

30 January 2019

ITEM: 13

Council

Report of the Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour

Report of: Councillor Rob Gledhill, Cabinet Member for Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour

This report is Public

1. Introduction

I am pleased to provide my first report on this newly created portfolio for Public Protection and Anti-Social Behaviour.

The portfolio covers a broad range of services including Public Protection (licensing, food safety, trading standards, emergency planning and health and safety), the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership, Environmental Enforcement, including unauthorised traveller encampments, Anti-Social Behaviour and CCTV.

Whilst we work closely with the Police, through the Community Safety Partnership, to help tackle certain crimes, it is important to note that the Police are responsible for arresting people for drug dealing, criminal damage, gang related crime etc. The role of the Community Safety Partnership is to support, prevent and engage with communities.

This is a broad portfolio which touches on others including Environment for enforcement activity, Children's Social care for youth offending and Education for awareness and reduction for reoffending, to name but a few.

2. Public Protection

2.1 Licensing

2.1.1 The Licensing Team continue to administer the Council's licensing functions and have worked throughout the year to ensure that licenced activities are as safe for residents as possible. This work has involved regular work with the Police, Fire Brigade, Ambulance service and other external agencies with an interest in preventing crime and promoting public safety to provide safe solutions for events and regular licenced activity in the area. The team remains at the forefront of our shared services initiative with Brentwood Council reducing the cost of this service and increasing its resilience. During the year the team assumed responsibility for the administration of the street trading scheme in Thurrock and have made a positive start in clamping down

on unlicensed traders who would otherwise undermine legitimate traders and fixed businesses in the area.

- 2.1.2 The licensing regime for animals covering pet shops, boarding kennels and breeding activities has been overhauled by central government. This is giving rise to an increased demand for work from the team in this area and they have upskilled to meet these new requirements.
- 2.1.3 The training of licensed Taxi Drivers across Thurrock has continued with now around 360 trained drivers which is over 98% of our currently licensed drivers. This work will continue with courses planned for this year for new drivers coming to Thurrock.

2.2 Food Safety

- 2.2.1 The Food Team have had a very busy year dealing with over a hundred and fifty notifiable diseases including cases of Legionella and E-Coli 157. Work has included the approval of a new bacon factory within Thurrock, intervention at a cheese manufacturer in Thurrock where poor hygiene standards were giving rise to a risk of E-Coli infection, successful prosecution of a butchers for activity giving rise to a serious risk of fatal infections from their products. The team have served 29 Hygiene Improvement notices to protect residents and visitors from poor hygiene and disease during the year and launched the Tuck in conjunction with Public Health England to combat poor diet issues among school children in Thurrock.
- 2.2.2 The team have issued 150 export certificates to allow for companies in Thurrock to export food to non EU countries. This work is expected to increase following the UK's departure from the European Union and we are in the process of recruitment to provide staff for this activity.

2.3 Trading Standards

- 2.3.1 Trading Standards team have continued during this year to combat crimes against consumers in Thurrock prioritising activity based on local and national intelligence focusing on doorstep crime, fair trading, intellectual property and mass marketing schemes. Over the last few years the team have expanded their remit to include the operation of the Product Safety at Ports and Borders project, a nationally funded project that monitors and regulates the safety of products imported into the UK via our Ports at Corringham, Tilbury and Purfleet. This is an increasing area of work and the Government grant to fund this has increased over recent years. The UK departure from the EU will give rise to an increased demand for this work and the team are monitoring the situation nationally to identify any opportunities that exist for additional funding to continue and expand this work stream. The team were finalists in this year's APSE team of the year awards.
- 2.3.2 Work is also ongoing in the area of Underage Sales to introduce Responsible Retailer packs to combat illicit and underage tobacco and alcohol sales.

These packs will contain comprehensive information for small independent retailers in the borough to support them in selling age restricted products in a responsible way and how to avoid selling illicit tobacco and alcohol. The team are also looking at how they can contribute to the reduction of knife crime in the borough by cracking down on knife retailers and making them aware of their responsibilities.

