

Council – 20th October 2022

Public Questions

1. Question from Stephen Cummings to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Tourism (Cllr Mulroney)

Question

When the public consultation for the PSPO last year showed a majority in favour, why do the responsible dog owners of Southend still not have a beach they can walk their dogs on all year round?

Answer

The Council has considered several locations to introduce a dog friendly beach. The most recent proposals were met with significant resistance from residents in the area selected. Despite a majority of people wanting a dog friendly beach when asked, no area seems willing to be the host beach which has been the challenge. We now also know that Natural England requires a habitats assessment for such a change to be introduced along our beaches as the impacts to some natural habitats can be affected.

The Council is open to further suggestions about a location to propose a dog friendly beach, but each proposal would need a new consultation with associated publicity that may well result in the majority of residents in the locality objecting. We would also need to seek Natural England's comments.

If a beach is found suitable, we may also look at the possibility of timed usage if this would overcome objections.

2. Question from James Miller to the Cabinet Member for Asset Management and Inward Investment (Cllr Collins)

Question

The Council's acquisition of Victoria Shopping Centre was potentially an exciting move to inspire new local independent businesses in Southend to start their entrepreneurial journeys. However, there does seem to be a number of vacant units at the moment. What is currently being done to attract budding entrepreneurs from the thousands of people who have an array of talents across Southend?

Answer

Since acquisition in December 2020, we have been working hard to diversify and intensify uses within the Centre, and despite a worsening economic picture, tenants have been retained and new occupiers secured. New occupiers, most of which are locally based, include: Cookies & Cones, NHS Phlebotomy Unit, Indirock, Brook Health, Mossys Shoes and Gourmet Burger. We have also let units to local charities including Welcome to the UK and The Climate Hub.

A number of vacant units are under offer to retailers and leisure operators. Our local letting agents are working with the Southend business community to market the Victoria Centre, and business support services are signposting local businesses to vacant units across the City where relevant.

3. Question from James Miller to the Cabinet Member for Economic Recovery, Regeneration and Housing (Cllr Gilbert)

Question

Southend High Street, filled with local owner/operated independent shops, could turn us into the most unique high street in the country. However, good business ideas will always fail when faced with unworkable business costs. Being that the shops are central to bringing Southend High Street back to life, what can the Council do to reduce all business costs in order to make opening a business for Southend people a realistic opportunity for success for them and the city centre?

Answer

The Council has very little control over business costs on the High Street. Aside from the Victoria Centre, the Council doesn't own commercial property on the High Street so has no power to lower property costs, business rates are set by central government, and we have no ability to influence the rising cost of utilities. However, the Council does provide other sorts of support including helping new business start-up and providing advice to existing businesses to help them thrive. Business grants are also available through South-East Business Boost for new equipment or specialist advice. We also have "No Use Empty" grant scheme to bring unused shops back into use – property owners can secure grants to improve their spaces, including breaking down large shops into smaller units.

4. Question from Alan Grub to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Parking (Cllr Wakefield)

Question

Why has the Highways Department of the Council, allowed the company installing 5G to deny access from April to August of this year, to the Post Box located on the corner of St Georges and Fairfax Drive?

Answer

The company have advised that unfortunately, it was necessary to barrier off the post box for safety reasons while they completed jointing of the new LV cable to the network. They did monitor the box and assisted where they could with posing letters during this time.

It appears the letter box was periodically barriered off through a 2-week period, not 5 months as stated in the report.

Teams are now aware of this issue and, in future, will ensure Royal Mail are contacted and an alternative provided or signage displayed onsite.

The team apologises for the inconvenience caused.

5. Question from Alan Grubb to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Tourism (Cllr Mulroney)

Question

Why has the Planning Department of the Council allowed a Planning Application to proceed, thereby denying access to the Post Box located on the property in question, next to Argosy Toys located on the London Road A13, even though the Planning Department were aware of the location of the Post Box?

