

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Council Meeting – 21st July 2016

Question 1 from Mr Webb to the Executive Councillor for Transport, Waste and Cleansing

Question

Will Southend Council change the speed limit of 40mph to 30mph on the southbound carriageway between Civic Centre and Southend Victoria as suggested by the Green party John Fuller?

Answer

Local speed limits are determined by traffic authorities having regard to guidance issued by the Department for Transport. Speed limits should be consistent, self-explanatory and seek to reinforce people's assessment of what is a safe speed to travel. Speed limits should also encourage self-compliance and be seen by drivers as the maximum rather than a target speed.

The section of Victoria Avenue outside the Civic Centre is dual carriageway part of A127 subject to 40mph speed limit which consistently applies along this road. The layout and design of this section of the road is consistent with what drivers would normally expect for a road with a maximum speed limit of 40mph. A reduction in speed limit from 40mph to 30mph along the section of the road will lead to inconsistency, confusion and be counterproductive as the drivers will continue to drive at the speed that will be seen appropriate to them by very nature of the road. This may lead to more driver errors such as driving too close etc which could lead to more accidents and casualties as drivers and riders travelling at inappropriate speeds are more likely to be involved in such situations. It is therefore not appropriate to reduce the speed limit in Victoria Avenue.

Question 2 from Mr Webb to the Executive Councillor for Transport, Waste and Cleansing

Question

What were the factors that caused the back log of miss collection of black bags across Southend during May Bank Holiday, How do you think this could have been avoided? Have the level of complaints and miss collections reduced since then?

Answer

The Council and its Waste Contractor apologises to residents for the disruption to their waste collection service and I am pleased to say now that collection services seem to be back on track.

At a recent briefing with the Members of the Council Veolia accepted that the disruption was caused by a combination of factors which with the benefit of hindsight could have been planned better.

Introducing the new collection service in a Bank Holiday period caused confusion and it would have been better to have delivered all new blue collection boxes before commencing with revised collection dates. In addition to this the new Waste Transfer Station was only operational from 30th June which meant that prior to this all tipping and bulking took place at a facility outside the borough which led to delays in refuse vehicles getting back to the town.

I am pleased to say that the level of complaints has now reduced significantly.

Question from Mr Fieldhouse to the Executive Councillor for Housing, Planning and Public Protection Services

The new administration has announced that it is to scrap the charge levied on cafes, restaurants, pubs and the like, to place tables and chairs on public highways.

Can the relevant portfolio holder tell me how many establishments will directly benefit from this, how many of those are independent local traders and the total figure of income lost to the public purse due to the scraping of this charge? I would also like to know how this loss of income will be absorbed into the Council's budget. i.e. where cuts will be made or alternative revenue generated and also what is the cost to the Council of administering and regulating street dining, assuming that it will still have to undertake these measures to ensure the public's safety and also guard against any negative impact on our highways?

Answer

With the introduction of the change all premises that have tables and chairs would benefit financially not having to pay a fee for the licence. There are 55 premises that are licenced for a table and chair. We do not specifically ask the applicant if they are an independent trader or tied to a

multiple. However a cursory review of that list shows that around 50% are in our opinion considered 'independents'.

Income from Tables and Chairs licensing generated £22870 last year. The loss of income will be absorbed by the Council but the requirement to have a licence for table and chairs on the highway will continue to ensure public safety.