

COUNCIL MEETING – 10 JANUARY 2024

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS PURSUANT TO COUNCIL PROCEDURE RULE 14.3

Q1 Councillor Tandy to the Chair of the Housing and Wellbeing Committee, Councillor Birch

Q1 Anti-Social Behaviour at Littlehampton Wave and Cancellation of Services

On Tuesday 2nd January, Freedom Leisure on their Littlehampton Wave Facebook page posted a lengthy announcement about anti-social behaviour outside the centre during their weekly Friday Night Project sessions, including within it notice of the cancellation of all Friday Night Project sessions going forward. The post claimed that support from the Council's Community Wardens and Sussex Police had not helped the situation, and that they were cancelling sessions going forward. The post also stated that this decision had been taken in consultation with Arun District Council. Less than 24 hours later, the post was deleted without explanation.

Please could the Chair of the Committee inform Council if the contents of the post were accurate, and reflected discussions between Freedom and ADC, and, if this is the case, who made the decision to agree with the suspension of services, who, including councillors, was consulted on this decision, and how members of the Council were kept properly informed of such decisions and actions as it is obligated for under section 1.7 of Part 4 of the Council's Constitution.

A1 Thank you for your question, Councillor Tandy. The Wave's initial social media post on 2 January was unfortunately worded. The Council were not informed of the post until late afternoon on this date, and we requested immediate removal. I note that it was quickly amended to provide a more accurate reflection of the situation.

For clarification, the Council's Community Safety team, which includes both anti-social behaviour caseworkers and community wardens, worked closely with staff at The Wave once they were made aware of ASB interfering with the Friday Night Project. Community Wardens undertook a period of extended working hours to attend weekly sessions during October and November, with local PCSOs also supporting. Any ASB incidents that arose were dealt with by officers during this time, although these were minor.

Feedback was provided to The Wave on operational matters that could help to resolve some of the issues occurring. These were echoed by the security personnel engaged by the Community Safety team to attend the final session prior to Christmas. Freedom Leisure are currently considering such recommendations.

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During a session on Friday, 8 December, a group of youths caused a significant problem at The Wave. Police attended promptly and removed those causing the disturbance. Following this, the ASB team worked hard to quickly identify the individuals by reviewing CCTV and body-worn camera images, liaising with the Neighbourhood Youth Officer and local schools. On obtaining positive IDs, officers visited the homes of these individuals to speak with parents and highlight the behaviour of their children. Proportionate enforcement action has been taken, including bans on attending the leisure centre being issued.

I trust that this summary provides reassurance to members that our Community Safety team, alongside the Police, have acted promptly and effectively to address the issues reported by The Wave.

The Friday Night Project is one of many discretionary Freedom Leisure initiatives not bound by contractual obligation and has been temporarily suspended in the interest of staff and customer welfare. The decision to suspend these sessions was taken by Freedom Leisure whilst they review the recommendations submitted to them.

On review of the original Facebook post, it does not appear to state that the decision was taken in consultation with the Council. However, I would stress that officers remain in contact with The Wave and are keen to support the reinstatement of the Friday Night Project should Freedom Leisure wish to do so.

Supp

Q Thank you for the response. If it is easier, I note on the Housing & Wellbeing Committee's Work Programme that Freedom Leisure are due to attend the next meeting of the Committee to present their annual report and so I am happy to take any further questions that I have to that meeting.

Supp

A As this was a statement rather than a question no further response was provided.

Q2 **Councillor Greenway to the Chair of the Environment Committee, Councillor Wallsgrove**

Q2 Does the Chair of the Environment Committee agree that in light of the recent flooding and rain events, keeping our streets clear of litter and debris is an essential activity undertaken by the District Council which will reduce the risk of flooding?

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A2 Whilst it is not the only factor, the importance of keeping streets clean to reduce flood risk is acknowledged and emphasises the role of the council and their contractors have in delivering effective street cleaning. ADC works closely with WSCC who retain the responsibility for gulley emptying/drain management on the highway.

The Council remains committed to addressing challenges posed by recent rainfall and flooding incidents. The street cleaning schedule is regularly reviewed to adapt to seasonal variations, especially with leaf fall in autumn.

Supp

Q Myself, Councillors Gunner and Cooper are looking into cleansing service challenging it and scrutinising it with the Cleansing Manager. I raised at the Environment Committee on 21 November 2023, the need for a scrutiny report to see what is being done and so we can scrutinise officers to see that the service we are meant to be getting we are getting. My question is simple, does Councillor Wallsgrave agree with that need and can she guarantee or support that it comes to Committee as soon as possible.

Supp

A Thank you for your further question. Yes, I do agree with that. We have had no report yet that has come back to the Committee and so we will have to wait to see the outcome. Obviously, it is for all of us to be prudent in what we are doing for members of the public. Yes, it does need looking at.

Councillor Worne, as Vice-Chair of the Committee made a point of clarification. She stated that the Cleansing Officers were very aware of this and had come out and undertaken a big survey on streets in Yapton because there was this problem and they looked at all of the services in terms of how many times all of the roads, side roads and gullies were cleaned. She confirmed that they were more than willing to meet with Councillors to look at their areas.