Answer

In the circumstances of this case, the prevention of access to a post box would not constitute a reasonable basis to refuse planning permission for the development sought. Where planning permission is granted for a new development planning conditions can, in principle, be used for a range of purposes to control a scheme and mitigate its impacts.

However, national planning policy makes it clear that the use of planning conditions should be kept to a minimum, and only used where they satisfy a number of 'tests.' These include that conditions are necessary for the planning permission to be granted, relevant to planning and reasonable in all respects. In the circumstances of this case, it is not considered that a planning condition requiring a developer to retain access to a post box would meet these 'tests' of a legitimate planning condition. As such it would not be appropriate for the Local Planning Authority to seek to control the development in this way.

6. Question from James Vessey-Miller to the Cabinet Member for Asset Management and Inward Investment (Cllr Collins)

Question

Southend Airport is undoubtedly the biggest polluting entity in Southend. The combined environmental impact of the airport's direct aviation operation and associated ancillary businesses is eye-wateringly huge. The carbon, air pollution, and noise output from aircraft themselves and the vehicles that service the aerodrome unacceptably subject our residents to elevated health risks, and further, worsen the city's already-terrible environmental impact.

Many Councillors in the chamber have publicly said that they seek to restrict and reduce the airport's operations, and yet these same councillors continue to vote through budgets and motions that seek to expand and support the city's biggest polluter. Look for no better an example of this than the Airport Business Park and Airport Music Festival, who the Council are a key investment shareholder of, as to how the Council continues to prop up and invest in the airport.

The Operator's own figures show that the Airport has failed to bounce-back after covid, and they freely admit that any increase in passenger numbers will be due to induced demand (i.e. creating new air passengers), and not by tapping-in to an unmet regional need for air travel.

At a time where most Councils are looking to restrict and reduce their local airport's operations, why is Southend Council actively seeking to expand and support ours? The very underpinning of the strategic partnership is the 'shared goal' of continued expansion of Southend Airport.

I ask the Portfolio Holder will the Council commit to ending its strategic partnership with Southend Airport, and seek to reduce the Airport's operations?

Answer

It is well documented that aviation has a negative impact on our environment, and we work with London Southend Airport to minimise their impact through our role on the Airport Consultative Committee (ACC). The Airport's community reporting information details the actions it is taking to improve air quality, manage carbon, use renewable energy sources, manage waste and promote recycling, protect and enhance biodiversity and reduce noise.

The Airport is a key partner for the Council as it is a driver for investment and business growth in Southend and neighbouring Rochford, and as it is a strategic employer. Council investment in the Airport Business Park is a commercial development on land owned by the Council outside the Airport confines which creates much-needed business and employment. Sponsorship of the delayed music festival is not investment in the Airport itself but support to a Southend community led musical festival. The Council provides no ongoing financial support to the Airport.

The Council keeps all its partnerships under review; however, it is likely that the Airport will be our strategic partner for the foreseeable future. We will continue to support and enforce endeavours for it to become even greener and cleaner.

7. Question from James Vessey-Miller to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Tourism (Cllr Mulroney)

Question

In 2019, following the first ever Declaration of Climate Emergency in Bristol by the Green Party's Carla Denyer, Southend Council was one of the 308 councils in the UK that went on to follow the Greens' lead in declaring a Climate Emergency.

It was hoped by local environmental groups and concerned residents alike that this might be the turning point for Southend council to start taking the climate and ecological crisis we face with the seriousness it deserves.

The scale of the changes we must make as a community are immeasurably vast, and yet the Council continues to treat the most grave threat our society faces in several generations simply as a trendy topic for their social media content.

Since Southend Council declared a climate emergency - seemingly in name alone - we have seen:

- continued widespread use of carcinogenic and ecologically devastating herbicides - which when challenged, the administration defends;
- reckless and needless felling of the city's beloved street trees;
- rampant and gleeful signing off of proposals to lose our last remaining green areas to inappropriate housebuilding and development;
- and areas in Southend where the council are fully aware that air quality is illegally poor and medically unsafe, to which the council does nothing more than simply monitor the worsening problem.

