

COUNCIL MEETING

12th October 2020

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. From David Marshall to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

How many applications has Bromley Council made for funding from the Department of Transport for sustainable travel? 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 majority of the funding received for sustainable travel projects over recent years has been received from Transport for London. However, some funding was made available this summer directly from DfT - the maximum amount was relatively small at £100k and this was successfully bid for. The schemes this funding is being utilised for are a pedestrian refuge in Beckenham, an improvement to a pedestrian crossing and segregated cycle route in Crystal Palace.

2. From David Marshall to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Monitoring of air quality in Bromley, particularly PM2.5 has been unreliable. At times when our neighbours in Croydon and Lewisham reported high levels in mid-August, Bromley's reporting is absent. What action is being taken to correct this issue?

Reply:

There have been teething problems with the PM2.5 monitor installed this year, and both Kings College and the engineers who service the site have addressed outstanding issues.

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

With reference to the Croydon Road bandstand, and the reply to full Council on 20th July, how is work progressing to secure a Conservation Architect for the works?

Reply:

Whilst progress on the project has been regrettably slower than anticipated, due to a number of competing projects and associated delays, it is expected that, following agreement of the procurement route, that tendering will take place later this year, when market conditions will hopefully enable contractors to properly assess the project.

4. From Chloe-Jane Ross to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

I witnessed a menacing and threatening catalytic convertor theft recently. Such thefts have risen significantly in the last couple of years. How many licensed scrap dealers are there in the borough and how many have been inspected by Bromley Council in the last 24 months?

Reply:

Bromley has 7 Scrap Metal Dealers sites within the borough and all have been inspected in the last 12months.

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

What provisions will the Council be making to ensure existing users of the Beckenham Public Halls retain access on favourable terms when the building lease is disposed of? In particular safeguarding access to groups that regularly hire the halls in terms of affordability and accessible timetabling?

Reply:

The marketing of the site for a suitable operator will include provision of community use, which by the nature means on favourable terms that are accessible for the local community.

6. From Stuart Benefield to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

What is the strategy to deal with the massive increase in traffic in Bromley, and how will this work alongside adjacent boroughs? Subjectively, I have noticed a huge increase in Bromley but there is also an objective increase throughout outer London - (<https://www.theguardian.com/environment/2020/sep/15/road-congestion-levels-in-outer-london-higher-than-before-lockdown>)

Reply:

Due to reduced capacity on buses at present, for social distancing reasons, there are unfortunately likely to be an increased number of cars using our streets, depending on the level of homeworking. However, according to some measures, it is pleasing to see that traffic levels have fallen through September to a level more similar to that seen at the same time in previous years.

Although Bromley lost its LIP (Local Implementation Plan) funding budget for 2020/21, as did all other London boroughs, Bromley has managed to secure some funding for temporary measures to help people travel by foot and by bicycle, plus creating additional space around some busy bus stops. Bromley will continue to work with all key stakeholders in order to maximise the effectiveness of schemes. Bromley also continues to lobby for further funding to help deliver the ambitious targets set out in Bromley's LIP.

7. From Stuart Benefield to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

How are the new schemes for cyclists/pedestrians, introduced following external funding, being monitored? How will their success be fed back to the original scheme funders such as TfL?

Reply:

Monitoring will be done in these ways –

- Usage of the route; this will be through observation or traffic count where necessary to see how the routes are being used. This is not necessarily in comparison to existing counts because some of the routes are newly introduced routes. There is existing usage data for some routes, such as for cyclists using Bromley Road.
- Safety; this will be monitored using the before and after collision records at the location. Again, this will be specific to cyclists and pedestrian collisions.
- Accessibility; although this cannot be measured, it will be monitored by observation on site to see if it is easier for cyclists and pedestrians to use the route.
- Social Distancing schemes in High Streets and other high footfall locations will be monitored by observation and by resident/visitor comments.

Routine meetings with TfL are undertaken, where scheme progress is monitored.

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

Please tell us what progress has been made on the successful bids to TfL for funding for the “variety of measures around schools across the borough” (as you reported in July), and the “temporary cycle routes in and around Shortlands”.

Reply:

Five of six temporary school streets are now operational and a number of footway widening schemes around schools have also been installed. The sixth school street will be operational in a couple of weeks’ time. Temporary zebra crossings are also being installed at three locations over the next few weeks, subject to safety assessments being completed. The Department has also introduced social distancing signage around 114 schools across the Borough. A number of schools are also having part time 20mph signage installed during October and November.

In Shortlands, the new cycle routes are subject to ongoing consultation regarding some details of the design, with works on site having now started. The routes should be fully operational before Christmas.

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

In January 2019 I asked a question at the Council Meeting about the dangerously narrow pavements that lead to Unicorn School and Langley Schools, plus highlighted the campaign for a weatherproof path across Harvington playing fields. Please would he tell us what contact has been made and what plans he has for easing the dangerous congestion on these routes, which makes social distancing impossible and road safety perilous.

Reply:

The Council's School Travel Planners have regular contact with Borough schools, including Langley Schools and Unicorn Primary. The issue of the footway width in South Eden Park Road and of a weatherproof path across the Harvington playing fields has not featured in the schools' Travel Plans.

10. From Sam Webber to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Congestion close to the schools on Tylney Road and Nightingale Lane and the risk to pedestrian safety now seems worse than pre-lockdown. What has happened to the promised pedestrian crossing and what other measures are planned to enable social distancing?

Reply:

A report came to Environment PDS Committee in March this year recommending a Zebra crossing for Homesdale Road, to assist pedestrians including children travelling to the several nearby schools. This was approved to be installed in 2020/21, funded from TfL's grant funding for walking schemes. Unfortunately, due to TfL requiring a bailout, all TfL funding for 2020/21 schemes and grants were cancelled in year and the project was unable to proceed.

Bromley put bids to TfL in June to introduce this zebra crossing as a temporary, emergency measure. This bid was not initially supported by TfL. However, TfL have in the last month agreed to fund a zebra crossing for this location and orders are being placed for the works to proceed as soon as possible.

11. From Sam Webber to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

How many school streets are currently in place in the borough and how many more are planned? What is the timescale for those schemes?

Reply:

Five of six temporary school streets are now operational and a number of footway widening schemes around schools have also been installed. The sixth school street will be operational in a couple of weeks' time.

12. From Suraj Gandecha to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

The introduction of the Low Traffic Neighbourhood in Crystal Palace by Croydon Council has caused chaos to local residents, a classic case of a good idea carried out badly without enough consultation. What steps have Bromley Council made to work with Croydon Council to improve the scheme and to inform local residents of those steps?

Reply:

Bromley has received much correspondence from local residents negatively impacted by the scheme that Croydon has introduced across the borough boundary, which has indeed created traffic chaos both on the main roads and in residential streets in this area. Bromley has asked Croydon to remove the road closures that have led to this situation, but Croydon have not agreed to do so. Issues across Borough Boundaries need to be referred to TfL and the Mayor for resolution. The matter has been taken up with TfL and the GLA, but as yet they have not asked Croydon to remove the offending closures.

Bromley has responded to residents to keep them informed of our efforts to have this damaging Low Traffic Neighbourhood reversed. Bromley has also sought to keep the press informed.

13. From Suraj Gandecha to the Leader of the Council

In August 2020 emails from different Bromley residents were sent to 58 Bromley Councillors. The email addresses of 3 councillors were invalid. Less than half of the councillors have replied to those emails (up to 28 Sept). Does the Leader of the Council feel this is an acceptable rate of response, and if not what is considered to be an acceptable rate?

Reply:

I would need to know what emails you are referring to prior to offering an opinion.