

Members' questions for witness interview session on
Tuesday 21 October E&E Select Committee

| Member leading questioning: | Subject area of interest: | Officer/Witness to direct question to: | Possible question(s): |
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| Cllr Phil Bibby | Ownership of land tenure | Lee Myers & Paul Seaby | Can resources be pooled between SBC HRA and SBC non HRA land to have a one Council approach to offer a uniform approach to tree and shrub maintenance across the town? |
| Cllr Pam Stuart | Shrub Beds Residents who are unable to carry out gardening | Paul Seaby | Discuss the merits of grassing over poorly maintained sparsely populated shrub beds – Are there areas of SBC non-HRA shrub beds that lend themselves to this solution? Is this a practical solution? What about losing the natural barrier to boundaries? Loss of visual amenity? What are the implications of doing this? As well as directing residents to a list of trustworthy and affordable Gardeners, are there any other mechanisms to help elderly or disabled to help maintain their gardens? Age UK? Volunteers? |
| Cllr Loraine Bell | Parks | Paul Seaby | Are the current staffing levels sufficient to maintain the parks to the current standard? i.e. is it sustainable? Regarding the safety of parks especially play areas re broken glass etc what provisions are there for reporting and monitoring? |
| Cllr Jim Brown | Trees and Hedges - most appropriate species | Cristian Pinta | Current Tree numbers are 29,000. If the Council continues to fell trees at the current rate (100 – 200) and replace 20-30 per year it will have a problem in the long term (in 10 years down circa 1800 trees) What is the long term plan to replace tree stocks? Which species should be used (most resilient to climate change and most appropriate)? In what context and locations would the use of defensive shrubs such as the Berberis group be used? |
| Cllr Doug Bainbridge | Volunteering Biodiversity | Julia Hill Lee Myers | How can the excellent work that the volunteers do be maintained? Is it sustainable to have more volunteers in future years? Are we publicising enough the great work that our volunteers are doing? What about encouraging more young people to volunteer? Biodiversity – what work are the Council doing to access funding for special biodiversity projects from EU and DEFRA funds? |
| Cllr Jackie Hollywell | Equalities & Diversity | Lee Myers | What efforts are made to provide sensory experience for blind and partially sighted people in our parks and open spaces? Tree roots in pavements and paths can cause access issues for mobility scooters, buggies and prams. What can be done to minimise this issue? Are our open spaces accessible to all? Lighting on paths and in parks is important to users feeling safe especially in the winter months, the lights are often out in Fairlands Valley Park, what can be done to get a quick repair? |
| Lloyd Briscoe | Licences to | Paul Seaby | Notwithstanding the complications of entering into |

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| | Occupy | | licences to cultivate, could more of these be entered into? Are the public aware that they can enter into these agreements, would better publicity help? Are there any barriers that could be removed to make these more attractive to residents? Advertise via Chronicle? |
| Unallocated | Housing | Audley Philips | Are there any common problems raised by tenants regarding tree, hedge and shrub beds? Are there any programmes to encourage tenants to look after their areas, tidy up, take part in in-bloom etc? What services do tenants get for their service charge? |
| Cllr Jackie Hollywell or another Member | Critical Friend | 'Critical Friend' Oliver Waring, Tree Officer at Welwyn Hatfield Borough Council | Given the current staffing ratios of SBC and the reduction in staff due to the Savings Options of the past few years how does this equate to your authority? Is there anything that SBC Environmental Services are doing that you would look to replicate? Is there anything you are doing that SBC could replicate to improve our service? |
| Cllr Jackie Hollywell | Portfolio Holder – Whole review challenges | Cllr John Gardner Executive Portfolio Holder for Environment & Regeneration | The work being done with volunteers is excellent is there any other measures that could support and encourage more volunteering? More publicity? Have the cuts to services affected the appearance of the town? |

Members who have been unallocated a specific area so far – Elaine Connolly, Chris Saunders and Graham Snell