

LONDON BOROUGH OF BROMLEY

MINUTES

of the proceedings of the Meeting of the
Council of the Borough
held at 7.00 pm on 17 July 2023

Present:

**The Worshipful the Mayor
Councillor Mike Botting**

**The Deputy Mayor
Councillor Keith Onslow**

Councillors

Hannah Gray
Christine Harris
Jeremy Adams
Jonathan Andrews
Jessica Arnold
Felicity Bainbridge
Kathy Bance MBE
Yvonne Bear
Kim Botting FRSA
Mark Brock
Graeme Casey
Will Connolly
Aisha Cuthbert
Peter Dean
Sophie Dunbar
Robert Evans
Simon Fawthrop

Adam Jude Grant
Dr Sunil Gupta
FRCP FRCPATH
Colin Hitchins
Alisa Igoe
Julie Ireland
Mike Jack
Simon Jeal
David Jefferys
Josh King
Andrew Lee
Kate Lymer
Tony Owen
Christopher Marlow
Ruth McGregor
Tony McPartlan
Alexa Michael

Angela Page
Chloe-Jane Ross
Will Rowlands
Shaun Slator
Colin Smith
Diane Smith
Alison Stammers
Melanie Stevens
Harry Stranger
Ryan Thomson
Michael Tickner
Thomas Turrell
Sam Webber
Rebecca Wiffen

The meeting was opened with prayers

In the Chair
The Mayor
Councillor Mike Botting

Before commencing with formal business, the Mayor presented a scroll to the previous Mayor, Cllr Hannah Gray, in appreciation of her service as Mayor for 2022/23.

10 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Nicholas Bennett JP, David Cartwright QFSM, Kira Gabbert, Charles Joel, Kevin Kennedy-Brooks, Jonathan Laidlaw, Chris Price, Mark Smith and Pauline Tunnicliffe.

11 Declarations of Interest

There were no declarations of interest.

12 To confirm the Minutes of the meetings of the Council held on 24th April and 10th May (special and annual meetings)

RESOLVED that the minutes of the ordinary meeting held on 24th April 2023, the special meeting held on 10th May 2023 and the annual meeting held on 10th May 2023 were confirmed as a correct record.

13 Questions

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

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

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

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

At the request of Cllrs Simon Jeal, Alisa Igoe and Tony McPartlan, the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing, Cllr Yvonne Bear, made a statement on the removal of mobile telephone antennas from the top of Burnt Ash Heights as part of the building's impending demolition. She explained that the masts had been removed as part of the demolition of the building and the redevelopment of the site. Planning policy did not provide for the replacement of the equipment, and any decision to do so would be a commercial decision for the mobile phone companies. The Council was working with telecoms providers to improve full fibre and mobile connectivity across the borough – this work was being led by the Economic Development Team. The Council had no powers to force telecoms providers to install equipment but where areas of poor coverage are identified officers would endeavour to seek collaborative solutions. The Portfolio Holder was not aware that concerns had been raised about this location, but now that she was aware officers were investigating what could be done with the telecoms providers to improve services for local residents.

In response to questions, the Portfolio Holder stated that it was in the interests of the providers to deliver good coverage. She confirmed that the Council had good relationships with the providers and officers had spoken with both telecoms companies. They were looking for temporary solutions and any developments would be reported as soon as the Council was informed. The Portfolio Holder agreed that the possibility of including relevant policies in the Local Plan could be looked at, and she re-stated that there were options being looked at with the providers.

15 Renewal of the Armed Forces Covenant
Report CSD23074

A motion to note the renewal of the Armed Forces Covenant was moved by Cllr Colin Smith, seconded by Cllr Mike Botting and **CARRIED**.

16 Provisional Final Accounts 2022/23
Report CSD23098

A motion to agree that a sum of £2,000k be set aside as a contribution to the Building Infrastructure earmarked reserve as detailed in paragraph 3.8.2 of the report was moved by Cllr Christopher Marlow, seconded by Cllr Colin Smith and **CARRIED**.

17 Constitution Update
Report CSD23100

Report WITHDRAWN.

18 Request for Waiver of Six Month Attendance Rule
Report CSD23072

A motion to grant a waiver of the six-month attendance requirement to Cllr Jonathan Laidlaw to extend his absence for up to an additional six months was moved by Cllr Colin Hitchens, seconded by Cllr Christine Harris and **CARRIED**.

19 Committee Membership and Proportionality
Report CSD23075

A motion to accept the following recommendations was moved by Cllr Colin Hitchens and seconded by Cllr Christine Harris:

- (1) The changes to proportionality involving creation of three additional Sub-Committee seats be agreed as set out in section 3 of the report.
- (2) The following changes to Committee membership be agreed –
 - (i) Cllr Michael Tickner replaces Cllr Jonathan Laidlaw on Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS Committee;

- (ii) Cllr Andrew Lee replaces Cllr Jonathan Laidlaw on General Purposes and Licensing Committee;
 - (iii) Cllr Dr Sunil Gupta replaces Cllr Jonathan Laidlaw on Audit and Risk Management Committee;
 - (iv) Cllr Simon Fawthrop replaces Cllr Jonathan Laidlaw on Pensions Committee.
- (3) It is noted that Cllr Jonathan Laidlaw will be appointed to Industrial Relations Sub-Committee and Rights of Way Sub-Committee by General Purposes and Licensing Committee and to Plans 1 Sub-Committee by Development Control Committee at the earliest opportunity.

