

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

Council Meeting – 21st July 2016

Question from Councillor Aylen to the Executive Councillor for Transport, Waste & Cleansing

A meeting was held where officers presented a feasibility scheme for the Kent elms junction all councillors were invited to comment and make suggestions.

A number of schemes were put forward including the original intended layout of Kent elms junction and another that would reduce costs environmental and construction time by two thirds. Following this all were assured another meeting would take place where officers would present a final plan of intent.

Since then there have been a number of press releases stating the final plan of intent that appears to be the complete opposite to the feasibility scheme and to those suggestions that were agreed.

May I request from the cabinet holder when the promised follow up meeting will take place where officers would present a final plan of intent?

Answer

Following a meeting held on 4th February with Members and officers to discuss scheme options for the Kent Elms Junction improvement, a technical report incorporating options and suggestions put forward at the meeting was issued to attendees on 3rd March 2016.

Three highway and four footbridge options were put forward within the public consultation which was carried out on 21st March to 30th April 2016. Consultation with Members at the 4th February meeting has also been included within the consultation.

At the meeting of Cabinet held on 15th March 2016 it was agreed that the preferred option was Highway Option 1 and Footbridge Option 2. However, it was also agreed that this was subject to land negotiations and the outcome of the consultation exercise.

The outcome of the Consultation including the inputs from Members following the Workshop held on the 4th February 2016 has formed the basis of the design to be taken forward for implementation. The current proposed option(s) includes changes in response to the feedback received from members and the public. At the meeting of the Cabinet held 15th March 2016 it was also agreed:

‘That once the results of the public consultation have been considered, that delegated authority be given to the Chief Executive and Corporate Director for Place, in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection, Waste and Transport to agree the final option to be taken forward to detailed business case submission, implementation, advertisement of any necessary traffic regulation orders, land acquisition and planning permissions following circulation of these details to all Members and discussions with Group Leaders.’

Following discussions with Group Leaders the final scheme will be circulated to all Members.

Question from Councillor Ware-Lane to the Leader of the Council

Question

I am proud to live in a diverse and tolerant society. Racism, xenophobia and hate crimes have no place in our country. I hope that we, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council, will condemn racism, xenophobia and hate crimes unequivocally. We should not allow hate to become acceptable.

Can the Leader assure me that Southend-on-Sea Borough Council will work to ensure local bodies and programmes have the support and resources needed to fight and prevent racism and xenophobia? Further, will the Leader reassure all people living in Borough of Southend-on-Sea that they are valued members of our community?

Answer

Of course I unequivocally join Councillor Ware-Lane in condemning any form of racism, xenophobia and hate crimes in our country. Extremist views and intolerance have no place in a civilised and modern society.

Councillors will know that our town has a long history of excellent community cohesion. The Southend in Harmony Community in Partnership group, for example, hold a highly successful annual event in our civic parks, attracting thousands of residents to come together and

celebrate their differences. Such events, and many similar initiatives, go a long way in promoting our rich and increasingly diverse culture and combating xenophobia and racism.

Like the Council, Essex Police take reports of hate crime extremely seriously and continuously analyse incident rates. The latest figures show that there are no current trends or patterns. However, along with our Community Safety partners, we will continue to be vigilant. The Council's PREVENT Board is central to monitoring community cohesion and is doing some excellent work in training our staff, and our partners staff, to better understand and counteract the negative effects of ideology and radicalisation.

I can assure Cllr Ware-Lane that the Council will continue helping local residents, community groups and voluntary sector organisations champion greater understanding whilst breaking down the barriers of ignorance and misunderstanding. We will also continue to maintain close links with our faith and community networks, listening carefully and working with them to address any concerns that they may have'.

I would also mention that all local authority school governors should be, especially Councillors, alert and mindful to monitor the issue and raise any concerns they have with the appropriate authorities.

Question from Councillor J Garston to the Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Public Protection Services

Question

With increases in Anti Social behaviour in parts of Milton ward could the portfolio holder tell me what measures are being taken to improve this situation for residents and business owners quality of life?

Answer

The very nature of the location of Milton ward, incorporating two of the main shopping areas of the borough as well as the seafront will see higher levels of anti-social behaviour compared to those of other wards with specific elements of ASB that are not so obvious in other wards.

Street drinking and begging has been prevalent in these areas and I can advise that a concerted effort has been placed on tackling this using intervention, prevention and ultimately enforcement. Through intervention and prevention with partner agencies it has been identified

that for begging a significant number have homes and are in receipt of benefits. Many of the street drinkers are complex individuals and engagement with rehabilitative opportunities clearly takes time. However, the impact upon the wider community is taken into account and Community Protection Warning Letters and Notices are issued and where necessary, Criminal Behaviour Orders are applied.

A strong partnership approach is taken to anti-social behaviour associated with the night time economy including building on relationships with licensed premises and utilising the skills of third sector groups such as Street Pastors.

For 2016 Milton Ward I can advise that 56 Community Protection Warning Letters have been issued and 32 Community Protection Notices have been issued.

1 Criminal Behaviour Order has been obtained and a further application is pending conviction.

With regard to general ASB that has the greatest impact for residents, the SMAART team carry out evening visits or patrols at least once a week to tackle the root causes of anti-social behaviour and where necessary can carry out joint patrol with Police and/or partner agencies.

For the High Street and Seafront BID Rangers provide a visible and proactive response to ASB and have been successful in preventing escalation of ASB.

Question from Councillor Butler to the Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Public Protection Services

Question

Can the Portfolio Holder for Housing advise me what the latest position is with the Sheltered Housing review?

Answer

I am pleased to report that Peter Fletcher Associates (PFA) have presented the first draft report to Officers, which has been shared with me. My comments have been fed back to PFA for incorporation into their final report. We expect to have the final report imminently, which I will then share with members.

Question for Councillor D Norman to the Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Public Protection Services

Will the Executive Councillor now reaffirm the commitment given to Queensway residents (both tenants and leaseholders) by the previous administration that in the event that residents are displaced from their current homes by the regeneration project, they will have a guaranteed right to return and be housed in the new Queensway development?

Answer

Yes.