

COUNCIL - 19 APRIL 2018

QUESTIONS RAISED BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

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

What Work Experience and Internship Opportunities are available to members of the public, especially College and University Students and how can these be accessed to facilitate Placements throughout the Year?

Response

“Local colleges generally employ Placement Officers to develop business leads with companies willing to provide work experience for their students, whilst they are in learning. Universities also have their own Internship/World of Work programmes so students on or completing their degree courses can access support from their university or online specialist agencies. Some graduates, however, frequently self-market themselves to a company that they would wish to work for, but this type of internship is often unpaid and they will generally require additional paid work.”

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

What Progressions have been made with both Incumbent long-standing and future Prospective Investors seeking to bring new Retail, Residential and Regenerative Opportunities to the whole of the Borough?

Response:

“Our business support service Invest Sefton offers ongoing support, advice and guidance to current and new start-up businesses in Sefton. The detailed levels of engagement are available to every member of the Council through my regular Cabinet Member reports to the Overview and Scrutiny committee, however just under 1,300 Sefton businesses have received support from the service in the last year.

Sefton’s Local Plan was adopted in April 2017 and includes opportunities for housing, employment, commercial and regeneration activity throughout the borough. The Regeneration and Housing teams talk regularly to land and property owners as well as investors who show interest in developing in Sefton. Councillor Barton will appreciate the commercial sensitivity linked to prospective investor discussions.”

3. **Question submitted by Councillor Barton to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control (Councillor Veidman)**

Can an Official Update be provided regarding the numbers of Properties remaining within the “Sefton Heritage at Risk Register” be these situated across the Borough within and outside the designated Conservation Areas, but especially Southport and the Promenade?

Response:

“The Current National Buildings at Risk Register holds:

Conservation Areas

- Christ Church, Waterloo
- Lord Street, Southport
- Promenade, Southport
- West Birkdale, Southport
- North Meols, Southport
- Waterloo Park, Waterloo

The Heritage at Risk officer is progressing these sites to removal from the register through, education, profile raising Conservation Area Appraisals, enforcement of derelict buildings, improvements, such as the successful Heritage Trails, publishing of verandah guidance brochure and improvements to Lord St Verandahs

Listed Buildings - Places of worship

- Church of St Nicholas, Bridge Road, Crosby
- Church of Holy Trinity, Manchester Road, Southport
- Wesley Southbank Road Methodist Church, Southbank Road

Many have sought or are seeking Heritage Lottery funded grants, the responsibility for these buildings is with Historic England and the Diocese, however it is anticipated some will be removed from the register next year.

Listed Buildings Grade II*

- Ince Blundell Old Hall, Park Wall Road, Ince Blundell
Discussions with Historic England ongoing
- Christ Church, Waterloo Road, Crosby
Recently received HLF grant for works to the tower

Scheduled Monument

- Old Hall moated site and fishponds, Sefton
Discussions with Historic England ongoing”

4. **Question submitted by Councillor Barton to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control (Councillor Veidman)**

Can any further support be provided to Key Stakeholders either presently or due to embark upon mass-scale restoration of their properties; for example a collective shared reduction in cost for Scaffolding and Street Works Licenses to encourage further uptake of maintenance work by members of the local Community, in particular those with greater fiscal burdens such as long- established Independents and new Businesses alike?

Response:

“This is not my area of responsibility but I can advise that Sefton Council’s charges are set each year as part of the Council’s budget setting process.”

5. **Question submitted by Councillor Barton to the Cabinet Member for Communities and Housing (Councillor Hardy)**

What Funding Grants, other than District and Town-wide Funding may be available to Local Community Groups on a legally ongoing basis, be this for provision of Car Parking for local Sporting Organisations such as the Southport & Birkdale Cricket Club, restorative costs for Buildings of Religious and Civic Importance such as the St. George’s United Reformed Church on Lord Street?

Response:

“I am personally not aware of any funding opportunities at a local, regional or national level that are exclusively provided for car parking fees.”

6. **Question submitted by Councillor Barton to the Cabinet Member for Locality Services (Councillor Fairclough)**

Can SMBC provide a greater full resurfacing of its most pertinent Carriageways regularly utilised by local residents and commuters alike as opposed to surface dressing and other Pothole Filling Techniques where there is grave deterioration of the Carriageway surface, such as Westcliffe Road, York Road and Eastbank Street; and may this be done during the warmer Summer months to ensure the greatest possible efficiency for the long- term?

