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ECS PDS—21st March 2022.

Oral Questions from the Public

1) Question from Alisa Igoe:

On 14 February residents on New Street Hill, BR1 and all side roads were unable to access/leave their streets by vehicle or on foot due to the railway bridge which crosses the road being damaged by a high vehicle. Network Rail quickly temporarily repaired it. Will the access road be closed at any time in the future to enable Network Rail to undertake permanent repairs?

Response to Question 1:

We understand that Network Rail are planning to close New Street Hill on the 8th June to carry out a full bridge inspection, between 10pm-6am. Network Rail will then be able to identify whether any permanent repairs are necessary, with our Network Management team co-ordinating any future road closures.

2) Question from Alisa Igoe:

Reference: Development Control Committee 9 March - Item 7 - 21/03622/FULL1

4.2 Transport for London.

Improvements to the existing pedestrian crossing refuge islands on Burnt Ash Lane should be secured through S278 agreement and consideration should be given to the provision of zebra or light controlled crossings.

The developer has agreed to widen the refuges via a S278 agreement. The road junction with New Street Hill is very difficult for pedestrians to cross, especially due to southbound high speed vehicles. If condition of development does not cover the installation of zebra or light controlled crossings as suggested by TfL, will Bromley Council install them?

Response to Question 2:

The works will be secured by a section 278 agreement for improvements to pedestrian crossing facilities to be undertaken within 2 years of completion of the development.

Supplementary Question:

I was at the Development Control Committee meeting when this matter was discussed. This development is due to be completed in 2031. Do you think it is reasonable for us to have to wait until possibly 2033 to get a pedestrian crossing installed where there are currently three refuges. Could this not be expedited?

Response to Supplementary Question:

This matter sits within the planning process and this was a condition on the planning application. The developers agreed to do that. We can engage with them to see if they would wish to do this earlier if some of the development was habitable before the final completion date.

3) Question from Jasper Bell:

Your update on the *South Eden Park Road Danger Reduction Scheme* states that there is no funding available at present for any of the interventions listed however your Executive Council Tax Report (dated 9.10) highlights reserves in the millions. Why is the Council unable to deploy some of these reserves for the improvements identified on South Eden Park Road?

Response to Question 3

The operational budget for improvements to the highway for pedestrians, cyclists and for casualty reduction comes from grants made available from TfL each year. This funding has ceased since December, as TfL and the DfT negotiate funding arrangements for TfL. I hope this is a temporary funding gap.

Regardless of funding, each highway improvement scheme must be prioritised according to need, with the priority being given to making changes at locations where there have been larger numbers of injury collisions and with a particular focus on serious injuries.

The Council takes a one Council view of its priorities and Council's level of reserves reflects the significant financial uncertainty facing the Council and the need to address the medium term budget gap, with the majority of amounts being retained for specific earmarked purposes, and to provide a more sustainable longer term financial position. Reserves also generate an income which avoids raising the funds through Council Tax, which is particularly important with the current pressures on residents. One particular pressure on the Council at the moment and looking uncertain going forward is our housing waiting list and the current ear marked reserve for this purpose may need increasing.

Supplementary Question:

If there is a situation where there is not a viable crossing, no pavement and where pedestrians are at the mercy of drivers can you make an exception please, even if it may be the case that there is no historic data showing collisions?

Response to the Supplementary Question:

There are locations (including at the roundabout on South Eden Park Rd which have been identified as accident locations; these are locations that have been identified as a possible spot for road safety interventions. So I would be hard pushed to say that other sites would move above settings that have been identified as priority accident locations.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Simon Fawthrop:

I would like to ask a question regarding the various earmarked reserves. Is it fair to say that within those earmarked reserves is unaccounted for inflation which could be a big concern in the coming financial year.

Response to the Supplementary Question:

I can't say precisely whether or not inflation is accounted for. As you are aware, the Council looks for contractors to try and absorb inflation where possible but equally things like building costs having been moving ahead significantly faster than inflation. Inflation was the aspect that I was particularly highlighting relating to why residents would prefer not to see Council Tax go up and prefer that our reserves generate income.

6) Question from Jasper Bell:

Your update on the South Eden Park Road Danger Reduction Scheme states that funding will be sought from TFL for the interventions listed as Bromley cannot provide the funds. Is it TFL policy to fund measures of this nature, and could you confirm how pedestrian crossings installed across the borough near schools were funded across 2020 and 2021?

Response to Question 6:

Funding for crossings and other improvements around schools, some temporary, was specifically made available to London local authorities through TfL's London Streetspace Programme, to support choice of travel during the Covid pandemic. As you may be aware, Bromley took advantage of this funding to install a number of pedestrian crossings near schools, in suitable locations.

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