As any parent understands, doing what is objectively the right thing to do oftentimes necessitates doing the unpopular thing. There is no room for discussion on softening the environmentally-motivated tasks we must

undertake, as if we falter, we face extinction. Our reality is now this stark.

I ask the portfolio holder, when are Southend Council going to start taking the Climate and Ecological Emergency seriously, and implement the radical changes required to avoid the worst possible future for our children and grandchildren?

Answer

The Council takes the global climate and ecological crisis extremely seriously. As an organisation, we are partnering with a wide range of international, national and local stakeholders to deliver climate positive change in Southend both corporately and city wide.

We make no apologies for taking an evidence-based approach to our climate change programme. Failing to evidence the scale of the challenge and the impact of our response, results in greenwashing - high profile but low or zero environmental impact. We have tasked our officers with demonstrating the impact of our policies and projects on carbon reduction and climate adaptation but, as a public body, these have to be balanced against the Council's wider corporate objectives and the statutory responsibilities that officers are required to comply with.

With respect to the specific issues that you have raised:

Pesticide

The Council currently uses a mixed approach to weed control within its parks and open spaces, with both manual weed removal and chemical methods being used. Glyphosate has been subject to several conflicting studies and reports about the possible impact on people's health. At present, glyphosate-based weedkillers have been deemed safe for use by the UK Government and the Health and Safety Executive, including in public areas. Limited studies on the impact of glyphosate on bees have been undertaken. Glyphosate is considered one of the least toxic pesticides used in agriculture. However, some evidence suggests that glyphosate affects non-target organisms, for example, changing the behaviour of honeybees and may also upset the gut microbiota of honeybees.

Cognisant of these concerns, the Parks team, as agreed by Council, are trialling a series of non-glyphosate-based alternatives within the city's parks as well as using manual weed removal and applying wood mulch to shrub beds and borders. Once the team have reviewed the results of the trial, a decision will be made about the best product to use moving forward.

Trees

The Council benefits from the skills and professionalism of highly trained arboricultural officers who manage the publicly owned trees in the city. There are occasions when our trees need to be felled due to extensive damage, disease or death. It is not uncommon for trees that 'appear' healthy to be riddled with pests and fungi which have a detrimental impact on wider tree cover (if they spread), weaken root structures causing instability or ultimately the death of the tree. Local authorities are required to carry out regular tree inspections as part of a proactive maintenance regime. Through these inspections we can identify trees which are no longer healthy and at high risk of causing significant damage to people or assets.

The assessment of the risk associated with diseased and damaged trees is made in accordance with the requirements of many different sets of primary legislation and guidance including Plant Health Act 1967, Equality Act, 2010, Environment Act 2021 as well as Health and Safety Executive Guidance. The Council always plants a replacement tree if a tree has had to be felled. In the last financial year (2021/), the Council planted well over 600 trees and we plan to maximise tree planting in the next planning season which starts this winter.

Development

Southend's Local Plan policies, in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework, prioritise development on previously developed land (as defined in the local plan). The Council is required to determine a 5 year housing land supply and infrastructure for our current and future population. All decisions related to the location of housing within the city are subject to stipulations of the planning application process which takes into consideration the local and strategic objectives.

Air Quality

Air quality monitoring is not only important, but also a requirement for local authorities as we report to DEFRA annually. The data from monitoring shows where there are air quality objective exceedances. There areas are defined as Air Quality Management areas and actions are prioritised in this area, for example the completion of the A127 (Bell Junction AQMA) infrastructure improvements and the commencement of post construction real time monitoring. Measuring the impact of the improvements made by interventions ensure that we are using are having a positive impact.

The human impact of producing air pollutants is undeniable and through the forthcoming Local Transport Plan we will be prioritising measures that promote transport decarbonisation and active travel. However, we also need to accept the impact of the weather on the pollutants when they are released into the air. Hot, still weather as was experienced this summer led to pollution episodes. Officers are developing 'cool spaces' across the city areas which reduce the impact of heat stress and the impact of air pollutants.