On being put to the vote the motion was **CARRIED**.

20 Local Pension Board - Appointment of Board Members
Report CSD23096

A motion that Emma Downie and Chloe West be appointed as Employer Representatives to the Local Pension Board for four year terms of office commencing on 17th July 2023 was moved by Cllr Keith Onslow, seconded by Cllr Christopher Marlow and **CARRIED**.

21 To consider Motions of which notice has been given.

(A) Refugees and Asylum Seekers

The following motion was moved by Cllr Julie Ireland and seconded by Cllr Will Connolly:

“Bromley Council, like other authorities, has a responsibility to house refugees and asylum seekers. The Council recognises the importance of supporting these individuals and the local community. While the Home Office leads the support for refugees and asylum seekers, the Council plays a role in ensuring they receive the necessary local services.

Council appreciates the valuable work to set up and run the Ukrainian Support Hub and aims to expand on its success. Additionally, Council acknowledges the generosity of the voluntary sector in the borough, which is eager to collaborate with the Council in supporting the new arrivals.

Therefore, Council recommends that the Executive:

1. Establish a Support Hub Service to coordinate local services and connect refugees and asylum seekers with other available support.
2. Collaborate with local partners, including other levels of government, non-profit organisations, and community groups, to ensure the effective delivery of services and support to refugees and asylum seekers in the borough, with a particular focus on preparedness for their arrival.

3. Serve as a liaison with the Home Office regarding the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers in the borough, with a strong emphasis on monitoring the quality of services provided by the Home Office's local contractors responsible for accommodation and meals.

4. Provide public information about the Council's role in supporting refugees and asylum seekers in the borough.

5. Allocate resources from existing budget allocations to operate the Support Hub and advocate for additional funding and support from other sources.”

The following amendment was moved by Cllr Simon Jeal and seconded by Cllr Jessica Arnold:

Add the following words after the second paragraph:

“The Council’s ability to support refugees is limited by lack of government funding and processes which instead diverts money to private companies making profit from the asylum dispersal scheme, which not only raises accommodation costs for local authorities competing with them when trying to source temporary accommodation, but also results in inadequate support for refugees and asylum seekers, as recently demonstrated by people accommodated in the borough who recently presented at community food providers because they were not being provided with enough appropriate foods.

The Council resolves that the Chief Executive should write to the Home Secretary, to raise these deficiencies and call for an urgent and immediate change in contract terms with the current contract providers so that sufficient funding can be provided directly to local councils including Bromley, who (partnering with our strong local voluntary sector) are better able to deliver a cost effective and supportive service for refugees and asylum seekers, as demonstrated through the delivery of our Ukrainian Support Hub.”

Remove the following text:

“Therefore, Council recommends that the Executive:

1. Establish a Support Hub Service to coordinate local services and connect refugees and asylum seekers with other available support.
2. Collaborate with local partners, including other levels of government, non-profit organisations, and community groups, to ensure the effective delivery of services and support to refugees and asylum seekers in the borough, with a particular focus on preparedness for their arrival.
3. Serve as a liaison with the Home Office regarding the welfare of refugees and asylum seekers in the borough, with a strong emphasis on monitoring the quality of services provided by the Home Office's local contractors responsible for accommodation and meals.
4. Provide public information about the Council's role in supporting refugees and asylum seekers in the borough.

5. Allocate resources from existing budget allocations to operate the Support Hub and advocate for additional funding and support from other sources.”

Motion, if amended, to read in full -

“Bromley Council, like other authorities, has a responsibility to house refugees and asylum seekers. The Council recognises the importance of supporting these individuals and the local community. While the Home Office leads the support for refugees and asylum seekers, the Council plays a role in ensuring they receive the necessary local services.

Council appreciates the valuable work to set up and run the Ukrainian Support Hub and aims to expand on its success. Additionally, Council acknowledges the generosity of the voluntary sector in the borough, which is eager to collaborate with the Council in supporting the new arrivals.

The Council’s ability to support refugees is limited by lack of government funding and processes which instead diverts money to private companies making profit from the asylum dispersal scheme, which not only raises accommodation costs for local authorities competing with them when trying to source temporary accommodation, but also results in inadequate support for refugees and asylum seekers, as recently demonstrated by people accommodated in the borough who recently presented at community food providers because they were not being provided with enough appropriate foods.

The Council resolves that the Chief Executive should write to the Home Secretary, to raise these deficiencies and call for an urgent and immediate change in contract terms with the current contract providers so that sufficient funding can be provided directly to local councils including Bromley, who (partnering with our strong local voluntary sector) are better able to deliver a cost effective and supportive service for refugees and asylum seekers, as demonstrated through the delivery of our Ukrainian Support Hub.”

On being put to the vote, the amendment was **LOST**.

The original motion was put to the vote and **LOST**.

(B) Council Support for LGBTQ+ Equality

The following motion was moved by Cllr Simon Jeal and seconded by Cllr Kathy Bance -

“Bromley Council notes with concern the record rise in homophobic and transphobic hate crime in London and across the UK in recent years. The Council unequivocally condemns such acts - including the recent incident on 27th June (during Pride Month) of hate-crime motivated vandalism of floral displays, created by local primary school children, on Bromley High Street.

