

COUNCIL MEETING

19th OCTOBER 2015

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL

1. From Cllr Simon Fawthrop to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

How many planning applications in the last year in relation to Petts Wood & Knoll Ward were received?

(a) in the last financial year

Reply:

Including adverts, certificates, prior approvals and LBC – 220

Valid planning applications only (PS2) -176

(b) In this current financial year.

Reply:

(To 6th October 2015)

Including adverts, certificates, prior approvals and LBC - 131

Valid planning applications only (PS2) – 95

In relation to the total applications received by the Council what proportion is this of all the applications received by the Council in the same period?

Reply:

Last Financial Year:

Including adverts, certificates, prior approvals and LBC – 4021 – PW&K apps make up 5.5%

Valid planning applications only (PS2) -2823 – PW&K apps make up 6.2%

Current Financial Year (to 6th October):

Including adverts, certificates, prior approvals and LBC – 2249 – PW&K apps make up 5.8%

Valid planning applications only (PS2) – 1549 – PW&K apps make up 6.1%

a) Over the same period how many applications were called in to committee by Petts Wood & Knoll ward members?

Reply:

2014 – 21

2015 – 8 to date

b) What is this as a proportion of the total number of applications for Petts Wood & Knoll ward?

Reply:

2014 – 21 of 130 = 16.15%

2015 – 8 of 50 = 16%

2. From Cllr Simon Fawthrop to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

How many responses to the Biggin Hill consultation survey which were included in the Council and Executive reports on 25th March 2015 were excluded from the final results because they were duplicate entries at the same address, of these how many were in favour of the proposals and how many were against?

Reply:

The figures contained within the report show that in total, 416 responses were recorded but excluded from analysis principally because names and/or addresses were omitted and or because a 'yes' or 'no' preference was not indicated. There is the possibility or probability that duplicate responses are contained within the 41,711 total individual responses analysed and it is for this reason that the report references the 14,754 individual identified property responses. Analysis of these individual identified property responses shows that there were 11196 (76%) 'yes' responses and 3558 (24%) 'no' responses.

3. From Cllr Simon Fawthrop to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

(a) What legal considerations have been given to a) the Human Rights Act in relation to both individual rights and rights to the enjoyment of land (Schedule I part II Article 1) in drawing up the report on Biggin Hill Airports proposals for extended operating hours (The Act postdates the Lease). Please provide a list of any legal advice given?

(b) the Climate Change Act 2008 in drawing up the report on Biggin Hill Airports proposals for extended operating hours (The Act postdates the Lease). Please provide a list of any legal advice given?

Reply:

Officers have considered relevant legislation and case law in preparing the report. It must be remembered that the rights under Article 1 of the First Protocol set out in the Human Rights Act 1998 are qualified rights and secondly that BHAL is on the drafting as much a "person" with Human rights for the purposes of Article 1 as any resident. The reports prepared have undertaken the necessary balancing exercises notwithstanding as was recognised in the High Court case that the impact of the Act on contracts entered into before 2 October 2000 will not always be clear cut.

On the Climate Change Act 2008 this had not been considered as the proposal, if agreed, would reduce aircraft movements and possibly indirectly encourage newer, quieter and more efficient aircraft.

4. From Councillor Peter Fookes to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Safety

What representations has Bromley made to the Mayor of London and Stephen Greenhalgh with regard to the proposal to withdraw all Police Community Support Officers from the streets of the borough and when will there be consultation with residents of the borough on this matter?

Reply:

At this stage there are no specific proposals and so no representations or consultations have taken place. When the Metropolitan Police have got their financial settlement for future years then consideration will be given to an appropriate response in the interests of the residents of the Borough.

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

What follow up assessment has been provided to all those residents with mild learning disabilities who were part of the Key Ring scheme who lost out as a result of the cuts that you introduced in April?

Reply:

Prior to support from Keyring coming to an end, people who were previously supported by Keyring were referred to Care Management for review or assessment of needs to determine whether people required continuing support and if so at what level.

Reviews were prioritised according to the needs present at the time. I understand that there is one review outstanding but that this is currently under way.

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

How much does the borough pay agencies for locum social workers and what is the longest contract offered?

