

Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 24 June 2015

Item 6 – Questions from Members of the Public.

2 questions were submitted from members of the public.

1. From Mr Watts to Councillor J Kent

Is the Council aware of the distress caused to vulnerable and disabled Thurrock residents brought about by the reduction in transport services provided by Trans-Vol due to the reduction in the services support grant.

As a temporary measure would the Leader move an amendment to the Council's budget that reduces the basic allowance for all Councillors by £500.00 and for the sum so raised to be added to the Trans-Vol grant for the current year?

Councillor J. Kent

Thank you Mr Watts for your question, of course we are aware of concerns of residents but when government reduced our own grant Council officers have had to work with Trans Vol to support them in developing alternative funding models. For the current year, Trans Vol have successfully tendered for the 265 bus service contract, and looking to tender for other services.

We are pleased that this year we have found £50,000 of funding for Trans Vol to help them tender for such service and to support continuity of service whilst other viable options can be secured by Transvol.

Mayor

Mr Watts, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Mr Watts

Thank you Madam Mayor. I have listened carefully to what has been said. Would the Leader agree that it is unacceptable for vulnerable or disabled people to scramble around for transport and wait a week to do their food shopping? It is unacceptable as far as I am concerned; people with disabilities have to think a week in advance, Councillors here would not have had to do that to get here this evening. This is totally unacceptable and I think if Members gave £500 from their generous basic allowance it would show solidarity.

Councillor J. Kent

Trans Vol's experiences mirror those of Community Transport Services up and down the country who are being forced to change the way they operate to reflect changes in the way which government supports vulnerable people.

I have considered your request and frankly feel that it is not one I can agree to. Councillors here support charities locally, regionally and nationally and it is not for me or anyone else to say which individual charities people should be supporting.

2. From Mr Perrin to Councillor J Kent

I believe it is current practice that when a child in Council care reaches the age of 16 they are classed as young adults and are required to leave the protection of child care and make their own way in adult society. I am sure that most Councillors will agree that 16 is still a very young age and is a time fraught with danger for young adults when they are most vulnerable. So I ask, does the Council continue to monitor the well-being and safety of young adults when they leave the care system and are you and your colleagues satisfied no young adult leaving care is abandoned and left to fend for themselves?

Councillor J. Kent

Other than where there is a plan for young people to return to their families, the Council encourages and supports all looked after 16 year olds to remain in care until the age of 18. Prior to their 18th birthday we work with all young people in care and where it is in keeping with the young person's needs and wishes, the council supports young people to remain in foster carer beyond 18, under 'Staying Put' arrangements.

Young People are consulted regarding plans for them and have access to independent advocacy and Independent Reviewing Officers, to ensure that plans reflect their needs, wishes and feelings.

The Council continues to offer support and assistance to care leavers up to the age of 25, in keeping with the Council's statutory responsibilities.

Not in every case does policy go smoothly, some young people leave care against our advice but in these cases we work harder than ever to continue to be there to help when needed, acting as a parent to help teenagers plan for the future.

Mayor

Mr Perrin, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Mr Perrin

Firstly Madam Mayor can I congratulate you in your appointment as Mayor of Thurrock and as Thurrock's favourite nanny. I would like to ask a supplementary question, if Councillors can be provided with a list of names so that they can be sure no teenagers are left abandoned to fend for themselves and rather they have chosen to leave the care system.

Councillor J. Kent

I do not know if that is practical, I'm not sure names can be disclosed to Members as this information is confidential and we need to protect the identities of our young people in care. I can however assure you that we do take this issue very seriously and I can ask the Corporate Parenting Committee to look at the practicalities of your question. Every Member here is a Corporate Parent and we take our responsibility seriously.

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Item 16 – Questions from Members

The Mayor informed the Chamber that two questions had been submitted to the Leader and a further three questions to Cabinet Members, Committee Chairs and Member appointed to represent the Council on a Joint Committee.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO THE LEADER

1. From Councillor Ojetola

The menace of cruisers in the Lakeside area has been a nightmare to Chafford Hundred residents and indeed to everyone living in the vicinity and the police need every tool possible to tackle it. Why has the council not renewed the Public Spaces Protection Order which the police require to deal with the racers?

Councillor J. Kent

I agree with Councillor Ojetola. Boy racers in the Lakeside area are a nuisance. The current police thinking is to request an urban clearway in addition to a Public Spaces Protection Order. The Police are due to meet with the Head of Highways shortly to discuss the potential for an urban clearway.

The PSPO application has been lodged with Legal and is currently under consultation.

The Police are currently at the stage of identifying a resource to enforce the order through processing of fixed penalty notices. The Council want to do this but we must make sure that the Police have the resources to enforce it.

Mayor

Councillor Ojetola, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Ojetola

Boy racers have an impact not only in the Lakeside area but in Aveley, Purfleet and West Thurrock where the noise can be heard. I have been in communication with the Police and they say they have asked for this PSPO.