We appreciate the city's residents holding the Council's feet to the fire on this issue. Mitigating for and adapting to the impact of climate change is everybody and every organisation's responsibility. As the city Council, we are leading by example, engaging with our residents and wider stakeholders and facilitating change by convening partnerships, lobbying government and we will continue to keep the city updated on our journey to becoming a green city.

8. Question from Gabriel Leroy to the Cabinet Member for Asset Management and Inward Investment (Cllr Collins)

Question

Many residents of Kursaal Ward and across the city have expressed concerns about the growing amount of litter which seems to be plaguing the streets of Southend.

What provisions are being made for better street cleaning as part of the negotiations for a new waste contract, and what is the process and frequency by which the sufficiency of litter bins is reviewed and assessed?

Answer

The contractor is required to cleanse all roads to a Grade A, as defined in the government's National Indicator 195 methodology. If a shortfall in this grading is reported, the contractor is required to return the street to Grade A within set time periods:

- Zone A (Principal Shopping Areas, beach, foreshore, and high footfall areas, roads around these areas) – 1 hour
- Zone 1 (Stations, local schools, educational establishments, local shopping areas, other high footfall areas) – 2 hours
- Zone 2 (all other roads) – 24 hours

All roads should be kept to a Grade B at all times, and all areas will be cleansed at a minimum of 6 weeks. Much of Zone A and Zone 1 are cleansed daily with an all-day presence.

The contract is output based, which means that it is the responsibility of the Contractor to monitor roads and determine the cleansing method and frequency in order to keep the road at the required grade. The contractor will revise the frequency of cleansing as required, throughout the life of the contract, following reports or complaints, and their own monitoring and inspection regimes. So, a road that is currently cleansed every 6 weeks, may be put on more frequent visits depending on the output measured.

This is why it is so important that members of the public report issues directly on MySouthend.

We are currently in the process of reviewing the cleansing regime across the Kursaal Ward following a number of recent reports. Many of the roads just off the Seafront are Zone 1 roads, which means that they are cleansed daily. Some other roads, including the Kursaal Estate are Zone 2, and so are on a 6 week cleanse. Most of the roads in this area commenced the next 6 week cycle on Monday 5th September. The Council has requested the contractor to monitor this area to ensure the 6 weekly cycle is adequate and draft in extra resources if required.

All litter bins across the City are required to be emptied before they overflow. Bins are on regular schedules based on usage, and this is monitored through collection schedule data, inspections and complaint data.

The Council will be reviewing the specification and KPIs as part of the new tender process to ensure it delivers the requirements of the City for the next term of the contract.

9. Question from Gabriel Leroy to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Tourism (Cllr Mulroney)

Question

Having spoken to residents in Kursaal Ward, a number have expressed to me concern about the state of Southchurch Hall Gardens. Whilst the local volunteer group, SHIP, do a fantastic job in helping to maintain the park, there is a concern that their activities mean that Southchurch Hall Gardens receives less attention from the Council's Parks Team than other local parks, such as Southchurch Park.

Can the cabinet member for the environment assure me and residents that Southchurch Hall Gardens will receive its fair share of maintenance and attention?

Answer

Southchurch Hall Gardens is often described as one of the hidden gems in Southend on Sea. It is home to the 14th century moated Manor Southchurch Hall and the gardens provide a good place for people to rest and relax and wildlife to thrive. The park received the Green Flag Award this year for the third year running.

The involvement and commitment of SHIP play an important role in the park. The group is a fantastic example how community involvement can improve our green spaces.

Maintenance is carried out on a mobile basis by the parks team in the same way as almost all parks and green spaces in the city. The team offer the same degree of commitment, care and attention to all of our green spaces. They are all important to residents in neighbourhoods across the city.

Southchurch Hall Gardens is an historic site and, as such, we are in the early stages of a discussion with possible external funding bodies with a view to enhance some of the historic features in the Gardens.

