

COUNCIL – 14 JULY 2016

QUESTIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. **Question submitted by Councillor Barton to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)**

“I think we all acknowledge the potential for Southport BID to achieve great results for the town of Southport. I was pleased to read in a recent community letter published in the local media that Southport BID had made "great progress" in pushing for improvements to the Verandahs along Lord Street".

Could the Council clarify the extent of the BID's financial assistance towards the Verandah restoration? And do they intend to fund any further Verandah restoration work?"

Response:

“I thank Cllr Barton for his question. However as it is related to a third party and requires current and future financial information and spend on their part, I suggest he contacts Southport BID direct for this information.”

2. **Question submitted by Councillor Barton to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)**

"What are the Council's official practice and procedures in place to maintain and upkeep its civic assets across the entire Borough region and are there any protocols that may be implemented soon in the future to address and resolve the dilapidated Promenade Railings here in Southport?"

Response:

“I would again suggest Cllr Barton contact the relevant person as maintenance and upkeep of civil assets across the entire Borough does not fall within the remit of my portfolio.”

3. **Question submitted by Councillor Booth to the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills (Councillor Atkinson)**

“British Destinations holds four meetings each year, three in London and one concurrently with the Annual Conference. This year the conference was held in Southport.

How many of these meetings have Sefton’s elected representative attended over the last 3 years?"

Response:

“As the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Skills since May 2015 I can inform Councillor Booth of the four meetings I was entitled to attend, two required travel to London, and one required travel with an overnight stay.

Regarding those four specific dates, on one occasion I attended a very successful meeting with Southport residents and John Pugh Liberal Democrat MP for Southport. The second I attended a meeting in Southport to discuss improving rail activity within the West Lancs and Southport area. The additional two dates of non-attendance was due to my full time employment.”

4. Question submitted by Councillor Hands to the Cabinet Member for Locality Services (Councillor Fairclough)

- i) Is the Cabinet member aware of the serious public concern about weed spraying (or lack of it) in recent months?
- ii) When was the last Borough-wide weed spray carried out?
- iii) In a normal year how many weed sprays would be undertaken and in approximately which months would they be carried out?
- iv) When is the next weed spray likely to take place?
- v) Assuming that he accepts that there is a problem, and that ultimately he is responsible, would the Cabinet Member advise me what actions he has personally taken to address this problem?”

Response:

“Following a recent procurement exercise for the Term Maintenance Contract for ‘Highway Weed Spraying’ the Council up until recently was in between Contractors due to some delays in concluding the procurement exercise. Hence, there has been a subsequent delay in the routine annual spraying programme. The Council have now resolved those issues causing the delay and it is anticipated that the weed spraying operation will recommence within the next two weeks. The Council will endeavour to initially target those areas across the Borough were they are aware of particular weed growth issues. Should any member of the public wish to raise an enquiry with regards to highway weed spraying then they can do so directly via the following email address - highway.enquiries@sefton.gov.uk.”

5. Question submitted by Councillor Lynne Thompson to the Cabinet Member for Locality Services (Councillor Fairclough)

“I have had many residents complain to me about the lack of grass cutting and spraying this year. I am sure that other Councillors have had the same. Does the Cabinet Member share my concerns? Is there a simple explanation for this problem and when can the public expect to get a proper service for the council tax they pay?”

Response:

“Following a recent procurement exercise for the Term Maintenance Contract for ‘Highway Grounds Maintenance’, the Council has appointed a new Contractor to deliver this service. The Contractor commenced the grass cutting activities on the 18th April. There were some early issues in terms of some locations being missed that should have been cut and some initial quality issues, however the Contractor has now refined their cutting programme and processes and are continuing to deliver the service in accordance with their Contract. Should any member of the public wish to raise an enquiry with regards to highway verge grass cutting then they can do so directly via the following email address - highway.enquiries@sefton.gov.uk

6. Question submitted by Councillor Dawson to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care (Councillor Cummins)

“There have been disturbing reports of the low extent, nationwide, of Carers assessments performed in accordance with The Care Act.”

Response:

Sefton Council has provided assessment/support to carers as set out below.

	14/15	15/16
Number of Carers given advice or information or signposted to other universal services	1,065	824
Number of Carers assessed for support	1,666	1,787

This breaks down as follows:

	14/15	15/16
Information/Advice Given Only	92	64
Link to Existing Referral	326	240
No Further Action from Contact	5	9
Progress to New Referral	591	770
Signposted to Other Agency	2	15
Total	1,016	1,098

7. Question submitted by Councillor McGuire to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Maher)

“In light of the recent referendum vote for the UK to leave the European Union, can the Leader of the Council please give details of what the financial impact of this decision may be on Sefton Council in terms of funding received from the European Union and any shortfall which may result in current funding programmes?”

Response:

“At this point in time the Government has not yet provided any guidance on what the next stages are with regard to EU funding programmes following the EU referendum.

Officers are currently seeking high-level private meetings with government to confirm that all Structural Fund commitments will be honoured and that replacement opportunities as regards other EU funds will be put in place for organisations in the City Region to bid for without delay.

At this point in time therefore:

- the emphasis is on delivering a compliant programme whilst the UK remains a member of the EU;
- appraisals of projects (ERDF and ESF) are continuing;
- live calls for proposals will continue, and any outline applications submitted will be appraised; and
- existing projects (i.e. those with Grant Funding Agreements) will be expected to deliver agreed targets and outputs and grant will continue to be paid

In terms of the Liverpool City Regions Structural Funds:

- The 2014 – 2020 Programme is worth €248m (£193m) with all of this money due to be spent in the City Region
- This programme also attract match funding of at least another 50%.

Specific risks for Sefton

As of now, it is estimated that if the Post-2018 funding for ESIF is de-allocated from the UK, then Sefton would not have access to some £10-15m in the 2018-20 period that it could reasonably expected to receive.

The full impact of the referendum however cannot yet be established, and when details are known a report together with an assessment of the financial implications will be produced for Members.”

8. Question submitted by Councillor McGuire to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing (Councillor Hardy)

“More than a third of councils are refusing to accept Syrian refugees over the coming four years. Councils have only committed to taking 8,146 refugees out of the 20,000 the Government has pledged Britain will accept under the resettlement programme. Can the Cabinet Member confirm how many Syrian Refugees Sefton has currently accepted under the resettlement programme and if the Council has a plan to accept more?”

Response:

“Sefton is fully committed to helping and supporting refugees. The Council has committed to settling 100 people under the Syrian Vulnerable People Resettlement Scheme – this is a proportion of the 20,000 nationally agreed based on our population as a Borough. The Council is working collaboratively with other Merseyside Authorities on the arrangements for their arrival and a multi-agency steering group has been meeting for several months now. The resettlement scheme will operate for 4 years and it is anticipated that 25 people per year will be resettled within the Borough over the next 4 years, with the first arrivals in the Autumn. Any requests received to settle more than this would be considered when such requests are received.”

9. Question submitted by Councillor McGuire to the Cabinet Member for Adult Social Care (Councillor Cummins)

“Can the Cabinet member confirm how many home 15 minute domiciliary care visits the Council funded for 2015/2016 and 2014/2015?”

Response:

“We have analysed the data and found three domiciliary packages across the two financial years requested. When we have looked on the system it would appear that two were commissioned for medication prompts and one commissioned for a prompt for change of night wear - all were provided as part of a larger care package. Two cases were identified during 2014/15 and one during 2015/16 and are all ceased now.”