

QUESTIONS TO THE ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR ORAL REPLY

From Alisa Igoe, on behalf of the Ashfield Lane Road Safety Group, a residents' group of 74 households, campaigning for traffic calming measures on Ashfield Lane, Chislehurst.

Ashfield experiences continuous illegal speeding, up to 50mph in a 30mph zone, despite warning signs and two VAS. Pedestrians cannot cross and drivers cannot exit side roads. Residents held a demonstration to highlight the dangers and calm the traffic. It worked. Could we please have more physical traffic calming measures?

Reply

Where speeding does occur on a regular basis, it is a matter for the Police to undertake enforcement. Funds for road safety schemes are prioritised on the basis of whether and the extent that the funds will maximise the reduction of injury accidents, particularly serious and fatal accidents. After successful interventions the number of serious accidents at any one location has decreased over recent years. Thankfully, Ashfield Lane does not feature as having a high priority accident record, which is why it does not feature for treatment at this time. The Council is currently looking into low cost options which may be justified, such as some additional road markings, e.g. "crocodile teeth", at the junction of Ashfield Lane with Kemnal Road, to help further reduce the traffic speeds along Ashfield Lane.

Supplementary Question

Ms Igoe understood that the collision data being used does not cover 2018; should the data not be up to date, Ms Igoe felt that it is difficult to use. Ms Igoe also felt that Councillors need to engage more with residents in Chislehurst.

Reply

The Portfolio Holder outlined that Ward Councillors have been engaged and Ward Councillors supported the borough's third Local Implementation Plan (LIP3). The Portfolio Holder indicated that online reports that ranked the A222 as a dangerous road considered accidents along the whole of the A222 not just those that may have taken place at a particular location such as Chislehurst. The Council wants to bring down the number of fatal accidents on roads in the borough and concentrates on those sections of road where such accidents (including accidents involving serious injury) have occurred. *(Democratic Services Note: the current method of selecting sites involves finding clusters of similar accidents of any severity - sites with five or more accidents within a circle of 50m diameter, over 36 months - ranking these clusters by severity, and then choosing potentially treatable sites).*

Councillor Terry (Chislehurst) indicated that he had received a lot of representations about Ashfield Lane and has regularly consulted officers. Councillor Terry also referred to the planting of a tree and the Portfolio Holder apologised for this not having yet been planted indicating that work will be taken forward with residents for the planting of a tree this year or a sweet chestnut tree next year. The Portfolio Holder understood that a suitable sweet chestnut tree was probably not available to

plant this year although Cllr Terry further understood (as the latest position) that officers are in the process of tracking down a new tree.

From Chris Wells, Co-Founder, Chislehurst Safer Streets, Environment Trustee, Chislehurst Society, Chislehurst Commons Conservator

Given the Council's 'good cause' policy, could he explain why Chislehurst's section of the A222 is not yet a 20mph zone? It runs by 6 schools, 5 retirement homes and, following a quadrupling of KSIs in the past 5 years, was recently named as Britain's 24th most dangerous road.

Reply

The ranking of a whole road length spanning a number of boroughs and in some cases counties as a dangerous road is not a useful indicator of the danger of any one section. It does reinforce our successful policy of targeting road safety interventions at locations where treatable patterns of injury collisions have been identified with priority being given to where spend will prevent most such collisions. Where parts of the A222 are prioritised in that assessment, viable schemes will follow at those locations – not the whole length. Introducing 20mph is not without cost and has to be evaluated in the same way as I mentioned earlier, a number of schemes have featured and been implemented. It is not considered that the A222, through Chislehurst, is a location where a 20mph limit would represent best value for money and reduce the highest number of injuries & deaths for our limited road safety budget.

As Mr Wells is aware, the Council is examining the junction of the A222 with Royal Parade and has been seeking for a number of years to install a pedestrian facility here. However, within the limitations of the highway width, it has not been possible to add a crossing without creating potentially much worse problems in terms of congestion, increased pollution, and "rat running" along roads which may then suffer from higher casualty numbers. A solution to a problem in one location should not simply shift a problem elsewhere. We wish to keep as many cars as possible on main roads.

