



BROMLEY CIVIC CENTRE, STOCKWELL CLOSE, BROMLEY BRI 3UH

TELEPHONE: 020 8464 3333

CONTACT: Graham Walton
graham.walton@bromley.gov.uk

DIRECT LINE: 020 8461 7743

FAX: 020 8290 0608

DATE: 30 October 2015

COUNCIL

Monday 19 October 2015

Replies to Questions

- 5 **QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC WHERE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN.**
(Pages 3 - 6)
- 6 **ORAL QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL WHERE NOTICE HAS BEEN GIVEN.**
(Pages 7 - 16)
- 7 **WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL**
(Pages 17 - 34)

Copies of the documents referred to above can be obtained from
<http://cds.bromley.gov.uk/>

This page is left intentionally blank

COUNCIL MEETING

19th OCTOBER 2015

(A) QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FOR ORAL REPLY

(1) From David Clapham to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

Have Councillors been made aware that FW have submitted a QC legal opinion stating that the concept of the 'lesser evil' used by both BHAL and the Council to promote extending the hours was 'misconceived' and that this may make the decision of 25th March unsound?

Reply (by the Leader of the Council):

Officers have exchanged correspondence with Richard Buxton (who we understand are your lawyers) advising them that the points made in their letter were not accurate. The report to the meeting on 25th March did not canvas the "lesser evil" option and neither does the report published on Friday and on this basis I cannot agree the proposition.

I would say in answering the question of whether Councillors are aware of the legal opinion, I cannot be sure that every Councillor knows about the points you want to make – but they are aware now.

Supplementary Question:

Mr Clapham pointed out that the legal opinion was separate from the letter.

Reply:

Cllr Carr stated that he had not seen the detail of the legal opinion from Flightpath Watch's lawyers, but he would be soon.

(2) From David Clapham to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

Have Councillors been made aware that the acoustic and aviation expert appointed by FW has confirmed that the noise measures recommended in the report by the Council's acoustic consultant are at best not stronger than measures already contained in the Lease?

Reply (by the Leader of the Council):

In considering the BHAL proposal to vary hours, the Council must seek to ensure that reasonable noise mitigation is in place and naturally the Council will be seeking, where possible, to strengthen current arrangements. The Council will be considering these matters at the Council meeting and Executive meeting in November. I have not seen any expert report that you may have commissioned, so I cannot comment on the validity of its conclusions.

I cannot be sure that all Councillors have been made aware, but I believe that most if not all have.

Supplementary Question:

To make the point that only eight of the eighteen recommendations from the expert in the report issued on Friday are acceptable, with the remainder “subject to”. This leaves a lot of work to be done – are the Council going to keep us informed of the detail sitting behind the remaining ten points.

Reply:

Hopefully you will agree that I have tried to be as transparent as I possibly can be. If there is information that we can share we will share it with all residents who have an interest.

(3) From David Clapham to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

Are Councillors aware that information provided under the FOIA has revealed potential irregularities in the way the consultation results were arrived at that we have needed to inform the Council’s senior solicitor that the matter is being investigated?

Reply (by the Leader of the Council):

Flightpath Watch has written to the Council’s Senior Solicitor but has given no detail of their findings following their “preliminary assessment” of the data they received. The Council will carefully examine any subsequent submitted detail, should this arise, commenting and explaining as appropriate. To avoid wider resident concern, as a guiding principle, the Council will always be as transparent as possible but for the avoidance of doubt, personal data is closely guarded and therefore is not disclosed in this or other FOI responses.

Supplementary Question:

I note and respect Councillor Carr’s statement. We are looking into non-personal data and will report to the Council once our investigation is complete.

(4) From Richard Gibbons to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services

65% of Bromley's population is either overweight or obese - the third highest prevalence of excess weight in London. Is it mere coincidence that Bromley is also ranked 3rd for car ownership and car use, and how are members collaborating to tackle growing obesity issues at a time of trimming the fat financially?

Sources

LBB Health & Wellbeing Board Obesity Action Plan 2015/16

GLA Health Impacts of Cars in London, September 2015

Reply:

Both the causes of and the possible solutions to obesity are many and varied. The Health and Wellbeing Board has set up a sub-group to address obesity in the borough as it is one of the Health & Wellbeing Strategy priorities. This sub-group is being chaired very well by Councillor Angela Page and I would recommend that he has a look at the work they have already done. The work of this sub-group includes a

Healthy Weight Forum which includes a wide range of stakeholders both internal and external to the council who have the potential to impact on this issue. The Healthy Weight Forum includes representatives from Transport Planning and from Planning as well as health services, leisure services, Housing Association and Public Health. The promotion of active transport is one key element of the Healthy Weight Pathway being developed through the Forum.

Supplementary Question:

The answer covers the health view on the matter but it does not address active travel which is well documented worldwide as one of the best ways of dealing with obesity. I would ask what measures are being taken to promote active travel in the borough.

Reply:

If cycling is one of the issues, I am sure that the Council is doing much to support cycling in the borough. I am sure that Cllr Smith and the Environment Department will furnish you with full details of what the Council is already doing to support cycling in the borough.

Additional Supplementary Question:

Councillor Simon Fawthrop asked whether any background work had been done on the levels of employment in this borough, one of the highest in London, and the hours worked by Members and residents, also the highest in London, and whether that could be one of the factors impacting on obesity. Also, would he agree with me that we should not be judgemental towards those who may be overweight?

Reply:

Certainly, people who work hard do not have an obesity problem in the main, and we are researching those issues, but I think cycling may reduce weight more than working.

(B) QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FOR WRITTEN REPLY

(1) From Hazel Waters to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

I would like to know on what financial basis Bromley Council are suggesting outsourcing the control of the library service to private enterprise. What are the projected cost/efficiency savings, and how are these to be achieved?

Reply:

A comprehensive report has been prepared for the Renewal and Recreation Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on the 27th October 2015, following which the matter will be considered by a meeting of the Executive Committee on the 9th November 2015. Subject to the outcome of these meetings, it is proposed that a formal procurement process is commenced jointly with the London Borough of Bexley. It is intended that the results of this procurement process, including the detail of any savings and service delivery proposals will be reported back to members in the autumn of 2016.

This page is left intentionally blank

COUNCIL MEETING

19th OCTOBER 2015

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL REPLY FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. From Cllr Russell Mellor to the Chairman of Development Control Committee

Can the Chairman advise me as to why the application in respect of No: 32 Church Avenue, No: 15/01541 was 'pulled' from the Planning Sub-Committee agenda when due for determination resulting in the proposal being referred to the Planning Inspectorate?

