

COUNCIL MEETING

8TH OCTOBER 2018

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. From Chloe-Jane Ross to the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio Holder

When was the last audit/survey of empty homes in the borough undertaken?

Reply:

All empty properties recorded as being empty for more than 6 months were checked in conjunction with visiting officers from Liberata during late August and September 2018.

2. From Chloe-Jane Ross to the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio Holder

What is the current estimate of empty homes in the borough?

Reply:

Following the Audit, the number of Long Term Empty properties (empty for more than 6 months) in the Borough as the 1st of October 2018 was 482. This compares with a figure of 575 for the 1st of October 2017.

3. From Chloe-Jane Ross to the Renewal, Recreation and Housing Portfolio Holder

How many empty homes has the Council used its power to bring back into residential use in the periods: 2018 to date; 2017; 2016?

Reply:

The Council offers advice and financial assistance linked to nomination rights under the Regulatory Reform Order. 4 owners are currently proceeding with assistance through this route. Where owners are not responsive and properties give rise to serious nuisance, then they are also warned that they risk the property being taken from them for up to 7 years. Although not a quick process most owners eventually respond positively and no new Orders have been served since 2015. In 2018, one EDMO expired and the property was returned to the owner in good condition. The legislation makes it clear that these Orders should only be used as a last resort. The Empty Property Officer is currently working with the Council's Lettings team to maximise the benefits available to owners prepared to offer their empty properties for nominations. It is hoped that this will further increase the use of empty properties within the Borough.

4. From Rich Wilsher to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

What is Bromley Council doing to lead by example in the 'war on plastic?'

Reply:

Bromley continues to be one of the highest performing boroughs in terms of recycling, having achieved 47% in 2016/17¹. We offer a comprehensive kerbside and flats recycling collection service through which residents can place plastic bottles and, plastic food packaging pots, tubs and trays for recycling². In addition, we provide a network of On-Street Recycling banks for excess household plastics and 'hard' plastics like plastic garden furniture can be taken to one of our two Household Waste and Recycling Centres.

Information about the types of plastic that can be recycled through the Council's collection schemes is available on our website. We encourage residents to use less plastic and to recycle the plastics that are used through our bi-annual newsletter, 'Environment Matters', which is delivered to all households in the borough.

Our ability to expand the range of plastics we can recycling is limited by global commodity markets. However, by working with our current waste & recycling service provider, Veolia, we regularly review the opportunities to expand the range of plastics that can be collected for recycling. For example, from December 2017 we will trial the recycling of the polyurethane foam in mattresses taken to our Household Waste and Recycling Centres.

Other actions we take to tackle plastic waste include:

- Removing plastic litter as quickly as possible through our street cleansing service to prevent it from further harming the environment;
- Attending community events to talk about the importance of reducing and recycling plastic;
- Engaging with Central Government on the development of policies around plastic waste including the Single Use Plastics Bill;
- Referring to our Sustainable Procurement Policy when procuring goods and services;
- Operating a recycling scheme within our offices that accepts plastics; and
- Encouraging the use of ceramic mugs by our staff by limiting the number of plastic cups supplied.

1 – This is the last Government audited recycling rate figure (Source: <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/waste-and-recycling-statistics>)

2 – Includes the most commonly recycled plastics i.e. PET, HDPE, some PVC and some PP