

COUNCIL MEETING

2nd DECEMBER 2013

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. From Councillor Tom Papworth of the Chairman of the Development Control Committee

- (i) How many (and what proportion of) major applications were not decided within the 13 week statutory deadline in 2012/3?
- (ii) Of those that were not decided, how many (and what proportion of) were subsequently taken to appeal on the grounds that no decision had been taken?
- (iii) Of those that appealed, how many (and what proportion of) were successfully appealed (i.e. the appeal was upheld)?

Reply:

(i) 45% 58 major applications

(ii) One (76 High Street, Orpington 12/00304/FULL1)

(iii) One (100%) (76 High Street, Orpington 12/00304/FULL1)

2. From Councillor Tom Papworth of the Chairman of Development Control Committee

- (i) What proportion of major applications did not include provision for affordable housing on site in 2012/3?
- (ii) Of those, what was the average financial contribution to affordable housing per unit of housing that was given permission?
- (iii) What is the comparable figure for London as a whole?

Reply:

(i) 2 out of 58 applications (3%)

1 Plaistow Lane – This is a Major due to floorspace, only 9 units does not qualify for Affordable housing.

Maunsell House (58 units total) No affordable units – this application was a revision to the already implemented previous application.

(ii) None

(iii) This figure is not published, the data that is published usually shows the numbers of affordable dwellings.

3. From Councillor David McBride of the Chairman of the General Purposes and Licensing Committee

Will the Chairman join me in congratulating the Committee of Orpington Liberal Club, which is one of the four finalists in CAMRA's National "Club of the Year" competition?

Reply:

I am always pleased to see local success recognised in any field and am not at all surprised at Orpington Liberal Democrats' beer drinking expertise! A former councillor is a real ale expert with an extensive knowledge of micro breweries and their specialist products. Cllr Stranger and I visited the premises on one occasion to discuss a possible beer purchasing coalition with the Conservative club!

The Liberal Club committee has done a superb job with 'first UK tastings' of new ales and a constantly changing selection of real ales. This has been recognised by the local CAMRA branch and I am happy to join Cllr McBride in congratulating them on being one of the four finalists in the national club of the year competition. I suggest he invites all his fellow councillors for a celebratory drink!

4. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett of the Portfolio Holder for Environment

When does he hope to carry out a public consultation at the West Wickham Library on the options for the Swan junction in West Wickham?

Reply:

Subject to obtaining TfL's sign off, it is planned that the consultation will take place early in the New Year.

5. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett of the Portfolio Holder for Resources

When the Improvement and Efficiency Sub-Committee it might receive a report on the work of the Commissioning Board?

Reply:

I am happy to ensure that the Improvement and Efficiency Sub-Committee receives a general progress report on the Council's commissioning activities and will discuss with Cllr Bennett an appropriate time for such a report to be considered. I should add that PDS committees are the correct route for specific proposals to be considered, as has recently been the case, prior to Executive consideration as and when appropriate.

6. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett of the Leader of the Council

If he will list by department, the estimated cost in the budget 2014-15 of:

- (i) each new statutory responsibility imposed since May 2010;
- (ii) each new statutory responsibility created by transfer of central government services to local government;
- (iii) each new statutory responsibility created by decisions of the High Court?

Reply:

(During consideration of the Leader's statement at agenda item 8, Councillor Carr explained that he had advised Councillor Bennett before the meeting that it had not been possible to carry out the work to provide this answer in the time available before the meeting, but that it would be provided in due course.)

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

How many people who previously did not pay council tax are now the subject of court action for non payment?

Reply:

15,481 households were receiving full Council Tax Benefit at the end of the 2012/13 financial year; out of which 9,844 were claimants of working age. This year 1,677 summonses have been issued to those entitled to maximum Council Tax Support.

8. From Councillor Peter Fookes of the Portfolio Holder for Environment

Will the Council ban the use of snares on Council owned land?

Reply:

I am advised that it is illegal to use a snare in a public place under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 and the Animal Welfare Act 2006.

Any which are discovered and I understand that number is minimal will of course be immediately removed.

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

What proposals are there for the Cycle Superhighway to come to Penge?

Reply:

The proposal is for CS6 to run from Penge to the City via Elephant and Castle.