Councillor J. Kent

We are working closely with the Police on this to examine how we delegate authority to them. Essex Police are currently considering the information they have and whether to add the request for an urban clearway to the Public Spaces Protection Order. I can say Councillor Ojetola that we are determined to complete this process as quickly as possible but we need to ensure that the Police have the resources to enforce it, but I can assure you we are doing all we can.

Mayor

Councillor Ojetola, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Ojetola

Yes Madam Mayor, I wasn't going to but I will. Thank you for your reassurance Councillor Kent. Residents have heard so many times the Police and Council blame each other for the lack of progress. We want reassurance that this is in order and look forward to having the issue resolved as soon as possible.

Councillor J. Kent

I agree that there is nothing more frustrating with one public body blaming another public body but I assure you we are working together on this.

2. From Councillor Ray

The Leader has in regards to item 10 2.1, 2.2 and 2.3 of the agenda to the annual council in May of this year said, 'The continued success of the shared legal service i.e. with the London borough of Barking and Dagenham has created a significant traded income'. Can the Leader give me and fellow members an actual figure of the traded income?

Councillor J. Kent

The shared legal service has been in operation since 2012 and in September 2013 began to take on traded work for other local authorities. Since this time it has generated £750,000 of income. This income has been generated from among its existing staff base and concentrating on specific areas of law such as governance, general litigation and academy transfers to name but a few. The service has also been accredited through inspection by the Law Society and gained the Lexcel accreditation for excellence in legal management and client care.

Mayor

Councillor Ray, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Councillor Ray

I welcome the opportunity to increase potential for earnings and extra income but can the total true staff cost be taken into account and that we are not storing up a financial burden in relation to pensions etc?

Councillor J. Kent

The work is being done by existing staff, the service wants to use its income to concentrate on new initiatives that will generate income and to reduce

spend on external lawyers for specialist work. Only a very small number of staff have been paid an honorarium based on additional management responsibilities.

Mayor

Councillor Ray, do you wish to pose a second supplementary question?

Councillor Ray

Thanks Madam Mayor. I wasn't going to but with the huge budget cuts I was led to believe by the previous Chief Executive, Graham Farrant that we were taking more people on in order to earn from them. Is that not the case?

Councillor J. Kent

There are two things there, first whether the Council should have its own trading arm and second to be more entrepreneurial as we can by bringing in £750,000 of income. Gloriana is another example. We are not going to be able to simply cut our way out of the budget cuts; we need equal measures of savings and growth.

As apologies had been received from Councillor Brookes, the Cabinet Member for Communities and Public Protection, Councillor Redsell confirmed that she wished to withdraw both her questions that had been submitted to him for a response.

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO CABINET MEMBERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND MEMBERS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON A JOINT COMMITTEE

1. From Councillor Ojetola to Councillor Holloway

There are many working groups currently in operation within the Council which deliver important strategic research work on behalf of Thurrock residents. In the interest of transparency and openness please publish a list of all such working groups, their membership, their terms of reference and lifespan.

Councillor Holloway

As this falls under this remit I have asked Councillor Kent to respond.

Councillor J. Kent

There are a number of working groups involving Councillors. As requested I will ensure that this is circulated to Members and a list placed on the Council's website.

Please note: The document circulated can be found within this pack.

2. From Councillor Redsell to Councillor Brookes




The majority of parking outside schools is done responsibly. Having had many yellow lines placed outside of schools, and parents still park(ing) illegally or irresponsibly inside roads and around the school. How do you envisage the pilot scheme allowing teachers to take on parking enforcement will tackle and solve the problem?

This question was withdrawn at the meeting by Councillor Redsell.

3. From Councillor Redsell to Councillor Brookes

The unlawful grazing of horses on council land including some children's play areas and also in many other parts of Thurrock. Can you inform the chamber what if any revenue this brings to Thurrock Council or if not, what action is taken to stop this?

This question was withdrawn at the meeting by Councillor Redsell.

Working Group Name	Membership	Lifespan	Terms of Reference
Thameside Complex Review Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Gledhill, Cllr Gupta and Cllr Snell (Cllr Gupta replaced Cllrs Curtis and Purkiss) • Matthew Essex • Stephen Taylor • Matthew Boulter 	Established by Corporate O&S in January 2015 and final report has been written	 ITEM 5 - Terms of Reference for the Th:
Member Working Group on Strategic Property	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Leader (either accompanied or not by relevant portfolio holders) • Either one or two members of the opposition, nominated by the opposition Group Leader • One member of the third largest group – which has been the Group Leader • Steve Cox • Ian Rydings 	Established by Cabinet in October 2012 and is ongoing	 17th October 2012 - Update and agreeme:
Supporting Work Placements Task and Finish Group	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Cllr Liddiard • Cllr Halden • Cllr Snell • 2 vacancies (1 Labour & 1 Conservative) • Carmel Littleton • Michele Lucas 	Established at Children’s Services O&S November 2014 and is ongoing	 Terms of Reference.docx
Budget Review Panel	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Group Leaders • Deputy Group Leaders • David Bull • Sean Clark 	Not yet established but agreed in principle with Group Leaders	To be agreed

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