

Public Document Pack

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Legal & Democratic Services

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07 August 2019

THE COUNCIL - THURSDAY, 18TH JULY, 2019

SUPPLEMENTARY PACK – QUESTIONS/ANSWERS AND OPPOSITION BUSINESS PROPOSALS

Please find enclosed, for consideration at the next meeting of the The Council taking place on Thursday, 18th July, 2019, the following items that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No	Item
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9	<u>Questions from Members of the Public</u> (Pages 1 - 4)
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Questions/answers attached

10	<u>Questions from Councillors</u> (Pages 5 - 16)
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Questions/answers attached

35	<u>Opposition Business - Parking on the Seafront and High Street Areas</u> (Pages 17 - 18)
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Opposition Business proposals attached

Robert Harris
Principal Democratic Services Officer

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Council Meeting – 18th July 2019

9

Question 1 from Mr Webb to the Cabinet Member for Housing and Communities

Question

Southend Council will spend 4.3 million pounds to buy homes to help families/individuals. The rent income will be used for a series of other targeted initiatives to help the homeless and the most vulnerable.

What are the specific target initiatives to help the homeless and most vulnerable from the income from council homes?

Answer

The Council's Acquisitions Programme for Council Housing, as set out in the Corporate Housing, Homelessness and Rough Sleeping Strategy, will utilise this budget of £4.3m to purchase properties from the open market for the purpose of Council housing. Increasing this supply of council housing will directly assist those people on the Council's Homeseeker's Register.

The Council is also progressing with plans for the next two phases of the HRA Land Review Project which will potentially see another 56 Council properties built over the next 2 years.

There are also a number of initiatives in place to specifically help homeless households:

- The Housing Solutions team is able to provide assistance to people facing homelessness through a wide variety of means.
- The team negotiates with landlords and family members, exploring all reasonable options to maintain tenancies where possible.
- Where this is not possible, the team are able to help people to secure alternative accommodation through the use of our rent deposit loan scheme and can also place appropriate households in to temporary accommodation.

Also through funding received from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, the Council has put in place a number of options for people experiencing street homelessness.

These include;

- 6 multi agency outreach workers to provide direct assistance on the streets
- a homelessness sit-up service based at HARP's Bradbury centre providing additional emergency beds
- extending the Bradbury Centre opening hours from 5 days to 7
- facilitating an extra 20 units of move on accommodation to free up first stage emergency accommodation
- a co-ordinator to oversee the project
- additional funding for the Church Winter Night Shelter program, including funding for the co-ordinator, training for volunteers and laundry costs

Question 2 from Mr Webb to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Customer Contact

Question

In the Conservative pledge on police they said they would spend £400,000 this year upgrading our CCTV equipment in Southend.

Will the new coalition Southend Council put more CCTV In Westborough to combat car crime, fly tipping and graffiti hotspots which is on the increase and when will this happen and how much will it cost?

Answer

The Council is currently progressing its CCTV upgrade program which includes digitilising all existing cameras in the Borough, and siting new cameras in new locations.

Current CCTV coverage in the Westborough area is a camera by the Palace Theatre, on London Road. This camera will be upgraded as part of the digitilisation programme.

An additional camera will be sited at London Rd junction with Fleetwood Avenue, and another on London Rd junction with Southbourne Grove. These are all in the Westborough ward and all part of the Council's investment into CCTV in 2019.

Question 3 from Ms McMahon to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Customer Contact

Question

Current administration members recently overwhelmingly voted against the police advice, as was proposed by the Conservative Group, to introduce injunctions against travellers illegally camping on Southend and Shoebury sites.

Is this what their residents expect of their representatives?

Answer

I recently attended a stakeholder meeting to discuss traveller issues. The senior police officer present at this meeting confirmed that Essex Police have not requested or advised that the Council should seek a borough wide injunction in respect of travellers.

Essex Police felt the matter of illegal traveller encampments needed further review with key partners, to understand what options and activity were the most appropriate to employ when dealing with anti-social behaviour.

The Council, Essex Police and other partners work very closely on the issue of travellers. A recognised process is in place and is effective in removing the camps if/when they arrive and this is currently being reviewed to ensure it remains robust.

