

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY

MINUTES

**of the proceedings of the Meeting of the
Council of the Borough
held at 7.00 pm on 1 March 2021**

Present:

**The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Hannah Gray**

**The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Stephen Wells**

Councillors

Marina Ahmad	Simon Fawthrop	Keith Onslow
Gareth Allatt	Peter Fortune	Tony Owen
Vanessa Allen	Kira Gabbert	Angela Page
Graham Arthur	Will Harmer	Chris Pierce
Yvonne Bear	Christine Harris	Neil Reddin FCCA
Julian Benington	Colin Hitchins	Will Rowlands
Nicholas Bennett MA J.P.	Samaris Huntington-	Michael Rutherford
Kim Botting FRSA	Thresher	Richard Scoates
Mike Botting	William Huntington-	Suraj Sharma
Katy Boughey	Thresher	Colin Smith
Mark Brock	Simon Jeal	Diane Smith
Kevin Brooks	David Jefferys	Gary Stevens
David Cartwright QFSM	Charles Joel	Melanie Stevens
Mary Cooke	Josh King	Harry Stranger
Aisha Cuthbert	Kate Lymer	Kieran Terry
Peter Dean	Christopher Marlow	Michael Tickner
Ian Dunn	Robert Mcilveen	Pauline Tunnicliffe
Nicky Dykes	Russell Mellor	Michael Turner
Judi Ellis	Alexa Michael	Angela Wilkins
Robert Evans	Peter Morgan	

The meeting was opened with prayers

In the Chair
The Mayor
Councillor Hannah Gray

234 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Cllr Kathy Bance MBE.

235 Declarations of Interest

Cllr Peter Dean declared an interest regarding minute 246 as he was an employee of the DWP, and he would not be participating in the debate.

Cllrs Bennett, Fawthrop, Mellor and Owen declared interests as members of the Borough's pension scheme. Cllr Fawthrop also declared, in relation to minute 242, that his wife was an employee of the Council, although this did not prevent him from voting.

236 To confirm the Minutes of the meeting of the Council held on 7th December 2020.

RESOLVED that the minutes of the meeting held on 7th December 2020 be confirmed.

237 Questions

Seven questions had been received from members of the public for oral reply, although three of these would now be receiving a written reply. The questions, with the answers given, are set out in Appendix A to these minutes.

Twenty five questions had been received from members of the public for written reply. The questions, with the answers given, are set out in Appendix B to these minutes.

Fifteen questions had been received from members of the Council for oral reply. The questions, with the replies given, are set out in Appendix C to these minutes.

Seven questions had been received from members of the Council for written reply. The questions, with the answers given, are set out in Appendix D to these minutes.

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

No statements were made.

**239 2021/22 Council Tax
Report CSD21027**

Councillor Graham Arthur, seconded by Councillor Colin Smith, moved acceptance of the final recommendations made by the Executive.

The following amendments were moved by Councillor Angela Wilkins and seconded by Councillor Ian Dunn -

After allowing for the report from the Director of Finance the following amendments are proposed to the recommendations of the Executive set out in the Blue Book on pages 57-118.

The following changes be made to the recommended budget for 2021/22:

Additional Recommendation (2.1):

(k) Utilise total one off funding of £13.827m from the Collection Fund Set Aside Earmarked Reserve (page 86) to be invested in services over the years 2021/22 to 2024/25 summarised by year as follows:

	2021/22	2022/23	2023/24	2024/25	Total
See appendix 1	£7.220m	£4.241m	£1.781m	£0.585m	£13.827m

(l) Amend the council tax support scheme for 2021/22 to allow an increase in the maximum support provided by the Council from 75% to £100 band A to D properties. The 2021/22 scheme for Band E and above properties would remain unchanged. This will be for 2021/22 only at a net loss of income of £3.2m to be funded from the Collection Fund Set Aside earmarked reserve.

Further details of (k) and (l) are provided in Appendix 1.

Appendix 1

Recommendation (k)	2021/22 £'000	2022/23 £'000	2023/24 £'000	2024/25 £'000	Total £'000
Strategy	100	75	50	Nil	225
Adult and Health	1,470	550	50	50	2,120
Children	1,180	250	Nil	Nil	1,430
Environment	1,180	1,721	936	40	3,877
Public Protection	340	115	115	115	685
Resources	1,000	125	Nil	Nil	1,125
RR&H	1,950	1,405	630	380	4,365
Total	7,220	4,241	1,781	585	13,827

(1) The above costs which fall out from 2025/26, totalling £13.827m, will be funded from the Collection Fund Set Aside earmarked reserve;

(2) The detailed proposals relating to the utilisation of £13.827m will be reported at the meeting;

(3) The further proposal of increasing council tax support to 100% of council tax would apply to Band A to D properties with no changes to the scheme for other properties (Band E and above). This proposal would result in a net loss of income of £3.2m, assuming a further increase in caseload 5% in 2021/22;

(4) The combined proposals in (1) and (3) above would require one off funding of £16.987m from the Collection Fund Set Aside earmarked reserve.

Amended Recommendation (2.3)

On the basis of the proposal above the following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):

(a) £593,240k being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.

(b) £417,928k being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates or the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.

The following Members voted in favour of the amendment -

Councillors Vanessa Allen, Kevin Brooks, Ian Dunn, Simon Jeal, Josh King and Angela Wilkins. (6)

The following Members voted against the amendment -

Councillors Gareth Allatt, Graham Arthur, Yvonne Bear, Julian Benington, Nicholas Bennett, Kim Botting, Mike Botting, Katy Boughey, Mark Brock, David Cartwright, Mary Cooke, Aisha Cuthbert, Peter Dean, Nicky Dykes, Judi Ellis, Robert Evans, Simon Fawthrop, Peter Fortune, Kira Gabbert, Will Harmer, Christine Harris, Colin Hitchins, Samaris Huntington-Thresher, William Huntington-Thresher, David Jefferys, Charles Joel, Kate Lymer, Christopher Marlow, Robert Mcilveen, Russell Mellor, Alexa Michael, Peter Morgan, Keith Onslow, Tony Owen, Angela Page, Chris Pierce, Neil Reddin, Will Rowlands, Michael Rutherford, Richard Scoates, Colin Smith, Diane Smith, Gary Stevens, Harry Stranger, Kieran Terry, Michael Tickner, Pauline Tunnicliffe, Michael Turner and Stephen Wells. (49)

The Mayor, Councillor Hannah Gray, abstained, and no vote could be recorded for Councillors Marina Ahmad, Suraj Sharma and Melanie Stevens.

The amendment was **LOST**.

Accordingly, the recommendations of the Executive, as moved by Councillor Graham Arthur and seconded by Councillor Colin Smith were **CARRIED** as follows -

That Council -

- (1) (a) Approves the schools budget of £79.506m which matches the estimated level of Dedicated Schools Grant (DSG) after academy recruitment**
- (b) Approves the draft revenue budgets (as in Appendix 2) for 2021/22 to include the following updated changes in (d) and (e):**

- (c) Agrees that the Chief Officers identify alternative savings/mitigation within their departmental budgets where it is not possible to realise any savings/mitigation within their departmental budgets where it is not possible to release any savings/mitigation reported to the previous meeting of the Executive held on 13th January 2021;
- (d) Approves a revised Central Contingency sum of £14,944k to reflect the changes in (e);
- (e) Approves the following provisions for levies for inclusion in the budget for 2021/22:

	£'000
London Pensions Fund Authority	451
London Boroughs Grant Committee	247
Environment Agency (flood defence etc.)	259
Lee Valley Regional Park	318
Total	1,275

- (f) Notes the final position on the GLA precept, as accepted by the London Assembly on 25th February 2021;
- (g) Sets a 4.99% increase in Bromley's council tax for 2021/22 compared with 2020/21 (1.99% general increase plus 3% Adult Social Care Precept) and a 9.5% increase in the GLA precept.
- (h) Approves the revised draft 2021/22 revenue budgets to reflect the changes detailed above;
- (i) Approves the approach to reserves outlined by the Director of Finance (see Appendix 4 to the report);

(2) Council Tax 2021/22 – Statutory Calculations and Resolutions (as amended by the Localism Act 2011).