Specialist staff at Southend Museums continue to conserve and care for Southchurch Hall and additional funding that would allow for appropriate repair and restoration of this grade 1 listed building is being sought, with an initial discussion relating to proposed works receiving positive feedback from a major funder. Funding bids of this nature take time, but the Council is committed to ensuring that Southchurch Hall Gardens is maintained to the best standard possible and retains its Green Flag accreditation.

10. Question from Mr David Webb to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Parking (Cllr Wakefield)

Question

A team looking for vehicles parking on grass verges and kerbs and pavement was supposed to be set up in Southend. Has this been set up, how many in a team, how many fines have been issued and what is the total of amount of fines collected?

Answer

There is currently not a dedicated team inspecting the network looking for vehicles parked on verges or pavements. However, where a vehicle is spotted parking on verges or the pavement and causing damage, the cost of any repairs is charged to the vehicle's driver. The highways enforcement team do write to property owners where it is clear that they are crossing verges or the pavement to gain access to their property. This letter asks them to cease the practice and apply for a properly constructed vehicle crossing. The option of issuing parking fines to offending vehicles is currently being looked into as there have recently been legislation changes that could assist with this.

11. Question from Mr David Webb to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection (Cllr Terry)

Question

I have been carrying out regular litter picks on the worst roads in Prittlewell roads. One of the worst roads is Hillborough Avenue and by the side entrance in Carlingford Drive at Entrance 5 and 6 where there are no bins for residents, patients to put cigarettes butts, packets and litter in bins and they just are thrown on the floor.

Can a letter be sent to the Chief Executive to allow Southend Council to put two bins in Hillborough and one at each entrance 5 and 6 in Carlingford Drive and more regular litter clearance along these roads by Southend Council on a weekly basis to keep on top of the litter and cigarette butts?

Answer

Thank you for your question. We will work with Veolia to monitor the cleansing standards in the areas you have mentioned and assess the viability of installing litter bins at the sites.

12. Question from Mr Andrew Brookes to the Cabinet Member for Asset Management and Inward Investment (Cllr Collins)

My understanding is that AEGuk has a 250-year lease, with no break clause for the Kursaal building, and that the Council is the freeholder. It's a travesty that a building which has some much potential to offer the local community is not being put to any use. Also, my recent empirical observation is that maintenance is not up to par (see attached photograph) with what looks like missing Window and pigeons gaining access. A sentence I came across in Council minutes about the Kursaal being "a fun place to learn and play" looks like nobody put in any serious thought as to how the Kursaal could be put to use.

Does the Council see the only way forward as buying back the lease from the leaseholder and, if so, why?

Answer

The Council would like to see the Kursaal returned to its former glory - in the City Centre Strategy and Implementation Plan we have set out our vision for the site as place to learn and play for people of all ages. Based on its current condition the investment required to bring it back into this sort of active use is at a scale that the Council cannot afford without securing external grant funding to cover all costs. Recovering the lease from AEG is not biggest issue for the Kursaal and the Council will not be pursuing that course of action at this time.

The Council has been in contact with AEG about immediate remedies to some of the maintenance issues surrounding the Kursaal and has requested that fixes are implemented quickly. We expect to see progress very shortly.

13. Question from Mr Andrew Brooks to the Cabinet Member for Asset Management and Inward Investment (Cllr Collins)

Question

When was the last time that the Council had any constructive dialogue with the AEG (if I am correct in them being the leaseholder) and what was the essence of the Councils approach to the leaseholder?

Answer

The Council is in regular contact with the Kursaal leaseholder AEG. The nature of constructive dialogue varies, but in the recent past has included, immediate repairs requirements; assessing commercial interest in the building; the leaseholder plans for the site; potential for temporary uses and site visits for potential investors.

14. Question from Mrs Judith McMahon to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration (Cllr Mitchell)

Question

Given the Despatches programme, in which Rochford Hospital and the Linden Centre, both of which accommodate Southend patients who are mentally ill, autistic and have people who have learning disabilities, showing them being subject to abusive practise, what safeguards will Southend Council take to interrogate the partner agencies to this Council to stop this clear abuse of institutional power against our vulnerable Southend children, adults and young people?

Answer

Thank you for your question.

