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DATE: 23 November 2020

## COUNCIL

**Monday 7 December 2020**

### **4 QUESTIONS** (Pages 3 - 14)

The questions received for this meeting before the deadline (5pm on Monday 23<sup>rd</sup> November 2020) are set out in the attached documents.

- (a) Questions from members of the public for written reply.
- (b) Questions from members of the Council for oral reply.
- (c) Questions from members of the Council for written reply.

Questions specifically on reports on the agenda should be received within two working days of the normal publication date of the agenda. Please ensure that questions specifically on reports on the agenda are received by the Democratic Services Team by 5pm on 1<sup>st</sup> December 2020.

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

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(A)

## COUNCIL MEETING

7<sup>th</sup> December 2020

### QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FOR WRITTEN REPLY

**1. From Dermot Mckibbin to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing**

*According to the Sunday times magazine of 15/11/2020 a fire destroyed the low-rise building at Richmond House on 9 September 2019 in approximately 11 minutes. The building lacked adequate internal compartmentation which was believed to be due to the deregulation of building inspection.*

What assurances can the Council give about the quality of building control inspections in Bromley in residential properties?

**2. From Dermot Mckibbin to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement**

Please supply details of when leading councillors met with the Borough Commander of the London Fire Brigade in the last 12 months to discuss fire safety issues in residential properties in the Borough and please supply details of the Council's strategy to deal with improving fire safety standards in residential properties in the borough?

**3. From Richard Gibbons to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services**

*Re. £11.8m Highway Investment, approved by Council 12 December 2016*  
<https://cde.bromley.gov.uk/documents/s50044404/Enc.%205%20for%20Capital%20Programme.pdf>

Would Portfolio Holder kindly confirm how much has been spent on footway maintenance to date; how much remains to be invested; and provide a list of footways and rights of way (footpaths, bridleways, byways) that have benefitted from investment, and if any budgeted/scheduled maintenance remains outstanding?

**4. From Richard Gibbons to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services**

*Re. Rights of Way Improvement Plan (revised), 1 November 2007*  
[https://www.bromley.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1715/rights\\_of\\_way\\_improvement\\_plan.pdf](https://www.bromley.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/1715/rights_of_way_improvement_plan.pdf)

Would Portfolio Holder kindly provide an update and current status for each recommended actions listed in Table 8.1 (pages 45-54); amounts expended; and actions that have and will be taken to inform residents of 1 January 2026 cut-off date for recording rights of way on definitive map(s)?

**5. From Richard Seabrook to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services**

Is a private developer adopting the upper part of the unmade section of The Avenue in Beckenham? If so, what will this adoption involve and at what cost to the Council and residents?

**6. From Richard Seabrook to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

How does the Council ensure the needs of children with particular dietary requirements (for example due to religious considerations) are respected in the provision of free school meals?

**7. From Emma Martin, Chair, Bromley Brighter Beginnings, to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management**

Could you please confirm the exact amount that Bromley Council has been allocated from the Government's Covid 19 Winter Grant, which departments will be receiving a portion of the funds and how much money they will each receive?

**8. From Emma Martin, Chair, Bromley Brighter Beginnings, to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

Can the Council please confirm that Bromley's portion of the Covid 19 Winter Grant will be used to ensure every child registered for free school meals in the London Borough of Bromley will receive a voucher to cover the value of those meals during the Christmas holidays?

**9. From Patricia Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

Were the Covid-19 Defra grants given to Bromley meant to provide welfare relief solely to Children in Social Care or more broadly to people struggling to afford food and other essentials due to Covid-19?

**10. From Patricia Morgan to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

How many children in Bromley received any direct support from the Covid-19 Defra grants?

**11. From Will Conway to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

*CYP PDS Committee, 10 November 2020: Bromley Council was awarded £279,772.15 in Defra grants “to support people who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to Covid-19. When asked what the Council had used the Defra grants for, they stated that the funds went to Children in Social Care. I am concerned that this money may have been spent on things that it was already the Council’s duty to provide and not the extra needs occasioned by the pandemic which the grant was intended to address.*

How many children in Bromley are currently recognised as “Children in Social Care”?

**12. From Clare Owen to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

Does the Council know how many families in Bromley are receiving direct support from Bromley Brighter Beginnings, Bromley Relief, Bromley Food Bank and Bromley Homeless Shelter Advice Service?

**13. From Lauren Brown to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

In what ways are Bromley Council exercising their Safeguarding Duties towards Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic Children, particularly the duty to promote emotional wellbeing, confidence and a positive identity during this time?

**14. From Verity Susman to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

How many of the cohort of children in Bromley in receipt of free school meals at the time the Covid-19 Defra grant was provided, received support funded by the Covid-19 Defra grant?

