

COUNCIL MEETING

20th July 2020

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. From Chris Phillips, Chairman, Friends of Croydon Road Recreation Ground, to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

At their AGM the Friends of Croydon Road Recreation Ground were advised by idVerde on behalf of Bromley Council that a conservation architect would be appointed by the end of February 2020 to draw up a specification for restoration of the bandstand. What progress has been made with this to date?

Reply:

We appreciate that progress in securing a Conservation Architect is disappointingly behind schedule. We would envisage being able to re-commence work on tendering for this consultant in August, with a view to making an appointment towards the end of September in conjunction with the Friends group.

2. From Chloe-Jane Ross to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

How many applications has Bromley Council made for funding from TfL for active travel schemes? Please list these applications and share what response has been received to each of those applications, which have been granted funds and what was the reason for refusal for those not granted?

Reply:

Bromley submitted 23 bids to the TfL Streetspace Fund, but a number of these were grouped proposals, such as the successful bid for funding to implement a variety of measures around schools across the Borough. Other proposals that have been funded include a number of temporary cycle routes in and around Shortlands.

Bromley can take no responsibility for TfL's decision mechanism. In common with many boroughs we consider that a system that appeared to take no account of community desires or past decisions by TfL should be improved. TfL has appeared to prioritise central London. TfL have not given specific reasons for why schemes were not funded, but in reference to all the unfunded proposals from across London, TfL have stated: "It was inevitable that we would be left with a large amount of schemes bid for which we have scored positively but for which there is simply no budget. Given the high number of submissions, we will now discuss with Government whether there is potential to extend this scheme as part of any future funding agreement."

3. From Julie Ireland to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

How many applications has Bromley Council made for funding from the Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government's London Streetspace fund, please list these applications and share what response has been received to each of those applications, stating which have been granted funds and what was the reason for refusal for those not granted?

Reply:

The London Streetspace Fund is administered by TfL, with support from the DfT, and is not related to the MHCLG.

In regard to the MHCLG's Reopening High Streets Safely Fund, Bromley Council has been allocated £295k to implement measures to help retailers reopen and to encourage shoppers to feel able to visit shops safely. Bromley has introduced signs, floor stickers and footway widenings across 32 shopping parades and town centres across the Borough. Funding will also be used to develop a high street action plan.

Bromley can take no responsibility for TfL's decision mechanism. In common with many boroughs we consider that a system that appeared to take no account of community desires or past decisions by TfL should be improved. TfL has appeared to prioritise central London. TfL have not given specific reasons for why schemes were not funded, but in reference to all the unfunded proposals from across London, TfL have stated: "It was inevitable that we would be left with a large amount of schemes bid for which we have scored positively but for which there is simply no budget. Given the high number of submissions, we will now discuss with Government whether there is potential to extend this scheme as part of any future funding agreement."

4. From Alisa Igoe, Coordinator of the Ashfield Lane Road Safety Group, Chislehurst, to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

So many other boroughs have successfully bid and won funds from TfL for safer School Streets: Lewisham 16 School Streets, Merton 18, Brent 23, with Barnet receiving £78k, Hackney £350k, Hounslow £352k. Bromley only submitted eight, all unsuccessful as at 6 July. How will Bromley prioritise protecting its most vulnerable residents?

Reply:

Bromley can take no responsibility for TfL's decision mechanism. In common with many boroughs we consider that a system that appeared to take no account of community desires or past decisions by TfL should be improved. TfL has appeared to prioritise central London. Since the 6th July the situation in Bromley with regard to Schools has changed.

Bromley was successful in being awarded funding to take forward 11 temporary schools streets, with these and other measures to support schools attracting £204k of funding from TfL's Streetspace fund.

Bromley has been in contact with the many schools in the Borough to support them in implementing measures in their immediate surroundings to support social distancing and safer travel to school.

5. From Alisa Igoe to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

The deadline for public questions for the 20 July Full Council meeting was 6 July. As the meeting was not confirmed and did not appear on the Council website until after 6 July, are the Council concerned they were not able to allow constituents sufficient opportunity to submit questions?

Reply:

No – we have received eleven questions from the public.

6. From Alan Tweddle the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

Since the beginning of lockdown on 23 March how many complaints have been received about (a) domestic bonfires (b) commercial bonfires and what action has been taken in respect of these?

Reply:

Date	Domestic	Commercial	Total
23 rd March – 31 st March 20	35	2	37
April 20	179	28	207
May 20	130	21	130
June 20	109	29	109
July 1 st – 8 th July 20	22	2	22
Total	423	82	505

In order for action to be taken against a domestic bonfire it must be more than annoying, it must be a nuisance in law, the same goes for commercial bonfires, for example, they can burn green waste, but must not burn controlled waste.

The figures above show the number of complaints received within the timeframe specified, all allegations were investigated, and as no nuisance/illegal bonfires were witnessed, warning letter was sent to all concern addresses stating the enforcement outcomes should statutory nuisance or illegal commercial burning be witnessed.

There have been local news articles stating that Bromley is missing out on the reductions in pollution seen elsewhere in the country as a result of excessive bonfires being lit; one article plots a graph of Bromley's NO2 against "London" that appears to corroborate this.

Independent analysis from Kings College London clearly shows that there were large variations across London, with the outer areas generally seeing less of a reduction, which is resultant of an effective shut down of Central London.