The Portfolio Holder further highlighted that he would be happy to revisit the A222/ Royal Parade junction to see whether anything has changed e.g. whether the Board of Trustees of Chislehurst Commons are now agreeable to release land to improve facilities at the junction.

Supplementary Question

Mr Wells asked whether the Portfolio Holder would consider making the A222 between the A20 and Bickley a 20mph zone if thought appropriate. Mr Wells enquired about criteria that is used.

Reply

The Portfolio Holder indicated that the principle criteria is how the Council can prioritise locations based on the best outcome per pound spent for a limited budget.

From Kate Lees

Please provide an update on replacement of Betts Park gates, removed 2 years ago originally planned for replacement within 3 months. Why has it taken so long to resolve, despite repeated requests to officers and councillors; will you agree this delay is unacceptable - this must now be treated urgently and ensure work is commenced immediately?

Reply

The access point to Betts Park via Croydon Road has gates to both prevent vehicles entering the site and to enable pedestrian access. Whilst the current gates may not be a direct replacement for the previous gates that were installed 70 years ago, they do provide the same level of protection for the park.

The Parks Management team have received several quotations for the refurbishment and installation of the previous gates but they were considered not to represent value for money, especially when considering that there is an operationally sufficient alternative in place.

The service provider is currently reviewing options for retaining the entrance gate pillars as a welcome point to this entrance to the park and at the same point where the current gates are, installing a modern a-frame vehicle access gate. This will both retain an element of the heritage gate and provide the operational functionality that is required.

Supplementary Question

Ms Lees asked what the process will be and how long it is going to take. Ms Lees also asked whether the pillars will be the original pillars or new pillars. Additionally, Ms Lees sought to clarify whether the current gates are to be regarded as temporary. Cllr Dunn (Clock House) also enquired when he and relevant Councillors will see a design of the proposed new gate as part of consultation. Cllr Dunn added that Betts Park is loved by Anerley residents and he questioned whether the proposed new gate design would be acceptable at the entrance to Kelsey Park.

Reply

The Portfolio Holder confirmed that it is proposed to retain the original pillars at the entrance gate. In leaving the pillars in situ as a welcome to the park, the Assistant Director of Environment indicated that they will also be refurbished.

Gates will continue to be permanently sited at the access point to Betts Park (via Croydon Road) and the Assistant Director of Environment confirmed that the

proposed a-frame vehicle access gate will replace the current gates, considered temporary.

In referring favourably to the Friends of Kelsey Park and their work in raising funds for the benefit of the park - providing value for money - the Portfolio Holder said that whilst the current efforts of the Friends of Betts Park were appreciated they could establish similar arrangements to Kelsey Park to raise funds for projects such as a preferred style of gates; in the meantime, the Portfolio Holder would ask officers to share plans for the proposed a-frame gate.

From Sam Gee, St Olave's Grammar School

What will be the Portfolio Holder's priorities over the coming year?

Reply

My priorities are for the Council to do its best in a declining budget context to improve the Environment our residents experience in their everyday lives and deliver the most cost effective environmental services to our residents. The priorities are outlined in the Environment Portfolio Plan, which is regularly updated and reviewed and I can discuss this with you at a later date, if this would be of interest to you.

As I mentioned last night at Council we are just one part of the borough and we encourage all residents, visitors and businesses to help improve the environment for everyone, with each person doing what they can. One part of that is active lifestyles; our LIP highlights that we will encourage residents to replace short car journeys with walking and cycling. We particularly note that it will be easiest to help those moving to the borough and those reaching driving age to choose more active lifestyles. In that context I would encourage you to help your school set up a school travel plan or otherwise encourage students to arrive at school by active means; and I can put you in contact with the Schools Travels Plan Scheme if this would be helpful.