**15. From Verity Susman to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

What amount (if any) of the Covid-19 Defra grant was spent on statutory services?

**16. From Sally Bywater to the to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

Would the Council not agree that it would have been more appropriate to issue multiple press releases through its social media platforms promoting help for vulnerable families and children all year round, rather than just the one on 25th October and why were there 5 posts on Halloween safety on the Council Facebook page and only two (same day) for the emergency number for family support?

**17. From Sally Bywater to the to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

By which communication means is the Council proposing to directly contact all families in the borough who are entitled to free school meals, to provide them with food vouchers over the Christmas holidays, by which date this will be achieved and how much it will cost the Council?

**18. From Alisa Igoe to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

*Reference: Portfolio Holder's written answer to a public question at Children, Education and Families PDS Committee meeting on 10 November 2020.*

The Portfolio Holder stated: "5,896 pupils eligible for a free school meal ... Spring 2020 Census" and "updated data not available until Autumn Census". This is a substantial increase on figures for 2019 which were approximately 4,500. What was the exact 2019 figure please and on which date will updated data be published?

**19. From Alisa Igoe to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

*Reference: Department of Education statement 16 November: £170m Covid Winter Grant Scheme "Local authorities have local ties and knowledge, making them best placed to identify and help those children and families most in need"*

Would you kindly confirm Bromley Council will, as the statement says, "identify" and approach families directly, to provide Christmas holiday food vouchers, rather than requiring families eligible for free school meals to call the MASH telephone line, as happened over October half term?

**20. From Edward Bywater to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

How did the Covid-19 Defra funds of £100,000 for extra carers differentiate from the Covid-19 Defra funds for £119,000 that went for assistance and shielding support?

**21. From Edward Bywater to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

Will Council list the £18,000 worth of equipment for children it purchased with the Covid-19 Defra grants?

**22. From Mrs Anne Clark to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

Could you tell me exactly how many families in Bromley directly received a service or food vouchers from the Covid-19 Defra grant? Hopefully this will include the Christmas holidays.

**23. From Mrs Anne Clarke to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

Would the Council explain details of the £ 30,000 Defra grant spent on "staffing and training?"

**24. From James Hamilton to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

At the Children, Education and Families PDS Committee, it was stated that Bromley Council had been awarded £279,000 in DEFRA funding. Was any of this used to pay for services the Council had already committed to spend within Children's Services before 23 March 2020, and was any of this spend on statutory services?

**25. From James Hamilton to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

How many people in Bromley directly received a service or a food voucher funded by the Covid-19 DEFRA grant?

**26. From Hanna Walton to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

How many children in Bromley who currently qualify for Free School Meals receive funding from the Covid-19 Defra grants?

**27. From Helen Alsworth to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

Has the take up of free school meals in Bromley increased during 2020? Can the Council estimate the increase and break it down by schools?

**28. From Helen Alsworth to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

The Government has stated an intention to tackle the issue of child food poverty, and I want to ask the Council if Bromley Council intends to develop a strategy to meet this need locally?

**29. From Maxim Rowlands to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

Does the Council know how many Bromley schools currently run food banks for their families?

**30. From Laura Vogel to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

*Children, Education and Families PDS Committee Minutes from 10 November, (19) Portfolio Holder's Update:*

*"Those parents in need of extra support were encouraged to call the MASH (Multi Agency Safeguarding Hub) helpline so their call could be screened to ensure they received the correct support. The Portfolio Holder explained that individuals often rung for one thing when actually, in conversation with a qualified social worker, the reason was discovered to be different. For example, someone could ring the number asking for advice but actually trying to report abuse, domestic violence or mental health concerns."*

Does the Council consider it appropriate that Bromley only publicised the MASH safeguarding telephone number as the appropriate channel for parents to approach the Council for food provisions during the October half term and how many Bromley staff were manning the line at any one time?

**31. From Laura Vogel to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

Would the Council not have considered it more appropriate to issue a dedicated telephone number (as other Councils did) for families requesting food vouchers for the October half term, rather than only providing the MASH safeguarding number, which may have made families hesitate if they simply wanted to request vouchers to which they were entitled, yet thought they would be talking to a social worker?

**32. From Liz Thomas to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

*Bromley Council was awarded £279,772.15 in DEFRA grants to 'support people who are struggling to afford food and other essentials due to Covid-19. When asked what the Council had used the DEFRA grant for, they stated that the funds went to children in social care. The funds were allocated on the basis of population, weighted by the English index of Multiple Deprivation. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/coronavirus-covid-19-local-authority-emergency-assistance-grant-for-food-and-essential-supplies>*

What is Bromley's English Index of Multiple deprivation and was this entire group covered in the disbursement of the Covid-19 DWFEA grants?

