

## **Council – 15<sup>th</sup> July 2021**

### **Public Questions**

#### **Question 1 from Mr David Webb to the Executive Councillor for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning**

##### **Question**

Many residents in Westborough are concerned with the level of the cleanliness of their streets. What can residents do if they are concerned with their level of cleanliness and what penalty do Veolia occur if they fall below the set standard?

##### **Answer**

The Council encourages residents to report cleaning issues through MySouthend (the Council's online reporting tool). The streets in Westborough Ward are swept approximately every 6 weeks with regular checks between cleansing cycles to ensure standards are maintained. The Council also supports community groups carrying out litter-picking and this is encouraged. For more information about this please see the Council's website [www.southernd.gov.uk](http://www.southernd.gov.uk) or contact Veolia at [uk.southend-recycling@veolia.com](mailto:uk.southend-recycling@veolia.com) or by calling 0203 567 6955.

We have noticed in recent times a particular problem in certain streets and have responded to reports of large quantities being dumped. Where evidence can be found of the perpetrators, we will take appropriate action.

The Council Client Management Team monitors Veolia's performance through collecting data and carrying out inspections. Financial deductions may apply if certain cleanliness targets are not met.

#### **Question 2 from Mr David Webb to the Executive Councillor for Transport, Asset Management and Inward Investment (**

##### **Question**

What is the criteria for cracked pavements or pavements which are rocking up and down to get repaired, as in Westborough I have reported many that they say are not required to be repaired?

## **Answer**

If a footway safety issue is reported, then inspected, and the Highways Inspector has detailed that no current repair is required on a footway, then it has not met our current intervention levels. For a footway, there must be a significant level difference of >20mm to be recorded as a repairable defect. Cracked footways, while not aesthetically pleasing, do not necessarily represent a safety issue unless they have significant crack width (again >20mm). If defects cover a significant area of the whole footway, then it would be considered as part of our ongoing highways improvement programme and would be prioritised according to risk/condition.

The quickest way for an inspection to be undertaken is to raise it via the MySouthend App. This App goes directly to the inspectors, and we inspect the site within 24hrs or next working day. All reports are assessed to determine whether they meet the criteria for an immediate repair or forwarded to the relevant Statutory Undertaker/Utility company responsible for the maintenance repair or replacement of the apparatus or site. Where urgent safety defects are found and they are the Council's responsibility, repairs are scheduled and undertaken within 2 hours or up to 7 days depending on the severity and arrangement of appropriate traffic management. All other damage/defects will be scheduled and prioritised as part of our routine general maintenance programme.

## **Question 3 from Mr Jonathan Garston to the Executive Councillor for Transport, Asset Management and Inward Investment**

### **Question**

It has been brought to my attention that at peak times the traffic situation in Priory Crescent at the Ecko site becomes very congested due to the new developments.

Has the Portfolio holder been made aware of this and are officers investigating a solution as the right turn into Aldi coming from the East causes tailbacks?

## **Answer**

As part of the planning permission, ALDI provided a detailed transport assessment including up-to-date traffic surveys and TRICS traffic modelling. The TRICS traffic modelling also provided future traffic growth predictions until 2023. It is considered that this was a robust assessment in line with national traffic modelling standards. The current traffic levels do not exceed the modelling predictions with no additional works currently planned at these development sites.

It should be noted that a Travel Plan was also submitted as part of the planning application which will be monitored by highway officers to ensure traffic levels remain acceptable.

There have been no notable levels of communication/complaints concerning these sites.

## **Question 4 from Mr Jonathan Garston to the Executive Councillor for Transport, Asset Management and Inward Investment (**

### **Question**

Please can I have an up-to-date timescale with regards to the installation of speed cameras along Eastern Avenue. For Residents safety I do ask for this to be given a high priority?

### **Answer**

The service was requested to look into the possibility of speed cameras at this location last year; and has subsequently engaged with a third party to present to us options for implementation of cameras. The service is currently undertaking a feasibility study of the top 9 identified sites that require some form of speed reduction put in place; these 9 schemes have an estimate value of £2.9m with this particular estimated to be in the region of £200-250k.

Due to the number of speed reduction schemes being requested a report is being presented to Cabinet on the 2 November to outline a criteria, and longer term strategy for the introduction of any speed reduction schemes which will include cameras. This will ensure that any scheme introduced will be the right scheme for the right location that will support the individual area objectives.

Once a policy is in place, the service will be able to assess the priority of this scheme and advise accordingly.

