

COUNCIL - 9 SEPTEMBER 2021

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(1) Question from Bill Glanvill to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration

Question

What is being done to help our hard-pressed police deal with the increasing mental health problems among the public?

Answer

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council is aware that all public services are currently under pressure with increasing mental health presentations and has developed a multi-agency Community Safety Hub which operates from Southend Police Station.

Within the Community Safety Hub, there are specialist teams and staff that deal with mental health referrals, including adult (and children's) safeguarding management and casework. Staff come from a range of agencies (such as specialist casework officers from the Council) and support Essex Police with a wide range of interventions and support packages. The approach to mental health in Southend is very much a partnership based one, with many different organisations involved, holding focused meetings on wrap around support for individuals who are struggling with mental health issues.

Any referral is documented, and a pathway of support offered for individuals - particularly where mental health is a concern. In most cases, the lead agency for supporting or dealing with an individual is unlikely to be Essex Police, but could be a range of agencies

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council actively supports children, adults and families of people with mental health needs. In partnership with our adult mental health partner Essex Partnership University Trust a range of interventions and services are provided to people already known to the teams and to people with new presentations of complex mental health needs. The Council also supports people of working age who meet the criteria for support

under the Care Act 2014. There is also extensive support provided by Emotional Wellbeing and Mental Health Service and Essex Partnership University Trust, via their Outpatient Services, Depot Clinics and nursing support.

The Police are generally involved when an incident occurs and is reported via 999 or other means. The Police will attend and assess and then refer to one of the specialist agencies if an individual is deemed to have mental health issues.

The Essex Police Form 'SETSAF' is a referral form which links Essex Police into Social Care with regards to adults. This isn't just limited to mental health, but any safeguarding concerns. There is also a juvenile version which is a 'PP57' Form, which again, is processed through a Triage service to review and establish any care/intervention opportunities within Social Care.

(2) Question from Paul Boulton to the Cabinet Member for Transport, Asset Management and Inward Investment

Question

I live close to St Thomas More and the Westcliff Schools. Every day, from 1430 onwards people park dangerously right on the corner of Arundel Gardens and Kenilworth Gardens. It is often the same people. I have reported this several times – whether as a result or not the 'spycar' has been round – but I have only seen it in the morning – not in the afternoon when the problem occurs.

I have no desire to see people fined – but I do want this dangerous behaviour to stop before someone gets badly hurt.

Will the Council undertake to work with the schools, the police and anyone else appropriate to personally contact the offenders to educate them as to the dangers of what they are doing, and to press for the harshest penalties allowed by law should the same offenders continue to stop / park in this manner?

Answer

The Council are undertaking a road safety scheme to install junction protection across the Borough, and we will be investing £650,000 over 2 years on this key safety project. We will ensure this location is identified as a key location whilst also looking at what other parking restrictions can be implemented to keep our roads and pedestrians safe.

Where possible we will always endeavour to work with our stakeholders including schools to educate drivers on how their inconsiderate parking behaviours affect pedestrians.

(3) Question from Andrew Atkinson to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning

Question

When I asked you in December about local comparison in assessing the wider Hamlet Court area for conservation designation you said, quote, 'Comparison with other values...is not a factor which should be given any weight' and, in referring to Leigh, that comparison was not, quote, 'considered of any relevance'. Yet later your own consultant Purcell used comparison with other parts of the borough in several places in their report now before Members and Historic England have supported comparison in conservation.

Why is it now acceptable to extend Leigh Cliff Conservation Area with a street block of less than special interest and considerable erosion but exclude the wider Hamlet Court area with its considerable historical and some architectural special interest - doesn't this show unfair local bias and failure to meet the requirements of the NPPF?

Answer

Designation of a Conservation Area is looked at taking account of the historical and architectural merit of the area and is considered in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and its stipulations regarding Conservation Areas and their designation. It is important that any Conservation Area designation is founded on the architectural and historic merits of that area only both in law and being mindful of Government policy.

The proposed Hamlet Court Road Conservation Area boundary, as set out in its accompanying Appraisal, is wholeheartedly supported by Historic England, the Government's key advisor on the historic environment.

The Conservation Area Appraisal for Hamlet Court Road makes reference to Southend's other main retail centres (Southend Town Centre, with the district centres of Leigh and Westcliff), in regard to the retail hierarchy of the Borough. However, direct comparisons between the area's historic and architectural character and other areas are not made within the Appraisal - and comparison with other Conservation Areas is not a factor that is to be given any weight when considering whether or not a new Conservation Area should be designated.

(4) Question from Andrew Atkinson to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture, Tourism and Planning

Your conservation area recommendation for Hamlet Court Road now divides the road and omits nearly all of the local residential parts. Most traders that actively support conservation designation are in the southern, also omitted half of Hamlet Court Road. Three pre-eminent international and national experts, Dr Mervyn Miller, James Bettley and Professor Andrew Saint have supported wider designation, providing a level of scrutiny previously unheard of in the entire history of local conservation in our town.

Without the engagement of the wider area and without a regeneration plan please can you explain your 10 year outcome plan for your proposed designation to the northern half of the road?

Answer

As noted in answer to the previous question, the proposed Conservation Area designation at Hamlet Court Road is fully supported by Historic England.

Historic England supports the proposed boundary of the new Conservation Area and is satisfied that this area meets the requirements as set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). A wider area was looked at as part of this process. However, the Council's expert consultants Purcell, our Officers and

Historic England concluded there was a clear divide in the higher architectural quality of the area within the proposed Conservation Area, and the wider area, which is not considered worthy of designation, having regard to the NPPF and its stipulations regarding conservation area designation.

Comments were received as part of the consultation process from Dr M Miller, all which have been given due consideration during this process. In recent weeks (after the public consultation closed) Officers received correspondence from Mr Bettley and Mr Saint. The comments received have been considered and noted, however none of the points raised are concluded to evidence matters of sufficient historical interest or merit to justify designation of the wider area as part of the new Conservation Area.

The detailed Conservation Area Appraisal for Hamlet Court Road Conservation Area includes a Management Plan to guide development decisions and the future improvement of the area designated as a Conservation Area. The Management Plan sets out a conservation vision, identifies issues and opportunities and recommendations for addressing these, as well as focusing on other issues including vacant buildings, shop fronts and signage (the Appraisal includes detailed guidance on shop front design that is sympathetic to the area), inappropriate alterations, and streetscape. It also includes detailed guidance on alteration and repair for elements of the built form, including windows and doors etc.

The intended outcome of the Management Plan for the new Hamlet Court Road Conservation Area, in common with the management plans for other Conservation Areas in the Borough, is that the heritage assets in the Conservation Area will be better protected, maintained and enhanced through the advice contained in those documents.

In terms of wider regeneration plans, the Council is currently prioritising its resources to other parts of the Borough such as Queensway, Southend town centre (where it has recently purchased the Victoria Centre for example) and Leigh Port (subject to a Levelling-Up funding bid). However, if the local community wishes to bring proposals forward to improve the Hamlet Court Road area, both within and beyond the Conservation Area boundary, we would be interested to see those proposals, or perhaps they could be developed as part of a neighbourhood area plan.