

# AGENDA ITEM No.6

COUNCIL – 5 JULY 2012

## QUESTIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

### 1. Question submitted by Councillor Jones to the Leader of the Council (Councillor P. Dowd)

“Could I ask the Leader of the Council:

Does he recognise the sorry decline in our town centres and villages as shoppers turn to the giant supermarkets and expanding retail parks with the appealing free and handy parking making their shopping experience stress free?

Does he recognise the hard work being done by the private sector in revitalising our towns and villages? The recent excellent Portas bid being just one example and the town centre partnerships another of what the private sector can do during these hard times.

Does he consider the fact that as more businesses consider the options of closure and redundancies, more must be done to encourage shoppers back to our faltering town centres and new ways be looked at in an attempt to create much needed jobs within our economy, and that we as a Council look at all options that can help our towns and villages prosper in such difficult times?

Does he realise that Sefton Council’s current pay and display system throughout the Borough is having an adverse affect on the appeal of our town centres and villages and that we as a Council need to show we have the drive and ambition to make our town centres the number one destination for shoppers in the North West once again?

I’m sure he is aware that the Council must realise that we cannot continue to use this as a way of subsidising the Council, whilst allowing businesses to go to the wall. We need to show we have faith in our town centres and villages to encourage others to invest not withdraw.

Would he consider that the Council look at alternative options with pay and display, for example a free hour or no charge during quieter times in an attempt to boost our local economy?”

### **Response:**

I acknowledge many of the sentiments outlined in Cllr Jones question. I’m sure he will appreciate that a number of the issues that he has raised will be the subject, in due course, of reviews as part of the budget process. In relation to the Portas bid, whilst regrettably none of the Sefton bids have been successful, nevertheless I look forward to bringing forward alternative plans in the not too distant future. I am more than happy to discuss with Cllr. Jones the nature of these plans when I meet him.

---

## **AGENDA ITEM No.6**

### **2. Question Submitted by Councillor Brodie-Browne to the Leader of the Council (Councillor P. Dowd)**

“What mechanisms are in place for reporting back to the Council, from the Board of Directors of One Vision Housing appointed by the Council?”

#### **Response:**

The Council has never had a mechanism in place (or the Council’s Constitution has never contained any provision) for Council representatives on any of the various Outside Bodies that the Council makes an appointment to, to report back to the Council.

---

### **3. Question Submitted by Councillor McKinley to the Leader of the Council (Councillor P. Dowd)**

“Can the Leader of the Council outline what if any intentions there are to develop relations with the trade unions in the light of the ongoing budgetary situation of the Council?”

#### **Response:**

The trade unions have played a positive and constructive role in the budget setting over the last 2 years. In particular, I hope this constructive relationship will continue.

Notwithstanding the massive cuts that have occurred over the past 2 years, staff have remained committed to the provision of good public services.

I would encourage staff to continue to speak to their trade union representatives about their concerns, ideas or views about the budget.

I would also encourage those members of staff who are not in a trade union to join one.

---

### **4. Question Submitted by Councillor Shaw to the Cabinet Member - Children, Schools, Families and Leisure (Councillor Moncur)**

“The Times had a leading article on Tuesday 3 July 2012 headed: “Out of Sight - The routine placement of children in residential care a long distance from their homes is an outrage that demands urgent action”.

This highlighted an issue which has long been of concern to residents in parts of my ward, as well as other areas of the Borough.

Would the Cabinet Member advise me how many children/young people were placed, on an out-of-area basis, in residential homes in:

1. Southport Constituency
2. Sefton Central Constituency
3. Bootle Constituency

in 2011/12, or the most recent period for which information is available?”

## AGENDA ITEM No.6

### Response:

For the period referred to, we were informed by other placing Local Authorities of:

6 children and young people in the Southport Constituency  
4 in Sefton Central Constituency and  
1 in Bootle Constituency

---

### **5. Question Submitted by Councillor Dawson to the Cabinet Member - Children, Schools, Families and Leisure (Councillor Moncur)**

“Could the Cabinet Member respond to the suggestion that there should be a regular published bulletin, regarding projects completed, under consideration and proposed for the future, on the beach and coastal areas of the Borough?”

