

LICENSING COMMITTEE – 23 FEBRUARY 2024

AGENDA ITEM 5 – PUBLIC QUESTION TIME

1. From Mr Rogers to the Chair – Councillor Blanchard-Cooper

FULL DETAIL OF THE QUESTIONS TO BE ASKED IS DETAILED BELOW

Note, the Chair will:

- invite questions from members of the public who have submitted in writing their questions in line with the Council's Constitution.
- confirm that Public Question Time allows Members of the public to ask one question at a time and that a maximum of one minute is allowed for each question;
- state that questions will be invited in the order in which they have been received and that if there is time remaining from the 15 minutes allowed for Public Question Time, questioners will be allowed to ask a supplementary question.

QUESTION ONE

From Mr Rogers to the Chair of the Licensing Committee

Question

The Old Canal Caravan Site, Lidsey

- 1) Has the promised drainage survey at the above Site been commissioned yet?
- 2) If not , why not ?
- 3) If commissioned , what is the timescale for its receipt ?
- 4) Once received , may I see a copy please ?
- 5) Why is the requirement for Site Licence conditions to be displayed on site not being complied with ?
- 6) Why hasn't action been taken to require the Site owner to repair the defective sewage treatment plant at the northern end of the site ?

Response

Mr Rogers, thank you for your question.

- 1) Unfortunately, the drainage survey has not yet been commissioned.
- 2) This was delayed because of a need to focus on other enforcement issues and whilst legal advice was obtained. It has also proven difficult to obtain quotes for this work.

- 3) As this has not yet been commissioned we are unable to provide a timescale for this to be completed, however now that legal advice has been obtained this will be progressed.
- 4) As with other information the council holds, access to any report provided would be subject to the usual information access request process, however officers will advise you once this has been received by the council.
- 5) Enforcement action by way of a Notice was taken to seek compliance with this requirement, but unfortunately this has not been rectified by the licence holder and further enforcement actions are under consideration. Site residents and the public can still access a copy of the site licence from the Public Register maintained by the council at the following address <https://eh.arun.gov.uk/>
- 6) An enforcement notice was issued on the site requiring a survey of the sewage systems and for any rectification works identified to be carried out. Unfortunately, this notice has not been complied with and legal advice has been sought on potential further actions, and it is not appropriate at this time to provide further details. It should be noted that the powers available to the Council including prosecution and undertaking works are discretionary and not mandatory, therefore, the Council must balance the resources it has against other matters within the District to ensure that that all matters are dealt with proportionately and in line with policy.

Supplementary Question

Was it sensible for Arun District Council's Environmental Health Department to employ staff to come down from the midlands at heaven knows at what expense to carry out caravan site inspections. I have asked for details of that, and I have had a data protection excuse advising that I cannot be given the information. I think it is highly undesirable and cannot be cost effective.

Response

The Council employed agency staff to support delivery of the caravan site licensing function to prevent a backlog in the annual inspection programme and caravan site complaint investigations, owing to the volume of enforcement work being undertaken by permanent staff. This work is essential to ensure that caravans sites are complying with their licence conditions and residents' health and safety is protected. Due to the specialist nature of this work, unfortunately we were not able to engage agency staff living locally, however the rate paid by the council did not include travel time or mileage to reach the Arun district, and therefore resulted in no additional costs to the council in comparison to employing agency staff situated locally.