Reply:

This planning application was submitted to the agenda whilst still awaiting key consultee responses, which had unfortunately not been received by the date of the meeting. The application was therefore withdrawn from the agenda to allow these to be received and considered prior to determination of the application. Unfortunately this meant the application passed its target date and the applicant chose to appeal against non-determination.

Supplementary Question:

Councillor Mellor thanked Councillor Dean and stated that he hoped the application would be refused.

Reply:

Councillor Dean stated that he shared Councillor Mellor's views on the application.

2. From Cllr Michael Tickner to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

I have been told by your traffic engineers that mini roundabouts may only be installed where a junction has 3 significant roads meeting. Is this correct?

Reply:

I would need to understand the content and context of the conversation Cllr Tickner alludes to, before answering the question as set with a yes or no response.

There are a number of examples across the Borough where mini-roundabouts have been installed at 4-arm junctions; what it is true to say, is that professionally trained Traffic Engineers consistently advise us all, that it is far safer to implement a mini-roundabout at a 3-arm, rather than at a 4-arm junction.

Mini-roundabouts are principally installed as a way of reducing the severity of collisions at a junction. Across both London and the UK as a whole, we are advised

that the frequency of collisions at 4-arm mini-roundabouts is higher than at those with 3-arms.

Therefore, when considering using a roundabout to reduce the number of collisions at an accident black-spot, it may be that a 4-arm mini-roundabout will not be able to achieve the safety improvements being sought.

Cllr Tickner may recall that in 2011 a study was conducted to consider the accident prevention value of adding mini-roundabouts at two junctions in Southend Road in his Ward – one at Brackley Road and one at Park Road/Foxgrove Road. The independent safety audits of the designs raised some significant concerns about the 4-arm proposal, which could not therefore be recommended by the engineers, whereas the 3-arm mini-roundabout at Brackley Road was recommended and has subsequently installed.

In summary, it is not that 4-arm mini-roundabouts cannot be considered, it is that they are not so likely to be able to reduce a collision problem at a 4-arm junction as a mini-roundabout is at a 3 arm junction, and could even make matters worse.

Supplementary Question:

Councillor Tickner asked how the recently installed 4-arm mini roundabout at the junction of Beckenham Road and Hayne Road, which was a major intersection on an A road, could be explained, and who was responsible for installing it – I realise it may be TfL.

Reply:

It is nothing to do with TfL. The simple reason is that it passed its safety audit whereas the one at Park Road/Foxgrove Road/Southend Road failed its safety audit. Engineers will not recommend schemes that fail safety audits.

3. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Resources

The meeting of E&R PDS in July was extremely critical of the levels of service reported by Liberata on both the Revenue & Benefits and the Customer Service contracts.

Is the Portfolio Holder aware of DWP data on housing benefit administration which shows that in 2014/15, LB Bromley was ranked 380th out of 382 local authorities for the length of time taken to process new claims and 357th equal for processing changes to circumstance? If not, why not? If so, is he still of the view that Liberata's performance is improving and can he please give the figures for the first quarter of 2015/16 to support this assertion?

Reply:

Whilst the league table position cited in the question might not be totally correct given the omission of some Authority's performance figures as a result of missing/incomplete data or data of insufficient quality, Liberata have acknowledged that the service provided in 2014/15 was very disappointing, in these two areas, and I

agree, particularly given Liberata's strong performance in the years since assuming responsibility for the service (2002).

The poor performance of the Benefits Section in respect of claim processing was reported to Members of the E&R PDS in the meetings of the 4th February 2015 and 9th July 2015.

Following pursuance through the contractual escalation process, I together with senior managers of the Council, urgently summoned a series of meetings with Liberata's Chief Executive and his service managers. These meetings were held in Pendle, in Sheffield and here. At this meeting, we reiterated our displeasure at the service being provided and demanded that measures be taken to bring about significant improvements.

A recovery plan was agreed and put in place, based on Liberata employing extra resources at no additional cost to the Council. However, it was acknowledged that given the nature of benefit administration, it would not be possible to bring about an immediate reduction in the average number of days to process a claim. The final quarter of 2014/15 showed a significant improvement in the speed of processing; however, it is accepted, as in the case for all Authorities, the change of circumstances indicator was distorted by the annual uprating of claims.

I am pleased to advise that improvement has continued this financial year and the average processing times for the first 6 months are as follows:

New Claims	19 days
Change of Circumstances	10 days

Supplementary Question:

It is fairly standard that the tables do not have all of the data, and the DWP is clear about that, but what I do pay attention to is the figures for neighbouring authorities. In Bexley the figure for new claims to be processed for 2013/14 was 21 days, in Lewisham it was 14 days and in Bromley it was 28 days. I recognise that there has been improvement from Liberata more recently. I would like to ask the Portfolio Holder whether this justifies an apology to those claimants in Bromley who had to wait anything up to twice as long as claimants in other boroughs.

Reply:

No, it is not acceptable, and that is why we took action. We are now at 19 days for new claims and change of circumstances 10 days, so we are now improved against the comparators you used. But if you ask me if I am satisfied at the performance during that period of last year for those two particular areas the answer is no and that is why we did something about it.

4. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Resources

Can the portfolio holder provide the number of Collection Orders obtained for bailiffs to pursue Council Tax and Business Rates arrears in 2014/15, the value of each type of debt and the percentages recovered?

Reply:

In the financial year 2014/15, Council Tax 11,348 Liability Orders to the value of £7,842,000 were passed to enforcement agents. In respect of Business Rates, 445 Liability Orders to the value of £2,196,000 were referred to enforcement agents. It is not possible to advise as to the amount recovered by enforcement agents in respect of the orders cited earlier. However, the sum received from enforcement agents in 2014/15 was as follows:

Council Tax	£2,325,000
Business Rates	£992,000

These sums include debt recovered in respect of previous years.

In 2014/15 the percentage of moneys received from the enforcement agents when compared to the sum sent in the same period was 29.6% for Council Tax and 45.2% for Business Rates. I am aware that giving out numbers like this is quite difficult and I am aware that you asked a related question for written answer, but I am happy to try to deal with a supplementary question or to meet with you outside the Chamber.

Supplementary Question:

How does the Council ensure that the way that our contractor and their bailiffs are pursuing our debt is being done in the most cost effective way and they are not just sending out bailiffs on visits to residents and businesses and charging them for the privilege.

