

ECS PDS--7th September 2023.

Questions from the Public for Oral Response:

1) Question from Dermot Mckibbin to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces:

What are the financial savings and reductions in carbon emissions for the proposed installations of the solar panels at the council owned Spa and Pavilion centres and will the Council use its influence to ensure that Mytime signs off this project?

Response to Question 1:

There are no financial savings to the Council arising from the installation of solar panels at Beckenham Spa or the Pavilion Leisure Centre, as the Council are not responsible for utilities at these sites, which are leased to Mytime Active on a full repairing and insuring basis. Any question on potential savings or on the reduction in carbon emissions, which are not measured by the Council, should be directed to Mytime. Officers met with Mytime and SELCE in August and have agreed that the Council will, as Landlord, provide its consent should Mytime wish to proceed with this project.

Supplementary Question:

The savings to the spa as I understand it are in the region of £456.00k The cost to the Council and the Spa would be nil as the cost will be borne by public share offers as has occurred elsewhere in Lewisham and Greenwich. If the spa is unable to sign off this agreement then they may come back to the Council to ask for more financial support. This is going to generate substantial carbon savings and should be in line with Council policy. Do you have any influence with My Time to enable the project to be signed off and to subsequently present a report to committee concerning the making of all of My Time and properties owned by the Council climate change friendly?

Response to the Supplementary Question from the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces.

I believe that this matter sits with the Property Team. I would suggest contacting Councillor Bear to see if she could bring this matter to the Renewal & Recreation Housing PDS Committee.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Igoe:

Would you discuss this matter with Councillor Bear and Councillor Marlow as the matter covers several portfolios.

Response to the Supplementary Question from Cllr Igoe from the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces:

I am always open to discussing issues with Cabinet colleagues where matters crossover different briefs and I will do so as and when required.

2) Question from Teresa Steele to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

This question is in respect of the Equality Impact assessment (EIA) relating to the removal of cash payment for parking in council controlled parking areas dated September 2022.

Would the Council please advise what procedures and methods were used to gather information about the impact of this policy on protected groups, to ensure compliance with Public Sector Equality Duty (PSED) as set out in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010 (EqA 2010) and the specific duties under section 153. Who signed off the EIA at the Council?

Response to Question 2 from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

The Council followed its internal procedures to conduct a full equalities impact assessment on the removal of cash payment for parking in Bromley to ensure full compliance with PSED. This process highlighted the potential impact on the age and disability groups. Those with disabilities who are part of the Blue Badge scheme will be unaffected by this service change. People of all ages who use parking bays are motorists who have demonstrated they have the skill to drive a vehicle, which is considered more demanding than using a mobile phone or computer--was a mitigating factor in the age category.

We fully evidenced our thinking, several methods were used to gather information including trend and data analysis from a range of data sets including census, UK finance, TFL, to measure impact on the identified groups. Focus has been placed on those without bank accounts, computers or smartphones, but data showed that car owners and those with disabilities were likely to have bank accounts due to the requirements of vehicle administration and benefits and allowances.

A public information campaign was put in place before implementation, including FAQs for residents informing them of the various ways of booking a session, including by computer, not just via a smart phone and that they can go to libraries should they need help with using computers, not to be digitally excluded. Leaflets were also provided in community settings to raise awareness amongst equalities groups. Market testing of the service change took place in 2020 and 2022. The EIA was completed by an impartial Council Officer from the Culture and Regeneration team and was signed off by the Director of Environment and Public Protection.

Supplementary Question:

Could you supply me with a list of the stakeholders consulted with respect to the Equality Impact Assessment please?

Response to the Supplementary Question from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

I will see if a list is available.

3) Question from John Perkins to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

Although progress has been made in clearing the backlog of pothole repairs, there are still many outstanding. I understand that the contractors are now switching their attention to footway repairs. Why is this being done when there are still many longstanding pothole repairs to be dealt with? How many crews will still be dealing with pothole repairs?

Response to Question 3 from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety:

Pothole repairs will continue to be undertaken in accordance with Council policy. Our contractors are currently employing 15 gangs in the borough. Of the outstanding reactive repairs, two-thirds relate to footways, and the resources deployed will reflect this.

Supplementary Question:

From my observations there are still a large number of potholes that have not been repaired, some for as long as six months. The performance schedule that is part of this agenda does not contain any data on the 35 day tasks since April 2023. Can you give any confidence that the contractor will be addressing long outstanding pothole repairs in the immediate future?

