

COUNCIL MEETING

10th APRIL 2017

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC

(A) QUESTIONS FOR ORAL REPLY

1. From Helena Williams to the Environment Portfolio Holder

Could the Council please state whether traffic calming measures have been considered on Parish Lane following the tragic accident on the junction with Lennard Road in 2016?

Reply:

It is important to note that investment in any traffic calming engineering works, is strictly driven by the number of recurring personal injury related accidents which happen at any given location to ensure maximum return is made on the limited public monies provided for such works.

To that end, prior to the tragic crime committed locally on 31st August, I am advised that there had thankfully only been 2 personal injury accidents at this junction since 2011 (in January and February 2016), which would in all candour exclude it from any list requiring early engineering intervention.

Were speeding assessed to be an issue on either road, the Council would provide additional signage (either rotational posters or a Vehicle Activated Sign (VAS)). Furthermore, if either road were deemed to be a 'Ward Priority' by the local Safer Neighbourhood Panel and Police Team, it could then benefit from periodic spot checks and subsequent enforcement by the Police.

Supplementary Question:

Would the Portfolio Holder re-consider under any circumstances? As a concerned resident, there does seem to be a lot of speeding down there.

Reply:

It is not a question of re-considering – the policy is as I have described it. In the hope of providing helpful advice, if there is concern about speeding in any road across the borough, ward councillors and the public should be working with the Police's Safer Neighbourhood Teams to escalate those concerns and ensure that potential enforcement can take place. Maybe the thing to do is to speak to the Safer Neighbourhood Team and your local councillors.

Additional Supplementary Question:

The Mayor asked the Portfolio Holder to confirm that every ward had a Safer Neighbourhood Team that residents could go to.

Reply:

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that this was the case.

2. From Andy Richardson to the Care Services Portfolio Holder

Can the Portfolio Holder explain in detail the reasons why public funding was an issue resulting in unusually high delays to Orpington residents in transfer of care from NHS institutions to care organisations and programmes in November and December 2016?

Reply:

I do not think that public funding was an issue here.

Nationally at that time of the year, all health and social care economies experience difficulties caused by pressure on the care home and domiciliary care providers, being able to recruit sufficient levels of staff. Locally, the Local Authority and CCG work together to put additional resources into the system in order to ensure we were able to secure intensive a range of support to improve discharge. Over this period we in place intensive packages of care and support at very short notice. We saw a drop in the Delayed Transfers of Care (DToC) numbers from the spike in November and December. We continue to work together so that our residents are discharged as soon as possible with the appropriate support in place.

Supplementary Question:

The statistics in the NHS England Delayed Transfers of Care did actually prove that there was delay in paying for NHS patients. Does this Council disagree with the statistics produced by a national government body?

Reply:

We certainly cannot agree with the statistics produced. As far as Bromley is concerned, our transfer of care bureau is working pretty well. It is not as well as we would like, and we would like to improve things. Our work with the CCG and the hospital is improving all the time in terms of improving the situation. It should also be noted that the discharge procedures from the PRUH are not just for residents of Bromley. A large number of the people who are discharged from the hospital go to other boroughs and the overall figures may well refer to the totality of patients leaving hospital - only a proportion of those are residents of Bromley.

3. From Julie Ireland to the Environment Portfolio Holder

Sadiq Khan has announced the beginning of a consultation on an ultra-low emissions zone in central London which may be extended to all of London including Bromley. What is the Council's policy towards reducing the use of diesel in Bromley particularly with regard to the vehicles they or their contractors operate?"

Reply:

Mindful that Bromley already enjoys the cleanest air in London, whilst at the same time acknowledging that a percentage of the population and local businesses purchased and still own expensive diesel vehicles as a direct result of the ill-considered advice and tax reforms of the Gordon Brown and Tony Blair governments, the Council would respectfully encourage any affected 3rd party to pay attention to the updated advice and seriously consider switching back to non-diesel alternatives when they next come to change their vehicles.

Regarding Bromley Council's own vehicles, I can confirm that upon reaching the end of their natural service cycle, or upon the introduction of any new law accelerating their retirement or adaptation, those which are being replaced will be with a non-diesel alternative.

Regarding Bromley Council's various contractors' vehicles, the companies will have their own vehicle replacement plans in place. However, when the Environment contracts are renewed in 2019, the Council will expect all contractors to comply with the then current and any future legislation in this field.

Supplementary Question:

Could the Portfolio Holder clarify whether contractors' vehicles would be expected to be diesel-free when their contracts come up for renewal?

Reply:

Speaking for the Environment Department, when the contracts are next up for renewal, which is in 2019 the Council fleet and the fleet of the Council's contractors will be diesel free.

Additional Supplementary Question:

Councillor Simon Fawthrop asked whether the Portfolio Holder had read the report issued by Imperial College that day which suggested that driving over speed humps caused a 98% increase in nitrous oxide emissions, and that removing speed humps could reduce it be 98% therefore. Was he aware of the report and would he be taking action on it?