Reply:

There are written procedures on the way they operate – you may have seen them and if not I will share them with you. They can only really be guidance and there has to be case by case consideration. There are very clearly some people who are just not paying who can pay - they need to be pressured, appropriately, to meet their debts. There are cases where there is genuine hardship and those cases we will deal with with a degree of sensitivity and assist those people. What we do find with a lot of people who come forward with debts is that when you start digging under the surface there are a lot of other issues, like housing, that we can assist with, and we do take a sympathetic approach in those cases. Going back to the original point, where somebody deliberately avoids paying their dues to the Council it has to be accepted that it is totally unfair to place that burden on other taxpayers. I would be happy to meet with you and the people concerned to see if you can be satisfied by what they say to you.

5. From Cllr Kathy Bance to the Portfolio Holder for Education

Has LBB revised their admission guidelines in line with the Government Guidelines, to allow parents of Summer-born children to delay their schooling by one year and then allow them to start in reception and receive the seven years of primary schooling in line with other UK children?

Reply:

The government has recently released information on their proposal to change the right of parents of summer born children to delay their start in reception until the Autumn term after they are 5. However, this is not yet mandatory and is subject to a consultation period, following which a decision will be made by the government as to when this will take effect. Until then, parents of summer born children may request that their child is admitted the following year outside of his or her normal age range into Reception Year instead of Year 1. Again, however, there is no automatic right to this. The relevant admission authority will make a decision, having taken into account the circumstances of each case and whether or not it is considered to be in the best interests of the child concerned. This will include taking into account the parent's views; information about the medical history, about the child's academic, social and emotional development; and whether they may naturally have fallen into a lower age group if it were not for being born prematurely.

Supplementary Question:

Councillor Bance asked for clarification of whether the Council was saying "no" until the Government makes a final decision.

Reply:

At the moment our processes are published and are as they were at the Education PDS Committee meeting in February. We have had cases in the past where parents have requested it, and it is up to the relevant admissions authority, so there are decisions made on a case by case basis. But we are expecting there to be some governmental change and we are having conversations about that. What is really important, and it is recognised in the question, is the concept of parental choice. The parents know what is in the best interests for the children and they are the ones that make the decision. That premise of best interest axiomatically extends to other areas of parental interest, such as school choice, be that the successful free school academies or any potential discussions we will be having around grammar schools later. We are waiting for the information to come from government, we are looking at cases on a case by case basis but we absolutely agree with you that parents are in the best place to choose.

6. From Cllr Kevin Brooks to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Safety

Following Bromley's recent reclassification as an emerging gangs borough we need to engage with our youths to break the cycle of gangs. Has LBB any plans to step up support for youth based activities in Penge and Cator where the gangs are predominantly based?

Reply:

Bromley Council is tackling gangs in the borough and youth engagement in many ways. Preventing young people from joining gangs in the first place is key. To this end I will be funding a programme to be introduced into Bromley Schools which is founded on the principles of prevention, protection and partnership and has already been delivered to 460 schools across London. Lessons will be delivered to pupils in school years 6 through to 10 on topics such as the myths and realities of being in a

gang, gang associated sexual violence and knife crime. If successful the aim is to have this programme funded by the Bromley Safer Neighbourhood Board. Schools that we have targeted and have signed up to the Gangs School Programme so far are all in the north west of the borough. They are Harris Beckenham, Harris Bromley, Alexandra Junior, Marian Vian, St John's, St Anthony's, Stewart Fleming, Harris Primary Crystal Palace and James Dixon. Despite cost pressures on the Council, diversionary activities have been maintained and are run by the Bromley Youth Support Programme at our four youth hubs, one of which is in Anerley. Additionally, a mobile detached provision is held on a Wednesday evening in the Queen Adelaide Estate and the Penge High Street area. The Anerley Youth Centre, which is open during the day and the evening, runs targeted projects on crime and disorder, and they have held sessions on issues such as weapons, gangs, crime and consequences, personal responsibility, peer pressure, anti-social behaviour and community cohesion. We also have an ever growing number of young people engaged in the Bromley Youth Mentoring Programme, which is coordinated by the Bromley EBP. There are currently ten mentees from south east post codes, some of whom have links to gang activity. Numbers of mentees in the mentoring programme grow every year. The best diversionary activity is to find employment in an honest job. In August, a free jobs fair was organised in Penge by Bromley Council, Jobcentre Plus, Bromley College, Safer Bromley Partnership and the Princes Trust. The aim of the day was to attract and engage with hard to reach young people in the Penge area aged 16 to 25. As part of our Operation Crystal Programme we have focused on the emerging gang issue by targeting gang members and young people causing anti social behaviour with joint visits by Bromley Council and Police Officers. During our recent summer operations in Penge, Council officers, with the newly formed Police Gangs Team, knocked on every known gang member's door in Penge in the very early hours of the morning and strongly encouraged them to attend the jobs fair, which at the same time highlighted to them that we know who they are, and that we are keeping an eye on them.

Supplementary Question:

Councillor Brooks welcomed the actions set out – it sounded like there was a lot of work going on. However, I have been in meetings where Police reports have shown that youth crime is one of the crimes that has risen in Penge in 2015 – do you agree that the Council's plans to sell Snowden Close and deprive Penge of the Hub, the only volunteer youth centre, are counter-productive as a cost-saving measure.

Reply:

I do not agree with your comments. These are early days in the re-classification of our borough as an emerging gangs borough and we will continue to look at all strategies and options in order to keep youth diversionary activities going in Penge in various different forms.

7. From Cllr Vanessa Allen to the Leader of the Council

The refugee crisis in Europe continues with no end in sight, resulting in major hardship for many people who have fled their homes due to war and other issues such as persecution, whether in Syria, Sudan, Afghanistan or elsewhere. Please would the Leader update us on progress with the register which was proposed for Bromley, contact details, whether it is available on line, for coordination of home

owners, charities and other bodies such as churches, who may be offering to provide accommodation or other assistance for refugees?

Reply:

The Council has issued a statement applauding the Government's leadership and commitment on this issue and we are committed to assisting when and wherever possible. Over the last few weeks we have received a very limited response from organisations and individuals who might be prepared to offer assistance. At this stage I cannot add more, but I am able to inform Council that the Chief Executive will be meeting in very early November to consider the Government's guidance on this issue and how we might move forward. It is also extremely important to remind colleagues of the major pressures we and all local authorities are experiencing regarding homelessness which will limit our capacity to respond.

Supplementary Question:

A hundred and one years ago, Bromley welcomed several hundred Belgian refugees with offers of accommodation, and it would be good to think we have not lost our sense of compassion, so I would request that steps are taken where possible to encourage bodies to come forward, and to try to actively set up a register rather than wait for other people.

Reply:

I have a degree of sympathy with Cllr Allen and we will do what we can to assist people wherever and whenever possible.

