

COUNCIL MEETING

8TH OCTOBER 2018

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett to the Leader of the Council

If he will list the dates on which -

1. Cabinet meetings;
2. Cabinet plus directors meetings;
3. Cabinet plus directors and PDS Chairman meetings

have been held since he assumed office in September 2017?

Reply:

1. Cabinet

6th Oct 17
10th Nov 17
5th Jan 18
2nd Feb 18
23rd Feb 18
20th April 18
18th May 18
29th June 18

2. Cabinet/Directors

24th Nov 17
27th July 18
21st Sept 18

3. Extended Cabinet/Directors

15th Sept 17
15th Dec 17

2. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

What information is available regarding the education status of young offenders including the number permanently excluded from school?

Reply:

The Youth Offending Service monitors the education status of all children allocated to them. As of the 2nd October, 4 children within the YOS cohort had been permanently excluded; all four are now in receipt of education. None of those were children looked after. Any young person in a Youth Offending Institute will all receive an education.

3. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

If he will require all departments to adopt a common form for the presentation of budget options and possible savings, together with an a risk analysis for each option, as recommended by the Zero Based Budget Working Party c 2009?

Reply:

All departments adopt a common approach in presentation of budget options and savings. Chief Officers will produce options which consider the financial impact (part year and full year), service impact including implications on other service areas, any investment or one off costs required, risk assessment, wider impact assessment and consultation approach.

The final Budget reports to Councillors, when considering departmental options include commentary on the financial and service impact, consultation arrangements and outcomes, risk analysis and the wider impact of the proposals.

The common approach ensures that full consideration is made across departments and enables a more corporate approach in finalising proposals. It also helps ensure a more rigorous approach is adopted.

4. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Services

With reference to the Car Parking Enforcement item on Page 39 of the budget monitoring report (Executive 11/7/18) which reveals a £110k deficit, please provide a breakdown between "reduction in contraventions and issues related to the deployment plan" (these being the two reasons provided in the report). Please also provide the reasons for the "reduction in contraventions" referenced.

Reply:

Can I start by stating that the purpose of Car Parking Enforcement is not to raise funds but to correct behaviour. Therefore the budget is an expectation of income based on past levels of detected contraventions when it is possible to place a ticket on the windscreen of the vehicle.

At the moment it is not possible to provide a breakdown between the two reasons suggested for the fall in income. There has been a growing number of ad hoc enforcement requests from residents using the online form, plus members have requested deterrent visits to locations where illegal/inconsiderate parking has been reported. These visits take CEOs away from other enforcement and whilst contraventions are present it is less likely to be able to place a ticket on the vehicle. Regarding contraventions, it could be residents improving behaviour following past tickets or less contention for parking in our Town Centres may have resulted in less contraventions. Potentially more residents using active means to visit Town Centre destinations (another objective) could also have contributed to a reduction in vehicle contraventions.

5. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing

Please provide a list of events and activities in LBB parks since June 2015, indicating which events are new and where events did not proceed, an explanation as to why not? Please provide details of hire charges for each of LBB's major parks/green spaces since 2013? Please provide details of annual event incomes for Crystal Palace Park since 2013?

Reply:

A detailed list of the events that have occurred in all Parks and greenspaces, including Crystal Palace Park, is available. Where events have not occurred or the initial enquiry was not pursued, the information is not recorded, therefore a rationale for why they did not proceed is not available.

A list of hire charges for activities is available.

The annual income of events taking place in Crystal Palace Park (CPP) is itemised below:

2013 – £32K
2014 – £32K
2015 – £32K
2016 - £28K
2017 - £44K
2018 - £60K to date

For information –

Parks events – attached is a copy of the Parks events with two tabs, (1) Parks & Greenspaces & (2) Crystal Palace Park

Park event charging – the Parks events website is <https://app.apply4.com/eventapp/uk/bromley> which states the current process for and charges associated with Parks events.

Documents attached: '2015-16 Hire Charges', 'Idverde Event Fees 2016-17', 'Idverde Events Fees 2017-18', 'Ground Hire Charges 2014-15', 'Ground Hire Charges 2012-13', '18.10.05 Events Listings 2015-18'.

(See Appendix 1)

6. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning & Contract Management

How many change control notices have been signed by contract managers when the £50k total contract value has been exceeded as a result of previous change controls not being recorded and therefore the £50k threshold not identified in advance? Please provide this information broken down by contract & department.

