

Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 27 July 2022

Item 6 – QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

No public questions had been received.

Item 13 – QUESTIONS TO THE LEADER OF THE COUNCIL

1. From Councillor Mayes to Councillor Gledhill

Councillor Mayes

Thank you, Mr Mayor. Could the Leader of the Council outline what the Council and other agencies are doing to tackle the scourge of illegally used and ridden motorbikes, mopeds, quadbikes and electric scooters in Tilbury?

Mayor

Leader of the Council, would you please respond to Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you, Councillor Mayes for this question, and thank you for taking the time out to meet me and others to witness this problem first hand. Clearly from my visit on Sunday, this issue really does fall within a couple of categories. Firstly, it's those who are clearly misusing the road by undertaking races, performing wheelies, and general making of noise. Some of them would normally be good, normal, responsible riders. The others are using machines in parks, green spaces, across pavements, pedestrian areas, and others causing a huge problem and indeed a danger to themselves and others. Both these are a danger to residents alike as said and both of them need to be tackled in different ways. Just putting it in perspective, there were nine reports of nuisance vehicles in Calcutta Road, Leicester Road, Civic Square, Dock Road and Feenan Highway in June alone. Also, I've witnessed this first hand over previous months, including riding without a helmet, riding across crowded footways, across parks, when I've either been out with enforcement officers, out with myself, out on my own, or indeed other reasons for being in Tilbury. So, for the past few months Council officers and I have been liaising with the community policing team regarding the issue of these nuisance machines, specifically in Tilbury. Separate meetings have taken place with the issue elsewhere across the borough. A community safety inspector has put together Operation Savage along with the roads policing unit. As Members will appreciate, it's not an option for local police to chase the riders in certain circumstances. I will not say what these certain circumstances are, but I can assure you there will be specialist resources on hand in order to address this at the time. As part of this Essex Police have been working with our CCTV team already and have been able to provide images which are now with officers for identification. I have made clear that we have the ability to publish those images on our website to help the identification of those putting

themselves and others at risk, and we will not shy away from using that facility. The police also attended the recent publicised incident in Tilbury, the rider was identified and are now pursuing a case for careless driving. I would really urge anyone in Tilbury, or anywhere else in the borough who's affected by these irresponsible riders, to report it to the police on 101 or online as soon as they possibly can. Descriptions of the bikes, what the riders are wearing etc. is always helpful, names are even better. Whilst the police may not be able to take action on that specific incident when called in, it may well lead to action in the near future or a cumulative effect where they can take action against multiple offences. I would again remind anyone that the police have really stepped up their game this year, they've issued 40 section 39 notices, and they've seized 4 motorbikes, which is twice the amount of paperwork issued from the whole of last year in these six months, and more motorcycles than last month have been seized. They will continue this, but please bear with us, not only in Tilbury but across the borough. Thank you.

Mayor

Thank you, Leader. Councillor Mayes would you like to pose a supplementary question to the Leader of the Council.

Councillor Mayes

Thank you, Mr Mayor. Thank you for your detailed response, Leader. Just how far are we along with the PSPO that was agreed in this Chamber? It would seem that this would massively help empower the police and make it easier for them to take action.

Mayor

Councillor Gledhill would you please respond to the supplementary question from Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you, Mr Mayor and thank you Councillor Mayes for your question. I recently met with police officers and council officers and our legal team in relation to the Public Space Protection Order. They've come up with some different wordings for, not so much different scenarios, but more different types of evidence put forward. Public Space Protection Orders work on evidence base and evidence of wrongdoing, but not just evidence of wrongdoing that could be dealt with by another criminal law, but something that is a cumulative effect. For instance, we have the Public Space Protection Order in Grays, which I'll probably come onto next, but that's got four points and that's street drinking, public urination, swearing in a public place, and so on, so it's has to be that criteria because those will identify problems. It's the same, so the more residents report in to the police and to the Council, the more we can do to get the right wordings. It was an absolutely fantastic motion and it's been a long time coming. I know Councillor Redsell and I, and a few of the other older sticks, and those that have left and re-joined, I'm

looking specifically at Councillor Pearce there, this has been a problem since first elected. It goes up and down, up and down, up and down, but hopefully this PSPO will be, you know, the end of that problem. Can't forget that it doesn't mean the police will go out and spend all their time dealing with the motorbikes if we the Public Space Protection Order across the borough, it will be a tool in their armoury, it will make it easier for them to do things during and after the event. But again, I am going to get back to, it does need the evidence. 9 is quite a lot at the moment, I'm sure it affected more than 9 people, so rather than residents going to social media to mention that there's a problem, go to the police, go to 101, report it on 101 and get those numbers up. The more numbers, the easier it is for us to apply to a judge to get Public Space Protection Orders.

