

Public Questions for Cabinet 30 June 2020

Question from Nigel Shearing

Given the Coronavirus restrictions and impacts on the town centre's economy, can the committee give an assurance to a local action group, RESPECT WEYMOUTH, looking after the interests of residents living behind the North Harbourside and up, that emerging support for invigorating licensing and hospitality will be lawful, balanced and respectful without adverse impacts on people's right to enjoyment of their private space and home. Particularly given this is a Cumulative Impact Area. There are serious concerns that the balance is not going to be achieved. Licensees are attempting to permanently introduce things on the back of the restriction for the worse. And residents have been suffering considerable impacts for too long already.

Question from Penny Quilter, Fiona Marlow and Anne Cucinella (Weymouth)

On 23rd May 2020, Secretary of State for Transport Grant Shapps, made a statement via foreword to the Traffic Management Act 2004: network management in response to COVID-19. "The coronavirus (COVID-19) crisis has had a terrible impact on the lives and health of many UK citizens, as well as severe economic consequences. But it has also resulted in cleaner air and quieter streets, transforming the environment in many of our towns and cities"

"Active travel is affordable, delivers significant health benefits, has been shown to improve wellbeing, mitigates congestion, improves air quality and has no carbon emissions at the point of use. Towns and cities based around active travel will have happier and healthier citizens as well as lasting local economic benefits."

"The government therefore expects local authorities to make significant changes to their road layouts to give more space to cyclists and pedestrians. Such changes will help embed altered behaviours and demonstrate the positive effects of active travel."

On 4th June 2020 Dorset Council announced that they had been awarded £577k of the £225m emergency active travel fund. With £115k for the short-term immediate measures and £462k for medium-term or permanent measures.

Question

Given the urgent need to change travel habits before the restart takes full effect, the Government has called for measures to be taken as swiftly as possible, and in any event within weeks. That was already over 5 weeks ago (as at 30th June) since when the restart has commenced, and levels of road traffic have rapidly

risen. Dorset Council has called for public suggestions, but set an end date for that consultation of 31st July by which time it will be 10 weeks since the Government called for swift action. Given that the urgent measures called for are not new but rather interventions that are a standard part of the traffic management toolkit, **what measures have DC already put in place in response to the Government's call for action, and by when do they anticipate having spent the money made available by the Government ?**

References

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/reallocating-road-space-in-response-to-covid-19-statutory-guidance-for-local-authorities/traffic-management-act-2004-network-management-in-response-to-covid-19>

<https://news.dorsetcouncil.gov.uk/2020/06/04/pop-up-walking-and-cycling-routes-coming-to-dorset/>

Question from John Calvert

As an interested resident of the Dorset Council Area I waited until the Agenda for the Cabinet meeting of June 30th appeared on mod.gov on Tuesday 23rd June then looked for details. There were no papers on Tuesday 23rd June but they appeared on mod.gov on Wednesday 24th June i.e. today. I was astonished to see that questions had to be submitted by 8.30 on Thursday 25th June.

Can the leader of the Council explain how constructive questions can be raised by the public with less than 24 hours to scan a document with over 250 pages? Surely the process can be better planned to give members of the public more time to read at least those areas which interest them.

Question from Averil Simmons

Is it possible to fine offenders at least for the cost of the call outs where firefighters and police are called out to extinguish barbecues and camp fires?

If people are from out of the area then can their details be verified through their vehicle number plates?

Statement from Annabale Gardner

I am in favour of the Prohibition of Disposable BBQs, but there needs to be some serious fines – to deter people from using them in public spaces, especially high fire risk areas!

Not only do carelessly discarded disposable barbecues cause fires, callously-displaced ones (e.g buried under the sand) cause horrific injuries – usually sustained by a child (see attached photo).

I am also in favour of asking all retailers to become responsible – withdraw sales of disposable barbecues. This approach has been started through the Nationwide campaign – Leave the BBQ at home. The aim of this campaign is to encourage and persuade retailers, local and national, to voluntarily remove these items from sale.

Whilst I appreciate that this approach may be drawn out over a long period – e.g the supermarkets putting profit the environment – we need to persevere with putting pressure on retailers until these disposable barbecues are withdrawn from sale.

In the meantime, another option could be for the retailers to increase the price of disposable barbecues with a significant percentage going towards the Fire and Rescue Service and the landowner's cost for restoration.

Regarding the link about the disposable bbqs not being 'worth sh*t' , here is a more in-depth and probably more reliable: <https://campingandcamping.com/disposable-barbecues-think-again/>