

COUNCIL MEETING

29th MARCH 2010

WRITTEN QUESTIONS BY MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. From Councillor Willetts of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

With regard to your reply at Environment PDS 23/2/10 re road from Whippendell Way through to Cotmandene Crescent, by way of explanation, the mattress obstructing the highway was removed by the local PCSO & placed on adjacent BHA land, following on from that & assuming your not still dealing with a backlog from Dec/Jan & your back on a scheduled cleansing routine –

i) could you remove approx 20 bags of dumped rubbish obstructing highway at the above location reported on 6 occasions 7/8/9/11/15/16th March 2010 (missed by Keir)?

ii) could you remove 2 car tyres dumped on amenity green opposite chip shop in Cotmandene Crescent reported on 6 occasions 7/8/9/11/15/16th March 2010 (missed by Kier, particularly as shops are supposed to be cleansed daily)?

iii) could you also remove heavy build up of leaf debris from low level footway 22-32 Beddington Road in situ since November 2009 (prior to backlog disruption) & clearly missed with alarming regularity up to and including 12th March 2010?

iv) could you remove heavy build up of leaf debris from high level footway steps & highway adjacent 26 Amherst Close in situ since November 2009 (prior to backlog disruption) & clearly missed with alarming regularity up to & including 16th March 2009?

v) could you remove heavy build up of leaf debris from steps adjacent 256 Chipperfield Road?

vi) could you remove dumped mattress/bagged rubbish from amenity grass area opposite Johnstones paint shop in Cotmandene Crescent shops in situ since 18/3/2010?

vii) could you remove dumped wood/metals/ bagged refuse & plastics obstructing footway from 'hotspot' cul de sac end adjacent 244 Chipperfield Road in situ since 17/3/2010?

Reply:

You are correct to assume that the backlog from December 2009 and January 2010 has long since been cleared.

i) Upon inspection no bags were found at this location suggesting they had been cleared as previously requested.

ii) Upon inspection no tyres were found at this location suggesting they had been cleared as previously requested.

iii) I am advised that this request has been completed.

iv) I am advised that this request has been completed.

v) I am advised that this request has been completed.

vi) I am advised that this request has been completed.

vii) I am advised that this request has been completed.

2. From Councillor Willetts of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Could you refill (unmarked) empty salt bins opposite 8 Hyde Drive & 10 Homefield Close?

Reply:

All salt bins will be inspected and refilled as necessary before the start of the next winter season.

3. From Councillor Willetts of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

I understood that fly tipped dumped rubbish/materials in Cotmandene Crescent car park would be picked up Mondays, Wednesdays & Fridays?- could you remove weekend build up of fly tip numbering 30 sacks still in situ as of this 2pm this afternoon 22/3/2010?

Reply:

The car park is visited Mondays, Wednesdays and Fridays and any fly tipping removed. Due to the contractors workload on Monday 22nd March a visit occurred on Tuesday 23rd March instead and all sacks removed.

4. From Councillor Mellor of the Portfolio Holder for Resources

Can the Portfolio Holder for Resources advise me as to the amount of Tax attributable to the NNDR for the Current Civic year ending 31st March 2010 and the amount of grant received from the H.M. Government in payment for the Council acting as their Tax Collector?

Reply:

The total tax attributable to NNDR for 2009/10 prior to deductions is approximately £93m this reduces to a collectable debt of £83m after deductions have been applied.

The grant receivable for collection and provision of bad debt is £1.3m.

5. From Councillor Papworth of the Portfolio Holder for Resources

To outline the full cost to the Council of the twinning programme with Neuwied in Germany, and separately to outline the costs incurred by 1) officers, and 2) councillors as a result of activities outside the UK related to the twinning programme.

Reply:

2007/08 £1,243.31

2008/09 £1,166.59

2009/10 £2,670.27

Information on costs/time is not held separately for officers and Councillors.

6. From Councillor Curry of the Portfolio Holder for Adult and Community Services

According to the Housing Charity Shelter, Bromley is one of only 8 Councils in the Country (top 2%) to have exceeded its, independently assessed target, for the provision of affordable housing over the past three years.

