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Southend-on-Sea City Council Strategy, Change & Governance

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05 September 2022

Dear Councillor

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - TUESDAY, 30TH AUGUST, 2022

Please find enclosed a copy of the questions from members of the public and the responses from the relevant Cabinet Member(s) noted by the Place Scrutiny Committee at its meeting on Tuesday 30 August 2022.

Tim Row
Principal Democratic Services Officer

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SOUTHEND ON SEA CITY COUNCIL
PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE – 30 AUGUST 2022
QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC AND RESPONSES

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1. QUESTION 1 FROM MR ALAN GRUBB TO CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND TOURISM

We have many planning applications in order to build new flats, and the developer does provide, in most cases large wheelie bins for the rubbish.

Does the council (Planning Department) have the power to instruct the developer to provide more wheelie bins at a later date?

This will prevent the existing bins from overflowing and therefore deter vermin.

As a result provide a better environment for the residents in the surrounding area.

RESPONSE:

Where appropriate the Council, as Local Planning Authority can impose conditions securing the provision of suitable refuse and recycling facilities in new developments when granting planning permission for them. However, once such conditions have been discharged the Local Planning Authority has no powers to unilaterally seek to revisit the matter again and require additional or different refuse and recycling facilities.

QUESTION 2 FROM MR ALAN GRUBB – CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND TOURISM

We recently had a Planning Application for 555 London Road Westcliff. Planning Application No 20/00139/FUL The planning application consisted of demolishing a property, with a forecourt to the front of the property, between the property and the Highway.

On the forecourt of the property was a George V Post Box

I did mention the location of the Post Box in my letter of objection, stating the Post Box is on the land which is the subject of the Planning Application.

In order to demolish the existing property, the developers have erected a fence on the Boundary, and in so doing is preventing access to the Post Box.

Why did the Council having past this planning application not say to the developer, the developer has to ask Royal Mail to relocate the Post Box onto the Highway, before starting the work?

The nearest Post Box is outside ALDI Chalkwell, or Valkrie Road.

Also the developer has closed the pavement leading to Northview Drive at the busy junction with the London Road, and there does not appear to be a Council Notice informing the pedestrian of the pavement closure.

Is it not time when this happens, the Council can impose a Large Fine?

RESPONSE:

Planning conditions can be used for a range of purposes when planning permission is granted for new development. However, national planning policy makes it clear that the use of planning conditions should be kept to a minimum, and only used where they satisfy a number of 'tests'. These include that conditions are necessary for the planning permission to be granted, relevant to planning and reasonable in all respects. It is not considered that a planning condition requiring a developer to require Royal Mail to relocate a post box for the duration of demolition works would meet these 'tests' of a legitimate planning condition. As such it would not be appropriate for the Local Planning Authority to seek to control the development in this way.

Our highways team works with developers, reviewing their plans and visiting site to discuss their requirements with regards to impacts on the public highway. In this case the developer has installed the appropriate signage required relating to the pavement.

QUESTION 3 FROM MR DAVID WEBB – TO CABINET MEMBER FOR PUBLIC PROTECTION (to be given by Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Tourism)

Please can I have a copy of the cleaning of cart and litter picking of Westborough Ward and Prittlewell ward as many residents are unaware of the road and whether this is adhered to as many residents complain about the level of cleanliness of the up and down roads, kerbs, drains which have not been cleaned for months?

RESPONSE:

Thank you for your question. Cleaning and litter picking schedules for each of the wards mentioned are as follow:

Prittlewell

Most of the area is currently carried out by a crew in a caged vehicle (3 weekly schedule), as this area has a lower number of residential streets and includes some high footfall areas such as the hospital/ schools/ shops. They are carrying out a broader range of activities, rather than just litter picking:

- Sweeper – roads swept minimum of 6 weekly;
- Gullies – cleared twice a year.

Westborough

There is a 3-week schedule for litter picking in most of this ward, carried out by a manual litter picker:

- Sweeper – roads swept minimum of 6 weekly;
- Gullys – cleared twice a year.

It should be noted that any reports where littering/ waste needs to be cleared, or gullies cleared, is completed within the contract timescales. These reports and Veolia's own inspections also may trigger a change to the frequency, as and when required.

Street cleansing schedules involve thousands of pieces of information to compile many different and often overlapping activities, carried out by different crews at different timescales. Cleaning schedules can be very complex and for this reason, all of this is coordinated on an electronic data management system, managed by Veolia to ensure their operations are delivered in line with the contract requirements. The city is split into 11 areas which overlap wards (17 wards are absorbed into these 11 areas), so it is impossible to provide information by ward. Downloading the quantity of data involved in a meaningful format (it is multi-layered) is not possible; the electronic data management system is designed specifically for the scheduling of rounds and work and not as a communication tool. The above summary provides the level of detail required to explain the operations in those parts of the city.

QUESTION 4 FROM MR DAVID WEBB – TO CABINET MEMBER FOR HIGHWAYS, TRAFFIC AND PARKING

The hospital path from the bottom of Tintern all the way to the top of Prittlewell chase in Prittlewell Ward. There are 6 light poles on the left going up but many light are covered from trees and bushes from Chase High School and the allotments. This is reducing the light coming from the LED lights.

Please could the bushes from both sides be cut back as soon as possible to let maximum light into the path to make it safe from patients, staff, and resident going up and down to the hospital?

RESPONSE:

This footway is maintainable at public expense and the overhanging foliage is coming from private land. The Highways Enforcement Team have already inspected this location and advisory enforcement letters will be sent to the landowners immediately.

The requested timescale to complete the removal of the overhanging foliage is fourteen days when a further inspection will be completed to ensure compliance.

QUESTION 5 FROM CLLR WOODLEY – TO CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND TOURISM

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm when the safety rail around Southchurch Park Lake will be fully replaced with a new safety rail?

RESPONSE:

The post and rail are in a very poor condition and has reached the end of its useful life. This structure will be removed in totality and a new rail erected only in locations that are identified as high risk, based on a risk assessment e.g. where children gather such as the duck feeding station. It is not common practice to have such structures around urban park lakes – none of our other lakes have fencing or rails in Southend. The Royal Parks in London have over 80 million visits a year and none of their lakes have fencing, rails. Where fencing does exist, this is to control wild fowl such as Canada Geese – e.g. Battersea Park.

QUESTION 6 FROM CLLR WOODLEY – TO CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT, CULTURE AND TOURISM

Can the Portfolio Holder state why the Historic Cricket Pavilion in Southchurch Park will be restored to its former glory?

RESPONSE:

The old cricket pavilion in Southchurch Park has clearly reached the end of its useful life and is in an extremely poor condition. A consultant with an architect was appointed to assess the building, its condition, opportunities to restore, costs, and to liaise with local groups including Project Southchurch, the bowls club, and the cricket club. All have visited the building as have I and deemed it not fit for their purposes and that a new build would be the preferred route for their uses. The building is of poor build quality in any event and would cost between £6-700,000 to repair which is not economical or an efficient use of Council funds even if they were available. As a result, officers in Property and Parks are completing a report to take to Investment Board for approval to demolish the building and reinstate the area to parkland. Officers will then work with local stakeholders on future needs and requirements in Southchurch Park and whether a new building is viable and achievable based on a thoroughly worked through and agreed business cases.