

ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND SCRUTINY COMMITTEE

Minutes of the meeting held at 7.00 pm on 23 January 2024

Present:

Councillor Adam Jude Grant (Chairman)
Councillor Felicity Bainbridge (Vice-Chairman)
Councillors Kathy Bance MBE, Josh Coldspring-White,
Simon Fawthrop, Colin Hitchins, Alisa Igoe,
Alison Stammers, Harry Stranger and Graeme Casey

Also Present:

Councillor Nicholas Bennett J.P., Councillor Will
Rowlands, Councillor Thomas Turrell and Councillor
Sophie Dunbar

68 APOLOGIES FOR ABSENCE AND NOTIFICATION OF SUBSTITUTE MEMBERS

Apologies were received from Councillor Chloe Jane Ross and Councillor Graeme Casey attended as substitute.

Councillor Adam Jude Grant was appointed as the new Chairman and Councillor Felicity Bainbridge was appointed as Vice Chairman.

The Chairman welcomed Councillor Josh Coldspring White to the Committee.

69 DECLARATIONS OF INTEREST

Councillor Alison Stammers declared an interest as the Secretary of the Friends of Chislehurst Recreation Ground and as a regular donor to the Chislehurst Conservators.

70 MINUTES OF THE MEETING HELD ON 16th November 2023

It was pointed out that in the main body of the minutes, and in response to a question, it had been noted that litter picking in car parks took place on a weekly basis. A Member highlighted that with respect to car parks in Chislehurst, one of the car parks was inspected on a weekly basis and the other two car parks were only inspected on a three weekly basis. Notwithstanding this, the minutes were agreed as a correct record of proceedings and signed accordingly.

71 MATTERS ARISING AND WORK PROGRAMME

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CSD24009

A Member raised the matter of the Equalities Impact Assessment that was undertaken with respect to the removal of cash payments for parking in Bromley. The Member was of the view that a correct formal public consultation process had not taken place, which was a fundamental principle of an EIA. She asked why the correct consultation process was not followed and referred to the fact that there was a similar situation with respect to Brighton Council where a judicial review of process was being undertaken. The Director of Environment and Public Protection responded that it was the Council's view that no additional consultation other than that already undertaken was required. The Member requested that in the future, a full yearly financial analysis report with respect to RingGo be brought to the committee, highlighting savings and income streams. The Director responded that the most appropriate place to do this would be at the annual review of the APCOA contract. The Member responded and expressed the view that the matters were separate. The Director answered and said that contractually they were not, as the Council only had a contract with APCOA and not with RingGo, who was subcontracted by APCOA. The Member responded that there was a need to scrutinise the decision that had been made. The Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety commented that it was not appropriate to keep revisiting the matter at every meeting and agreed with the Director that the time to revisit the matter was at the annual review of the APCOA contract. It was noted the depot infrastructure report had been moved to the June committee.

RESOLVED that the Matters Arising and Work Programme report be noted.

72 ORAL QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

Three oral questions were received from members of the public. The questions and responses are appended to the minutes.

73 ORAL QUESTIONS TO THE PORTFOLIO HOLDERS FROM COUNCILLORS

Four oral questions were received from Councillors. The questions and responses are appended to the minutes.

74 WRITTEN QUESTIONS

Six written questions were received from members of the public. The questions and responses are appended to the minutes.

75 UPDATE FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR THE ENVIRONMENT

The Committee received an oral update from the Portfolio Holder for Environment. A Member expressed thanks to the Portfolio Holder for his visit to the Plaistow ward. She raised the question of QR codes for trees and wondered when they were going to be fully operational. The Portfolio Holder responded that he was hopeful this would be achieved within the next two weeks.

RESOLVED that the update from the Portfolio Holder for Environment be noted.

**76 UPDATE FROM THE PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR TRANSPORT,
HIGHWAYS AND ROAD SAFETY**

A Member expressed her thanks to all those who had met with TfL to resolve the issue of vandalised traffic lights throughout the borough. She commented that in many cases the traffic had flowed better when the lights were out. However, it was sometimes the case that the negative aspect of this was that pedestrians were put in danger. She wondered if the Council could look at traffic management at junctions in a different manner. The Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety reminded the committee that it was TfL that installed the traffic lights and that at night time, drivers and pedestrians would be more vulnerable; consideration would also need to be applied to protecting school children. The Assistant Director for Traffic & Parking stated that new traffic signals would only be considered when there was a critical problem; the main concern was with safety, rather than traffic flow.

A Member stated that the first traffic light had gone down on the 10th of January and that she had written to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety on the 15th of January, requesting that an appropriate press release be issued to the public. She commented that nothing had been released until the 19th, and asked why this had taken so long, and why the Portfolio Holder had not mentioned any injuries (sustained as a result of the lights not working) in his update. The Portfolio Holder responded and said that the Council was not responsible for the traffic signals around the borough and this indeed was the responsibility of TfL. The Council was not the traffic authority and it was the responsibility of TfL to deal with any issues that occurred with respect to traffic lights. He said that the Council paid £0.5m annually to TfL to sort out any issues regarding traffic signals. He said the issuing of a press release would not have modified driving.

The update stated that the Government had awarded Bromley an additional £455,000 to spend on potholes in each of 2023-24 and 2024-25". A Member asked if the funds could be used to repair College Road, (which had multiple bus routes, a nursery and a church), and was a main artery into Bromley. The Portfolio Holder replied that this would be considered at his meeting with officers.

A Member suggested that as the vandals had been targeting traffic lights, could the Council use new poles instead of putting cameras on the existing

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traffic lights. The Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety replied that this was a matter for TfL and that sometimes TfL placed the cameras in places which the Council did not approve of. In essence, TfL could put the cameras wherever they wanted to. The committee was reminded that the vandalism of traffic lights and cameras was a criminal activity.

RESOLVED that the update from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety be noted.

77 PRE-DECISION SCRUTINY OF REPORTS TO THE ENVIRONMENT AND COMMUNITY SERVICES PORTFOLIO HOLDER

a ECS PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW REPORT

ES20348

A Member pointed out that the target with respect to Highways Maintenance had not been hit and indeed it was only 40% against a target of 90%. The Assistant Director for Highways responded that an improvement plan was in place and that matters were improving. Regular meetings had been taking place with Riney and they had been asked to improve their performance further. A Member enquired if Riney were currently paying low service damages. It was noted that these had been suspended last January, but would be re implemented in April this year.

It was noted that an improvement plan was also in place with respect to Glendale. A Member commented that there had been many references to an improvement plan at many meetings, without much evidence of improvement actually taking place. She expressed the view that Glendale were struggling and was concerned that they would never get better. The Assistant Director, Environment (Carbon Management and Greenspace) commented that performance was now starting to recover due to various reasons including additional recruitment, a review of processes and changes in management. The recent storms had added to the difficulties in dealing with the backlog. Additional contractors would be brought in as required. A Member expressed concern about additional spend on contractors. The Director for Environment and Public Protection provided assurance that this expense was contained within the existing budget. It was further noted the KSIs were high; this was because there had been a higher than expected number of KSI incidences in May and June.