Will he provide, in tabular form, details of the wards in which the housing has been provided, the type, i.e. wholly rented, sheltered and shared ownership, and the details of which Registered Social Landlords have delivered these properties?

Reply:

Helping our residents meet their housing needs goes way beyond just numbers and we are proud of the range of initiatives we have developed around quality advice and support and we have been particularly successful in supporting families facing financial difficulties to keep their homes. We have also focused on regeneration, shared ownership and key worker housing and supporting people with learning disabilities to live independently and developing schemes for older people in the borough.

All the housing has been provided through the Council's main RSL development partners - Affinity Sutton (Broomleigh); Hyde; London & Quadrant; A2Dominion (Kelsey); Town & Country; Moat and Servite and has been provided across the Borough

Only half of the Shelter 3 year figures are actual new housing and the break down is as follows :-

Social rented - 286

Shared ownership/Homebuy/Key Workers - 255

Intermediate Rent - 95

Supported Housing - 28

Ramsden Regeneration - Rent = 26; Shared ownership = 27

Whippendell Regeneration - Rent = 18; Sheltered = 20; Shared ownership = 20

Maisonettes over shops bought back in to use for renting = 12

The service is extremely busy at this time due to year end and development/bidding deadlines therefore I suggest if you really need the information broken down into wards it can be provided in due course after the meeting.

(Councillor Curry stated at the meeting that he required a breakdown of the information into Ward areas and the Portfolio Holder agreed that this information would be sent to him before the next Council Meeting.)

7. From Councillor Fookes of the Leader of the Council

Other than Revenue Support Grant, what other grants are Bromley going to receive in 2010/11?

Reply:

Attached is a spreadsheet summarising the government grant income of £417.434m received for 2010/11.

8. From Councillor Fookes of the Leader of the Council

Other than swimming, what government grants have Bromley refused or not spent over the last five years?

Reply:

Apart from the swimming grant I am not aware of any other government grants refused or unspent.

9. From Councillor Fookes of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

How many complaints about street cleaning were received from residents in Penge and Cator last year?

Reply:

The Council received 187 Street Cleaning enquiries from Penge and Cator residents last year.

My information is that there are 150 streets in Penge and Cator Ward, meaning on average, that one and a quarter complaints were received per road over the course of the entire year.

10. From Councillor Getgood of the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

Will he confirm that the Health & Safety Executive has issued a Statutory Notice on the Pavilion Sports Centre in respect of defective equipment?

What action has he taken to make sure that MyTime has responded appropriately?

Will he also remind the Chief Executive of Bromley MyTime that when members of the public complain about the state of facilities at Leisure Centres, MyTime are acting on behalf of the council and should respond promptly and fully to those concerns.

Reply:

The Health and Safety Executive did not issue a Statutory Notice on the Pavilion Leisure Centre in respect of defective equipment, but rather the Council's Public Protection team, who enforce the Health and Safety at Work Act investigated the complaint. The Council always take complaints very seriously and take proportionate action according to the level of risk involved. In this case, following a complaint last September an investigation by one of our officers revealed slight damage to one of the aerobic steps. We sought firm assurances from the Pavilion management that their agreed equipment checks were in place and ensured that the damaged piece of equipment was removed from use.

However, a second complaint again highlighted equipment with similar damage which should have been picked up in their routine checks. Disappointed by their lack of response, we issued an improvement notice which requires action within 21 days, so we expect to see the matter dealt with when we inspect the equipment again at the end of this period on 8 March 2010. Bromley Mytime did comply with the Improvement notice and as such the case is now closed. As far as inspections go, The Pavilion will be next due a routine inspection in 18 months. If a complaint is received in the meantime, then we will investigate that separately.

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

What has been the capital spend on Langley Park School for Girls since 1990?

Reply:

In July 1993, Bromley invested capital funding of £1.3m to build a new Design and Technology block for the school. This was followed by a further £0.8m in October 1993 to create additional teaching and learning accommodation to enable an expansion of the school to seven forms of entry, as part of the Local Authority's borough-wide expansion of secondary school places.