Reply:

Bromley pay rates for Locum Social Workers range from £23 - £30 per hour and for Senior Practitioners £29 - £32 per hour. The assignments are offered on a short term basis with a view to the assignment ending if a permanent Social Worker is recruited. The notice period is one week.

Bromley has entered into a Memorandum of Understanding with the majority of the other London Boroughs with a view to work collaboratively with each other and with agency suppliers to develop mechanisms to ensure that rates and charges for supplying agency staff appropriately reflect the skills and experience of workers and the remuneration of permanent staff.

7. From Councillor Tom Philpott to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal and Recreation

Further to Councillor Nicholas Bennett's oral question earlier this year, can the Portfolio Holder please give an update on the long hoped for refurbishment of West Wickham Leisure Centre. Specifically, can he update members on the current projected timescale for work to commence and whether it is expected that this work would be built into any future borough wide contract with MyTime?

Can the Portfolio Holder also advise what steps the council is taking in the meantime to ensure that facilities in West Wickham are kept up to an adequate standard by MyTime?

Reply:

The Council is currently considering the future options regarding the boroughs leisure offer and is in discussions on the future provision of facilities with Mytime Active, the charitable trust set up by the Council to manage its leisure facilities.

This also includes the long term proposals for the West Wickham Leisure Centre, the Council is currently awaiting a response from Mytime with regard to their proposals for West Wickham Leisure Centre.

In the interim period however, certain urgent repairs and maintenance will be undertaken by Mytime to ensure that ensure the building is safe, clean and hygienic.

Mytime active have in the last few months installed brand new air conditioning in the gym and repaired remaining air conditioning units, repainted and refreshed the teaching pool changing rooms, repaired around 40 lockers, removed harmless algae from the pool floor. Mytime Active have also employed internal cleaning staff dedicated to keeping customer areas clean and hygienic during peak hours. Mytime are also proposing the replacement of around 36 lockers in the ladies and teaching pool changing areas, the installation of 2 new shower cubicles in the gym changing rooms, as well as replacement and repair of other minor pieces of equipment and key areas.

Mytime will endeavour to keep the facility clean and undertake the minor day to day repairs as required. It is hoped that the Council and Mytime Active will shortly conclude their discussions on future leisure provision within the Borough together with agreed future investment proposals.

8. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Whilst I am grateful that at last the street cleaning schedule has been made available to the public, please will the Portfolio Holder change the location of the schedule on the site so that people can easily find it? As this schedule has the potential to deliver direct service monitoring by local residents, will the Portfolio Holder also agree to proactively publicise the availability of the schedule by press release / stakeholder communications etc.?

Reply:

There are no plans to change the website further at this time following Cllr William Huntington-Thresher's innovative suggestion to publicise Bromley's street sweeping schedules at the March ES PDS meeting.

Plans are already afoot to advertise the links presence more widely and this will manifest itself in the impending edition 'Environment Matters' which will be reaching local doorsteps in approximately 5 weeks time from now.

Members can obviously contribute to this process themselves, by alerting Residents Associations, Friends Groups and other interested persons to further assist the Department in their scrutiny function of the Contractor's performance.

9. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services

The Portfolio Holder is aware of a recent infestation of bed bugs in Amplio House. Can the Portfolio Holder please give concise timeline of events and in particular details of how and when residents and their carers/guardians were informed of this outbreak by either Avenues Management or LBB? Can the Portfolio Holder also please supply the method statement and HACCP analysis provided by Avenues management in relation to both the prevention and treatment of infestations of this type?

Reply:

Care Services will ask Avenues Trust to provide us with this information and the timeline of their communication with their service users.

10. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

Officers report unprecedented levels of fly tipping in the Borough. I am informed that clearance of such debris is now being undertaken by personnel otherwise employed on regular street cleaning. Please can you provide details of the existing contract specification, SLA and KPIs on the clearance and disposal of fly tipped waste? Does the Portfolio Holder agree with me that residents should not suffer dirtier streets because of the actions of a minority of offenders who may well not even live in the Borough? And if so, what is he going to do to ensure this doesn't happen?

