

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**16<sup>TH</sup> JULY 2018**

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR ORAL REPLY**

**1. From Cllr Julian Benington to the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio Holder**

West Camp, Biggin Hill is the former offices, barracks, messes, hangars and storage areas for the RAF who left the airfield and West Camp in 1992, 26 years ago. It was bought by Pentridge Properties, which company is effectively owned by Bernie Ecclestone, who used the hangars and some of the buildings for storage. Many of these buildings are Listed, but little or no maintenance has or is carried out on them, the whole site is a deteriorating eyesore and total waste.

In May 2017 a letter was sent to Pentridge Properties from this borough expressing an interest in purchasing the site. The reply received was that it had already been sold, but this sale fell through almost immediately. What steps have been or are being taken now to purchase this site?

**Reply:**

The Council wrote to Pentridge, who are the current owner of the property concerned, on 7 June stating that the Council is still interested in acquiring the above site so as to provide a sustainable reuse of the listed barrack buildings as an enterprise centre. To date we have not had a response.

**Supplementary question:**

In view of the deteriorating condition of the buildings, and the waste of the site, which is within the Mayor's Strategic Outer London Development Site, if the sale is refused or cannot be agreed will a compulsory purchase order be made to secure the site for commercial development, possibly including the new Aviation Training College planned by South East London Colleges?

**Reply:**

As regards the Aviation Training College that is no longer going on that site - it is going on another site provided by the Airport, so that is taken care of. However, I do not disagree with your sentiments with regard to these buildings. I myself have been pressing for some time to get a reply from Pentridge or to go down the compulsory purchase route. However, this is not always that simple and I will require legal advice as to whether we will succeed in doing that.

**2. From Cllr David Jefferys to the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio Holder**

Would the Portfolio Holder clarify who is responsible for controlling and monitoring the air space under 2,500 feet over Bromley for both fixed wing aircraft and helicopters?

**Reply:**

Unfortunately, it is not the Council's responsibility. Ultimately, this is a matter for Government and the Civil Aviation Authority (CAA). Controlled airspace can go from ground level to 66,000 feet in some cases, and 'air routes' can have bases down to 3,500 ft. Outside controlled airspace, aircraft can go anywhere so long as they abide by

the Rules of the Air. Specifically, relating to Biggin Hill, we have double checked the position with the CAA who confirm that Biggin Hill is within airspace G. The CAA website says "In the UK class G airspace is uncontrolled. This means there are no restrictions on which aircraft can enter it, what equipment the aircraft must carry, or the routes taken by the aircraft."

The CAA have said to us, "As long as pilots follow the published rules, they can largely operate autonomously."

The CAA have essentially confirmed to us that the Council does not have a role in routes below 2,500 feet, with the Airport in charge, in that sense, albeit within the existing regulatory framework, including the controls outlined in the Lease, which includes the Noise Action Plan.

Also, it is important to note that the Council does not have additional powers as a planning authority as some mistakenly believe.

**Supplementary Question:**

In the light of this answer, and the two earlier answers, can he bring forward a meeting with the CAA as soon as possible, or at least request such a meeting, so that these matters can be discussed.

**Reply:**

I will.

**3. From Cllr Alexa Michael to the Environment and Community Services Portfolio Holder**

When will the measures to control the speed and volume of traffic on Heathfield Road in Keston be implemented? What form will these measures take?"

**Reply:**

There are no plans in place to limit the volume of traffic using Heathfield Road in Keston. There are two measures to be installed to help limit the speed of drivers using Heathfield Road. The first is the installation of a virtual speed table at the junction with Keston Avenue. Before this could be installed, a new road surface had to be laid at this location. This new surface was installed some months ago and the surface is now settled such that the required road markings and surface dressing can be laid. The new Highways contract came online at the start of July and the road markings are now programmed to be laid sometime this month.

The other speed-reducing measure planned is for a gateway feature to be installed just south of Fishponds Road. This has taken time to bring to fruition as planning permission was required to place the signs on Commons land. It is expected that the gateway feature will be installed in September.

**Supplementary Question:**

Given that it is exactly five years since the first measurements of speed and traffic in Heathfield Road were taken does the Portfolio Holder think it is high time that action is now taken?

