

COUNCIL MEETING

23rd FEBRUARY 2015

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FOR WRITTEN REPLY

(1) From Colin Willetts, Secretary, Longbury Residents Association, to the Portfolio Holder for Resources

I understand that Councillor Nathan will be using an interpreter during Council meetings, can you tell me the approximate cost per meeting & who will be paying for this service (assuming that LBB is legally obliged to provide this support)?

Reply:

The Council is investigating reasonable adjustments to assist Cllr Nathan, including use of the Infrared Hearing System installed in the Council Chamber and provision of a Speech to Text Report (STTR) service, for which the cost will be about £160.

(2) From John Getgood, Chair, Penge Forum to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

The former Lodge in Penge Recreation Ground has been undergoing refurbishment by the new owner for at least 12 years. Residents have complained on several occasions about the waste of this local resource and the untidy state of the grounds surrounding the Lodge. The situation is clearly unsatisfactory.

Please can you tell me when council officers last visited the Lodge and discussed this situation with the owner?

Reply:

With regard to the property in question, the Council Empty Property Officers are aware of this house and have been in regular contact with the owner. The officers inspected the property last year and noted the continuing renovation works, which are now in the final stages. They found the exterior of the property to be boarded up and this may be considered unsightly but it only remains boarded for security reasons, primarily due to the location and the various vacant periods. The grounds were not considered to be in an untidy site at the time of their visit.

The progress has been slow but the project has had significant delays due to unforeseen circumstances; it being self-funded and the renovation works being carried out to a very high standard.

(3) From John Getgood, Chair, Penge Forum to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

What action, for example, issuing an untidy site notice, would you support to bring this building (the former Lodge in Penge Recreation Ground) back into use at the earliest opportunity?

Reply:

It is considered that success would be very unlikely if this case were taken to the Residential Property Tribunal or to a Public Inquiry. A Compulsory Purchase Order is not considered an option for the Council due to the current financial climate, the high percentage of work currently completed in the house and the compensation that would be involved. The use of a Notice under section 215 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990 would not be considered appropriate, having regard to the comments made above in the answer to question (2).

Officers will continue to monitor and stay in contact with the owner, but formal action is not considered appropriate or possible at present.

(4) From John Getgood, Chair, Penge Forum to the Portfolio Holder for Environment

We were promised that the new public park in Kings Hall Road, created following permission being granted for the construction of houses on the former Cyphers' Sports Ground, would be opened to the public last summer, following the installation of park furniture and notices.

We are pleased to see the tennis courts being well used but why has the work on the park not been completed and when do you expect to see members of the public enjoying Bromley's first new park in this area for many years?

Reply:

The works planned for last year were suspended because of a major review of the way ancillary landscape services are procured. Accordingly new contracts have been set up following an extensive packaging, specification and tendering process. As a result of this we are now bulking projects together to take advantage of economies of scale and it is envisaged that any missing park furniture will be in place during late spring.

(5) From Mrs Susan Sulis, Secretary, Community Care Protection Group to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

Proposal to 11th February 2015 Executive to close Bromley Museum and sell off the historic Priory building and part of the Priory Gardens. The decision to withdraw this report is welcome. The Blue Plaque erected by LBB in 1999 states:

"The Priory Gardens form part of the commemoration in 1946 by the Orpington Urban District Council to those who gave their lives in the Second World War"

Is this statement untrue?

Reply:

The statement is true.

(6) From Mrs Susan Sulis, Secretary, Community Care Protection Group to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

Following the Council's decision to postpone consideration of the item for 3 months, and discuss with local groups, will the people of Orpington and the public be consulted on the final options for the use of the Priory, the future of its Museum collection and their contribution to Orpington Town Centre?

Reply:

Yes

(7) From Mrs Susan Sulis, Secretary, Community Care Protection Group to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

When will the Equality Impact Assessment be published and when will a report covering the planning requirements for the sale of the Priory as a Grade 2 * listed building in a Grade 2 listed park in a Conservation Area be prepared by Bromley's Heritage/Planning Section?

Reply:

An Equality Impact Assessment was prepared but in light of the decision to undertake further consultation it was not published. It is envisaged that the further report back to committee in three months' time will set out all of the issues concerning the potential disposal of the Priory.