Mayor

Thank you, Leader. Councillor Mayes would you like to ask a second supplementary.

Councillor Mayes

Yes please Mr Mayor. Thank you, Leader. When can residents of Tilbury expect action on this, and can we expect a region of target hardening, or something more visible? Thank you.

Mayor

Leader would you like to respond to Councillor Mayes.

Councillor Gledhill

Thank you Mr Mayor and thank you Councillor Mayes. I'll be honest with you, I'm not a great fan of target hardening and bunding. Bunding creates obstructions for other people to see round and see over. If it's not done correctly then all it adds is an extra added jump for them to zoom over. It's expensive and invariably, as I know Councillor Carter experienced in Chadwell, things can be put in and they get ripped out that night, and the Council has spent an awful lot of money, and indeed taxpayers' money on trying to solve this. But, as mentioned, we've got Operation Savage coming online very, very shortly. That will make a huge difference. But and I've already mentioned this before, the Council have put a massive – sorry, put a massive investment into the police for quadbike teams. It will be their job to help and in certain circumstances track down the individuals doing this – these dangerous riders and they've given a bad name to all riders, and that's what they will be there for and that's in the short term. Medium term Public Space Protection Order, again I'll reiterate, you've got to report it. If you don't report it then you won't get it. That's going forward. But we also need to start looking at some form of education. A lot of these riders are very young, some of them are below the age of having the ability to have a motorcycle licence, so it does fall not only on them, but on the parents to make clear that riding in a dangerous way, not only might injure you, might kill you, but could quite

easily injure or kill somebody else. Last year someone that I know had their pet dog killed in Chadwell, which was absolutely terrible, 12–13-week-old puppy. We've had a couple of minors already injured who were pedestrians. I've had complaints, we know in Tilbury with Jacob Rees-Mogg MP turning up, that we had people zooming up and down, and older residents come to me physically shaking and scared that they can't walk along the pavements. So we do need to get that education piece out as well and I hope over the coming sort of year or so, we come forward with those plans as part of the normal reporting process. Thank you.

2. Question 2 fell.

Item 13 - QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS TO CABINET MEMBERS, COMMITTEE CHAIRS AND MEMBERS APPOINTED TO REPRESENT THE COUNCIL ON A JOINT COMMITTEE

1. From Councillor Polley to Councillor Jefferies

Councillor Polley

Thank you, Mr Mayor. Can the Portfolio Holder give me an update on when the new resident waste collection services will be introduced? Thank you.

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies could you please respond to Councillor Polley.

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you, Mr Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Polley for your question. It was planned that from September this year we would be able to implement a new system of waste collection, which would include a separate collection for food waste. However, for two reasons it's been decided to suspend implementation for a year. The first reason is that the government is carrying out a review of waste management, and whilst all the findings of this review have not been made public, the following has become apparent. Local authorities will be required to provide separate food waste collections and there will be a new burden fund, which will mean capital costs for new containers and vehicles can be claimed from the government, and the Secretary of State will publish statutory guidance on service standards. If we invest in amending the current service before the guidance is provided, we risk implementing something that may not be compliant with the guidelines. We also need to ensure that the current service level is improved and that residents are happy with the service that they're being provided with at the moment.

Mayor

Thank you, Councillor Jefferies. Councillor Polley do you have a supplementary question?

Councillor Polley

Thank you very much for that response, Councillor Jefferies. My supplementary is: does this mean that the issues faced by residents with non-collection of waste will continue?

Mayor

Councillor Jefferies, could you respond to Councillor Polley please.

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you, Mr Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Polley. Let me first start by saying that I'm really sorry for the poor service that residents have been receiving recently. As a result of the lack of refuse collection, we've instigated a full review of the service by bringing in a waste expert who has already implemented changes, which have seen some improvements. However, this weekend where we had crews working all weekend to try and catch-up on missed bins, is evidence that there is still a lot of work to do. As part of this review, a report has been prepared for the Chief Executive, which is now on her desk and I fully expect to see this full report, warts and all, with a comprehensive plan of how we can deliver a first-class waste service for our residents. One thing that I think Members would be interested to hear is the changing of how we report bins. We have too many rules in place as to what counts as a missed bin, and we are too quick to dismiss a complaint from a resident when complaining about a missed bin, and I'm sure we're all familiar with the line 'case closed' after you've submitted a report of a missed bin. This is going to change, and every bin reported as missed will be counted as a missed bin. So, we'll have accurate reports of how many bins have been collected, and how many bins have been missed.

Mayor

Thank you, Councillor Jefferies. Councillor Polley would you like to pose a second supplementary.

Councillor Polley

I would indeed, thank you Mr Mayor. Thank you so much for that Councillor Jefferies. I'm sure that is news that is well received by every Member that is present in this Chamber tonight, because I think we've all had those resident emails regarding these very frustrating situations that you've alluded to. My final supplementary would be: would you now confirm that the review will be covering all aspects of the service, from top to bottom please.