Subject to 2.1 (a) to (k) above, if the formal Council Tax Resolution as detailed below is approved, the total Band D Council Tax will be as follows:

	2020/21 £	2021/22 £	Increase £	Increase % (note #)
Bromley (general)	1,153.00	1,178.15	25.15	1.99
Bromley (ASC precept)	111.77	149.71	37.94	3.00
Bromley (total)	1,264.77	1,327.86	63.09	4.99
GLA	332.07	363.66	31.59	9.51
Total	1,596.84	1,691.52	94.68	5.93

- (#) in line with the 2021/22 Council Tax Referendum Principles, the % increase applied is based on an authority's "relevant basic amount of Council Tax" (£1,264.77 for Bromley) – see paragraph 6 below.
- (3) (1) It is noted that the Council Tax Base for 2021/22 is 132,026 "Band D" equivalent properties
- (2) Calculate that the Council tax requirement for the Council's own purposes for 2021/2022 is £175,312k.
- (3) That the following amounts be calculated for the year 2021/22 in accordance with Sections 31 to 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, as amended (the Act):
- (a) £586,018k being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates for the items set out in Section 31A(2) of the Act.
- (b) £410,706k being the aggregate of the amounts which the Council estimates or the items set out in Section 31A(3) of the Act.
- (c) £175,312k being the amount by which the aggregate at 3(a) above exceeds the aggregate at 3(b) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31A(4) of the act as its Council tax requirement for the year.
- (d) £137.86 being the amount at 3(c) above, divided by (1) above, calculated by the Council in accordance with Section 31B of the Act, as the basic amount of its Council Tax for the year.
- (4) Notes that the Greater London Authority (GLA) has issued a precept to the Council in accordance with Section 40 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992 for each category of dwellings in the Council's area as indicated in the table below.
- (5) That the Council, in accordance with Sections 30 and 36 of the Local Government Finance Act 1992, hereby sets the aggregate amounts shown in the table below as the amounts of Council Tax for 2021/22 for each part of its area and for each of the categories of dwellings.

Valuation Bands	London Borough of Bromley £	Greater London Authority £	Aggregate of Council Tax Requirements £
A	885.24	242.44	1,127.68
B	1,032.78	282.85	1,315.63
C	1,180.32	323.25	1,503.57
D	1,327.86	363.66	1,691.52
E	1,622.94	444.47	2,067.41

F	1,918.02	525.29	2,443.31
G	2,213.10	606.10	2,819.20
H	2,655.72	727.32	3,383.04

- (6) That the Council hereby determines that its relevant basic amount of council tax for the financial year 2021/22, which reflects a 4.99% increase (including Adult Social Care Precept of 3%), is not excessive. The Referendums Relating to Council Tax Increases (Principles) (England) Report 2021/22 sets out the principles which the Secretary of State has determined will apply to local authorities in England in 2021/22. The Council is required to determine whether its relevant basic amount of Council Tax is excessive in accordance with the principles approved under Section 52ZB of the Local Government Finance Act 1992.

The following Members voted in favour of the motion -

Councillors Gareth Allatt, Graham Arthur, Yvonne Bear, Julian Benington, Nicholas Bennett, Kim Botting, Mike Botting, Katy Boughey, Mark Brock, David Cartwright, Mary Cooke, Aisha Cuthbert, Peter Dean, Nicky Dykes, Judi Ellis, Robert Evans, Simon Fawthrop, Peter Fortune, Kira Gabbert, Will Harmer, Christine Harris, Colin Hitchins, Samaris Huntington-Thresher, William Huntington-Thresher, David Jefferys, Charles Joel, Kate Lymer, Christopher Marlow, Robert Mcilveen, Russell Mellor, Alexa Michael, Peter Morgan, Keith Onslow, Tony Owen, Angela Page, Chris Pierce, Neil Reddin, Will Rowlands, Michael Rutherford, Richard Scoates, Suraj Sharma, Colin Smith, Diane Smith, Gary Stevens, Melanie Stevens, Harry Stranger, Kieran Terry, Michael Tickner, Pauline Tunnicliffe, Michael Turner and Stephen Wells. (51)

No Members voted against the motion.

The following Members abstained -

The Mayor, Councillor Hannah Gray, and Councillors Vanessa Allen, Kevin Brooks, Ian Dunn, Simon Jeal, Josh King and Angela Wilkins. (7)

No vote could be recorded for Cllr Marina Ahmad.

240 Capital Programme Monitoring Q3 2020/21 and Capital Strategy 2021 - 2025
Report CSD21028

A motion to approve that the new capital schemes listed in Appendix C to the report be included in the capital programme was moved by Councillor Graham Arthur, seconded by Councillor Colin Smith and **CARRIED**.

**241 Treasury Management - Annual Investment Strategy 2021/22
and Quarter 3 Performance 2020/21**

Report CSD21029

A motion to approve an increase in the limit to £80m for investments with Housing Associations as set out in Section 3.5.5 of the report, and to adopt the Treasury Management Statement and the Annual Investment Strategy for 2021/22 (as set out in Appendix 4 to the report) including the prudential indicators (summarised on page 47 of the report) and the Minimum Revenue Provision (MRP) policy statement (page 22 of the report) was moved by Councillor Graham Arthur, seconded by Councillor Colin Smith and **CARRIED**.

242 2021/22 Pay Award
Report CSD210031

A motion to approve the following -

- (i) A flat 2% pay increase for all staff (excluding teachers who are covered by a separate statutory pay negotiating process);
- (ii) An additional one day annual leave, non-consolidated, for 2021/22;
- (ii) An additional £200k towards Merited Rewards, for 2021/22, bringing the total to £400k for rewarding staff for exceptional performance;
- (iv) That the Trade Unions' pay claim for staff be rejected (see para 3.8 below and attached Appendices);

and to note that, as in the previous years since coming out of the nationally/regionally negotiated frameworks, Bromley staff will receive the 2021/22 pay increase in time for the April pay was moved by councillor Pauline Tunnicliffe, seconded by Councillor Stephen Wells and **CARRIED**.

243 Property Acquisition Scheme Proposal
Report CSD21030

A motion to agree the loan of £20m to the LLP for a period of 50 years with annual repayments starting from year 3 of 1.6% (£320k) per annum and increasing annually by CPI (collared at 0-4%), funded from the Housing Invest to Save Fund (£14m) and uncommitted Investment Fund (£6m) earmarked reserves, and to agree to enter into a guarantee agreement with the Funder to guarantee the loan facility of £60-£65m to the LLP and undertake to meet the liabilities of the LLP in respect of the loan facility in the event of loan repayment default, was moved by Councillor Peter Morgan, seconded by Councillor Colin Smith and **CARRIED**.

244 Pay Policy Statement 2021
Report CSD21032

A motion to approve the 2021/22 Pay Policy Statement, as updated following the withdrawal of the £95k public sector exit payment cap, was moved by Councillor Pauline Tunncliffe, seconded by Councillor Stephen Wells and **CARRIED.**

245 Members Allowances Scheme 2021/22
Report CSD21033

A motion to approve the Members Allowances Scheme 2021/22 and the 2021/22 Mayoral and Deputy Mayoral Allowances was moved by Councillor Pauline Tunncliffe, seconded by Councillor Stephen Wells and **CARRIED.**

246 To consider Motions of which notice has been given.

The following motion was proposed by Cllr Simon Jeal and seconded by Cllr Kevin Brooks -

“The £20 a week increase to Universal Credit made at the beginning of the pandemic, but which is due to end in April, continues to be a lifeline for many Bromley residents including many people who have been furloughed, lost their jobs or are struggling with in-work poverty.

This Council resolves to write to the Chancellor and to the Prime Minister calling for the increase to Universal Credit to be made permanent and extended to claimants on legacy benefits.”

The motion was **LOST.**

247 The Mayor's announcements and communications.

The Magical Night of Christmas Entertainment last December had been a huge success, raising approximately £1,200.

The Mayor reminded members of the following events –

- The virtual quiz evening with quiz master Cllr Mark Brock on Friday 12th March – her final charity event before her year in office ended.
- Tickets were still available for the prize draw via the Mayor's Facebook page with Givergy which is the Spitfire Flight Experience - tickets were £10. Cllr Julian Benington was the first member to sell ten tickets, so he had won an extra ticket.
- There was a special art competition for children up to the age of 11 to showcase their creativity - the theme was “Follow Your Dreams.” This

was on social media and was being sent out to all schools in the borough.