We reiterate our unwavering commitment to supporting LGBTQ+ people living, working and studying in Bromley, including the Council's own staff and those accessing Council services. We will continue to work with Police, Health Service partners, Schools and employers across the borough to challenge anti-LGBTQ+ discrimination and provide inclusive services in line with our Equality Policy.

As part of this commitment, the Council agrees to establish a cross-party members' task and finish group to consider options for Bromley Council, within existing budgets, to mark and celebrate events of significance to LGBTQ+ residents as part of the Civic calendar. To provide recommendations to this effect to the Mayor."

It was moved by Cllr Thomas Turrell and seconded by Cllr Colin Smith that the motion be amended to read –

"Bromley Council notes with concern the record rise in reported homophobic and transphobic hate crime across London which remains the responsibility of Mayor of London Sadiq Khan to get a grip of. The Council unequivocally condemns such acts - including the recent incident on 27th June in Bromley of hate-crime motivated vandalism of floral displays, created by local primary school children, on Bromley High Street.

The Council reiterate our unwavering commitment to treat all Bromley residents, employees and members of society fairly, whatever their background without fear or favour."

The following members voted in favour of the amendment:

Councillors Jonathan Andrews, Felicity Bainbridge, Yvonne Bear, Kim Botting, Mark Brock, Aisha Cuthbert, Peter Dean, Robert Evans, Simon Fawthrop, Adam Grant, Sunil Gupta, Christine Harris, Mike Jack, David Jefferys, Andrew Lee, Kate Lymer, Christopher Marlow, Tony Owen, Angela Page, Will Rowlands, Shaun Slator, Colin Smith, Diane Smith, Melanie Stevens, Harry Stranger, Michael Tickner and Thomas Turrell (27)

The following members voted against the amendment:

Councillors Jeremy Adams, Jessica Arnold, Kathy Bance, Graeme Casey, Will Connolly, Sophie Dunbar, Alisa Igoe, Julie Ireland, Simon Jeal, Josh King, Ruth McGregor, Tony McPartlan, Chloe-Jane Ross, Alison Stammers, Ryan Thomson, Sam Webber and Rebecca Wiffen (17).

The following members abstained:

Councillors Mike Botting Hannah Gray, Colin Hitchins and Keith Onslow (4).

The amendment was **CARRIED**.

The motion as amended above was put to the vote and **CARRIED**.

22 The Mayor's announcements and communications.

The Mayor thanked Members for attending the Armed Forces Day Ceremony and signing of the Armed Forces Covenant on 21st June and the Bromley Stars evening on 7th July. He reminded Members about the Annual Civic Reception for Volunteers on 27th July, the Charity Ball on 21st October and the Dinner at the East India Club on 11th April 2024.

Events being planned included a Sunday Lunch to raise funds for Ukraine in January, a Wine Tasting in December, the Carol Service in December, a visit to the Bromley little Theatre in January and the Mayor's Quiz in February – details would be available in due course.

The Meeting ended at 9.06 pm

Mayor

Council

17 July 2023

Questions from Members of the Public for Written Reply

1. From Janet Worth to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

What is the Council doing to enforce TPO 2888?

Reply:

The Council's strategic response to the apparent breach of TPO 2888 comprises three strands. The first is the injunction which has been granted by the court, pending a second hearing on 6th July. The purpose of the injunction is to provide an even greater deterrent to further unauthorised tree felling. The second is the process of enforcing replanting of the felled area. There is a lot of preparatory work preceding any actual physical action on-site, which we expect to be taken when the planting season commences in autumn. The third strand is the investigation into the apparent breach of TPO that could potentially lead to prosecution of those responsible if legal tests are passed. This process commenced on 12th June when we began gathering evidence. We are currently processing the evidence received so far. Once we have a clear understanding of all the evidence any suspects will be interviewed under caution. Finally, an expediency assessment will be undertaken to determine what if any further action should be taken, one of the options being prosecution.

2. From Dermot McKibbin to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

What is happening regarding the installation of solar panels on the spa and pavilion leisure centres, when will they be fully operational and how much savings will be generated. Will the Council roll out these win-win projects throughout the borough?

Reply:

The solar panel scheme is still in its early stages with discussions on going between Mytime and the Council as to the installation and lease terms. At this time a planning application has been progressed for the Spa but not yet for the Pavilion. Officers will update Councillors once there is further news. The process will determine the viability of taking similar schemes forward on other buildings. Officers in the Environment and Public Protection Department are working with the Property team to identify energy efficiency projects on Council buildings as part of initiative 2 in the Council's Carbon Net Zero Action Plan.

3. From Kyle Sewell to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

Does the Council agree that, in solidarity with LGBTQ+ people who have faced a rising number of homophobic attacks and discrimination, the Council should have celebrated Pride in June by raising the rainbow flag?

