

COUNCIL ASSEMBLY

(ORDINARY MEETING)

12 JULY 2017

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

1. QUESTION FROM SAM BAILEY TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE PUBLIC REALM, COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD

Has the council considered the negative impact of the restrictions suggested in the recent dog consultation on the vast majority of well-behaved dogs and responsible owners, including the elderly and more vulnerable community members who rely on these spaces, not only to walk their dogs, but for vital social interaction?

RESPONSE

In March 2017 the Cabinet agreed for Southwark to go out to public consultation for the introduction of Public Space Protection Orders (PSPOs) to tackle dog related anti-social behaviour.

The consultation is now closed and has had 2081 responses, 47.76% are from dog owners and walkers. We have also had written responses from the Dogs Trust and the Kennel Club.

We are currently in the process of evaluating the consultation results and using this to discuss recommendations (if any) for introducing dog related PSPOs in the borough. We will of course consider all representations fully during this process.

Any recommendations will give due regard to the Equalities Act, Southwark's Animal Welfare Charter and the duty placed on the local authority under the Animal Welfare Act.

Dog owners are part of our diverse community that use and enjoy our public spaces. Southwark is working to ensure that our public spaces can be enjoyed by everyone and that irresponsible behaviour can be tackled effectively.

2. QUESTION FROM AMIR EDEN TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE PUBLIC REALM, COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD

Dozens of residents who live in Bankside, by the Jubilee Walkway, have for many years been negatively impacted by unending amplified music, which regularly continues past midnight. What measures are available to the council including measures it can employ with other relevant authorities, to address the debilitating effect of busking?

RESPONSE

Buskers are difficult to regulate. Legal processes require that the individuals suspected of committing a crime are identified by their name and address. Council officers have responsibility for investigating complaints about buskers but have no powers of arrest and cannot require that an individual disclose their name and address. In order to do this the Police must be present. Buskers are also a popular attraction within larger cities. They are often supported by passers by as officers

attempt to regulate busking activity which can create a difficult environment and often officers are filmed whilst conducting this aspect of their work.

The council's noise and nuisance team, Southwark anti-social behaviour unit, wardens, other street enforcement teams and the police work closely together at an operational level to reduce the disturbance and impact of buskers. This has been greatly improved through the introduction of the multi-disciplinary joint enforcement teams during 2016.

At an operational level, the council shares information with other partner organisations through monthly meetings and tasks teams on future operations based on current intelligence. As part of this the activity of buskers is tracked and teams asked to use their resources to tackle those causing nuisance and difficulties.

Where buskers are causing disturbance late at night then residents should contact Southwark's noise and nuisance team to make a complaint at the time they are being disturbed, via the call centre on 0207 525 5777. This will allow officers to give formal warnings and, if necessary, prosecute severe or repeat offenders.

At other times of the day wardens, highway enforcement officers and anti social behaviour officers are available to tackle other aspects of nuisance and anti social behaviour that may be caused by buskers. Officers will engage with the busker and ask them to desist with the nuisance/anti-social behaviour. If the busker fails to comply with the request then the busker is asked to move on.

If buskers fail to comply with officers' requests and a history of non compliance is established, then officers will consider remedies under the Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 which may include issuing community protection notices.

Officers regularly liaise with colleagues across London and other cities to determine if other councils' approaches to this matter are proving more successful, and therefore the issue of buskers is kept under constant review.

3. QUESTION FROM REBECCA COKER-ADELEKE TO THE CABINET MEMBER FOR ENVIRONMENT AND THE PUBLIC REALM, COUNCILLOR IAN WINGFIELD

Research shows that blanket restrictions to dogs on leads is the top reason dog-owners stop using spaces. Have councillors considered that imposing this on an active community, who utilise spaces 365 days a year, the consequences are that spaces become less populated, more unsafe and prone to opportunities for criminality?

RESPONSE

In addition to my answer to question 1, I can assure the questioner that the points she raises in this question will be considered as part of the consultation process.