

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Council Meeting –13th December 2018

Question 1 from Councillor Terry to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection

Question

Does the Portfolio Holder acknowledge that the levels of crime and disorder in all parts of the Borough of Southend on Sea are unacceptable and that the recent Operation Southend, temporarily surging police numbers, proved beyond doubt that we need many more permanent police not temporary fixes?

Answer

Whilst a 28.9% reduction of crime within a targeted area was noted during Operation Southend, it should be made clear this operation ran concurrently with Southend Community Safety Partnership Days, with up to 21 different agencies visible and interacting with members of the public in the same targeted area. In addition, a results analysis of this operation, highlights a seasonal reduction of crime usually occurring during this period. Therefore, a definitive conclusion that Operation Southend was the sole reason of the success cannot be determined.

Current Southend crime figure trends are in line with Essex and wider national figures, which all show increases at the moment. In part, this is due to new police recording methods, particularly around violence, which now includes malicious communication reports (email, social media, facebook etc.)

The Council and partners are working together to tackle a range of challenges, and have recently introduced a new Community Safety Patrol Team in the town centre. Fear of crime has significantly reduced since the introduction of the team, and town centre crime and disorder, including street community issues, have also seen reductions. Police and Council teams are now tackling other areas in the Borough where there has been displacement from the town centre as a result of the new deployments.

Southend will be getting additional police resources next year and Cllr Flewitt is in the process of arranging a meeting for Cllr Terry with the Police Borough Commander.

Question 2 from Councillor Terry to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection

Question

Does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that the ESSEX PCFC is not giving us the proportional resources we should be getting and why is he and his Administration unable to get them?

Answer

The Essex Police, Fire & Crime Commissioner (PFCC) has agreed to provide 12 additional Police Officers to Southend. They will be in place in 2019, with 6 of those being focused on the town centre, and others supporting across the Borough. Alongside the new Community Safety Team (CST) introduced by the Council, this will greatly improve the wider Community Safety Partnership resources in Southend.

The priorities of the Community Safety Partnership will ensure the resources are deployed across the Borough in all of our 'town centres', and we have already seen joint initiatives in Hamlet Court Road in Westcliff, and in Leigh Road and Broadway in Leigh, as well as the very positive work undertaken in Southend Town Centre.

The Police have been fully supportive of the actions put in place as a result of the recent High Street Summit, which have already resulted in reductions in crime and disorder in the town centre, as well as a reduction of the fear of crime in the town.

With our partners, we continue to work closely with the PFCC to ensure Southend has the resources it requires, and very recently a number of partners met with the PFCC in Southend, including our business partners, to discuss current challenges and the resources required to tackle them. It is acknowledged, however, that the PFCC has to get the balance right between increasing his share of the precept and asking the Government for more funding

Question 3 from Councillor Ayling to the Leader of the Council

Question

Now the cut-off date of 10th December, for the original agreement with Turnstone Estates has now been reached, with no planning permission approval, will the Council now put the development out to open tender and potentially obtain a development that will be good for our seafront, our High Street and our town?

Answer

I have given a commitment that Cabinet will receive a report on the matter in January 2019 so that the matter can be considered in the context of the deal, the economic impacts and the timescales, especially now that the planning application has been received.

Question 4 from Councillor Aylen to the Cabinet Member for Infrastructure

Question

The public transport and bus working party was replaced by a new working party, when is this going to meet?

Answer

The meeting of the Access, Parking and Transport Strategy Working Party has been arranged for Tuesday 22nd January 2019 at 6.30pm.