Mayor

Thank you, Councillor Polley. Councillor Jefferies could you please reply to Councillor Polley.

Councillor Jefferies

Thank you, Mr Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Polley. I can confirm that already there have been changes made in the way that the service is managed, and I do foresee further changes being made. Changes so far have been welcomed by almost everybody, in particular our hardworking bin crews, who after all do a job that most of us would not like to do. Some of the things that we've implemented to make the bin crews work experience a lot better have been small, but have made a big difference. So, just to name a few that have happened already, weekly health and safety surgeries where issues about health and safety can be raised, which previously weren't actually listened to, where crews raise issues about blocked roads. We've all had complaints where bins haven't been collected because of a blocked road. They're now properly investigated, and a solution should be found. We've introduced summer uniforms to help them with the heat, and we've also agreed that there should be a 5am start, which I'm pleased to say that the bin crews asked for that and we were pleased to say that they could do it. Regular health checks, all the vehicles have been assigned a health and safety kit bag, and by the end of September we should have considerably reduced our agency staff. On a slightly lighter note, but very important to the bin crews, during this particularly hot weather we've been offering water, sun cream, and in some cases ice creams to help with the difficult job they've got to do.

2. Question 2 fell.
3. Question 3 fell.
4. Question 4 fell.
5. Question 5 fell.
6. Question 6 fell.
7. From Councillor G Coxshall to Councillor Maney

Councillor G Coxshall

Could the Cabinet Member advise what enforcement has taken place around Somers Heath School in an effort to tackle illegal parking? Thank you.

Mayor

Thank you, Councillor Coxshall. Councillor Maney would you please respond.

Councillor Maney

Thank you, Mr Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Coxshall for your question. I will start by saying Somers Heath is not a school in respect of which the Council gets very many complaints or concerns raised in relation to illegal parking and safety related to that, but in no small part due to the representations that you

and Councillor Polley have made, we have revisited that recently and stepped-up enforcement patrols in the area. Again, that hasn't identified that there is a particular problem of illegal parking or safety, but I can advise that today four penalty charge notices have been issued for illegal parking. We will of course carry on these operations and respond to any safety concerns that we identify, but as I said at the moment it's not one of those schools that raises particular concern, but I can give an assurance that we will continue to monitor the situation there. Thank you, Mr Mayor.

Mayor

Thank you, Councillor Maney. Councillor Coxshall, would you like to pose a supplementary?

Councillor G Coxshall

Yes, thank you Mr Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Maney for your response. Really pleased to see that we've had enforcement patrols stepped-up around the school and they will continue. Just, my supplementary being: would you be able to advise if consideration has been given to deploy a school crossing patrol officer outside the primary school, or perhaps if there are other measures that we could perhaps take should illegal parking instances start to increase. Thank you.

Mayor

Thank you, Councillor Coxshall. Councillor Maney would you like to reply please.

Councillor Maney

Thank you, Mr Mayor. Yes, I would. First of all, it's good to see you here representing your constituents on this very important matter. Yes, the Council has given consideration to deploying a school crossing patrol officer. I've learnt this week that there's actually quite a bizarre mathematical equation contained in government guidance, which Council's use to determine whether the criteria for such officers are met, and crudely speaking it basically involves counting the number of child pedestrians at a given time, counting the number of vehicles at the same time, and multiplying one by the other, and that has been applied numerous times in the case of Somers Heath. It doesn't make the grade for a school crossing patrol officer. I can say that if residents or Ward Councillors who are at meetings want us to revisit that and carry out another assessment, we can do so. In terms of other measures, as I said we will carry on with enforcement operations. That's one of the surest ways to address illegal parking obviously, and safety issues, but something else we are looking at bringing on stream is the acquisition and deployment of a CCTV car. It's at a very early stage at the moment, but I'm hoping it will progress and come to fruition soon, and obviously if we have that we will be able to carry out much more high-profile and rapid enforcement around schools, and as part of that one of the things we'll have to do is revisit all schools in the

borough and make an assessment of road markings and restrictions outside to see whether they, first of all are what comply with the requirements of a CCTV car because there are only certain things they can enforce, but it will give us an opportunity, as I say, to look at all the restrictions, all the safety measures around schools, and to see whether they need updating. So, I can assure you that Somers Heath will be included in that and I'm obviously happy to meet you or Councillor Polley on site anytime to talk to residents, talk to the school to see what we can do to improve safety to the utmost. Thank you, Mr Mayor.

Mayor

Thank you, Councillor Maney. Councillor Coxshall would you like to pose a final supplementary.

Councillor G Coxshall

No. I'm fine thank you Mr Mayor. Thank you, Councillor Maney.

8. Question 8 fell.