset the reduction in this service. Officers replied that they were not confident there was an extra £80,000 to be made from trade waste at this current time.

Officers confirmed that the Council did not employ dedicated grass cutters and the saving would hopefully be made by not employing temporary staff at peak times.

Members recognised the excellent work apprentices were achieving in the directorate.

The Committee noted the proposal with some reservations.

Cleansing Growth

The Proposal was for the street cleansing service to defer its growth proposals by becoming more efficient with its current resources. The Committee noted that developments such as DP World were currently keeping areas of their transport networks clean as this was part of their planning conditions.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) Team

The theme of the proposal was that the Council would cease to provide services for private housing ASB and focus its resources on social housing ASB. The Council had a statutory duty to tackle social housing ASB whereas in private ASB it did not. The ASB team would be moved into the Housing Directorate.

Officers clarified that other statutory areas of ASB such as fly tipping and dog fouling would still be covered by the Public Protection teams.

Members were uncertain whether the team would continue to be effective and hoped that the team continued to have an impact when they moved into the Housing directorate.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Review of Waste Collection

The Council would reconfigure its waste collection service to reduce the rounds by three. This would not affect collection frequency and every resident would still continue to have their bins collected every week. A reduction in each round would see a driver and two collectors being removed but it was hoped that this could be achieved through vacancies and losing agency staff, rather than redundancies.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Outsourcing Leisure Facilities

This proposal covered Grays Beach, Thameside and Grangewaters. Members noted that Thameside might not be a viable commercial option and closure was a possibility if a private company was to become involved in the Thameside building. Members believed there was merit in looking at outsourcing proposals.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Waste Contracts

All waste contracts were due to be reissued in 2017 and therefore no savings could be made in the next two years. The process for renegotiating these contracts would start in 2014.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Additional Trading Standards Officer

Officers felt that the established trading standards team fulfilled the Council's current statutory duties and that if a further post was added, this person would be assigned discretionary work possibly in furtherance of HWB objectives. The real challenge for the service was obtaining volunteers to undertake test purchases.

Members recognised that the health and well-being agenda was related to education, support services and planning and that the use of resources could be deployed in other areas other than trading standards. Councillor Curtis thought this area of work was important.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Reconfiguration of PCSOs

This alternative proposal suggested that money for PCSOs could be re-invested in different models to save money but also maintain a service through civic enforcement officers. Councillor Gaywood thought the proposal was worthy of further work in better financial times but a saving would not be made if the money was re-invested and therefore it was not viable.

The Committee noted the proposal.

Members noted the proposed capital spends.

RESOLVED: that

- i) The Committee notes and reviews the additional proposals for budget savings and capital bids set out in the report.**

22. WORK PROGRAMME

The Committee noted the changes for February's meeting and Councillor Stone registered his thanks to Lucy Magill and her team for the winter gritting work.

The meeting finished at 8.50pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIRMAN

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
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