Supplementary Question

Mr Gee indicated that there are environmental/transport concerns around schools for which students can do some things. But Mr Gee asked how the Council is supporting schools in their action?

Reply

The Portfolio Holder indicated that a lot of vehicle emissions come from people travelling into the borough from outside. What the Council can achieve, given its level of emissions, is small in the context of what can be achieved nationally and by the population as a whole, since a very significant proportion of emissions arises from heating of homes.

On transport, the Portfolio Holder referred to cycle training and driver training (this includes Road Safety Officers giving 'pre-driver' training sessions in sixth forms at schools and colleges across the borough).

From Jude Charman Jones, Newstead Wood School

1. As a borough with poorer public transport links, a larger area and higher car ownership than the London average, what is the Portfolio Holder doing to reduce air pollution in Bromley, so that people with asthma like me can enjoy sports, and so that more people do not develop asthma?

Reply

In 2007 the Council declared an Air Quality Management Area covering the North and North West of the borough, on the basis that NO₂ pollutants were predicted to exceed national objectives. Since then the Council has worked on a number of measures, including introducing an Air Quality Action Plan, aimed at achieving compliance. Most recently this work has included: Outcome 4 of Bromley's LIP 3 setting out our proposals to reduce emissions from the transport network. Central to these proposals is delivering mode shift to walking, cycling and public transport. We also have proposals for anti-idling education, ambitious targets to green our fleet and roll out EV charge infrastructure to provide the facilities to allow for more EVs including supporting the adoption of ZEC Taxis and reducing emissions of the car club fleet. We also plan to introduce green infrastructure as part of transport projects to absorb pollutants. This is also mentioned in Bromley's Local Plan. For further details I would recommend reading Outcome 4 in detail.

The Portfolio Holder also highlighted that Newstead Wood School does not have a School Travel Plan.

Supplementary Question

Miss Charman Jones enquired of the extent to which air is monitored in the Crystal Palace area.

Reply

Although details were not to hand, the Portfolio Holder offered to direct Miss Charman Jones to relevant information.

2. On 22nd September this year, the Mayor of London and TfL will be bringing Car-Free Day to London, with plans due to be publicly released very soon. What are the Portfolio Holder's plans regarding this important step in transitioning the capital to zero carbon travel, with the obvious public health benefits?

Reply

Car-Free Day is a continuation of the previous international In Town Without My Car Day, which the Council has previously supported. However, more recently Bromley has chosen to support The Big Lunch and related road closure events in June, by making these free of charge, to help communities come together in car-free streets.

The Borough has a programme to help give road users a choice to travel by less polluting means, through school travel plans, introducing new cycling and walking

infrastructure such as the Crofton Road scheme, training for cyclists, the installation of electric vehicle charging points, and large programmes such as the multi-million pound Shortlands, Ravensbourne and Bromley Better Villages scheme (the Liveable Neighbourhood). I also refer you to the Dockless E bikes item on this agenda, where we would expect to see E bikes at Orpington Station so visitors can arrive by train and travel onwards by bike rather than feeling they need to drive the whole way.

The particular challenge I feel is for residents and visitors to make the change to active lifestyles, the cycle training we offer is one element of that. I would hope that cycle clubs consider offering confidence building trips on that day, which I feel would be more successful than individual road closures.

**From Richard Gibbons, Co-Chair, Friends of Orpington Priory & Gardens
Committee Member, Bromley Cyclists**

Re: Agenda Item 6 - Environmental Portfolio Plan: Performance Overview

1. In view of growing evidence globally of microplastics in water supplies and food chains, and following complaints locally from residents and fellow councillors, would the Portfolio Holder confirm who is responsible for clearing discarded litter from the Priory Ponds in Orpington, a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation?

Reply

The clearance of litter from the ponds at Priory Gardens is undertaken by the Council's service provider, idVerde.

Supplementary Question

Mr Gibbons understood from idVerde that ponds are not included in the contract they have with the Council and that it is not the responsibility of idVerde to clear blockages in the River Cray.