The Assistant Director (Traffic and Parking) pointed out that the Council needed to look at long term trends and long term data. He said that the KSI figures were half of what they were in early 2000, and were in fact the best in London. A Member highlighted the fact that the 'Driven by Consequences' program had only been held once a year, and she expressed the view that more of these schemes in schools were required. The Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking responded and said that it was intention of the Council to

run more of these programs if possible, but that the Council had to build up relationships with schools in the borough.

It was asked if the additional work caused by the damage from recent storms would be within budget or would additional funding be required. The Director said that supplementary funding may be required as there were budgetary implications as a result of a succession of storms. It was asked that in view of the fact that storms were becoming more frequent, would it be helpful to bring services in house. The Director pointed out that to deal with fallen trees needed specialised equipment and trained staff, so it made sense to continue to use an organisation that had these resources readily available.

A Member referenced section 3.3 of the report which showed Riney's projection and targets with respect to 10 day highway maintenance times and 35 day highways maintenance times. The former was currently projected to hit 23% target, (out of 90%) and the latter had a 90% target with a projection of 40%. The Member referred to these as 'flashing' red targets and wondered when the implementation plan would be implemented and take effect. The Assistant Director (Highways) responded that the number of outstanding jobs was reducing rapidly, and the date to come back on target was set at 1st of April. The Director for Environment and Public Protection said that he and other officers had spent a whole day recently, discussing issues with Riney and it was now the case that they had a much more stable workforce and were introducing innovative technology that would speed up pothole repairs. The Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety added that Riney had now employed a Planner to plan the repair of potholes more efficiently. He also pointed out that LIP funding had been cut by 50%.

The Assistant Director for Traffic and Parking pointed out that the Council's Road Safety Officer was undertaking road safety and educational work twice a week in schools, (every week) and education was also being carried out with respect to E scooters and mopeds.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holders endorse the outcomes, aims and performance measures set out in the 2023/24 ECS Portfolio Plan.

78 ECS PERFORMANCE OVERVIEW INFORMATION BRIEFING

No questions were received specifically regarding the information briefing.

a UPDATE ON ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STRATEGY

ES20343

The Chairman expressed concern over the time that it took to charge vehicles, and the cost involved. He hoped that there was scope to upgrade in the future and that the cost from the provider could be reduced. The LBB Transport Planner explained that this particular product was for residential

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charging which was done slowly and mainly overnight which was good for the vehicle and the batteries.

Members discussed the user agreement and maintenance going forward. It was hoped that the gully would be considered as an asset in the property. Members discussed the provision of the service for Motability users and the Transport Planner explained that issues around usage by Motability users had not yet been decided. It was asked if a gully could be shared and the general view was that this should be possible. At the time of the meeting, a start date for implementation had not yet been decided. It was noted that the power supply would be supplied in the usual way from the customer's normal household electricity supply. In terms of general maintenance of the gully itself, (cleaning, clearing etc) that would be down to the resident. The provider(s) would provide their own warranty period for the unit itself. The Council would still have a responsibility for the footway in general so would be expected to re-install the unit in the event of footway works. A Member asked if all the street electric charging points would be situated on pavements. The Transport Planner said that this was not the case, as different locations may mean build outs.

A question was raised as to why three of the Carbon Reduction Team members had left. It was explained that one member of the team had joined Odeon in a senior role, one was a graduate trainee who had moved on to another position and another was a junior member who had been promoted internally within the Council.

It was asked if the Council would possibly get left behind in terms of progressive technology. It was commented that the technology side of things had currently settled down. The Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety recommended that the Council should proceed with caution. It would be interesting to observe how Connected Kerb responded to technology changes. The equipment would need to be future proof; the Council would not want issues arising from out of date street furniture. The committee supported the recommendations as outlined in the report.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety be recommended to:

1) Approve the appointment of Connected Kerb as a supplier of the on street electric vehicle charge points, to be installed in the locations defined in the EV Residential Charging Strategy.

2) Authorise officers to begin the process of rolling out an electric vehicle gully charging project across the Borough as a paid for service, at no cost to the Council.

3) Delegate to the Assistant Director of Legal Services, authority to sign and execute all legal and ancillary documentation arising in connection thereto.

4) Delegate to the Director of Environment and Public Protection, authority to make minor changes to the schemes in response to operational requirements.

b ALBEMARLE ROAD / WESTGATE ROAD JUNCTION RECONFIGURATION

ES20353

This report was brought to the committee to seek approval for the recommended option for the reconfiguration of the junction of Albemarle Road and Westgate Rd. This was because the recommended option retained and improved the existing priority junction arrangement and introduced a contraflow cycling facility northbound on Westgate Road.

RESOLVED that the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety be recommended to approve the proposed priority junction improvement scheme as detailed in Appendix A of the report, for the implementation of the scheme, with any minor detailed design amendments addressed under delegated authority.

c CASHLESS PARKING UPDATE REPORT

ES20355

This report was presented by the Head of Shared Parking Services to update Members on the performance of the cashless parking application RingGo, since the final stage of the removal of the pay and display machines in April 2023.

A Member expressed the view that there were still some residents who had not come to grips with RingGo and were consequently disadvantaged. She said that as far as the Chislehurst Ward was concerned, parking numbers were down on this time last year in every single area, down between 6% to 12%. Continuing, she said that over the last nine months there were 17,000 fewer parking transactions and that there was a human and financial cost. She questioned if the Council were making savings, and suggested that measures be taken immediately to offset the drop in usage across the borough. She requested that a single car park machine be installed in Chislehurst which could take card payments.

A Member expressed the view that the system had been rushed in and that more consultation had been required, together with an earlier dissemination of signage. She stated that in her view, this was discrimination against the elderly, and reminded the committee of the judicial review in Brighton. The Director for Environment and Public Protection said that he was not aware of the grounds of the judicial review with respect to Brighton Council. He stated that many other local authorities in London had moved to cashless parking.

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He said that in the view of the Ombudsman, the Council had acted correctly and there was no reason for alternative arrangements.

The Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety expressed the view that if a motorist could drive a 2 tonne vehicle on the road, then they should be able to use the App. He reminded the committee that the Council had to save £30m by 2027.

The Portfolio Holder stated that his concern had to be with the borough as a whole. In terms of parking usage across the borough, the usage for April to December 2022 was 2,687,032, whilst the usage for the same period in 2023 was 2,747,778. He said that this approximated to an increase of 60,000 and a 2% increase. The Portfolio Holder said that the increase had occurred despite the fact that the Hill Car Park had been closed and the West Wickham Car Park had also been closed to make way for housing development.

Councillor Alison Stammers stated that she had reservations about the report and requested that this be noted.

RESOLVED that the Cashless Parking Update Report be noted.

**d DIY WASTE AT THE REUSE AND RECYCLING CENTRES-
CHANGE IN LEGISLATION**

ES20346

The report was presented to the committee by the Head of Environmental Strategy, Technical Support and Commissioning. The report detailed changes in legislation to prevent households from being charged for the disposal of small scale DIY waste at household reuse and recycling centres.

