

Appendix A to the Council Minutes – 22 July 2015

Item 6 – Questions from Members of the Public.

1 question was submitted from a member of the public.

1. From Mr Perrin to Councillor J Kent

In his budget speech the Chancellor intimated the Government would devolve power to Local Government to decide issues regarding “Sunday Trading”. It is suggested that the current restriction of 6 hours trading on a Sunday imposed on shopping malls and other large stores be lifted and the hours of trading should be in line with those permitted for small shops and businesses. Should your administration inherit such powers would you give me some idea as to what you would propose?

Councillor J. Kent

Clearly were any powers transferred we would have to look at carefully, and in detail, what was on offer. We would then work with retailers and consult those large and small – like Grays Town Centre and Lakeside Shopping Centre.

I would also want to consult with community groups, churches and shop workers because I’m sure there are some shop workers who would welcome the opportunity to earn some more money at the weekend, where it is perhaps the only time they can work, where there are others who would value the opportunity to not have to work more than 6 hours on a Sunday.

So I think the first thing we would need to do is to have a full wide ranging consultation with everybody who would be affected, incidentally that does include smaller shops who would be disadvantaged if larger retailers are able to open all day long.

Mayor

Mr Perrin, do you wish to pose a supplementary question?

Mr Perrin

Thank you Madam Mayor. My personal preference would be in line with the commandment, six days shalt thy labour and on the 7th shalt thou rest, but then I am old fashioned and have been told I’m 50 years out of date. Having said what you have already said I am concerned about the small shop owner – what affect it has on them. And as you have said yourself about workfare, there are some people who would not want to work on a Sunday but who would be threatened by employers if they wouldn’t work on a Sunday that they would find somebody else who will.

I think I would ask you to bear in mind that situation, which you have already said anyway, I'm quite happy with the answers you have given me, but in my own opinion Sunday should be Sunday and I'd like to go back to it being a day of rest. Thank you Madam Mayor.

Councillor J. Kent

Madam Mayor, I'm not sure about Mr Perrin being 50 years out of date, because we have to remember that Sunday shopping for 6 hours is relatively new, so for instance when Lakeside Shopping Centre first opened it was illegal for any shops there to be open on a Sunday. This is still a relatively new piece of legislation.

My own point of view, opinion I guess, is that keep Sunday special has gone. That went in 1992/1993. That doesn't mean that we should not support keeping Sunday different and keeping the opening hours down. If I had a personal view it would be that.