Reply

On the Portfolio Holder's behalf, the Assistant Director of the Environment confirmed that this role is included in the Council's current contract with idVerde.

Re: Agenda Item 7c Dockless E-Bikes

2. Has the Council undertaken risk assessment in respect of riders of mixed abilities, given growing number of residents and campaign groups expressing concerns about road danger (e.g. speeding drivers) and, despite road safety claims, research that indicates that Bromley has higher levels of risk for people on bikes than most London boroughs?

Reply

Bromley's LIP3 Transport Strategy acknowledges that all 2 wheel transport modes have a higher accident rate than we would like it to be for the number of cycling journeys made in the Borough. The document also sets out the Council's approach to improving cycling facilities across the Borough in coming years. A challenge to all outer London boroughs is achieving a sufficient mode change in numbers cycling and walking that drivers expect to see them and react accordingly. I see E-bikes as helping mode change.

As Mr Gibbons will be aware, Bromley is investing in substantial cycling infrastructure improvements and in cyclist training programmes. Each location and each training site is risk assessed. Both infrastructure and training take consideration of cyclists of all abilities, experience and confidence levels.

Supplementary Question

Expressing disappointment that Bromley Cyclists had not been consulted on the proposal to trial dockless e-bikes, Mr Gibbons asked who amongst the Committee, apart from the Chairman, or remaining Members of the Council had ridden or will ride a dockless e-bike.

Reply

The Portfolio Holder highlighted that dockless e-bikes were mentioned in the LIP upon which Bromley Cyclists had commented. The current proposal is a trial and he hoped that any Councillor or Member of the Public would be prepared to ride a dockless e-bike. For Councillors, much would depend on how they move around the borough; the Portfolio Holder was not available to ride a dockless e-bike when Lime visited the Council recently. (Post meeting note: as part of the press releases associated with the scheme going live, the Portfolio Holder had now ridden a Lime dockless e-bike.)

Re: Agenda Item 7c Dockless E-Bikes

3. How will Portfolio Holder reassure residents, particularly the less able and sight impaired that, to avoid risk of injury, dockless e-bike riders will park responsibly, given everyday examples of inconsiderate parking by vehicle drivers across the borough?

Reply

Can I start by saying that I see dockless E-bikes as a positive change to the borough generally in terms of choice to residents but also in reducing barriers to adopting active lifestyles. Speaking to PH colleagues in other boroughs, Lime is performing above their expectations. As the agenda item details, we will have a Memorandum of Understanding with Lime. There is no legal requirement for Lime to engage with the Council, the fact they have chosen to do so should give all residents confidence that they are a responsible organisation.

I will highlight a number of points: users of the bike hire scheme are reminded at multiple points through the process to park each bike considerately and where possible use cycle parking facilities. This is done through both the mobile phone app and a printed message on each bike. Lime have also agreed for bikes causing an obstruction to be removed within two hours of reporting (between 0700 and 2100 hours). Issues can be reported by phone or email, details of which are provided on each individual bike.

It should also be noted that as the bikes are electric assisted and require regular battery replacement, they will be tended to by Lime operatives on average every three days, in contrast to traditional dockless pedal cycles, that can be left unattended for far longer periods. From a business perspective it also is in the operator's interest to relocate bikes to sites where they will be more frequently used.

Supplementary Question

Mr Gibbons asked the Portfolio Holder how he would mitigate adverse publicity from less enthusiastic colleagues.

Reply

The Portfolio Holder replied that all Councillors respond to what residents wish to see.

From Nicole Kilama

Following Blue Planet II, there has been a huge push to tackle ocean plastic pollution. What is this Portfolio Holder's plan for enabling Bromley to play its part in tackling this global issue?