Additionally, the Mayor was launching “Nominate a Local Hero” on her social media. Residents were invited to nominate someone they knew by sending in a photograph and their reasons for the nomination (nominators had to ensure that the permission of the nominee was granted.)

The Mayor’s Podcast series was progressing really well. She was especially pleased to meet Helen Lederer and Paul Sinha – the recordings were available at <http://hannahgraymeets.podbean.com/> .

The Mayor had a monthly column in the “Life in Orpington” magazine, and the February issue was now out. The Mayor could be followed on Facebook, Twitter and Instagram -

www.facebook.com/mayorofbromley/ (@mayorofbromley)

www.twitter.com/MayorofBromley0 (@MayorofBromley0)

www.instagram.com/mayorofbromley/ (@mayorofbromley)

The Mayor concluded by thanking Members for their continued support and generosity.

The Meeting ended at 10.12 pm

Mayor

COUNCIL MEETING

1st March 2021

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FOR ORAL REPLY

1. From Stuart Mayer to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Crofton Road Cycle Scheme - Approximately 20% of the road's width has now been allocated exclusively to bicycles, yet cycle usage along this stretch of road is low. If cycle uptake predictions are not met, and bicycle traffic remains below 1% of all traffic along this stretch of road, will you remove the cycle lane?

Reply:

The Crofton Road scheme is a walking and cycling scheme. Over many years across London congestion is increasing, due to more car journeys being undertaken. This scheme is intended to make walking and cycling a realistic new choice for residents and visitors' short journeys, thus allowing those residents and visitors for whom this choice is not an option to continue to drive. This scheme has been viewed in the context of commuters using Orpington Station, in particular. This scheme is not reducing the number of lanes on Crofton Road.

Supplementary Question:

The design has changed since the public consultation and the downhill stretch of the cycle lane has now been raised. At peak times vehicles tail back from the station all the way up the hill, and now we have this change vehicles will no longer be able to temporarily move into the cycle lane to allow emergency vehicles through. Have the hospital trust and the other emergency services been consulted on this significant deviation from the original plan?

Reply:

I can confirm that, as with all schemes, we have undergone statutory consultation and consulted with the emergency services. All schemes are subject to review after implementation and if there are any particular issues along those lines that only become apparent later then we will examine and address them in due course.

Additional Supplementary Question from Councillor Christopher Marlow:

In light of residents' concerns regarding the implementation of the Crofton Road cycle lane, will the Portfolio Holder commit to holding a post-implementation review once the scheme has been completed that will report to the Environment and Community Services PDS Committee with a particular focus on safety and traffic?

Reply:

Yes.

Additional Supplementary Question from Cllr Simon Fawthrop:

Can the Portfolio Holder outline what criteria needs to be met for this scheme to be classed as a failure, for example, how many accidents, how many deaths, increase in cycle lane usage, length of traffic jams, to name but a few.

Reply:

As with all schemes, we will review this scheme, and, as I just committed to Cllr Marlow, it will come back to the PDS. If future issues arise, alongside the usual and on-going road safety commitment across the borough, we will make those adjustments and changes in time.

2. From John V. Powell to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

There has been a tsunami of complaints regarding the Orpington to Locksbottom cycle lane with regard to both safety and justification. Does the Council intend to continue ignoring the voting public, especially as now a number of serious road safety concerns are emerging?

Reply:

There was a public consultation for Crofton Road which showed the majority of respondents to be in favour, so the Council is in no way ignoring the public. As part of the design process the scheme has been subject to a two-stage road safety audit process and two more audits will follow once the scheme is completed, and I also refer you to my previous answer to Cllr Marlow.

Supplementary Question:

This project is a fatal accident waiting to happen; how do the Council justify not acting now rather than waiting for a tragedy?

Reply:

As I have previously indicated, we will be monitoring this for road safety as soon as the implementation is finished. Some of the issues that are there during the build we hope will disappear. Some of the road markings that have been laid down have not stuck very well - we will be re-surfacing the road very shortly which will allow the road markings to stay in place, which should then address any issues that people have highlighted so far.

Additional Supplementary Question from Cllr Tony Owen:

Given that one head-on accident has already been reported, attributed to the changed road configuration by Orpington Station, if public concern proves to be justified and a corporate manslaughter charge is brought, who would be deemed culpable, the designers of the scheme, officers who recommended it, or Councillors who voted for it?

Reply:

I am not qualified to answer that – I would have to refer it to the Director of Corporate Services.

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

May I commend Portfolio Holder and team for recent active travel infrastructure improvements supporting the PM's Gear Change strategy? Many more residents are choosing to walk and cycle. Due to wear and tear to footways and public rights of way, would you review highways budget to enable proper maintenance, repair and improvements?

Reply:

The Council undertake regular inspections of the highway network, and in addition we encourage members of the public to report issues they see through Fix my Street.

I am pleased to be able to confirm that the existing budgets are sufficient to maintain all highways and carriageways in a safe condition.

Supplementary Question:

Bromley Council has published a series of eleven circular walks which take walkers on routes that cross busy roads at various points. Would you review the risk assessments for these routes and consider installing pedestrians crossing signs to alert motorists, as per the DfT guidance?

Reply:

If Mr Gibbons would forward me the details of those I will certainly investigate.

Additional Supplementary Question from Cllr Keith Onslow:

Would the Portfolio Holder agree that, throughout the present difficulties with Covid over the last twelve months, our highways and pavements repairs team have done a splendid job in acting efficiently on repairs as reported? I personally have reported a number of these in Petts Wood and Knoll ward and have been pleasantly surprised that they have been attended to very promptly and efficiently.

Reply:

Thank you for the chance to highlight the work of our internal team and Riney our contractors. Riney and all our contractors have made an exemplary effort over the last year given the working conditions and I would entirely agree with you.

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

Healthy, safe, attractive end-to-end journeys are essential to enable more children and adults to travel by active modes. In Orpington, the link from the Crofton Road improvement scheme via the station underpass to Mayfield Avenue is not fit for purpose. What progress is being made with stakeholders, and what are timescales for improvements?

Reply:

The Council has already been in discussion with South Eastern about this link or tunnel, but because the approaches and the underpass are the responsibility of Network Rail we also need to engage with them. A meeting has been arranged

between the three parties in mid-March and it is hoped will result in a way forward, although this may depend on the future availability of funding that can be secured and any other feedback that we might get from users.

Supplementary Question:

What would you like to say to colleagues who may be described as lapsed conservatives for turning their backs on the Prime Minister's bold vision for cycling and walking and for dismissing the Secretary of State for Transport for saying that we want half of all journeys in towns and cities to be cycling and walking by 2030?

Reply:

The Secretary of State is able to express their view. It may be part of the city or on the periphery of the city - an average is made up of lots of different areas. In this borough, we wish to offer people as many choices as possible for their journeys so they can make a truly informed choice and the best choice for them to make that journey.

Additional Supplementary Question from Cllr Tony Owen:

Given that this scheme to Mayfield Avenue is currently footpath, can I ask please that the three Petts Wood and Knoll Councillors are notified of what is going on and are given an opportunity to contribute.

Reply:

I think that this footpath is on the border of three wards, and we will engage with all ward members.

COUNCIL MEETING

1st March 2021

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. From Steve Isted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Will the Council consider halting the Crofton Road cycle scheme until a new risk assessment has been undertaken to address the numerous and serious safety issues that its implementation has/will create?

Reply:

As part of the design process the scheme has been subject to a two-stage road safety audit process and two more audits will follow once the scheme is completed.

2. From Suraj Gandechea to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

During the 12 months ending 31 Mar 2020 what percentage of non-paper recycling (e.g. plastics) collected from residents was not recycled, and how was it disposed of?

Reply:

100% of the recyclable plastics, cans and glass that are collected by Bromley Council are recycled.

However, 11% of items placed in the green box for plastics, cans and glass recycling are not accepted for recycling in Bromley, for example plastic bags, food waste or nappies. These items are separated from the recycling at the Material Recycling Facility and then sent to an energy recovery facility.

3. From Suraj Gandechea to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

Secondly, as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I would like to know what the Council is doing to recognise LGBT History Month and what it has in place to support people from different backgrounds and minorities?