**Reply:**

As with all schemes we will undertake measurements of the effect to determine whether there is anything further that we can realistically achieve where road users are controlling their vehicles.

**4. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Leader of the Council**

Does he support the general principle practised across the corporate and public sectors that, when something goes horribly wrong inside the organisation, the person “with whom the buck stops” should take ultimate responsibility and resign (if not be sacked)?

**Reply:**

Cllr Wilkins has raised an interesting philosophical question which I have given some considerable thought to over the course of the weekend.

On reflection, it would probably depend on the circumstances, and also as to whether the individual in question could reasonably have been expected to know something was wrong, then neglected to do anything about it, or wilfully engaged in an action or policy which caused significant loss or damage to their business or other 3<sup>rd</sup> parties.

For example, were a Chancellor of the Exchequer to indulge in a series of 17 gold auctions and sell half the nation’s gold reserves at levels not seen in decades running up a loss to the public purse estimated to have cost British Tax payers somewhere in the region of £8 billion pounds, then yes, I would agree that a resignation, or indeed a sacking, would be highly appropriate.

Another example would be were a Prime Minister and most of his Cabinet to decide to engage in what many regard as being an illegal war based on a false premise concerning weapons of mass destruction, leading to the death of many thousands of innocent people, at further great cost to the British tax payer. That would certainly merit sacking, if not the criminal prosecution of those responsible.

But I have a strange feeling that these are not the issues which Cllr Wilkins wishes to address in her supplementary question to me this evening.

**Supplementary Question:**

Would he explain please how it is that, having been Portfolio Holder for Environmental Services responsible for Waste Services, Vinci, Streetworks to name a few, all of which had extremely bad Internal Audit reports and as a consequence of failures in that Department this Council lost in excess of £1.5m, how has it come about that he has been elevated to be Leader of the Council?

**Reply:**

I hope it comes down to the good judgement of my colleagues on this side of the Chamber understanding the facts of the matter rather than the so called facts that Cllr Wilkins continues to try to misrepresent. The Waste Service has long since been an outstanding service, one of the best in London, it beats the benchmarks and has been the source of great pride amongst this authority in terms of performance. The fault to which Cllr Wilkins refers had long been embedded into that contract, preceeding my arrival in-post, as soon as the fault was spotted (and it was spotted by Environmental Services) who alerted Internal Audit it was quickly put right, the fault corrected and the priority flags corrected within about fourteen months. I have not got much more to add

as the report is still being redacted and held back and I am sure that we will be discussing it again in the not-too-distant future.

Cllr Angela Wilkins raised a point of personal explanation stating that she had not misrepresented anything. The report was there, but unfortunately the public could not read it yet, and she was not mis-representing the audit at all. Councillor Colin Smith responded that there were on-going false reports about that audit; when the audit was reported the facts would be seen.

**5. From Cllr Vanessa Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services**

Please describe the Council's policy for the implementation and enforcement of 20mph speed limits outside primary and secondary schools.

**Reply:**

20mph limits have been introduced outside 22 schools across the Borough, where a need has been identified; some of these are enforceable and some are highly visible advisory limits. In other locations, other types of warning signs have been installed, some electronic and some static. The school-time flashing advisory 20mph signs, introduced recently adjacent to three Borough schools are considered to be very effective at alerting drivers such that they adjust their speed accordingly.

The Council continues to monitor all schools, through our school travel planners, and will introduce whatever measures are deemed suitable to address safety issues or barriers to travel.

I should make clear that essentially the approach starts with the school and the School Travel Plan process to work out what is the best type of measure appropriate to that individual school in consultation with the school.

The Police are responsible for policing speed.

**Supplementary Question:**

I am interested to hear that the 20mph limit is enforced - I would like to know how it is enforced?

**Reply:**

I think I just said that the Police are responsible for policing speed.

**6. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Leader of the Council**

Bromley Youth Council are ambassadors for engaging with young people and they elected to have a young Mayor. The next stage in the process is for a white paper to be produced between the Chief Executive and the Leader of the Council. Can you give us an update on the status of this white paper?

**Reply:**

I am advised that there are issues involving the Council's constitution, finances and particularly concerns over safeguarding in the report which the Chief Executive is preparing. Those are the reasons that it is taking a little longer to prepare than he originally anticipated.

