

COUNCIL MEETING

26th MARCH 2012

WRITTEN QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. From Councillor Russell Mellor of the Leader of the Council

Can the leader advise me as to the outcome of the appeals detailed in response to my question placed before the Council on the 24th October 2011? The outstanding appeals and decision pending appeals were Children and Young People (1), Adult and Community Services (3).

Have the appeals been resolved, and if so, the cost to the Council; in the event of the appeals still being outstanding can you provide the reasons for the delay? “

Reply:

All job evaluation appeals have been heard. The outcome of one appeal is still pending and subject to further discussions with the trade unions. The delay is due to a technical matter which requires consideration and agreement by all three trade unions who are parties to the Single Status Agreement; as yet this has not been forthcoming from one of the trade unions concerned. Against this background arrangements are now in place to reconvene the appeal.

Department	Number of appeals*	Number that resulted in a grade change	Decision Pending
Children and Young People	3	0	0
Adult and Community Services	5	0	1
Renewal & Recreation	1	0	0
Environmental Services	3	1	0
Resources	1	0	0
Chief Executives	1	1	0

The cost of the 2 successful appeals is £23,206 one off costs and £6,555 going forward costs.

*Please note this figure relates to the number of posts not post holders.

2. From Councillor Russell Mellor of the Leader of the Council

In view of the failure of our bid to secure funding for Beckenham and Penge from the Mayor's Outer London Fund and the TfL Capital of London Area based funding scheme is the Council in a position to enhance the

Beckenham Town Centre Management Team with a view to achieve success for future bids to the TfL scheme?

Reply:

Maintaining and enhancing the vitality of all of the Borough's town centres, including Beckenham, is a key Council priority. The Council, along with our Partners have a clear strategy for promoting improvements to Beckenham Town Centre. One of the agenda items before Council tonight is a report on Special One-Off Initiatives. This includes a proposal to allocate the sum of £250k to support immediate improvements to Beckenham High Street. Part of this funding will also be used to support design work to enhance a bid to Transport for London for traffic and public realm improvements under their Area Based Schemes, which is a competitive process. I would urge Members to support this item.

The process of developing a successful TfL bid and scoping more immediate improvements is being guided by the Beckenham and West Wickham Working Group – which was commissioned by the R&R PDS Committee. The Town Centre Management Team is playing an active role in attending and supporting this group in its deliberations. Notwithstanding some sickness issues within the team, which are being dealt with through the proper process, Town Centre Managers will also be working with colleagues in other Council Divisions to roll out many of the shorter term projects, and will assist with consultation on proposed future public realm changes.

With regards to the future of Town Centre Management, we are exploring the option of introducing Business Improvement Districts (BIDs) to the main town centres which may unlock additional resources and give more control to local businesses and other key occupiers. This approach, which has been successful in other town centres across the UK, is being piloted in Orpington town centre – and if successful we would be looking to gauge the feasibility of the BID model for other towns, including Beckenham.

3. From Councillor Russell Mellor of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment - *In the absence of the Portfolio Holder the Executive Assistant for the Environment will respond.*

I would be obliged if the Portfolio Holder can advise me of the financial savings to the Council by the expenditure of £7.942 million from the Invest to Save fund for the replacement of lighting columns in the Borough, the reply to be expressed in terms of a revenue stream.

Reply:

As set out in 5.4 of the report that went to the 7th March 2012 Executive meeting, the total revenue saving over 11 years is expected to be: -

New Installation & Maintenance	£8.532m
Energy savings	£0.897m
Staff savings	<u>£0.342m</u>

Direct Revenue Savings	£9.771m	
Savings from Carbon Allowances	£0.114m	
Inflation savings	<u>£1.797m</u>	
Total Savings (inc future growth)	£11.682m	
Repayment of invest to save monies (scheme)	£7.942m	(estimated cost of scheme)
Interest on borrowing 3.5%	£1.849m	
Net Saving from Invest to Save	<u>£1.891m</u>	

Any final release of monies will be dependent on the outcome of tendering for the works early in 2013.