Reply:

The Council takes seriously its public sector equality duties namely;

- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Council's approach and unequivocal commitment to these duties is rooted in our leadership values REAL (Respect, Empower, Ambition and Learn). The recent

Stronger Together staff thematic discussions led by our Chief Executive Ade Adetosoye (OBE) and our Director of HR & Customer Services is a very good example. The sessions which were open to all staff promoted and celebrated individual differences and the positive impact on individual and organisational efficiency and performance.

In the LGBT month, the Chief Executive also reached out to all staff on the importance of the history with reference to notable achievements by the LGBT community. We expect and demand fairness and tolerance from all our staff. We have a clear zero tolerance policy/procedure on discrimination, victimisation and harassment on any of the protected characteristics including sexual orientation. We gather and use the equality profile of our customers including applicants/candidates for Council jobs to inform or and review services and policies. We offer equality impact assessment to all our managers. We deliver equality and diversity training to all our staff.

The Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group which is chaired by the Director of HR & Customers is currently looking at how to gather some of the more sensitive equality profile through customer engagement/consultation. The group is fairly represented by staff at different levels not just managerial levels from different protected characteristics including sexual orientation"

4. From David Marshall to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

The Open Space Consultation list of open spaces did not include Plaistow Green. Also, open spaces within Bromley boundary but managed by others such as Warren Avenue Playing Fields and West Wickham Common were not mentioned. Will these be included in the next version of the consultation document and can you guarantee that these are also safe from disposal?

Reply:

Many of the LBB owned open green spaces are known by different names and documented by their formal reference according to LBB asset data in the open space strategy. We will ensure that Plaistow Green, Warren Avenue Playing Fields and West Wickham Common appear alongside their formal respective names in the next version of the strategy. Our press release on 8 January applies to these green spaces.

5. From David Marshall to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Following the press release by Cllr Huntingdon-Thresher on 8 January promising that the Council "are not about to sell any park" would he now confirm that no open space listed in the Open Space Consultation will face "reassignment (including development or disposal)".

Reply:

Residents' expectations from Our Parks and Greenspaces changes over time. The terms alteration, investment, reassignment and development found within the Open Space Strategy refer to the enhancement and improvement of Bromley's open spaces: An example of this would be the recent clearance of the disused Upper

Kelsey Park Depot and its return to parkland, where an area previously inaccessible to the public has been reassigned for public use. Other types of reassignment/development include such concepts as sport facilities, sensory or memorial gardens, play area, biodiversity, trees and natural habitat areas to name just a few.

6. From Julie Ireland to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

How many laptops have Bromley Council received from the Government to help school children access online learning, and how many of these have been given out?

Reply:

The LA received 734 laptops and tablets from the DfE. To date, more than 800 devices have been given out in accordance with the guidance, including additional devices purchased by the Council for vulnerable children, such as for children looked after and care leavers.

7. From Julie Ireland to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

How many laptops have schools, academies, colleges and FE institutions in Bromley received from the Government to help students access online learning?

Reply:

The LA managed the quota of laptops and tablets from the DfE and supplemented this with additional devices purchased directly. Schools were able through a portal to order laptops and tablets and the DfE will hold this information as Academies and schools were not required to inform the LA only the DfE.

8. From Christopher Bentley to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

How many Freedom of Information requests did the Council receive between 01/04/19 - 31/03/20 and how many were answered in the regulatory 20 days?

Reply:

Number of FOI Requests – 1,316

Number of requests responded to within 20 days – 1,078 (82%)

Number of requests responded to outside 20 days – 238 (18%)

The requests dealt with outside of 20 days includes requests where extensions have been agreed or can be applied.

9. From Christopher Bentley to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Recent Imperial College research states that Bromley suffers the highest number of air quality related deaths in London. Has Bromley Council met its AQAP commitment to begin deploying 20 new diffusion tube monitors and will the Council commit to more live monitoring in population centres?

<https://www.london.gov.uk/WHAT-WE-DO/environment/environment-publications/health-burden-air-pollution-london>

Reply:

The research demonstrated that Bromley's pollution levels are very low, with the second lowest anthropogenic pm2.5 and NO₂ levels in London. The additional diffusion tubes were deployed in January 2021, and the commitments approved by the GLA to improving air quality are contained within the Air Quality Strategy 2020 (AQAP).

https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/413/pollution_control_-_air_quality

10. From Chloe-Jane Ross to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

The tender for the Beckenham Public Halls provides for 15% community use, how does this compare to the current (notwithstanding COVID issues) space for community use and if there is a shortfall how will this be resolved?

Reply:

The 15% community use is comparative to the pre Covid regular community use of the halls. However, we would very much hope that future use of the building will mean a greater use of the facility.

11. From Chloe-Jane Ross to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

What are the street cleaning provisions around the wards in Albemarle Rd and Bromley Rd cycle scheme (debris is starting to accumulate)?

Reply:

Existing schedules will be adhered to, but through applying a different resource to that which would ordinarily be applied for channel sweeping on carriageways due to these installations. By working with our Service Provider, we have identified a compact sweeping appliance that can fit in the narrower pathway. We have implemented this and will ensure any accumulations are minimised.

12. From Sam Webber to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Will the Council now consider wheelie bin style bins or bins with fixed lids for recycled paper to save the cost (both environmental and financial) of wet paper and cardboard put out for recycling being rejected as it is too wet?

Reply:

The council continually reviews its collection methodologies to maximise recycling and considers the environmental and financial cost of any changes. For example, we are currently trialling a collection methodology to increase recycling from flats above shops. That includes options to ensure paper and card can be recycled. Given the environmental (and financial) cost of providing and emptying plastic wheelie bins for the whole borough, it is not clear that there would be an overall benefit considering the relatively low volumes of current rejections and the ongoing decline in volumes of paper. We encourage residents to cover their recycling boxes between collections.

13. From Sam Webber to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

Please supply a list of all high-rise residential buildings in Bromley Borough in the private sector with ACM cladding and identify those where remediation work is either complete or has commenced.

Reply:
None.

14. From Jill Hollamby to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

Please supply a list of all buildings in Bromley Borough over 18 metres in height with unsafe non-ACM cladding.

Reply:
There is one building over 18 metres high where unsafe cladding has been identified and remediation is being progressed, and there is one further building where investigation is ongoing.

Publishing the names and addresses of these buildings could enable someone to identify particular buildings which have failed or are inferred to have failed cladding tests. There are concerns that this information could be used by those with malicious intent to attack or otherwise compromise the safety of these buildings and their residents.

15. From Jill Hollamby to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

Please supply a list of all buildings in Bromley Borough over 11 metres and under 18 metres in height with unsafe ACM cladding and non-ACM cladding.

Reply:
There are no buildings which have been identified at present. There is one building between 11 and 18 metres high where unsafe cladding has been identified.

Publishing the names and addresses of these buildings could enable someone to identify particular buildings which have failed or are inferred to have failed cladding tests. There are concerns that this information could be used by those with malicious intent to attack or otherwise compromise the safety of these buildings and their residents.

16. From Rick Das to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

How many Snow Friends (groups and/or individuals) are currently authorised in Bromley Borough?

Reply:
There are currently 4,032 Snow Friends in 426 Snow Friend groups.

17. From Rick Das to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Given the widespread disruption caused by icy roads and pavements during the cold weather in February, will the Council now revise their strategy for keeping all roads and pavements safe?

Reply:

Unfortunately, it is not possible to keep all roads and footways clear of ice and snow during winter months. The Council have a published policy and plan for winter maintenance, which includes precautionary treatment of nearly half of the road network when cold weather is forecast. Additional busy roads and residential roads on steep hills are also treated following any snow fall. Footways in shopping centres, transport interchanges and schools are also cleared after any snow fall.

18. From Allan Tweddle to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Given the short notice given to councils to apply for TfL funding and consult with local people, have the Council prepared/are working on other road or active travel schemes and if so what are they?

Reply:

The Council is preparing a programme to submit to TfL during March that will be in line with the Council's transport policy document: "Bromley's transport for the future: Bromley's Third Local Implementation Plan", published in 2019.

https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/200107/transport_policy/535/local_implementation_plan

19. From Allan Tweddle to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

I understand the Environment Agency is temporarily allowing yellow bag clinical waste to be processed at municipal incinerators due to increased volumes caused by Covid-19. Have Bromley Council's contractors processed additional medical waste locally in this way?