Reply:

Fly-tipping removal can be allocated to various contractors subject to the volume of material involved, as well the contents if they are hazardous.

This methodology has been employed for several years.

The street cleaners remove material on a daily basis where it is found on their routine scheduled cleaning frequencies.

The Council's environmental service aims are available on the Council's website under the Council & Democracy page however we aim to clear rubbish on the public highway within five working days.

If investigating a fly-tip for enforcement purposes we may keep the rubbish in situ, where it is safe to do so, while evidence is gathered to facilitate prosecution.

Arrangements for the collection of hazardous waste (once verified) are made with specialist contractors.

I certainly do agree that residents, businesses and visitors to the Borough should not suffer the blight of fly-tipping. Whilst I cannot “ensure” anything in terms of outcome around anti-social and/or criminal behaviour, I have already alerted local MPs, the Minister of State, the Environment Agency and DEFRA to my concerns and strong belief that the existing powers available to Local Authorities provide an insufficient deterrent to the disgusting individuals who behave in this manner. Likewise for the need for a significant bolstering to Magistrates punishment tariffs, to ensure tougher routine punitive action can be taken against those responsible when apprehended.

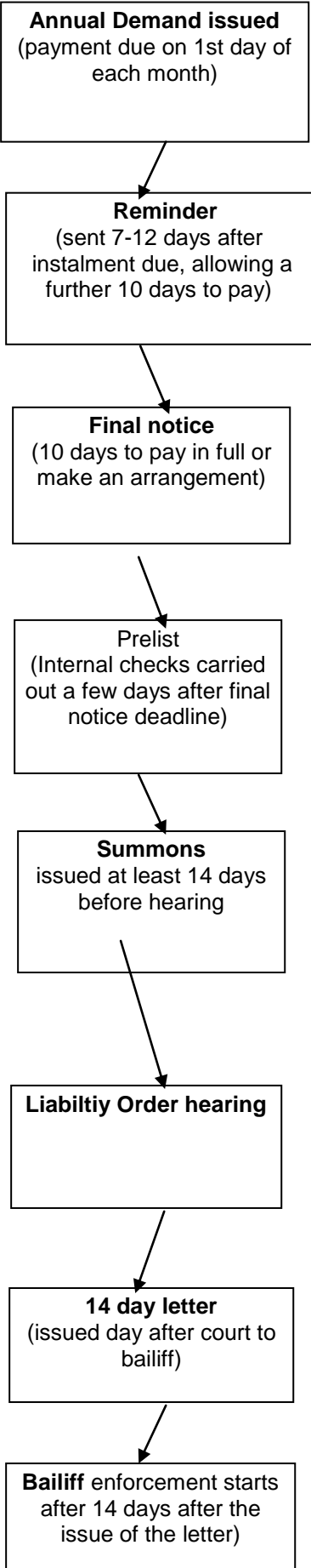
11. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Resources

Will the Portfolio Holder provide full details of the processes used by Liberata for the follow up of Council Tax and Business Rate debt, including the use of bailiffs?

Reply:

Further to your question regarding the processes used by Liberata for the follow up of Council Tax and Business Rate debt, I enclose the relevant flow charts. These contain the action to be taken, together with time allowed prior to escalation to the next stage.

Council Tax Recovery



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

Will the Portfolio Holder provide the components of the Council's contract with Liberata governing their use of bailiffs.

Reply:

Please find detailed below the relevant paragraphs of the Exchequer Services specification regarding the use of bailiffs and subsequent action of the Authority and/or its contractor.

From Council Tax Service Level Requirements

Bailiff

The Service Provider shall:

- 2.13.1 Seek authorisation from LBB of the Bailiff Company the Service Provider wishes to employ to undertake action on behalf of LBB. Provide a copy of the Bailiff Company's code of practice and list of charges and any other information regarding the proposed Bailiff Company. For the avoidance of doubt only Bailiff Companies accepted by LBB will be permitted to operate on LBB accounts. Any current or future costs in using Bailiffs will be met by the Service Provider.
- 2.13.2 Monitor the Bailiff to ensure they comply with all relevant legislation and that targets set by the Service Provider in conjunction with LBB are being achieved, and that the Bailiff code of practice and LBB requirements are being adhered to.
- 2.13.3 Ensure the Bailiffs carry out work for the Council in accordance with the following:
 - a) The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy
 - b) Any Code of Practice as issued by the Certificated Bailiffs Association
 - c) A quality management standard of ISO9002 or equivalent
- 2.13.4 Administer, monitor and liaise with Bailiff/relevant body on execution of Warrants of Arrest.
- 2.13.5 Monitor all accounts/Warrants of Arrest held with the Bailiff to ensure all payments have been noted, prior to action.
- 2.13.6 Provide details of recovery cases returned from the Bailiff on a quarterly basis (May, August, November and February) detailing what further action is to be taken to recover the outstanding debt.

- 2.13.7 Ensure all income collected on LBB's behalf by external bodies (e.g. Bailiffs, solicitors) is monitored to ensure that the amounts received are correct.
- 2.13.8 Ensure any payments collected by the Bailiffs are paid directly into the Council's account and payments made by cash are transferred to the Council's account within 15 days of receipt.
- 2.13.9 Fully update the Bailiffs on any changes affecting the amount of a Liability Order or circumstances of the customer, which will affect how the Bailiffs secure payment.
- 2.13.10 Check all Bailiffs' letters and documents comply with any relevant statutory requirements, are in plain English, include a detailed breakdown of the debt (including costs and fees), contain information on how to contact the Bailiffs and how payment can be made.
- 2.13.11 Notify LBB of any appeals in connection with distress immediately in writing, prepare case files as required by the Council's legal representative, attend Court as a witness and secure attendance by Bailiffs and carry out any follow up action necessary.
- 2.13.12 Ensure Liability Orders are returned by the Bailiff if they have been unsuccessful after 90 days
- 2.13.13 Where Liability Orders are returned from the Bailiffs:
- a) Ensure that payments collected by the Bailiffs are paid directly into the Council's account and are allocated accurately to the correct accounts and summons debts.
 - b) Ensure all records are updated accurately including the reason for return.
 - c) Check the reasons for return for each Liability Order within 15 working days of return from the Bailiffs and ensure further enforcement is taken where a balance remains in accordance with statutory requirements within a further 10 working days.
- 2.13.14 For 'nulla bona' returns send a committal pending letter within 15 working days.
- 2.13.15 Where a Bailiff returns a Liability Order as unexecuted (e.g. marked "nulla bona" or as being unable to obtain access) the Service Provider shall carry out one or more of the following actions:
- a) Make arrangements with the debtor to clear all outstanding sums;
 - b) Obtain an Attachment of Earnings;

- c) Obtain an attachment of Income Support Order;
- d) Initiate Bankruptcy proceedings against the debtor following appropriate checks for suitability, and be responsible for the associated costs of such action, and checking if the debtor is known to LBB Social Services.
- e) Initiate Charging Order process where appropriate and be responsible for the associated costs of such action.
- f) Consider referring the debt to a Debt Collection Agency, and be responsible for the associated costs of such action.
- g) Seek a Committal Hearing in respect of the Debtor.
- h) Undertake an occupancy checks to ascertain whether the debtor is still in occupation.

- 2.13.16 Check cases monthly where committal letters have been sent and ensure appropriate enforcement is taken relevant to any details held on customers' financial circumstances.
- 2.13.17 Select cases for committal proceedings where all other alternative attempts to enforce outstanding arrears have been unsuccessful and pass case details to LBB for approval.
- 2.13.18 Where approval for committal proceedings is given, prepare summonses and complaint lists and attend committal complaint hearings with LBB.
- 2.13.19 Include information required by law in all committal summonses and warrants and ensure all summonses and warrants are in a format agreed with LBB.
- 2.13.20 Check committal summonses for accuracy prior to posting or preferably delivery by hand.
- 2.13.21 Post committal summonses by recorded delivery or first class post within 1 day of the complaint date. Each committal summons must be posted separately and the certificate of posting kept and taken to Court as evidence.
- 2.13.22 Respond to all customer enquiries on committal cases and take alternative enforcement action wherever possible.
- 2.13.23 Prepare case files for all cases listed for committal hearings, ensuring all records are accurate, and present at committal hearings as the expert witness with the LBB acting in the presenting role with the Service Provider providing.
- 2.13.24 Information and evidence as required by LBB and the Court.