I am further advised that he will update you immediately that he has something more substantive to report.

**7. From Cllr Josh King to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing**

Does the Portfolio Holder agree that 22 affordable homes completed in Bromley in a year is not acceptable, given the level of demand for housing within the Borough?

**Reply:**

The Council actively seeks to ensure the provision of affordable housing on all new developments in line with national guidance and development plan policy. The target is for 35% percent on-site affordable housing provision in Bromley on all sites of nine units or more. Payments in lieu of onsite provision are an exception when the independent assessment has confirmed that affordable on-site provision is not viable and the Council has used those contributions to provide additional accommodation for local people via Housing Associations.

During the past 5 years around 155 new affordable housing units have been delivered. Payments in lieu contributions have also secured a current pipeline of approximately 198 affordable housing units with our housing associations. The Council is actively seeking to increase supply through a range of activities across the housing market and to ensure the best use of existing affordable housing becoming available for re-lets to meet housing need.

**Supplementary Question:**

Will the Portfolio Holder support the Mayor of London's building Council homes for Londoners programme?

**Reply:**

Where this is possible and viable, yes; there are certain parts of his policy which I think will provide fewer homes and therefore I would not want to go down that route. We are certainly conscious of the need to provide more affordable homes and our policies will be producing this in months to come.

**Additional Supplementary Question:**

Councillor Simon Fawthrop asked whether the Portfolio Holder was aware that last year the Labour authorities of Brent, Haringey, Hackney, Merton and Harrow built zero affordable housing, and is he aware that, in saying that he has met the figures this year, it appears that the Mayor of London has been telling a few "porky pies?" It looks like he has been double counting some of the figures and has actually failed to meet some of his affordable housing targets for the last year. Does it not say that the Conservative way of doing things is the better way of doing things?

**Reply:**

I was not aware of that particular data, but I am not surprised. The Conservative way of doing things is to work with the grain of the market, not against it.

**8. From Cllr Marina Ahmad to the Portfolio Holder for Education, Children and Families**

How much extra, in pounds, has been spent on the Education, Children and Families budget since the damning OFSTED report in June 2016?

**Reply:**

The answer is £7,251k.

(Controllable budget in June 2016 totalled £32,938k, Controllable budget in May 2018 £40,189k.)

**Supplementary Question:**

Will he now agree that the direct correlation between increased spending on the service and the very welcome improvements that have taken place as a result proves that this budget was cut too far in recent years?

**Reply:**

One of the original findings in the report was that the money spent on Children's Services was not the driving issue - it was around management of that service. The process since that damning Ofsted report which we have always accepted and committed to improving that service and not just fixing it but changing the way that we provide Children's Services in this borough is making sure that the management structure and the systems are correct, and that has been the main focus. If you look at the independent reports that have come in, we have had seven monitoring visits from Ofsted and we have had numerous visits from the DfE. That has all looked at systems and processes. They have looked at things we are doing well, like the triple lock, bringing staff in from agency to be full time, better relationships with schools - which was highlighted in the last report - better working around child sexual exploitation and gangs. In none of those reports have they said that the cash going in to those services is an issue, so I think that the focus is going to be on getting things right, and when we have spoken to other local London authorities who have failed their Ofsted inspections that is the advice that we are providing, that it is around management systems - getting it right and making sure that children are at the heart of everything that we do.

**9. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management**

Could you please comment on Barnet Council's plan to take around 11 current outsourced services back in house and whether the problems they have faced could be risks to the London Borough of Bromley's commissioning model?

**Reply:**

Bromley Council has been an outsourcing authority since the late 1980s and has in excess of 500 plus contracts with third party providers. In all of that time, only 3 or 4 contracts have been brought back in-house and these have been relatively low value contracts.

The problems experienced by Barnet are likely to be because they outsourced a high number of contracts all at the same time, including back office professional services such as finance and strategic HR, which are the ones that have now been brought back in-house. Given the seven services returning back to the Council are corporate type services it would seem likely that Barnet failed to properly fully appreciate the need to retain a strong central Client and strategic corporate resources to properly manage those outsourced services.