### **Question 5 from Mr Majzoub Ali to the Executive Councillor for Adult Social Care and Health Integration**

#### **Question**

The Healthwatch Southend (HWS) Advisory Board Group resigned en-masse in January 2021 and has not been replaced.

Family Action and the NHS Alliance Director state that the functions of Healthwatch Southend have not been affected. Does this mean there is no real need for a HWS Advisory Board?

#### **Answer**

Healthwatch was established under the Health and Social Care Act 2012 to be the new consumer champion for health and social care in England. Its purpose is to strengthen the collective voice of patients and users of health and social care services and of the general public.

In order to function as a Healthwatch is a requirement that lay people and volunteers are included in decision-making and involved the work of Healthwatch. As Southend Healthwatch operates a hosted model this means an advisory group is required.

When the previous advisory group resigned, Southend Borough Council asked Family Action (as the host charity) to recruit a new advisory group.

### **Question 6 from Mr Majzoub Ali to the Executive Councillor for Adult Social Care and Health Integration**

#### **Question**

Family Action is now actively trying to recruit a new advisory board without telling potential volunteers the reasons why the previous group had stepped down.

This cannot be acceptable as it's against openness and transparency, can it?

## **Answer**

We have an expectation of openness and transparency from all of the organisations we work with, and this is even more important in the case of Healthwatch, which has a responsibility for championing the voice of local people.

The enquirer has submitted a separate question to Southend Borough Council (commissioning), along the same lines and received a response on 25 June 2021. This response noted the concern and indicated that an investigation into the concerns would take place. This has concluded and a response has been supplied to the enquirer.

## **Question 7 from Ms Terri Simpson to the Executive Councillor for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning**

### **Question**

Could Southend Council please consider an outdoor skate 'rink' in the town?

We have several skateparks in or around Southend but they are predominantly ramps and bowls for skaters, bikes and scooters to do stunts.

Since the start of the covid lockdown a few of us skate friends set up a facebook group called Southend Fossil Skaters to communicate and get out on our skates for exercise. What started off as 10-12 friends in this group it has now grown to (at today's count) 353 members. We currently use the seafront, local car parks or tennis courts for skating but this is not practical, not always safe and slightly irritating to residents or pedestrians (if they live close by) or users of these facilities. Although we are all regular members of our local indoor rink Rollacity, there is an absolute need for a daytime, outdoor rink as there are many beginner skaters who need a flat safe surface in which to practice. As a group we have had many discussions on how we can go about getting a rink in our town. We hope you will consider this.

## **Answer**

Thank you for your question Ms Simpson. The growth of participation reported by your group in this sport is impressive. Space for this type of activity usually comes with a compromise given space constraints in the

Borough and not something that we can immediately see a solution for. May I suggest you provide some indications of where you had thought this might be achievable based on the discussions you refer to and contact me with those suggestions.

**Question 8 from Ms Kimberly O'Connell to the Executive Councillor for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning**

**Question**

I am very concerned that the Council is being left with no alternative than to go to consultation with regards to building on green belt land.

I understand that this is due to the unreasonable quota of new housing that needs to be delivered in Southend as demanded by the Government.

I have been running a petition against these proposals and would ask if the petition, which has already amassed over a 1000 signatures could or would be used as part of this consultation?

**Answer**

The Council will accept submission of the Petition as part of the consultation response. It is noted, however, that this is being put forward prior to the consultation and without respondents having access to all the relevant documentation that will be published.

The amount of new homes that Local Authorities have to provide for in their Local Plans is set out by Government. The figure for Southend is 1,181 per annum or 23,620 over a 20 year period.

National planning policy and guidance requires the Council to go through a range of processes in producing a Local Plan. This includes prioritising non-green belt sites in the first instance and, if housing needs cannot be met, only then should sites within the Green Belt be considered. Detailed studies have been undertaken on the potential supply of new homes in Southend and following this there is a deficit of around 10,000 new homes when only non-green belt sites are included. Government guidance and the Planning Inspector would require us as a Local Planning Authority to look at and consider sites being promoted in the Green Belt in such circumstances.

The Local Plan consultation is only the second of five stages of preparing a statutory Local Plan for Southend and sets out possible options for consideration. Following feedback from the public consultation, further consultations will take place before the Plan is submitted for an independent examination. The Local Plan can be rejected by central Government as “unsound” if we do not consider the full range of options and sites being submitted to us for development at this stage, including those within the Green Belt. For this reason, Green Belt sites should be included as potential sites within the Refining the Options document and be subject to consultation even if they are discounted in the final version of the plan.