- 2.13.25 Carry out any follow up action on cases after each committal hearing including the administration and enforcement of Arrest Warrants.
- 2.13.26 Non-compliance with paragraph 2.13.42 n) above shall be deemed to have occurred if more than 25 cases for current year accounts and 50 cases for previous years accounts are returned by the Bailiff unexecuted without action having been taken by the Service Provider within the required 90 day period as appropriate and/or the Service Provider fails to obtain Committal hearing dates on a minimum of 10 new cases every calendar month (unless otherwise agreed by LBB).

From NNDR Service Level Requirements:

Bailiff

The Service Provider shall:

- 2.17.1 Seek authorisation from LBB of the Bailiff Company the Service Provider wishes to employ to undertake action on behalf of LBB.
- 2.17.2 Provide a copy of the Bailiff Company's code of practice and list of charges and any other information regarding the proposed Bailiff Company. For the avoidance of doubt only Bailiff Companies accepted by LBB will be permitted to operate on LBB accounts. Any current or future costs in using Bailiffs will be met by the Service Provider.
- 2.17.3 Monitor the Bailiff to ensure they comply with all relevant legislation, Bailiff Code of practice and LBB requirements.
- 2.17.4 Ensure the Bailiffs carry out any work for LBB in accordance with the following:
- a) The Council's Equal Opportunities Policy
 - b) Any Code of Practice as issued by the Certificated Bailiffs Association
 - c) A quality management standard of ISO9002 or equivalent
- 2.17.5 Administer, monitor and liaise with bailiff/relevant body on execution of Warrants of Arrest.
- 2.17.6 Monitor all accounts/Warrants of Arrest held with the Bailiff to ensure all payments have been noted, prior to action.
- 2.17.7 Ensure all income collected on the behalf of LBB by external bodies (e.g. Bailiffs, Solicitors) is monitored to ensure that the amounts received are correct.

- 2.17.8 Ensure any payments collected by the Bailiffs are paid directly into LBB's account and payments made by cash are transferred to LBB's account within 10 days of receipt.
- 2.17.9 Fully update the Bailiffs on any changes affecting the amount of a Liability Order or circumstances of the customer, which will affect how the Bailiffs secure payment.
- 2.17.10 Check all Bailiff's letters and documents comply with any relevant statutory requirements, are in plain English, contain information on how to contact the Bailiffs and how payment can be made and clearly states the period of the debt and breakdown of costs/fees charged.
- 2.17.11 Notify LBB of any appeals in connection with distress immediately in writing, prepare case files as required by LBB's legal representative, attend Court as a witness and secure attendance by Bailiffs and carry out any follow up action necessary.
- 2.17.12 Ensure that Liability Orders are returned by the Bailiff after 90 days if collection has been unsuccessful unless an arrangement is in place or full payment is expected shortly after the 90 day period.

Where Liability Orders are returned from the Bailiffs, the Service Provider will:
- 2.17.13 Ensure that payments collected by the Bailiffs are paid directly into LBB's account and are allocated accurately to the correct accounts and summons debts.
- 2.17.14 Ensure all records are updated accurately including the reason for return.
- 2.17.15 Check the reasons for return for each Liability Order within 10 working days of return from the Bailiffs and ensure further enforcement is taken where a balance remains in accordance with statutory requirements.
- 2.17.16 Where a Liability Order is returned 'nulla bona', within 10 working days, send the customer a committal pending letter.
- 2.17.17 Check cases monthly where Committal letters have been sent and ensure appropriate enforcement is taken relevant to any details held on customer's financial circumstances.
- 2.17.18 Select cases for Committal proceedings where all other alternative attempts to enforce outstanding arrears have been unsuccessful and pass case details to LBB for approval.
- 2.17.19 Where approval for Committal proceedings is given, prepare summonses and complaint lists and attend committal complaint hearings with LBB.

