

ORAL QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS:

ORAL QUESTIONS FROM MR RICHARD GIBBONS TO THE RENEWAL AND RECREATION PDS COMMITTEE—26TH January 2016.

Question 1

I commend the Council for appointing East Architecture to propose public realm improvements for the Walnuts Centre precinct. Has the Council also taken the opportunity to draw on East Architecture's considerable experience to fully integrate sustainable travel into the scheme in view of Key Priorities identified in the JSNA and Health & Wellbeing Strategy?

Answer to Question 1

The Council and East Architecture have taken every opportunity to ensure that balances in lifestyle aspirations are met with the transformation of the space.

The plans for the Square indirectly address the key priorities on the JSNA/Health and Wellbeing Strategy by assisting in the promotion of healthier lifestyle choices by encouraging the use of outdoor space. This will be facilitated by scheduled activities potentially from the proposed Wellbeing Centre, the Library and Leisure Centre and promoted by the future active frontages around the Square. Provision is also being made for a revamped market area, which will offer in conjunction with Bromley College, healthy eating options prepared by the catering students.

Supplementary Question

Are Members aware of traffic congestion in Station Road, Orpington, and the levels of related pollution, and the adverse impacts on health?

Answer to Supplementary Question

The Council is aware of increased congestion in this area. This is unfortunately a generic problem with growing and expanding populations. This may be a question that would be better asked of the Portfolio Holder for the Environment.

Question 2

What measures are being taken to reduce congestion in and around Orpington High Street given the anticipated increase in traffic as a result of recent and ongoing housing, retail and leisure developments such as Berwick Quarter, Brunswick Square, Odeon Multiplex, Premier Inn, Pure Gym, shops restaurants, and a Health & Wellbeing Centre?

Answer to Question 2

The variety of new developments coming on line in and around the Walnuts have different travel characteristics. Residential developments generally tend to have their peak travel demand in the morning and evening peaks. The cinema and restaurants will generally peak in the evening and other uses spread throughout the day. The impacts of the developments are therefore unlikely to be concentrated at any one time but spread throughout the day.

Orpington High Street has good public transport connections and a proportion of trips are likely to be by methods other than by car. It is recognised that as part of the rejuvenation of the town centre there will be an increase in travel demand, including car trips. Major planning applications are normally supported by a Transport Assessment which will recommend specific improvements, including cycle parking. The High Street underwent major works a few years ago as part of improvements to the Town Centre and there are no proposals for further works, such as road or junction widening, at the present time.

Supplementary Question

Would Members consider a Pedestrian Plan and include improvements to walking and cycling routes and signage?

Answer to Supplementary Question

I (the Portfolio Holder) agree that we do so.