Reply

Can I start by saying we are only responsible for the disposal end of the plastics journey and then only when the plastic is provided to us for disposal. The first step to tackle is the choice to purchase plastics and have non-plastic alternatives. Within the Council we are working within the Dep Rep's Staff Forum to reduce plastic use within the Council. I also know through the Economic Partnership (although falling under a different PH) that businesses are doing their part by offering alternatives. In particular, Business Improvement Districts are helping businesses find alternatives to plastics. A couple of weeks ago I had the pleasure of attending the Orpington Business Awards and hearing the efforts of the entrants to the hotly contested Environment Award to reduce plastic use in particular and help the environment more generally.

Turning to our waste collection and disposal, Bromley continues to be one of London's leading boroughs for recycling, with 50% being recycled in 2017/18. This is a direct result of a comprehensive recycling collection service for residents which includes plastic bottles and, plastic food packaging pots, tubs and trays for recycling. In addition, we provide a network of On Street Recycling banks for excess plastics, with our contractor required to make sure that the collected plastics are recycled. In addition to our collection services, we regularly encourage residents to recycle as

much as possible, including their plastic materials and to think of ways to minimise the waste they throw away, encouraging re-use too. By removing plastic litter from streets as part of our street cleaning service, we prevent it from further harming the environment, including the potential to enter streams etc. Our new waste contract will soon mean that virtually zero waste will be sent to landfill, ensuring that we will no longer bury plastics of any sort in the ground, with refuse instead being converted to electricity.

Supplementary Question

Miss Kilama's supplementary question concerned schools and limiting plastics.

Reply

Although most schools are now independent of the Council and can make choices related to recycling, the Portfolio Holder encouraged students to work with schools to encourage recycling. The Portfolio Holder also encouraged Miss Kilama and students to promote increased recycling through the Bromley Youth Council. Those aged 18 to 24 are often less interested in recycling and the Portfolio Holder encouraged students to think of the environment whilst at school.

From Cllr Ian Dunn

Can the Portfolio Holder please provide an update on progress with the replacement of the Betts Park gates, including an estimate of when work on the installation of the new gates is planned to commence?

Reply

Can I refer you to the answer given to Ms Lees. With regard to the timescales, officers will be in contact with you shortly.

From Cllr Simon Jeal

1. Following the consultation of Kings Hall Road residents, which closed in December, could you please confirm when updated plans and diagrams for the parking bays scheme will be available to residents?

Reply

The original scheme went out for consultation with stakeholders in November and in respect to the responses received the proposed design of bays has changed very little. However, the zebra crossing that is being designed to go near to the station does have an influence on the precise location of some bays, so until the design of the zebra is complete, the final parking scheme design cannot be published. I expect the final parking scheme design to be ready to share with residents in late May or early June.

2. With regard to the implementation of the Quiet way scheme and 20mph speed limits on Kings Hall Road, many residents and local schools have expressed clear views in favour of the entire road being subject to the lower speed limit- could you please explain how these views have been reflected in the revised plans?

Reply

Careful consideration has been given to the precise extent of the proposed 20mph limit. Experience has shown that the signage has most effect on behaviour where it is closely associated with the hazard – in this case children crossing. In addition experience also shows that adherence to signage diminishes with distance from the sign. There are a combination of factors to consider here, the section of Kings Hall Road that is on the bend “feels” less like a 20 limit, the bend and the parking, however, should naturally limit vehicles’ speed. However, there is often a tendency for vehicles to speed-up on exiting a bend on to a straight section and having signage at this point should counter this tendency; if we are to see a change in driving behaviour officers believe that having the entrances to the 20 limit at obvious entrance points will help the limit to be adhered to and thus be effective.

In response to concerns expressed by the nursery in Kings Hall Road during the consultation, the start point of the 20 limit was moved significantly further east.

Supplementary Question

Cllr Jeal indicated that the original plan(s) had slipped some way and Cllr Jeal sought reassurance that when the (final) plans are published, work would then proceed as quickly as possible. Cllr Jeal also asked when the plans are expected to be published.

Reply

The Portfolio Holder understood that completion of the plans is linked to the Quietway scheme; the Portfolio Holder would ask officers to respond directly to Cllr Jeal. This would include an update concerning parking bays.