Reply:

No, the Council does not agree. Although it is true that the number of hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales has risen year on year, in their latest data release Home Office statisticians note that “due to significant improvements in police recorded crime made in recent years, it is uncertain to what degree the increase in police recorded hate crime is a genuine rise, or due to continued recording improvements and more victims having the confidence to report these crimes to the police” (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022>). As for the claim regarding discrimination, it is not clear why this would be the case, considering that the British public’s acceptance of homosexuality has increased dramatically since the 1980s (e.g. see graph on page 129 of a recent British Social Attitudes report: https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39363/bsa_36.pdf).

It is Bromley Council’s policy to fly only the Union Flag and on occasion the Cross of St George. These flags represent the unity of the people of Bromley both as part of England and the United Kingdom. The only exception to this is the Armed Forces Day Flag. We have no intention of changing this policy. Bromley Council fully supports the right of private organisations and individuals to fly flags of their choice from their buildings or residences, or wear and display them about their person, in full exercise of their rights to freedom of speech.

As an employer the London Borough of Bromley complies with all its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and all related legislation with respect to LGBTQ+ people.

4. From Gary Kent to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Will the Council urgently consider greater flexibility in car parking payments by, for instance, allowing scratch cards to ease difficulties for residents?

Reply:

At this current time there are no plans to introduce a voucher system for car parking. To implement such systems would be expensive and these costs would need to be passed back to the customer. Officers are holding 2 future drop-in sessions in Beckenham and Orpington Library where they will be happy to help motorists with any queries they have using the RingGo system.

Council

17 July 2023

Questions from Members of the Council for Oral Reply

1. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

Will LBB liaise with the perpetrator of the felled trees in Kings Hall Road, to allow a competent and experienced tree surgeon to access the field to properly coppice all the remaining felled oak trunks to allow those trees to then regrow as multi-stem coppice trees which will then be of wildlife value?

Reply:

There is a legal requirement for the landowner to replant trees which have been illegally felled. The Council will be approaching the landowner regarding the options for replanting. Unfortunately, however, the Council cannot dictate the exact method and this will ultimately be for the landowner to decide providing it meets the overall requirement to restock the illegally felled trees.

Supplementary Question:

Is there a plan? Who is responsible for clearing the felled trees? There are 131, so there is a large amount of debris.

Reply:

This case goes across three portfolios, so I will have to get back to you on that.

2. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Spaces and Open Spaces

Did London Borough of Bromley participate in 'No Mow May' for parks, green spaces and grass verges across the borough this year?

Reply:

No.

Supplementary Question:

Thank you for that concise reply which clears up confusion for many residents who thought that the Council was participating in "No Mow May." As the Portfolio Holder is aware, many of the open spaces across the borough were not mown in May. Can she please explain what the issues that arose with idverde, the Council's contractor, were and what action she is taking to prevent these from occurring again?

Reply:

I would say that I am taking this very seriously and I am seeing officers regularly about this. In the contract with idverde we do have that the grass is cut as often as is needed.

3. From Cllr Alisa Igoe to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety – In the absence of Cllr Nicholas Bennett the reply was provided by the Leader of the Council

Environment PDS Committee 29/06: in answer to a resident's written question, you apologised for the delay of the start of the EV on-street charging pilot and said it would now start 03/07. This year long pilot was approved 21/03/22, due to commence autumn 2022, with results reported back to committee in Spring 2024. Could you please elaborate on what are the reasons for the delay?

Reply:

The EV charging Gul-E trial commenced at the start of this month (there are 8 installations at addresses across the Borough). More Officer time can now be dedicated to the procurement of the on-street charging equipment, which is the other aspect of the trial.

The on-street aspect of the EV charging trial has taken longer than the Council would have liked which is due to a number of factors. The procurement has been more complex than anticipated due to the nature of the pilot scheme, whereby officers wish to make a genuine comparison between different types of chargers and different suppliers. EV charging technology has continued to develop and we wish to ensure that we trial systems that will be future-proofed as far as that is possible.

Officers have recently made significant progress in solving this issue and the tender process is due to commence shortly.

Supplementary Question:

We should be looking at Oxfordshire and Nottinghamshire County Councils. Do you truly think that we are ambitious enough with our EV charging strategy?

Reply:

Yes, I do. I am against spending far too much money too quickly on kit that will become obsolete within a few years, such is the pace of technological change. We need to take considered steps.

(During consideration of this question Councillor Simon Fawthrop declared that he owned an electric vehicle.)

4. From Cllr Sam Webber to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces

How can litter that is blown out of kerbside recycling boxes be reduced across the borough and if appropriate, how does the Council plan to increase the take up of the nets sold in our libraries to cover the boxes?

Reply:

We have got Environment Matters, which goes out biannually, that is delivered to every household.

Also, I will be up at 5am with the Veolia Team doing a video giving key messages for residents about recycling and our waste programme, and I will also be talking about the netting. If any Members have any particular requests or questions that could be addressed in the video please get in touch with me.

Supplementary Question:

I am glad to hear that this is being promoted. Can you please ensure that, where residents do use these nets, Veolia staff do not discard them into the refuse.

5. From Cllr Chris Price to the Portfolio Holder for Resources Commissioning and Contract Management (In the absence of Cllr Price a written reply was provided to his question)

Please can you inform the Council in regard to the outturn of the 2022/23 Household Support Fund.

- A. How many residents applied
- B. How many were successful
- C. What was the total spend?