Understanding and specifying in detail all services before market testing should ensure successful contracts are placed. Sufficient time is included in the commissioning timetable to allow for this to be done.

**10. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services**

What is the Council doing to encourage Bromley Residents to participate in World Car Free day on Saturday 22 September?

**Reply:**

The Council promotes and supports a number of year-round initiatives to encourage children and adults to consider alternative means of transport to the car, where this is suitable to their circumstances. The Council does not plan any extra independent activities for World Car Free Day, however consistent with our approach to work with partners, we will assist partners activities on that day, for example with publicity. In the past, a number of schools in the Borough have chosen to take part and the Borough's School Travel Plan Advisers offered appropriate support to these schools at that time.

**11. From Cllr Kevin Brooks to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing**

How will the Council support businesses in Penge as they transfer onto the Business Improvement District? Will the Portfolio Holder ensure that, despite the Town Centre Team ceasing, the Council will ensure retail in smaller high streets are promoted and protected?

**Reply:**

The Council is working with the new BID at Penge and has provided support through the retention of its specialist BID advisor, CMS, both the local authority and CMS were recently involved in the recruitment of the BID manager and will eventually hand over to the manager.

The Council continues to support smaller retail parades through the Small Parades programme aimed at delivering targeted improvements and enhancement to small parades in conjunction with local businesses. Applications for that money need to be endorsed by ward councillors and I would urge all councillors to encourage the development of such applications.

**Supplementary Question:**

We are just at the stage where we are about to turn over to the BID, Penge not really being on the Small Parades list but still being one of the smaller high streets compared to Bromley and Orpington. I want to know that, on the transition, the Council will still be providing advice and support so that the turnover will be successful because there are not a lot of ratepayers there, unlike Bromley High Street so we still need the Council behind us and supporting us, even if only morally.

**Reply:**

Indeed, we will endeavour to give whatever support we can as we did in the case of both Orpington and Bromley. In the immediate months after the appointment of the new BID manager there are always questions which arise and we will do our best to help.

## **12. From Cllr Tony Owen to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing**

The LBB Report DRR16/057 15th June 2016 promised to appoint a member of LBB staff to assist with monitoring the agreement with BHAL, paid for by BHAL. When is this appointment going to be announced, as residents need a Council officer with whom to raise their very many serious concerns?

### **Reply:**

It is true that the report you refer to “proposed that a member of staff will be employed on a temporary contract” and for context it outlined that this was “to assist with monitoring, with costs for this and other related costs, such as expert advice, being met from ring-fencing the monies BHAL pay to the Council for their application costs.” Whereas the application costs are subject to ongoing discussions, be assured that monitoring is nevertheless taking place. Residents do need to report their noise complaint to the airport as previously advised but they can contact the Council and the details remain on the Council’s website [www.bromley.gov.uk/bigginhillairport](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/bigginhillairport). Whilst it was not necessary to appoint someone initially, this is now under review.

### **Supplementary Question:**

Will the Portfolio Holder emulate Rushmoor District Council who receive and post on their website half-yearly written monitoring reports from their local airport? In their case it is Farnborough.

### **Reply:**

I can see no fundamental reason why we should not do that - as long as it is practical we will do it.

## **13. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

Will he make a statement of the Report by Christine Whatford into St Olave’s School?

### **Reply:**

When we received this report it was very depressing and upsetting reading. There are personal statements from parents, pupils and teachers that cannot help but fill you with regret for the awful experience that these families faced. As Councillor Bennett is aware, on Wednesday we will be having a thorough session to accept this report, where we will have some further conversations about the detail.

What I would like to say is that I would like to thank Mrs Whatford for producing this thorough, independent report because it has shone a light on some dreadful practices at that school.

### **Supplementary Question:**

It is indeed a truly shocking report which showed an unlawful admissions policy at Year 12 in not letting pupils back, which is contrary to law, and the inhumane way in which some of the pupils were then treated. The fact that £2m was in the reserves of the school and yet staff were refused money for essential things, and the fact that a company was set up to trade with China without any approval by the Governing body. This does show an appalling state of things and I am sure that the new chairman will do something to improve the situation. Would he join me in congratulating Tony Wright-Jones and Julian Grainger, who was our local authority governor, who both raised, on a number of occasions, problems with the school and got a stony response?



