

Borough Councillor Report. October 2022

Unfortunately Cllr Clare Softley has resigned as Lead Member for the Lib Dem Councillor group and from The Tewkesbury Branch of the Lib Dems. She remains a Borough Councillor for St.John's ward in an unaligned capacity. Cllr Mary Jordan has been elected to replace her.

Tewkesbury Borough Council has approved a new Public Protection Order which to cover all public spaces in the Borough. It makes it a requirement, in law, for dog owners to pick up their dog's poo, carry spare poo bags and to not allow their dogs into children's play areas. Notices will be put up informing the public of this. We did question how this was going to be policed and the response was that officers would be sent to 'hot spots' but we felt this was asking a lot from an already over-stretched department. There was a general consensus of opinion on this and we suggested EH look into additional ways of policing. It was agreed to take this back to Pete Tonge , Operations Manager, to discuss a way forward. This is definitely a positive step in the right direction and one we have been pushing for for some time. We have also asked for the complaints procedure to be made clear to enable residents to easily report areas of concern.

There has been a lot of discussion amongst senior officers at TBC about staffing levels. Both staff and members are concerned about the exodus of experienced staff and something our group brought to Full Council 2 years ago. TBC is finding it increasingly difficult to compete in the labour market especially at higher levels. Many staff are leaving for a better salary combined with the fact that generally there is a shortage of professional staff especially in Planning The issue is being looked in to and decisions will be made shortly.

There is also a pending national pay award for lower level staff . This is being discussed with the unions at the moment and results of negotiations are expected shortly. This affects all authorities and is bound to have serious implications for budgets. We have asked questions at Council about the possible effects on the budget and services but have been unable to get a definitive statement at this point.

BC members have also been pushing for progress on S106 payments and an update on the new system TBC are installing to identify trigger points etc for payment. This has been a very long process but we now have a date to view the system. What we would prefer is a date for its launch so we can identify outstanding/upcoming payments. We are all aware that Pirton Fields payments for John Daniels/Chosen Hill are overdue but it could be counter-productive to chase this as CPC aren't at a point to put in a bid for the monies available.

Cllr Mary Jordan
Cllr Richard Smith
Cllr Paul Smith
Cllr Scott Thomson