

Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee – 10th October 2019
Public Questions

Question from Mr Webb to Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Customer Contact – Cllr Martin Terry

Question 1

C.P 5.5 in February monthly report Increase the number of people signed up to MySouthend to 45,000. The target was 44,166 but only achieved 37,334. What strategies have the MySouthend team put into place to promote residents in signing up to MySouthend and why do they think are the reason why residents of Southend have not signed up?

Answer

Thank you for the question. The MySouthend team would like to take this opportunity to thank you for your continued support in assisting the team in promoting the use of MySouthend within your community.

Initially we felt that the amount of customers registered for MySouthend was a measurement of success of the system. However we have since recognised that many of our customers are visitors to Southend, or residents with a specific issue who may only want to use the system from time to time and do not necessarily want to register. We are therefore no longer using the number of registrations as a performance measure but are currently looking at other indicators. We continue to promote the use of MySouthend as an efficient and reliable alternative way of contacting the Council, increasing choice for residents and visitors, and are proactively open to suggestions and ideas as to how this service might be improved.

Question from Mr Webb to the Leader of the Council (Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities) – Cllr Ian Gilbert

Question 2

How will the Southend Borough Council, the Police and other out sourced agencies support homelessness prevention & begging prevention in Southend High Street and also in the surrounding wards during October 2019 - January 2020?

Answer

Southend Council has contracts in place with support services provided by HARP, Peabody and Change Grow Live throughout the period in question.

Additionally we continue to have council staff in place to coordinate our rough sleeper support services. These services work closely with the Council's Community Safety Enforcement Officers to ensure that the appropriate response is provided to people in order to meet their needs, or to tackle anti-social behaviour where required. The Community Safety team will also continue to operate throughout this period.

All of these efforts will continue to draw upon the additional support of agencies such as Essex Police; and other public, voluntary and faith community housing and health services, including the church winter night shelter scheme. This programme works borough-wide via outreach and in response to referrals from agencies and members of the public.

Our long term drive to reduce homelessness will continue through the period with newly acquired council properties becoming available and our pipeline for the delivery of new housing progressing.

Question from Miss Newman to the Leader of the Council (Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities) – Cllr Ian Gilbert

Question 3

In January 2019, you consulted with residents of Lundy Close and on 14th February received 85 consultation forms from residents affected by the proposed development - this is a very heavy response. You, the council, encouraged residents to engage in pre-application discussions to see whether the development would be welcomed within the local area. Can I ask, regardless of the previous cabinets decision, why you are still proceeding even after receiving such a negative response from residents in the area?

Answer

The resident consultation event held on 29th January 2019 was undertaken to provide a clearer understanding of the proposals put forward for the 3 sites of Lundy Close which were agreed at the Cabinet meeting that month. We encouraged residents to provide feedback on a number of key aspects of the estate such as antisocial behaviour, parking, amenity space and the development of affordable housing.

The response rate for households of Lundy Close was 59% and as was referenced at the consultation event, this was an opportunity to start feeding into the plans for the sites at an early stage in the process. The Council need to proceed with the project in order to further understand the sites.

Additionally the Council will appoint an architect to develop more detailed plans at which point a further consultation event will be held at which indicative plans will be available for residents to comment on.

Question from Miss Newman to the Leader of the Council (Cabinet Member for Housing & Communities) – Cllr Ian Gilbert

Question 4

With a population density of 41.6 persons per hectare Southend is already heavily populated compared to neighbouring boroughs. St Laurence ward already has a population of 9870 (as registered in 2016) I understand that you need to provide affordable housing as a Council, however this should not create a detrimental effect on existing residents. Removing our amenity space will impact on residents quality of life. The council have incorporated amenity land for the new Queensway development and is also implementing the planting of over 1000 trees in the borough, can you please answer why you have the need to remove our community area that is full of well established trees and wildlife that helps enhance the local area?

Answer

With 1400 households on the Homeseeker's Register, the provision of more genuinely affordable housing is a key priority for this Council. As is indicated in the question there is very limited space in the borough on which we can build so we therefore need to utilise the small amount of land we do have, whilst considering the needs of existing residents.

As was discussed with residents at the Consultation event on 29th January, the proposals for the sites have yet to be agreed as an architect has yet be appointed. Until this has been done the exact proposed site boundaries will not be known however it is clear from initial proposals that there will be minimal disruption to the well-established trees in Lundy Close. Additionally, should any trees need removing the Council would look to provide more than 2 for 1 in terms of tree replacements.

The project may also look to make other improvements in the Lundy Close estate such as improving landscaping, additional parking and introduction of dog waste bins which will be discussed with residents at the next consultation event.