

COUNCIL MEETING

13th October 2014

WRITTEN QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. From Councillor Peter Fookes to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services

When will the new medical centre/pharmacy in Oakfield Rd, Penge be opening?

Reply:

According to NHS England, 15 December 2015.

2. From Councillor Peter Fookes to the Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services

How many complaints were received last year with regard to street cleaning in Penge and Cator ward?

Reply:

I am advised that there were 349 reports concerning street cleaning in Penge & Cator Ward of which 1 was registered as a “complaint.”

3. From Councillor Peter Fookes to the Portfolio Holder for Education

How many pupils are still waiting to be offered a primary school place?

Reply:

There are 15 reception children waiting to be placed (these are late applications, just received. We are still waiting for their proof of address documents). In Years 1 to 6 there are 30 children where we are still waiting for proof of address documents and these will be placed within the agreed 20 day rule. However, we do have a problem with a lack of spare Key Stage One places and where this is an issue we have to use the Fair Access Protocol which allows schools to go over their admission number.

4. From Cllr Richard Williams to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal & Recreation

Are there plans to introduce a homework club and toddler Rhyme Tyme sessions at Anerley Library Hub?

Reply:

There are no plans to introduce either a homeworking club or toddler Rhyme Tyme session at Anerley Town Hall. These activities continue to be offered at the new Penge Library. The position at Anerley remains the same as previously reported that

a library offer, comprising an automatic book locker and a number of Peoples Network Terminals will be installed, this is likely to be finalised by the end of October.

5. From Cllr Katherine Bance to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Can you please provide statistics for the reports to the Council on rubbish dumped on High Street Penge for 2014 and indicate if this is higher, average or lower compared to other wards.

Reply:

There have been 53 cases of dumped rubbish reported in High Street Penge year to date (as at 8th October).

This is higher than in other High Streets.

6. From Councillor Katherine Bance to the Portfolio Holder for Education

How will LBB ensure that all stakeholders have had the opportunity to consult on the plans to market test the outsourcing of SEN provision before it is on an agenda at PDS.

Reply:

The decision to commence the market testing of Education Services was approved by the Council's Executive on 16th July 2014. The process of market testing is now in progress and is expected to take up to a year before a recommendation on the outcome is presented for decision to Executive. The Council makes no assumption as to the outcome of market testing of Education Services – outsourcing is one possible outcome.

The market testing is for all Education Services of which Special Educational Needs (SEN) is one of a wide range of services. Stakeholders, across all Education Services, will be engaged throughout the process in various ways. These include:

- Representation on the Evaluation Panel: school representatives, as the major stakeholder in receipt of Education Services (including SEN), will be included in the Core Evaluation Panel responsible for the evaluation of proposals;
- Staff and Service User Referral Panels: Referral Panels will support the Core Evaluation Panel by providing feedback on proposals, or parts of proposals, upon referral. There will be a number of Service User Referral Panels, including Panels for Schools, Early Years, Special Educational Needs and Sensory Support. In this way, stakeholder representatives will be directly involved in the market testing process, informing the consideration of proposals. Representation on the Panels is currently being arranged.

- Communications: there will be a number of ways in which the Council and stakeholders will engage on a regular basis, including: a dedicated website for updates; a dedicated e-mail address to receive comments; and briefings, via letters or meetings, as required.

Finally, suitable arrangements will be made in due course for appropriate engagement with stakeholders in relation to the decision making process. This may take different forms depending on the recommended outcome of the market testing process and, as a result, will be planned closer to the time.

7. From Councillor Katherine Bance to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

Why are LBB discouraging new businesses by charging for information on the planning status of empty properties and please provide details of the charges?

Reply:

We make charges for anyone who wishes to search the planning register for information about the planning history of a property, which is £46. The public can also come in and search our records themselves by prior appointment and planning decisions since the early 1980s are available on our website, including all relevant documentation for cases from 2003.

The principal way to obtain a formal confirmation of the lawful planning use of a property is by submission of a certificate of lawfulness for either a proposed or existing use. The fee for this would be £385 for an existing use or £192.50 for a proposed use.

There is no intention to discourage new businesses but there is a cost to providing the information which is why we make a charge.

(fees online at http://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/download/45/planning_fees)

8. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Resources

How much housing benefit was paid during 2013/14 in respect of privately rented accommodation which was previously owned by the London Borough of Bromley? How many individual cases does this represent?

Reply:

It is not possible to identify properties previously owned by the London Borough of Bromley from our Council Tax or benefit records.

The stock transfer of Bromley domestic properties to Broomleigh Housing Association (now known as Affinity Sutton) was undertaken in 1992.

In the year 2013/14, £44,931,636 Housing Benefit was paid to Affinity Sutton; however this would also include entitlement made in respect of properties acquired/built since the date of the transfer. The above sum relates to payment for 8,919 different claimants.