8. From Cllr Russell Mellor to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

Can the Portfolio Holder inform as to the number of planning applications in the last Civic year which when presented to a Planning Sub-Committee have requested Members Views?

Reply:

In the last civic year, there were no planning applications requesting Member's views when presented to a planning sub-committee.

Supplementary Question:

Councillor Mellor enquired about proposals for including Members Views in all future planning applications.

Reply:

Recommendations are made by the planning officers. The planning officers are free to put a recommendation forward for Members Views if they so wish. My own view is that a professional, experienced planning officer should be able to make a recommendation one way or another on the planning information available to them.

Additional Supplementary Question:

Councillor Simon Fawthrop reminded the Chairman that the last meeting of the Development Control Committee was unanimous in its view that Members Views

should be made available and he stated that it seemed that the democratic will of this Council, and the will to set the policy, may be being thwarted by officers.

Reply:

I do not believe that the democratic position of the Council is being thwarted. The opportunity to put forward a recommendation of Members Views is there, and Development Control Committee at its last but one meeting endorsed that and that is still the case.

Additional Supplementary Question:

Councillor Tony Owen asked whether the Chairman accepted that although planning applications could be finely balanced, and therefore you are going to say yes or no, there was room for doubt and did he accept that having a dogmatic recommendation from officers in favour seriously compromised at appeal to the planning inspectorate and left the Council open to costs which it might not otherwise be open for.

Reply:

I accept that there are some very finely balanced planning applications. I still feel that the planning officer should be able to make a recommendation one way or another. The opportunity to recommend Members Views is there, but as far as the planning inspectorate is concerned, and I think we are talking about applications refused by our Council, if the reasons for refusal are legitimate grounds as determined by Members the Inspector will either agree or disagree with that view, but properly presented grounds of refusal should not result in us incurring costs. As far as I am aware, instances where we have incurred costs have been where the reasons for refusal have not been particularly substantial.

9. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Leader of the Council

The Local Government Transparency Code 2015 sets out “..to place more power into citizens’ hands to increase democratic accountability and make it easier for local people to contribute to the local decision making process and help shape public services. The code requires all (English) local authorities to publish the following information:

Quarterly:

- expenditure exceeding £500
- Government Procurement Card transactions
- procurement information

Annually

- local authority land
- social housing assets
- grants to voluntary, community and social enterprise organisations
- organisation chart
- trade union facility time
- parking account
- parking spaces

- senior salaries
- constitution
- pay multiple
- fraud

Can you please clarify on which of these requirements the Council is fully compliant? Where the Council is not complaint, please explain why not and by what date the Council will comply?

Reply:

The Council is fully compliant except for some technical procurement information for some contracts of between £5- £50,000. This will be remedied following the imminent completion of a new eProcurement system and the adoption of revised contract procedure rules and that should be complete by the end of December.

Supplementary Question:

There were a number of these items which I couldn't find – trade union facility time was one. Would you, in the spirit of the legislation, consider making the data more readily accessible to people who are less able to find it when it is hidden away.

Reply:

I am sure we would all want to be as transparent and clear as possible. If it practically possible I am sure officers will do everything they can to make it easy to access the information.

10. From Cllr Kathy Bance to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services

For many children living in temporary accommodation their school has been the one consistent in their lives. How successful are LBB being in housing people with school aged children into temporary accommodation within a reasonable distance from the child's schools?

Reply:

The Council seeks to secure temporary accommodation locally. However as the supply is extremely limited and insufficient to meet current demand, it has been necessary to procure accommodation outside of the local authority boundary to meet statutory duties. In the first instance this will be in surrounding boroughs with the search area sequentially extended as availability and demand requires.

In offering temporary accommodation, the Council will consider and does consider the suitability of each offer, taking into account the factors including size and location of the property, transport links and the availability of support networks in the area, health factors, education and employment. In terms of education specifically those households who have children with special educational needs or children at who are at a critical stage in their education such as close to taking public examinations will be given priority for in-borough placements. This means that the vast majority of such families are accommodated within the borough or nearby localities. Where this has not been possible, the Council works closely with the family to identify move-on accommodation in a suitable location as quickly as possible.

Supplementary Question:

Does the London Borough of Bromley have the staffing resources necessary to deal with the demands for urgent temporary housing requests in a timely manner so as not to add to the stress these families are facing?

Reply:

Our housing department works tremendously hard and currently they are working to maximum capacity and are able to cope with the problems that are presented to them.

COUNCIL MEETING

19th OCTOBER 2015

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. From Cllr Simon Fawthrop to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

How many planning applications in the last year in relation to Petts Wood & Knoll Ward were received?

(a) in the last financial year

Reply:

Including adverts, certificates, prior approvals and LBC – 220

Valid planning applications only (PS2) -176

(b) In this current financial year.

Reply:

(To 6th October 2015)

Including adverts, certificates, prior approvals and LBC - 131

Valid planning applications only (PS2) – 95

In relation to the total applications received by the Council what proportion is this of all the applications received by the Council in the same period?

Reply:

Last Financial Year:

Including adverts, certificates, prior approvals and LBC – 4021 – PW&K apps make up 5.5%

Valid planning applications only (PS2) -2823 – PW&K apps make up 6.2%

Current Financial Year (to 6th October):

Including adverts, certificates, prior approvals and LBC – 2249 – PW&K apps make up 5.8%

Valid planning applications only (PS2) – 1549 – PW&K apps make up 6.1%

a) Over the same period how many applications were called in to committee by Petts Wood & Knoll ward members?

Reply:

2014 – 21

2015 – 8 to date

b) What is this as a proportion of the total number of applications for Petts Wood & Knoll ward?

Reply:

2014 – 21 of 130 = 16.15%

2015 – 8 of 50 = 16%

2. From Cllr Simon Fawthrop to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

How many responses to the Biggin Hill consultation survey which were included in the Council and Executive reports on 25th March 2015 were excluded from the final results because they were duplicate entries at the same address, of these how many were in favour of the proposals and how many were against?

Reply:

The figures contained within the report show that in total, 416 responses were recorded but excluded from analysis principally because names and/or addresses were omitted and or because a 'yes' or 'no' preference was not indicated. There is the possibility or probability that duplicate responses are contained within the 41,711 total individual responses analysed and it is for this reason that the report references the 14,754 individual identified property responses. Analysis of these individual identified property responses shows that there were 11196 (76%) 'yes' responses and 3558 (24%) 'no' responses.

3. From Cllr Simon Fawthrop to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

(a) What legal considerations have been given to a) the Human Rights Act in relation to both individual rights and rights to the enjoyment of land (Schedule I part II Article 1) in drawing up the report on Biggin Hill Airports proposals for extended operating hours (The Act postdates the Lease). Please provide a list of any legal advice given?