The estimated net savings of £1.891m is after repayment of the 'Spend to Save' plus interest of 3.5%.

There will not only be enhanced asset values at the end of the investment period compared with the existing budget provision, but there will be further benefits relating to the use of latest technology, which could include LED's, to provide environmental benefits and improved lighting levels for pedestrians and drivers.

The investment is targeted at the concrete and older steel lamp columns which are at risk of structural failure.

A copy of the report together with the detailed papers providing further breakdown of the financial impact are available in the Members room.

4. From Councillor Peter Fookes of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment - *In the absence of the Portfolio Holder the Executive Assistant for the Environment will respond*

When will trees be replaced in St John's Rd, Penge as the tree pits are becoming a trip hazard?

Reply:

There are currently no plans to plant trees in this road at present. Streetscene officers are arranging to have the tree pits tarmaced over. If requests are received from the public, staff will of course consider planting at these vacant locations, subject to suitable resources and priorities.

5. From Councillor Peter Fookes of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment - *In the absence of the Portfolio Holder the Executive Assistant for the Environment will respond*

What plans are there to plant trees in Hawthorn Grove in Penge?

Reply:

There are no plans to plant in Hawthorn Grove. If Ward Members would like to suggest anything then the potential will, of course, be investigated.

6. From Councillor Peter Fookes of the Portfolio Holder for Resources

What progress is being made in the redevelopment of the Studio in Beckenham?

Reply:

The Agreement to Lease 28 Beckenham Road Beckenham (previously known as "The Studio") was entered into with Citygate Church on 3rd November 2011. Citygate's contractor took possession of the property soon after to commence the repair and refurbishment work. Under the Agreement, Citygate has 1 year in which to complete "Phase 1" of the "Works" and serve notice on the Council to complete the Lease. "Phase 1" includes: external works, renewal of services (electrical, heating including boiler replacement, alarms, water and media), installation of steelwork and other alterations, asbestos removal, plaster renewals and redecoration to some ground floor rooms and one first floor room to enable the building to partially reopen. The main works undertaken to date include: renewal of flat roof, eradication of rot and renewal of some roof timbers, installation of steel beams and removal of masonry walls, new partitioning and ceilings, some electrical work, boiler strip out, some window renovation and other external work. The contractor is programming to complete all work by the end of the summer with the exception of the internal decoration. It is understood this will be undertaken by the church members.

7. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP of the Portfolio Holder for Children and Young People

What proposals he has for establishing sold services to schools?

Reply:

The London Borough of Bromley has successfully provided Sold Services to schools since the 1990's, offering schools a range of support packages especially in the areas of School Improvement, Governor Training & Support, Finance, Human Resources and Property. With the introduction of the Academies Act in 2010, and the direct funding of academies for many services previously provided by the Local Authority, the Bromley Sold Services offer has been reviewed and expanded to meet this changing agenda. Following the endorsement given by Executive to focus on a One-Council during 2011/12, Children and Young People Services have co-ordinated the management and delivery of Sold Services across the Council. The take up of Sold Services from schools, including academies, remains high and many new services now provided to academies on a Sold Service basis only have seen high levels of buy back.

In parallel, a detailed analysis has been undertaken to establish the Full Cost Recovery position of each Sold Service. In January, Cabinet received a detailed report which presented the outcomes from this work including: the income profile, an evaluation of the potential for sold services on a Full Cost Recovery basis and options for the Council for the future direction of support and sold services to schools 2012/13 – 2014/15. This information will be reported to Executive in the spring.

For 2012/2013, the Sold Services offer will continue to be marketed to Bromley schools and, increasingly, out of borough customers. All Sold Services will be expected to meet income targets based on a Full Cost Recovery position and put in place appropriate action where needed, such as price reviews, to ensure that targets are met, supported by regular budget monitoring. Action will be taken in-year to remove a Sold Service offer where the level of market interest makes it unviable.

8. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP of the Leader of the Council

If he will set out the organisational arrangements following the merger of the ACS and CYP Departments from 1st April and any proposals to amend the Portfolio and PDS functions as a result of this merger?