Southend Borough Council is also a member of the Essex Traveller Liaison Group which monitors traveller activity across the County, and reviews legislation (and any new legislation) that could be introduced to address traveller camps.

There is also a robust communication process in place between neighbouring local authorities and Southend – and information and intelligence regarding large numbers of caravans on the move is shared across these boundaries between local councils and police teams.

**Question 4 from Ms McMahon to the Cabinet Member for
Community Safety and Customer Contact**

Question

When Independent Councillors choose to vote against injunctions against travellers, did they make this decision individually or were they directed to do so by their Group/Party leaders?

Answer

The answer to this politically motivated question from a former Conservative Councillor is no, it was a free vote as was, and is always, demonstrated by the Independent group, who were split on this matter when the vote was taken.

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

Council Meeting – 18th July 2019

10

Question 1 from Councillor Aylen to the Leader of the Council

Question

With the increase of size of shipping in the Thames estuary and the associated increase of sound and vibration that can be heard across all Southend would the Leader of the Council assure the residents of Southend and surrounding areas that the munitions ship Richard Montgomery that sank approximately 75 years ago today and contains over 1,500 tons of explosives is safe?

These comprise the following items of ordnance:

- 286 × 2,000 lb (910 kg) high explosive bombs
- 4,439 × 1,000 lb (450 kg) bombs of various types
- 1,925 × 500 lb (230 kg) bombs
- 2,815 fragmentation bombs and [bomb clusters](#)
- Various [explosive booster](#) charges
- Various [smoke bombs](#), including [white phosphorus](#) bombs
- Various [pyrotechnic](#) signals

The reason this question has been asked again in Council after it was last asked is that the local press have been featuring concerns over the damage the new larger ships are causing to important wrecks such as HMS London and increased wear on the pier.

Answer

Concerning the size of the container ships using the London Gateway Port, some years ago the Department for Transport (DfT) commissioned a short study into the impacts of vessel-generated waves in relation to the development of the port. The conclusion was that there was no significant impact on the Richard Montgomery wreck.

The receiver of wreck has confirmed that the Richard Montgomery wreck is monitored on a regular basis (the last survey took place in February 2019 and another is planned for August 2019). The receiver of wreck has advised that had there been any significant change in its environment or structural condition (regardless of the cause), this would be identified through that process.

You will see from the published reports (mcga.gov.uk) that the wreck has remained largely stable, subject only to very slow natural deterioration.

Therefore, the Richard Montgomery is safe.

Question 2 from Councillor Aylen to the Cabinet Member for Business, Culture and Tourism

Question

The Metal village green event takes over Chalkwell Park and stops residents from using the park for 4 weeks. This event costs £20 to attend on one day and no food, drink, etc may be brought outside the park. This event also stops local residents for some distance up to two miles from parking near their properties.

Southend Council give free tickets to the Metal Village event for unemployed residents and also provides £22,000 sponsorship to metal to hold the event every year, even if they do not hold the event. The Council also clears the rubbish up afterwards and makes no charge for anything.

Compare this to Leigh folk festival that does not stop anyone using any parks or open spaces.

On the Sunday of the event traffic is stopped from using leigh high street and the high street car parks are closed. The festival organisers are also charged for loss of revenue to these car parks. By 8.30pm everything is back to normal and all rubbish is cleared up. The local tradesman have enjoyed excellent trade as has Southend.

So would the cabinet holder explain as to why an event that has a negative value to Southend (Metal) gets £22,000 plus and an event (Leigh Folk Festival) that is the biggest of its type in Europe bringing people from across the world is a positive to Southend tourism and Southend economy yet gets no money and is even charged for putting the event on?

Answer

Residents are not stopped from using Chalkwell Park for 4 weeks. Much of the activity over the whole period is in sections of the park and even during the main festival days, parts of the park are still available for public use.

All major events require infrastructure considerations whether road closures in the case of Leigh Folk Festival or Chalkwell Park for Village Green.

I do not agree that Village Green has a negative effect on the town and is a major event in the calendar. In addition to hundreds of free tickets being provided to low income families for the festival, the Next Generation day involves 4000 children in developing creative skills.

Food is allowed in the park and Metal contracts a specialist cleaning company as part of their event management plan.