(b) the Climate Change Act 2008 in drawing up the report on Biggin Hill Airports proposals for extended operating hours (The Act postdates the Lease). Please provide a list of any legal advice given?

Reply:

Officers have considered relevant legislation and case law in preparing the report. It must be remembered that the rights under Article 1 of the First Protocol set out in the Human Rights Act 1998 are qualified rights and secondly that BHAL is on the drafting as much a "person" with Human rights for the purposes of Article 1 as any resident. The reports prepared have undertaken the necessary balancing exercises notwithstanding as was recognised in the High Court case that the impact of the Act on contracts entered into before 2 October 2000 will not always be clear cut.

On the Climate Change Act 2008 this had not been considered as the proposal, if agreed, would reduce aircraft movements and possibly indirectly encourage newer, quieter and more efficient aircraft.

4. From Councillor Peter Fookes to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Safety

What representations has Bromley made to the Mayor of London and Stephen Greenhalgh with regard to the proposal to withdraw all Police Community Support Officers from the streets of the borough and when will there be consultation with residents of the borough on this matter?

Reply:

At this stage there are no specific proposals and so no representations or consultations have taken place. When the Metropolitan Police have got their financial settlement for future years then consideration will be given to an appropriate response in the interests of the residents of the Borough.

5. From Councillor Peter Fookes to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services

What follow up assessment has been provided to all those residents with mild learning disabilities who were part of the Key Ring scheme who lost out as a result of the cuts that you introduced in April?

Reply:

Prior to support from Keyring coming to an end, people who were previously supported by Keyring were referred to Care Management for review or assessment of needs to determine whether people required continuing support and if so at what level.

Reviews were prioritised according to the needs present at the time. I understand that there is one review outstanding but that this is currently under way.

6. From Councillor Peter Fookes to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services

How much does the borough pay agencies for locum social workers and what is the longest contract offered?

Reply:

Bromley pay rates for Locum Social Workers range from £23 - £30 per hour and for Senior Practitioners £29 - £32 per hour. The assignments are offered on a short term basis with a view to the assignment ending if a permanent Social Worker is recruited. The notice period is one week.

Bromley has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the majority of the other London Boroughs with a view to work collaboratively with each other and with agency suppliers to develop mechanisms to ensure that rates and charges for supplying agency staff appropriately reflect the skills and experience of workers and the remuneration of permanent staff.

7. From Councillor Tom Philpott to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

Further to Councillor Nicholas Bennett's oral question earlier this year, can the Portfolio Holder please give an update on the long hoped for refurbishment of West Wickham Leisure Centre. Specifically, can he update members on the current projected timescale for work to commence and whether it is expected that this work would be built into any future borough wide contract with MyTime?

Can the Portfolio Holder also advise what steps the council is taking in the meantime to ensure that facilities in West Wickham are kept up to an adequate standard by MyTime?

Reply:

The Council is currently considering the future options regarding the boroughs leisure offer and is in discussions on the future provision of facilities with Mytime Active, the charitable trust set up by the Council to manage its leisure facilities.

This also includes the long term proposals for the West Wickham Leisure Centre, the Council is currently awaiting a response from Mytime with regard to their proposals for West Wickham Leisure Centre.

In the interim period however, certain urgent repairs and maintenance will be undertaken by Mytime to ensure that ensure the building is safe, clean and hygienic.

Mytime active have in the last few months installed brand new air conditioning in the gym and repaired remaining air conditioning units, repainted and refreshed the teaching pool changing rooms, repaired around 40 lockers, removed harmless algae from the pool floor. Mytime Active have also employed internal cleaning staff dedicated to keeping customer areas clean and hygienic during peak hours. Mytime are also proposing the replacement of around 36 lockers in the ladies and teaching pool changing areas, the installation of 2 new shower cubicles in the gym changing rooms, as well as replacement and repair of other minor pieces of equipment and key areas.

Mytime will endeavour to keep the facility clean and undertake the minor day to day repairs as required. It is hoped that the Council and Mytime Active will shortly conclude their discussions on future leisure provision within the Borough together with agreed future investment proposals.

8. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Whilst I am grateful that at last the street cleaning schedule has been made available to the public, please will the Portfolio Holder change the location of the schedule on the site so that people can easily find it? As this schedule has the potential to deliver direct service monitoring by local residents, will the Portfolio Holder also agree to proactively publicise the availability of the schedule by press release / stakeholder communications etc.?

Reply:

There are no plans to change the website further at this time following Cllr William Huntington-Thresher's innovative suggestion to publicise Bromley's street sweeping schedules at the March ES PDS meeting.

Plans are already afoot to advertise the links presence more widely and this will manifest itself in the impending edition 'Environment Matters' which will be reaching local doorsteps in approximately 5 weeks time from now.

Members can obviously contribute to this process themselves, by alerting Residents Associations, Friends Groups and other interested persons to further assist the Department in their scrutiny function of the Contractor's performance.

9. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services

The Portfolio Holder is aware of a recent infestation of bed bugs in Amplio House. Can the Portfolio Holder please give concise timeline of events and in particular details of how and when residents and their carers/guardians were informed of this outbreak by either Avenues Management or LBB? Can the Portfolio Holder also please supply the method statement and HACCP analysis provided by Avenues management in relation to both the prevention and treatment of infestations of this type?

Reply:

Care Services will ask Avenues Trust to provide us with this information and the timeline of their communication with their service users.

10. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Officers report unprecedented levels of fly tipping in the Borough. I am informed that clearance of such debris is now being undertaken by personnel otherwise employed on regular street cleaning. Please can you provide details of the existing contract specification, SLA and KPIs on the clearance and disposal of fly tipped waste? Does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that residents should not suffer dirtier streets because of the actions of a minority of offenders who may well not even live in the Borough? And if so, what is he going to do to ensure this doesn't happen?

Reply:

Fly-tipping removal can be allocated to various contractors subject to the volume of material involved, as well the contents if they are hazardous.

This methodology has been employed for several years.

The street cleaners remove material on a daily basis where it is found on their routine scheduled cleaning frequencies.

The Council's environmental service aims are available on the Council's website under the Council & Democracy page however we aim to clear rubbish on the public highway within five working days.

If investigating a fly-tip for enforcement purposes we may keep the rubbish in situ, where it is safe to do so, while evidence is gathered to facilitate prosecution.

Arrangements for the collection of hazardous waste (once verified) are made with specialist contractors.

