

Public Document Pack

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Legal & Democratic Services

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07 February 2022

THE COUNCIL - THURSDAY, 9TH DECEMBER, 2021 SUPPLEMENTARY PACK: QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS SHEET

Please find enclosed, for consideration at the next meeting of the The Council taking place on Thursday, 9th December, 2021, the following report(s) that were unavailable when the agenda was printed.

Agenda No Item

4. **Questions from Members of the Public (Pages 1 - 8)**

Questions and Answers sheet attached

5. **Questions from Members of the Council (Pages 9 - 16)**

Questions and Answers sheet attached

Robert Harris
Principal Democratic Services Officer

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(1) Question from Mr David Webb to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning (Cllr Mulroney)

Question

What strategies is Veolia and the Council going to put into place to raise the pink, food, garden recycling and reduce black sack tonnes in 2021 and 2022?

Answer

The Council and Veolia continue to work in partnership to deliver actions to improve recycling rates. This currently includes:

- school education activities.
- volunteer engagement.
- social media campaigns.
- engagement with businesses and local communities regarding correct recycling.
- seasonal recycling information for example at Christmas.
- Regular updates of the recycling information on the Councils website.

(2) Question from Mr David Webb to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection (Cllr Terry)

Question

How many fines for fly tipping were handed out in 2019, 2020 and 2020 and what was the total for each year?

Answer

The Council's environmental enforcement policy prioritises recycling education and engagement before formal enforcement action, to ensure that residents and business have the opportunity to comply with environmental legislation.

In 2019/20, 31 Fixed Penalty Notices and 19 statutory notices for littering, fly-tipping and duty of care infringements, were issued by the Council.

In 2020-21, the Council undertook 300 investigations into fly-tipping, 71 warning letters were issued and 30 duty of care inspections relating to businesses were carried out, although further formal enforcement activity was impacted by the COVID-19 pandemic.

In the current financial year to September 2021, 271 fly-tipping investigations have been undertaken, 103 warning letters have been issued and 63 duty of care inspections relating to businesses have been carried out.

The Council has recently recruited an additional Enforcement Officer to carry out enforcement activity in hot spot areas of fly-tipping.

(3) Question from Ms Lydia Hyde to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning (Cllr Mulroney)

Question

It was great to see women's sport have a platform in Southend recently with the Ladies bike tour. However, the largest team sport for women in the UK is netball, and rather staggeringly there are over one hundred active teams in Southend alone, including adult, youth and non-competitive groups. There are even 'walking netball' clubs for those with mobility challenges.

Despite this popularity in our city, the local facilities do not match demand, especially with the outdoor courts at Garon Park falling into disrepair. This has forced the leagues and many teams to need to travel out of borough to play and train. This is not only frustrating for players, and causing congestion on our roads, but is also a loss of revenue for the Council, with bordering authorities drawing in thousands each week from netball courts.

Would the portfolio holder consider investment into our netball facilities, with appropriately surfaced courts and flood lighting, allowing the thousands of keen netballers in Southend to train and play locally, and attracting much needed revenue into the Council?

Answer

Thank you for raising this point about netball provision in the area which I know is being delivered at variety of sites, some of which are outside Southend's boundary. Participation in sport is important and I have asked our officers to actively investigate this matter and identify what improvements could be possible with appropriate partners for more provision in the Borough. I have asked that this investigation be undertaken as soon as possible, especially into potential funding opportunities.

(4) Question from Ms Lydia Hyde to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Asset Management and Inward Investment (Cllr Woodley)

Question

Cuckoo corner is a busy roundabout that provides a vital junction between Victoria Avenue, Prince Avenue, Manners Way, and Priory Crescent. However, at peak times this can often get clogged up by traffic waiting for one exit, including by HGVs, therefore blocking other users from traversing the roundabout and unnecessarily exacerbating the congestion. This is extremely frustrating for residents who live on these roads, who have considerable time added wherever they try to drive to and from their homes, as well as for people in the East of the borough for whom this is their only viable route home.