**Reply:**

What is clear in the report is that there had been concerns both from parents right across the board and the pressure that they exerted on the school and the issues they raised towards the end of the last academic year, sending a letter in to us which triggered the whole investigation, was absolutely useful in drawing this to a conclusion. So we thank all the parents and teachers who were involved.

(Councillor Neil Reddin declared an interest in this question as a former governor at St Olave's School.)

**14. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Leader of the Council**

How does he see the work of Audit Sub Committee developing over the forthcoming year and does he anticipate any areas of the Council's activities in which an audit (or an OFSTED inspection) would find similar serious failings as in the last 2-3 years?

**Reply:**

Audit Sub-Committee is a sub-committee of General Purposes and Licensing Committee; as such is a non-executive function.

Its strength relies upon its independence.

With that in mind Cllr wilkins should really direct any concerns you may have regarding its operation to Cllr Reddin to consider.

If I believed any area of the Council's operation was deficient in any way, I would instruct pro-active action to correct poor practice, rather than wait for Audit (or Ofsted) to confirm same.

**Supplementary Question:**

Would you agree with me, having made a point about Audit Sub-Committee needing to be independent, that it is not really appropriate to have a member of the Executive on Audit Sub-Committee, and in particular to have the Executive Portfolio Holder for Environment given the recent history of the major reports that have gone through the Sub-Committee and the findings and the costs of those findings to this Council?

**Reply:**

No, I would not. I think the presence of the Environment Portfolio Holder has been extremely helpful both in his current role and his previous role as PDS Chairman in keeping some sense of proportion around an escalating situation which was being exaggerated at that time. It could be, if Members wish there not to be an executive member on it that might be something we bring to the Constitution Improvement Working Group - I am relaxed about that. Insofar as the Portfolio Holder's presence is concerned, I think that it has been wholly positive.

**15. From Cllr Vanessa Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management**

Will he provide a breakdown of the costs of the recent voter ID pilot and of the monies paid for this pilot by the Cabinet office?

**Reply:**

The Cabinet Office is meeting all our costs associated with the Pilot of approximately £200k which includes additional staffing costs. The full breakdown is very detailed but could certainly be sent to Cllr Allen electronically.

(At this point, the time allowed for questions expired. The remainder of the questions received written replies.)

**16. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing**

We learned recently that another of our Bromley Community Centres, Penge East Community Centre, is earmarked for development by Clarion Housing. They stated that no guarantee of a replacement Community Centre can be made. Will the London Borough of Bromley support our residents and community to ensure they provide a replacement Community Centre.

**Reply:**

In Planning terms, there is no planning application or proposal for this development so it is difficult to respond in specific terms. In general, under the Council's development plan policies, planning permission will be resisted for proposals that would lead to a loss of community facilities unless alternative provision is made or there is no longer a need.

**17. From Cllr Josh King to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services**

In May the UK was referred to the European Court of Justice for failing to tackle illegal levels of air pollution. Can the Portfolio Holder report when the most recent air quality figures for Bromley were recorded and what the readings were?

**Reply:**

The monitoring results from all sites need to be independently reviewed and verified prior to publication in an Annual Status Report (ASR).

The results for 2017/18 are currently being verified, however, the latest verified results are for the 2016-17 period. These were published in August 2017, and a copy available via Council web site

[http://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/download/816/air\\_quality\\_annual\\_status\\_reports](http://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/download/816/air_quality_annual_status_reports)

The results of which are summarised below:

Bromley Council has 1 site at Harwood Avenue where the air quality is monitored on a continuous basis.

This site monitors levels of Nitrogen Dioxide (NO<sub>2</sub>) and Particulate matter PM 10 and PM 2.5

The Pollutants Measured and their associated levels from this site are:

Pollutant Measured and Averaging period	Objective UK	Result for 2016-17	Achieved Y/N
NO <sub>2</sub> 1 Hour Mean	200 µg m <sup>-3</sup> not to be exceeded more	No of hours exceeded = 0	Yes

	than 18 times a year		
NO2 Annual Mean	40 µg m-3	31.9 µg m-3	Yes
Particles - PM10 24 hour mean	50 µg m-3 not to be exceeded more than 35 times a year	No exceedances = 4 (35 allowed)	Yes
Particles PM10 Annual Mean	40 µg m-3	29.5 µg m-3	Yes
Particles PM 2.5	25 µg m-3	15.5 µg m-3	Yes