10. From Councillor John Getgood of the Portfolio Holder for Care Services

The DWP has advised Local Authorities that they are now legally bound by the Burnip judgment. As a result, in respect of housing allocation, LAs should allow an extra bedroom for children who are unable to share

because of their disabilities and any reduction in benefit applied as a result of the bedroom Tax, should be lifted and refunded.

What action has Bromley Council taken to implement this advice? How many families in Bromley are affected by this judgment? What are the implications for Bromley residents, financial and otherwise, of this decision?

Reply:

In terms of the Allocations Scheme, the current scheme already complies with this judgement. As in determining bedroom entitlement it takes into account where an extra room is required because two children are unable to share a room on grounds of disabilities, health and so on. This was not changed with the onset of the bedroom size criteria, although such households would obviously have been advised on the potential implications of the bedroom size and criteria and as such there would have been the options to opt for smaller accommodation. Thus all current applications would have been assessed in compliance with this judgement as it essentially mirrors this element of our allocations scheme. There would therefore not be any associated costs in relation to allocations.

I have checked our allocations during this time and there have not been any households unduly affected – such as moving to accommodation without the additional bedroom

In respect of Housing Benefit, all processing staff have been advised of the provision to allow an extra bedroom for children unable to share because of their disabilities. The Housing Benefit IT system has the capability to make this adjustment and to date has been used on 11 occasions. As the requirement for the extra room most commonly manifests itself when the claimants applies for a Discretionary Housing Payment, all applications for assistance under this scheme are first checked to see whether the claimant qualify for additional Housing Benefit under the Burnip judgement.

Increased Housing Benefit awarded to households as a result of the said judgement attracts full Housing Benefit subsidy and as such payment of the additional entitlement is fully reimbursed by the Department of Work and Pensions.

11. From Councillor Katherine Bance MBE of the Portfolio Holder for Care Services

How many food banks do we have supporting families in Bromley?

Reply:

There are 2 key food banks in Bromley which are part of the national network - one is based in Orpington and other at the United Reformed Church in Bromley. This one also has an on-line food request as well. Between the two they do cover the borough and are run through the network of churches. We do have direct referrals in to these and they also

monitor requests to check people really need help and also to identify repeat callers etc to then be able to refer to appropriate services for other advice and assistance. In addition within housing we have access to emergency food and 'essentials' packs for homeless households and can usually arrange for these to be delivered in a matter of hours.

12. From Councillor Katherine Bance MBE of the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

What plans does Bromley Council have for commemorations of the Centenary of WW1 and when will they be published?

Reply:

The Council is currently looking at a number of activities to commemorate the centenary of the commencement of World War 1 and it is with great pleasure I can advise members that we were successful with our bid to the Heritage Lottery Fund, who have awarded us £56,000 to deliver our 'Caring for casualties of the First World War in Bromley' project. As a result of this, there will be an exhibition at the armed forces day on the 30th June 2014, with another Civic event at All Saints Church, Orpington, to mark the opening of the 'Canadian Corner'. In addition a number of commemorative panels will be installed at locations across the borough.

13. From Councillor Katherine Bance MBE of the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Safety

Would the Council consider a blanket alcohol ban on street drinking in the borough?

Reply:

Where a Local Authority is satisfied that an area is suffering from alcohol-related crime and disorder, then under section 13 of the Police and Criminal Justice Act 2001 they may instigate a Designated Public Place Orders (DPPOs). This gives Police officers the powers to require a person to stop drinking and to confiscate alcohol or containers of alcohol in such designated public places.

These DPPOs are specifically to address alcohol-related crime and disorder in public places and a local authority may only identify such a public place if they are satisfied that nuisance or annoyance to members of the public or disorder has been associated with the consumption of alcohol in that specific place. Before it is declared, evidence must be presented that there is an alcohol related problem of nuisance or annoyance to the public and/or disorder within the proposed area.

This proposal was previously explored by the Community Safety Team several years ago and it was found that the majority of the Bromley Borough does not have this type of problem and as such we would not be able to initiate such a blanket order for the whole Borough.

14. From Councillor Simon 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:

Between 6th September and 22nd November 2013 the Major Developments Team have had 8 non-householder pre-application meetings.

Between 6th September and 22nd November 2013 the Non-Major Developments Team have had 29 householder pre-application meetings and 22 non-householder pre-application meetings.

Details of the individual applicants and sites at present is exempt information and not disclosable in respect to a Council Question.