Reply:

The Council's clinical waste contractor is continuing to process clinical waste through facilities that are permitted to accept it in Rochester and Redhill.

The Council's Covid Rapid Testing programme procured an alternative clinical waste provider for best value. Our provider is processing waste through a facility permitted to accept clinical waste based in Kent.

20. From Stuart Benefield to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

How many families have received vouchers for food to provide support for children who normally receive free school meals? Please provide number and value between 21 December 2020 and 31 January 2021.

Reply:

Supermarket vouchers were provided through schools to support vulnerable children during the Christmas and February half term school holidays. The data is not held at family level. To date 25,149 £15 vouchers have been issued to eligible children.

21. From Tony McPartlan to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

What support is the Council giving for businesses in the Borough who are facing financial difficulties due to the pandemic and will the Council ensure such support is in place for a suitable length of time to avoid a cliff edge in the future?

Reply:

In line with government guidance, the Council has been administering a range of grants that have been made available to businesses; these include mandatory grants as well as discretionary grants. The Council has supported businesses in accessing these grants through a variety of communication channels including direct contact, a live webinar and regular e-bulletins.

Since the start of the pandemic the Council has paid out over £60 million to support businesses in the borough and will continue to make payments in accordance with the government funding conditions for each of the grant schemes.

One of the discretionary grants established is to support business innovation as well as a business lounge to support new businesses, something Bromley has always been proud of the number of new businesses choosing Bromley.

In addition to this support the Council is drafting an Economic Strategy for 2021-2031, to support the longer terms recovery of our local economy. Officers are working on High Street recovery plans, as well as working with Business Improvement District to monitor, review and support where appropriate. Bromley is well placed to rise to this challenge.

22. From Tony McPartlan to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

What will the Council be doing to support residents who have lost their jobs during the pandemic to continue to be able to live in Bromley rather than be forced out of the area to find affordable housing?

Reply:

We have streamlined our money and debt advice service to ensure that we are able to help the increasing number of clients that require support. This has included working jointly with the DWP and partners such as Clarion to ensure that we are able to reach as many people as possible.

With evictions for rent arrears currently on hold until the end of March our aim has been to identify where there is a risk of homelessness in its early stages in order to minimise the impact on households and allow us more time to engage in early prevention work. This has involved utilising discretionary housing payments and our prevention funds where appropriate, liaising with creditors in order to facilitate

payment holidays, readjusting debts, facilitating affordable payment plans and providing the many residents that have never been in this predicament before with essential budgeting advice.

23. From Carolyn Heitmeyer to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Can the Albemarle consultation be changed in the following ways: (a) lengthened from 3 weeks to 6 months, as per statutory guidance, (b) modified so it's not just a binary choice (keeping vs removing), (c) supplemented with key contextual information about the long-term goals (i.e. modal shift)? If not, why not?

Reply:

The Albemarle Road cycling scheme was installed as an experimental scheme, with ongoing feedback being used to tweak and modify the design. The current consultation will report its results for Scrutiny to the Environment PDS committee on 11th March and thus is limited in duration. An option for the next amendment to the experimental scheme is the addition of Traffic Lights and the reintroduction of two-way traffic on to Westgate Road rail bridge, this has a cost associated with it and therefore we are asking residents for their views before spending the funds on this change.

24. From Dermot McKibbin to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

What has the Council done since June 2017 to identify buildings with fire safety risks, what is the plan to make them safe and when was this issue discussed in public by a council committee? How many buildings in the borough have "waking watches"?

Reply:

Under the Fire Safety Order 2005 the person responsible for the common parts of a building is responsible for identifying fire risks. The London Fire Brigade are the enforcement authority.

However, the issue of tall buildings with potentially dangerous cladding was discussed by Renewal and Recreation PDS in 2018, and again by the Development Control Committee later on in 2018.

There have been 4 waking watches.

25. From Dermot McKibbin to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

How many high-rise buildings in Bromley are currently under construction and have been built since June 2017 and what assurances can the Council give that they will be or have been built without dangerous cladding and with proper safety considerations?

Reply:

Four Buildings.

All new high rise buildings would be required to meet current Building Regulations standards at the time of approval for fire safety whether this approval is given by the Council's Building Control team or by a third party Approved Inspector for Building Control. The Council is also engaged with the MHCLG for their External Wall Systems data collection exercise which is an ongoing review of the cladding on all high rise buildings.

This page is left intentionally blank

COUNCIL MEETING

1st March 2021

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR ORAL REPLY

1. From Cllr Kieran Terry to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

Recent news reports suggest Sadiq Khan, the Mayor of London, is planning a 'border tax' that will charge anyone driving in to Bromley from outside of London £5.50 per day. What impact could this have on the vitality of Bromley's Town Centres?

Reply:

The imposition of a charge on cars entering our borders would doubtless be welcomed by the owners of the Bluewater Shopping Centre but would be very bad news for shopkeepers in our borough. Shoppers already have to pay to park their cars here, and an extra charge will further deter them from visiting our high streets. Our high streets are not in the best of health due to Covid-19 and other things; this is just hitting them when they are down – terrible.

Supplementary Question:

Sadiq Khan's punitive tax will definitely come as tough news for many of our independent shops, businesses and restaurants in the borough, including those here in Chislehurst. This is also on top of the effects of coronavirus, and now more than ever these businesses will need all the help they can get. Can the Portfolio Holder outline some of the positive steps that the Council is taking to help our high streets?

Reply:

We are doing lots of things to support our high streets. In the case of Bromley, for example, we supported the BID, whose vote came up a few days ago and was successful. We are also spending quite a lot of money in that particular high street to make it nicer – an events area, for example, a covered area. We are also giving money to the BIDS to help businesses which are struggling during the lockdown. We will continue to do whatever is necessary. The government grant that we are handing out is helping smaller businesses in a big way – we have handed out many millions of pounds of government money for that very purpose. We are looking forward very much to the lockdown being lifted and I am quite sure that our high streets, which are so lovely, will recover very quickly.

Additional supplementary Question from Cllr Vanessa Allen:

Given that this potential charge is not going to happen, if it does at all, until late 2023, and is part of the finance settlement for TfL that the Mayor was forced into by the government, how else does the Portfolio Holder think the funding should be made up, given the lack of use of public transport for the past year?

Reply:

I have no idea how the Mayor runs his finances. All I know is that when Boris was the Mayor the taxes did not go up, and now that Sadiq Khan is Mayor the taxes are going up and up and TfL is going down and down. That cannot be a coincidence and I hope

he gets himself sorted out and stops spending so much money on all the advisors with which he surrounds himself. To do this is utterly ludicrous – all it will mean is less and less business in our town centres and a lower rate-take; it will exacerbate the problems, not help them.

Additional supplementary Question from Cllr Marina Ahmad:

This time last year, Sadiq Khan had paid off 72% of the TfL deficit left by the mismanagement of the previous Mayor, Mr Boris Johnston. There was an attempt by the Transport Secretary this summer to impose cuts on Londoners for doing the right thing and not travelling during the pandemic. As part of finding different income streams which is what the Transport secretary has asked TfL to do, Sadiq Khan wants the government to give Londoners the £500m of vehicle excise duty it raises from London cars. The boundary charge is only a possibility if the Transport Secretary refuses to give Londoners the £500m that Sadiq Khan is fighting for. Will this administration in Bromley support Sadiq Khan when he stands up for Londoners to get our £500m back from central government?

Reply:

I will not.

Additional supplementary Question from Cllr Simon Fawthrop:

Is the Portfolio Holder aware that the TfL debt is equivalent to £1,500 for every man, woman and child in the whole of greater London? That was before Covid.

Reply:

I was not aware of that particular figure, but it does not surprise me. The mismanagement of TfL by this Mayor defies belief.

2. From Cllr Tony Owen to the Chairman of the Pensions Investment Sub-Committee

How much has membership of the London CIV (Collective Investment Vehicle) cost Bromley pensioners?

Reply:

Since the Council joined the London Collective Investment Vehicle in 2015/16, we joined with £150k of regulatory capital. Since then, the initial membership fees of the CIV started at £25k per annum and have now increased to £110k per annum. The total cost to date has been £590k with a further £110k due on the 1st April 2021.

