

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY

MINUTES

of the proceedings of the Meeting of the
Council of the Borough
held at 7.00 pm on 26 June 2017

Present:

**The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Kathy Bance MBE**

**The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Kevin Brooks**

Councillors

| | | |
|-----------------------|---------------------|-------------------------|
| Vanessa Allen | Peter Fortune | Tom Philpott |
| Graham Arthur | Ellie Harmer | Chris Pierce |
| Douglas Auld | Will Harmer | Neil Reddin FCCA |
| Julian Benington | Samaris Huntington- | Catherine Rideout |
| Nicholas Bennett J.P. | Thresher | Charles Rideout QPM CVO |
| Ruth Bennett | William Huntington- | Michael Rutherford |
| Eric Bosshard | Thresher | Colin Smith |
| Kim Botting FRSA | Charles Joel | Diane Smith |
| Katy Boughey | David Livett | Melanie Stevens |
| Lydia Buttinger | Kate Lymer | Tim Stevens |
| Stephen Carr | Russell Mellor | Michael Tickner |
| David Cartwright QFSM | Alexa Michael | Pauline Tunnicliffe |
| Alan Collins | Peter Morgan | Michael Turner |
| Mary Cooke | Terence Nathan | Stephen Wells |
| Ian Dunn | Keith Onslow | Angela Wilkins |
| Nicky Dykes | Tony Owen | Richard Williams |
| Judi Ellis | Angela Page | |
| Robert Evans | Ian F. Payne | |
| Simon Fawthrop | Sarah Phillips | |

The meeting was opened with prayers

In the Chair
The Mayor
Councillor Kathy Bance MBE

14 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Peter Dean, Peter Fookes, Hannah Gray, David Jefferys, Richard Scoates and Teresa Te. Apologies for late arrival were received from Councillors Will Hamer and Sarah Phillips.

15 Declarations of Interest

Councillor Peter Morgan declared, in relation to the item on the annual accounts for 2016/17, that his daughter was an employee of Kier.

Councillor Angela Wilkins declared, in relation to the question she would be putting on Crystal Palace Park, that she had been a stallholder at the recent Overground Festival.

16 To confirm the Minutes of the annual meeting of the Council held on 10th May 2017

RESOLVED that the minutes of the annual meeting held on 10th May 2017 be confirmed.

17 Petitions

No petitions had been received.

18 Questions from members of the public where notice has been given.

Six questions had been received from members of the public. These are set out in Appendix A to these minutes.

19 Questions from Members of the Council for oral reply where notice has been given.

Fifteen questions for oral reply had been received from members of the Council. These are set out in Appendix B to these minutes.

20 Questions from Members of the Council for written reply where notice has been given

Fifteen questions for written reply had been received from members of the Council. These are set out in Appendix C to these minutes.

21 To consider any statements that may be made by the Leader of the Council, Portfolio Holders or Chairmen of Committees.

The Leader of the Council, Councillor Stephen Carr, made a statement on the recent the tragic and horrific fire at Grenfell Tower in Kensington and Chelsea. He had expressed sincere condolences both personally as well as on behalf of the Council to those affected. The Leader stated that the safety of residents was always the highest priority and the Council would work continually with partners in the fire service, police and other organisations to ensure that it kept abreast of safety issues that might affect residents.

Bromley had assisted in several ways – the Chief Executive had spent several days with the team helping to assemble and organise resources, and social workers and housing officers had been deployed to assist. 28 units of temporary accommodation from Clarion had been offered, although they had not been required. The Leader stated that he would be writing to all the staff involved offering thanks for their assistance in these difficult circumstances.

The Council had published a statement on its website and in the media explaining what actions were being taken to reassure residents. In particular, assurances had been sought from the major housing associations with high rise properties in the borough – Clarion, Hyde and Riverside. The largest provider, Clarion, had commissioned a detailed review of all their properties over six storeys. In Bromley, this was nine blocks, but none of them needed to be reviewed in relation to cladding. Other providers had also been contacted and all would be expected to demonstrate that risk assessments had been carried out to the required standards.

The Council had also checked that all other provision was safe – this included temporary accommodation, More Homes Bromley, nightly-paid temporary accommodation, supported housing, care leaver's placements, care homes, schools and other public buildings. The Council's Emergency Planning and Building Control arrangements would be reviewed.

The Leader confirmed that the Council was doing everything possible to get the reassurances that residents needed to ensure that they were as safe as possible, and would take the necessary action to ensure that the situation was remedied where these were not satisfactory. The Leader would be meeting with the Chief Executives of Clarion, Hyde and Riverside later in the week to hear about the work they were doing. He concluded by assuring Members that the Council would continue to monitor the investigation into the fire and would work closely with the Department for Communities and Local Government wherever needed.

22 Submission of Bromley's Draft Local Plan
Report CSD17026

A motion to approve the Draft Local Plan for submission to the Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government for Independent Examination was moved by Councillor Peter Morgan, seconded by Councillor Alexa Michael and **CARRIED**.

23 Provisional Final Accounts 2016/17
Report CSD17092

A motion to transfer a sum of £3,311k to the Growth Fund and transfer a sum of £2m to the Joint Initiatives and Pump Priming (BCF) earmarked reserve was moved by Councillor Graham Arthur, seconded by Councillor Stephen Carr and **CARRIED**.

24 Treasury Management - Annual Report 2016/17
Report CSD17093

A motion to (1) note the Treasury Management Annual Report for 2016/17; (2) approve changes to the Council's Treasury Management Strategy as set out in the report; and (3) approve the actual prudential indicators within the report, was moved by Councillor Graham Arthur, seconded by Councillor Stephen Carr and **CARRIED**.

25 Fourth Report of the Education Select Committee 2016/17
Report CSD17081

The following corrections to the Select Committee's report were noted –

- in recommendation 2, the words “through the regular” should be deleted.
- in recommendation 4, the word “available” should be replaced by “appropriate”.

A motion to invite the Leader of the Council and appropriate Portfolio Holders to consider the recommendations of the Select Committee, refer the recommendations to Service Directors where appropriate and provide a written response to the Education, Children and Families Select Committee for consideration at their meeting in October 2017 was moved by Councillor Nicholas Bennett, seconded by Councillor Neil Reddin and **CARRIED**.

26 To consider Motions of which notice has been given.

No motions had been received.

27 The Mayor's announcements and communications.

The Mayor thanked Members for all their offers of support and reminded them of the following events –

- The Civic Service on Sunday 9th July 2017 at Beckenham Baptist Church.
- The Volunteers Reception on Thursday 27th July 2017.
- The first charity event - a dinner at the Lugana Restaurant in Beckenham.
- A fun evening at the Bridge House Theatre in Penge on Sunday 3rd September 2017.

The Meeting ended at 8.55 pm.

Mayor

COUNCIL MEETING

26th JUNE 2017

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(A) Questions for Oral Reply**1. From Sam Russell to the Leader of the Council**

Following the tragic events in Grenfell Tower, residents in and around Essex Tower in Penge are rightfully concerned about their safety. Given the privatised nature of the Council's housing stock, is the Portfolio Holder satisfied that the information provided by the housing association is accurate, timely and independently verified?