We share your concerns about the situation in Rochford Hospital and the Linden Centre. Both Units are run by the Essex Partnership University Trust (EPUT). We understand that Essex County Council (ECC) as the Host Local Authority will work with key stakeholders including the police, the Care Quality Commission, and the Integrated Care Board, to hold EPUT to account. ECC as the host authority also has the statutory responsibility to lead on all safeguarding enquiries. We have offered our full support to all partners and will be involved in safeguarding enquiries relating to Southend Residents. We will further ensure that all those concerns are addressed within the enquiries and support appropriate actions to be implemented.

In a note to the People Scrutiny Committee the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care and Health Integration made members aware of the actions she has taken due to concerns about mental health services provided by EPUT, Essex Partnership University NHS Foundation Trust. She pointed out that the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care System (MSE ICS) is commissioning mental health services for Southend residents from EPUT. Councillor Mitchell informed the committee that she has therefore in her capacity as Portfolio Holder, and as Chair of the Health and Wellbeing Board, written to the Chief Executive of the Mid and South Essex Integrated Care Board. In that letter she asked for a formal response outlining the identified risks, the assurance processes the organisation has put in place and details of the actions should quality of care not improve.

15. Question from Mrs Judith McMahon to the Cabinet Member for Asset Management and Inward Investment (Cllr Collins)

Question

As the rounds of budget projections are under preparation in Southend Council at this time of year, on reflection would the £10million poured into Seaway and other substantially delayed aspirations such as the former Deputy Leader's Marine Plaza development, which are either dead or dying in the water, be better spent stopping our residents from dying on ligature hooks improving Southend Councils social care?

Answer:

The Council is investing in Seaways with its Capital Reserves, as a commercial and regeneration project delivering longer term financial benefits, such as increased business rates income and higher visitor numbers, generating more local spend with our businesses and revenue coming into our City.

I remain confident the scheme will be delivered in a timely way.

The Council makes considered decisions about how to use its resources for the benefit of all residents and businesses, both in the short term – investment in regeneration with the ability to attract investors and growth is part of a longer-term plan to ensure the financial sustainability of the Council and wider economy in our City.

16. Question from Mr Trevor Harp to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Culture and Tourism (Cllr Mulroney)

Question

It was announced at the beginning of August this year that Southend City Council had given 12 months' notice to The Jazz Centre (UK), (TJCUK), to vacate their home since 2016 at the Beecroft Gallery. The TJCUK is not only nationally known for its collection of artefacts from Louis Armstrong, Bix Beiderbecke, the archives of Sir John Dankworth, and Humphrey Lyttleton, amongst many others but it is also internationally well known.

TJCUK's importance to the cultural offering of our City is unparalleled and of great benefit.

Jazz, and all music, fans were glad to see the commitment given by the Portfolio holder in the Council's press release that assistance would be given to TJCUK to enable their relocation to a new suitable venue within the City.

Could I please ask, is the Portfolio holder able to give an update on progress made on finding suitable premises for the relocation of TJCUK, as we know such arrangements can take considerable time and the clock is ticking. Furthermore, could the Portfolio holder give assurance that the City Council will not leave TJCUK without a home to suit its international stature as a Southend City ambassador around the world?

Answer

Thank you for your question. There are many competing needs for support and our resources are finite. Our own heritage collection is currently suffering due to lack of available space.

We continue to meet with Jazz Centre Trustees and they have visited a potential alternative site in the City Centre. We submitted a Levelling Up bid on the premises and we await the response to that funding bid. Even if successful however, there will be works required, so the Jazz Centre and the Council will remain in regular contact. The Jazz Centre has been supported to date and we will consider short-term options with them as they develop a sustainable income to cover their costs.

17. Question from Mr Jonathan Garston to the Cabinet Member for Highways, Transport and Parking (Cllr Wakefield)

Across this city we have street signs of the very old style, some with the Road name not clearly displayed. This gives a negative impact to that Street. For example, Trinity Avenue, Milton Avenue, Prittlewell Square and Palmeira Avenue in Milton Ward.