Reply:

A response to this question is difficult to quantify as indicated by the specifics of the question. If previous change controls have not been recorded effectively, then it follows that it will be difficult to effectively and accurately record and quantify how many subsequent change controls have exceeded the cumulative threshold for additional officer or Member authorisation as a result.

However, the introduction of the Contract Database greatly reduces the risk of such a situation reoccurring currently or in the future. All change controls are required to be recorded in the Database so that the cumulative value of such change controls can be immediately apparent, informing the suitable thresholds for decision making for any subsequent change controls. It is also planned that all authorisations for change controls are to be managed and signed off through the Database itself, so that the information is immediately recorded within the database as part of the authorisation process, reducing the risk of records not being kept up to date.

The risk of failing to seek suitable authorisation through the database itself is mitigated through the linking of the Database to financial monitoring where periodic review can identify anomalies between actual spend and the contract values recorded through the Database, identifying contracts at an early stage that may require further investigation.

7. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning & Contract Management

What is the Council's policy on Gender Recognition and has the Council responded to the recent Gender Recognition Consultation?

Reply:

In line with the Equality Act 2010 the Council's equal opportunity policy and practice (including equality impact assessment) recognises all the 9 protected characteristics including gender recognition/gender re-assignment. We think the London Councils' Equality Network will be providing a response to the gender equality recognition consultation.

8. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care & Health

Please provide details of all monies spent on the Eclipse Project within the CareFirst contract.

Reply:

Part 2 minutes from E&R PDS on 5th September 2018 provide the cost of Eclipse.

9. From Cllr Vanessa Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing

In relation to the Orchard & Shipman contract for private sector landlords, given that PSL properties are returned to O&S at end of contract how does the Council exit this contract without causing its own mini housing crisis?

Reply:

The properties offered to us under the private sector leasing scheme have been procured by Orchard and Shipman from the private sector usually on 3 or 5 year leased and then offered to the Local Authority on a sub-lease basis for use as temporary accommodation which secures access to these properties for the term of the lease. The overarching contract secures properties in this area are offered to the Council. Should Bromley decide not to continue with the contract then as leases come to an end the property would have to be handed back to the private landlord. This would not all happen on the same day as leases have been procured over the term of the contract. The Council continues to review opportunities to secure a sufficient supply accommodation including the use of leasing schemes and is reviewing how this can be commissioned in the longer term to increase supply and ensure that those properties procured under such schemes can continue to be maintained, for example on a preferred partner or dynamic purchasing arrangement.

10. Cllr Vanessa Allen to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Services

Can the Portfolio Holder explain the arrangements when a care professional requires to regularly visit a patient in a CPZ?

Reply:

This has previously been considered by the Environment PDS. The Parking Team will consider any such request on an individual basis and will look for an appropriate solution based on the care worker's/patient's circumstances.

11. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning & Contract Management

Please provide the highest 10 daily rates paid to agency staff employed in each of Children's Social Care, Adult Social Care and ECS in 2018. Please also provide the number of days paid for each of these staff between 1 January and 31 August 2018.

Reply:

(See [Appendix 2](#).)

12. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning & Contract Management

Please provide the number of applications to Bromley's Council Tax Hardship Fund, the number accepted and the total sum paid in each of 2014/15, 2015/16, 2016/17 and 2017/18. Please describe the way in which the Hardship Fund is publicised to residents who have difficulties paying their Council Tax.

Reply:

Unfortunately, it is not possible to provide the number of applications received for assistance from the Discretionary Council Tax Hardship Fund as a high proportion of the requests are not entered on the form provided for that purpose.

However, the remainder of the requested information is provided in the table below:

Year	Number of Successful applications	Total Sum Paid
2014/15	31	£6,644.27
2015/16	32	£7,060.72
2016/17	99	£22,217.36
2017/18	142	£28,294.33

It should be noted that the above sums relate to the amount by which an individuals liability has been reduced and does not include the value of court costs that have been removed. In the same way, the number of successful applicants does not include the number of residents having “costs” removed, but not receiving additional assistance towards their liability

The hardship fund is advertised on the Bromley website, with an application form provided for that purpose. Advice and support agencies are reminded of the provision in liaison meetings and ad hoc contacts, with the suggestion that they assist those making application. In addition, Council Tax staff are advised to inform/remind residents of the scheme where it is thought the individuals circumstances may merit additional assistance.