Reply:

Yes, I am satisfied at this stage with the information that I am receiving, given that much of it is being independently provided from organisations outside Clarion. The Fire Services and other specialist contractors are providing independent advice. Not only that, but I have been personally contacted by the Chief Executive Officer of Clarion, not only expressing his heartfelt sympathy for those affected, but also informing me of what they will be doing to reassure local residents of their safety. This goes much beyond some providers in the public sector.

Supplementary Question:

I would be interested to know if there is any information that you feel you have not received yet, and if so, when you expect to receive it and, in general, if you feel that there is anything further that is causing you concern that we are not currently aware of?

Reply:

Do I know what I do not know? It is a very serious question. I am confident at the moment that we have got most of the boxes ticked, if not more. What I can say is that, and I talk about Clarion because your question is particularly related to accommodation under the Clarion umbrella, I have been on the phone to their Chief Operating Officer this afternoon and I am meeting with their Chief Executive later this week, to ensure that I am even more confident than I am today speaking to you of all the things we can think of. If you would like to contact me and raise any issues that local residents want to deal with I'll pick those up and take them to that meeting. At the moment I am as confident as I can possibly be, without knowing what I do not know.

2. From Sam Russell to the Leader of the Council

Given the unique nature of Essex Tower within Bromley, and to reassure residents, would the Portfolio Holder agree to support and encourage some additional inspections led by council officers and the fire brigade and including the housing association?

Reply:

In preparing the answer to these questions, I spoke this afternoon with the Head of Corporate Affairs at Clarion who assured me again that all the work that is being done in the light of the Grenfell Tower disaster is being conducted independently.

If, sometime in the future, further reassurance was needed then I would take such action as you are requesting this evening.

Supplementary Question:

If there continues to be a concern from residents in and around Essex Tower in the coming weeks and months, would the Leader consider visiting Essex Tower personally to provide some direct reassurance to the residents

Reply:

I will do anything I can to try to reassure residents, whether living in Penge or elsewhere in the borough, that they are living as safely as possible. So the answer to your question is yes, of course I will.

(B) Questions for Written Reply**1. From Sophie Shaw to the Chairman of Development Control Committee**

Given the dire shortage of social and affordable housing in Bromley, why is the Council not enforcing the minimum 35% provision for this type of accommodation on developers?

Reply:

Development Plan and national policies do not simply require 35% of Housing to be Affordable housing. They include a viability stage where the developer can seek to demonstrate that the scheme with 35% is not viable unless a lower proportion of Affordable Housing is included. The Council follows those policies and normally refers such cases for an independent check as well before deciding on the application.

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

Could the portfolio holder please explain why pavement works on Penge High Street have stopped before completion, why they are apparently not going to resume for at least eight weeks and whether the reason for the stoppage is that the contractors completing the work have not been paid?

Reply:

Completion of the footway improvements in Penge High Street have been delayed to allow TfL to install the new traffic signals at the Green Lane Junction. The project also includes improvements to Empire Square and Arpley Square, and once the special paving materials for these have been delivered the works will recommence.

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

After the pavement has been re-laid, could the portfolio holder explain why it is then being dug up again two weeks later by UK Power Networks and how long this further work is expected to take?

Reply:

UKPN needed to excavate the footway in Penge High Street to deal with an emergency. The paving will be reinstated in matching materials once their works have been completed.

4. From Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Since pavement works on Penge High Street have now stopped, the bollarded-off areas have become full with litter. Does responsibility for cleaning these areas rest with the council and will they commit to ensuring the areas are cleared of litter throughout the eight weeks in which the works have stopped?

Reply:

I am advised that the area has been checked by Neighbourhood Management and Highway Network Management since receipt of Mr Jeal's question and that they were unable to locate any areas which were full of litter.

If Mr Jeal could possibly provide further information as to any specific area he might have in mind, ideally via 'Fix My Streets' if possible to ensure the swiftest response, I know that they will be very pleased to recheck the area again at his direction.

Some litter was spotted behind the Heras fencing next to the old toilet block and that will be removed presently, if indeed it hasn't been already.

The contractor responsible has been reminded that the barriers left on site around the lamp column need to be checked daily until this work is completed.

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COUNCIL MEETING

26th JUNE 2017

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL REPLY FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Community Safety

What action has been taken by the Police and Ward Security in the light of the reports of knife point robberies of bicycles in West Wickham, Hayes and other parts of the Borough?

Reply:

Once we were made aware that there were incidents of ASB having taken place in Blake's Recreation Ground, Ward Security were tasked to undertake site visits as often as reasonably practicable.

Ward Security has undertaken the following amount of patrols at Blake's Recreation Ground in West Wickham -

- | | | |
|-----------|--------------------|----------------------------------|
| - April - | 14 Patrols | - 3 reported Incidents |
| - May - | 7 Patrols | - No reported incidents |
| - June - | 5 Patrols to date. | - No reported incidents to date. |

In particular, Ward Security attended Blake's Recreation Ground on the 21st April, as part of their patrols an evicted a large group of youths causing ASB.

Please be advised that Ward Security do not patrol the Borough's Streets in relation to reported knife point robberies of bicycles as this is a Police function. They will of course respond to and assist the Police if called to assist.

With regards to crime levels in West Wickham Ward, in the 9 weeks running up to and including the school Easter holidays (the time period to which I understand the question relates), there were

- 4 crime reports for theft of a cycle (two of these bikes were left unsecured and unattended outside KFC);
- 3 crime reports for robbery.

There was no mention of knives being used in any of these crimes.

At the time of this increase in crime, additional patrols were undertaken by the Police in this ward and plain clothes officers made an arrest off the ward in Croydon Road Recreation Ground in Beckenham, where they successfully apprehending suspects for a robbery there.

As a response to the community concerns Bromley Council's Community Safety Team, Inspector Byfield and the Safer Neighbourhood Team (SNT) met with a representative of the local parents to discuss what has been done and what young people can do to stay safe. The SNT also organised a community event on 23rd June at St Francis Church Hall

alongside the regular market. This provided local residents with access to various police officers and local agencies for advice, support and reassurance.

The local Police and Ward Security are aware of the upcoming summer holiday period and will factor this into team tasking. The Police and local authority have supported a group of local parents to compile a personal safety leaflet specifically for young people which will be offered to all schools in the borough; this leaflet covers advice and information on how to stay safe, as well as what to do in the event of a crime taking place and who to call. This has been funded by the Bromley Safer Neighbourhood Board.

The police, as always are available to speak with at local surgeries, on their telephone number and can be followed on twitter for current information on what they are doing.

Within the local authority, the Trading Standards Team are refreshing the Blade Safe Initiative. This involves visits to stores selling knives to ensure traders are complying with age related requirements and that all consumers are over 18 years of age.

Supplementary Question:

I met, with Mark Brock, forty parents at the Railway Inn in West Wickham in April. Mention of knives was made there, I understand that they may not have been reported at the time. Can we ensure that when we do come to the summer holidays that the excellent work being done by Angela Mumford of our Council with the parents is followed through, and that parents are aware that if there is any incident whatsoever they should report it directly to the Police rather than just passing it on amongst themselves because that is the way that the Police can get accurate information and intelligence on what is happening.

