



RESPONSE FROM THE LEADER TO QUESTIONS FROM THE PUBLIC

**to
COUNCIL
5 APRIL 2017**

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. QUESTIONS OF WHICH NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN

- 1.1 In accordance with the Council's public speaking protocol the following questions were received from members of the public.

2. QUESTIONS 1 - 5

The following questions (1 – 5) were received from Ms Judy Lea of Spital Road, Maldon on Monday 3 April 2017.

“In the light of the recent Central Planning Committee decision to approve number plate recognition cameras and notice in support of Tesco's intention to limit public parking on their site in Maldon, can the Council please confirm:

1. that the Council recognises that the unlimited public use, at no apparent or proven detriment to Tescos, has for many years brought people to Maldon and increased footfall on the High Street?
2. that the Council will remain steadfast in fully protecting the park and ride and free parking on the site, in full accordance with the relevant S106 agreements?
3. what potential for public involvement there will be in any attempt by Tesco's to make legal amendments to the S106 agreements?
4. that with the current and intended expansion of Maldon town, there is an urgent need for a holistic public car parking and public transport strategy for the central area to be formally and specifically prepared in conjunction with business and community interests and the Town council?
5. that if approved within the Central Area Plan currently under discussion, the Council will make financial provision in the next budget round in support of the proposal for an additional park and ride facility at or near the recycling depot?”

3. QUESTIONS 6 - 9

The following questions (1 - 9) was received from Geoffrey Vale of 32 Victoria Road, Maldon (on behalf of the Maldon Refugee Response Group) for the Community on Monday 3 April 2017.

“Subject: Agenda Item 9 Update on the Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme.

Local Community Support

6. One family is a drop in the ocean of the millions displaced by war in the Middle East. We can't do everything, but the logic (not to mention national honour) is for us to at least do what we can. It may be a mere token, but tokens count. An enormous amount of work has gone into putting us on track to be in a position to rescue and provide a home for one Syrian family under the government's Vulnerable Persons Resettlement Programme. The community here in Maldon, including the District's churches, have taken the lead in seeing that what can be done, is done. **Will you add your leadership to that?**
7. The Maldon Response Group have pledged to raise the finances MDC cannot manage and we are absolutely confident that can be done. We had a week's notice of your Full Council meeting to consider approval of a formal offer of accommodation to the Home Office, and within three days (at the time of preparing these questions) more than £2,000 has already been received as token to ongoing larger support, forthcoming if reception of a family is assured. The offer of a home and funding and service provision can at present be extended beyond 2years to 5years if necessary. As with the Vietnamese boat family that your Council accepted some years ago, such families become a real asset to this country in a surprisingly short time.

Whilst pursuing the aim outlined in your chief executive's report of "seeking to mitigate risk (the level of cost) through the matching of families that are less likely to be affected by any housing benefit restrictions", **will you accept that, whatever the shortfall, it can be met by public subscription?**

Home Office via ECC Service Provider

8. **Are you aware that the Home Office fund the cost, in our case via Essex County, of a Service Provider to ensure competent organization of the practical arrangements** for meeting the family off the chartered flight, their resettlement and ongoing support? Colchester Borough Council voted unanimously, across the political spectrum, to receive 11 families within Colchester LA area and the first family arrived in 2015; the whole process there has been handled competently and, in terms of community relations, with great success.
9. There now appears to be no obstacle and no good reason for refusing to agree to a family being rescued from their plight and resettled in Maldon. We are aware that the Home Office will not proceed without agreement of Maldon District Councillors. **Will you please signal your agreement to the Home office so that matters can proceed and we the community can act?**

4. RESPONSE TO QUESTIONS 1 - 9

From the Leader of the Council:

Question 1:

The Council does not have any specific data to support this, but it is recognised that that visitors make use of the car park whilst they walk to local attractions such as local play sites and potentially the High Street.

Question 2:

The original Section 106 (S106) Legal Agreement and its subsequent modifications required that the car park for the retail store provided fifty (50) public spaces free of charge for up to 4 hours use to enable customers to visit the high street and other places by way of the park and ride facility from the site. Charging for the remainder of the car park was under the jurisdiction of the applicant (Tesco). The fact that Tesco has chosen to not enforce parking restrictions of any kind has led to the public perception that no parking restrictions were in place or enforceable and that unlimited public use is available throughout the day.

The S106 legal agreement and its modifications would be required to be amended should the retail store wish to apply a blanket charge for parking after a three (3) hour period. In relation to the recent applications, the applicant and their agent have been fully apprised of the situation and supplied with all copies of the relevant Decision Notices and the associated S106 documents. They have also been advised that whilst permission has been granted for the siting of the Automatic Number Plate Recognition (ANPR) cameras and one associated advertisement sign board, they cannot be utilised in association with parking charges until such time as the existing legal agreement is either amended or complied with.

Question 3:

An application for a formal modification of the section 106 agreement would need to be reported to committee for formal determination. Public speaking rules would apply.

Question 4:

The draft Maldon and Heybridge Central Area Masterplan sets out the approach to transport and car parking management and considers the traffic and car parking management measures as a key objective to support the success of the Central Area. The movement and connections framework specifically focusses on improvements to parking management through a parking strategy, utilising the existing park and ride (Tesco bus) and park and ride connections via parking in Promenade Park. Projects that will be delivered as part of the Central Area Master Plan's Action Plan work alongside existing public transport arrangements and include new pedestrian and cycle routes to better access the town centre and public realm and highway improvements to access car parking. Phasing of the delivery plan will be considered on completion of the public consultation and final endorsement of the plan.

Question 5:

This will be a linked to the projects mentioned above in 4 to be delivered as part of the Central Area Master Plan Action Plan. Phasing of the delivery plan will be considered on completion of the public consultation and final endorsement of the plan.

Question 6:

The District Council has been proactive in working with the Church and voluntary sector representatives to help meet this need and will continue to do so. The matter to be debated tonight is whether the Council is prepared to make a formal conditional offer to the Home Office that it is prepared to provide a home for a family. This will be a trigger for Home Office to match a family to our area and will furnish the Council with information on the financial cost to be borne in the event the rental costs are not fully covered by housing benefit.

Question 7:

The Council at its meeting on 16 February 2017 pledged a non-financial interest and support for the Syrian Vulnerable Persons and wider Vulnerable Children's Resettlement Schemes as well as the National Asylum Dispersal Scheme and it agreed to takes a leadership role and continue to work with churches and other interested parties to investigate other sources of funding and the potential for a crowd funding initiative

Question 8:

Yes we are aware of this.

Question 9:

This question will be the subject of debate tonight.