- 2.17.20 Include information required by law in all Committal Summonses and Warrants and ensure all Summonses and Warrants are in a format agreed with LBB.
- 2.17.21 Check Committal Summonses for accuracy prior to posting.
- 2.17.22 Post Committal Summonses by 1st class post within 1 day of the complaint date.
- 2.17.23 Respond to all customer enquiries on committal cases and take alternative enforcement action wherever possible.
- 2.17.24 Prepare case files for all cases listed for Committal Hearings, ensuring all records are accurate, and present at committal hearings as the expert witness with LBB acting in the presenting role with the Service Provider providing information and evidence as required by LBB and the Court.
- 2.17.25 Carry out any follow up action on cases after each Committal Hearing including the administration and enforcement of Warrants of Arrest.
- 2.17.26 Where a Bailiff returns a Liability Order as unexecuted (e.g. marked “nulla bona” or as being unable to obtain access) the Service Provider shall carry out one or more of the following actions:
- a) Make arrangements with the Debtor to clear all outstanding sums
 - b) Obtain full payment from the Debtor of all outstanding sums
 - c) Initiate Bankruptcy or Liquidation proceedings against the Debtor
 - d) Seek a Committal Hearing in respect of the Debtor
- 2.17.27 Non-compliance with paragraph 2.17.84 above shall be deemed to have occurred if more than 25 cases for current year accounts and 50 cases for previous years accounts are returned by the Bailiff unexecuted without action having been taken by the Service Provider within the required 90 day period as appropriate and/or the Service Provider fails to obtain Committal Hearing dates on a minimum of 5 new cases every calendar month (unless otherwise agreed by LBB).

Sundry Debtors Service Level Requirements:

- 2.20.1 Ensure all appropriate recovery remedies are considered and the most suitable solution is taken and followed through to successful conclusion which must not exceed 1 year from the date Complaint was made:
- a) Attachment of Earnings
 - b) County Court Bailiff

- c) High Court Enforcement Officers
- d) Oral Examination
- e) Third Part Debt Order
- f) Charging Order
- g) Bankruptcy

13. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment

What criteria are used to determine how frequently footpaths and carriageways are swept? Are there any differences in how these criteria are applied in different parts of the borough? Are there any plans to change these criteria?

Reply:

Frequencies of cleaning are based upon the hierarchy of the street, distinguishing between the pavement and the road, and are influenced by local factors such as the proximity of nearby amenities such as schools, shops, transport interchanges etc, which might be subject to heavy footfall and vehicle movements.

The same methodology is applied Boroughwide. There are no plans to change the current criteria at this point in time.

14. From Cllr Kathy Bance to the Portfolio Holder for Education

Can the Portfolio Holder please provide an update on the Council's plans for the future of Kentwood Adult Education Centre?

Reply:

The consultation on the proposed changes to Adult Education started on 16th October for staff and is due to start around 21st of October for students and stakeholders. Under these proposals the adult education service will continue to use the Kentwood site for the delivery of courses, which would include English, maths, courses for unemployed adults and some non-accredited leisure type courses. However, it is proposed that the nursery at the Kentwood adult education site would close in order to free up additional space for some of the courses to be relocated following the closure of the Widmore site. All the proposed changes would come into effect from the start of the 2016/17 academic year.

15. From Cllr Richard Williams to the Portfolio Holder for the Environment.

Despite numerous complaints to Thames Water regarding an ongoing leak on Anerley Hill SE19, the leak has not been rectified. Will the Council put additional pressure onto Thames Water to rectify this problem?

Reply:

Thames Water have advised Council Officers that they intend to undertake the necessary repairs during the week commencing today.

16. From Cllr Vanessa Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Resources.

As the transition period for Independent Electoral Registration ends on 1 December 2015, please will the Portfolio Holder advise on the following:

- How many people were registered to vote, broken down by ward, for the general election of May 2015?
- How many people are individually registered to vote, broken down by ward, as of now?
- What percentage of the population of the borough do these figures represent, again by ward?
- How are moves into the borough tracked (whether into purchased or rented accommodation), and how are new residents contacted?
- What steps will be taken after 1 December to keep the electoral register up to date, and how and when will residents be contacted?