Reply:

- A. 13,857
- B. 13,620
- C. £3,468,994.29

6. From Cllr Tony McPartlan to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety - In the absence of Cllr Nicholas Bennett the reply was provided by the Leader of the Council

Accessing the facilities on our local high streets and shopping parades can be difficult, and sometimes impossible, for wheelchair and mobility scooter users. What are we doing to ensure our high streets and shopping parades are accessible to as many of our residents as possible?

Reply:

Whenever a town centre improvement scheme is undertaken the needs of wheelchair users are considered and drop kerbs etc are installed. However, there are locations around our town centres where the addition of new ramps will help make access easier. Where such locations are brought to the attention of Officers or Members, the Environment and Public Protection Department will consider what can be done to make suitable improvements.

Supplementary Question:

Has the Council ever considered working alongside local businesses to improve High Street and Shopping Parade accessibility as part of grant applications.

Reply:

I do not have intimate knowledge of what the Department is doing about accessibility, but certainly we have done this and I am in favour of it. It is what we are all about, trying to lever in money wherever we can get it.

7. From Cllr Josh King to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

I'm aware that I and a number of other councillors have been told that their applications to the Small Parades Initiative have had funding either removed in full or in part.

Can the Portfolio Holder list all applications by ward and amount of funding where this has happened in the last 6 months?

Reply:

It is not true that funding has been removed. However, it is true that some projects that had funding agreed cannot now be delivered or have been identified as at risk due to insufficient business support. The project is recorded as a whole so the date I can provide is for the whole project, not just for the last 6 months. However, I can confirm that over 42% of the funding has already been spent on works that have either been completed or nearing completion, and 17% of the funding is at risk of not being spent on the originally identified works. These funds will be returned to the central pot for Members to bid for again. A detailed breakdown by Ward is provided in the written response to Cllr McPartlan's question.

Supplementary Question:

Does the Portfolio Holder understand that many businesses who have suffered hardship during the Covid lockdown and now the cost of living crisis feel that the Council is withdrawing funding and is not supporting them?

Reply:

The scheme is for capital funding, it does not involve revenue funding, that has never been included in any of the proposals associated with this pot. It has never been part of this project to consider revenue funding.

8. From Cllr Jeremy Adams to the Leader of the Council

Can the Council Leader guarantee that any charity displaced by the proposed sale of Community House will be offered appropriate and affordable accommodation in the Direct Line building?

Reply:

The Council made the decision to sell the freehold interest in Community House with the existing tenant, Bromley Voluntary Sector Trust (BVST), in situ under the 1954 Act protected lease they currently hold. BVST sub-lets to various tenants on commercial terms to which the Council is not party. Therefore to clarify, the sale will not displace the current tenant, and only the current tenant has the legal ability to displace any sub-tenants in accordance with any commercial terms that are provided for within their sub-lease agreements.

A previous commitment during full Council in December 2022 was made, welcoming any sub-tenants to relocate themselves into the Council's new Civic Centre should they be displaced from their current premises at Community House by their landlord

BVST, making assurances that no single current sub-lessee of BVST would be worse off financially if that route was pursued. That offer remains open to this day.

Supplementary Question:

Has the Council been approached by any of the sub-tenants with any form of request for alternative accommodation?

Reply:

At this point in time I have not been involved with the officers dealing with this. It is possible - the Chief Executive will email you if there is any further information that I am not party to. I suspect that everyone involved is waiting to see what happens with the expressions of community interest in the building. If there is any further information you are entitled to see it.

9. From Cllr Jessica Arnold to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Health

On page 79 of the public pack, an update is given on persistent underspending of Public Health budgets, as follows:

“Public health has had underspends in each of the last six years. These were £141k in 2014/15, £152k in 2015/16 and £330k in 2016/17, £395k in 2017/18, £761k in 2018/19 and £358k in 2019/20. This total balance of £2,137k was carried forward to 2020/21. £282k of this was used in 2020/21, and there were underspends again in 2021/22 of £109k and £910k in 2022/23. It is requested that the cumulative balance of £2,874k is carried forward to fund public health initiatives that may be required in 2023/24 and future years.”

What plans are in place to ensure that this year’s funding, which has been allocated for improving Public Health for Bromley residents, is fully spent on such, and are plans being developed with partners to effectively utilise the rather large cumulative balance of £2.9m over coming years?

Reply:

I am advised by the Director of Public Health that planning for the allocation of both the 23/24 Public Health Budget as well as any additional initiatives, where evidenced based health outcomes have been identified to justify additional spending from the accumulated reserve, is at an advanced stage.

As well that a paper detailing the Public Health team’s recommendations will be presented to Health & Wellbeing Board Members at its next meeting on September 21st.

10. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

Cllrs who won in the Local Parades grants have been advised that incomplete bids have been closed out and the monies returned to a central pot for other wards to bid for. Why were these incomplete bids not discussed with the ward Cllrs before this decision was made? Why can't the awarded bid money be used in the wards where the bids were won?