Reply:

Yes, you are absolutely right. It became clear at that meeting in April that a lot of these crimes were not being reported. If they are not reported to the Police they do not know they are happening and we do not know they are happening and we cannot tackle the problem. Part of the leaflet that the Safer Neighbourhood Board has just, on Friday, got funding from MOPAC for is to educate young people on who to call how to report a crime – that is very important. I think what happened in that meeting in April is that, although some of the victims of crime who said that they had been held at knifepoint, although they lived in West Wickham the actually those crimes occurred elsewhere in the borough or in Croydon. Concerning that parents group meeting, I had an email last week from Sarah Armstrong and there is another meeting being set up next week or the week after, which Amanda Mumford will be going to and I will be going too.

2. From Councillor Peter Fookes to the Leader of the Council
(In Councillor Fookes' absence a written reply was given)

What discussions have been held with the Mayor's Office with regard to the future of Crystal Palace Park?

Reply:

I attended a meeting with Deputy Mayor Jules Pipe this year on 15th May 2017 namely to provide an update on the Regeneration Plan and discuss the future of the National Sports Centre. This followed the Deputy Mayor's visit to the Park on 29th September 2016.

The discussions with the Deputy Mayor have focussed on the importance of the GLA resolving the future of the National Sports Centre, an important regional leisure facility, and ensuring no future conflict with the Regeneration Plan, which has been progressed by the Council.

Discussions also took place prior to the Mayor of London sending letters to the Big Lottery, Heritage Lottery Fund and Sport England this year regarding additional capital funding for the park.

There are regular meetings at officer level and the GLA's officers attend the Council's project monitoring meetings with AECOM, public consultation events and open days, and the Shadow Board meetings.

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

What is the total number and value of the Penalty Charge Notices identified as being issued as a result of malpractice or issued by Civil Enforcement Officers who did not have the right to work in this country, in the report by the Royal Borough of Greenwich into our former parking enforcement contractor?

Reply:

Council questions which require the disclosure of exempt confidential information can be rejected.

Here, the audit report has been reviewed by the Information Tribunal and consideration is being given on whether or not to appeal - until the period for considering the appeal expires (that is 35 days from the 9th June) any confidential information in the report remains confidential.

Having said that, the Member will be aware that the Council's Audit Sub-Committee did consider and accept Counsel's advice that the PCN's the Member refers to were lawfully issued. If the Member had concerns on that advice it should perhaps have been raised 2 years ago when it came before Members.

Supplementary Question:

Having had the first appeal against the Information Commissioner's decision dismissed recently, and with the potential to have a further appeal higher up the legal chain, if a decision is not taken to go higher up the legal chain will you commit to publishing the information which I have asked for within the statutory timescale?

Reply:

I am happy to give that assurance, we will obviously comply with any due aspect of law.

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

Whilst there may be a 'de facto' contract, have you managed yet to find the Waste Services contract (the full contact as required to be kept under legal seal) which was identified as missing in a recent internal audit and which I asked about at the last full Council?

Reply:

The candid answer is "No", and neither am I looking for it.

Securing and retention of such documents is a function of the Chief Officer's Legal team.

As has been explained previously, sufficient legal documentation is in place to fully support and enforce the contract in the original document's absence.

Supplementary Question:

Given the recent findings of a further Internal Audit report into Streetworks and the similarities between this and the audit report into Waste Services, which identified 15 priority one issues, do you think an internal audit of the Street Cleaning contract might actually reveal similar findings, and would it not be in the interests of the Council Tax payer to request an immediate Internal Audit investigation into the Street Cleaning contract?

Reply:

I do not believe so.

5. From Cllr Vanessa Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Environment

Further to the question asked at the April Council meeting, please provide information on where in the borough the additional £500k allocated for Environmental Initiatives in the 2017-18 budget is to be spent.

Reply:

Various options are currently still being evaluated and Members will be updated as to the various outcomes and recommendations over the course of the coming months.

Supplementary Question:

Can you give me any more information on what criteria you are using and when we can expect an update?

Reply:

The broad criteria is that we wanted to spend the limited money on the most effective way that produces the most good for residents across the borough. There is not a specific measuring stick. As I said in response to the time lapse, we should hopefully begin to recommend things in the coming weeks. I suspect that they will include projects such as more deep cleanses in the more tightly parked areas of the borough, including Clock House ward; and perhaps in the greener areas of the borough, slightly more environmental things which tick local boxes around parks; perhaps around high streets new bins with greater capacity to reduce overflowing waste. These are the sort of things that we are looking at, without any decisions having been finalised at this stage.

6. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

How many electric car charging points there are in the Borough and if he will list their locations?

Reply:

There are 9 ULEV/EV charging points sites (with 5 proposed), located in the following streets -

| Location | Number of Spaces | Status |
|------------------|------------------|--------|
| Car Parks | | |
| Civic Centre | 2 | Active |
| The Hill | 2 | Active |
| St Georges | 2 | Active |

| | | |
|------------------------|---|--------|
| Penge East | 2 | Active |
| New Beckenham | 2 | Active |
| Burnt Ash | 4 | Active |
| Hayes Station Approach | 2 | Active |
| On-street | | |
| The Meadway | 2 | Active |
| South Hill Road | 2 | Active |

Proposed new EV charging point locations

| Location | Number of Spaces | Current Status |
|------------------|------------------|-------------------------------------|
| On-street | | |
| Glebe Way | 3 | Free parking- could add P&D as well |
| Thicket Road | 3 | Free parking |
| Ravenscroft Road | 3 | Free parking |
| The Avenue | 3 | Free parking |
| Brunswick Place | 3 | Free parking |

There is a total of in the region of 35 actual points. We are looking at the evolving technology around the GULCS which is the roll out of far more electric points across the borough to meet the rising demand. Bromley is sixth on some measurements, and eighth on another, of demand for these new sites. What we want to do is to get them where they are serving a purpose without blocking up a parking space where they are not going to be as badly needed as in other places. It is an evolving feast that we are dealing with and you will see much more of this not only in Bromley but across London over the course of the next few years.

Supplementary Question:

I am sure that the Portfolio Holder agrees that electric cars are the coming thing, and they are going to take off very quickly in the next few years, particularly as people are concerned about clean air. Would it not be a good idea if we could publicise these, perhaps in his excellent "Environment Matters" newsletter so that the public can be very clear about where they can go to charge their cars.

Reply:

Yes, there is absolutely no reason why this should not be publicised. There is no point having these charging points if people do not use them. We should steer people towards them, and I will remind officers of the suggestion for the impending "Environment Matters."

Additional Supplementary Question from Councillor Simon Fawthrop:

Is the Portfolio Holder aware of a new scheme involving lamp post charging – will he look at that and make sure that there is a report to him and the PDS Committee, so that we can look at that and see whether that might be a cheaper and easier way to put charging points around the borough?