Public transport links are clearly promoted on all publicity and Metal work closely with the bus and train companies alongside FowardMotion to encourage the use of public transport to the event.

Southend Council provides a grant to Metal for a wide range of activities, events and community engagement far beyond Village Green Festival. They also lever in additional creative sector engagement and funding throughout the year and support many health and wellbeing initiatives.

Public transport links are clearly promoted on all publicity, and Metal work closely with the bus and train companies alongside FowardMotion to encourage the use of public transport to the event.

The Council recognises the benefits that the Leigh Folk Festival delivers to the area and has supported it with grants and funding in the past. It also continues to work with organisers to minimise external traffic management costs to assist the event.

Question 3 from Councillor Wexham to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

Can the portfolio holder please tell the Council how many trees were taken out and how many trees were planted to replace them in the Council years April until March for the following years:

2016, 2017 and 2018.

Answer

In each year requested, it was necessary for the Council to remove trees, as follows:-

2016/17 three hundred and ten (310);

2017/18 three hundred and seventy-three (373); and

2018/19 four hundred and twelve (412).

During these three years, the UK experienced several storms; these storms accounted and resulting damage resulted in 115 of the trees removed.

The total number of trees removed represents less than 1% of the overall tree population.

The Council planted new trees as follows:-

2016/17 three hundred and twenty-two (322);

2017/18 two hundred and seventy-nine (279); and

2018/19 three hundred and eighty-four (384).

The Council's Tree Policy states that it will 'Replace removed trees, where possible, with appropriate trees, on a two for one basis.'

Due to a variety of reasons, such as underground services, sightline and street furniture, it is not always possible to replant trees on a street when one has been removed. When many of these trees were planted (some decades ago) times were different and little heed was paid to or known about these constraints, which today we now have to deal with.

In addition to the standard trees that have been planted previously detailed, over the 2016 to 2019 period, hundreds of young trees in the form of whips have been planted in green spaces across the town.

This administration takes the environment very seriously and trees in particular are a vital part of that and we will make every effort to improve the rate of tree planting and replacement to enhance the street scene.

Question 4 from Councillor Garne to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Customer Contact

Question

The season for large scale firework displays will soon be upon us. What measures can be taken to minimise the fear and distress caused to many domestic pets during such events?

Answer

In respect of animals the best advice is to keep them indoors and as far away as possible from the display. This includes bringing the hutches of small pets such as rabbits and guinea pigs indoors where possible, or covering them if not.

Close all windows and doors, and block off cat-flaps to stop pets escaping and to keep noise to a minimum. Draw the curtains, and if the animals are used to the sounds of TV or radio, switch them on (but not too loudly) in order to block out some of the noise of the fireworks.

Dogs should be walked earlier in the day before the scheduled start time of a display.

There is more detailed advice available on the web on sites such as rspca.org.uk and bluecross.org.uk

Question 5 from Council Flewitt to the Cabinet Member for Health and Adult Social Care

Question

The Public Health Report is comprehensive and reveals some sad facts, including the late diagnosis of HIV as well as other sexual health criteria.

Can the Portfolio Holder say what actions he is taking or can take to impact upon these adverse statistics?

Answer

Thank you Councillor Flewitt for your question regarding the sexual health data detailed in the Director of Public Health Report 2018-2019. A number of the sexual health indicators benchmark Southend-on-Sea as being better or similar than England however it is recognised that some indicators are not showing this outcome.

Since April 2019 a new Southend Sexual Health Service has been commissioned to deliver free to access sexual health services to the residents of Southend-on-Sea, this includes the testing, diagnosis, treatment and partner management of sexually transmitted infections and HIV. The service also provides access to a comprehensive range of contraceptive methods and support in managing conception options. The sexual health service will offer, from the beginning of August 2019, a new digital online offer for sexually transmitted infections testing and diagnosis with treatment and partner management being provided through clinical services. This service will complement the already existing HIV Home Sampling offer delivered in conjunction with Public Health England as part of the national service.

From September 2019 the Terrence Higgins Trust will deliver a sexual health promotion and community HIV prevention service and will bring additional resource to deliver community and digital outreach; distributing safer sex and HIV prevention materials; and Point of Care HIV Testing to both the general public and to targeted identified groups.