Would the portfolio holder agree to have an engineering assessment at this roundabout to install a box junction at the bottom of Manners Way to alleviate this issue and allow for freer movement of traffic?

Answer

Having recently completed the Bell Junction improvement works and a systems recalibration exercise, it is important that the Council evaluate the results of this work before undertaking any possible interventions. As a result, we will monitor the traffic behaviour for a period of 3 months then evaluate the data and determine if additional works are required.

(5) Question from Mr Owen Carthey to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection (Cllr Terry)

Question

It has been promised by councillors across the Southend Borough since 2019 that adequate CCTV provisions would be made alongside Ambleside Drive and other areas where criminal activity is providing extensive social damage to the livelihoods of the communities that live there. These are promises that predate the Covid-19 pandemic.

I am certain that everybody in this place agrees that it should be the Council's priority to help our dedicated community groups like Project Southchurch, SHIP and others to reclaim our streets from the prostitution and drug activity that has taken hold, so that our public spaces can be used by our children and our community.

For the last three months posts have been erected along Ambleside Drive, but with no cameras attached to them.

Could the Cabinet Member please confirm to me when this promise from 2019 will finally be fulfilled and working CCTV fitted in these sites?

Answer

The £2 million upgrade to the Council's CCTV system is the biggest programme of works to the network for over 20 years. In total, 42 new column installations will take place, all analogue cameras will be replaced with digital, and a new operating system will be installed in the control room. This work is due to be completed by April 2022.

The upgrade work at Ambleside Drive, which includes fitting cameras to the new columns and connecting the infrastructure to the CCTV control centre, is due to be completed by the middle of February 2022.

Once the cameras are live at Ambleside, in addition to monitoring the cameras directly, the Council will have the ability to send direct live feed to Southend Police Station and Essex Police Headquarters at Chelmsford.

Both the Police and the Council's Community Safety Teams are aware of the current issues in Ambleside Drive, and a number of actions to address these are in hand, including a review of lighting at the site.

(6) Question from Mr Kevin Ryan to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning (Cllr Mulroney)

Question

How much tree planting has taken place across Shoeburyness this year?

Answer

Tree planting for the 2021/22 financial year takes place during the winter, therefore works on the ground to plant trees have only commenced recently. As of 3 December 2021, 31 standard trees have been planted in the Shoeburyness area this year.

Planting will continue throughout this winter, and it is anticipated that over 700 container grown standard trees will be planted across the Borough this planting season.

I would like to urge residents and businesses of Shoebury and the Borough to also take part as much as they can in tree planting on their own property, so that we can enhance the canopy cover of the Borough overall.

(7) Question from Mr Kevin Ryan to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning (Cllr Mulroney)

Question

Given the global, national regional and local interest in the declaration at COP 26 to the promise to end and reverse deforestation by 2030, what additional steps do the Council plan for the next 8 years for Southend on Sea and specifically Shoeburyness?

Answer

The Council's parks and climate change teams will continue to work collaboratively to assess opportunities across the Borough for increased tree growing across Council owned land. Tree planting, alongside the enhancement of green infrastructure in development, will be supported by strengthened policies in the forthcoming Local Plan.

Through its stakeholder engagement programme, the Council will be supporting communities across the Borough in delivering tree planting in and around their homes, but we would urge residents and businesses to plant more trees on their own land because the Council cannot do this on its own, and if we want a greener Borough everyone needs to play their part.

(8) Question from Ms Shahid Nadeem to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning (Cllr Mulroney)

Question

Residents of Prittlewell heard the news of development and planning about Roots Hall stadium. Could the cabinet Member please tell me how many new houses are planned for the new development on the site of Roots Hall?

Answer

The application proposes 502 new homes for the Roots Hall site under planning application reference 19/01985/FULM.

(9) Question from Ms Shahid Nadeem to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning (Cllr Mulroney)

Question

What impact will this have on parking and other civic facilities for existing residents in the area and what mitigation will the Council and developers do to address these issues?