Response:

“Sefton like most other Local Authorities face the ongoing challenge of a deteriorating highway asset. Through successive years of insufficient funding being available to stem the deterioration to a steady state, Council officers have to utilise all available asset management and construction techniques to try and prolong the life and condition of the highway to a safe and serviceable standard.

Surface treatments such as Micro Asphalt and Surface Dressing are industry standard applications and are widely used across the country on roads showing early signs of surface failures. The treatments are designed to seal the existing road surface from the ingress of water and protect its underlying structural layers from further deterioration. When applied and maintained correctly they can significantly extend the life of carriageway before more intrusive and costly resurfacing or re-construction is required.

It is acknowledged that conventional resurfacing methods such as ‘plane and inlay’ will always be considered the better long term maintenance solution, however there is currently insufficient funding available to support such activities on a larger scale across the Borough.

With regards to the timing of completing highway surfacing works there are clear benefits for completing works in the warmer summer months but there are a number of factors that can prevent this from occurring.

Taking Southport as a particular example, the Council has to take account of the needs of businesses, residents, tourists and visitors along with the multitude of events which occur annually when planning such works. There is also the size and scale of the annual highway maintenance programme. It may not be feasible to complete all of the works in a condensed period of time. Linked to that, there is also the issue of the availability of the Contractors to complete the works particularly with those Contractors who work for multiple Clients across the country along with our statutory requirement to coordinate all works on the highway to minimise disruption to the travelling public.”

7. **Question submitted by Councillor Barton to the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services (Councillor Lappin)**

Would SMBC consider introducing Dog Permits to encourage further civic responsibility be this when out in a prominent Shopping Precinct or a Residential Neighbourhood where Dog Fouling has been committed on a serial basis by inconsiderate Animal Owners who may in fact be providing their Animals a miserable quality of life?

Response:

“There are no plans to introduce dog permits. The Microchipping of Dogs (England) Regulations 2015 provides compulsory, permanent identification and registration of dogs via *microchipping* and the recording of each *dog's* identity and its keeper's contact details on a database. This assists significantly in reuniting dogs with their owners.

In addition the Sefton MBC Public Space Protection Order - Dog Control 2017 provides measures to tackle irresponsible dog owners. Formal action can be taken for failing to comply with the requirements/restrictions within the Order including; failure to remove dog fouling forthwith; dogs to be kept on a lead within defined areas and dogs prohibited from defined areas such as enclosed playgrounds.”

8. **Question submitted by Councillor Barton to the Cabinet Member for Locality Services (Councillor Fairclough)**

What provisions can SMBC make to avoid any further deterioration of major Tourist Attractions such as the Flower Beds along Rotten Row, Birkdale, Southport which have been subject to damage incurred by On-Street Car Parking?

Response:

“The recent damage was caused by attendees at a recent car show held in Victoria Park. Officers will be meeting with the organiser of the event in the next few weeks to ensure that, if there are to be future similar events, then measures are put in place to ensure that there is no repeat of this parking behaviour.”

9. **Question submitted by Councillor Barton to the Cabinet Member for Planning and Building Control (Councillor Veidman)**

Can a full Audit of all potentially dangerous Highways Junctions and Crossings be produced and acted upon as soon as possible on the grounds of urgent Health & Safety, such as the one at Portland Street and Cemetery Road and the Kew Roundabout at Town Lane, Southport?

Response:

“This is not my area of responsibility but I can advise that Officers monitor the collision data supplied by Merseyside Police and base work programmes, subject to budgetary constraints, around treating those locations/roads which exhibit the greatest number of collisions.”

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

As a member and co-leading member, can SMBC instruct the Southport BID to fulfil its democratic duty and disclose a full detailed and unaltered log and description of where said Bid Levy Payers’ Monies have been spent, when and in what fashion, including where all monies for that matter have been acquired?

Response:

“The Southport Business Improvement are a limited company by guarantee, they are independent from Sefton Council. The request should be made direct to the BID company.”