Reply:

When the second Local Parade initiative was first announced in 2017, ward members were required to bid for certain works for their ward by 2018 – these were then costed. Due to a range of issues, these works have experienced delays, substantially due to Covid where these works were paused for almost two years. Officers are now trying to deliver as many of the schemes as possible, but some of these works have now been identified as no longer possible, no longer relevant or no longer carrying business support. Ward members have been contacted where this is the case, and asked to try to obtain business support by August if that is the outstanding issue. It was never the intention of this fund to be for specific wards, but rather for specific works within local parades, therefore if the original works cannot be delivered the funding needs to be returned to the central pot for consideration of new schemes which Members are at liberty to bring forward. Ward members have been updated on this. A general verbal update was provided at the RRH PDS meeting in June and a further report is due in September.

Supplementary Question:

We did not bid for the works in a particular parade, it was the parades that won the bids and the works to be undertaken there. I spent two years working to get some of these works done. We were never told that this work is likely not to go ahead, everything I received was positive. The other issue is that, yes, we decided which parades needed improvement and we made suggestions but we were directed by the officers working with us to which parts we could bid for. For example, a notice-board was included but the officer cut it out. And now, the money is not going to be spent and that is absolutely wrong. Where work can be done, even an alternative type to overcome the problem that has arisen, that money should be spent in those parades.

Reply:

I do not know the specifics of the works you are talking about. There are a host of reasons why something might not receive funding, including that we found water mains underneath. The officers can tell you that, if they have not already done so, which I thought they had. We will take that away as an action to give you a full briefing on why your proposal is no longer viable. If a way can be found to make it viable then we can proceed with it, but if we cannot you can put in for revised works.

Additional Supplementary Question from Cllr Alisa Igoe:

I was told that Plaistow ward had £12k left.

Reply:

There is an amount left over from specific projects in Plaistow. If you look at the written reply to Cllr McPartlan that explains where everything is.

11. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

Could you please provide recent examples of how you have engaged the Metropolitan Police and other public bodies with the aim preventing and tackling hate

crime in Bromley, including the Council's actions in response to the worrying rise in anti-LGBT+ incidents, such as occurred on Bromley High Street on 27th June?

Reply:

As you are no doubt aware, individual incidents are led by the Police and the Council provides a strategic overview.

The welcome introduction of the Borough team means that we can have far more direct conversations about what is affecting us locally and discuss the trends. Also, Superintendent Luke Baldock now co-chairs the SBPB where addressing hate crime is one of the four priorities, this is in addition to the quarterly meetings attended by myself and the Assistant Director with the BCU's Chief Superintendent, Andy Brittain.

Additionally, the Council also receives weekly Hate Crime updates from South BCU which are then discussed identifying actions for various partners. Further we attend the annual Pan London Hate Crime Forum with the Metropolitan Police Service and the quarterly BCU-wide Hate Crime Trends and Updates Meeting.

Supplementary Question:

Can she confirm when was the last time that she met with the Metropolitan Police's LGBT Community Liaison Officer for Bromley BCU?

Reply:

Officers may well have done, and I can check that.

Additional Supplementary Question from Cllr Sam Webber:

Does the Portfolio Holder welcome the Bromley BID's support for the LGBT community and will she be increasing engagement with the Bromley BID as part of supporting this important minority community in the borough?

Reply:

I am always happy for things to be brought to me, if they want to approach me that is absolutely fine.

12. From Cllr Alisa Igoe to the Leader of the Council

Does the Leader feel the Council is providing residents with adequate services and value for money, as we have now (a) employed, at extra cost, a second contractor to work on the backlog of potholes (b) an additional provider is needed to plant new trees, at a 42% cost increase (£566k) over that originally approved and (c) the Portfolio Holder for Green Services says she will now hold bi-weekly meetings with the CEO of our grounds maintenance provider to discuss getting work back on schedule?"

Reply:

Yes, clearly. As well, that where delivery falls short on occasions or circumstances change, it is rightfully challenged and mitigating measures put in place as quickly as possible to address the cause. Including such as:

(a) Employing additional suppliers to meet the increased demand. Possibly the Labour Party opposite would prefer it if the record number of potholes on the Borough's roads after last winter were left unfilled for longer than they have been whilst no doubt attempting to make cheap political capital out of that as well?

(b) As with (a), it would have been helpful had the Labour Party advised us in advance that inflation was set to spike to 11% and make financial provision for it in their 2023/24 alternative Council budget to at least moderate the increase. Possibly they would prefer it if the 'Treemendous' scheme were abandoned and no further money spent on that too?

(c) It is called scrutiny/holding contractors to account, which I had hitherto foolishly assumed that the Labour Party opposite thought might be a good idea.

Supplementary Question:

With the 42% cost increase for planting trees, can you tell me the percentage increase of employing a second contractor?

Reply:

I cannot, but that could be available through the PDS Committee if you ask for it.

13. From Cllr Chris Price to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing (In the absence of Cllr Price a written reply was provided to his question)

With a growing social housing waiting list of nearly 3,000 households, what is the Council's in-borough target for additional social housing over the next 5 years?

Reply:

All Boroughs in London and the South-East are facing the same difficulties as reflected in the comparative number of households in TA including:

Bromley – 1,544
Lewisham – 2,661
Croydon – 1,935

The current target for Council acquisition and development as set out in the homelessness and housing strategies is 1,000 additional units and progress has regularly been reported through the RR&H PDS Committee. Against this target the Council has so far secured a supply of 615 new affordable units through its acquisition and new build schemes and is currently undertaking feasibility work for the development of up to a further 230 new affordable homes. Work is also underway with housing association partners to support the regeneration of existing estates and increase the supply of new affordable units across the borough. The Homelessness and Housing strategies aim to not only increase the supply of affordable housing but to also support residents to prevent homelessness wherever possible, including assisting more than 130 households into privately rented accommodation last year. The Council continues to keep the supply and demand under review and to maximise the supply of affordable housing.