Primary Care services, delivered by General Practice and Community Pharmacy will also improve access to contraception, particularly Long Acting Reversible Contraception, for those seeking it.

The Southend Sexual Health Service and The Terrence Higgins Trust, in partnership with the Southend-on-Sea Borough Council Communications Team and Public Health Team will raise awareness of national, regional and local campaigns through joint communication channels including social media.

A Deep Dive exercise is currently underway to review teenage conceptions and pregnancy with the outcomes being available in October 2019.

Public Health 0-19 services continue to support children and young people in school settings and supporting young families through Health Visiting and Family Nurse Partnership Services. This offer includes sexual and reproductive health advice and support.

Training is being delivered to support Southend Schools, through the Enhanced Healthy School Project, to implement the statutory Relationships and Sex Education curriculum from September 2020. The actions above detail access to specialist services; new technology options for delivering services; improved awareness raising; and direct interventions with young people and targeted groups, these will support an improvement in sexual health outcomes for Southend-on-Sea residents and intend to raise the local indicator outcomes to being better or similar to England.

In regards to working age adults, and in particular those in the older age group, we are currently in discussion with THT to engage them in our PH Responsibility Deal (Workplace health and wellbeing intervention) to raise awareness around the increase trend of STIs in the older working age population.

Question 6 from Councillor Flewitt to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

Question

Energy is a significant element in all our lives and the Council is ever reaching to make better use of all forms and refine others.

Will the Portfolio Holder take my suggestion to hold an Energy conference to evaluate how our local communities and the Council can best shape the future for energy within the Borough?

Answer

We are committed to improving the Environment and the lives of all of our households. Of course Energy forms a large part of this work and involvement of the local community will be critical. We are examining how to make best use of the approaches and funding available within the Government's Industrial Strategy, especially as they relate to Local Energy Systems. A conference may well form a useful part of the local communities engagement work amongst other approaches, and we will be considering that.

Question 7 from Councillor McGlone to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

Question

The residents of the Ekco estate in St Laurence Ward currently pay a maintenance fee to the developer for a sub contracted organisation to carry out the work which includes cutting grass verges and other green areas and emptying dog waste bins.

The maintenance fee is in addition to the payment of Council tax.

It is obviously clear that the sub-contractor is failing in its duty to fulfil this role.

Can the portfolio holder commit this Council to carrying out these functions in the near future? Thus providing the residents with a better environmental ambience and also reducing their costs.

Answer

The Areas in question are privately owned and they have not been adopted by the Authority and are therefore not the responsibility of Southend on Sea Borough Council.

Residents will have entered into a private contract with the developer, and pay maintenance fees accordingly. If they find that the contractor is not committing to its responsibility, then the remedy is with the developer or whoever is now running the sub-contract. This is a private matter and we would suggest that the residents contact their maintenance company as a collective directly if they feel that services for which they pay are not forthcoming.

There are a number of areas throughout the Borough that are owned and maintained by Private Companies. These companies are responsible for Street Lighting, Columns, Grass cuttings from open spaces, litter and dog waste.

The Council is unable to give an undertaking to take on responsibility for those areas throughout the Borough, as the costs would be prohibitive.

There is a formal process in place for Council's to consider adopting private road and amenity areas. This is a resident driven process, where a collective agreement between residents is reached. The areas in question are required to be brought up to the Council's adoptable standard (this applies to either highway or park amenity areas) at residents expense, before the adoption process can take place. Residents may wish to consider this approach.

Question 8 from Councillor Dent to the Cabinet Member for Business, Culture and Tourism

Question

Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the situation regarding the Kursaal?

Answer

The Council retained the freehold when the long leasehold interest in the building was sold many years ago however it has no direct relationship with the subtenants and is not involved in the running of the building. The current owners of the building are working hard to give the building a sustainable future.

Question 9 from Councillor Dent to the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Customer Contact

Question

Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on the CCTV upgrade programme throughout the Borough?

Answer

The procurement process is in the last stages of finalisation. Key procurement documentation, including final revision of the tender specification and the Data Protection Impact Statement (DPIA), are in hand and it is hoped that the Council can be in position to go to full contract tender in the next month.

A decision will be made as to whether to avoid going live with the contract tender in the month of August due to the holiday period; September may be more appropriate.