There are 8 additional sites where passive monitoring (using diffusion tubes) of NO2 is undertaken, the results of these sites are:

Site	Annual Mean Concentration (µgm-3)	40 µg m-3 Objective UK Achieved
1. Elmers End Road	68.8	No
2. London Road	52.4	No
3. Widmore Road	50.9	No
4. College Road	46.8	No
5. Homesdale Road	63.3	No
6. Anerly Hill	49.6	No
7. Anerly Road	47.9	No
8. Beckenham Road	47.9	No
9. Harwood Avenue	31.3	Yes

The annual mean concentrations for sites 1 -8 were not achieved.

**18. From Cllr Marina Ahmad to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

LBB still does not have a permanent Director of Education, despite advertising and interviewing one applicant. There is now a process of offering a secondment to Headteachers in the borough. Why has it been so difficult to attract the right person to the post?

**Reply:**

These posts are challenging to fill and other London authorities have needed more than one attempt. The post in Bromley is unusual in that it does not include either the school improvement work or the wider early help functions which are often included in the scope of similar posts in other areas, although the local emphasis on developing Bromley's SEN/D offer adds interest. Engaging recruitment consultants to search for suitably experienced candidates should increase the field.

**19. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Leader of the Council**

Following the publication of the Government's LGBT action plan, what assessment will council officers and portfolio holders be carrying out to implement parts of the plan relevant to local authority services.

**Reply:**

The Council recognises and will continue to fulfil its legal obligations pursuant to the Equality Act 2010 including the public sector duty to 'foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic (including sexuality) and those who do not'.

**20. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Leader of the Council**

What progress has been made on the following motion agreed at the September 2017 Council Meeting?

*"This Council re-confirms its commitment to the maximum possible levels of openness and transparency at all times. Council requests that a review be undertaken by Officers to be presented to the next meeting of the Constitution Improvement Working Group to establish how and whether this commitment might be better illustrated and publicised."*

**Reply:**

I am advised that the Constitution Improvement Working Group received a report on transparency from the Director of Corporate Services at its meeting on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2018. Members did not make any recommendations to change our existing practices.

I am further advised that the Working Group's discussions focussed on part 1 (public) and part 2 (private) reports. The default position that we have followed for many years is that reports have to be published in part 1 of the agenda, unless senior officers consider there are very good reasons for them to be restricted to part 2. Even then, Members can challenge this and Committees can and do agree to bring part 2 reports into the public domain where they consider this does not cause harm to the Council or other interested parties.

Members will also be aware that in recent years we have encouraged the practice, where some information cannot be published, of providing reports in both parts 1 and 2, or providing a part 1 report with the restricted information in a part 2 appendix. In this way we maximise the information that is made available to the public and keep part 2 reports to a minimum.

**21. From Cllr Kevin Brooks to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families**

The Portfolio Holder has identified a small budget to support SACRE. Taking into account the extent of academisation in Bromley how does he feel this budget can most effectively be spent?

**Reply:**

I support the decision of the Bromley SACRE to use this resource for specialist educational advice to the SACRE so it can continue to fulfil its statutory duties. The priority this year is to review and refresh of the Bromley local Agreed Syllabus for RE, which is now 5 years old and therefore due for review. Of course, the Agreed Syllabus is available to all schools and many Bromley academies do use it.

## **22. Cllr Tony Owen to the Leader of the Council**

What assessment have you made of the skills and talents of your Council colleagues? How do you ensure that they are deployed to the maximum benefit of local taxpayers (especially given the cost of over £1 million per year)? Is it sensible that 2 Councillors (Cllr Tickner and myself) with 69 years experience in local government between us have been denied our requested participation in the scrutiny process?

### **Reply:**

I offered each of our new Councillors an opportunity to meet to discuss their personal strengths and preferences in terms of work commitments and areas of interest for Council responsibilities, an offer which most took up and I believe found quite helpful.

The only Councillors I can ensure are deployed to posts I deem they are best suited to are the Portfolio Holders as you are aware.

