

AGENDA ITEM NO. 6

COUNCIL – 21st APRIL 2022

QUESTIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. **Question submitted by Councillor Sir Ron Watson CBE to Members of the Police and Crime Panel**

Subject: Public Space Protection Orders (PSPO's)

I understand that Sefton now has the legal ability to introduce PSPO's.

There is no doubt that these can be very helpful in dealing with a range of behavioural problems and will the Members concerned, therefore, indicate what representations he/she has made to the Cabinet in particular as there appears to have been no action in this area to introduce what many will regard as a much-needed power?

Response:

I am advised that there was a PSPO in place which covered ASB around the Sefton coastline, including specific provision around alcohol consumption. This order expired and was not renewed in time for the summer of 2021. This order has still not been renewed but I am advised that there have been some meetings with the council's legal team and Police earlier this year and a draft order should be progressing for sign off in time for this summer which will be the busiest time. It would cover the whole of the coast in Sefton.

The coast is probably the main issue that a PSPO would be of real value – The Police have other powers to deal with more localised ASB such as dispersal orders, as well as other orders around individuals and have recently obtained several Criminal Behaviour Orders against a team of prolific shoplifters and vehicle crime offenders who target Crosby, Waterloo, Seaforth, and Bootle

2. **Question submitted by Councillor Sir Ron Watson CBE to Members of the Police and Crime Panel**

Subject: Town Centre Night-Time Economy

The Members will know from his or her work as Sefton's Representative on the Merseyside Police Authority that extra funding has been given to Merseyside to deal in particular with anti-social behaviour in respect of what is known as the night-time economy.

My understanding is that all of this funding has been applied to the Liverpool city centre area and that none has been made available to deal with the problems in Southport.

Will the Members concerned advise what representations he/she made at any meeting of the Authority and is he/she prepared to liaise with the local Southport Police Officers to seek to ensure that the Town does receive adequate cover which in turn will enhance the reputation of the facilities on offer in the Town?

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Response:

The Police have received different funding streams that have impacted upon the Night-time Economy in Sefton (including Southport). They have been specifically able to tackle the NTE deploying extra officers every Saturday night in Southport, albeit this has now ended. They have had permanent growth in the local Community Team in Southport of 3 officers (They now have 4 posts per team alongside the PCSO's instead of 3) which is helpful and provides more resilience to keep a dedicated presence around the town centre. The general uplift has led to additional recruitment so the Targeted Teams (who provide the bulk of the resources for the NTE's) are able to provide the resources required both for the city centre and the NTE's in other parts of Merseyside.

They also can bid for funding to tackle serious violence, county lines and other issues that all impact on Southport Town Centre and this allows the Police to respond to increases in ASB / violence, resource events that present a risk or undertake targeted activity around problematic premises.

3. **Question submitted by Councillor Brough to the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care (Councillor Doyle)**

Subject: Ofsted Report for Children's Social Services

I am informed that a recent Ofsted report for Children's Social Services is complete.

Can the Cabinet Member for Children's Social Care please explain why it will not be published until May 8th 2022?

Response:

"I have no influence on when a government department publishes its reports. This is a matter for Ofsted and they determine the dates of when inspections take place, and when they publish the reports pertaining to said inspections."

4. **Question submitted by Councillor Prendergast to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ian Maher)**

Subject: Local Authority Publicity - Letter 'Your Council Tax'

1. Who prepared the content of the letter titled 'Your Council Tax' and were any council officers involved in the preparation of the letter?
2. Did the Leader of the Council consult with anybody in the legal department at Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council about the wording of the letter titled 'Your Council Tax'?
3. Were all members of the Cabinet consulted and made aware of the contents of the letter titled 'Your Council Tax'? If so, did any of them raise any concerns about the letter being sent out or have any concerns about the wording of the letter?
4. How many letters titled 'Your Council Tax' from the Leader of the Council were

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sent out by post and email?

5. How much did it cost to send the letters and emails titled 'Your Council Tax' across the borough?
6. When was the decision taken to include the letter titled 'Your Council Tax' with the Council Tax Bills that were being sent out?
7. Did the Leader of the Council consult with anybody outside of Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council about the wording of the letter titled 'Your Council Tax'?
8. Is the Leader of the Council familiar with the contents of the Code of Recommended Practice on Local Authority Publicity issued by the Department for Communities and Local Government and does he agree that Sefton Metropolitan Borough Council should adhere to this code?

Response:

1. Me and no.
 2. No.
 3. No
 4. 129,168 households.
 5. £3,144.24 or 2.4p per letter.
 6. A short time prior.
 7. No
 8. Yes
5. **Question submitted by Councillor Sir Ron Watson CBE to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ian Maher)**

Subject: Trade Union Work Concessions

The Leader of the Council is no doubt aware and indeed supports the policy of allowing staff members who hold positions within the Sefton Trade Unions to take time off work with no loss of wage and/or salary.

Will the Leader of the Council please provide the following information:-

1. The number of staff who fall within this category by Department.
2. The annual number of days involved where the staff member is missing and unable to carry out their Council duties.
3. The costs involved in terms of the amounts paid to the individuals concerned when covering their period of absence.
4. The percentage of Sefton staff who are currently members of Trade Unions and

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an indication in respect of the increase and/or decrease of Union membership over the past 5 years.

Response:

“Yes I do.

1. 6.6 FTE
2. 6.6 FTE
3. £209,000
4. I don't have this information”.

6. **Question submitted by Councillor Sir Ron Watson CBE to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Ian Maher)**

Subject: Pleasureland

The Leader of the Council will know that there is increasing concern at the lack of progress that has been made by ‘Universal Rides Limited’ in respect of the development of the Pleasureland area.

The Council made an unprecedented decision to grant a lease for a 50-year period subject to a renewal period of another 50 years and never in Sefton’s history has a commitment been given of this nature to last a century.

The lease provided for a break clause relating to capital investment and other issues and on the basis of the information currently available there is no prospect that the conditions indicated can possibly be met within the timeframe.

Members of the Council have constantly been refused information about these arrangements but Councillors in particular are receiving increasing representations about the state of the area and the lack of progress.

Will the Leader of the Council please detail what action has been taken to ensure compliance with the terms of the lease and what provision has now been made on a practical basis to instigate the break clause at the appropriate time?

Response:

“The project referred to is a private sector led development, and the council has entered into a non-disclosure agreement (NDA) with the leaseholder that enables access to information and updates. This information is commercially sensitive so cannot be shared by the council as we continue to comply with the NDA, but it does enable monitoring against the capital investment clauses within the lease. Officers frequently engage with the leaseholder regarding this and other agreements in the area, and any appropriate actions will be taken and reported in accordance with council procedures”.