I certainly do agree that residents, businesses and visitors to the Borough should not suffer the blight of fly-tipping. Whilst I cannot “ensure” anything in terms of outcome around anti-social and/or criminal behaviour, I have already alerted local MPs, the Minister of State, the Environment Agency and DEFRA to my concerns and strong belief that the existing powers available to Local Authorities provide an insufficient deterrent to the disgusting individuals who behave in this manner. Likewise for the need for a significant bolstering to Magistrates punishment tariffs, to ensure tougher routine punitive action can be taken against those responsible when apprehended.

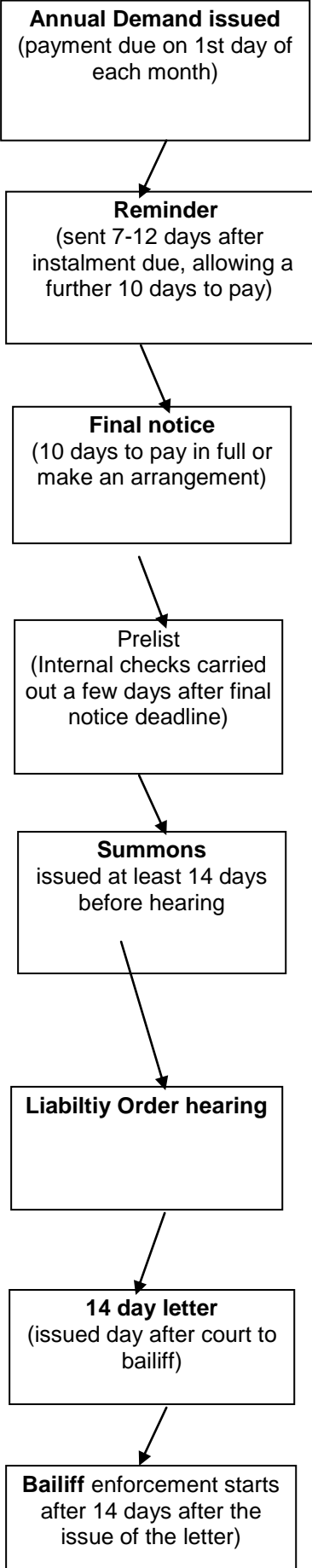
11. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Resources

Will the Portfolio Holder provide full details of the processes used by Liberata for the follow up of Council Tax and Business Rate debt, including the use of bailiffs?

Reply:

Further to your question regarding the processes used by Liberata for the follow up of Council Tax and Business Rate debt, I enclose the relevant flow charts. These contain the action to be taken, together with time allowed prior to escalation to the next stage.

Council Tax Recovery



12. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Resources

Will the Portfolio Holder provide the components of the Council's contract with Liberata governing their use of bailiffs.

Reply:

Please find detailed below the relevant paragraphs of the Exchequer Services specification regarding the use of bailiffs and subsequent action of the Authority and/or its contractor.

From Council Tax Service Level Requirements

Bailiff

The Service Provider shall:

- 2.13.1 Seek authorisation from LBB of the Bailiff Company the Service Provider wishes to employ to undertake action on behalf of LBB. Provide a copy of the Bailiff Company's code of practice and list of charges and any other information regarding the proposed Bailiff Company. For the avoidance of doubt only Bailiff Companies accepted by LBB will be permitted to operate on LBB accounts. Any current or future costs in using Bailiffs will be met by the Service Provider.
- 2.13.2 Monitor the Bailiff to ensure they comply with all relevant legislation and that targets set by the Service Provider in conjunction with LBB are being achieved, and that the Bailiff code of practice and LBB requirements are being adhered to.
- 2.13.3 Ensure the Bailiffs carry out work for the Council in accordance with the following:
 - a) The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy
 - b) Any Code of Practice as issued by the Certificated Bailiffs Association
 - c) A quality management standard of ISO9002 or equivalent
- 2.13.4 Administer, monitor and liaise with Bailiff/relevant body on execution of Warrants of Arrest.
- 2.13.5 Monitor all accounts/Warrants of Arrest held with the Bailiff to ensure all payments have been noted, prior to action.
- 2.13.6 Provide details of recovery cases returned from the Bailiff on a quarterly basis (May, August, November and February) detailing what further action is to be taken to recover the outstanding debt.

- 2.13.7 Ensure all income collected on LBB's behalf by external bodies (e.g. Bailiffs, solicitors) is monitored to ensure that the amounts received are correct.
- 2.13.8 Ensure any payments collected by the Bailiffs are paid directly into the Council's account and payments made by cash are transferred to the Council's account within 15 days of receipt.
- 2.13.9 Fully update the Bailiffs on any changes affecting the amount of a Liability Order or circumstances of the customer, which will affect how the Bailiffs secure payment.
- 2.13.10 Check all Bailiffs' letters and documents comply with any relevant statutory requirements, are in plain English, include a detailed breakdown of the debt (including costs and fees), contain information on how to contact the Bailiffs and how payment can be made.
- 2.13.11 Notify LBB of any appeals in connection with distress immediately in writing, prepare case files as required by the Council's legal representative, attend Court as a witness and secure attendance by Bailiffs and carry out any follow up action necessary.
- 2.13.12 Ensure Liability Orders are returned by the Bailiff if they have been unsuccessful after 90 days
- 2.13.13 Where Liability Orders are returned from the Bailiffs:
- a) Ensure that payments collected by the Bailiffs are paid directly into the Council's account and are allocated accurately to the correct accounts and summons debts.
 - b) Ensure all records are updated accurately including the reason for return.
 - c) Check the reasons for return for each Liability Order within 15 working days of return from the Bailiffs and ensure further enforcement is taken where a balance remains in accordance with statutory requirements within a further 10 working days.
- 2.13.14 For 'nulla bona' returns send a committal pending letter within 15 working days.
- 2.13.15 Where a Bailiff returns a Liability Order as unexecuted (e.g. marked "nulla bona" or as being unable to obtain access) the Service Provider shall carry out one or more of the following actions:
- a) Make arrangements with the debtor to clear all outstanding sums;
 - b) Obtain an Attachment of Earnings;

- c) Obtain an attachment of Income Support Order;
- d) Initiate Bankruptcy proceedings against the debtor following appropriate checks for suitability, and be responsible for the associated costs of such action, and checking if the debtor is known to LBB Social Services.
- e) Initiate Charging Order process where appropriate and be responsible for the associated costs of such action.
- f) Consider referring the debt to a Debt Collection Agency, and be responsible for the associated costs of such action.
- g) Seek a Committal Hearing in respect of the Debtor.
- h) Undertake an occupancy checks to ascertain whether the debtor is still in occupation.

