

Minutes of the Meeting of the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on 4 February 2021 at 7.00 pm

- Present:** Councillors Joycelyn Redsell (Chair), John Kent, Angela Lawrence, Elizabeth Rigby and David Van Day (Substitute) (substitute for Garry Hague)
- Apologies:** Councillors Mike Fletcher and Garry Hague
- In attendance:** Phil Carver, Strategic Lead Enforcement and Community Protection
Michelle Cunningham, Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Manager
David Kleinberg, Assistant Director for Counter Fraud & Investigations
Cheryl Wells, Emergency Planning and Resilience Manager
Jenny Shade, Senior Democratic Services Officer
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Before the start of the Meeting, all present were advised that the meeting was being live streamed to the Council's online webcast channel.

81. Minutes

The minutes of the Cleaner Greener Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee held on the 8 December 2020 were approved as a correct record.

82. Items of Urgent Business

There were no urgent items of business.

83. Declaration of Interests

Councillor Redsell declared a non-pecuniary interest that she was a member of the Community Safety Partnership.

84. Thurrock Community Safety Partnership Update

Michelle Cunningham provided Members with an overview of the report on the review of performance, both qualitative and quantitative, of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership in 2020 and provided an insight into the priorities for the Partnership for 2021/22. Phil Carver provided Members with an overview of the environmental enforcement team's items of the report.

The Chair thanked Michelle Cunningham for the very good report.

With no questions from Members, the Chair moved to the recommendations.

RESOLVED

- 1. That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee noted the performance of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership for the year 2020 and support the retention of the five priorities of the Community Safety Partnership for the year 2020/21, which are:**
 - 1. Tackle Violence against Women and Girls**
 - 2. Tackling Violence and Vulnerability**
 - 3. Local Community and Visibility**
 - 4. Tackling Offending**
 - 5. Counter Extremism and Terrorism**
- 2. That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny committee recognised the changing environment and risks that poses to keeping communities safe.**
- 3. That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee recognised the requirement to continue to work collaboratively across Essex on the Police and Fire Crime Commissioners Violence and Vulnerability framework and to deliver on the recommendations within the Annual Public Health Report on Serious Youth Violence.**
- 4. That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny understood the impact on the Council of the Domestic Abuse Bill.**

85. Community Safety Partnership Report on Prevent

Michelle Cunningham presented the report that provided Members with the opportunity to review the Councils response to the Counter Terrorism and Security Act 2015, ensured that they understood the local threat and to judge whether the strategy and actions planned would address that threat. Members were referred to the Home Office Prevent Handbook that outlined three key roles for elected Members in shaping and delivering Prevent activity locally and these were Leadership and Direction, Community Dialogue and Scrutiny.

Councillor Redsell thanked Michelle Cunningham for the report and asked for clarification on the Panels being referred to. Michelle Cunningham stated that the Channel Panel formed a key part of Prevent which was a multiagency approach to identifying those individuals who were at risk of being drawn into terrorism, had access to the nature and extent of that risk and provided early support to those identified as being vulnerable to being drawn into terrorism. The Strategic Prevent Board focused on the delivery of the wider aspects such as training, communications and engagement and would be fed up into community safety partnership for their awareness.

Michelle Cunningham stated the Pledge Card had been developed by the Members Working Group and had been aimed at members to highlight the

five key points and how to report suspicious activity. Councillor Redsell stated it would be good idea to send this out again to all Members.

Councillor J Kent referred to the training being delivered and questioned who this had been available to, what the take up of this training had been and had the training been available to elected Members. Michelle Cunningham stated this training had been offered by the Learning Development Team to schools, partners and internal professionals and would be happy for this to be available to Members. Councillor J Kent stated that Members should be invited to take part in these training sessions as Members may need to demonstrate that they had completed such training. That there was a misunderstanding on what Prevent was and the intentions of Prevent. This training should be mandatory for all Members and before any decisions were made on the Prevent Committee, Members should be given the opportunity to attend training to ensure they understood what the Prevent strategy was and what that role would be. Michelle Cunningham replied that Members had been offered sessions and would be happy to arrange further sessions.

Councillor J Kent recommended that a further recommendation 1.5 be added to this item in that all elected Members should undertake the Prevent training and to make this a mandatory requirement. Members were in agreement with this and would be added to the report.