Supplementary Question:

What have our pensioners received in return?

Reply:

The main benefits were intended to be fee saving by buying in bulk and also improved fund performance. Bromley's pension scheme is an award winning scheme - currently we are the best performing fund over five years out of 88 nationally. I have queried with the CIV how they propose to improve on our performance bearing in mind that theirs is worse than ours and all I have received back are fairly bland statements and sound bites. I have to conclude, as one of the previous CEOs of the CIV said, that they could do nothing to improve Bromley's fund performance. On the question of fee savings, the CIV came to our Pensions Investment Sub-Committee

on 1st December 2020 and after much to-ing and fro-ing prior to that meeting, we eventually worked out that the fee savings (bearing in mind that these are supposed to be excellent savings) on a fund of £520m that we could have transferred to the CIV was £8k. That is not a big saving at all and even that would probably be eaten up with additional administration costs for the council. The short answer to the question is that we have received no benefit at all.

Additional supplementary Question from Cllr Gary Stevens:

We are an award winning Council in terms of the performance of our pension fund over a number of years. I raised this point with Rishi Sunak at the Conservative Party conference in 2019; I get the logic for having a CIV in London, and across the country, if Councils do not have adequate resources. Have other Councils that you have spoken to over the last two or three years, had a benefit from the CIVs, not just the London CIV but across the UK as well?

Reply:

You have probably realised from our Pensions Investment Sub-Committee meetings that I have done extensive work with the London CIV to try and make our membership work. Anecdotal evidence from a number of other Councils in London that belong to the CIV leads me to believe that there are quite a number that are in the same boat, many of whom are probably not aware of it. In other words, any additional benefits that they got by joining the CIV are possibly not there now or even been eroded, particularly on fee savings, where, generally, fee savings have dropped since the establishment of pooling. I have, through various webinars in lockdown, asked a number of questions of a number of other Councils and pools as to what their savings have been, and what the effects have been and we do tend to get sound-bites back rather than actual figures. I do have some doubt that the numbers being declared are being calculated properly, certainly not consistently. This is important because it is declared to government and government produces legislation or instructions based on those numbers.

Additional supplementary Question from Cllr Simon Fawthrop:

In 2018, there was a damning report from the independent consultants, Willis Towers Watson. In that report, as well as being critical of the governance procedures of the CIV, the report highlighted political interference. What has changed since that report?

Reply:

I have to conclude that very little has changed.

Additional supplementary Question from Cllr Simon Jeal:

On the basis of his comments, would the Chairman agree that Bromley Council should lobby the government to reverse its decision to make pooling mandatory?

Reply:

Yes, it is time to lobby the government, and indeed we are doing that. Of course, it is an uphill battle with other things going on, such as with Covid, but any support that you or other councillors can give would be very welcome.

3. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing.

What has the Council done in response to the Homes (Fitness for Human Habitation) Act 2018 and what use has the Council made of the powers granted to it by the Act?

Reply:

This Act allows tenants to seek remedy and redress for defects in their property – it does not alter any existing local authority powers.

Supplementary Question:

Can the Portfolio Holder clarify that, as my understanding is that it does give the Council enhanced powers to act and we have a number of problems with housing associations not being able to do their repairs at the moment.

Reply:

With regard to the Act, the role of the Council is one of advice and guidance, rather than enforcement. However, there are instances where it may be appropriate to offer more practical assistance to tenants seeking redress under this Act, especially for vulnerable tenants. If the tenants prefer the Council to act on their behalf the Council has an existing mechanism for tenants to report poor and sub-standard accommodation, so if you have anything like that please do refer them to us.

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

Given the combined backlog and future maintenance costs of nearly £480,000 as stated in the tender document for Beckenham Public Hall, does the Portfolio Holder agree that this makes the proposition a very difficult proposition for any bidders who many wish to put forward plans for its future? Can the Portfolio Holder explain why the Council has not pursued an application under the Heritage Lottery Fund?

Reply:

Beckenham Public Halls is a part of the Council's Regeneration Strategy, which seeks to improve and enhance the Council's buildings and facilities to the benefit of local residents. The report which was presented at the Renewal, Recreation and Housing PDS in September 2020 set out a number of options, based on external advice, given the current condition of the building.

The recommended option considers the necessary refurbishment costs and allows for a rent free period to an operator to facilitate the necessary works. Market testing is currently underway and once finished, we will have a better understanding of the viability. Subject to a formal procurement process, a provider will be brought on from the start and subject to meeting the Council's requirements, and in the long -term will enhance and improve the facility for Bromley's residents, Beckenham's residents in particular.

Due to the maintenance costs and the need to bring a provider on board from the start, Heritage Lottery Funding has not been considered feasible.

Supplementary Question:

Can the Portfolio Holder explain how the Beckenham Public Halls differ from other projects, for example the Biggin Hill Memorial Museum, where an application to the Heritage Lottery Fund was taken forward?

Reply:

They are completely different projects. Our officers are very skilled in applying for these grants. They have achieved some grants, but this one did not fit all the categories. We did seriously consider this.

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

Can the Portfolio Holder please explain why the Draft Open Space Strategy which went out to consultation included the following words:-

“Be brave enough to recognise when open space should be repurposed”,

“The need to increase residential provision though development and balance this with open space provision” and

“Identify open spaces that require alteration, investment or reassignment (including development or disposal)”?

Reply:

Residents’ expectations from our Parks and Greenspaces change over time. We have a strategy to set out how we consider our open spaces, where appropriate, should evolve over that time. Most residents view the addition of sports pitches, playgrounds, biodiversity projects, planting and the like positively, a few may not welcome such changes, so we consulted on our strategy and we were pleased so many residents responded. For example, your colleagues have supported the development of the Crystal Palace Park Trust with intention of an eventual handover of responsibility for Crystal Palace Park to the Trust.

This borough has been given a target for the number of new homes to be built in the borough, and with any reduction in private gardens, our parks and open spaces assume greater significance and need to be of high quality.

Supplementary Question:

Can you tell me what the consultation document actually meant when it said “Identify open spaces that require alteration, investment or reassignment (including development or disposal.)”

Reply: I included that in my first reply, but I will repeat it. It is the addition of, to name a few, sports pitches, playgrounds, biodiversity projects, planting projects and the like. In terms of other aspects, for example, looking to hand over responsibility for the maintenance of a park to a trust, like the Crystal Palace Park Trust. Not that there are examples elsewhere in the borough, but, going forward, the Crystal Place Park Trust might be a model that other parks aspire to follow.

Additional supplementary Question from Cllr Simon Jeal:

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm whether the strategy will include any attempt to build residential developments on our Open Space land?

Reply:

The strategy that we are consulting on does not include any of that.

Additional supplementary Question from Cllr Angela Wilkins:

Could the Portfolio Holder confirm whether or not there is any misinterpretation here, and does he understand why the public might understand this to mean that the Council is considering disposal. Crystal Palace Park is going to the Trust, but the Council will be retaining the freehold so it will not be a permanent disposal. I just want to clarify whether or not the Council will consider disposing of any open spaces and if not does he appreciate why the public have perceived what they have from this?

Reply:

When it became apparent this this was how some residents were interpreting the document, and when it became apparent that there was a media campaign encouraging them to interpret it that way we issued a press release to clarify exactly what we intended by that statement in the consultation. This is only a draft, and when it comes back for scrutiny by the PDS Committee we will be able to see how we have clarified the language that we used.

6. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing

Could you please confirm what consultation will be undertaken, both with ward members and with members of the public, regarding plans considering sites for development in phase 2 and phase 3 of the Council's housing delivery plans, at what stage will residents be able to object to building on Green Belt land, or where the sites are currently used as day centres, youth centres, libraries, car parks or other public buildings?

Reply:

Any proposed development would be subject to planning permission and there will be a consultation as always prior to that being determined, and that will allow a significant time for public consultation.

Supplementary Question:

Can you please confirm on what grounds the plans for the Council's housing delivery plans were put under part 2 and are not available to the public to understand what sites are being considered?

Reply:

It depends – some sites are commercially confidential in terms of money, but we really do not want to be discussing plans that may not happen. We are considering all of the land in the ownership of the Council, not including parks - there is no point in setting hares running where there is no need to.

