

Meeting of the Council

23 February 2017

Written Questions from Councillors (Agenda Item No 9)

The following written questions have been received from Councillor Ient which he wishes to ask of the Cabinet Member for Waste and Recycling, Councillor Franklin (questions 1 and 3); and the Cabinet Member for Finance, Councillor Giles (question 2):

Question 1: The scourge of the take-away coffee cup

As many will know the scourge of our roadsides and streets is the takeaway coffee cup. Its local councils that have to clear up the mess and to make matters worse these coffee cups are mostly not recyclable. I would like the Lewes District Council to do more about this problem. Let's try and reduce our costs by both getting people not to throw them away in the first place and making the waste biodegradable. We have heard of initiatives by Costa Coffee in big cities to include a special recycling bin for their coffee cups in their stores. Well why not here in the Lewes District? But moreover let's try and persuade all businesses to both provide better recycling facilities and to use biodegradable cups? The range of biodegradable cups has increased over recent years. We just need to persuade businesses to use them whether they be part of the big chain or independent outlets.

My question is this:

Would the Leader of the Council please ask the lead member for waste and recycling to undertake a programme to promote recycling of coffee cups in stores and the use of biodegradable cups? I would be happy to pass on the information I have researched on this subject?

Question 2: Excessive business rate increases for local pubs, restaurants and small businesses

Over the past few weeks in the press we have seen a number of national organisations including the CBI, the IOD and the British Chamber of Commerce raising their concern about the rating revaluation which may affect a whole range of businesses including local pubs and restaurants/catering businesses. Whilst I appreciate that rating revaluation for businesses occurs regularly every five years and that the government regularly uses a tapered form of relief to soften the blow over the five-year period of implementation it seems that this year there is a much

bigger step increase in the basic revaluation for these smaller local businesses. In comparison it seems that major international companies like Amazon with large warehouses will have a major reduction in their rating revaluation is. It seems that the pub and small restaurant are being penalised because they are on the high street or in a bricks and mortar building in the countryside whereas rating revaluation is for industrial estate warehouses have gone down! We can't believe everything in the press but with the Times and the Guardian talking about increases of 42% for smaller businesses and with the calls from respected institutions that I've mentioned above I believe the Lewes District Council should not ignore the potential problem.

My question is this:

Would the Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government, as a matter of urgency, asking him to review the levels of onerous tax increases which the smaller businesses are facing due to the business rate review?

Question 3: The scourge of the plastic bottle on the roadside and in the marine environment

Hansard records that a staggering 38.5 million plastic bottles are used every day in the UK and that, along with cans, plastic bottles account for approximately 40 per cent, by volume, of all litter found in our environment. I'm sure everyone is aware of the cause for UK government to introduce a deposit scheme for plastic bottles similar to those successfully in operation in Scandinavia and now in Germany. Removing plastic bottles from littering our streets and roadsides would considerably reduce the costs for local authorities in clearing up the litter itself. Also, it will help reduce marine pollution by is less plastic bottles will end up in the sea. We've already what success there has been in reducing the number of plastic bags by introducing the 5p charge. I believe, like the 5p charge for plastic bags, by having a places where the public can deposit a bottle and have their deposit refunded will significantly reduce pollution and at the same time increase the levels of recycling without local council staff having to scour the countryside to pick it up.

My question is this:

Would the Leader of the Council write to the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs giving the council's support for a plastic bottle deposit scheme?