- 2.13.16 Check cases monthly where committal letters have been sent and ensure appropriate enforcement is taken relevant to any details held on customers' financial circumstances.
- 2.13.17 Select cases for committal proceedings where all other alternative attempts to enforce outstanding arrears have been unsuccessful and pass case details to LBB for approval.
- 2.13.18 Where approval for committal proceedings is given, prepare summonses and complaint lists and attend committal complaint hearings with LBB.
- 2.13.19 Include information required by law in all committal summonses and warrants and ensure all summonses and warrants are in a format agreed with LBB.
- 2.13.20 Check committal summonses for accuracy prior to posting or preferably delivery by hand.
- 2.13.21 Post committal summonses by recorded delivery or first class post within 1 day of the complaint date. Each committal summons must be posted separately and the certificate of posting kept and taken to Court as evidence.
- 2.13.22 Respond to all customer enquiries on committal cases and take alternative enforcement action wherever possible.
- 2.13.23 Prepare case files for all cases listed for committal hearings, ensuring all records are accurate, and present at committal hearings as the expert witness with the LBB acting in the presenting role with the Service Provider providing.
- 2.13.24 Information and evidence as required by LBB and the Court.

- 2.13.25 Carry out any follow up action on cases after each committal hearing including the administration and enforcement of Arrest Warrants.
- 2.13.26 Non-compliance with paragraph 2.13.42 n) above shall be deemed to have occurred if more than 25 cases for current year accounts and 50 cases for previous years accounts are returned by the Bailiff unexecuted without action having been taken by the Service Provider within the required 90 day period as appropriate and/or the Service Provider fails to obtain Committal hearing dates on a minimum of 10 new cases every calendar month (unless otherwise agreed by LBB).

From NNDR Service Level Requirements:

Bailiff

The Service Provider shall:

- 2.17.1 Seek authorisation from LBB of the Bailiff Company the Service Provider wishes to employ to undertake action on behalf of LBB.
- 2.17.2 Provide a copy of the Bailiff Company's code of practice and list of charges and any other information regarding the proposed Bailiff Company. For the avoidance of doubt only Bailiff Companies accepted by LBB will be permitted to operate on LBB accounts. Any current or future costs in using Bailiffs will be met by the Service Provider.
- 2.17.3 Monitor the Bailiff to ensure they comply with all relevant legislation, Bailiff Code of practice and LBB requirements.
- 2.17.4 Ensure the Bailiffs carry out any work for LBB in accordance with the following:
- a) The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy
 - b) Any Code of Practice as issued by the Certificated Bailiffs Association
 - c) A quality management standard of ISO9002 or equivalent
- 2.17.5 Administer, monitor and liaise with bailiff/relevant body on execution of Warrants of Arrest.
- 2.17.6 Monitor all accounts/Warrants of Arrest held with the Bailiff to ensure all payments have been noted, prior to action.
- 2.17.7 Ensure all income collected on the behalf of LBB by external bodies (e.g. Bailiffs, Solicitors) is monitored to ensure that the amounts received are correct.

- 2.17.8 Ensure any payments collected by the Bailiffs are paid directly into LBB's account and payments made by cash are transferred to LBB's account within 10 days of receipt.
- 2.17.9 Fully update the Bailiffs on any changes affecting the amount of a Liability Order or circumstances of the customer, which will affect how the Bailiffs secure payment.
- 2.17.10 Check all Bailiff's letters and documents comply with any relevant statutory requirements, are in plain English, contain information on how to contact the Bailiffs and how payment can be made and clearly states the period of the debt and breakdown of costs/fees charged.
- 2.17.11 Notify LBB of any appeals in connection with distress immediately in writing, prepare case files as required by LBB's legal representative, attend Court as a witness and secure attendance by Bailiffs and carry out any follow up action necessary.
- 2.17.12 Ensure that Liability Orders are returned by the Bailiff after 90 days if collection has been unsuccessful unless an arrangement is in place or full payment is expected shortly after the 90 day period.

Where Liability Orders are returned from the Bailiffs, the Service Provider will:
- 2.17.13 Ensure that payments collected by the Bailiffs are paid directly into LBB's account and are allocated accurately to the correct accounts and summons debts.
- 2.17.14 Ensure all records are updated accurately including the reason for return.
- 2.17.15 Check the reasons for return for each Liability Order within 10 working days of return from the Bailiffs and ensure further enforcement is taken where a balance remains in accordance with statutory requirements.
- 2.17.16 Where a Liability Order is returned 'nulla bona', within 10 working days, send the customer a committal pending letter.
- 2.17.17 Check cases monthly where Committal letters have been sent and ensure appropriate enforcement is taken relevant to any details held on customer's financial circumstances.
- 2.17.18 Select cases for Committal proceedings where all other alternative attempts to enforce outstanding arrears have been unsuccessful and pass case details to LBB for approval.
- 2.17.19 Where approval for Committal proceedings is given, prepare summonses and complaint lists and attend committal complaint hearings with LBB.

- 2.17.20 Include information required by law in all Committal Summonses and Warrants and ensure all Summonses and Warrants are in a format agreed with LBB.
- 2.17.21 Check Committal Summonses for accuracy prior to posting.
- 2.17.22 Post Committal Summonses by 1st class post within 1 day of the complaint date.
- 2.17.23 Respond to all customer enquiries on committal cases and take alternative enforcement action wherever possible.
- 2.17.24 Prepare case files for all cases listed for Committal Hearings, ensuring all records are accurate, and present at committal hearings as the expert witness with LBB acting in the presenting role with the Service Provider providing information and evidence as required by LBB and the Court.
- 2.17.25 Carry out any follow up action on cases after each Committal Hearing including the administration and enforcement of Warrants of Arrest.
- 2.17.26 Where a Bailiff returns a Liability Order as unexecuted (e.g. marked “nulla bona” or as being unable to obtain access) the Service Provider shall carry out one or more of the following actions:
- a) Make arrangements with the Debtor to clear all outstanding sums
 - b) Obtain full payment from the Debtor of all outstanding sums
 - c) Initiate Bankruptcy or Liquidation proceedings against the Debtor
 - d) Seek a Committal Hearing in respect of the Debtor
- 2.17.27 Non-compliance with paragraph 2.17.84 above shall be deemed to have occurred if more than 25 cases for current year accounts and 50 cases for previous years accounts are returned by the Bailiff unexecuted without action having been taken by the Service Provider within the required 90 day period as appropriate and/or the Service Provider fails to obtain Committal Hearing dates on a minimum of 5 new cases every calendar month (unless otherwise agreed by LBB).