9. From Councillor Ian Dunn of the Portfolio Holder for Resources

What was the minimum balance in the Investment Portfolio in each month since January 2013? (based on the graph in paragraph 3.16 of paper FSD14057).

Reply:

The minimum investment portfolio balance each month is set out below:

January 2013	£224.4m
February 2013	£214.1m
March 2013	£199.3m
April 2013	£201.1m
May 2013	£251.3m
June 2013	£253.8m
July 2013	£253.9m
August 2013	£252.8m
September 2013	£246.0m
October 2013	£255.2m
November 2013	£254.1m
December 2013	£250.0m
January 2014	£250.0m
February 2014	£253.8m
March 2014	£245.2m
April 2014	£270.6m
May 2014	£290.6m
June 2014	£287.2m
July 2014	£287.2m
August 2014	£289.9m
September 2014	£264.4m

10. From Councillor Kevin Brooks to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

In accordance with Council policy, Penge toilets are to be closed and replaced with the Community Toilet Scheme. Will the portfolio holder reassure residents that this will not result in poor service by ensuring that:

- There is correct and conspicuous signage on the High Street as to location of the toilets
- The provision in Penge will be monitored and that any problems will be swiftly resolved.

- All staff in McDonalds, Wetherspoons and Sainsbury's are to be fully informed that the toilets are for public use and there is no obligation make purchases
- Any complaint of pressure put on the public to buy products would be taken to the franchiser by the council
- Space must be provided for potential queues
- Money must be ring-fenced to ensure the empty building will not become an eyesore and that graffiti, broken windows etc. will be dealt with as a matter of urgency.

Reply:

In line with the minutes and recommendations of the Enviromental Services PDS meeting held on 23rd September, I can confirm that the Community Toilet Scheme in Penge will be signed and advertised in an indential manner to other participating locations across the Borough.

If Ward colleagues in any place learn of deficiencies in either that or any other regard (ie sales pressure, cleanliness or staff being 'off message') I would ask them to make Officers aware to facilitate early remedial action taking place .

Any graffiti which might arise will be attended to in a timely manner via the existing contractual arrangements.

Funding also remains available for any short term maintenance issues which might arise, notwithstanding that this facility will shortly be placed for disposal on the property market, eliminating any need to set a longer term budget .

11. From Councillor Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for the Resources

How many payments on account have been made to housing benefit claimants for each of the last 12 months and what is the percentage of payments on account of all claims for each of these months?

Reply:

Unfortunately, information as to the number of Payments on Account is not available. However I can confirm that the Authority attempts to make the initial payment on new claims as soon as possible.

The table below provides the number of new claims processed on a monthly basis.

	Apr-13	May-13	Jun-13	Jul-13	Aug-13	Sep-13	Oct-13	Nov-13	Dec-13	Jan-14	Feb-14	Mar-14
new claims processed in month	1067	1028	908	854	869	922	1059	835	687	829	687	747

12. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett to the Chairman of the Development Control Committee

Pursuant to Cllr Fawthrop's standard question at each council meeting: If he will show in table format how many:

- i. Non householder applications;
- ii. Householder applications;

have there been in each of the past three years and how many in each category, in each year, where the application has been recommended for approval, have been refused?

Reply:

The following figures apply to all applications received in calendar years:

Year Overturned
at Committee*

2011 52

2012 67

2013 62

*includes all types of applications

2011 – 52 overturned, 2012 – 67 overturned, 2013 – 62 overturned

Count of refval	Column Labels		
Row Labels	HH	NON-HH	Grand Total
Committee			
2011	108	218	326
2012	133	216	349
2013	168	238	406
Dele			
2011	1391	799	2190
2012	1465	776	2241
2013	1465	794	2259
Grand Total	4730	3041	7771

13. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett to the Portfolio Holder for Education

How many 'in year' admissions were there in each of the past three school years and how many in the current year to date?

Reply:

2011-12	2369 (495 upto 8.10.11)
2012-13	2324 (511 upto 8.10.12)
2013-14	2450 (562 upto 8.10.13)
2014-15	680 up to 8.10.14

14. From Councillor Nicholas Bennett to the Chairman of the Development Control Committee

If he will show in table format the following information for current municipal year with regard to applications placed on Planning committee agendas:

- i. the number of applications;
- ii. the number recommended for permission and subsequently refused by committee;
- iii. the number recommended for refusal and subsequently approved by committee;
- iv. the number 'called in.'

Reply:

In the period mid-May to mid-September 2014:

- (i) there have been 189 applications considered at committee
- (ii) 36 were recommended for permission and subsequently refused; and
- (iii) 2 were recommended for refusal and subsequently permitted
- (iv) 60 call ins