Response to the Supplementary Question from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

A second contractor was brought in to assist the first contractor as they were having problems getting enough staff. From my observations (after coming back from holiday), I was pleased to note that many of the potholes that I had reported had been dealt with. There are still many to do but we are getting on top of it. I anticipate that the remaining pot-holes will be repaired by the end of the month. Winter is coming and so let's hope we don't get more pot-holes because of Winter.

4) Question from Tim Webb to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

Despite many comments from residents and councillors, the Highways Dept remain unable to give any idea of timescale for dealing with potholes or to explain why your contractor does not deal with all the defects in one location at the same time. Why is this?

Response to Question 4 from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

Repair works are programmed by our contractors to make the best use of resources. Our contractors have been reminded that all defects within a location should be completed at the same time, but there are locations when this is not possible, such as when traffic management is required.

Supplementary Question:

The question is really regarding the updating of notes on 'Fix My Street.' I recently reported 3 potholes by the roundabout in Orpington. The last official update saying that traffic management would be required was on the 13th May. We are now in September and what I am disappointed with is not with the efforts of the contractor, but rather I would like to ask if the Highways Department could be more forthcoming and more current with putting updates on FMS.

Response to the Supplementary Question from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

There are at least three officers here listening to your reply and your reputation as the 'Pot Hole King' goes before you. I am sure that Mr Brand will ensure that you receive a reply to your question.

5) Question from Richard Gibbons to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces.

Parliament has concluded England is arguably the most littered nation in Europe, and LB Bromley is no exception. Speaking to idverde operatives, I understand that their litter picking team has been disbanded. As a consequence, is the Council surreptitiously outsourcing the job of litter picking our parks and greenspaces to the volunteer workforce?

<https://www.euronews.com/2023/03/15/welcome-to-a-filthy-littered-dump-called-britain>

Response to Question 5 from the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces:

No. idverde are contracted by the Council to provide a programme of cleaning in parks and open spaces in the borough. The cleansing teams have not been disbanded.

Supplementary Question:

Thank you Portfolio Holder for your answer.

Before my supplementary question, as Veolia are in the chamber, may I take a moment to thank them for their support for Street Friends, providing these striking vests, litter pickers and purple sacks; and to Maria for promoting Street Friends and organising a regular forum. As we are providing a 'green service', may I request 'green' rather than 'yellow' vests? Wearing a 'green' vest would also avoid our volunteers being mistaken for the yellow-vested protestors associated with The Stop ULEZ Coalition, which lists Cllr Fawthrop amongst its members.

Portfolio Holder, our 'litter walks' in Green Street Green cover around 23 hectares, a small part of Chelsfield Ward, about the same area as Norman Park. Since local elections last May Friends of Green Street Green have spent 459 hours collecting and recycling 10,886 bottles and cans, 2,254 nitrous oxide canisters, and filling 192 purple sacks with non-recyclable litter. If we extrapolate the numbers across 22 wards, a conservative estimate would be 10,000 hours spent picking up 250,000 bottles and cans, 50,000 nitrous oxide canisters, and filling 4,000 sacks with litter.

Whether idverde are litter picking or not is debatable. Are they doing a thorough job? Clearly not. Therefore, would you acknowledge that resident-led community groups have become a de facto contractor which, since May 2022, has provided a service worth over £100,000 at National Living Wage?

Response to the Supplementary Question from the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces:

There is no denying that the Friends Groups do an enormous amount of work. I can only speak from my experience that whenever I have visited parks I have seen idverde operatives working hard and their trucks full of rubbish. It begs the question as to why we have such a litter problem. I don't think its fair to criticise idverde.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Simon Fawthrop:

Can we refer the matter of littering to the Education Portfolio Holder. It is important to ingrain into future generations the fact that littering is not acceptable?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces:

I think this is a cross portfolio issue. Veolia have been working on their own educational initiatives and indeed were recently nominated for a national recycling award. I think that there is more to do for sure and that it is important that this education is encouraged in secondary schools.

Supplementary comment from Councillor Allison Stammers:

I concur with the observations of Mr Richard Gibbons. The Friends of Chislehurst Recreation Ground are constantly picking up litter after idverde operatives have left the area. There appear to be some ID Verde operatives who are conscientious in their work and others who are not.

Response to Councillor Stammers from the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces:

Please report any issues of this nature to your Commercial Manager, Myself or to Hannah Jackson. We do need to know about these issues so that they can be monitored.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Chloe Jane-Ross:

Do we have the right amount of bins and in the right places?

Response to Councillor Chloe Jane Ross from the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces:

I am not against installing additional bins in new areas, but in some instances it appears that more bins can attract more litter. We can put in more bins if required. Please direct any queries of this nature to your Commercial Manager for assessment.

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