A Member expressed concern that the proposal would not be able to be policed effectively. He said that he was concerned about long queues developing and would support the introduction of a booking system. Another Member expressed concern around the abuse of staff and whether or not this could get worse. She also expressed a preference for the introduction of a booking system. The Head of Environmental Strategy, Technical Support and Commissioning answered and said that in terms of abuse, the main offenders were individuals using large tipper type vans, and so to deal with this it was proposed to restrict the type and the height of vehicles entering the Household Re-use and Recycling Centres. A Member enquired as to how any changes would be publicised, and it was noted the leaflets would be produced and the council website would be updated.

A Member enquired about possible administrative costs. He was informed that the attendants at the reuse and recycling centres would be using a tablet and that there would be no cost to the council. Monitoring would be undertaken to see if the new proposals positively affected the levels of fly tipping. The implementation of the new proposals would be reviewed in July and the fly

tipping report would come back to the committee in September. A Member asked if the new proposals and details could be promoted in the council magazine.

RESOLVED that:

1) The Environment Portfolio Holder acknowledge the changes in legislation and the change in practice at the two Household Reuse and Recycling Centres in Bromley.

2) The Environment Portfolio Holder be recommended to agree to the changes proposed at the Household Reuse and Recycling Centres and to restrict site users in using certain vehicle types from the 1st of March 2024.

79 POLICY DEVELOPMENT AND OTHER ITEMS

80 DRAFT 2024/25 BUDGET

FSD24009

The report was presented to the committee by the Head of Finance for Environmental and Community Services. The aim of the report was to consider the Portfolio Holders' draft 2024/25 Budget, which incorporated future cost pressures, planned mitigation measures and savings from Transformation and other budget options, which were reported to the Executive on the 17th of January 2024.

The Chairman expressed concern at the Council's predicted deficit of £39m by 2027/28.

It had been noted in the meeting that the Department for Transport had allocated £455k to the Council for a fund to deal with pot-holes. A Member commented that he could not find this in the draft budget and asked where it had been detailed. The Director for Environment and Public Protection commented that in his view this was because details of this funding had been released after the draft budget had been drawn up. The Member commented that this funding should be added to the draft budget. He commented that a budget could not be approved if details were missing. He asked that this comment be forwarded to the Executive.

A Member referred to the fact that the draft budget had shown a loss of income from the closure of West Wickham Car Park. She informed Members that Chislehurst Library Car Park was likely to be closed for a period of six months for extensive renovations and that the loss of income from this closure should also be included in the Budget.

RESOLVED that the ECS PDS Committee note the Draft Budget Report.

Post Meeting Note:

Following the question regarding pot-hole funding—the following note was sent out to the committee the following day from the Head of Finance—ECS:

The question asked by Cllr Fawthrop at committee last night regarding the pothole funding for Highways and why that is not reflected in the ECS budget, the answer to which is because the funding announced is 100% capital, and therefore would not be included in the draft revenue budgets for 24/25.

Please see link to funding announcement below which confirms that all funding is capital in the last paragraph before table 1 for regional allocations.

<https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/highways-maintenance-funding-allocations/local-highways-maintenance-additional-funding-from-2023-to-2034>

81 Park Buildings Lease Process and Grant Payments

ES20320

The ward member for Chislehurst was grateful that the grant paid to the Chislehurst Conservators had been renewed for a further five years. She was disappointed however, that the amount of the grant had not been increased since 2010. She expressed concern regarding the poor condition of some of the buildings in question due to age and being in a poor state of repair. She wondered how organisations would be prepared to take on new buildings in this condition and said that this had not been addressed in the report. She also expressed concern at the short term nature of the lease which was for seven years.

There was a discussion concerning shipping containers that would be in used to store tools and equipment for Friends Groups. It was asked if the Friends Groups would incur a charge, and if planning permission would be required. The Assistant Director for Environment (Carbon Management and Green Space) answered and said it was possible to consider longer leases where there was significant capital investment. She said that the seven-year lease term was linked to delegated authority under the constitution. The Assistant Director said that rent free periods may be required; the council needed to try hard to find new tenants and there was a need to divest the Council of responsibility for these buildings. With respect to the shipping containers, it was stated that planning permission was not always needed and decisions would be made on a case by case basis. The Assistant Director said that with respect to the containers, there were currently costs raised by legal and estate colleagues, but these were heavily discounted, those costs may need negotiating.

The Chairman asked if cladding could be applied to the containers as most of the time they looked dirty.

The Assistant Director replied and said this would be dependent upon costs; efforts would be made to place them in a discreet location. A Member objected to a 'one size fits all policy' and said he did not understand the rationale behind the seven-year lease policy. He expressed the view that longer term leases would give stability to organisations for planning purposes. The Assistant Director said the standard terms and conditions would be a new starting point for negotiations and that the length of the lease would be negotiable. A Member asked that it be minuted that it had been agreed that a one size fits all policy would not be adopted.

RESOLVED that:

1) The Portfolio Holder for Environment be recommended to approve the revised approach to leasing park pavilions and buildings as set out in the report; specifically those processes set out for vacant pavilions and lease renewals.

2) The Portfolio Holder for Environment be recommended to approve the standardisation of the grant agreements provided for leisure activities in parks and open spaces as set out in the report.

3) The Portfolio Holder for Environment be recommended to delegate authority to the Director of Environment and Public Protection in consultation with the Portfolio Holder for Environment, to agree and enter into revised grant agreements as appropriate.

4) The Portfolio Holder for Environment be recommended to delegate authority to the Assistant Director for Legal Services, to execute all relevant legal documentation ancillary thereto.

5) The Portfolio Holder for Environment be recommended to agree to the renewal of the grant to the Chislehurst Conservators, for a term of five years as further set out in the report.

82 Open Space Strategy 2021- 2031: Year 2 Update

ES20355

This report was presented by the Assistant Director for Environment (Carbon Management and Greenspace) to provide an update on the delivery of the Open Space Strategy in the second year since its adoption in November 2021.

A Member raised the issue of concessions for ice cream vans. As many of these ice cream vans were emitters of diesel fumes, she wondered how this would fit in with the Council's air quality strategy. The Assistant Director responded and said that the tender process would favour those that were lower emitters. A Member referred to an appendix which noted various objectives and progress made against those objectives. Some of the

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objectives had been Rag Rated as 'Red' and the Member stated that some of them should not really be 'red' if there was mitigation in place, or if no further action was going to be taken. Reference had been made to governance arrangements for stakeholders and clarification was required concerning this. The Assistant Director responded and said that the plan was to increase the number of stakeholders and the range of stakeholders and also to make the best use of everybody's time. It was anticipated that the government arrangements would be finalised this year.

RESOLVED that the Open Space Strategy Year 2 Update Report be noted.

83 ECS CONTRACTS REGISTER REPORT

ES20347

Members reviewed the ECS Contracts Register Report.

It was requested that going forward, the data-base extract be published in the main report and not as an Information Briefing.

RESOLVED that the ECS Contracts Register Report be noted.