In the current Council Tax Support consultation exercise residents are being asked whether there should continue to be a hardship fund and if so, the annual level of funding to be made available

13. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Leader of the Council

Please summarise the planning which the Council has done in advance of Brexit. Please describe how these plans will be modified as further details of Brexit emerge in the coming months.

Reply:

There have been no obvious trends or problems emerge to date, so hitherto there is nothing to modify.

The Council’s planning and preparation has been, and remains, to keep responsible levels of Cash reserves and contingency funding to hand, to enable it to address to any unexpected situations which might emerge, be they Brexit related or otherwise.

The same reserves incidentally which the Party opposite, Cllr Dunn’s party Madame Mayor, have long since been critical of the Council for preserving and which would have already been long since exhausted, had we paid heed to their many reckless and unfunded spending plans over the years.

14. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education & Families

What action are you taking to ensure that there is at least one Local Authority Governor in each school in the borough?

Reply:

All the community schools and the voluntary controlled school and voluntary aided schools have a local authority nominated governor.

Academy Trusts are responsible for setting out their own governance arrangements.

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

Will the Portfolio Holder provide details (number of items and cost) of stock purchases for the months since GLL started providing library services in the Borough and the previous five years when the service was run in-house as a comparison. Please provide the monthly figures broken down by e-books, books and DVD/CDs.

Reply:

The annual number of stock purchases broken down by category from 2012-2018.

(The Main library supplier is not able to supply a monthly breakdown of items supplied/paid for prior to April 2017 so annual figures only have been supplied. An annual figure for GLL is not yet available as the contract commenced on 1st November 2017, therefore a 6 monthly figure has been supplied).

A monthly breakdown of stock purchases broken down by category from April 2017-September 2018 – gives stats for LBB and GLL for comparison.

Please see spreadsheet attached called 'Libraries Annual Stock Spend 2012-2018' ([Appendix 3](#))

16. From Cllr Tony Owen to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning & Contract Management

How will we ensure that the proposed care case management system does not repeat the millions of pound wastage of the LINKS debacle? Why do we need bespoke arrangements when every council in the country must have similar requirements?

Reply:

The current case management system is Care First; this was introduced in 2006 to replace LINKS. Lessons were learnt from the LINKS experience, Care First is not a bespoke system.

12 years after its introduction CareFirst no longer meets requirements of social care managers and practitioners or the expectations of the children's social care regulator. It is our intention to procure a proven solution from the marketplace.

17. From Cllr Tony Owen to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing

When will a member of staff be appointed to deal with the public over Biggin Hill airport matters as promised (paid for by the airport). When will regular reports be produced as requested at the last council meeting?

Reply:

It had been envisaged that additional staff resources would be in place in the Summer period but this has unfortunately not yet happened. I am hopeful progress will be made with this shortly and I will update you about this in due course. Please note that the LBB Report DRR16/057 15th June 2016 you referenced previously recommended that “any sum received to reimburse the Council its reasonable costs incurred, will be ring-fenced for any potential future costs for the increased monitoring that will be needed for the revised operating hours of the Airport.” It is this money that will be utilised. I have looked at Rushmoor District Council’s website and the relationship the Council has with Farnborough Airport is framed by the planning permission and associated sec 106 agreement whereas the position in Bromley is different to this. Fundamentally, information about the Airport should be published by the Airport and I will be encouraging them to publish what they can in this regard. I remain of the view that the Council can publish some related information and highlight where information is available elsewhere and I am asking Officers to progress this as a matter of priority.

18. From Cllr Tony Owen to the Chairman of General Purposes and Licensing Committee

What has been done to investigate the animal cruelty allegations at 5 Jail Lane, Biggin Hill?

Reply:

The RSPCA is the lead authority with the appropriate powers to deal with allegations of animal cruelty, the allegations raised have been passed to them, and they have also been written to asking for an update. Thus far they have not provided an update on the extent of any investigation taken, and there is no legal means by which to insist they share information. Notwithstanding this, Officers have focused their efforts upon gathering evidence in respect of the allegations made of statutory nuisance due to dog barking. No nuisance has been witnessed to date, and no evidence of animal cruelty was noted by Officers undertaking their investigations.