Does this administration have a plan to replace the remainder signs?

Answer:

There are currently no plans and no allocated budget; however, we are looking at improvements to street scene borough-wide and signage would form part of this project when funding becomes available.

18. Question from Mr Jonathan Garston to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection (Cllr Terry)

Question

With Anti-social Behaviour a major concern in this city especially in central areas, does this administration have a list of areas to introduce new PSPO and what extra resources are introduced when this measure is put in place?

Answer

The city is currently covered by two PSPO's, one covering the town centre and Southend seafront, and the second covering parts of Old Leigh, Leigh High Street and Leigh Library Gardens.

The town centre and seafront PSPO includes prohibitions: defecating, urination, littering and spitting, begging and rough sleeping in public place, no drinking zone, chugging, erection of tents and inhaling toxic substances.

Under a recent review of this PSPO in July, a further two prohibitions were added, namely: no cycling or E scootering on a public footway.

The Leigh PSPO has all the above prohibitions, with the exception of the no cycling/e-scootering. (As this was a recent PSPO and a review will not be applicable for this PSPO for a further 2 years).

Enforcement of PSPOs is the responsibility of the Council's Community Safety Unit. The team is stretched as it is to meet the demand of expected enforcement of both PSPO's with the resources available at the moment, and that's without now, the additional measures being added to the town centre PSPO in July. Placing further pressure on the team.

With rising footfall in Southend, alongside ASB increases that we have seen post Covid, the Community Safety Unit would require further resource investment to enforce against any further PSPO's considered. This would also include administration support to meet the case work demand.

PSPO consideration for a new area requires a lengthy consultation process and substantive evidence from police, council and partners that evidences a significant ASB problem in a particular area. Based on current ASB activity, there is no evidence to suggest that a new PSPO is required for a different area of the town. However, a city wide PSPO to tackle car cruises and the associated ASB that is linked with such events could be a consideration.

19. Question from Mrs Susan Delgarno to the Cabinet Member for Public Protection (Cllr Terry)

Question

I would like to bring to your attention that as flat (sheet) glass is not recycled by Southend City Council, all of that glass is wasted by sending it to landfill. To recycle flat glass uses 30% less emissions than making new glass from scratch and saves the financial cost of sending it to landfill. There are companies throughout the country who provide flat glass recycling facilities, including one in Rainham who would be very interested in speaking to you about this issue. As the information given in your reply to a similar question at the last Full Council meeting was based on out of date information and therefore not wholly accurate, and I and Cllr Berry have since provided you with details of the flat glass recycling options that are now available, my question now is will you be following up on that so as to make Southend Council a leader in recycling flat glass and help to save our planet as well as saving landfill costs?

Answer

Thank you for your question.

We would be happy to engage with the firm in Rainham and would welcome the details to do so. However, following a site assessment, it has been deemed that the volume produced on site is extremely low and therefore prohibitive at this stage. Findings show that Stock Road HWRC would take around a year to fill a skip, and Leigh Marsh HWRC in around 6/7 months. The space on site is also very limited and priority is given to recyclates that are collected in larger volumes. In addition, the Council is currently preparing for the segregation of POPs (Persistent Organic Pollutants) containing materials. This legislation applies to furniture containing upholstery which will need to be kept separate by law from other bulky items, both collected from the kerbside and at the HWRCs. Officers have calculated that the space currently underutilised on site will be required for this process.

I/we genuinely do appreciate your interest in recycling. Our City is not recycling enough domestic waste overall and we, as a community, need to make more of an effort. As we move into both a climate crisis and the cost-of-living crisis it is imperative we do more. For each 1% that we can improve our City recycling rate it helps the environment and saves us all £120,000 in landfill tax and lost revenue. It is vital that we shift the dial on our overall recycling rate which I see as an act of community responsibility. Landfill tax is taken from our revenue budget, the same budget used for the provision of many of the services families and the vulnerable depend upon.

For advice on recycling please refer to Council Recycling and Waste website: www.southend.gov.uk-recycling-waste-0