2.4 Emergency Planning

2.4.1 Thurrock has more industrial processes and commercial storage facilities than other Essex councils due to its strategic location. This poses challenges for the Emergency Planning Team who are responsible for the exercising of plans for managing incidents at hazardous industrial sites, commonly known as COMAH sites. The team have undertaken three full exercises for sites in the area this year and have developed the in house expertise in this area to ensure ongoing resilience in this area of work. This has resulted in Thurrock being self-sufficient in terms of COMAH planning and no longer dependant on external contractors to provide this safety critical service. The team continue to administer the Councils 24/7 emergency planning duty officer service.

2.5 Health and Safety

2.5.1 The Health and Safety team are responsible for the regulation of health and safety standards for workers in the majority of businesses in Thurrock. This year they have finalised prosecutions against major companies for health and safety failures that lead to injuries to staff. In addition to formal enforcement, the team maintain expertise in health and safety matters and advise both external employers and the Council on health and safety issues that impact employees. The team have used their knowledge to exploit opportunities to offer their expertise to others on a paid consultancy basis. This has so far yielded income from schools and is an area of work the team hope to develop further.

2.6 Environmental Health (Noise Control, Pollution/Air Quality) Cross over with Health and Transport

2.6.1 The team continues to deal with a high demand for work on nuisance and pollution issues. During this year the team has developed a drone service consisting of two drones and four qualified pilots together with a CAA operating permit to run services. The primary purpose of this service is to enhance the Council's ability to undertake monitoring and evidence gathering in hard to reach locations. In addition to the use of the drone by the team to enhance evidence gathering and monitoring there is the opportunity to use the equipment, expertise and permissions acquired to operate this service in a commercial context and the team are already working on external projects. As part of the succession planning for the workforce of the Council a need for trainees in Environmental Health has been identified and the team are in the process of recruiting a trainee to fulfil their part of this requirement.

3. Community Safety Partnership

- 3.1 Community Safety Partnerships were set up under the Crime and Disorder Act, 1998, to ensure joint working between partners, including councils, to reduce crime and promote public safety in a locality.
- 3.2 The Council is a statutory member of the Thurrock Community Safety Partnership, as are Essex Police; the Community Rehabilitation Company; the National Probation Service; the Clinical Commissioning Group; and the Essex Fire and Rescue Service. These responsible authorities who form the Community Safety Partnership (CSP) have a legal duty to work together to tackle local crime and disorder in the area and to have in place a partnership plan for that area, setting out the CSP's priorities;
- 3.3 The partnership must have due regard for the police and crime objectives set out in the Police and Crime Commissioners (PCC) Police and Crime Plan.
- 3.4 In order to address local crime and assist in addressing emerging issues around the radicalisation of groups, following consultation, the partnership priorities for the year 2018/2019 are:
- Reduce Youth offending and re-offending of adults and young people. This will focus on volume crimes of: Domestic burglary and violence
 - To reduce harm to and safeguard vulnerable victims from: Domestic abuse, Sexual offences including rape, Child sexual exploitation and abuse, Gang related violence, Hate crime, Anti-social behaviour, Cyber bullying, Honour based abuse i.e. forced marriage and female genital mutilation, and Serious Organised Crime in relation to Modern day slavery and Human trafficking
 - Violent extremism: Delivering the Governments counter terrorism strategy – referred to as the Prevent agenda
- 3.5 In response to the recorded increase in violent crime and the concerns raised by residents in relation to gangs and anti-social behaviour Cabinet allocated £250k of additional funding.
- This funding has enabled a number of proactive operations to be deployed including: -
- 3.6 Addressing motorbike nuisance, which by the end of September had delivered a reduction of 50% in reports to Essex Police. This funding also enabled the innovative use of Selecta DNA.
- 3.7 The Anti-Social Behaviour Team and Community Policing Team have deployed high visibility patrols to hot spot areas of antisocial behaviour which has led to a reduction of ASB in the borough reported to the police of 8.5% in the 12 month period to end of November.