Reply:

I am aware of this and the matter was discussed at the London Councils TEC meeting only a week or so ago. One of the concerns about lamp post charging - which is clearly a good thing, particularly in the more tightly built areas of the borough where people do not have off-road parking available to them, and it gives people who live in that type of neighbourhood the ability to charge - is that more and more authorities have moved their

lamp columns to the backline, rather than near the kerb to avoid the volume knock-downs, which cost around £1,000 a time, and there is a problem because the technology works with lamp posts near to the kerb preferred. That is a consideration we will have to carry forward. It is also the case that in an area such as Bromley a large number of properties have significant off-street parking available to them and one would expect in those areas that the residents who have bought into the electric car methodology will be charging their vehicles on their own property. So I think there is broad consensus that there is not a simple one size fits all around this. We will have to plan very carefully about where we install this technology, which is not cheap to install, to ensure that where we do put it has value and purpose and that is what officers are looking at the moment.

7. From Councillor Peter Fookes to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services
(In Councillor Fookes' absence a written reply was given)

What progress has been made on dementia hubs?

Reply:

The Bromley Dementia Hub is a service commissioned by the Council with the support of the Clinical Commissioning group as a one stop shop to support Bromley residents diagnosed with dementia and their carers. The Dementia Hub had a soft launch in July 2016, taking initial enquiries from the Memory Clinic only. The service was fully operational by the Autumn of 2016, and whilst the primary route into the hub service is via the Memory Clinic, the Hub service is now available to all Bromley residents with a Dementia diagnosis. The Hub has received a total of 1182 referrals to date (615 from residents with a diagnosis and the remainder from carers), and the service user and carer feedback has been exceptionally positive. Over half of the people referred to the hub have gone on to have 1-1 support. The hub has supported nearly 100 carers to receive training in supporting those with Dementia, as well as provided training to almost 50 care and support staff in dementia awareness.

As the service has been operational for almost a year, the Council and the CCG are collating the first data set to help monitor how the Hub has supported people to remain independent.

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

When Adecco came to the May E&R PDS, neither their contract manager nor the officer managing the contract could answer a question on whether compensation would be paid to the Council should Adecco not meet its targets. Can you please confirm the consequences of Adecco not meeting their targets?

Reply:

A report was circulated to Members on the E&R PDS following its meeting last month – I would refer you to paragraph 3. It should be appreciated that the contract is mutually flexible to reflect the unique difficulty in recruitment of both temporary and permanent staff in this area. For example, in the last week or so we have secured Adecco's agreement for us to use five other agencies. The real solution is to make Bromley an employer of choice and move away from agency staff altogether. Members will be aware of the many initiatives now being pursued with marked success.

Supplementary Question:

You mentioned in your answer that there is an intention for Bromley to be an employer of choice and moving away from the use of agency staff. Do you have a sensible timescale for that to be done and would you be willing to publish, say, a five year plan.

Reply:

I am sure that the Deputy Chief Executive will have that information and will have already shared it with the Portfolio Holder and the PDS. That is the way that it will be shown in future, rather like a dashboard with these key figures. In terms of the penalty clause, when you realise that the horse you are riding is dead the logical thing to do is to actually dismount rather than send for a big whip. What we have done instead, in terms of recruitment, improved IT in the frontline - £0.5m spent, break out rooms, and a very successful recruitment day. All this information stemmed from the Dep Reps Forum, which was extremely useful. We were able to give higher pay and merit pay outside national terms, which your party opposed, but we think they are worth more, and should be paid more. I do think it is time to come together and support what is being done, because we are becoming an employer of choice. When the figures are shown to you will see that members of staff from other boroughs are coming to us an employer of choice, which is exactly what we wanted to achieve.

Additional Supplementary Question from Councillor Angela Wilkins:

I do not think that the question has been answered. The question comes from the Executive and Resources PDS Committee meeting when no-one knew whether there were any default payments where Adecco did not meet their KPIs. You may not have the answer tonight, but can we please be assured that the answer will be available for the next PDS meeting?

Reply:

I can only refer you to the published report – paragraph 3.

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

Given that in excess of £1million has been lost to this Council by poor management of the waste contract with Veolia, will he agree with me that the decision to try to save £60k by allowing Veolia to supervise the weighbridges was an extremely bad one?

Reply:

I neither accept the premise nor the factual accuracy of the theoretical figure mentioned in the assertion, nor more generally, so the answer to the question clearly has to be no. It might be helpful to understand where the Member opposite is 'sourcing' her asserted figure from, were she to have a supplementary question.

Supplementary Question:

The information came from both meetings of the Contracts Sub-Committee and meetings of the Audit Sub-Committee which I am not a member of but which I attended. The answers are in the paperwork and the documents that go with it.

Is it not the case that contracts like this where there is contractual self-monitoring are very similar to marking your own exam papers. It is perfectly natural to have the potential for the Council to be the loser and therefore we should consider not having self-monitoring in future contracts?

Reply:

I am personally more than happy with the current arrangements. Of course, every service across this authority needs to be audited, perhaps more regularly, to spot any errors that might exist, at a far earlier stage in any cycle where contracts might perhaps need attention.

10. From Cllr Vanessa Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection & Safety

A recent News Shopper report highlighted once again the number of food outlets in the borough which have poor ratings for food hygiene, including 4 with zero rating and 68 on one star. In February the Food Standards Agency found over 70 places rated zero or one star, and a year ago 160 rated two stars or fewer. A well known local ice cream producer waited 18 months for an inspection which never happened and then moved premises. This highlights the need for:-

- inspections of new premises
- regular inspections of all premises
- follow up inspections where food standards are poor
- more inspectors

In view of the above can the citizens of Bromley look forward to recruitment of more inspectors in order to safeguard their health, deal with this long running problem, and also to help the businesses concerned to improve and thrive?

Reply:

I must clarify that it is the London Borough Bromley Food Safety Team Officers who carry out the inspections, not the Food Standards Agency. With regard the issue of more inspectors, an additional resource was recently deployed to carry out additional inspections of our high risk businesses and officers are currently preparing a business case for additional resources which will be considered through the appropriate decision making process shortly.

Supplementary Question:

Bromley's boast that it is committed to providing a good quality service has been shown to be groundless by the FSA report – the audit in April this year. Will the Portfolio Holder undertake to ensure that the FSA recommendations are not only fully carried out, but also that the Council seriously considers recruiting more than the minimum number of staff that are included in the proposals that you are going to be looking at on Thursday?

Reply:

I do not agree with your analysis of the report from the FSA. What that report outlines is that the Team have been doing an excellent job with the restricted resources available and it also says in the opening statement how greatly staff are committed to providing a good service for the residents of Bromley. There is currently a business case being put together in response to the report from the FSA and that will be decided upon in mid-July, and hopefully we will have some resources to bolster the Team. Overall, this is a very common circumstance across the whole of the country – there is hardly a borough in the country that has as any Food Safety officers as they would like. We plan to improve that situation for Bromley.

11. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

How many car clubs have been established in Bromley and what are their locations?