11. **Question submitted by Councillor Bliss to the Cabinet Member for Locality Services (Councillor Fairclough)**

“With the rollout of the 20mph speed limit, it calls into question the use of speed bumps across Sefton especially as they have been known to cause damage to vehicles. Also, there is evidence that speed bumps can be the cause of increased air pollution from vehicles as they decelerate as they approach speed bumps. As speed bumps are frequently located near schools, there is a risk that these traffic calming measures are increasing air pollution near those schools to the detriment of local residents and schoolchildren. With the need to provide safe roads approaching schools and the need to reduce air pollution where possible, what is Sefton MBC's policy about speed bumps?”

Response:

1. “Independent research by the TRL (Transport Research Laboratory) concluded that there is no damage to vehicles if drivers traverse speed humps or speed cushions at the correct speed.
2. Sefton’s Policy for introducing traffic calming measures which may or may not include speed humps, is that there should be 7 or more recorded injury accidents in the last 3 year study period before any road is placed on our priority list. These roads are then investigated in more detail to see if traffic calming measures will actually address the accidents that are occurring.

The scheme that gives the greatest savings in casualty reduction relative to scheme cost goes to the top of the priority list and is progressed if funding is available. In recent years such funding has been severely cut back. In Sefton in the last 5 years, no schemes have been introduced with speed cushions, only 20 mph signed only areas have been progressed.

3. Sefton Council monitors air quality throughout the Borough at a range of locations. The monitoring shows that the quality of air across the Borough is within national air quality standards except at a small number of locations next to very busy roads and these areas have been declared as Air Quality Management Areas. In the majority of residential areas where 20 mph zones or traffic calming has been introduced, air quality is generally good and traffic flows are moderate or low. Excessive acceleration and deceleration by poor driving at speed hump locations can cause a small spike in air pollution emissions, however this has only a very small or even negligible effect on air quality which remains well within national air quality standards. Furthermore, speed cushions, rather than full width speed humps are more commonly placed within Sefton's Traffic Calming Schemes. These have shallower slopes to speed humps and require less deceleration, therefore result in less pollution.

The direct benefits of traffic calming in reducing traffic accident casualties far outweigh the possible impacts of very small increases in pollution emissions and, as described in Point 2 above, the Council will usually only introduce speed cushions where there is a clear justification in safety terms."

12. **Question submitted by Councillor Bliss to the Leader of the Council (Councillor Maher)**

"Did any Sefton MBC delegates attend MIPIM 2018 and, if so, at what cost?"

Response:

"No and none."

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

The Southport Theatre and Convention Centre (STCC) reopened in 2008 after an eight million pound plus refurbishment. It is now thought to be the North west's premier conference, Banqueting and entertainment venue all under one roof.

A report to Southport area committee on 6th December 2017 titled "Southport Economy and Development Framework" stated:

"Business tourism continues to play a vital role within Southport's visitor economy. The Southport Theatre and Convention centre (STCC) is regarded as an excellent venue for medium to large scale conferences. In 2016 the venue hosted 19 conferences that generated 20,480 bed nights worth an estimated £9 million to the local economy.

Option work continues as a priority to secure the sustainable future of the Theatre and Convention Centre".

Southport was to be marketed as a conference destination which could increase the footfall into Southport and increasing our local economy for Sefton. 19 Conferences out of 52 weeks is not what could be thought of as a good return for our investment. A busier STCC is not only good for Southport but for the economy of Sefton.

1. Could the Cabinet member inform me of the plans and resources to help promote this excellent venue and to make Southport the conference destination we planned and bringing in much needed revenue to Sefton.”

Response:

“Sefton Tourism team lead conference sales and conference marketing (ATG will independently market the venue Theatre productions), this involves/will involve the following:

