

# Public Document Pack

## Southend-on-Sea Borough Council

Department for Corporate Services

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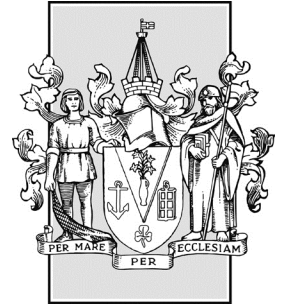
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### POLICY AND RESOURCES SCRUTINY COMMITTEE - THURSDAY, 14TH APRIL, 2016

Please find enclosed a copy of the Questions from members of the public considered at the meeting on 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016.

#### Agenda No    Item

3.    Questions from Members of the Public (Pages 1 - 2)

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**Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee – 14<sup>th</sup> April 2016**  
**Public Questions**

**3**

**Question from Mr Webb to the Leader of the Council**

Question

“Why does the council need to carry out public consultations and how can they make them more successful?”

Answer

Effective consultation provides the Council with information about how we can meet the diverse needs of people living, studying, working and visiting Southend on Sea. By getting involved in local affairs, people can influence decisions about public services. This can result in improvements in the quality of life for local communities. Consultation also strengthens local democracy by encouraging a closer relationship between decision-makers and the people affected by their decisions.

The Council aims to make consultations a success by ensuring they are conducted effectively: at a time when proposals are still at a formative stage; that sufficient information is provided to allow people to have an intelligent input in the process; and that adequate time is given for consideration and response to the consultation. Each consultation is tailored to meet the respective circumstance and stakeholders, allowing an appropriate approach and methodology.

**Question from Mr Webb to the Portfolio Holder for Community & Organisational Development**

Question

“In Westborough there have been a lot of graffiti tags (Sheepy). How does the police and Southend Council tackle this issue of graffiti?”

Answer

Both the Police and Southend on Sea Borough Council would prosecute an offender where they were caught applying graffiti, including tagged graffiti. The Council, within its street cleansing contract with Veolia, deals with graffiti on all public buildings and highway infrastructure, which is removed quickly when noted or reported. The Council has a 100% record of dealing with reported graffiti incidents within specified timeframes and also delivers a free removal service to private households when requested. The Council also assists commercial businesses with graffiti removal when resources allow and offers advice on prevention techniques that they can apply to prevent any further recurrence.

The Council also use CCTV monitoring to identify taggers and report these to the Police to act upon. An example of this was the recent incident in the Victoria Gateway area where groups of teenagers graffitied the area over several days. CCTV footage was gathered and passed to the Police which led to the perpetrators being arrested for criminal damage.

## **Question from Mr Thomas to the Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Regulatory Services.**

### Question

“Regarding the local connection, we are about to increase the need for a local connection to be 5+ years which is completely out of hilter with all the other local councils (Basildon apparently operates a 3 year local connection not 7) and as a result will lead to an increase in homelessness. Has this unforeseen circumstance been considered when putting this policy together?”

### Answer

The Localism Act gave Local Authorities the option to specify the length of local connection a household has to meet in order to qualify to be included on their Housing Register. The Council’s current requirement of having a 3 year residency qualification is similar to other Councils with the exception of Basildon who do have a 7 year local residency criteria. There is no obligation for the Council to take into account neighbouring Council’s schemes. At the Cabinet meeting in March it was agreed that the Council will initiate a consultation process on a proposed wide ranging review of the Council’s Allocation Policy, which will not be restricted to consideration of residency alone. The Government are proposing that Local Authorities should require a person to live in a local area for at least four years before they are considered for social housing and as part of the consultation we will be consulting upon a proposal to extend this a further year to 5 years. However, regardless of local connection, homeless households who fall within a ‘reasonable preference’ criteria as defined by the Housing Act 1996 will still be able to join the Housing Register.