Additional supplementary Question from Cllr Alexa Michael:

Would the Portfolio Holder agree that Bromley Council gives residents every opportunity to comment on planning proposals and planning applications that affect

them and the environment, including right up to the time that the application is determined at Committee?

Reply:

I would certainly agree with that.

7. From Cllr Vanessa Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning & Contract Management

Please explain why the pay award to Council staff was announced at the February Executive meeting, one day after the GP&L Committee meeting where it should have been considered?

Reply:

One of the key principles underpinning the Council's decision to adopt a localised pay and terms of employment is the realignment of the annual pay award with the annual Council budget process. It means that the pay award proposal is tabled at the same time as the draft Council budget is presented to the Executive for consideration and release for public and staff consultations. Thereafter, the proposal is then presented to the General Purposes & Licensing Committee following consultation with staff and their representatives, not the other way around as the question erroneously suggests. This tried and tested process has been the case since the Council adopted the localised pay and terms of employment on 12 November 2012.

Supplementary Question:

The point is that we were told at GP&L that discussions were still ongoing and there was no recommendation which was clearly not the case, because it was considered the next day, and we had to have a special GP&L meeting. I still do not understand how it happened that way.

Reply:

The first stage of this is to say what is in the budget – what we can afford. It is then for GP&L to review the process and make a recommendation to full Council, and that is where it is approved. On this occasion we had to move very quickly. We are always very keen to say to our staff what the settlement is and next month I think all members should be very proud that our staff will be the only local government staff in London who will know how much they are being paid. I am indebted to the way that Councillor Tunnicliffe responded and held the meeting so swiftly, and I think our staff will be grateful to us for taking away any doubt about how much they will be paid next month.

Additional supplementary Question from Cllr Simon Fawthrop:

Can the Portfolio Holder confirm that one of the reasons that this was slightly delayed compared to previous years was because of the way that the government's announcement on the local government finance settlement was also delayed?

Reply:

I am happy to confirm that. We have had about forty different grants and we have not had clarity about the final settlement this year. We still do not know for certain how much we are going to be getting, but we are pretty clear where we are. You are quite

right – we live in very uncertain times and this was reflected in the way that this was handled.

Additional supplementary Question from Cllr Ian Dunn:

Why last year, when the GP&L meeting was again one day before the Executive, did the pay settlement come to GP&L that day?

Reply:

I have just made it clear that this is an unusual year when unusual things happen, but the process was still followed in the correct manner. First of all, what can we afford, secondly for it to be crafted by a specialist committee and then for a recommendation to go to full Council.

8. From Cllr Kevin Brooks to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning & Contract Management

Please provide figures as to the Council's in-house youth apprenticeships and the percentage comparison as to our contractors.

Reply:

Since 2015 to date, the Youth Employment Service has successfully secured 171 apprenticeships with other local and national employers for young people. Three apprentices were placed with our contractors Mytime, Amey and Clarion Housing Group.

Since the apprenticeship levy was introduced in April 2017, the Council has directly recruited 26 apprentices. Of those 26 recruits, 13 have successfully secured an offer of employment in Bromley via a temporary, fixed term or permanent contract.

Supplementary Question:

The Treasury has recently admitted that there have been delays between identifying placements and the actual start date for young people. What does the Portfolio Holder plan to do to encourage contractors, and the Council itself, to utilise more apprenticeships and to ensure that, when they are identified, their start date is timely.

Reply:

In general terms, Bromley has a long and proud tradition of recruitment, training and staff development which has led to retention. It is possible to find people that we have trained in-house through our schemes at the highest levels – we have a Director and an Assistant Director who came in as trainee apprentices. I think it is something we can be very proud of. It is also an extremely important issue that could perhaps be taken to PDS. I would like to see a presentation on a future agenda, if Councillor Fawthrop is comfortable, about our apprentices, and immediately I can think of an apprentice that would actually give that presentation. I think it would be extremely informative. I am not aware of delays; it may be that in the current climate something has happened and if Cllr Brooks can draw my attention to specifics I will try to come back to him.

Additional supplementary Question from Cllr Simon Jeal:

Given the success of the apprenticeship scheme within the Council, is the Portfolio Holder looking at placements under the government's Kickstart Scheme, either directly within the Council or through Council-commissioned providers?

Reply:

Yes.

(At this point the time allowed for questions expired and written replies were provided for the remainder of the questions.)

9. From Cllr Kieran Terry to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

What can be learned from the submission of a section 114 notice by neighbouring Croydon Council last year, which effectively declared the Labour-run authority to be bankrupt? How has Bromley acted differently over recent years to avoid encountering a similar situation?

Reply:

I believe it is always possible to learn more from the failure of others rather than their successes.

Key strengths of Bromley includes, for example, forward financial planning, robust financial management and never forgetting the requirement for the Council to 'live within its means' ensuring we spend public money wisely.

By way of contrast, let me highlight the following:-

- We have had not received any adverse commentary from external auditors on financial sustainability. Croydon have received adverse comments as follows – For the 2017/18 accounts Grant Thornton first raised concerns around financial sustainability with recommendations made within the VFM conclusion for corrective action. For 2018/19 Grant Thornton qualified their VFM conclusion with concerns’.
- We have adequate levels of combined general and earmarked reserves across which are significantly higher than Croydon's previously reported reserves of £16.6m as at 31/3/20;
- We currently have sufficient contingency (central contingency sum) to meet the any short term issues re Covid pandemic without requiring any drawdown of balances this year/ Croydon have sought a capitalisation directive from Government, which is permission to borrow to meet funding shortfalls;
- Our latest budget monitoring report shows that we are within budget - no overspends overall. Croydon face a significant overspend and Croydon's Public Interest report refers to a residual budget gap for 2020/21 estimated at £65.4m, exceeding available reserves of £16.6m;
- Bromley has had no overall overspend for some years - Croydon's Public Interest report refers to the Council failing to address the underlying causes of service overspends which during 2017/18, 2018/19 and 2019/20 had a combined overspend of £59.3 million;
- We remain 'debt free' which reduces the financial risk around cost impact of increases in interest rates. Croydon have reported debt of over £1.5bn and

Grant Thornton estimate that Croydon's debt will rise to £1.8bn by the end of 2020/21 and exceed £2bn by 2022/23.

We spend public money wisely. It is worth noting that Croydon Croydon's settlement funding per head of population is £222.11 for 2019/20 which compares with £112.61 for Bromley – nearly double. That can't be right.

10. From Cllr Tony Owen to the Leader of the Council

How much does membership of London Councils cost Bromley taxpayers?

Reply:

Membership in 2020/21 cost £161,958.

In addition, the Council was required to make a payment of £247,844 towards the London Boroughs Grant Scheme.

Bromley is also charged £33,459 by the Parking Enforcement & Appeals Service and £6,492 by Taxicard Administration.

11. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Services

What actions is he proposing to reduce excessive traffic caused by rat-running on residential roads in Crystal Palace and why has he been silent on the recent Crystal Palace LTN implemented (and recently removed) by LB Croydon?

Reply:

I don't think that excessive traffic is caused by what you refer to as rat running and the Council has been far from silent on the matter of Croydon's LTN. Croydon's apparent attempt to help residents in their LTN area to achieve a less trafficked environment to encourage walking and cycling has in fact had a very detrimental impact on many residents. Those living in some adjacent residential roads on Bromley's side of the boundary have had to contend with vastly increased traffic flows on their narrow and now-congested streets. Bromley residents living on Anerley Hill also had to contend with longer queues of traffic while Croydon's LTN was in place, with the resulting negative impact on air quality.

For the avoidance of doubt, as a cross borough issue residents and members involved the Leader early on and the Leader naturally responded. Now Croydon is actually consulting Bromley on this scheme, I as PH have been involved in responses. This arrangement should not be taken as a divergence of views, just that in these unprecedented times we are avoiding duplication of effort.

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

Can the Portfolio Holder explain why it has taken such a long time to clear the drain blockage at Birkbeck Bridge – I made a report on fix my street in August 2020 and the initial response was that it was a Thames Water issue.