Reply:

The following table answers the first two bullet points -

WARD	Registered to vote for General Election on 7 May 2015 (Parliamentary electorate only)	Registered to vote as at Sept 2015 (including*)	*Unconfirmed as at Sept 2015 (to be deleted 1/12/15 if no response rec'd)
Bickley	11474	11851	183
Biggin Hill	7878	8004	141
Bromley Common & Keston	12031	12458	193
Bromley Town	12162	13084	339
Chelsfield & Pratts Bottom	11224	11462	206
Chislehurst	11840	12218	223
Clock House	11434	12000	291
Copers Cope	11724	12385	280
Cray Valley East	10856	11350	252
Cray Valley West	11866	12248	276
Crystal Palace	8346	9147	321
Darwin	4116	4160	62
Farnborough & Crofton	11593	11870	175
Hayes & Coney Hall	12291	12576	170
Kelsey & Eden Park	12103	12446	215
Mottingham & Chislehurst North	7004	7399	174
Orpington	11797	12121	203
Penge & Cator	11837	12721	435

Petts Wood & Knoll	10667	10937	123
Plaistow & Sundridge	11133	11695	297
Shortlands	7464	7703	140
West Wickham	11830	12118	158
TOTAL	232670	241953	4857

For the remaining bullet points the answers are -

- We do not have this (population) data so cannot provide you with the details requested.
- Currently, we track moves/changes through the canvass, citizenship ceremonies, and records from Council Tax and Registrars (deaths) – an application form (either a Household Enquiry form or an Invitation to register form, as appropriate) is sent to the property/individual when we become aware of the change. We also provide information on the registration process, on the Council website and through press releases, social media and poster campaigns
- After the publication of the revised register on 1 December 2015, we are exploring the possibilities of undertaking more extensive data mining to track new resident (as the law allows) using records from Housing Benefits, Parking, Blue Badge and CRM (in addition to records from Council Tax, Registrars, and Citizenship ceremonies). Again an application form (either a Household Enquiry form or an Invitation to register form, as appropriate) will be sent to the property/individual when we become aware of any change. An annual canvass will be undertaken next autumn.

Earlier this year (in February 2015) we sent a Household Notification letter to every property in the Borough in the lead up to the General election on May 2015 to ensure the register was as up to date as possible - this was very effective. The exercise cost approximately £45,000 and was (largely) funded on this occasion by Central Government. Unfortunately it is unlikely we will have the resources to undertake a similar exercise in the lead up to the GLA election in May 2016.

17. From Cllr Kevin Brooks to the Portfolio Holder for Care Services

The recent policy to ‘no longer include households on the register if they are assessed as lacking one bedroom and are not tenants of partner Housing Associations’ has caused concern and consternation amongst residents. Would the Portfolio Holder please provide the rate of the appeals and specify the numbers of those who have appealed on medical grounds? Would the Portfolio Holder please inform us what levels of support and advice are being provided for residents that make an appeal, particularly concerning appeals on medical grounds?

Reply:

768 applications were cancelled as part of the Allocation Scheme review.
70 households (9%) submitted a request for a review.

The majority of households submitting a review indicated that lacking a bedroom should be sufficient to allow them to be included on the Housing Register and have requested a review on that basis.

Of the 70 review requests submitted 8 households (11%) indicated that their review was submitted on medical grounds either fully or in part. 3 of these households (4%) provided medical information that had already been assessed prior to the cancellation; no priority was previously awarded.

The Service will review each application separately in line with the guidance sent out within the Allocation Scheme; copies of the full scheme and a summary can be downloaded from the Bromley Homeseekers website www.bromleyhomeseekers.co.uk. The reviews are being carried out by senior officers and each customer will receive a letter tailored to their individual needs and circumstances. Irrespective of whether or not the review decision is upheld customers will be provided with details of alternative housing options and, where appropriate, details of relevant support agencies in order that they may source further support and assistance.

Whilst the number of reviews received is lower than expected we fully recognise that the changes made to the Allocation Scheme has caused concern to a number of households. However we remain satisfied that the changes made were essential in order to ensure that the Scheme is legally and statutorily compliant and that it is proportionate in managing expectations against the backdrop of the available supply of accommodation so that those included on the housing register have a realistic expectation of being successful in securing an offer of accommodation through the scheme.