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Southend-on-Sea City Council

Executive Director (Strategy, Change and Governance):

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13 March 2023

Dear Councillor

PLACE SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - MONDAY, 13TH MARCH, 2023

Please find attached the questions from members of the public, together with the respective responses from the relevant Cabinet Member(s), at the meeting of the Place Scrutiny Committee held on 13th March 2023.

Tim Row

Principal Democratic Services Officer

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SOUTHEND ON SEA CITY COUNCIL

Place Scrutiny Committee

Monday 13th March 2023

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QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Question 1 from Mr Grubb to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture & Tourism, Councillor Mulroney

When a planning application comes before the Council to provide housing, or convert commercial properties into housing and the developer will provide off-street vehicle parking, when a resident responds, saying a dropped kerb will have to be installed, why can't the planning department insist a dropped kerb has to be installed prior to the start of the building/conversion? This would at least guarantee a reduction in the problem of vehicles accessing a hard standing, where a dropped kerb has not been provided.

The pavements in certain parts of the town, leave a lot to be desired, partly caused by residents using the pavements to either park their vehicles or to access a hard standing, where a dropped kerb has not been provided. It does appear the council is wasting money repairing the pavements and resurfacing the pavements without dealing with the problem of what is causing the damage. A case in point is the pavements in Fairfax Drive, between Southbourne Grove and Westbourne Grove. Vehicles are still accessing the hardstanding of the residential properties, where a hard standing has not been provided.

Response:

National guidance makes it clear that the planning system should not seek to duplicate those controls which exist under other legislative regimes. Powers over the installation of dropped kerbs exist under the Highways Act 1980 and are exercised by the Council as Local Highway Authority. Therefore, the Council as Local Planning Authority should not try to replicate them. However, where it is appropriate to do so, planning conditions are imposed on planning permissions requiring the delivery of both parking and the means of access to it. Cases of damage to the public highway should be reported, along with any evidence of the cause of the damage, to the Highway Enforcement Team who will investigate the matter.

Question 2 From Mr Grubb to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Tourism, Councillor Mulroney

In Wards like Westborough Ward, which are densely populated, where the majority of housing does not benefit from off-street vehicle parking, and the properties have

very small front gardens, is there any reason, when the Council receives a Planning Application to turn a small property, which has a narrow in depth front garden into shared Housing, or an H M O, before the decision is made, can the council invite the rubbish collection company to visit the property to see if the property has enough frontage to accommodate the amount of large wheelie bins required, for the containment of the Black Bags, Pink Bags, Cardboard/paper and Food Waste?

Response:

The Council has adopted policy on the level of refuse and recycling storage facilities needed for different types of proposed uses. This is a material planning consideration when planning applications are determined. The Council's Waste Service are also specifically consulted on planning applications where it is helpful to do so. It is therefore not necessary for the collection company to visit a site as part of the assessment of a planning application. If there is inadequate space for the level of refuse and recycling storage needed in relation to a proposed use planning permission can be refused on that basis. Such refusals have been issued by the Council, as Local Planning Authority, on a number of occasions.

Question 3 From Mr Webb to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport & Parking, Councillor Wakefield

What steps are put in place to inspect roads and footways in Prittlewell ward for this year. What are the defects looked for and what level is needed to meet the requirement for resurfacing the whole pavement and road for these roads in Prittlewell, how often are roads checked in particular:

- Highfield Close
- Dulverton Avenue
- Eastbourne Grove,
- Hillborough Road
- Gainsborough Drive
- Bridgwater Drive
- Carlton Avenue from A127 through to Fairfax Drive.

Response:

All roads and footways are subject to annual condition surveys and then, from the data, are subsequently applied a condition score. However, condition is not the only factor, and they must also be assessed in line with Codes of Practice requirements in terms of risk, e.g. level of usage, key buildings like schools and flood risk. These 2 elements together give a priority score which is used to assess the priority order. There is no set level to be reached to generate a remedial action and the number of schemes selected from the priority list would be based on available funding for that year.

Safety defects are identified and are dealt with on a site-specific basis. The intervention levels are carriageway potholes over 40mm in depth, with the pothole being larger than 300mm in any one direction. Footway investigatory level for trip heights must be in excess of 20mm.

Question 4 from Mr Webb to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture & Tourism, Councillor Mulroney

What is the target 2022 - 2023 for the number of new trees being planted in Southend and how many and what type of trees were planted in Prittlewell and what roads are they going to be planted?

Response:

Thank you for your question, Mr Webb.

The Council will plant approximately 225 street trees across the City between April 2022 and April 2023. On top of this will be more planting in our parks.

Planting will mainly take place in an area to the East of Chalkwell Park (around Imperial Avenue, Kings Road, Crowstone Road). This will allow for an ease in traffic management, and can be accessed easily for future tree maintenance, including watering.

Where we have received requests for trees to be planted outside of homes, we hope to fulfil these from the donated trees scheme, although there is a backlog of requests. We currently have 15 trees in the donated scheme, and these will be planted in Priory Park, making the total in the ward to probably be 21/22 of which 6 are replacements. In the Prittlewell ward, just 6/7 trees from the donated tree scheme will be planted in Georges Drive, Hopleythick Lane, Parkstone Drive and Southbourne Grove.

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