- 3.8 To support this there have been improvements to CCTV on the Garrison Estate, Derwent Parade and Seabrooke Rise.
- 3.9 We have enabled the ASB team to purchase ring door bells to be given to residents in order to support identifying perpetrators of ASB.
- 3.10 Purfleet has seen a 58% decrease in reported ASB in the 3 months to 30th September 2018 compared to the previous year with no reports of nuisance vehicles, in that timeframe (compared to 15 in the previous year).
- 3.11 Addressing the issues in Grays High Street was one of our top priorities, through additional funding Essex police's Operation Raptor team have conducted additional proactive and covert operations which has enabled them to obtain gang injunctions against 11 members of C17 and robustly enforce the conditions and breaches, leading to custodial sentences.
- 3.12 To tackle this issue long term, as well as enforcement activities, there has been a focus on prevention through additional funding for our Youth services which has enabled them to deliver holiday activities, and put additional nights of youth work into Tilbury and Ockendon, as well as fund an additional Youth Worker in Purfleet. Our Prevention and Support Services are working in schools delivering youth at risk programmes and are delivering outreach in the community through 5 stay safe operations.
- 3.13 Private Housing are recruiting an ASB prevention officer to tackle ASB in licensed homes of multiple occupancy.
- 3.14 We are aware that reporting is still a concern for many residents and working with Thurrock CVS we have launched the "report it" campaign to encourage communities to report issues in relation to anti-social behaviour and drugs – either direct to agencies or anonymously through Crimestoppers.
- 3.15 The Public Spaces Protection Order in place to address car cruising in West Thurrock has been extended for a further 3 years following a 76% reduction in reports from Jan – Sept 2018 compared to the same time period in 2015.
- 3.16 The Public Spaces Protection Order in Grays High Street continues to be effective in addressing the persistent street drinkers with 108 fixed penalty notices for breaches issued to members of the public and 31 warnings issued after disposing of their alcohol and left within the PSPO zone.
- 3.17 We are delighted to announce that we have been able to secure funding for 3 years to enable five police officers and one sergeant to be based in Thurrock Council and work alongside the teams to continue to deliver on the Community Safety Partnership priorities and to ensure that residents of Thurrock are able to feel safe in their community and confident that if they report, action will be taken. The Police are also providing three police officers,

which in total equates to eight police officers and a sergeant working within the community of Thurrock.

- 3.18 The Community Safety Partnership priorities for 2019/20 have yet to be finalised but will continue to include a focus on:
- Reducing re-offending
 - Addressing domestic and sexual violence against all genders
 - Tackling gang related violence
 - Tackling hate crime
 - Preventing Violent extremism
 - And anti-social behaviour will be added as a priority for next year.
- 3.19 While police are responsible for tackling certain aspects of anti-social behavior, Thurrock Council Environmental Enforcement Team deals with;
- abandoned and untaxed vehicles
 - graffiti
 - fly tipping
 - fly posting
 - littering

4. Environmental Enforcement

- 4.1 Thurrock Council's Environmental Enforcement team have issued notices and dealt with the following from 1st January 2018 to November 2018:
- 18 Community Protection Notices issued by Officers
 - 26 Abandoned vehicles removed
 - 802 fly tipping incidents were reported through 'MyAccount' to the Environmental Enforcement Team. The investigations of these and proactive patrols have resulted in 90 Fixed Penalty Notices for fly tipping and 65 Fixed Penalty Notices for Littering.
 - 57 unauthorised encampments were reported.
 - 78 Fixed Penalty Notices are in the processes of being prosecuted for littering offences in the Magistrates Court.
 - 60 Community Protection Warnings were issued to HGV drivers (and their companies) for parking on the footpath/grass verge and they were asked to move on immediately by the Environmental Enforcement Officers with a further 17 Community Protection Notices issued after they breached the Community Protection Warnings, refusing to move their vehicle.
 - The Council contractors (Kingdom Environmental Services) have issued 3498 fixed Penalty notices in 2018. In the main, these fixed penalty notices were issued for littering offences, however they also included the following offences, urination, spitting, dog fouling, fly tipping, fly posting and failure to produce waste transfer notes on request.
- 4.2 From April 2018 there was an increase in the fine payable for littering offences, from £80 to £150, as a consequence payment rates dipped,

although income levels increased. Payment rates returned to above target in November achieving a 70.80% payment rate.

