

Cabinet 5 September 2023

Public Questions

Question from Linda Stevenson

Evidence of people living or visiting Dorset Area who have seen information displayed in public spaces which this consultation relates too, and where I can view it, not just in public libraries, but public notice boards.

What actions did she take after the announcement in June 2023 apart from press statements which appeared in Dorset Echo, online or on social media.

Cllr Beddow appears to have no understanding of assistance for children, or families with assistance dogs who want to enjoy public spaces together.

No understand of the Equality Act 2010 which was sent to all councils in 2011

No understandings of people with protected characteristics who may have a hidden disability.

Makes no reference of the different types of assistance dogs who are officially trained to work with people with a wide range of disabilities.

Cllr Beddow shared information regarding health risks to the public, she failed to quote the NHS who see the risk from dogs as low, also failing to recognise Cats, both feral and domesticated, Foxes and Badger are also a source of infection, public spaces are open to all types of animals particularly rats who spread disease and are found in our town and countryside due to fast food litter, wildlife live in close proximity to humans.

Today's dog owners are only too aware of the need to seek regular treatments for their dogs from their vets, not just for public health but for the health of their family and friends, the children who live or visit their home.

Since 7th August 2023 I have been trying to reach Janet Moore and Jane Williams of the dog Warden Department, environmental health services who are involved in the creation of the Public Space Protection Order.

I've asked Cllr David Grey, Cllr Peter Barrow and the Democratic Services to help in gaining a response from the department responsible, to date I still haven't received a reply. The consultation closes on 24th August 2023 which gives little time for the public who are still unaware to take part

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Culture and Communities

Thank you for your question, Ms Stevenson

The Dog Related Public Spaces Protection Order public consultation ran for just over 10 weeks, closing on the 25th August 2023. There were 4221 number of responses.

The Dog Related Public Spaces Protection Order Public Consultation was promoted in accordance with our usual practice. This included

- A press release issued on 19 June 2023 to local media outlets (coverage in Dorset Echo, Lyme Online, Bridport News, and Bournemouth Echo)
- An article in Dorset Council News e-newsletter (sent to 27,115 recipients)
- An article in Dorset Council Town and Parish Council e-newsletter (sent to all Town and Parish councils in Dorset). Posters were also made available if the Town and Parishes wanted to display them in relevant locations.
- An article in Members Newsletter (sent to all Dorset Council members)
- 14 social media posts since 19 June (4 Facebook, 5 Twitter, 4 Instagram) – with a reach of 20,706 people.
- Briefing notes for Library Staff together with the posters to be displayed.

There has also been coverage on both regional and national TV and radio.

In addition, direct messages were sent to all Town and Parish Councils; other landowners such as the National Trust and Natural England, animal organisations such as the Kennel Club, Wildlife Trust, RSPCA, a local rescue centre, Dogs Trust and Dorset Dogs; Dorset Police and the Dorset Police and Crime Commissioner and organisations associated with Equality, Diversity and inclusion - Dorset Blind, MS Society, Dorset Stroke Organisation, Diverse Abilities, Access Dorset.

Direct messages were also sent to 117 residents who had either requested prior notification or with whom we had been in contact through the last consultation.

The Council has therefore used many avenues to promote the consultation. In doing so, it has tried to ensure that the reach was such so as to minimise the risk of bias for any particular outcome.

Assistance dogs are currently exempt from a number of requirements of the Order. Further information on this will be included in the promotional material for the new Order. The Council are working with Dorset Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Panel to agree the definition for an assistance dog which will be used in the wording of the new Order.

Question from Cllr K Tippins

The former Tourist Information Centre at 8 Bell Street in Shaftesbury has been empty since Feb 2023 and this building is owned by Dorset Council. Any building that is owned by the Local Authority in Shaftesbury, is of interest to the residents of this town, and as a Town Councillor, I am frequently asked about progress regarding this particular building. Currently, as a Councillor there has been no published data or information from Dorset Council sent to Town Council elected members regarding this buildings. I understand that the lease has now been terminated with the dissolved Blackmore Vale Tourism and Development Company Ltd and the possession of the premises has reverted back to Dorset Council. In paragraph 21.2 of the Cabinet Papers in Nov 2020, it states that 'closer collaboration with Town and Parish Councils to share space and explore opportunities will be beneficial in driving down costs'...At Shaftesbury, the Town Council is the Corporate Body of 12 Councillors and the elected members have not been communicated with regards to the future of this space, but there has been a Dorset Council arranged meeting on

30th Aug 2023 which seemingly has bypassed the corporate body of elected members. Some Cllrs, myself included, have been specifically requested by residents to lobby Dorset Council, to ensure that a 'spin off' Tourist function will not be leased this building and Dorset Council are aware of this request. I am sure that there are other Town Council elected members are aware of strong feelings by residents about lobbying Dorset Council regarding occupancy of 8 Bell St, Shaftesbury. Cabinet may or may not be aware that the former Tourist Information volunteers, around 20 Shaftesbury residents, who used to occupy 8 Bell St, Shaftesbury, have now all successfully moved to be located next door in the Morrisons shop.

Please can I request that Cabinet ensures that the Town Council, the 12 elected members, are not bypassed and are truly involved in the future of 8 Bell St, Shaftesbury building in an open and transparent manner, as specified in the para 21.2 of the Nov 2020 Cabinet Papers?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Property and Assets

The Council's tenant in Shaftesbury has gone into administration and in accordance with standard procedure, the property will now undergo a full condition and compliance survey with a view to carrying out improvements ahead of its future use. Part of that process will involve an options appraisal to determine the best use for the site and the Council is very keen to work with the town council and Cllrs to ensure the facility is not left unoccupied and provides a facility which meets the needs of the community. The Council has sought the support of Brie Logan, Town Clerk to provide informal key holding services to assist with consultant/contractor access.

Statement from G Hooper

I have read on google that you are going to review the new car park charges in Dorset in September and so I am writing in the hope that my - and I am sure the views of many other people - may be take into consideration.

I am a pensioner living in Sherborne. I, and anything up to four other friends used to enjoy coming down to West Bay three or four times a month as it is not so crowded as Weymouth and somewhere you can actually sit near to and hear the sea which cannot be done at Weymouth our nearest seaside town. I came down with a couple of friends in May and was quite shocked at the car parks charges. Because I have neuropathy in my feet and can sometimes not walk far I had to pay to park in two different car parks, one near our usual eatery on the front and then move to the park nearer the harbour and piers for shops and tea. I paid £9 in total. I have not been back to West Bay since but decided to go to the coast less and travel an extra half hour over the border to East Devon when I do so as the car park charges are cheaper - £8 pays for 24 hours so we can go down for the day without having to look at our watches.

We decided to leave West Bay until the Autumn but I now see that the parking charges will be in place until the end of October so will not bother to visit. I

understand that the Council are trying to catch the holiday makers but do you not think it would be a nice gesture to the people of Dorset to bring the parking charges down after they have returned in September? As residents of the county we are already paying the fifth highest council tax in the country. I did read some time ago that Dorset wanted to attract the 'right people' at the top with six figure salaries. Is this what we are paying for while services are cut and charges go up?

Think of the lost income to local businesses when the holiday makers have left. As one car load we would have paid for five meals three or four times a month at the Windy Corner Cafe and always ended up going into the small shops near the harbour and having tea there before we returned.

Much as I like West Bay I am quite happy to either carry on driving to East Devon or free parking in the National Trust car park and seeing the sea at Burton Bradstock but I think you need some forward thinking for the survival of the small businesses in West Bay.

Letter from Hannah Kearns - attached