- Chase up sale leads generated, currently the database of leads is some 14k+ strong and live leads currently number 8k with ongoing active conversations with 140+ of them.
- Recent advertising campaigns have included Rotary Magazine, The British Medical Journal and TUC Yearbook
- Conference Portfolio is an A4 piece of print (also available in a digital format) which provides an overview of Southport as a conference destination. It includes reasons why the town is attractive to delegates, the types of venues available and how the team can support organisers. It also includes an insert which lists the capacities of all the major venues, highlighting the STCC as the destination’s ‘flagship’ venue.
- Sefton Tourism will also be present at The Meetings Show at London Olympia and the TUC Congress in Manchester. We will have a stand at both events showcasing Sefton as a great destination to bring large scale conferences to the STCC. Partners from The STCC and Ramada Hotel will also be on the stand with us.
- Repeat business is also key for any conference destination; therefore we undertake a number of initiatives to ensure that delegates leave with an excellent lasting impression. On arrival all delegates are given a copy of delegate news which includes articles about the resort and the local area, places to go, places to eat, upcoming events. We also supply all delegates with a Visitor Passport booklet filled with discount vouchers and offers for local restaurants, retail and attractions in the area.
- The Southport Conferences Website is also currently being redesigned and the new site will offer increased functionality and a fresh new image for the team.”

14 **Question submitted by Councillor Jones to the Cabinet Member for Regulatory, Compliance and Corporate Services (Councillor Lappin)**

"A decision by Cabinet Member - Locality Services has been published: Proposed charges - Sands Public House car park, Shore Road, Ainsdale

Decision:

That, in respect of the charges for parking at the Sands Public House, Ainsdale, Cabinet Member - Locality Services approve:-

- i. subject to the agreement of the Cabinet Member - Regulation, Compliance and Corporate Services, an amendment be made to the Traffic Regulation Order which sets parking charges, to include the parking charges as detailed in paragraph 2.1.
- ii. the Manager – Highways Management be authorised to undertake the necessary legal procedures, including those of public consultation and advertising the Council’s intention to implement the Orders;
- iii. in the event that no objections are received during the consultation process referred to in (ii) above, the Head of Regulation and Compliance be authorised to make the Orders and the Manager - Highways Management be authorised to implement the Orders; and
- iv. in the event that objections are received during the consultation process, the matter be referred to the Licensing and Regulatory Committee for consideration.

Reasons for Decision:

The Council has the power to revoke a Traffic Regulation Order (Part IV of Schedule 9 to the Road Traffic Regulation Act 1984) as well as the power to make a new Traffic Regulation Order (Section 1 of that Act). Authorisation to advertise new Traffic Regulation Orders falls under the remit of Cabinet Member Locality Services.

Alternative Options Considered and Rejected:

None"

QUESTIONS:

Regarding the proposal for an introduction of charges at the sands car park in Ainsdale.

1. Will the Council include in its decision making the impact on the local visitor economy and
2. If the implementation is to go ahead will it make the necessary repairs to the car park to avoid any accidents/injures and legal costs to this council.

Response:

1. “As a charge was previously made for this car park and the proposed charges are lower than the previous charge then no impact assessment was made.
2. Repairs will be made to the car park surface before it comes into operation. Decision has been confirmed by Cabinet Member and call in finishes next Monday, 23rd April 2018.”

(Councillor Maher)

My 2018/19 Sefton Council Tax Demand advises me, under 'Information relating to chargeable dwelling' at the bottom left, that my Council Tax has increased by 3.4% compared to last year. (This is the weighted average based upon the information supplied that 90% of the total demand has increased by 3.0%, while 10% has increased by 7.2%.)

Would the Leader confirm that the true increase for the total bill is 6.0% over last year?

Why does the Sefton Council Tax Demand give the impression that the total increase over last year is barely half the true figure?

Response:

"I can confirm that the **total** Council Tax increase for Sefton, Police and Fire for 2018/2019 was 5.98%.

Increases for the three individual bodies are 5.99% for Sefton, 7.20% for the Police and 3.00% for Fire and this is reported correctly.

The Government prescribe how all councils should show any increases on Council Tax Demand Notices. As a result the Council does not have any discretion as to how the information is shown on the Demand Notice.

For **Sefton** in 2018/2019, the Government has allowed all authorities with adult social care responsibilities, the ability to increase Council Tax up to a maximum of 5.99%, without the need to hold a referendum. The total increase consists of:-

- A basic Council Tax increase of 2.99% above the 2017/2018 level for all services, plus;
- A further 3% to contribute to the increasing costs of Adult Social Care.

As such the Demand Notice complies with Government regulations. All Councils with Adult Social Care responsibilities will have shown increases in the same way."