Question 10 from Councillor Davidson to the Cabinet Member for Environment and Planning

Question

Last year, under the previous administration, the Council submitted a successful bid for funding from the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy project. This enabled Southend Council to plant 215 new trees at a number of locations in the Borough to mark the centenary of Armistice Day. Earlier this year, the Government launched a £10 million Urban Tree Challenge Fund so that 130,000 new trees can be planted in urban areas in England over the next two years.

Is the Council in the process of applying for a grant from this fund?

Answer

Before I answer the question regarding the Urban Tree Challenge Fund I can confirm that hundreds of young trees in the form of whips have been planted in green spaces across the town which includes those funded by the Queen's Commonwealth Canopy project.

As to the Urban Tree Challenge Fund this is a challenge fund offering 50% contribution to the costs of tree planting. It is over a two year period and this is the first year. In that first year only block bids are required to a minimum value of £500,000. As this then has to be match-funded the Council would also have to contribute the same amount. This of course has not been the subject of any budget consideration coming so early in the financial year.

A planting scheme of this value and consequent magnitude would constitute a massive planting in Southend which does not have the land capacity for such a massive amount of planting even if it were broken down into several areas.

However, year two is aimed at individual applications and would allow for small individual schemes working with community groups thus ensuring the tree cover in the Borough is enhanced throughout the area and aligning with a number of the 2050 objectives and giving a chance for all areas of the Borough to participate.

Officers will be looking at this as a positive opportunity in the coming months and engaging with community groups and to that end I would be grateful if any members have any suggestions for areas that would benefit from a scheme if they could let the officers know together with a local contact for liaison so that they can be investigated.

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Opposition Business

Notice of Motion

35

Parking on the Seafront and High Street Areas

This Council notes the concerns of residents and local businesses on the Seafront and Town Centre area that local traffic and parking restrictions are having a negative effect on local traders and are having an especially pronounced effect on our local economy. This Council believes that the area's local businesses are vital to tourism and the future of the High Street.

During exceptionally busy periods, there is a major shortage of car parking spaces around the Seafront area. The lack of parking capacity creates major congestion as cars circle round and around hunting for non-existent spaces.

Car parks are full by 1pm, the traffic queues up, the roundabout grinds to a halt and congestion builds across the whole town and down the A127 past Basildon.

Resultant pollution and increased journey times are detrimental to the town's economy. Local residents avoid the Seafront and High St for fear of getting stuck in traffic. Visitors choose not to return as it can take hours to get into the town and find a parking space. In order to boost the local economy,

This Council therefore resolves that it should:

1. Provide on street parking for 2 hours free parking in all roads off the High Street between Royal Terrace and Queen's Road.
2. Restoration of the 1-hour parking charging band in all car parks where it was removed in the 2018/2019 budget.
3. To increase connectivity between the Seafront and the High Street, reinstate the right-hand turn at Chancellor Road and Church Road junction.
4. Allow the straight-ahead manoeuvre at the Chancellor Road and Church Road junction.
5. Allow a right turn into Tylers Avenue Car Park from Chichester Road.
6. Acknowledge that more parking spaces are desperately needed to cater for population growth and to allow tourism and our economy to grow.
7. Provide additional on-street car parking at the following locations:
 - i. Removal of the yellow lines by the businesses under Pier Hill on Western esplanade
 - ii. Introduce parking bays on the soft verge area on Chancellor Road
 - iii. By the coach bay near the Pier

- iv. Remove yellow lines outside the Yacht Club
- v. Remove the yellow lines on Eastern Esplanade outside the Vaping Shop
- vi. Provide parking on the area opposite Electric Avenue on Marine Parade
- vii. White lines outside Three Shells on Western Esplanade
- viii. Yellow lines outside the Marriotts on Western Esplanade

Proposed By: Cllr Buck
Cllr Cox

Seconded By Cllr Bright
Cllr Boyd
Cllr Burzotta
Cllr Davidson
Cllr Dear
Cllr Evans
Cllr Folkard
Cllr Garne
Cllr Garston
Cllr Habermel
Cllr Jarvis
Cllr McGlone
Cllr Moring
Cllr Nelson
Cllr Salter
Cllr Walker