84 CONTRACTS REGISTER INFORMATION ITEM

Members noted the Contracts Register database extract that had been published as an Information Briefing.

85 ECS RISK REGISTER

ES20349

Members reviewed the ECS Risk Register.

RESOLVED that the ECS Risk Register be noted.

ECS PDS-January 2024--Oral Questions from the Public

ECS PDS: Oral Questions from Councillors

ECS. Written Questions from the public

ECS PDS-November 2023--Update from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

ECS PDS-January 2024: Update from the Environment Portfolio Holder

ECS PDS January 2024, Update from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

The meeting ended at 9.32 pm

Chairman

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ECS PDS: January 23rd 2024

Oral Questions from the public with answers:

1) Question from Ann Garrett to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety:

Nuclear waste trains which carry highly radioactive fuel rods, have been travelling through Bromley from Dungeness to Sellafield for many years. These trains which travel very close to people's homes, continuously emit low level radiation increasing the risk of cancer and strokes. There is also the danger of an accident, which would release highly radioactive material, were the flasks to break open.

Has Bromley Council done a recent risk assessment in relation to the impact on people's health, and how would local emergency services deal with an accident were it to occur?

Response to Question 1 from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety:

The Council is not notified of trains, or the routes of trains or any other vehicles, which may carry nuclear waste through the borough. The method of transporting nuclear waste is subjected to rigorous regulation, control, and continued risk assessment.

Supplementary Question:

The transportation of nuclear waste through the borough is due to be de-commissioned soon. I feel it is important that councillors be informed about what has been happening. I would like to ask if councillors knew about the nuclear waste travelling through the borough before I asked the question?

Response to the Supplementary Question from the Chairman:

We will get back to you and write to you concerning this.

2) Question from Alex Hudson:

When will Bromley deliver on its commitment to Net Zero and Bromley Air Quality Action Plan targets, by providing residents without offroad parking or access to SEN transport, financially viable and convenient home EV charging options, generating revenue, utilising section 106 Carbon Offset Fund and avoiding additional street furniture?

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

I refer you to the report on tonight's agenda.

Supplementary Question:

What are the alternatives that the Council offers for residents to make the switch away from fossil fuel motoring to electric?

Response to Supplementary Question:

The report sets out what we're doing for the future in terms of the provision of gullies and electric charging. 65% of residents in the borough have off road parking, and the Council encourages those who have off road parking to charge their vehicles at home.

3) Question from David Boswell:

Following the wholesale removal and imposition of cashless payments for parking using the RingGo app, I have a question for the PDS Committee to be held on the 23 January 2024, it is:

“At the PDS Meeting of the 22 November 2022, Members were given a Report and also an Equality Impact Assessment, to be read in conjunction with the Report, regarding the removal of every pay and display machine in the Borough and the imposition of parking payments using the cashless payment app RingGo, with there being no alternative payment method. The Council imposed cashless payments in April 2023 without any prior and relevant public consultation. The Report and EIA referred to there having been two previous rounds of consultations to which there were no objections. Those two rounds of consultations were undertaken to establish public attitudes regarding the removal of some pay and display machines while still retaining 131 pay and display machines.

Why was there no public consultation before 22 November 2022 Committee Meeting debated the removal of every P&D machine and imposition of RingGo, which was a completely different and not comparable proposition to the partial removal of P&D machines while retaining opportunities for drivers to pay by cash for parking?

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

The reasons for the Council moving to a cashless system was clearly set out in the report to elected Members of this PDS Committee in November 2022 and after an exhaustive debate, the proposal to remove all machines was supported based on the best use of public money. With regard to public consultation, I refer Mr Boswell to Legal implications in Paragraph 11 of the report on November 22nd 2022. I took the decision following a report on the outcome of the public consultation.

Supplementary Question from Mr Boswell:

I am very deaf and finding it hard to hear anyone speak in this chamber. Please speak slowly and with good diction.

(At this point the answer is re-read again, slowly and clearly, by the Portfolio Holder—Cllr Dunbar also offered to provide the T Loop facility.)

The Government advice regarding the undertaking of public consultations has been published in a document issued by the Cabinet Office. The report of the 23rd refers to a traffic management order. Does the Council regard the publication of traffic management orders to be public consultation for the removal of every pay and display machine?

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

Yes.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Alisa Igoe:

Public consultation is a fundamental principle of the EIA. The inclusion of the views of the affected interested public helps to ensure that the decision making process is equitable and fair and leads to more informed choice and better environmental outcomes. Do you think that we have really had a proper formal public consultation?

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

Yes, and it was confirmed by the Director of Legal and Corporate Affairs in response to correspondence from members of the public and was also supported by the Local Government Ombudsman in four separate reports that they have issued in response to public applications to them.

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ECS PDS. 23rd January 2024

Oral Questions from Councillors

1) Question from Cllr Chloe Jane Ross:

(To be asked by Cllr Graeme Casey)

It has been recently reported that the borough of Bromley has the most abandoned cars of any London borough. We have experienced difficulty in getting long abandoned vehicles removed even when the road tax has run out. What can be done to strengthen Bromley's ability to get abandoned cars removed more quickly.

Ref: <https://www.newsshopper.co.uk/news/24027160.bromley-revealed-london-borough-abandoned-cars/>

1) Response to Question from Cllr Ross by the Environment Portfolio Holder

Legislation denotes that Bromley serves formal notice (up to 15 days) requesting removal of abandoned vehicles deemed to be abandoned, also that adequate and reasonable efforts to check for a keeper or interested party must be taken before removing, a process which unfortunately does take time. We welcome detail of any specific cases of concern, so that these can be reviewed to ensure that the process and timeframe for removal of vehicles (which have met the criteria) has been followed, whilst noting any which fall outside of the agreed process as a learning tool for future improvement to service delivery.

The Council also has an agreement with DVLA via APCOA that vehicles untaxed for a period of time can be removed. This is not aimed at dealing with abandoned vehicles but is more to target drivers avoiding paying road tax.

Supplementary Question:

I refer to an example of a vehicle with no MOT in Foxgrove Road. When do you check vehicle MOTS? Some vehicles could be insured but have no MOT, lack of an MOT invalidates the insurance; when do we undertake MOT checks?

Response from the Environment Portfolio Holder:

If you can send me the specific details of this case I can get it investigated. I can point to examples in the Mottingham and Shortlands wards currently where vehicles with no MOT are being investigated. By law we have to give 15 days grace. If someone then MOTs the vehicle within this grace period there is nothing that we can do. We do remove and impound illegal vehicles.

Comment from Cllr Alisa Igoe:

There is a vehicle in Plaistow ward that has been there before I was elected. You referred to a period of being untaxed, how long a period are we talking about?

Response from the Environment Portfolio Holder:

If a vehicle is untaxed by a day, then its illegal. The situation that we find ourselves in is that we do have to allow 15 days for the vehicle to be taxed, and the situation rectified. We can then intervene at that point. It is frustrating, but that is the law as it currently stands.

Comment from the Director of Environment and Community Services:

I will arrange for officers to send out a briefing note.