The articles point to alleged issues with PM2.5 in the borough with local data held by residents showing an alleged sharp increase in PM2.5 in April 20. Kings College confirmed that higher levels of PM2.5 were seen regionally at the start of April 20. However, data shows that in comparison to the region Bromley levels were lower than the surrounding background sites in: Croydon and the AURN background sites in Greenwich Eltham and Bexley Slade Green.

This matter was investigated thoroughly, and the following points have been independently corroborated by Kings College London:

1. From March 1st to April 20th, there have been 4 notable spikes in the daily average PM10 μ g/m³ daily averages for Bromley. These were 6th March, 26th March, 10th April and 16th April, as recorded at Harwood;
2. These same spikes were also recorded within Bexley, and Sevenoaks, as such this, and the data in general shows that the spikes are not necessarily local, but are regional;
3. None of the spikes (as per point 1) relating to LB Bromley exceeded the National Air Quality Standard;
4. Whereas LB Bexley (at their Belvedere and Five ways monitoring stations) and Sevenoaks (at their Bat and Ball and Greatness Park) exceeded the National Air Quality Standards for 2 of the spikes (26th March and 10th April and 16th April respectively);
5. From the 1st March to 20th April (time span for the above data), the Harwood Avenue data had the lowest recorded levels out of the 5 monitoring stations;
6. Information provided by Kings College London that stated for a fact that Bromley was not adversely affected by particulates bonfires as reported, and the issues at that time were caused by air flow coming from the continent, which brought emissions from urban and industrial areas, and wood burning stoves.

When looking at complaints made, reporting of bonfires has increased in recent months, April 20 saw a rise as the dumps were closed. Things eased (in comparison to April 20) in May (dumps opened), and further (compared with April) in June 20. These increases in reports appear to be directly related to the various lobbying, as no nuisance bonfires have been witnessed.

7. From Dr Brendan Donegan, Chair of Bromley Living Streets, to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

What proposals has the council got to bid for additional schemes that enable safer streets for walking and cycling based on community feedback captured on Widen My Path?

Reply:

The Council encourages residents to feed their suggestions to us via Ward Members or by direct contact with the Council, many of which were fed into the bids to TfL for Streetspace funding. The Council does not capture information from Widen My Path.

At the moment we are not aware of any funds currently available for Bromley to submit bids. There is an expectation of future opportunities later in the year. In common with most London boroughs we have proposals currently unfunded which we will submit as

and when opportunities arise. However, should new suggestions be proposed to the Council, we will consider them and apply an appropriate prioritisation, potentially replacing an existing unfunded scheme in the order we will submit future proposals.

8. From Dr Brendan Donegan to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

LBB is at the bottom of the ranking in terms of central government and TfL funding for COVID-19-related changes to streets and the Healthy Streets Scorecard. When preparing future proposals in this policy area, will LBB consider accepting support from residents and/or consulting residents on options?

Reply:

There were at least 10 other boroughs that will receive less funding from TfL's Streetspace pot than Bromley, but this is not a competition and we trust that public funding for COVID-19-related changes to streets will have been assigned across London where maximum cost-benefit can be achieved.

As stated in my previous answer, I would encourage residents to feed suggestions via their Ward Members.

9. From David Martin the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

How many incidents of fly-tipping have been recorded between April of June this year across the borough compared to the same period last year of which how many have been investigated and what actions were taken?

Reply:

April to June 2019: 1113 fly-tips recorded with 721 fly-tips removed. 62 fly-tips were investigated with 3 warning letters and 1 FPN.

April to June 2020: 1227 fly-tips recorded with 996 fly-tips removed. 15 investigations, no action taken as yet.

NB: The disparity between the reported numbers and confirmed collections will be due to the following reasons: incident was on private land or an area outside of the Council's control (e.g. other local authority or housing land), duplicate reports, waste not present upon attendance, or had already been collected proactively through routine service delivery.

10. From Richard Gibbons, Bromley Cyclists, to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

DfE guidance for full opening of schools published 2 July states that DfT is "asking local authorities to urgently work with schools to survey parents on their typical routes to school and potential alternatives".

Would the PH kindly provide a copy of the survey and details of how the Council is working with schools, and what kind of measures the Council will be implementing to

enable schools to “encourage parents, staff and pupils to walk or cycle to school” safely and with confidence?

Reply:

My Officers have an ongoing dialogue with schools and particularly so since May, when the return to school process started to be known. Officers are working with schools to identify transport related obstacles related to each school and, where possible, will be implementing measures to help with social distancing and with supporting alternative travel options.

I will be happy to provide a copy of the survey sent to schools in the Borough, which has so far generated 3850 responses from primary school parents and 3253 from secondary school parents.

11. From Richard Gibbons, Bromley Cyclists, to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

The dramatic increase in numbers of speeding drivers on London’s roads has been widely reported, and has prompted the setting up of the Road Crime Team by the Metropolitan Police.

LB Bromley residents are expressing increasing concern about speeding drivers on the borough’s roads, despite increased monitoring and enforcement by police teams. What measures are the Council introducing to ensure the safety of children and adults cycling in the absence of funding for protected cycleways?

Reply:

The Borough has successfully bid for a number of temporary cycle routes, all of which will be installed with measures to help protect cyclists. Escorted cycle rides are currently being provided by Bromley to equip the many new cyclists we see on our streets, to help them safely reach their place or work or study. Furthermore, the Borough is lobbying government for more funding to support this focussed training going forward.

The above is in addition to our road safety education programme, which unfortunately due to school closures is mainly delivered through our road safety signs at this time. I have also encouraged London Police to work with the borough’s road safety team so that speed and other unsafe practices (e.g. mobile phone use) enforcement can have the biggest impact.