Reply:

There are 14 Car Club vehicles located in the following streets –

High Street, Bromley South, BR1 1DS
Elmfield Park, Bromley, BR1 1LU
Sherman Road, Bromley, BR1 3GP
Station Road, Bromley, BR1 3LP
Rectory Road, Beckenham, BR3 1HW,
Copers Cope Road, Beckenham, BR3 1NR
Langley Road, Beckenham, BR3 4AD
Kendall Road, Beckenham, BR3 4PY
Knoll Rise, Orpington, BR6 0DD
Orpington High Street, Orpington, BR6 0NQ
Ledrington Road, Penge, SE19 2BA
Station Road, Penge East, SE20 7BQ
Witham Road, Penge, SE20 7YB
Anerley Park, Penge, SE20 8NF

Supplementary Question:

I understand that the car clubs are all organised by a private company. Would it be a good idea if the Council, in conjunction with the private company could put a letter round with our logo on to encourage those who want to use car clubs rather than owning the now rather expensive option of using a car.

Reply:

The route we have followed hitherto is that buildings, predominantly but not universally new buildings, have been left to advertise their own car clubs on the grounds that the more work we put in the more work and resource and money it will cost the taxpayer. If it felt helpful in future that we help to promote businesses, because fundamentally this is what these things are, they do generate profit, that is something we can look at but that might potentially raise questions about the Council's partisanship around supporting one company over another. This can certainly be looked at, and I am not against it in principle, but it is not as easy as it might seem at face value.

12. From Councillor Peter Fookes to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services
(In Councillor Fookes' absence a written reply was given)

What are the latest figures for homeless households in temporary accommodation?

Reply:

1,495.

13. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services

There has been a worrying increase in reports of Bromley residents with care needs not be able to attend services due to cuts in benefits and increases in transport charges. How will the Portfolio holder ensure that no resident will be denied essential services due to financial restrictions?

Reply:

I am advised that there is no evidence to suggest that this is the case, and have also been informed that no complaints have been received regarding this matter. Any resident assessed as needing support will also have a financial assessment and those who cannot afford to contribute to their care package will not be required to do so.

14. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal & Recreation

This year, the Crystal Palace Overground Festival moved from Westow Park in LB Croydon to CP Park, delivering a much bigger event on Saturday 18th June than in previous years.

The sun was shining, the music was playing, and the event was a huge success. Will the Portfolio Holder join me in congratulating the organisers and the very many local volunteers who did an amazing job in bringing this festival into LB Bromley, so boosting our local economy and providing entertainment for many thousands of families?

Reply:

The Crystal Palace Overground Festival was a huge success this year and I would like to join Cllr Wilkins in congratulating Noreen Mehan and everyone who worked with her in delivering this fantastic event in the Park.

Supplementary Question:

This was a free festival, and I would like, on behalf of the festival organisers, to thank Cllr Arthur for the grant from the community fund which funded the volunteers and helped them. The festival is free to visitors – it will not make a profit. Will the Council be prepared to consider funding for next year and future years please?

Reply:

We will certainly think about it if someone will give us the details.

(The time allowed for questions had expired, but it was agreed that the final question would be considered.)

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

As part of the effort to combat global warming and climate change, fossil fuels should stay in the ground and not be exploited. The cost of global warming is often picked up locally, for example in the shape of damage by extreme weather such as storms. Bromley is one of many local authorities investing in companies involved with seeking new fossil fuel resources. As it is possible and indeed almost mainstream nowadays to invest in and make returns from fossil free fuels, please would the Portfolio Holder look into the options and make the appropriate changes.

Reply:

The Council's treasury management strategy, which is approved annually by Council, has regard to the DCLG's guidance on local government investments and the CIPFA Treasury Management Code of Practice. The investment strategy specifies that investment priorities are security first, liquidity second, then return.

Within the Council's treasury management investments of around £308m, there is £10m invested in Diversified Growth Funds (DGFs); these are pooled funds which invest in a variety of asset classes and industries. The Council owns units in the fund, but not holdings – we cannot direct fund managers. The DGFs has a total of only £126k in its total portfolio which relates to fossil fuels, or 0.04%, so it is only a very small amount that they actually hold there. It might be that Councillor Allen is referring to the Pension Fund but that is an entirely different matter.

Supplementary Question:

This is a growing sector so I would ask again that opportunities are looked at for diversifying the investment that you do know about, and why not look at the Pension Fund while you are doing that?

Reply:

You can draw parallels between us and certain other boroughs, Islington, for example, who say that they wish to maximise their influence to promote corporate social responsibility. Their returns over the three year period are 8.9% whereas ours are 14.6%. Indeed you can compare us with any of the sixty areas in our consortium. You can compare Bromley favourably because we are the most successful of the benchmarked areas for one year, three year, five year and ten year investments. That was announced during the last week. It would be kinder to recognise that and compliment the way that our committee system works, the way that the Finance Officers input and the way that our external people, who we monitor very carefully, advise us. It is not our money, it is our employees' money and we are investing it as best we can for their benefit. If we were to ask our employees and our pensioners if they would rather have their pension as it stands, or would they rather have it top sliced in order to pursue some other agenda, they would probably compliment us.

Additional Supplementary Question from Councillor Simon Fawthrop

Does the Portfolio Holder agree that it is better to take professional advice and adhere to that, rather than listen to political ideology when making these decisions?

Reply:

It is a very fair point. If you look at how this dialogue has been extended over time it is interesting - the Guardian came up with this phrase about leaving fossil fuels in the ground, and actually said it should be 100%, then 80%, then 75%. I think that people were explaining to them that if you leave oil under the ground you will not have plastics or chemical industries which we are dependent on. If you are asking a question starting off saying that all fossil fuels should remain in the ground they should think about what that means.

Additional Supplementary Question from Councillor Stephen Carr:

Whether it be our Treasury Management, or our Pension Investment management, we have been enormously successful saving many millions of pounds for Council Tax payers in this borough and also saving many millions of pounds in frontline services for vulnerable people. Am I right in thinking that if we start making these ethical investments we would be putting at risk those frontline services that we have been able to protect, and whether we should ask the opposition parties where they will get the money if they did not have the money to invest in frontline services?

Reply:

We are one of only two London boroughs that is debt free. What that means is that when we construct our accounts we have a line item which says interest received. Every other Borough, bar one, has a line item that says interest paid. Whilst they are servicing their debts, we are using our money to secure frontline services, and the amount we are receiving is £14m-£15m a year, which goes straight into protecting frontline services. Other boroughs will reflect on when they borrowed money at very high interest rates and locked into those interest rates - they are carrying crippling levels of debt. £800m is not unusual in certain London boroughs, whilst we are £300m in credit and able to invest money on behalf our Council Tax payers rather than be profligate as other have been.

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COUNCIL MEETING**26TH JUNE 2017****QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL****1. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett JP to the Portfolio Holder for Education, Children and Families**

What progress is being made in investigating my suggestion that the care services and education bus fleets be combined and the schedules be aligned to as to use the same vehicles for both services?

Reply:

The subject of amalgamating the two services was also raised at the Education Budget Subcommittee and SENt are required to take a report to that committee later in the year, following a wider strategic review of SEN transport, policy, project initiatives and operations which would include an option appraisal around service amalgamation. This report is expected to be delivered September/October 2017.

2. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett to the Portfolio Holder for Education, Children and Families

If he will list the number and percentage of children above the age of 7 in each school receiving free school meals?