Reply:

Since the start of January 2012, a single Management Team for Education and Care Services Department has been led and chaired by the Chief Executive, meeting weekly. This is in addition to ongoing respective ACS and CYP management meetings.

The Education and Care Services Management Team consists of the three Assistant Directors with responsibilities for front-line service divisions, namely Kay Weiss for Children's Social Care, David Roberts for Adults' Social Care, and Bob Garnett for Education. They are assisted by the Strategic and Business Support division under Anne Watts, the Commissioning division under Lorna Blackwood and Finance support from Lesley Moore. Also supporting this transition are Charles Obazuaye, Gillian Pearson, Terri Walters and Susie Clark.

In these months work has begun in identifying natural synergies and opportunities for smarter working across all component parts. The Management Team has also engaged with staff about the changes.

From 1st April, the Chief Executive will continue to lead the work of the Management Team as set out above, excepting a change following the retirement of Gillian Pearson and the addition of Sara Bowrey to assist with consideration of Operational Housing matters.

The weekly meetings of the Management Team will address significant issues arising, matters of shared interest across all components of the department, and the overarching strategic framework.

ACS Departmental Management Team and CYP Senior Management Team meetings will be maintained alongside the ECS Management Team until the new civic year to ensure adequate consideration of portfolio-specific issues.

The recruitment process for the post of Assistant Director for Education is underway and it is hoped that an appointment will be made in due course. The recruitment process for the post of Director of Education and Care Services will be started again after Easter.

With regard to the Portfolio and PDS functions both myself and colleagues are currently assessing the best way forward that may well precipitate an evolved change to both the Portfolio and PDS function.

9. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment - *In the absence of the Portfolio Holder the Executive Assistant for the Environment will respond*

What criteria does he intend to use in deciding the priorities for the Council's Public transport policy?

Reply:

The following factors would be taken into account in assessing priority. They are listed in no particular order.

- Whether the project falls within existing Council policy or aspirations as expressed through the Corporate Plan, the LDF/UDP, LIP and other key documents.
- The number of users likely to benefit from the proposal.
- Whether a proposal provides the level of service necessary to meet an identified current or forecast need for access to jobs or services.
- The likely timescale for implementation of the project.
- The likelihood of the project receiving funding.
- Overall value for money.
- Any costs likely to fall on the Council.
- Engineering feasibility.

- The environmental impact of the project through operation or construction.
- Whether the proposal promotes real choice of travel mode.

The views of the public and stakeholders expressed through consultation

10. From Councillor John Getgood of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment - *In the absence of the Portfolio Holder the Executive Assistant for the Environment will respond*

What will be the first opportunity to remove the street clutter of the free-standing advertising hoarding on the pavement outside Empire Square, Penge?

Reply:

There are no plans to remove the free-standing advertising hoarding; it was only installed after the planning permission had been granted to ClearChannel.

11. From Councillor John Getgood of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment - *In the absence of the Portfolio Holder the Executive Assistant for the Environment will respond*

What progress is he making in persuading BT that the placing of their green box on the edge of Empire Square, Penge disfigures the public realm and that they should move it.

Reply:

The Streetworks Team have asked for the BT cabinet to be moved and are awaiting their response. A Fixed Penalty Notice has been issued to BT as they did not have a valid permit to work in this location, although as a utility company they do have powers to install cabinets and other equipment on the highway.

12. From Councillor John Getgood of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment – *(In agreement with the Portfolio Holder this has been redirected to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation)*

Will he please convey to all those staff involved, the thanks of people living and working in Penge for their support of and contribution to the Penge Town Sign project.

Reply:

Yes I will ensure your thanks are passed on.

13. From Councillor Fawthrop of the Chairman of the Development Control Committee (to be asked at every Council Meeting)

What pre-application meetings have taken place since the last full Council Meeting between Council Officers and potential planning applicants? Can these be listed as follows:-

The name of the potential applicant, the site address being considered.

Reply:

From 15th February to 19th March, 2012, there were 20 non-householder pre-application meetings and no householder meetings. At present, the details of individual applicants constitute exempt information and cannot be disclosed in response to a Council question.