

Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee – 30th January 2019
Public Questions

**Question from Mr Webb to Cabinet Member for Public Protection –
Cllr Mark Flewitt**

Question 1

There has been a dramatic rise in car crime in Westborough from 20 - 54 in 10 months. Residents are worried about the safety of their car.

What ways is Southend and the Police take strategically and practical steps to reduce car crime and has there been any arrest for car crimes in Westborough and Southend?

Answer

In the past 2 weeks there have been 3 significant arrests for persons linked to car crime. This has resulted in a 58% reduction in vehicle crime offences in the past week. A number of teams - including the Council's Community Safety Team - have worked together to identify repeat locations, develop intelligence and to target proactive patrols to help ensure offenders are brought to justice. This has been heavily reported on social media and in the Evening Echo.

Advice is still to remove items from vehicles and to ensure cars are secured when leaving them, and consider leaving compartments empty and open to deter thieves.

**Question from Mr Webb to Cabinet Member for Public Protection –
Cllr Mark Flewitt**

Question 2

What has been the police numbers for Southend for 2015 - 2016, 2016 - 2017, 2017 - 2018, 2018 - 2019 and does the Portfolio think police officers are safe driving on their own when answering to calls in Southend?

Answer

We are unable to provide the Police numbers; Essex Police may be able to provide these via a direct request. However, it is our understanding that officer numbers are increasing generally, as a result of the precept rise secured by the PFCC, but numbers vary from year to year.

With regard to Police officers driving alone, Essex Police covers a wide geographical area (one of the biggest in the UK) hence officers often

work alone and respond to calls alone, so that police resources can be deployed across the whole county area. Essex Police officers are specially trained to work in this way and will risk assess each incident to determine measure of response. Police will always respond to 999 calls as fast as they can and in such situations it is often the case that a number of police vehicles will converge at the location either single manned or doubled crewed.

Question from Mr Miller to Cabinet Member for Growth (Deputy Leader) – Cllr James Courtenay

Question 3

The Cabinet report valued the Seaway car park at £3.8million. The documents to support the valuation that were sent to Savills in both 2013/2014 and again to Savills in November 2018 have not been disclosed, although it was understood that the valuation of the former Rossi factory and the three dwellings on Herbert Grove were excluded. An independent valuation, from an prominent independent estate agent (which has been sent to the Chair of the Committee), has valued the car park and the additional sites at over £7million. Why is there such a discrepancy?

Answer

I cannot comment on the independent estate agent's report as it has not been provided to me, or to officers. The Administration is always willing to engage (and has done so with Seaways) with all interested parties. However, I cannot and will not pass comment on documents that the questioner has not even had the courtesy to pass to me.

Question from Mr Miller to Cabinet Member for Growth (Deputy Leader) – Cllr James Courtenay

Question 4

From recent public correspondence, it has come to light that the viability of the Kursaal, the Odeon and ancillary businesses associated with those sites will be threatened by the Turnstone Development and will be likely to close when that development opens. Has the impact of these closures been factored into the economic appraisal and the net overall benefit to the community?

Answer

The Economic Benefits Assessment takes into account displacement in the Economic Impacts and Benefits Section (Section 4, as part of the

17th January 2019 Cabinet Report on Seaways), along with estimated economic benefit arising from linked-trips and additional tourist expenditure. Whilst there is a range of positive benefits, the scheme will bring some competition with existing businesses. We believe that this will drive investment and enhance the leisure offer available to residents and visitors and to increase commercial activity in the town centre. The proposed scheme is aligned with the Council's long-held ambitions for this land as the report sets out.