Sundry Debtors Service Level Requirements:

- 2.20.1 Ensure all appropriate recovery remedies are considered and the most suitable solution is taken and followed through to successful conclusion which must not exceed 1 year from the date Complaint was made:
- a) Attachment of Earnings
 - b) County Court Bailiff

- c) High Court Enforcement Officers
- d) Oral Examination
- e) Third Part Debt Order
- f) Charging Order
- g) Bankruptcy

13. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

What criteria are used to determine how frequently footpaths and carriageways are swept? Are there any differences in how these criteria are applied in different parts of the borough? Are there any plans to change these criteria?

Reply:

Frequencies of cleaning are based upon the hierarchy of the street, distinguishing between the pavement and the road, and are influenced by local factors such as the proximity of nearby amenities such as schools, shops, transport interchanges etc, which might be subject to heavy footfall and vehicle movements.

The same methodology is applied Boroughwide. There are no plans to change the current criteria at this point in time.

14. From Cllr Kathy Bance to the Portfolio Holder for Education

Can the Portfolio Holder please provide an update on the Council's plans for the future of Kentwood Adult Education Centre?

Reply:

The consultation on the proposed changes to Adult Education started on 16th October for staff and is due to start around 21st of October for students and stakeholders. Under these proposals the adult education service will continue to use the Kentwood site for the delivery of courses, which would include English, maths, courses for unemployed adults and some non-accredited leisure type courses. However, it is proposed that the nursery at the Kentwood adult education site would close in order to free up additional space for some of the courses to be relocated following the closure of the Widmore site. All the proposed changes would come into effect from the start of the 2016/17 academic year.

15. From Cllr Richard Williams to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment.

Despite numerous complaints to Thames Water regarding an ongoing leak on Anerley Hill SE19, the leak has not been rectified. Will the Council put additional pressure onto Thames Water to rectify this problem?

Reply:

Thames Water have advised Council Officers that they intend to undertake the necessary repairs during the week commencing today.

16. From Cllr Vanessa Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Resources.

As the transition period for Independent Electoral Registration ends on 1 December 2015, please will the Portfolio Holder advise on the following:

- How many people were registered to vote, broken down by ward, for the general election of May 2015?
- How many people are individually registered to vote, broken down by ward, as of now?
- What percentage of the population of the borough do these figures represent, again by ward?
- How are moves into the borough tracked (whether into purchased or rented accommodation), and how are new residents contacted?
- What steps will be taken after 1 December to keep the electoral register up to date, and how and when will residents be contacted?

Reply:

The following table answers the first two bullet points -

WARD	Registered to vote for General Election on 7 May 2015 (Parliamentary electorate only)	Registered to vote as at Sept 2015 (including*)	*Unconfirmed as at Sept 2015 (to be deleted 1/12/15 if no response rec'd)
Bickley	11474	11851	183
Biggin Hill	7878	8004	141
Bromley Common & Keston	12031	12458	193
Bromley Town	12162	13084	339
Chelsfield & Pratts Bottom	11224	11462	206
Chislehurst	11840	12218	223
Clock House	11434	12000	291
Copers Cope	11724	12385	280
Cray Valley East	10856	11350	252
Cray Valley West	11866	12248	276
Crystal Palace	8346	9147	321
Darwin	4116	4160	62
Farnborough & Crofton	11593	11870	175
Hayes & Coney Hall	12291	12576	170
Kelsey & Eden Park	12103	12446	215
Mottingham & Chislehurst North	7004	7399	174
Orpington	11797	12121	203
Penge & Cator	11837	12721	435

Petts Wood & Knoll	10667	10937	123
Plaistow & Sundridge	11133	11695	297
Shortlands	7464	7703	140
West Wickham	11830	12118	158
TOTAL	232670	241953	4857

For the remaining bullet points the answers are -

- We do not have this (population) data so cannot provide you with the details requested.
- Currently, we track moves/changes through the canvass, citizenship ceremonies, and records from Council Tax and Registrars (deaths) – an application form (either a Household Enquiry form or an Invitation to register form, as appropriate) is sent to the property/individual when we become aware of the change. We also provide information on the registration process, on the Council website and through press releases, social media and poster campaigns
- After the publication of the revised register on 1 December 2015, we are exploring the possibilities of undertaking more extensive data mining to track new resident (as the law allows) using records from Housing Benefits, Parking, Blue Badge and CRM (in addition to records from Council Tax, Registrars, and Citizenship ceremonies). Again an application form (either a Household Enquiry form or an Invitation to register form, as appropriate) will be sent to the property/individual when we become aware of any change. An annual canvass will be undertaken next autumn.

Earlier this year (in February 2015) we sent a Household Notification letter to every property in the Borough in the lead up to the General election on May 2015 to ensure the register was as up to date as possible - this was very effective. The exercise cost approximately £45,000 and was (largely) funded on this occasion by Central Government. Unfortunately it is unlikely we will have the resources to undertake a similar exercise in the lead up to the GLA election in May 2016.

17. From Cllr Kevin Brooks to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services

The recent policy to ‘no longer include households on the register if they are assessed as lacking one bedroom and are not tenants of partner Housing Associations’ has caused concern and consternation amongst residents. Would the Portfolio Holder please provide the rate of the appeals and specify the numbers of those who have appealed on medical grounds? Would the Portfolio Holder please inform us what levels of support and advice are being provided for residents that make an appeal, particularly concerning appeals on medical grounds?

Reply:

768 applications were cancelled as part of the Allocation Scheme review.
70 households (9%) submitted a request for a review.

The majority of households submitting a review indicated that lacking a bedroom should be sufficient to allow them to be included on the Housing Register and have requested a review on that basis.

Of the 70 review requests submitted 8 households (11%) indicated that their review was submitted on medical grounds either fully or in part. 3 of these households (4%) provided medical information that had already been assessed prior to the cancellation; no priority was previously awarded.

The Service will review each application separately in line with the guidance sent out within the Allocation Scheme; copies of the full scheme and a summary can be downloaded from the Bromley Homeseekers website www.bromleyhomeseekers.co.uk. The reviews are being carried out by senior officers and each customer will receive a letter tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. Irrespective of whether or not the review decision is upheld customers will be provided with details of alternative housing options and, where appropriate, details of relevant support agencies in order that they may source further support and assistance.

Whilst the number of reviews received is lower than expected we fully recognise that the changes made to the Allocation Scheme has caused concern to a number of households. However we remain satisfied that the changes made were essential in order to ensure that the Scheme is legally and statutorily compliant and that it is proportionate in managing expectations against the backdrop of the available supply of accommodation so that those included on the housing register have a realistic expectation of being successful in securing an offer of accommodation through the scheme.

This page is left intentionally blank