Reply:

| | FSM NCY 3-6 | Pupil Numbers NCY 3-6 | %FSM |
|---------------------------------------|-------------|--------------------------|--------|
| Alexandra Junior School | 27 | 244 | 11.07% |
| Balgowan Primary School | 13 | 382 | 3.40% |
| Bromley Road Primary School | 10 | 78 | 12.82% |
| Churchfields Primary School | 17 | 226 | 7.52% |
| Hawes Down Junior School | 8 | 301 | 2.66% |
| Marian Vian Primary School | 20 | 350 | 5.71% |
| Gray's Farm Primary Academy | 52 | 226 | 23.01% |
| OAK LODGE PRIMARY SCHOOL | 23 | 352 | 6.53% |
| The Pioneer Academy | 39 | 231 | 16.88% |
| Wickham Common Primary School | 5 | 251 | 1.99% |
| Burnt Ash Primary School | 44 | 240 | 18.33% |
| Harris Primary Academy Kent House | 47 | 218 | 21.56% |
| Pickhurst Junior School | 19 | 512 | 3.71% |
| Southborough Primary School | 36 | 234 | 15.38% |
| Harris Primary Academy Crystal Palace | 48 | 195 | 24.62% |
| Valley Primary School | 28 | 298 | 9.40% |

| | | | |
|-------------------------------------|----|-----|--------|
| Red Hill Primary School | 59 | 434 | 13.59% |
| St John's CE Primary School | 24 | 129 | 18.60% |
| Mottingham Primary School | 55 | 246 | 22.36% |
| Castlecombe Primary School | 28 | 121 | 23.14% |
| Chelsfield Primary School | 7 | 60 | 11.67% |
| La Fontaine Academy | 10 | 53 | 18.87% |
| Darrick Wood Junior School | 22 | 383 | 5.74% |
| Downe Primary School | 6 | 39 | 15.38% |
| FARNBOROUGH PRIMARY SCHOOL | 9 | 124 | 7.26% |
| Green Street Green Primary | 9 | 247 | 3.64% |
| Pratts Bottom Primary School | 3 | 38 | 7.89% |
| The Highway Primary School | 17 | 129 | 13.18% |
| Warren Road Primary School | 16 | 480 | 3.33% |
| St. Mary Cray Primary Academy | 49 | 135 | 36.30% |
| Trinity CofE Primary School | 49 | 249 | 19.68% |
| James Dixon Primary School | 51 | 217 | 23.50% |
| Leesons Primary School | 32 | 124 | 25.81% |
| Midfield Primary School | 50 | 189 | 26.46% |
| Worsley Bridge Primary School | 42 | 202 | 20.79% |
| Edgebury Primary School | 10 | 125 | 8.00% |
| HPA Orpington | 50 | 217 | 23.04% |
| Scotts Park Primary School | 12 | 271 | 4.43% |
| Oaklands Primary School | 33 | 270 | 12.22% |
| Clare House Primary School | 2 | 181 | 1.10% |
| Perry Hall Primary School | 31 | 247 | 12.55% |
| Poverest Primary School | 25 | 130 | 19.23% |
| Bickley Primary | 8 | 239 | 3.35% |
| Manor Oak Primary School | 37 | 115 | 32.17% |
| Keston C.E. Primary School | 8 | 131 | 6.11% |
| Parish C.E. Primary School | 30 | 342 | 8.77% |
| St George's CE Primary | 15 | 191 | 7.85% |
| Unicorn Primary School | 8 | 256 | 3.13% |
| Cudham CE Primary School | 6 | 57 | 10.53% |
| St Paul's Cray CE Primary | 40 | 110 | 36.36% |
| St Mark's C.E. Primary School | 11 | 245 | 4.49% |
| Chislehurst (CofE) Primary | 5 | 127 | 3.94% |
| St Joseph's R.C.Primary School | 3 | 118 | 2.54% |
| St Vincent's Catholic Primary | 7 | 118 | 5.93% |
| St Philomena's Catholic Primary | 8 | 121 | 6.61% |
| St.Anthony's R.C Primary | 14 | 107 | 13.08% |
| St Peter & St Paul Catholic Primary | 17 | 128 | 13.28% |
| St James RC Primary School | 2 | 124 | 1.61% |
| Blenheim Primary School | 38 | 114 | 33.33% |
| Biggin Hill Primary | 10 | 212 | 4.72% |
| CROFTON JUNIOR SCHOOL | 37 | 715 | 5.17% |
| Holy Innocents Catholic Primar | 12 | 128 | 9.38% |
| St Mary's Catholic Primary | 4 | 239 | 1.67% |

| | | | |
|--------------------------|-------------|--------------|---------------|
| Highfield Junior School | 10 | 376 | 2.66% |
| Hayes Primary School | 14 | 385 | 3.64% |
| Raglan Primary School | 9 | 243 | 3.70% |
| Tubbenden Primary School | 12 | 370 | 3.24% |
| | 1502 | 14689 | 10.23% |

3. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett to the Portfolio Holder for Education, Children and Families

If he will give the number of male teachers in each school and the percentage that represents for the primary and secondary sectors overall?

Reply:

There are 29 male Teachers in the remaining Community and Voluntary Controlled Schools. This figure includes members of the Leadership Team. The LA does not keep data on academy staff.

4. From Councillor Peter Fookes to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

What is the backlog for tree pruning in the borough?

Reply:

There is no backlog in the tree pruning schedule in Bromley, thanks to the thoughtful extra investment to the service, funded by way of taking early Corporate savings during the course of the recent difficult years of 'austerity'.

5. From Councillor Peter Fookes to the Portfolio Holder for Education, Children and Families

As it is not on the agenda for this week, when will a report on future school funding be going to committee?

Reply:

We are unlikely to hear anything back from the consultation on the National Funding Formula until the end of the Summer, therefore, it is doubtful that a paper on the future of school funding will be ready before the Autumn. This depends on the next steps by DfE and what they come back with.

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

What long term support is available for people who have been subjected to sexual abuse?

Reply:

Children's Services:

For children it would be CAMHS support; some young people use Bromley Y if they feel that they do not want to see a mental health service practitioner. In addition there are victim support groups and referrals through GP. The Haven also has referral routes.

Adult Services:

The Local Authority would support the resident with signposting to specialist providers. People deal with recovery in many different ways, any adult can request an assessment for care and support; where the outcome of the assessment indicates their eligibility a care and support plan will be devised with them to support their needs. The individual is likely to be offered a direct payment, so that they can best manage the care and support they require.

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

Please provide the number of applications to Bromley's Council Tax Hardship Fund, the number accepted and the total sum paid in each of 2014/15, 2015/16 and 2016/17.

Please describe the way in which the Hardship Fund is publicised to residents who have difficulties paying their Council Tax.

Reply:

Unfortunately, it is not possible to advise as to the number of requests made for Bromley's Council Tax Hardship Fund. Whilst an application form is provided for the purpose of claiming, many of the requests for assistance are included in general correspondence or contained on the benefit forms,

The number and value of awards are entered in the table below:

| Financial year | 2014/15 | 2015/16 | 2016/17 |
|------------------|-----------|-----------|------------|
| Number of awards | 31 | 32 | 99 |
| Value of awards | £6,644.27 | £7,060.72 | £22,217.36 |

It should be noted that the above figures do not include the removal of court costs and/or bailiff fees.