- 4.3 The Tranche 2, 2018/19 Keep Britain Tidy scores for flyposting show a significant reduction from Tranche 3 17/18 when monitoring commenced.

| Fly-Posting | |
|---------------------|-------|
| Tranche 3 – 2017/18 | 2.83% |
| Tranche 1 – 2018/19 | 1.83% |
| Tranche 2 – 2018/19 | 1% |

- 4.4 KBT concluded that “Transects for issues with fly-posting have nearly disappeared from Thurrock with only 1% failing in all land-uses. Main retail areas however are bucking this trend and targeting flyposting removal from this land will improve the scores”.
- 4.5 The Main retail outlets are often under private land ownership and the approach here will need to differ to that on public land, the trial of Community Protection Warnings and Notices will commence in the final quarter of the year, in an attempt to eradicate flyposting from these areas.
- 4.6 Similarly graffiti on private land has shown an increase. Landowners are victims of crime and should be treated as such, however it is imperative that they are encouraged to remove graffiti as quickly as possible to avoid further increases. Letters will be sent to private landowners encouraging reporting on each and every occasion to ensure Essex Police are aware and can identify areas being targeted for patrol purposes.

4.7 Unauthorised Traveller Encampments

- 4.7.1 Thurrock Council employs the services of Essex County Travellers Unit (ECTU) who investigate unauthorised encampments on the Council’s behalf. The turnaround time for eviction, depends on courts availability to approve applications for summons and to evict however from end to end the turnaround time, is normally between 7 to 9 days to evict.

- 4.7.2 The following table provides the amount of unauthorised encampments on public and Council land, which Thurrock Council has been subjected to during 2017 and 2018, with an 11% reduction of unauthorised encampments across the borough, annually in comparison to 2017, however Thurrock still has the highest number of unauthorised encampments within Essex in 2018

| | Jan | Feb | Mar | April | May | Jun | July | Aug | Sept | Oct | Nov | Dec | Total |
|--------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|------------|------------|-------------|------------|-------------|------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| 2018 | 1 | 5 | 4 | 4 | 12 | 12 | 2 | 10 | 5 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 57 |
| 2017 | 0 | 4 | 3 | 7 | 10 | 10 | 8 | 7 | 5 | 7 | 4 | 1 | 66 |
| Total | 1 | 9 | 7 | 11 | 22 | 22 | 10 | 17 | 10 | 9 | 4 | 1 | |

- 4.7.3 Essex County Travellers Unit only investigates unauthorised encampments on public land, not private land. Private land owners are responsible for dealing with encampments on their land, by employing private bailiff companies or to liaise with the police to enforce evictions where appropriate, however the Council always take an interest in all unauthorised encampments on private land in our borough. The Council will provide guidance to private land owners on the options to address unauthorised encampments on their land.
- 4.7.4 Due to the number of incursions, Thurrock Council has adopted a target hardening approach as preventative measures to secure vulnerable sites. This is currently being undertaken with Gammonfields, Brandon Groves and Felipe Road already completed, further works are scheduled in 2019.
- 4.7.5 Due to the cost of clearing fly tips, after the unauthorised Travellers have vacated, and the impact incursions have on the community, Thurrock Council have gathered evidence to apply to the High Court for an injunction in accordance with the Anti-Social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014, prohibiting the setting up of unauthorised encampments within the borough.
- 4.7.6 The Council were positioned to submit this application in December, however an appeal for London Borough of Bromley v Persons has been submitted, which could have an impact on how injunction applications are considered going forward. Legal advice at this time is to await the outcome of the appeal prior to submitting our own application.

5. Anti-Social Behaviour

5.1 Thurrock Councils Housing Anti-Social Behaviour (ASB) team deal with ASB where the person causing the problem is a council tenant or it affects a council tenant and where the ASB is any act that causes, or is likely to cause, alarm, harassment or distress to anyone living in a different household to the person responsible. Examples of ASB include:

- Noise nuisance
- Drug taking and dealing
- Threatening or rowdy behaviour
- Violence and disorder
- Vandalism

5.2 As a result of carrying out high visibility out of hour patrols targeting estates and hotspots, which are the subject of intelligence received from residents, local businesses and community partners the team have achieved the following outcomes from the 1st January 2018 to date:

| | |
|--------------------------------|----|
| Community Protection Warnings | 12 |
| Final warning letters issued | 8 |
| Acceptable Behaviour Agreement | 1 |

| | |
|-----------------------------------|----|
| Possession of stolen quad bike | 1 |
| Reassurance visits to victims | 20 |
| Notices of Possession Proceedings | 2 |
| ASB Injunctions | 1 |