In April 1994, the school was awarded Grant Maintained status by DfEE, and the funding for capital investment in the school became the responsibility of the Funding Agency for Schools (FAS). During this period, the Local Authority only received partial information from DfEE and FAS regarding capital investment in Bromley GM Schools. However, papers relating to capital funding to address basic-need place planning schemes indicate that DfEE made an investment of £1.1m in Langley Park School for Girls as part of a second 11 to 15 basic need expansion

programme. During this period, FAS also funded a range of other building projects within Bromley grant-maintained schools, however, these were negotiated directly with each school and the Local Authority therefore does not hold this information.

In April 1999, Bromley resumed statutory responsibilities for the strategic planning of school places and related school organisation with the dissolution of FAS. Since that time, Langley Park School for Girls, as a foundation status school, has benefitted from the following capital allocations through a combination of DCSF devolved formula capital grants and local authority investment:

- Devolved Formula Capital £1.2m
- Seed Challenge Funding £94,000
- Planned Maintenance ££466,000
- Asbestos investigation £82,000

In addition, the school would have received funding direct from the DCSF as part of its series of Specialist Status awards and additional funding for schemes to deliver dining area improvements.

12. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP of the Portfolio Holder for Adult and Community Services

What has been the impact of the recession with regard to homelessness in the Borough and what action has the Council taken to alleviate the problem?

Reply:

In the last year there has been a 40% increase in approaches to the service from households either homeless, threatened with homelessness or with mortgage or rent difficulties that could lead to their homelessness that can be linked to their financial difficulties resulting from the recession. This equates to 222 households.

The Council has put in place a number of measures including a money and debt advice service, maximising take up of the national mortgage rescue scheme, a LBB mortgage rescue option, arrear repayment plans negotiated with the lender/landlord and client, small loans scheme secured against their property, plus extending the rent deposit guarantee scheme and increased work to establish more private landlords who will take referrals of such households from the Council so as to prevent their homelessness.

As a result the 40% increase in approaches has been dealt with in such a way as to only result in a 2% increase in actual homeless acceptances.

There has also been a 300% increase per week in households applying to the Council's Housing Register (c 100 every week) as the means to meet

their housing needs such that there are now in excess of 5,500 households on the register.

13. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett JP of the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

What has been the impact of the recession with regard to unemployment in the Borough particularly on young people under the age of 25 and people over 50?

Reply:

Prior to recession in Feb 2008 3,059 Bromley residents were in receipt of Job Seekers Allowance (JSA). 28.7% were aged 24 and under, 17.9% were aged 50 and over and 53.4% aged 25-49. By Feb 09 5,481 residents were in receipt of JSA. 27.8% were aged 24 and under and 17.3% were aged 50 and over . In Feb 2010, the most recent period for which figures are available, 24.7% were aged 24 and under and 16.7% were aged 50 and over. In the last few months the Government's Future Job Fund scheme aimed at long term unemployed young people became operational. Bromley Field Studies has recruited 33 young people under this scheme and has secured a further 66 places. JobCentre Plus is the primary agency in the borough supporting JSA claimants.

Graphs and tables with the figures are attached as Appendix 1.

14. From Councillor Fawthrop of the Chairman of the Development Control Committee (to be asked at each subsequent 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:

There have been 58 pre-application meetings between 11th February 2010 and 26th March 2010. 23 of those concerned residential proposals for either new units or extensions and alterations to existing properties, and 32 for non-residential proposals for various types of commercial or public facilities. Details of the individual applicants and sites at present is exempt information and not disclosable in response to a Council Question.

15. From Councillor Grainger of the Leader of the Council (to be asked at each subsequent Council Meeting)

In respect of each of the oral and written questions submitted to this Council Meeting, please can the Leader state:

- a) when each question was received by the responding officer? *(to the approx. 1/2 hour)*
- b) How long did it take the responding officer to gather the information for the answer *(approx. working hours)*
- c) How long did it take for the responding officer to complete his draft for the responding Member *(to the approx. 1/4 hour)*

Reply:

Within the time available it has not been possible to collate the replies.
This information will be circulated after the meeting.