Reply:

We were made aware of, subsequently investigated extensively and successfully managed to resolve the issue referred to, however these types of complicated enquiries can become drawn out given the variable nature of drainage which at times is due to multiple factors and responsibilities split across varying parties. Certain time frames and responses could have been tightened and improved, and this is a matter we are addressing.

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

Can the Portfolio Holder please explain what the Council is doing to support MyTime, while its premises are closed down during Lockdown?

Reply:

Council officers have been meeting regularly with Mytime to monitor the situation. The Council has agreed rental deferments along with other leases and continues to review this. Any further support will be subject to Executive scrutiny. The Council supported Mytime in applying for the National Leisure Recovery Fund Grant. Notification has just been received that this application has been successful with an award of £760K. Once received this will be passported to Mytime to support the hibernation costs incurred during lockdown. The Council will work with Mytime to apply for any further grant funding which may be made available to support leisure services.

14. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care & Health

What action is taken by Council officers in the event of a breach of COVID restrictions by people working or acting for council contractors - particularly where they are engaged in activity which put them into contact with vulnerable residents?

Reply:

In the event of the Council being notified of any such breach of restrictions, contractors would be contacted to ensure greater compliance by their employees in the future. Support would be offered to ensure that all staff have been trained and that appropriate use is being made of PPE and other infection control processes.

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

Please explain what the Council is doing to support Care Homes across the Borough which are struggling and currently suffering high levels of COVID infection.

Reply:

Fortunately due to the proactive stance and response to the pandemic taken by this Council and thanks in large part to the excellent management by their staff there are no care homes across the Borough struggling or suffering high levels of Covid at the current time.

In terms of support:

The Director for Adult Services and the Director for Public Health have put in place regular meetings where Covid-19 cases and outbreaks (2 Residents) are closely monitored.

In the event of an outbreak a tailored support plan is put in place to help the care home and its residents. Support can include:

- Additional PPE
- Extra support and guidance for providers on testing for staff and residents
- Advice and guidance and training from the Public Health team
- Wellbeing support for providers
- Regular meetings with providers to support the management of the outbreak and co-ordinate the response.
- Extra funds to cover costs of additional Infection Prevention and Control requirements and additional staff cover

Covid positive patients being discharged from hospital to a care home will temporarily stay at one of two designated homes with specialist facilities to support their recovery before moving on to their permanent care home.

In a poll taken at the January meeting of the Bromley Care Home Managers Forum providers reported high levels of satisfaction in the support they have received over Covid infection prevention and control.

COUNCIL MEETING

1st March 2021

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. From Cllr Michael Tickner to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Since the first lockdown in March 2020 until the most recent figures available, what changes in air pollution have been recorded, compared with the same period in 2019, at the Council's continuous monitoring sites:

- (1) for nitrogen dioxide (NO²) levels? How does this compare with the Government target of 40 micrograms per cubic meter?
- (2) for particulate matter (PM10) concentrations? How does this compare with the World Health Organisation standard of 20 micrograms per cubic meter?

What plans are there to maintain low pollution levels after lockdown?

Reply:

In 2019 the annual mean ratified and bias-adjusted data for Harwood Avenue showed 24.7 µg/m³ for NO₂ and 18.8 µg/m³ for PM₁₀, levels for both pollutants were below the annual thresholds set by the Air Quality Directive of 40 µg/m³, and in the case of PM₁₀, the level was beneath the guideline annual level of µg/m³ as determined by the World Health Organisation.

The data collated at Harwood Avenue is not analysed by Officers, it is sent for ratification by Kings College London who then determine the annual mean. Comparison between years is done on an annual basis and analysis will commence in April 21. The results will be presented as part of the Council's statutory Annual Status Review (ASR).

The actions pertaining to improvements with air quality are contained within the Air Quality Strategy 2020 (AQAP).

The AQAP and ASR's are available online here -

https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/413/pollution_control_-_air_quality

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

Please provide a list showing all the Heritage Lottery Fund applications the Council has made over the past three years, including whether the application was successful or not and if successful, the amount received.

Reply:

The Culture and Regeneration department has made one application for the Heritage Lottery Fund in October 2019 for Crystal Palace Park which unsuccessful. In applying for grants the Council must always consider the eligibility criteria and how a particular project may meet with that criteria, this very often includes timing of works.

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

Can the Portfolio Holder please describe the process which is being used to incorporate the over 800 consultation responses on the Council's Open Space Strategy.

Reply:

There were 769 responses to the survey, 733 from individuals and 36 from a group or organisation. An additional 68 emails were received. The views of all respondents to each question of the survey have been captured with questions and feedback documented in Excel Spreadsheet format for each respondent. These are now in the process of being analysed with the results to each question presented in full in a *Parks and Open Spaces Strategy Responses Excel Spreadsheet*. This document will provide a summary of the main trends found within the responses to the consultation and will result in a road map directing how the Council will proceed with the redrafting.

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

What were the levels of carbon emissions in the Borough for the last two years?

Reply:

Performance reports detailing the levels of Bromley's borough emissions are available online at:

https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/download/980/co2_emissions_local_authorities_performance_reports

These reports are based on national data provided by the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) released each year, generally 18 months after the reporting year-end. Bromley emitted a total of:

2018: 973 ktCO₂

2017: 1MtCO₂

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

Are members of the public now able to ask oral questions in person at online Council meetings in the same way as they were in person meetings prior to COVID arrangements and is it not time that the Urgency Committee met to review the arrangements made last March, a review that was agreed by this Council should have happened last June?

Reply:

As you aware, the review in question was held at the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS at its meeting on 10th September where a vote was taken to defer any changes until January 2021, to enable further investigation and opinion to be formed concerning the availability and reliability of the various platforms capable of hosting such meetings.

You made further reference to the matter at subsequent Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS meetings on 6th January 2021 and 3rd February 2021, at both of which you were offered further reassurance by the Chairman that questions were set to return, as indeed they have since started doing.

Officers in Democratic Services are currently gathering details as to how public questions are handled in neighbouring Boroughs and will complete this exercise over coming weeks, to reconfirm that Bromley's 'offer' remains as generous as others, with a view to reporting back to Members formally as shortly as possible thereafter.

There is no need to convene an 'Urgency Committee' for these reasons.

6. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning & Contract Management

How much unspent and unallocated COVID funding from central government is currently held by the Council?

Reply:

The Council is currently expected to receive funding of £212m (which consists of £53m for service impacts, £104m for grants to businesses, and £55m for business rate reliefs) of which it currently expects to have spent over £200m by the end of the financial year – part of this funding allows spend into the following financial year (2021/22). Any unspent monies by the year end will be reported to Executive at its meeting on 31st March as part of the updated budget monitoring report 2020/21. The budget monitoring report will consider the carry forward any unspent monies to fund the impact of the continuation of the pandemic period into the new financial year as well as setting aside funding to support the future recovery from the pandemic. This will ensure that funding is fully utilised to address the pandemic impact and to support the future recovery from the pandemic. Any estimates need to be treated

with some caution as further funding may be provided this year as well as the requirement for new commitments to be made.

7. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning & Contract Management

How much has this Council spent on commercial property investments in the last 10 years and what is the current capital value of that property portfolio?

Reply:

The Council has spent £89,366,000 on commercial property. The 2019/20 Asset Valuation figure for these properties is £72,528,165. The 2020/21 Valuation is currently being progressed.

Investment properties are long term investments and we have to recognise that the UK property market at present is going through a period of uncertainty, due to a multitude of factors but with the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbating the situation. Therefore, the current Covid situation creates uncertainty in the market which results in spot sales not provide realistic longer term values (e.g assets may be underpriced in view of uncertainty at current time). Over the lifetime of the investment portfolio, the additional income to the Council over and above Treasury Management returns stands at circa £24.5m, calculated until the end of December 2020. This additional revenue generated from these investments more than offsets the decline in capital values and has helped protect key services with the additional funding provided.

Further details are available in the 'Investment Portfolio Review# report to the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS on 3rd February 2021.

The Council has spent £89,366,000 on commercial property. The 2019/20 Asset Valuation figure for these properties is £72,528,165. The 2020/21 Valuation is currently being progressed.

<https://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/g6891/Public%20reports%20pack%20Wednesday%2003-Feb-2021%2018.30%20Executive%20Resources%20and%20Contracts%20Policy%20Development.pdf?T=10>