- 5.3 The Private Housing service is exploring the implementation of Additional Licensing scheme for Houses of Multiple Occupation [HMO] let to 3 to 4 tenants in certain parts of the borough from May 1st 2018. The council already implements the mandatory HMO licensing scheme across the borough.
- 5.4 Licensing in the private rented sector helps improve property conditions and management standards benefiting residents and neighbourhoods. Landlords affected by the proposed Additional Licensing Scheme must apply for a licence to operate as a HMO and pass a Fit and Proper person test and property inspection before they are granted a licence. The council's licence will include conditions the landlord must comply with such as acting on complaints about their tenants in relation to anti-social behaviour and waste. Private landlords who fail to intervene against their tenants can face sanctions in serious cases such as civil penalty notice of up to 30k, prosecution or have their HMO licence revoked. The team works closely with enforcement teams within the council and agency partners.

6. Housing CCTV Service

- 6.1 The borough wide CCTV service has expanded to 30 locations in the borough. This provides residents with a sense of security and reassurance of feeling safer within their neighbourhood.
- 6.2 The council's Housing Enforcement CCTV service works in collaboration with Essex Police and internal department departments sharing information and intelligence to prevent and deter crime. Information is shared to provide evidential packages of crime incidents caught on camera, assist emergency services respond to incidents using CCTV footage and supply information for further investigations.
- 6.3 CCTV demand has increased in relation to crime levels in the borough. The tables below demonstrate that:

April to March 2017/18

| Team | Service Requests | Evidential Packages Produced |
|----------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| Police | 1396 | 224 |
| Council | 778 | 338 |

April to November 2018/19

| Team | Service Requests | Evidential Packages Produced |
|----------------|------------------|------------------------------|
| Police | 964 | 198 |
| Council | 653 | 113 |

6.4 Camera technology is ever changing in response to CCTV solutions to combat crime and improve community safety and the council is developing its services using new technology to reduce crime in the borough, including:

- We are now authorised to use drones to detect and prevent crime and investigate reports of environmental problems e.g. fly tipping by authorised officers.
- The Council's ASB team can rapidly deploy mobile cameras to hot spot locations to increase public safety on a 3G and 4G connection and subject to suitable street furniture to fix mobile cameras on housing estates.

6.5 Some examples of how CCTV evidence has been used in the past year:

- Supplied evidence and are still co-operating with Police in Operation Raptor, collecting and collating evidence of illegal drug dealing in the Grays town centre.
- Identified a person of interest to Essex Police who then had officers apprehend male in Grays High Street.
- Open space CCTV footage was reviewed to identify persons in relation to a shooting incident in Tilbury
- CCTV evidence used to convict a person for burglary/theft from Perth House in Tilbury
- Footage was reviewed to identify persons involved in relation to sexual assaults.

7. Financial Information

| Service area | Revised budget | Year to date actual | Forecast outturn | Budget variance |
|-------------------------------------|----------------|---------------------|------------------|-----------------|
| | £000s | £000s | £000s | £000s |
| Public Protection | 1,142 | 682 | 1,142 | 0 |
| Environmental Enforcement | 264 | 1 | 264 | 0 |
| Community Safety Partnership | 134 | 69 | 134 | 0 |
| Housing Anti-Social Behaviour (HRA) | 523 | 210 | 497 | (26) |
| Total | 2,063 | 962 | 2,037 | (26) |

Community Safety Partnership Funding 2018/19:

| Funding stream | Amount | Comment |
|--|----------|--|
| Police Fire and Crime Commissioner Grant | £24,976 | All allocated to CSP priorities |
| Thurrock Council | £18,347 | All allocated to CSP priorities |
| CSP grant carried forward | £40,000 | This was allocated for Domestic Homicide Reviews and not required. This has been used for a post to develop perpetrator awareness across front line services |
| Cabinet funding | £250,000 | £245,892 allocated to address ASB and gang related violence |

Summary

Thurrock Council work collaboratively and in partnership with Essex Police, however It is important to note that criminality is the remit of the Police Service and the Council will do all they can to support perpetrators being held to account for their actions. Gang and drug activity falls within the remit of the Police, through additional funding we have supported Police activity which has assisted in evidence gathering to achieve gang injunctions and we will continue to invest in similar activity to ensure our residents feel safe and reassured that ASB is being addressed.