14. From Cllr Jessica Arnold to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

Councils are required to spend section 106 monies received from developers within a five-year time limit. Of the £9,446,000 section 106 monies projected at year end 2022/23 (page 132 of the public agenda pack), how much of this funding is due to expire and therefore will be lost if it is not spent, during 2023/24? Is there a plan for spending any such 'at risk' funds so they are not lost?

Reply:

The management and spending of section 106 money is something we have taken seriously for a long time. In the previous municipal term I led a cross-party working group looking at the issue across all portfolios. And while the processes were robust a few changes were proposed. I am happy to confirm to you that, of the £9,446k in the final accounts, 2% is subject to payback risk and officers are looking at ways to spend that money rather than paying it back.

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Council

17 July 2023

Questions from Members of the Council for Written Reply

1. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

Can we be assured that officers will do all they can to prosecute those responsible for cutting down trees with TPOs?

Reply:

Yes. As with any crime, we will look to take forward a prosecution where the evidence exists.

2. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

Does the Council have figures for how many looked after children, born between September 2002 and January 2011, received Government funds into their Child Trust Funds (CTFs) and as Corporate Parents did Bromley Council contribute money into their CTFs?

Reply:

We do have records for these children. We can also confirm that all of these children will have received payments into their individual Children's Trust Funds. As a Council we have historically not added in any additional funds directly into CTF. However, all of our young people do instead receive savings as soon as they come into care.

3. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

What action has the Council taken to ensure care leavers and looked after young people who received Child Trust Funds and have turned 18, or will do soon, are aware of and can access the money within their CTF?

Reply:

At age 18 we write to all of our young people and let them know the details of how they can access their funds.

4. From Cllr Graeme Casey to the Leader of the Council

Will the Council commit to demanding an explanation from Royal Mail as to why some areas are receiving such a poor service from the Royal Mail? We have had reports of some residents having to wait 10 days or more for their post.

Reply:

I can do better than that for you. Having written to the CEO of the Royal Mail on two occasions myself as long ago as January 2021, only to be completely ignored, enquiries of this nature for Bromley & Chislehurst residents were streamlined and are being pursued directly by Sir Bob Neill and his team at Westminster.

Sir Bob is in regular correspondence with Royal Mail as delays are reported, has visited Sherman Road sorting office and held talks on site there with senior Royal Mail Managers, as well as meeting local postmen and women and Trade Union representatives, explaining directly the impacts that these delays have on local residents and businesses.

With that in mind, you might find it helpful to steer any of your constituents who approach you complaining of delays directly to his office.

5. From Cllr Graeme Casey to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces

Can the Portfolio Holder please confirm the replacement rate for newly planted trees across the borough? The street where I live previously had six trees replaced due to vandalism and is due to have three of those replaced once again for the same reason. Is this an issue across the borough? Of the trees planted in public areas, how many of those have died within 12 months of being planted, and how many have been replaced?

Reply:

Although it can take up to three years for newly planted trees to establish, we can report that the estimated mortality rate for trees planted in 2021/22 is 7% (88 trees).

Unfortunately, vandalism of newly planted trees accounted for the death of 1% of trees planted in 2021/22 (14 trees). Of those planted in 2022/23, the mortality rate is at <1% (16 trees) but these are all due to vandalism.

Vandalism does occur across the borough, although there are hotspots where repeated acts of vandalism are a particular risk.

The Council aims to replace all trees which fail to establish, and under our Tree Management Strategy are committed to replacing any trees which need to be removed. Officers will usually attempt to replace trees in the same locations up to twice if the site remains viable, after which an alternative site may be located.

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

There has been much discussion of Energy Performance Certificates (EPCs) in the media recently and their impact on homeowners and landlords. However is the Council aware of how EPCs now affect commercial properties?

As of April 2023, it is illegal to let or continue to let any building with an EPC rating lower than 'E' (on a scale of A-G) under the Minimum Energy Efficiency Standards (or MEES) rules. The minimum standards level is expected to rise over the coming years to 'C' in 2027 and 'B' in 2030. As the ultimate enforcer for these measures, I understand the Council has the power to issue fines ranging between £5,000-£150,000.

How will Officers work to enforce these standards, to ensure that commercial property stock locally is improved and made more energy efficient? Is this something our Enforcement team is already working on alongside other agencies? Do Officers anticipate any extra income for the Council as a result of non-compliant commercial properties?

Reply:

Trading Standards are the regulatory body for overseeing commercial premises and their EPC status under these new duties. Presently there is no national funding grants for this increased demand. Therefore, this is not a current enforcement priority when compared to other demands on the service.

7. From Cllr Tony McPartlan to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing, for written reply

Please detail how much money was initially awarded to schemes as part of the local parades improvement initiative, and please detail how much of this has yet to be spent. Please split this out by ward.