### Response:

Unfortunately under the current financial constraints, such a bulletin is not considered appropriate use of resources.

Any projects that affect the coast are already reported through existing mechanisms.

These include the formal cabinet member approvals process.

The reports and decisions are published on the council’s intranet and internet.

There are also the cabinet member update reports.

These feature on the agenda of the Overview and Scrutiny (Regeneration and Environmental Services) Committee. These updates are also published on the council’s internet and intranet.

More general information about the coast and coastal projects is also available on the visit Sefton website on the Sefton’s natural-coast pages.

---

### **6. Question Submitted by Councillor Dawson to the Cabinet Member - Children, Schools, Families and Leisure (Councillor Moncur)**

“Could the Cabinet Member give a commencement date for the remedial works to Cambridge Arcade, Southport, to correct damage created during the Arts Centre refurbishment?”

### Response:

The reality is that the works to the Cultural Centre have caused limited if any damage to the fabric of the Arcade. A number of structural elements in the Arcade had to be altered to allow the erection of scaffolding and installation of a new electricity sub-station, but always with the intention of reinstatement at the appropriate time. The Arcade was not in good condition before the commencement of the Cultural Centre works and this will be further highlighted given the improvements to the adjacent building fabric, however the Council is currently exploring the possibility of an investment in the fabric of the Arcade to put it into an improved state of repair and appearance.

---

## AGENDA ITEM No.6

### 7. Question Submitted by Councillor Dawson to the Cabinet Member - Older People and Health (Councillor Cummins)

“What are the ‘demographic changes’ in the population of Sefton which are going to cause the Council to incur major social service costs from 2013 onwards which are substantially in excess of those contemplated during the 2012/13 budget process, and when were these ‘new’ demographic pressures discovered?”

What is the cost of the average annual adult care package presently paid for by Sefton MBC?”

#### **Response:**

In 2010 21% of our population was aged 65 or above, compared to a national average of 16%. The number of older people in Sefton is expected to increase by 7% over the next four years, and by almost 35% over the next twenty years.

At present, Sefton has the 16<sup>th</sup> highest proportion of older people of any Council with Adult Social Service Responsibility (CASSR) in the country (152 local authorities have social care responsibilities). This is not reflected in our spending formula.

Owing to the Government and their changes in funding to Health, previous funding from Sefton PCT and Government Winter Pressures (£2m), underpinned adult social funding. However, neither of these funding streams may be made available in future. In addition, there are local pressures to consider i.e. **an unforeseen increase in children with complex needs moving in transition to adult services, and increased Ordinary Residence pressures, which all add to demand. People are living longer, therefore needing care for longer.**

These new pressures were not ‘discovered,’ but in the past year detailed work has been undertaken to understand the population of Sefton, and future demand on services.

#### **Last year’s MTFP 2011/12 May 2011 stated:**

Adult social care growth included within the MTFP was £2.5m for 2012/13, and £0m in the final two years of the plan. A review of these figures has indicated that growth, because of demographic pressures, is likely to be higher than is allowed for within the MTFP. A prudent allowance for a further £0.75m in 2012/13, and thereafter, is recommended. However, current experience suggests that demand may be increasing further. Consequently, a review of the potential changes in 2013/14 and 2014/15 will be undertaken. Of course, as a result of the savage cuts by this callous, uncaring and irresponsible government, we will struggle to meet the demands on our services.

**The average cost of an older person’s package of care is £160.00 per week, which equates to £8,320 per annum, depending on their assessed need. This is taken from national figures, and is at the lower average end within Sefton’s family group of Local Authorities.**

---

## **AGENDA ITEM No.6**

### **8. Question Submitted by Councillor Dawson to the Cabinet Member - Transportation (Councillor Fairclough)**

“When are the Speed Reduction advisory flashing signs likely to be erected on the Southport Coast Road?”

#### **Response:**

To inform the response I can confirm that the poles went in on Tuesday this week and the signs should be mounted by the end of the week.

---