Answer

The development has been found to have an acceptable impact on parking in the area. The scheme provides 504 car parking spaces in full compliance with the Council's adopted parking standards. This includes 1 for 1 parking for each of the homes proposed and 2 car club parking spaces. The scheme also includes a policy compliant 502 cycle parking spaces and 16 motorcycle parking spaces. The controls on the application secure the provision of travel plan measures to encourage travel by non-car modes in this sustainable location and funding to explore the introduction of a controlled parking zone. More generally the scheme has been designed to facilitate pedestrian movements.

In respect of other civic facilities, the scheme provides a number of new open spaces and will be making financial contributions to the provision of education facilities in the Borough. In addition, it will be required to make payments under the Council's Community Infrastructure Levy. Under the terms of the planning controls imposed the existing stadium will not be able to be removed until the first phase of the new stadium at Fossetts Farm has been delivered.

A full assessment of the development in all regards is available in the officer report prepared on the application. This is publicly available on the Council's website and can most easily be found using the application reference number 19/01985/FULM.

QUESTIONS FROM COUNCILLORS

(1) Question from Councillor Garne to the Cabinet Member for Corporate Services and Performance Delivery (Cllr Collins)

Question

How is the Council dealing with the problem of “digital exclusion” in its dealings with the citizens of this town?

Answer

There are a number of initiatives taking place which provide skills, support, access, training, equipment, guidance, awareness and bring digital inclusion. A number of organisations and departments are supporting these initiatives and include (but not limited to) Family Centres, Libraries, Job Links, Trust Centre Plus, South Essex Homes, Southend Adult Community College, Rough Sleeper Outreach, A Better Start Southend, Community Renewal Fund and One Southend. Many more initiatives are being planned or discussed.

(2) Question from Councillor Cowan to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Asset Management and Inward Investment (Cllr Woodley)

Question

Could the Cabinet Member detail what the Council’s position and policy is on advertising boards on council owned land?

Answer

The Council does not have a specific policy in relation to advertising boards on Council owned land. There are a small number of advertising sites within the commercial portfolio. The designation of any land owned by the Council would be a relevant factor in determining the suitability or otherwise for advertising.

Commercial opportunities are considered on their merits, are subject to the agreement of suitable commercial terms and compliance with any planning requirements which would also include the assessment from a highway safety perspective.

Guidance on the planning considerations is available on the Council's website.

(3) **Question from Councillor Cowan to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning (Cllr Mulrone)**

Question

Could the Cabinet Member detail what the Council's current arrangement is with Veolia for the collection of textiles?

Answer

Residents are provided with white sacks to present textiles, which are collected once a week. Refuse vehicles have pods to store textiles, when these have reached capacity, arrangements are made for support vehicles to collect the textiles.

(4) Question from Councillor Dent to the Leader of the Council (Cllr Gilbert)

Question

Could the Leader of the Council please provide me an update as regards the implementation of the proposed selective licensing scheme for the private rental sector?

Answer

Following the referral back to Cabinet at the Council meeting of 25 November 2021, further expert legal guidance is being sought relating to the scheme. In advance of Cabinet considering the revised report, officers have continued to work with local landlords with properties in the areas designated for Selective Licensing by the decision reached in February 2021, in order to support them to prepare and submit applications to license their rental properties. Officers are also continuing to work on the requisite systems and processes to ensure that these are all efficient and in good order. At this stage no licenses are being issued, nor is any enforcement activity being undertaken.

(5) Question from Councillor Dent to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing (Cllr Jones)

Question

Could the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing please provide an update as to what provisions the Council has put in place for the homeless and rough sleeping community, as we come into the deepest and coldest part of the year?

Answer

There is an up-to-date Severe Weather Emergency Protocol for 2021/22 which outlines the Council's approach to supporting all rough sleepers during periods of severe weather. It ensures prompt action to ensure rough sleepers have access to shelter during severe cold weather. Provision is accessible to everyone, including all those who may otherwise be excluded from services. The protocol is a cross partnership response whereby the local authority and other services work together to be responsive and proactive. Furthermore, it also takes cognisance of current COVID-19 regulations and will be regularly reviewed in light of new rules and Covid variants to ensure that it remains safe and appropriate. A copy of the current protocol can be supplied upon request.