2) Question from Cllr Chloe Jane Ross

(To be asked by Cllr Graeme Casey)

It has been reported that the borough of Bromley has been given an additional £455,000 to spend on potholes in each of 2023-4 and 2024-25, and a pledge of a minimum of £14,240,000 to be spent in the borough up to 2033-34. How much has been spent on potholes in 2023-4 so far, how much is currently budgeted to be spent on potholes in 2023-4 and 2024-25 and can this be diverted to other road maintenance or safety needs if required?

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

The additional £455k allocation from DfT is to be used on new highway maintenance initiatives, rather than subsidising existing budgets. Once full details are available from DfT a decision will be taken on possible projects. Potholes are not defined in our maintenance policies or contracts, but minor repairs are undertaken. Spend on minor carriageway repairs up to 1 sq.m to date is £66,047. The overall annual budget for reactive works is £858,480, which would include repairs up to 1 sq.m.

Maintaining highway safety is statutory duty, and as such emergency and reactive repairs would need to be prioritised over other highway repairs.

Supplementary Question:

What will the £14,240,000 be spent on? Is it just for pot-holes and how much additional budget did we get in the borough for such costs in addition to what has already been stated?

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

I think that I have covered that in the answer to the question—but it has to be on new initiatives.

3) Question from Cllr Alisa Igoe:

A2212, Plaistow ward: we have no streetlights along three quarters of Burnt Ash shopping parade. With many street trees and some businesses shuttering their windows early, it can be dark in winter even in mid-afternoon. Could officers consider an assessment of light levels with a view to adding streetlights, for amenity/safety reasons?

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

A survey will be conducted to see if lighting reaches the required standard at this location.

4) Question from Cllr Alisa Igoe:

Reference:

Report No. ES20343 - UPDATE ON ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STRATEGY

3.20. "Tranche 1 of the LEVI funding (underway this financial year) came too soon for Bromley's purposes."

Question:

On 21 March 2022, Cllr Harmer, Chair of Environment PDS Committee, said it would be good to speed up the EV charging initiative in the borough. What were the reasons Bromley were not ready to take advantage of Tranche 1 monies of the LEVI funding for EV charging infrastructure, as other councils did?

4) Response from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Bromley have elected to be part of Tranche 2 for the following reasons:

The willingness of other London boroughs to work collaboratively in 24/25.

The development of the on street EV charging trial which will enable the Council to ensure installations carried out with LEVI funding are in the right locations with the right technology.

To learn from the experiences of other Boroughs taking part in Tranche 1.

To cater for developments in both battery and charging technology between 2022 and 2025.

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ECS PDS: January 23rd 2024

Written Questions from the Public

1) Question from Brendan Donegan to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

The [Cargo Revolution Borough Charter](#) is an opportunity for Local Authorities to be part of the transition to a greener economy and help make sure businesses and residents have the best possible chance of making the switch to cargo bikes. Will Bromley Council sign up and if not, then why?

1) Response to Question 1:

We will not be signing this charter. We do not want to encourage the use of these slow moving and wide cargo bikes on busy roads which will impede other road users.

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

I wish to submit the following question for the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways & Road Safety at the Environment and Community Services Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee meeting on Tuesday 23 January 2024.

Does Portfolio Holder agree that, given changing demographics, it is incumbent on Bromley Council to:

- (a) ensure borough fit for post-ICE future;
- (b) enable active travel for all in transition to sustainable transport modes, e.g. walking, wheeling, shared mobility, public transport;
- (c) endorse behaviour change, e.g. Pageant of Sustainable Mobility?

Resources:

[Young people are falling out of love with cars.](https://www.economist.com/international/2023/02/16/throughout-the-rich-world-the-young-are-falling-out-of-love-with-cars)

<https://www.economist.com/international/2023/02/16/throughout-the-rich-world-the-young-are-falling-out-of-love-with-cars>

[Bromley, London borough with most reported abandoned cars.](https://www.scrapcarcomparison.co.uk/blog/scrap-car-report-statistics/)

<https://www.scrapcarcomparison.co.uk/blog/scrap-car-report-statistics/>

[Over 76,000 adult residents in LB Bromley eligible for free travel on public transport in London.](https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimatesenglandandwales/census2021unroundeddata)

<https://www.ons.gov.uk/peoplepopulationandcommunity/populationandmigration/populationestimates/bulletins/populationandhouseholdestimatesenglandandwales/census2021unroundeddata>

2) Response to Question 2

Bromley has a comprehensive set of transport policies designed to ensure a fair balance between the needs of all road users.

3) Question from Ian Dunn to the Environment Portfolio Holder

On 31 March 2021, the Council established a Carbon Neutral Initiatives Fund, with £875,000. To date, none of that fund has been spent. Can the Portfolio Holder provide examples of the sort of projects this fund will be used for, and when he expects to bring papers describing them to this Committee for scrutiny?

Response to Question 3:

The Council allocated £7k of the Carbon Neutral Fund to measure and analyse its Scope 3 procurement emissions following a Council motion.

The Carbon Neutral Fund was set aside to support delivery against the Carbon Net Zero Action Plan and is managed by the Executive. To date, much of the funding used to deliver the initiatives in this plan have been from grants or invest to save monies.

However, the Carbon Programme Manager is working with the Council's Property Team to develop proposals that will make use of this fund through the delivery of the Operational Property Refurbishment Programme, with these being brought forward in due course.

4) Question from Sue Sulis to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety:

Robbie Moore, the Minister for Flooding, stated (5/1/24) that :

'The Government is spending £5.2 billion over the next cycle to better protect homes'...

Will Bromley Council receive any funding, if so, how much; on which sites is it planned to be spent; and what works are to be carried out?

Response to Question 4:

To date no details have been circulated to local councils.

5) Question from James Rowe to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety:

Our roads and pavements are often in need of repair to keep the surfaces safe for use.

Can you provide separate figures, for the latest available years data, showing how much was spent on repairing (1) pavements, and (2) roads?

Also, how do you decide how much to spend on each?

Response to Question 5

Reactive and emergency highway repairs are arranged following routine safety inspections or customer enquiries. The 2023/24 budget includes;

Reactive footway repairs - £691k

Reactive carriageway repairs - £788k

Planned road and footway resurfacing are based on priorities identified by annual condition surveys. The annual budget for planned maintenance is £2.5m, which is allocated to carriageways and footways depending on priorities.

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Transport, Highways and Road Safety update to Environment and Community Services PDS Committee November 16th 2023

Public Transport Forum

Another Transport Forum was held on October 10th and a wide range of representatives attended including; Network Rail, Southeastern, Thameslink, Stagecoach, GoAhead, TfL and Licensed Taxis. In follow up correspondence I raised with Southeastern better connectivity for the trains on the Bromley North branch line with trains at Grove Park. Southeastern have stated that:

“It is possible to change the schedule to provide more minutes before connections at Grove Park to Charing Cross, for example, but this would impact travellers coming in the other direction.

