

QUESTIONS TO THE ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ORAL REPLY

From Mr Richard Gibbons

1. Orpington's Priory Ponds Bridge has been closed for 37 weeks awaiting balustrade repair. Does the Portfolio Holder consider this an acceptable level of service, given Priory Gardens' Grade II status within Historic England's 'Register of Historic Parks and Gardens', and his Portfolio Plan's aims and outcome 'Enhancing Bromley's Parks & Green Spaces'?

Reply

Repairing vandalised equipment in our parks is a costly expense, and a listed park requires something more than a quick unsympathetic repair. I am concerned that you as a tax payer seem to be more challenging to the Council for the repairs than challenging the vandals who caused this destruction in the first place. We are currently finalising options to replace the balustrades with a more substantial replacement which is appropriate for a listed park and will benefit and be a pleasure for visitors to the gardens plus has a chance of withstanding the attentions of the dregs of our society for many years to come. Just replacing the bridge yet again with something that has been shown to need regular repairs and replacement is not the sensible option.

The need to survey the bridge, establish a viable solution and then obtain competitive tenders does take time. We now have those quotes and are evaluating them.

Supplementary Question

Mr Gibbons highlighted that since submitting his question, the Priory Ponds Bridge had been closed for 38 weeks. Mr Gibbons then asked his supplementary question.

In view of the Portfolio Holder's compliments regarding Friends of Parks groups (40,000+ hrs pa valued, vital, voluntary conservation work) and the Leader of the Council's comments on 16th May to "work more closely with Bromley's voluntary sector and friends groups", Mr Gibbons asked if the Portfolio Holder would include engagement and practical support for volunteer groups within the Depot Strategy? For example, Mr Gibbons suggested that a 'Friends Space' with secure tool storage in Priory Gardens would help Friends attract volunteers and work more efficiently.

Reply

In his reply, the Portfolio Holder referred to communicating with Friends and suggested the Council could communicate better with Friends; in regard to the depot strategy, the Portfolio Holder confirmed that the Parks and Grounds Maintenance contractor would continue to support Friends groups.

Re: Agenda Item 8 - to inform and aid proper scrutiny by seven committee members not present at November 2016 meeting

2. Can the Portfolio Holder demonstrate how a commuter would cycle safely up Station Road, under the railway bridge, to reach the proposed Orpington cycle hub? Specifically, with one or more buses in situ at the bus stop, and traffic travelling on Crofton Road towards the station manoeuvring to pass stationary buses?

Reply

The cycle hubs in this borough are an important addition to encourage cycle to rail, and I would hope that you support and appreciate them. As you are aware from previous reports to the Environment PDS we are in the process of developing cycling options along Crofton Road and intend to move on to address routes from Sevenoaks Road to Orpington town centre and station in the next couple of years which may or may not result in routes along Station Rd. We are also looking at how these routes can be connected on a quieter alignment than Station Road provides. I would be happy to demonstrate cycling and I intend to be trained shortly by our cycle trainers, after that I would be happy to demonstrate how I would cycle this route, though it is a fairly steep hill. I would only attempt to pass a stationary bus if safe to do, a similar approach I take when driving a car. My understanding is that in general for both cyclists and motorcyclists weaving through traffic is not advised on safety grounds. However I would also point out that I, along with current policy would attempt to find a quieter and more pleasant route to get to destinations, which as I have previously mentioned we are looking at, but these are complex projects which take time to develop into a network. Those using the buses to commute are of course also participating in an active lifestyle and shouldn't be discouraged, it is not unreasonable for other road users to wait for buses to drop off pedestrians.

I would hope that you (Mr Gibbons) and other cyclists will work with the Council to constructively support the development of proposals and more directly help us give more residents, more confidence to cycle more frequently. In pure number terms, we are aware that the current mode share indicates that there are more residents who choose to walk than cycle to the station and other destinations. A number of residents do report feeling intimidation from cyclists when they are pedestrians which needs to be addressed so we can bring forward proposals that benefit all of those residents wishing to use more active forms of transport. I hope that you are supportive of the cycle hubs we are developing and will help us to help you as we add cycle facilities across the borough.

Supplementary Question

Suggesting the scheme is potentially life threatening, Mr Gibbons highlighted that he raised concerns about the scheme last November. Mr Gibbons offered Members, through the Portfolio Holder, an opportunity to ride and experience cycling along Crofton Road in peak times (to the proposed cycle hub). The cycle hub would also effectively be in the middle of a roundabout, at the borough's second busiest station. Mr Gibbons enquired whether the proposed scheme met CLoS and/or Healthy Street Check standards.

Reply

In his reply, the Portfolio Holder referred to developing Crofton Road (and proposed cycle route) and the report previously presented on the item identified the funding basis for the scheme. The Portfolio Holder also disagreed with the description from Mr Gibbons that the cycle hub would effectively be in the middle of a roundabout.