Reply:

There was a total of £250k allocated to the local parades initiatives in 2017 and ward members were invited to apply for funding for specific initiatives in 2018. The initiatives that could be applied for were where capital monies could be utilised to enhance a local parade in conjunction with local businesses, and had to be supported by local ward members. However, as with all capital monies the funding cannot be utilised for revenue costs often associated with maintenance. To date £106k has been expended the breakdown of which is provided in the table below.

Ward	Parade	Approved Funding	Actual Spend (Year end 2022/23)	Funds allocated for items unable to be progressed
Penge & Cator	Kent House Parade	£8,150.00	£4,742.06	
	Newlands Park Parade	£19,587.00	£11,782.94	£1,710
	Parish Lane	£1,887.96	£297.22	£1,280
Biggin Hill	Roundway Biggin Hill	£8,825.30	£8,023.00	
	Rosehill, Biggin Hill	£21,725.00	£1,112.00	£13,920
	The Pantiles, Biggin Hill	£4,600.00	£742.00	£300
Chislehurst	Royal Parade	£24,942.50	£17,504.59	
	Old Hill Chislehurst	£8,453.50	£353.46	
	Belmont Parade	£21,466.50	£10,019.00	£3,000
Chelsfield	Green Street Green	£10,677.70	£9,149.82	
Clock House	Clock House Parade	£9,546.94	£7,531.93	
	Upper Elmers End/Marlow Rd	£7,875.00	£375.00	£4,910
Crystal Palace & Anerley	Anerley Hill/Crystal Palace Park	£21,373.00	£6,168.33	£4,920
Bromley Common & Holwood	Chatterton Road	£10,780.00	£4,280.00	
Bromley Common & Keston	Keston	£486.76	£442.16	
Shortlands & Park Langley	Park Langley - 1 item	£221.76	£221.76	
Kelsey & Eden Park	Eden Park Parade - Upper Elmers End Road	£19,885.00	£16,098.85	
Bromley Common & Keston	Keston	£486.76	£442.16	
West Wickham	Red Lodge Road	£17,921.20	£2,355.80	
Plaistow	Burnt Ash Lane	£21,843.06	£4,392.11	£14,015
Mottingham	Mottingham Village	£25,000.00		
Total:		£265,734.94	£106,034.19	£44,055.00

8. From Cllr Julie Ireland to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

When will the Council be undertaking a review of progress against the objectives set out in the 2019 LIP "Bromley's Transport for the Future"?

Reply:

The Council reviews progress against targets set out in the 2019 LIP on a regular basis.

9. From Cllr Julie Ireland to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

In the 2019 LIP "Bromley's Transport for the Future" the then Portfolio Holder promised "the development of a new public transport infrastructure in the Borough to provide new connectivity to other parts of London and Kent". What progress has been made towards this objective in the 4 years since the report was published?

Reply:

The Council is currently developing a scheme to provide bus priority measures through the installation of bus lanes on Anerley Hill between Crystal Palace Parade and just to the south-east of Seymour Villas. The project is planned to be implemented during the 2024/25 financial year. Also, TfL will shortly be deploying state of the art electric buses on Service 358 and as this is one of the main services that uses Anerley Hill it will complement the measures soon to be provided. TFL recently announced plans to introduce a network of limited stop/express orbital bus routes, called 'Superloop', intended to provide new travel opportunities, and quicker, and for Bromley will potentially provide new links to Canary Wharf, West Croydon and Bexleyheath. The details are still to be confirmed and are currently subject to discussion with ourselves and other London Boroughs.

10. From Cllr Chloe-Jane Ross to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces

Residents have reported concern about recent sewage discharge into the River Ravensbourne and River Beck, how does Bromley Council work with Thames Water to ensure our rivers are clean and what reporting does Thames Water provide to the Council when such discharge occurs?

Reply:

Bromley Council's work with Thames Water involves ensuring illegal connections from private properties into natural systems of drainage are rectified to reconnect appropriately with the main sewers. Permits to discharge effluent into local waterways by Thames Water are regulated by the Environment Agency, which is the lead authority for the quality and health of rivers. Therefore, any data reporting is between TW and EA.

If there is a specific local concern, Bromley Council will engage with both parties to rectify the matter. Any large pollution incidents are reported to LB Bromley's Emergency Planning team who would move into action.

11. From Cllr Chloe-Jane Ross to the Chairman of General Purposes and Licensing Committee

Will Bromley Council ensure that reminders about Voter ID are put into the upcoming Environment Matters Newsletter and any other publication going out to all households in the borough before the next Mayoral and General Elections?

Reply:

We have an extensive, wide-ranging communications and engagement plan, which is already underway and builds upon work undertaken as part of the pilot scheme that the Council was part of previously. Details of the new measures, including Voter ID, are already published on the Council website -

www.bromley.gov.uk/ElectionsAct2022

and specifically Voter ID - www.bromley.gov.uk/VoterID

Other communications activity will include sending direct communications to all residents/electors/households via various Council publications, including with all Canvass communications. Posters will be published on digital screens but also distributed in places like libraries, with messaging also placed on the Council's social media channels and news releases also published.

This activity is already underway and will gradually increase over the coming months and will build up to the next scheduled election in Bromley which is the GLA election on 2 May 2024.