3. Would you agree that the transformation programme provides an important opportunity for Bromley council to consider ways it can operate in a greener, more environmentally conscious manner across all council services/departments?

Reply

The transformation programme affects the whole Council and we have to consider the Environmental, Social, Economic and Public Health future of all Bromley residents. I reject the inference in the question that we are not operating in an environmentally conscious manner. We were one of the first Councils to introduce LED lights to reduce our energy bills and environment footprint. We have been in the top 2 or 3 of the 32 London Boroughs for recycling rates for many years. I can go on and on highlighting our record. We do not rest on our laurels and continually look to improve, the PDS over the years has played its part in developing policy to deliver improvements and I am confident will continue to do so in the coming months. I

provided a fuller response to Mr Gee at Full Council regarding our current work programme so I will refer you to that answer.

Supplementary Question

Cllr Jeal confirmed that the inference was not intended but felt there is always more to be doing. Cllr Jeal was impressed that the PDS is trialling a paperless approach for its meetings and asked the Portfolio Holder whether he agreed that all Committees should adopt a similar approach.

Reply

The Portfolio Holder indicated that outcomes from the paperless trial would be recommended to other Committees. It reflected the Council's approach to protect front line services and achieve savings from measures such as good energy management. In this context, the Portfolio Holder also referred to the food for thought campaign to relaunch food waste recycling in the borough.

QUESTIONS TO THE ENVIRONMENT PORTFOLIO HOLDER FOR WRITTEN REPLY

From Clive Lees, Chairman, Ravensbourne Valley Preservation Society

1. With reference to the meeting on 20 November 2018 at which, in response to our third written question, the Environment Portfolio holder confirmed certain signage in the Crab Hill area would shortly be removed, we note that 3 months later it is still in situ. When will they be removed please?

Reply

With regards to signage on Foxgrove Road and Ravensbourne Road, the "unsuitable for HGV" signs will be removed. An investigation carried out previously shows that HGVs can comfortably turn at the Crab Hill/Ravensbourne Avenue junction with some parking restrictions applied. The design to enhance this is currently in progress. See the attached screenshots of the turning movements at Annex 1 and Annex 2.

In addition to this, another scheme is currently underway to improve traffic movement at the junction on Foxgrove Road and Downs Hill.

The request to remove these "unsuitable for HGV" signs has been placed and they will be removed in the next couple of months.

2. In any event, the real issue is to ensure large vehicles never approach the Crab Hill area anyway and in this regard, we would be pleased to receive an update regarding plans to improve signage. For example, signage should send large vehicles to Downham (Peter Pan Pond junction) to avoid Shortlands.

Reply

Having reviewed the existing HGV directional signs in the area, it appears that there are sufficient signs to direct HGVs away from the low bridge on Beckenham Lane, so we do not intend to add more signs at this stage. Increasing the number of signs in this area would only add more to the street clutter and drivers who are already familiar with the route will do nothing but continue through the route they know best. As an alternative to more signage, the junctions around Crab Hill are being improved for better traffic movement as explained above.

In the meantime, we will investigate the number of HGVs going through Crab Hill so as to have a better idea of the volume of traffic we are dealing with here.

Please note that Tweedy Road is part of the TfL road network, not on Bromley network, so you might want to approach them on this.

From David Viles, Chair, Kemnal Residents Association

Speeding on Ashfield Lane conflicts dangerously with pedestrians and joining/crossing traffic at the Kemnal Road junction. There have been several serious collisions. Signs and road markings have not significantly reduced speeding. What real physical measures will the Council introduce at this junction to slow Ashfield Lane traffic down?

Reply

I refer you to my answer to Ms Igoe. Over the past three years for which collision data is available there have been four injury collisions along Ashfield Lane. Although every injury is regrettable, the Council must prioritise resources to where the finite resources available will potentially prevent the most injuries. As I have stated in my reply to Ms Igoe low cost measures may be justified on this basis, crocodile teeth are currently being looked into for Ashfield Lane. If you have other low cost suggestions we would welcome your views.