In addition to this, the rough sleeping team and wider partnership are taking a flexible approach to accommodating rough sleepers through the colder months. The outreach team will be patrolling as usual, and all those found to be sleeping rough will be supported to access accommodation through the Council-led rough sleeper partnership meetings, at which the Council and other services set actions and plans for ongoing wraparound for rough sleepers in the Borough.

(6) Question from Councillor Keith Evans to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration (Cllr Nevin)

Question

Does the Council have any jurisdiction over the NHS in ensuring they provide a complete and full service to residents?

Answer

As a unitary authority, the Council has the power to review and scrutinise matters relating to the planning, provision and operation of health services in the Borough, to improve the health and wellbeing of local residents. The Council has delegated its health scrutiny function to the People Scrutiny Committee.

The primary aim of health scrutiny is to strengthen the voice of local people, ensuring that their needs and experiences are considered as an integral part of the commissioning, delivery and improvement of health services and that those services are effective and safe. Health scrutiny is also a fundamental way by which local councillors are able to voice the views of their constituents and hold relevant NHS bodies and relevant health service providers to account.

Health scrutiny also has a strategic role in taking an overview of how well the integration of health, public health and social care is working and in proactively seeking information about the performance of local health services and institutions, in challenging the information provided to it by commissioners and providers of services for the health service, and in testing this information by drawing on different sources of intelligence. The role of health scrutiny is not to consider individual complaints relating to the delivery of local health services. In its delivery of the Council's health scrutiny function, the People Scrutiny Committee has the power to:

- Review and scrutinise any matter relating to the planning, provision and operation of local health services.
- Make reports and recommendations to the local NHS on any matter reviewed or scrutinised.
- Require the attendance of an officer of the local NHS to answer questions and provide explanations about the planning, provision and operation of health services.
- Require the local NHS to provide information about the planning, provision and operation of health services.
- Establish joint committees with other local authorities to undertake overview and scrutiny of health services.
- Report to the Secretary of State for Health where it is concerned that consultation on substantial variation or development of services has been inadequate, or where it considers that a proposal is not in the interests of the health service.

(7) **Question from Councillor Tricia Cowdrey to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration (Cllr Nevin)**

Question

Approximately two years ago concerns about the closure or downgrade of the Shoeburyness Ambulance Station were raised and EEAST were called upon to report to the People Scrutiny Committee, agreeing to advise outcomes of their modelling report and plans for consultation with all those in the SS3 who would likely to be impacted by these changes.

Obviously, in the interim period we have experienced a pandemic, the trust has been in special measures and new CEO appointed. This has resulted in understandable delays.

How will the Cabinet Member ensure that this issue does not fall off the radar and remains open to scrutiny by the Council?

Answer

A report in regard to the provision of ambulance services from Shoeburyness Ambulance Station was last made to the People Scrutiny Committee in July 2020, at which time representatives of the East of England Ambulance Service NHS Trust undertook to report further to the Committee once the modelling and operation of service delivery had been completed. Following that meeting, my predecessor Cabinet Member and the Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee jointly wrote to the Trust expressing the concerns of members with regard to the continued provision of ambulance services from Shoeburyness Ambulance Station and seeking responses to a number of questions raised by the Committee. The response of the Chief Operating Officer for the Trust to these concerns and questions was circulated to all members of the People Scrutiny Committee in August 2020 and I understand that this information has also recently been provided to Councillor Cowdrey.

In view of the concerns already raised by members and the previous commitment of the Trust to report further to the People Scrutiny Committee on the provision of services from Shoeburyness Ambulance Station on the completion of the modelling and operation of service delivery, I intend to liaise with the Chair of the People Scrutiny Committee on the provision of an update on this matter at a future meeting of the Committee. I will also request officers to seek the attendance of the recently appointed Chief Executive and relevant officers of the Trust at the meeting, to ensure that the scrutiny of service provision at Shoeburyness Ambulance Station remains available to the Council.

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