**(B)**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**7<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR ORAL REPLY**

**1. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett to the Leader of the Council**

What is the debt and any interest paid by council taxpayers in Bromley compared with neighbouring boroughs?

**2. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Leader of the Council**

Many London Boroughs have spent close to £1m on contact tracing. Apparently Bromley's expenditure on this work is extremely low because existing staff have been diverted to it. This is a tribute to our staff, but what work isn't being done as a consequence and what is the financial "opportunity cost" of this to the Council?

**3. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Leader of the Council**

In the past three months two papers, for the Redevelopment of Chislehurst Library and the Energy Services Contract were initially published as Part 2 (Confidential) only, in spite of substantial public interest in both of these papers. It was only after significant pressure from Councillors and members of the public that Part 1 (Public) versions were published, containing the vast majority of information in the original papers.

Why were these Part 1 (Public) papers not published with the original meeting agendas?

**4. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing:**

Could the Portfolio Holder please explain on what basis the eligibility criteria for applications to the Bromley Welfare Fund were set and when they were last renewed?

**5. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing:**

One of my recent caseworks concerned an elderly couple who are now homeless because they refused to be relocated from Penge to Gravesend. Can the Council's policy be amended to ensure elderly local residents are not moved away from their support networks to remote locations?

**6. From Cllr Josh King to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Services**

Given the Government's announcement that the purchase of new petrol and diesel cars will be banned from 2030 what is the Council doing to accelerate the provision of publicly accessible charging points for electric vehicles?

**7. From Cllr Kevin Brooks to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Services**

Would the Portfolio Holder please outline the Council's strategy on leaf clearance? Are there multiple clearances or is the policy to wait until all leaves have fallen?

**8. From Cllr Simon Fawthrop to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Services**

Has the Portfolio Holder read the report in the Economics and Human Biology Journal which demonstrates that cycles lanes are on the whole poor value for money, and that if spending increased at the same rate for the next 10 years there would only be a 1% increase in commuter cycling.

**9. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett to the Leader of the Council**

What consultation did Transport for London and neighbouring local authorities undertake with the Council regarding the closure of streets and the narrowing of roads during the summer of 2020?

**10. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Leader of the Council**

Is this Council going to be one of those trialling mass testing?

**11. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Services**

Information provided at the November meeting of the Environment & Community Services PDS Committee showed no downward movement in the number of people killed or seriously injured on Bromley's roads over the last three years. What will the Portfolio Holder do to get this number moving firmly downwards in the coming years?

**12. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Services**

Following the Government's announcement of an additional £175 million for councils to provide walking and cycling infrastructure, how does Bromley Council plan to consult local communities, as required as part of the conditions for schemes, and when will this consultation process begin?

**13. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Leader of the Council**

The Metropolitan Police are taking bold steps to recruit more black police officers and ensure that institutional racism is wiped out in the police force.

Can you advise if Bromley Council are undertaking any work or additional training to ensure that the diversity of our communities are reflected?

**14. From Cllr Josh King to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing**

Will the Portfolio Holder endorse the End our Cladding Campaign organised by Inside Housing and The Sunday Times?

<https://www.insidehousing.co.uk/news/news/end-our-cladding-scandal-campaign-relaunches-with-10-step-plan-to-tackle-mounting-crisis-68020>

**15. From Cllr Kevin Brooks to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Health**

Over the last few years and accelerated under Covid, the number of respite centres in Bromley has dramatically decreased. While praise must go to Bromley Well, they have been overwhelmed and therefore their support is limited. What are the Council doing to improve respite for the large number of Bromley Carers?

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**COUNCIL MEETING**

**7<sup>th</sup> December 2020**

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**1. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett MA JP to the Leader of the Council**

Following the announcement of plans for H M The Queen's Platinum Jubilee in 2022 whether he will consider modest grants to local groups who organise events to celebrate the occasion?

**2. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett MA JP to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal Recreation and Housing**

Pursuant to my question at the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS Committee on November 9<sup>th</sup> what is the position regarding the construction of housing on the Station Road Car Park in West Wickham?

**3. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning & Contract Management**

Please provide a breakdown of the Council's use of Agency Staff, showing person days and net cost, by month from April 2019 to as recently as figures are available, broken down by Adult Social Care, Children's Social Care, other EHCS, ECS and other. Please also show the number of employees in FTE with the same breakdown.

**4. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing**

Please provide the total number of Planning Applications received for 2019 and 2020 (to date) broken down by ward, showing the number of normal Planning Applications, the number relating to Permitted Development and the number related to tree work.

**5. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing**

What is Bromley Council doing to ensure that all Grade 1 and Grade 2 listed buildings in the borough are properly maintained?

**6. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services**

A resident submitted photos of Bromley trees that had not been adequately maintained. Can you confirm that all our trees have been inspected during this year despite Covid?