

# Policy & Resources Scrutiny Committee – 1<sup>st</sup> December 2016

## Public Questions

### Questions from Mr Webb to the Portfolio Holder for Corporate & Community Support Services: Cllr Andrew Moring

#### Question 1

What percentage of emails and calls are being dealt with customers within the specified policy of emails in 5 working days?

#### Answer

When an email is received into the Council's main email address (council@southend.gov.uk) an automated response is sent to acknowledge the email has been received.

There are different ways in which an email may be answered –

- If the email can be answered by a customer service officer you will receive a response with the answer to the enquiry within 5 working days
- If the email cannot be answered by the customer service centre and it is sent to another department for resolution the customer will be copied in so they are aware another department needs to deal with the enquiry
- If the email is making a report or request for a service, a service request is made to the specific department and you will receive an email with a reference number and the time it will take to investigate or resolve; you will receive a response in 5 working days

100% of e-mails handled by the Customer Service Centre are dealt with in 5 working days.

#### Question 2

How many people paid their council tax and how many have not paid their council tax compared to 2015 - 2016 to 2016 - 2017?

Hopefully this should fall within part I because it is dealing with data.”

#### Answer

The council does not collect council tax payment details by number of accounts but based upon the percentage collected. For 2015/16 the council collected in year 97.2% of council tax due against a target of 97%. For 2016/17 our collection performance to the end of November is 69.9% against a target of 69.7% and we are therefore in a position to achieve our year-end target of 97.2%.

However, this is not the end of the story, any unpaid Council Tax which is still due at the end of the year becomes debt which we pursue over many years – our debt collection rate is amongst the highest of local authorities with almost 100% of the council tax due being paid. It is clear that our Council tax collection rate is extremely high as is the number of people that actually pay what they are assessed to owe.