3. Currently, does the Portfolio Holder consider a 12-year-old can cycle safely to school on roads around the Bromley South junction, specifically Masons Hill and Westmoreland Road, as is the aim of his party's Transport Minister, Jesse Norman?

Reply

I'm sure that you (Mr Gibbons) can find many junctions and roads across our borough that cyclists and indeed drivers would tend to avoid for congestion and other reasons. Over time we aspire to improve many of these as they invariably are poor junctions for all road users. We live in a borough that has developed over time with limited space for transport plus topography challenges. This creates issues with the allocation of road space and for providing a pleasant street environment that we aspire to. We are developing a number of facilities for cycling and walking and are working with TfL to refine our proposals for the Quietways, the first of which will be delivered later in 2018/ early 2019. This is not new, we have previously developed routes under different guises off the main thoroughfares. Officers also engage with TfL to lobby for cycling improvements on the A21, however the complex nature of the junctions and limited space makes these projects long term aspirations. The Council works with schools when they are developing their travel plans to help students and staff access the school by active means which could include identifying improved routes and infrastructure.

I also refer you to my answer to your previous question.

Supplementary Question

Mr Gibbons asked the Portfolio Holder what his response would be to developers who regularly submit Planning Applications with Transport Assessments that include extracts from TfL's London Cycle Maps featuring such roads as Westmoreland Road as evidence of safe routes for children to cycle to school?

Reply

The Portfolio Holder indicated an aspiration to hopefully improve poor junctions for all road users including this (Bromley South) junction but time and money was needed in support. The Portfolio Holder would also hope that the planning system would expose the limitations of such travel plans in planning applications such as those referred to by Mr Gibbons.

QUESTIONS TO THE ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR WRITTEN REPLY

From Cllr Ian Dunn

Please provide the following information:

Description of change, date of Member decision, date change control notice formally applied to the contract, and financial implications on every change control notice which has been issued on the following contracts:

- Waste disposal,
- Waste collection,
- Street environment, lot 1 - Street Cleaning,

Grounds Maintenance.

Reply

Please see attached the list of Change Control Notices in place for the current Waste collection, Waste Disposal, Street Environment (lot 1 Street Cleaning) and Grounds Maintenance contracts.

The attached includes a brief description of the change taken from each CCN, the date of member decision (where applicable) and any financial implications.

All of this information, along with more detailed descriptions of each CCN can be found on the Contracts Database.

From Colin Willetts

1. Could the Portfolio Holder explain why there is a 'no entrance markings' sign (8 to 9-30 am/2-30 to 4-00 pm) opposite 291 Chipperfield Road for no apparent reason as it appears that rear entrance/exits to/from Leasons School are located opposite 279 & 303 Chipperfield Road?

Reply

Please see attached drawing showing the proposal for this location. The drawing shows a length of 'School Keep Clear Marking' with zig zags. A time restriction plate is also included which indicates the time that vehicles are permitted to park on them.

2. With regard to your replies 26/2/18, could you tell us why there is a lack of progression on:

i) flooding problems in Pops alley (lead from 8 Arbrook Close)

Reply

- This alleyway has never had any surface water drainage, there are no existing assets to be maintained.
- There is no history of reported 'flooding' at this location on file here.
- Our Highway Inspector will continue to try to gather evidence to justify an intervention but has not yet managed to attend the site immediately after protracted rainfall.

ii) bus stops upgrades 297/299 Chipperfield Road (including junction with Petersham Drive)

Reply

The stops near numbers 297/299 Chipperfield Road have now been completed.

iii) relocation of lamp column Chipperfield Road junction Petersham Drive?

Reply

A replacement column was erected on 7th June 2018. A date for connection to the power supply is currently awaited from the street lighting contractor's independent connection provider (ICP).

3. Concerning Page Heath Villas, including the recent planning approval for four flats without car parking facilities, parking is already at a premium and residents are unable to park nearby due to commuter parking. Would the Portfolio Holder now consider a CPZ review or resident parking permit scheme urgently?

Reply

As far as our records show there have not been any particular requests for residents in Page Heath Villas showing a desire to be added to the local CPZ. The last recorded written request was in May 2014. Therefore at present this is not a proposal for a scheme currently showing on a programme of works for consideration.

Where there are new build developments permitted within current CPZs or in areas expected to require CPZs in the foreseeable future they are regularly excluded from joining the existing or future permit schemes.

The Council has a tried and tested approach to deciding which areas are appropriate for CPZs and their relative priority to other parking schemes across the borough. The information provided in the question would not appear to justify grounds of urgency.

All proposed schemes are subject to consultation. Issues highlighted in the consultation can result in even proposed schemes not progressing. For example it is important to note that there are also a number of businesses registered in Page Heath Villas with parking requirements. Permits do not guarantee a space outside a property or in a specific road and officers would not necessarily look to remove all free (i.e. non-resident) parking spaces from the location.