Whilst I genuinely sympathise with your frustration on a personal level, with every due respect, I do not think it is appropriate to discuss internal group arrangements in a public arena.

## **23. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett to the Leader of the Council**

How much has been spent from the Growth Fund to support Skills and Enterprise Development in the Biggin Hill Strategic Outer London Development Area?

### **Reply:**

I am advised zero.

## **24. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to Portfolio Holder for Adult Care & Health**

Can the Portfolio Holder please comment on the implications of the recent report by the Local Government & Social Care Ombudsman which concluded that:-

*"The Council failed to ensure Ms M's son, Mr N, could receive the level of care that he was entitled to. Mr N has lost out on provision and Ms M, who wanted to support him, has been caused distress and time and trouble. This has been made worse because although Ms M complained to the Council, it failed to deal with this complaint."*

The report found *"Fault found causing injustice"* and recommended that the Council: *"pays £2,865 to reflect the time, trouble and distress it caused to Ms M and Mr N; and, apologises for the fault identified in this report."*

### **Reply:**

The Council has openly acknowledged and since apologised for its failure in this instance as you will be aware.

Notwithstanding the fact that the Council's complaints system has been considerably strengthened since that time, the implication of this case is clearly that there might potentially still be others seeking resolution too.

With that in mind, as soon as I became aware of this particular issue and the LGO report, I immediately instructed the Director of Adult Social Care to organise an early

review of all outstanding complaints, likewise to confirm that all re-assessments are being completed in a timely fashion and that work is ongoing.

**25. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement**

Bromley has again been blighted by trespassing Travellers and although, in Penge, no costly clean up was required, there were numerous accounts of loss of income and inconvenience to our traders and residents. Will Bromley Council commit funds to support practical engineering solutions, where possible, to stop this type of access?

**Reply:**

Yes. The Neighbourhood Management Street Enforcement Team has an ongoing programme of works which identifies areas of risk and provides well designed infrastructure to prevent access by unauthorised encampments. This work is funded by the Member's Initiative fund to support the reduction of fly-tipping. Notably, recent incursions onto Council land have occurred by the cutting of padlocks to already existing barriers and the removal of boundary posts that are placed to deter access. When weaknesses are identified, we work with our service providers to install or repair physical deterrents immediately.

**26. From Cllr Josh King to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing**

How does the Portfolio Holder plan to house a greater proportion of those housed in temporary accommodation within the Borough?

**Reply:**

In accordance with legislation and statutory guidance, the Council seeks to accommodate households in or near to Bromley as far as is reasonably practicable. It is not reasonably practicable to provide accommodation within Bromley to every household to whom the Council owes a rehousing duty and there is an increasing need to secure accommodation that may be at some distance from the borough in order to meet the level and range of housing need. A risk and needs assessment is undertaken to ensure the suitability of all temporary accommodation placements. This includes prioritisation children at critical school age and those with particular support need for accommodation within the borough.

There are a range of activities being undertaken to secure a sufficient supply of suitable accommodation both in and outside of the borough

This includes:

- Prevention to assist as many people possible to remain in their existing home and thus not have to be placed in TA
- Securing alternative new home through the private rented sector
- Use of Bromley owned land and vacant buildings for new supply including for example the refurbishment of Manorfields and Bellegrove and current modular homes proposal
- Working with housing associations and private developers to secure new affordable homes
- Working with partners to secure local block booking and leasing schemes temporary accommodation placements.

- Making best use of existing housing stock to meet housing need – during 2017/18 364 homeless households were moved into permanent accommodation through the housing register.

**27. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing**

How many lockers at the Beckenham Spa Leisure Centre wet side changing rooms have no locks and the reasons why this is so?

**Reply:**

Mytime Active have advised that 68 out of 406 lockers are not working (17%). Mytime highlight that they are experiencing thefts and vandalism currently which is adding to the problem. They are working with the local police teams for prevention.

Mytime placed an order for 5k to repair all parts in mid-May but the supplier, Prospec, have given a 6 week lead time. Mytime have chased them and are hoping to have the parts by the end of the week finishing Friday 13<sup>th</sup> July.

In the long term Mytime report they are now ordering the parts monthly to try and beat the 6 week order times.