For example, if we have a train arriving 5 minutes earlier to provide an additional cushion for connection, we would then need this shuttle service to depart 5 minutes earlier to travel back to Bromley North, meaning some passengers heading via Grove Park to Bromley North would face a very tight connection or would miss it entirely and then have a very long wait.

In essence we can provide a service in one direction with plenty of cushioning for connection, or we can accommodate both directions with tighter connection times, which is what we do now

If there is substantive feedback which suggests that a good majority of local passengers would prefer us to prioritise the Grove Park direction in the morning (for example), then we would be happy to consider it, but it would come with a trade-off for those travelling into Bromley at that same time of day”.

As this largely affects constituents in the Bickley and Sundridge, Plastow and Bromley Town Wards I have circulated the reply to them for their observations.

TfL bus planning meeting

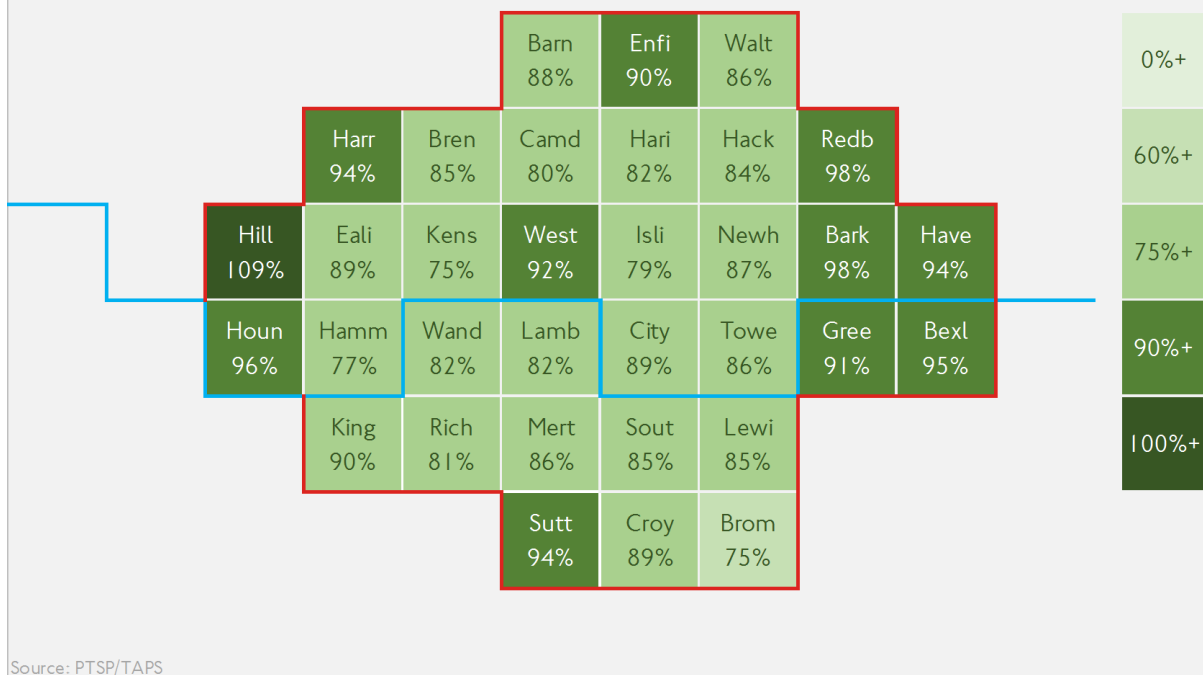
I, with the Assistant Director for Transport, Angus Culverwell and David Bond, Senior Principal Transport Projects Manager met TfL representatives on November 2nd

TfL have agreed to review our ideas for the Superloop network i.e. extending SL4 to Bromley North from Grove Park and routing SL5 via West Wickham. We also raised the reliability of route 320 with a focus on the curtailments at Biggin Hill airport. We have suggested that given the alternative link to Catford on the 208 from Bromley that the 320 could be cut back to Bromley North to improve reliability in Biggin Hill where it is the key route to Bromley.

We discussed bus ridership recovery after COVID and this is the latest available data.

Weekday (0-24h) bus boarders by local authority

[w/c 16/10/23 versus w/c 14/10/19]



Source: PTSP/TAPS

TfL raised with us the problem of operating a double deck SL5 along South Eden Park Road because of the overhanging trees, at the moment they are considering using single deck buses which would reduce capacity. Both the Council and TfL wish to use double deck buses and they have asked us to facilitate a meeting between TfL, the borough transport team and arboriculture staff to see if a solution can be found.

We raise a number of other matters

Faster and more reliable links from Biggin Hill to Bromley TC and Orpington TC.

- . Borough east- north west connectivity
- . West Wickham to Princess Royal Hospital links
- . Links to Greenwich and Blackheath
- . Cross GLA boundary services to Kent

Obviously, all proposals are subject to the available funding and there may be opportunities to consolidate some routes to allow for more high frequency services.

We also discussed the capacity at the Bromley North stand and have suggested that TfL discuss with Network Rail leasing the northern section of their car park which is little used.

Southeastern Trains stakeholders Forum

I attended the Forum on November 13th in Canterbury. Representatives of the management, operating and customer services together with Network Rail gave a series of presentations on building a more sustainable and economic railway.

Passenger levels have increased since Covid but are still below 2019 and consequently the taxpayer subsidy is still required.

Separately Network Rail have announced a ten-day closure of between Herne Hill, Brixton and London Victoria, with Southeastern services being diverted into either Blackfriars, Cannon Street or Charing Cross.



The line closure will take place for 10 days, from Saturday 23 December to Monday 1 January, as well as several weekends before and after.

This will also enable the installation of a new signalling system on the lines from Herne Hill and Nunhead into London Victoria. The new system will replace the existing 1980s signalling and will come into use over Christmas next year. This work follows recent upgrades between East Croydon and London Victoria which has seen delays slashed in half.

Drainage repairs, track maintenance and inspections will also be carried out during this time to maximise the amount of work that can be completed while the railway is closed.

Trailing new technology for pothole repairs

Following last winter's pothole problems in which we brought in a second contractor at addition cost to the budget I have looked at various ways in which we can increase productivity and repair potholes more quickly. There are a number of machines on the market which repair potholes in a matter of minutes. They are not a magic bullet and the process and the material used by some them, whilst possibly suitable for lightly used rural roads may not be appropriate on busy urban roads. I have asked officers to discuss with other boroughs their experience of using the machines and to procure for trials a number of alternative machines for comparison trials as part of the Council's Transformation policy.

**Cllr Nicholas Bennett JP,
Executive Member for Transport, Highways and Road Safety**

Portfolio Holder update 23rd January 2024

Happy New Year to one and all. This year was a first for me, as I decided to have a New Year's resolution. From 1st January, I was going to cut down on the quantity of cigarettes I smoke.

All of this was going tremendously well and then on the 2nd, Storm Henk decided to pay our illustrious borough an unwanted visit. Henk rocking up was then shortly followed by the British American Tobacco share price increasing as we braced ourselves for a very busy week, clearing up Henk's damage which made Bromley look like the morning after a concert by The Who.

