

Southend-on-Sea Borough Council



From Councillor: Anna Waite
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Southend-on-Sea, SS2 6ER
Telephone: 07825 680430

Thursday 16th April 2009

OPEN LETTER TO MR QURESHI OF PARK LIFE

Dear Mr Qureshi,

It was brought to my attention last week that Parklife recently issued a press release which states-

Mr Qureshi issued a direct challenge to the councillor responsible for transport and planning, stating, 'Cllr Anna Waite can resolve the situation here and now by publicly announcing that the road widening is no more. Road building should have no place as part of a sane and connected planning response to the unfolding climate catastrophe that we are beginning to witness.'

I am therefore responding to this statement.

In respect of your first request for an announcement re the widening of Priory Crescent, I can, and have previously said, that the proposal to widen Priory Crescent - which has never included taking land from Priory Park - is not going ahead. To be absolutely clear on this, the earlier scheme has been split into two - Prittlebrook Entrance and Cuckoo Corner. We are proceeding with Cuckoo Corner.

When, and if, the Prittlebrook Business Park goes ahead, it may be preferable to consolidate its current three entrances into a modified single junction.

Whilst we now have funding in place to improve traffic flows at Cuckoo Corner, as yet there are no firm proposals. However, I am hopeful that a roundabout can be retained and therefore there may be an extra west travelling slip lane at the roundabout, and/or a widened approach adjacent to the roundabout. This will not encroach into the park.

I have pledged to turn the burial site into a commemorative garden for the Saxon King and can assure you that the outstanding archaeological works will happen as soon as possible once the site is vacated, so as to enable the landscaping to occur.

In respect of the second request re Road Building, I clearly cannot promise that no new roads will ever be built in Southend. For example, if the Prittlebrook Business Park were to come forward, there would be a need for roads within the site. That said, road building is only one element of our strategy to improve access and congestion. We have successfully bid for SERT funding and are currently consulting on this. Likewise we have been awarded Cycling Town Status and considerable funding to roll out cycling facilities. In the forthcoming year I am looking to improve yet more footpaths and safety initiatives to aid walking. We are hoping to improve train and bus use through a number of schemes. We are also in the very early stages of looking at alternatively-fuelled vehicles, and incentives for employees to use

alternatives to their cars. We are also looking carefully at planning applications and briefs to ensure that they are as sustainable as possible and our new Design and Townscape Guide has raised the build levels.

Given this considerable and genuine commitment to solving our congestion by a holistic and as sustainable an approach as possible, even if a new road was deemed essential, it would accommodate public transport, cycling, walking and where appropriate, SERT.

I trust this gives you the assurances you seek and that you will now vacate the site of the Saxon King Burial Chamber. Should you have any queries I suggest that you contact me to arrange a meeting and I will be happy to meet with you.

Yours Sincerely

Cllr A Waite, Executive Cllr for Planning and Transport, Southend-on-Sea Borough Council