

Council 22 November 2017 - Questions submitted by Members

Question No.	Question from:	Question:	Question to:	Service area:
1.	Cllr Cameron Beart	Could the Cabinet Member for Regeneration please provide an update on the long awaited and long overdue Visitor Economy Strategy? It was due to go before cabinet on the 8th November as per the forward plan but appears to have been delayed again?	Cabinet Member for Regeneration	Lyn Newton
<p>Response:</p> <p>Thank you for this very fair question that I know will be echoed by many members who were involved with the tourism consultant's research. Recently Visit England produced a strategy report that set out key issues for the national visitor economy . This has amplified our own thinking. Given that we want to expand our own Visitor driven economy over the next five years, we considered it was right to determine our strategy based on an investment led approach. This will put into context what our priorities and leadership role should be to drive this fourth largest business sector in Swale. The Cabinet report for February will provide details.</p>				
2.	Cllr Mike Whiting	Fixed Odds Betting Terminals, which allow people to gamble up to £100 every 20 seconds, have made the headlines recently and the government is consulting on proposals for changes to the law governing these machines. Is the Cabinet Member for Safer Families and Communities satisfied that his licensing policies in respect of gambling establishments here in Swale provide the right balance between allowing the industry to contribute to the local economy	Cabinet Member for Safer Families and Communities	Della Fackrell

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		while doing all they can to protect consumers and communities from gambling-related harm?		
<p>Response: Swale Borough Council currently has a Gambling Policy (2016-2019) in place. At the previous Committee meeting of the 3rd December 2015 it was agreed that once the revised Guidance from the Gambling Commission was received, a full review of the policy at the earliest opportunity would be carried out.</p> <p>The Policy currently ensures that the Licensing objectives are met by</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> Ensuring gambling is kept free from crime and disorder. Ensuring gambling is conducted in a fair and open way. Protection of children and vulnerable adults. <p>We are satisfied that the Gambling Policy is sufficiently equipped at the moment to tackle the gambling issues that may arise.</p> <p>There are 11 Betting shops currently trading in the Borough. Each betting shop is allowed a maximum of 4 Fixed Odd Betting Terminals (FOBT) therefore there are a maximum of 44 FOBT's in Swale.</p> <p>The borough has seen 2 Betting shops close in the last 2 years. During discussions with Gravesham BC it seems that they have also experienced a decline in betting premises.</p> <p>We will be liaising with Medway Council who have a large number of gambling premises to learn from their best practice approach.</p> <p>The Gambling Commission is currently consulting on Fixed Odds Betting Terminals which closes on 23 January 2018. Any updated guidance from the Gambling Commission regarding Fixed Odds Betting Terminals will be</p>				

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reviewed and consideration given to amending the policy. Any revisions will be presented to the PDR Committee for advice, guidance and approval.				
3.	Cllr Mike Whiting	Parking on pavements and grass verges in some areas is hazardous can be illegal. Inconsiderate and illegal parking can force wheelchair users and those with pushchairs and prams off the pavement and onto busy roads. It can also reduce visibility, making it harder for residents to safely enter or leave their driveways. Does the Cabinet member agree that this needs tackling, and will he agree to review the laws and enforcement options available to him to deal with illegal or inconsiderate parking where it is creating an unacceptable danger to others?	Cabinet Member for Safer Families and Communities	Martyn Cassell
<p>Response: The issues are very complex and responsibility for resolution sits across a number of organisations including Swale Borough Council, Kent County Council and Kent Police. This means that it is not totally based upon Swale Borough Council decision making.</p> <p>There is no one solution to this problem (outside of London) and each option has limitations placed on it by different legislation. There are also unique considerations for each particular location including, for example, enforcement capability, displacement of vehicles onto other streets or the investment needed to ensure parking is both safe and physically possible.</p> <p>It is clear to me that each location needs to be considered on a case by case basis and I consider that the Joint Transportation Board is the current mechanism in place to deal with individual cases and to consider Traffic Regulation Orders.</p>				

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4.	Cllr Roger Truelove	The future economic growth and regeneration of this Borough are closely linked to the progress of education here. What leverage, if any, does this Council have over school age education, especially as so many schools have become Academies within Trusts that have limited accountability to local government?	Cabinet Member for Regeneration	Emma Wiggins
<p>Response:</p> <p>Swale Borough Council's direct influence on compulsory age education is limited, with KCC being the Local Education Authority and Academy Trusts controlling all of the local secondary schools. Whilst the Council does seek to engage with these institutions, to encourage collaboration and promote links between local employment and activity in schools, this has proved difficult. However we are helped by the support given by both our MPs and at times funding leverage from SELEP.</p>				
5.	Cllr Roger Truelove	What progress has been made towards instituting a University Technical College, or any other like College, in this Borough?	Cabinet Member for Regeneration	Emma Wiggins
<p>Response:</p> <p>The Council remains committed to increasing choice and reducing distance to learning for local young people, with a particular emphasis on locally relevant technical skills. During 2015/16 discussions with a potential UTC provider were underway, but the provider was not able to commit to expanding its provision. In parallel, discussions have also been ongoing with two local FE providers. These have advanced against the backdrop of the FE Commissioners Area Review of Kent, which identified a gap in provision at Sittingbourne- the only area in Kent with a gap, Whilst progress is slow, with the FE providers facing their own institutional challenges, agreement has been reached to progress feasibility work scoping demand and potential scale of future local provision.</p>				