Bromley's Council Tax discretionary discount policy is entered on the authority's website as is the application form for those wishing to request assistance. Furthermore, revenues and benefits staff are advised to draw the scheme to the attention of possible recipients.

The Revenues and Benefits section has good links with agencies providing advice services to Bromley residents, who as well as being made aware of the scheme have been provided contact details of officers should they wish to discuss a particular application.

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

Please provide the cost of defending the Freedom of Information application by a former Civil Enforcement Officer to obtain the Internal Audit report into the Council's former parking enforcement contractor, including the cost of appealing against the

decision of the Information Commissioner on how much of the report could be provided to the applicant, dated 19 September 2016.

Reply:

Counsel's fees for the hearing were £8,355 plus VAT. Other costs involved would have been some interim advice and officer time which would be absorbed in the overall time of dealing with the c1,500 FOI requests received annually.

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

Please provide a summary of the policies the Council has in place to monitor the compliance of our contractors with health & safety legislation and any specific health & safety requirements in our contracts with them.

Reply:

The primary responsibility for complying with health and safety responsibilities sits with our contractors, although this is monitored by Council officers including the production and adherence to method statements and is overseen by the Health and Safety Executive.

Any specific requirements would depend on the contract.

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

Please provide details of how many default penalties have been given for street cleaning by ward and by year, from May 2014 to May 2017.

Reply:

These figures are currently being carefully rechecked prior to formal presentation and will be forwarded as soon as they are to hand.

The figures are now set out below -

Street Cleansing Notifications & Defaults May 2014 to May 2017

| WARD | May 2014 - April 2015 | May 2015 - April 2016 | May 2016 - April 2017 | May-17 | TOTAL |
|-----------------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------|-----------|--------------|
| | Defaults | Defaults | Defaults | Defaults | Defaults |
| Bickley | 6 | 3 | 3 | 0 | 12 |
| Biggin Hill | 19 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 19 |
| Bromley Common & Keston | 5 | 1 | 2 | 0 | 8 |
| Bromley Town | 23 | 2 | 0 | 0 | 25 |
| Chelsfield & Pratts Bottom | 0 | 0 | 1 | 2 | 3 |
| Chislehurst | 15 | 4 | 5 | 1 | 25 |
| Clock House | 19 | 3 | 14 | 1 | 37 |
| Copers Cope | 27 | 0 | 13 | 1 | 41 |
| Cray Valley East | 181 | 48 | 56 | 1 | 286 |
| Cray Valley West | 148 | 9 | 52 | 1 | 210 |
| Crystal Palace | 141 | 5 | 83 | 3 | 232 |
| Darwin | 54 | 0 | 0 | 0 | 54 |
| Farnborough & Crofton | 0 | 0 | 1 | 0 | 1 |
| Hayes & Coney Hall | 70 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 72 |
| Kelsey & Eden Park | 20 | 1 | 67 | 9 | 97 |
| Mottingham & Chislehurst North | 20 | 9 | 6 | 1 | 36 |
| Orpington | 24 | 2 | 19 | 0 | 45 |
| Penge & Cator | 91 | 4 | 51 | 0 | 146 |
| Petts Wood & Knoll | 8 | 3 | 0 | 0 | 11 |
| Plaistow & Sundridge | 12 | 0 | 13 | 0 | 25 |
| Shortlands | 10 | 0 | 2 | 0 | 12 |
| West Wickham | 26 | 0 | 52 | 6 | 84 |
| No Ward Data Available | 67 | 69 | 0 | 0 | 136 |
| TOTAL | 986 | 163 | 442 | 26 | 1617 |

11. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Education & Children's Services

Was the £495,419 transferred from reserves to the CSC recruitment & retention fund included in previous sums allocated to work necessary post-OFSTED inspection or should it be considered as a further additional corrective expenditure?

The Executive has just agreed to spend £915k on "Step up to Social Work", a scheme designed to support recruitment of social workers, and one supported by this Council since 2011. How much has been spent to date on this scheme and how exactly has its effectiveness and value for money been evaluated given the serious problems this council has had recruiting and retaining social workers?

Reply:

The transfer of £495,419 from the reserves to the CSC recruitment and retention fund was not included in previous sums allocated to work relating to post-OFSTED inspection.

The funding has been set aside to deal with potential recruitment and retention issues within Children's Social Care, particularly around the recruitment and retention of social workers. Recently this has been an issue for Bromley and this funding will help to alleviate this through elements such as golden hello payments, market premiums and retention payments.

As stated in the report to the last Executive, Step Up to Social Work is a cost neutral initiative funded wholly by the Department for Education. Local authorities are encouraged to club together to form a training partnership with a lead authority. Bromley Council joined the scheme in 2011 (cohort 2) and has since then lead the partnership of 3 authorities in cohort 2; 6 authorities in cohort 3; 7 authorities in cohort 4 and now 6 authorities in cohort 5. Hence the grant from central government (DFE) is for the partnership not just Bromley Council. The lead authority i.e. Bromley Council receives the grant and project manages the scheme on behalf of the partnership.

The programme itself comprises of a post graduate education and work placement supervision, as well as a bursary payment to the student-participants. Currently, the post graduate element is a 14 month programme. It used to be 18 months so it runs over two financial years. To date, the Council has received circa £2.9m from the DFE on behalf of the partnership consisting of £232,666.62 in 2011/12, £440,333.16 in 2012/23, £790,270.89 in 2013/14, £419,063.04 in 2014/15, £251,933.64 in 2015/16 and £780,217.83 in 2016/17.

To date, across the partnership, the total number of trainees supported on the programme is 73 of which 67 (i.e. 92%) were offered employment having successfully completed the programme. The figure for Bromley is 12 out of 14 participants were offered employment. These figures are a good indication that the scheme is a good recruitment source of recruiting newly qualified children's social workers, taking into account the shortness of the course (currently 14 months) compared to the normal qualification route of 3 years' university education. It also represents value for money compared to the previous in-house "Grow your Own Scheme" the Council used to run prior to the cost neutral Step Up to Social Work funded wholly by central government. The In-house scheme was quite pricey because participants were released on their full salary and the participants' posts were then filled by a temporary replacement or an agency worker giving rise to a costly "double whammy" effect.