Given that I provided daily updates in the aftermath of the storm, I won't go into too much detail relating to this particular item. I can however update you on the situation as it currently stands:

- Glendale are currently working through the backlog.
- Our systems (Confirm) has a log of 259 'tree emergency call outs' across both Highways and Parks service areas over the reporting period 26/12/23 – 19/1/24.
- At the time of reporting (19/1/24) there are 112 open emergency call outs. We are awaiting further data from Glendale as to the status of these cases however, it is anticipated that a significant proportion 'made safe & need reattendance' or are 'duplicates'.
- Work is underway to collate the associated costs and the breakdown between publicly owned and private trees. Once complete we will seek compensation from the tree owners for costs incurred by the Council during the clear up.

Tremendous

Many of you may have seen the video of me planting a Common Hawthorn in Mottingham back in November. Unlike my presenting skills in front of a camera, the Hawthorn, and all of the trees we have planted this year and previous years really are a thing of beauty! Please find below some facts relating to this year's progress:

- 1510 trees are being planted in total. Of which 1250 are tremendous trees, 25 are sponsored trees and 39 are replacement trees from those planted in 22/23 with the remainder accounting for replacement trees for those felled in 22/23.
- Trees planted to date are 920 with monthly targets for November and December met. January tree planting is firmly on track to exceed target.

Month	Trees to plant per month	Actual number planted in the month

Nov-23	302	302
Dec-23	302	312
Jan-24	302	
Week 1	75.5	101
Week 2	75.5	103
Week 3	75.5	102
Week 4	75.5	
Feb-24	302	
Mar-24	302	

- Tree planting season runs from November to March.
- The monthly planting target is 302.
- Tree planting has been split into 9 batches.
- Batch five is nearing completion.
- Batch 6 trees have been delivered.
- Batch 7&8 trees will be delivered February.
- 568 tree planting requests received to date in 2023.
- A review of tremendous trees planted since winter 21/22 will be undertaken in early spring 2024. Upon completion a report will be produced detailing mortality rates and as necessary outlining the strategy to ensure the target number of 5000 new trees is met by 2025.
- QR code tags are operational on IOS with Android scheduled to go live later this winter.
- Bromley 'please water me' tags have been produced and will be installed on the first round of watering in 2024.

If you would like a tree to be planted, please report it on Fix my Street.

Jubilee Projects

Once again, I would like to express by heartfelt gratitude to all the Friends Groups and Residents Associations, amongst many others, who have submitted applications for funding across the borough. To date we have had 43 jubilee projects approved with a total awarded value of £600,680.00.

Of the 43 successful projects, 14 have been completed, 2 have had the first phase delivered, 5 have had orders raised and 5 are in progress at the moment. The remaining are either in design phase, continuing fundraising, in planning or require further scoping.

Since the last update:

- Playground improvements have been completed at Whitehall Recreation Ground.
- Playground improvements have been completed at Kings Meadow.
- Playground improvements have been completed at Ravensbourne Open Space.

The orchard projects at Richmal Crompton and Jubilee Country Park were due to be completed this week, however they have been postponed slightly due to the frozen ground conditions.

The damage that was caused by the ASB at Brook Park (St Paul's Wood Recreation Ground) is being rectified this month via the insurance claim and the extra area of surfacing being completed by the contractor by way of compensation is being completed this week.

DIY Waste reforms

The day I was appointed to my role of Portfolio Holder, HM Government decided to be very helpful and announce the new regulations regarding DIY waste.

As there is a report at the PDS setting out in detail what this means for Bromley, I won't repeat what you will have all already read in great careful detail. What I would like to add though, is where this new legislation impacts all Local Authorities, Bromley was already compliant with the new legislation before it was introduced (we would allow reasonable household DIY Waste to be disposed of for free unless you were trade). All the new legislation does is help recognise the government's attempts to move us to a standardised, nationwide policy for local authorities to receive DIY waste and address the scourge of fly-tipping. Bromley is doing the right thing in all aspects of making it easier for householders to dispose and recycle their waste whilst importantly tackling waste crime, and is therefore minimally impacted by these legislative changes. This, rather conveniently, brings me smoothly and effortlessly to the next chapter of this week's light reading.....

Fly Tipping

One of the areas I am very keen for us to specifically focus our efforts is on fly tipping and enviro crime. Following on from the successes of last year in prosecuting the rodents who feel it's acceptable practice to ruin our natural habitats and wider communities, I'm please to say we have continued the good form. In the past few months, they have:

- Seized 1 vehicle linked to fly tipping in Chislehurst (the total number of seized vehicles is now 11)
- Secured 6 successful prosecutions at court, 2 resulted in cautions and one case resulted in the first Criminal Behaviour Order (CBO) being secured by LBB, with the forfeiture of the offender's vehicle.
- 7 cases presented to court are currently awaiting hearing.
- 1 case with legal for review prior to summons being issued.
- 9 cases being compiled for consideration to report to court for summons.

Fixed penalty notices and CPW

I have also included some information regarding some FPN's and CPW's for leisurely reading. Once done, please dispose of the paper responsibly so you don't add yourself to a statistic below!

- Littering - 33 issued.
- Fly tip – 16 issued.
- DOC – 15 issued (Duty of Care breach of sec 34 EPA – commercial waste)
- CPW – 26 issued (Community Protection Warning notice)

The team have also arranged for CCTV surveillance at 4 hot spots which have assisted the team secure vital evidence (location confidential at this stage).

In the past month the team have highlighted a hotspot location in the Hayes & Coney Hall ward. These fly tips have occurred on unlit single lane country roads, causing great risk to the environment and highway users. Evidence was located within the waste and the team are hot on the trails of a waste operator who will be invited to attend council offices in the coming days to explain how waste they'd removed ended up in Bromley.

On 29th January 2024 the team welcome the addition of three Neighbourhood Enforcement Officers as part of the contract held with APCOA. This is an extension of the contract held by parking services, who already provide an excellent service enforcing parking concerns within the Borough. The three new officers will assist the enforcement team dealing with low level enviro crime concerns such as littering, dog fouling and also supplement enforcement of highway concerns such as unlicensed building materials on the highway and unlit skips.

In light of the excellent efforts undertaken by Dean and his team, I feel he deserves everyone's upmost gratitude and a jolly good round of applause! Well done Dean!

Visits

Since assuming stewardship of the portfolio, I have met with Veolia, attempted to drive both an RCV and road sweeper (sensibly, keys weren't provided for such an experience... but I was allowed to risk a by-election in Mottingham and hold a bird of prey!) and had meetings with Idverde. I have also visited the following wards:

- Plaistow
- St Pauls Cray
- St Mary Cray
- Chislehurst

I have also visited Walter Leonard and the friends group at Betts Park, Anerley, as well as having a visit in the diary for Clock House and Darwin wards. The invitation of a visit to a Ward or Friends Group is open to everyone so please contact me.

As I'm sure that many of you will be getting a tad bored of yours truly lecturing you on what a busy chap I've been, I've decided to add the partial photo album of my 'Grand Afternoon out at the Depot' for you to enjoy.