Reply:

No, I have not read it, but I shall endeavour to do so at the earliest possible opportunity.

Additional Supplementary Question:

Councillor Angela Wilkins asked whether the Portfolio Holder would accept her invitation to come to Crystal Palace, where recent measurements of air pollution show a considerably high level.

Reply:

The Portfolio Holder responded that he would be happy to visit any ward.

(B) QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. From Callie Foster to the Environment Portfolio Holder

Please could the Council provide an update to the response received at the Council meeting on 22 February 2016, as below? Please could we have a more definitive timetable of action?

From Callie Foster to the Environment Portfolio Holder

Following a productive meeting between residents of Moorfield Road, Orpington and Council representatives held on 16 November 2015 we, the residents, have been waiting for a response from the Council in relation to our petition requesting a residents parking scheme. Please could the Council update us on progress made and the next steps required to move this process forward?

Reply:

I can confirm that this request is currently advancing within a queue for such works and that an outline proposition will be placed before local residents early in the new financial year.

Reply:

Firstly, whilst it is fair to say this location is proving extremely difficult to design and recommend a solution for which is likely to strike a popular common chord, may I nevertheless apologise on behalf of the Parking design team for the ongoing slippage to this project.

I can confirm and indeed promise that this request remains very well advanced within the described queue for such works and that an outline proposition will be placed before local residents shortly.

2. From Ian Brown to the Resources Portfolio Holder

With reference to Report no FSD 17036 (Internal Audit Progress Report) from the agenda for the Audit Sub Committee meeting on 4 April, can you please provide the key findings of this report together with details of the 15 priority 1 recommendations, mentioned in paragraph 3.3 of the report, relating to the Waste Services contract.

Please also provide legal justification for the full report item being classified as "Part 2" and thereby not available to the public.

Reply:

The Council is not required to disclose confidential or exempt information in response to a question. The agenda sets out the ground the sub-committee relied on under Schedule 12 A in resolving to consider the matter in closed session although there are potentially other reasons to exempt from disclosure at this time.

3. From Sam Webber to the Care Services Portfolio Holder

FOI requests in February 2017 revealed at least 368 spaces for 'Unaccompanied Asylum Seeking Children' (UASC) in the UK, including 22 spaces in Lewisham, 5 in Bexley, 3 in Sutton & 3 in the City of London. How many spaces are available for these vulnerable

young people in the London Borough of Bromley, given neighbouring councils - or those close by - are taking their share or offering to do so?

Reply:

Corporate Statement - March 2017

“A general letter to all Councils last year requested assistance on a voluntary basis. Given our own local pressures - number of homeless family units, the majority of them with children, approaching 1300, and an increasing number of Looked After Children (around 290) - we were not, and are not, in a position to voluntarily offer accommodation to Syrian refugees affected by the ongoing conflict.

Bromley is a member of the London wide rota arrangement, which takes unaccompanied asylum seeking children on a regular basis. We have had between 12-20 children/young people since April 2016 at any given time. This number is likely to increase following the introduction of a national dispersal system.”

I can confirm at the present time we have 288 Looked After Children, 17 UASC – 2 of which were Kent UASC and settled here with agreement we would accept them.

4. From Sam Webber to the Care Services Portfolio Holder

Does the Council know how many offers of support have come from Bromley residents to the Refugee Resettlement Programme (RRP - a joint unit between the Home Office & the departments for International Development and Communities & Local Government)? 1 resident has contacted me to confirm her offer of translation services etc & the RRP was not even able to establish the appropriate point of contact within Bromley Council to take this forward.

Reply:

Bromley have not had any direct requests from the RRP to provide assistance on accommodation and have not received any information regarding any offers of support the RRP may have received directly from Bromley residents. I am aware that there was previously talk of setting up a central list here of any offers of support but I don't believe this was pursued as it was felt more beneficial to direct people straight to RRP where the offers of assistance could more actively be taken up on the grounds that we had not been asked to directly house any refugees. Details were publicised by corporate communications to inform Bromley residents on how to contact the RRP directly with any offers of assistance

5. From Sam Webber to the Environment Portfolio Holder

Too much recyclable litter is often lying on pavements or in roadside gutters across the borough and we must reduce this. Would the Council consider installing new split recycling & litter bins (initially just replacing existing bins) at busy areas like bus stops; in front of train stations or in shopping areas if this could be shown to reduce littering, increase recycling and therefore increase council revenue?

Reply:

The Council will certainly continue to consider any and all good practice it becomes aware of which reduces littering and increases recycling rates within the confines of the tight financial parameters which the Department has available to it to operate within.

Whether this involves newer bigger bins, dedicated recycling bins, or occasionally even the removal of bins being effectively fly tipped and filled up with domestic and/or commercial waste which then causes litter to overflow, being something which is assessed on a case by case and site by site basis.