As we all know the recruitment and retention of children's social workers is an on-going challenge at the local, regional and national labour markets. The Step Up to Social Work programme is part of the wider strategy being adopted at the local and national levels to rebalance the demand and supply of children's social workers. The current disequilibrium means that the retention of children's social workers including the graduates of the Step Up to Social work programme is a real challenge for every local authority. Currently, 6 out of the 12 step up graduates who were offered full employment by Bromley Council are still here. Hence, at the national level the

government is looking to supplement the Step Up to Social Work Programme with a “Return-ship” scheme aimed at bringing back to the profession experienced people who left for a variety of reasons including career breaks, maternities, etc. At the local level Bromley Council has a comprehensive recruitment and retention strategy aimed at shifting the balance in favour of the Council. This is sole responsibility of the Recruitment and Retention Board under the joint leadership and chairmanship of the Director of HR and the Deputy Chief Executive/Executive Director of Education, Care and Health Services. The Board’s objectives include a) improve the retention rate by reducing the leaver’s rate and b) reduce the agency staff usage. A key part of our retention strategy is the “No Quit Policy” and the Exit Interview. In relation to the former, HR and managers arranged a No Quit discussion with potential leavers or flight risk employees who have very good performance track record within 48 hours of informal or formal intelligence that the employee is planning to leave the Council. The aim of the No Quit discussion is to dissuade the employee from leaving the organisation. The Exit interview is equally important and prioritised especially with newly qualified staff including the Step to Social Work graduates. We get good feedback on how to improve the quality of the programme. To improve the quality, quantity and timeliness of the exit interviews HR is about to launch an online exit questionnaire capable of being accessed remotely anytime from any smart device including mobile phones, tablets, ipads, etc.

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

A recent FOI question revealed that the average increase in gross spend on temporary accommodation in London since 2010 is 53%. (Details here: <http://www.bbc.co.uk/news/uk-england-london-39305950>)

For Bromley, the increase over the same period is 1197% - the highest in London and 360% higher than Wandsworth who experienced the second highest increase. Please provide a full explanation for this astonishing statistic.

Reply:

There is no simple answer to this. In reality it is due to a number of contributing factors:-

Bromley is unique compared to other London Authorities since it became a LSVT authority back in 1992, where its entire housing stock transferred to what was Broomleigh Housing Association at the time. As a direct result, Bromley has less flexibility compared to stock holding authorities who can utilise their properties as they see fit reducing their reliability on the private sector in using Nightly Paid Accommodation (B&B) with additionally still managing their own homeless hostels ensuring quick move-on. Bromley when it had its own housing stock championed “the Right to Buy” campaign which reduced the available social housing stock in borough before transfer.

Additionally in April 2010, there was a deadline set for a 50% T/A reduction target for all local authorities. As such almost every possible permanent housing resource in Bromley went into reducing T/A to meet this target, which in essence left the pot empty.

On 1st April 2010, Bromley had 479 homeless households in T/A – only 69 of which were in Nightly Paid Accommodation (B&B)

As of 1st April 2017, Bromley had 1438 homeless households in T/A of which 843 were in Nightly Paid Accommodation (B&B)

Total number in T/A has actually increased by 300%, whilst the number in Nightly Paid Accommodation (B&B) has increased by 1221%.

Compounding the issue is the acknowledged rise in homelessness again due to a number of social issues, the impact of Welfare Reform, the reduction of available social housing and number of affordable homes available within London with demand far outweighing supply.

Council/Housing Association lettings in London have reduced up to 50 % since 2010. As a direct result, waiting times in Bromley to secure a property through Homeseekers choice based lettings system is now approximately three years and rising compared to a 12/18 month wait back in 2010. All of which means families are spending longer in T/A than they initially did back in 2010, and more often than not are being placed outside of borough in more affordable areas.

Home ownership is slipping out of reach for most, on average house prices are almost seven times people's incomes. Young people stay longer at home and often as a result get evicted due to increasing tensions. Home ownership is in decline, real house prices have risen 151% since 1996, while real earnings have risen about a quarter as much. Those that managed to buy are now experiencing hugely expensive housing costs and are stretched to their financial limits finding it harder to meet their monthly repayments putting pressures on relationships, which again could result in a homeless application as relationships breakdown.

More families are renting privately which can be incredibly unstable, with soaring rents, hidden fees and eviction a constant worry as a result they turn to the local authority where once they wouldn't have needed to. Landlords can get mandatory possession at the end of the agreed term and increase income by offering to new tenants at higher rent levels to protect their investment resulting in constant loop of homelessness. Those claiming benefits are priced out of market as more often or not the Local Housing Allowance Rate falls way short to cover the rent forcing them to move to more affordable areas away from their support networks or again to the local authority.

Since the 1980's, over 1.5 million properties were sold off in the United Kingdom under the "Right to Buy" initiative, most of which were houses and low rise flats in high demand areas. Insufficient re-investment by all Governments since has contributed to the current housing crisis. The introduction of the Homeless Reduction Act next year will go some way to prevent families being evicted by utilising all known prevention options(at a cost) however it doesn't address the major problem of lack of affordable homes now and for future generations.

The biggest groups applying as homeless are those evicted from private sector as term has ended and family/friends evictions.

13. From Cllr Richard Williams to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection

Over the last few months we have seen over 200 killings of cats and foxes that appear be the victims of the 'Croydon cat killer'. What action is LBB Is taking with our local police and neighbouring local authorities to put an end to this horrendous spree?

Reply:

The MPS have a dedicated team of officers working on Operation Takahe which is the investigation into these cat killings. To date they have invested over 1200 man hours and are bringing in a specialist in animal forensic pathology and criminal profiling experts from the National Crime Agency. Locally there are protocols in place should officers be called to any of these types of incidents and there are regular messages given out to our KINS and at Ward Panels in relation to reporting any suspicious activity and incidents involving cats/foxes. SNARL have also offered a £10,000 reward for any information leading to an identification and/or arrest. The Community Safety team helped facilitate a small grant at my request to pay for a print run of 4,000 warning/advice leaflets which were distributed by SNARL in the Bromley area.

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

Please explain why on-street parking did not deliver the budgeted -for income stream in 2016-17.

As we have experienced delays in delivering both consultations and decisions on various parking proposals in Crystal Palace ward, is your team of officers under-resourced?

Reply:

As you should be aware, the Council is not allowed by regulation to raise revenue by introducing on street parking schemes designed for such purpose.

I will take it as given that is not the Labour Group's suggestion or an evolving policy initiative, unless you tell me otherwise.

Annual parking budget projections are only ever an educated estimate of anticipated 'income', figures which will vary annually dependent on whether prospective parking schemes are progressed or rejected following consultation with local people and Ward Members, or indeed whether on street parking levels trend upwards or downwards in line with the wider business cycle and the health of the national economy.

The Council has recently suffered the resignation of a key senior officer within the Parking Design team, a post which is being pro-actively backfilled, so in essence, the answer to your question is no, albeit the Department does remain extremely busy at present.

15. From Cllr Kevin Brooks to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection

Given the recent incident in Penge involving a machete, what additional steps are being taken to stop the escalation of gang related violence in Penge?

Reply:

Whilst we believe the incident in Penge involving a machete was an isolated occurrence we are acutely aware of the potential for gang related violence. This week sees MPS wide activity in relation to Operation Sceptre which is specifically tackling knife crime. This involves a number of officers being deployed in plainclothes utilising stop and search combined with high visibility targeted patrols, weapons sweeps and other covert activities. We are also working closely with our partners in surrounding boroughs sharing intelligence and information, in order to identify and combat any rising tensions. Trading Standards will shortly be launching a “Blade Safe” responsible retailer campaign to remind retailers of their responsibilities when stocking and selling knives, which will be followed up with an under-age test purchasing campaign throughout the borough.

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