DISCLAIMER: No animals or camera lenses were harmed in the taking of this picture – although I think he was glad to see the back of me!

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Update to Environment and Community Safety PDS 23rd January 2024

Alternative Technologies:

I have asked officers to investigate the financial feasibility of two alternative technologies for generating electricity in our car parks – solar panels and wind power. It will depend on the cost period for return on investment.

New Tesla Chargers in Civic Centre Carpark.

The new facilities, which were facilitated on behalf of the Council, by APCOA, were funded by Tesla, with use not restricted to Tesla vehicles and available for charging all electric vehicle types.

Each Tesla charge point can produce up to 250kW of power with a 15-minute charge typically producing enough battery charge for 170 miles. A standard charge takes around 40 minutes, subject to vehicle type and battery size.

In addition to the Tesla chargers, a further five AC charging units are available in the same area of the car park for motorists to charge their vehicles over a longer period or overnight.

With the car park open 24/7 along with the number of charging units and the swift charging feature, there should always be a charger available when needed.

Motorists who are happy to charge their vehicles over a longer period can use the one of the five additional AC charging units and there are also two further charging units near the main entrance to the car park.”



Connected Kerb

Cllr Grant and I visited the newly installed Connected Kerb charging points at Knights Hill, Norwood yesterday. The Company is one of three suppliers identified through the procurement framework. Further details are in the report to tonight's meeting at 10c.



Potholes

The torrential rain has once again caused potholes to appear across the network. Our contractors, Riney, are busy repairing the holes. The Government has awarded Bromley an additional £455,000 to spend on potholes in each of 2023-4 and 2024-25, and a pledge of a minimum of £14,240,000 to be spent in the borough up to 2033-34. I very much welcome this money which is coming directly to the Council rather than TfL. We await further details about any conditions which need to be fulfilled. Members will recall that last winter I authorised a second contractor, O'Rourke's, to help with the backlog caused by the doubling of the number of reports, this was expensive and therefore officers are meeting our contractor this coming week to discuss further incentives to increase the number of teams in Bromley with recourse to a second emergency contractor.

In my last update I referred to trialling innovative technology for pothole repairs. I will be attending a demonstration by JCB on February 6th and a report will be prepared for a subsequent committee.



Criminal Damage to Traffic Lights

As members will be aware, a large number of traffic lights, in total, we believe thirty-three traffic signals at 13 junctions and pelican crossings in the borough required repairs following criminal attacks attempting to destroy ULEZ enforcement cameras. A number of colleagues asked the Council to provide warning signs. However, as the traffic lights are controlled and owned by Transport for London, this is their responsibility. I checked traffic signals in the Bickley and Chislehurst area and every affected location did have warning signs, although not in all directions. Our paramount concern was and is road safety and through the good offices of Peter Fortune, our London Assembly member, a meeting between TfL and Bromley was held to emphasise the need for urgent action to replace the signals giving priority to repairs at traffic signals on routes to schools.

We need TfL to remain focussed on this serious problem and we welcome the news that repair work has started. I condemn, without reservation, these criminal acts and hope the perpetrators are caught. Bromley has amongst the safest roads in London. This vandalism compromises road safety.

Blackwall Tunnel Closures

Transport for London (TfL) has advised us that the Blackwall Tunnel will be closed to southbound traffic for five weekends in January and February to help support works to the northbound carriageway on the northbound Blackwall Tunnel approach.

The works, which are required to implement the road configuration for the new Silvertown Tunnel which will open in 2025, will see new drainage as well as new over-height vehicle gantries installed, which are necessary to protect the tunnel. The Silvertown Tunnel will provide a public transport-focused river crossing with zero-emission bus links across the Thames. Once open in 2025, the crossing, which is within the Ultra-Low Emission Zone and will be subject to a user charge, will also reduce congestion and improve the reliability and resilience of the Blackwall Tunnel, which will improve overall air quality in the local area.

The closures will take place across the weekends of 13-15 January, 20-22 January, 27-29 January (a contingency weekend if either of the previous two weekends are not possible), 10-12 February and 24-26 February, starting at 00:01 on the Saturday morning and being reopened by 05:00 on the Monday morning at the latest.

Greater London Assembly Transport Committee Report on Transport in Outer London

In a previous update (ECS PDS 7th September), I reported on my evidence session to the GLA Transport Committee on September 5th 2023. The report has been published and I am pleased to say that my evidence on Local Implementation Plan funding has been highlighted in the Committee's letter to the Mayor. A copy of their letter is attached as Appendix A.

Hill Car Park

The Hill Car Park reopened on December 17th. Because of complaints of anti-social behaviour on the upper floor have authorised the closure of the third floor, this will not impact on motorists as there is sufficient space in the lower floors for all potential users.

Bromley North to Grove Park Rail Link

Following the discussion at the Transport Forum about the connection at Grove Park in the morning and evening rush hours I asked local ward members for their views.

The overwhelming consensus is that as far as possible, the morning and evening connections at Grove Park for London trains should favour the traffic flow to and from London rather than any commuters travelling against the London bound flow. I therefore wrote to Southeastern as follows:

“At present in the morning rush hour the train provides a service every twenty minutes and has a dwell time at each terminus of 5 minutes on what is a five-minute journey each way. We accept that without a second train, which would not be an economic or a reasonable request, the service is appropriate. We also consider that the non-peak frequency of 30 minutes is reasonable.

We would, however request that consideration be given to increasing the frequency in the evening peak from 30 to 20 minutes as in line with the morning peak. This would provide more connections with the outbound London trains and reduce the often long waiting times at Grove Park for the Bromley North train”.

Southeastern have replied as follows:

“The current timetable has a two train per hour (2TPH) or half-hourly service operate between Grove Park and Bromley North in the evening peak. This is mainly because if we move away from this pattern, the connections out of other services worsen and currently the Bromley North shuttle connects out of the Charing Cross via Lewisham service thereby accommodating most passengers.

I have spoken to our train planners, and they say, as the shuttle services are self-contained it is relatively straight-forward to amend the timetable as, aside from the impact on passenger connection times, there is no knock-on impact on other operators or lines. From June 2024 our intention is to operate the same level of service as the current timetable, however there is an option to improve the evening peak frequency to 3TPH or every 20 minutes, as you have suggested, but it would mean some connections are broken, while others become better, for example for services departing Cannon St.

I would be interested to hear what the preferences of local councillors would be on the following two options:

1. The June 2024 timetable as originally planned (PDF Copy attached)
2. The June 2024 timetable, but with an option to enhance to 3TPH in the PM peak. (The changes are highlighted in red on the word timetable).

I would highlight that if we decide we should enhance the Bromley North service from its current level, we would need to secure approval from the Department for Transport, but we believe that because the costs of doing this are very low and if there is stakeholder support then it would further enhance the likelihood of this being enacted”.

The service mainly used by residents of Bromley Town, Plaistow and Bickley and Sundridge Wards and I have, today, written to them for their views.

Cllr Nicholas Bennett JP

Executive Member for Transport, Highways and Road Safety