RESOLVED

That Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee Members:

- 1. Noted the increased National risk.**
- 2. Understood the implications for the Local Authority in relation to the Channel Duty Guidance.**
- 3. Considered the ratings and actions reported in the self-assessment Prevent duty toolkit for Local Authorities.**
- 4. Supported the Members working group to promote the important role that members play in raising awareness of Prevent, community tension monitoring and reporting concerns.**
- 5. That this committee recommend that all elected Members undertake the Prevent training and make this a mandatory requirement.**

86. Contract Renewal for Litter Enforcement

David Kleinberg presented the report that outlined the proposal for the Council to re-tender for the brought-in support services that assist the Council in meeting the objectives to improve the environment and neighbourhoods for Thurrock residents. Phil Carver provided an overview on the performance and

required standards of the contract to date and detailed future projections based on known comparatives and requested permission to progress the report's recommendations to Cabinet.

Councillor J Kent asked for some elaboration on the enforcements of environmental crime. Phil Carver stated that littering was a statutory offence and that there were processes in place for the Grays Town Centre PSPO which was written by Thurrock Council that the current contractor must abide by.

Councillor Rigby questioned how many contractors there were currently, how often they patrolled and what areas were covered. Officers informed Councillor Rigby there was currently one contractor and officers would be assigned to hot spot areas which may have been based on the number of complaints received from residents. Members were informed that contractors wore body-worn cameras and activated at the start of each interaction with alleged offenders.

Councillor Redsell questioned how many mobile cameras the environmental enforcement team had to which it was confirmed they had four.

Councillor J Kent stated his disappointment in the case being made for the in-house option as it currently did not highlight some of the real positives this could bring to the borough. There was also a lost training opportunity that could be attached to the issuing of fines. For example, for offenders being fined for dropping cigarette butts should be followed up with information or help on how to stop smoking. Councillor J Kent suggested that some flexibility, common sense and some education was required to be in place alongside enforcements.

Councillor J Kent stated that recommendation 2 as it currently stood was invalid and needed to be changed to reflect where the authority of delegation would fall. Members agreed to change recommendation 2 to say the authority of delegation would fall to the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud.

Councillor Redsell questioned if the service were to be tendered out who would be in charge of tickets and what would come back in house. Officers confirmed that in respect of tickets this would be based on percentage and currently the contractor received £42.50 for each fixed penalty notice.

Councillor Redsell questioned if the service were to go to another contractor how many more officers would there be in Thurrock. Officers stated this would be currently the same as now, one supervisor, four officers and one admin officer.

Councillor Redsell referred to the current contractor already in place and questioned what actual differences would it make in going out for another tender. Officers stated the current contract which had been working very well was due to expire in December 2021 and stated that the Council would be

looking at widening the contractors remit to deal with more offences which are absolute offences that are non-investigative.

Councillor J Kent raised the question that whoever was successful in winning the tender the Council would receive an increased percentage of fines. Officers stated that it would be two thirds of the payment to the contractor and one third to the Council. Councillor J Kent stated this was a hefty increase and reminded Members that if the services were kept in-house the Council would keep 100% of the fine payment.

Councillor Rigby questioned whether the contractor received any commission in the means of an additional fee or payment or were their payment purely based on the percentage of fines. Officers stated there was no commission with current contractors and would not likely to see that in any future contracts.

Councillor Redsell questioned what the risks would be to deliver an in-house enforcement service. Officers stated there would be costs to the Council such as financial and legal risks, training, equipment, sickness, conduct, capabilities, appraisals, redundancy costs. Members were also referred to the in-house comparisons within the report.

Councillor Redsell questioned whether the existing contractors could take part in the procurement exercise. Officers stated that they could.

Councillors Lawrence suggested that consideration could be given to shorten the contract to two years instead of four years. Officers stated that from experience contracts would be set at a four year minimum.

Councillor Van Day questioned whether the current contractors were employed to undertake any other services for the Council. It was stated they had delegated authority for fly-posting and graffiti.

Councillor Rigby questioned what the current contractual hours were. Officers stated the contract was from 7.00am to 5.00pm, Saturday working but there was a flexible agreement in place for these hours to be changed.

It was noted for the minutes that Councillor J Kent voted against recommendation 2.

RESOLVED

That the Cleaner, Greener and Safer Overview and Scrutiny Committee:

- 1. Noted the content contained within the report; and**
- 2. Recommend to Cabinet to delegate the authority for the tender and subsequent award of a new contract to the Director of Environment, Highways and Counter Fraud on a payment by results basis, based on Option 3 (3.3 of the report).**

87. Work Programme

Members were informed this was the last meeting of this municipal year, the chair thanked Members on the committee and looked forward to seeing everyone again in the next municipal year.

The meeting finished at 8.15 pm

Approved as a true and correct record

CHAIR

DATE

**Any queries regarding these Minutes, please contact
Democratic Services at Direct.Democracy@thurrock.gov.uk**