

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**12<sup>th</sup> October 2020**

**QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF COUNCIL FOR WRITTEN REPLY**

**1. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing**

Can the Portfolio Holder say how many additional units of accommodation have been introduced which are adapted for residents with serious mobility issues in the past two years?

**Reply:**

Since 2016 all new permitted units are required to meet M4(2) standard to accessible and adaptable dwellings and 10% must meet the M4(3) standard for wheelchair accessible units.

Adaptations were historically listed in a non-reportable format on the IT system. We have recently transitioned to a new IT system which will enable adaptation to be recorded in a reportable field going forward.

**2. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing:**

Following the work of Rob Vale's team recently, does Bromley Council now have a register of private landlords? If so, when will you be able to share the outcome of the work done and the cost of that work?

**Reply:**

The outcome and finances of this project was reported back to the Public Protection and Enforcement Policy Development and Scrutiny Committee on the 26<sup>th</sup> June 2019 Report ES19039.

There was no scope within the project to develop a database of all private landlords.

**3. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Health**

Please provide details of any additional payments made to any of our contractors in respect of additional costs they have incurred in respect of COVID.

**Reply:**

For the duration of the first wave of COVID the Council put in place the following support arrangements for adult social care and support providers

- Payment on receipt of invoice. Invoice reconciliation or correction can take place over a longer period.
- Alternative payment mechanisms or frequency (such as moving to monthly payments where this is not already in place; or interim payments or advance payments).

- Block payments to providers, based on the past three months of invoicing (or other suitable mechanism), where otherwise payment would have been based on actual volumes (occupancy, hours, etc.) and invoice payments would normally have been reconciled to evidenced delivery.
- Where a provider is at risk, due to the short term liabilities arising from the COVID -19 period, continued payment (either based on current payment mechanisms or moving to block payments as appropriate) where there has been a reduction or cessation in service related to the Public Health situation (for example, learning disability day centres and transport providers).
- Additional payments (for example, lump sum or increased rates) to take into account evidenced additional costs related to the Public Health situation. For example, additional infection control costs or use of higher cost agency staff.
- Suspension, as appropriate, of performance related or KPI mechanisms or penalties within a contract, as well as flexibility in varying current specification requirements where required.
- 5% uplift made on top of the 2020/21 annual uplift agreed with providers for April, May and June fees for residents placed by the Council totalling c.£0.8m. Providers should also have received an uplift payment for any other residents placed by other councils who are living in care homes in Bromley.
- Free emergency PPE totalling c.£350k
- Distribution of the government's Infection Control Grant allocation for Bromley of c.£2.2m to all care homes in the borough and to contracted supported housing and extra care housing providers, with a further £2.4m to be distributed in the coming months.
- Providing a 6 month rent waiver to day centres totalling £36k

#### **4. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management**

Please provide a breakdown of the average cost of conducting a physical PDS Committee meeting and that of conducting the same meeting online.

#### **Reply:**

I am pleased to say that we have a full programme of PDS meetings again.

There will be different costs associated with different meetings. Virtual meetings are more resource intensive in terms of staff. It requires two Democratic Services officers to support and manage the meeting including managing the live stream and we usually have two or three members of the IT team supporting , one supporting the actual meeting and the others providing real time helpline support if members or officers have difficulties joining the meeting.

Both Democratic Services and IT are small teams and still have to undertake their usual roles during the working day. Virtual meetings have doubled the workload on evening meetings for the Democratic Services Team and substantiality extended the working day for IT at a time

when they also have to support a home based workforce and are delivering on the IT transformation programme. Therefore we are not just looking at financial cost we are looking mainly at the welfare impact on staff.

## **5. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care and Health**

With recent research suggesting that nationally, as few as 18% of people developing COVID19 symptoms are self-isolating, what actions are the Council's public health team taking to ensure that all Bromley residents understand and are following government guidelines?

### **Reply:**

Public Health team together with other Council departments have been engaged in numerous prevention and communication activities related to the management of Covid -19 pandemic. Below is the summary of these activities including those with general public.

#### **Businesses**

- Contact maintained with businesses by phone, email and letter to provide support and advice on safe return to business operations.
- Joint visits with police by licensing officers to target non-compliance of social distancing in licensed premises.
- Markings and reminders about social distancing in the high street.
- Posters for pubs and restaurants to display distributed directly and through the BIDS :
  - Basic prevention messages, including NHS Test and Trace
  - 'We are collecting your contact details.'
- Advice given and posters handed out to market traders –
  - Basic prevention messages, including NHS Test and Trace
  - Please don't handle the goods – just ask for help.
- Leaflet sent and handed out face-to-face
- Further work to interpret new government guidelines and update of leaflet.

#### **Schools**

- Continual messaging to Head Teachers through Education Matters as guidance changes.
- Letter to independent schools re infection control.
- Public Health Q&A sessions prior to start of the autumn term for Primary School and Secondary School Heads.
- Web Material signposting guidance for parents and carers.
- Covid-19 mailbox - individual questions answered by Public Health.
- School nurses offer individual help and guidance.
- Ongoing support and guidance by Education and Public Health as required.

#### **Care Homes**

- Ongoing Public Health advice on prevention in care homes/LD settings.
- Testing Programme in care homes – guidance in partnership with CCG.
- Ongoing PPE support and training for 'donning and doffing.'
- Questions to Covid-19 mailbox answered by Public Health.
- Visiting guide sent to homes, with information for residents online.

## **Travellers**

- Public Health Nurses using their relationships to deliver prevention messages, including NHS Test and Trace.
- Prevention advice shared through Star Lane site manager/Newsletter.
- Identifying trusted community leaders across all sites to help as advocates for prevention and NHS Test and Trace.
- Contact through GPs
- Bid for mobile testing unit if required.

## **Faith Groups and community leaders**

- Analysis undertaken to investigate, compile/update stakeholders.
- Work undertaken through Community Links to share basic prevention resources and advice, including NHS Test and Trace.
- Meeting set up for Charles Obazuaye and Ade Adetosoye to listen and build trust in the communities and share messages.
- Web material around test and trace – link to languages.

## **Homeless/HMOs**

- Work underway with Housing to identify the best methods of communication to homeless/identify stakeholders.
- Contact made with Foodbank, Bromley Shelter, Latch, Living Well and Hostels.
- Public Health nurses offer advice to landlords.

## **Young People**

- Exploring link with the Youth Service and Bromley Youth Council
- Analysing Mosaic data to find out how best to reach a younger audience.
- Schools competition to engage younger audiences.

## **General Public**

Stay Safe campaign is providing basic prevention advice supported by infographics using usual channels such as:

- website
- high street advertising sites
- businesses/BIDS
- local community groups
- partner channels
- news releases
- newsletters and
- social media.
- Stepped up social media re prevention and secondary messages including wearing of face coverings, contact tracing in pubs and restaurants – ‘If they don’t know, don’t go’ and how to spot a scam.
- Updated graphics – it has not gone away. Reinforced prevention: Hands, Face, Space.
- Download and use NHS App.

**6. From Cllr Kieran Terry to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services**

What actions have been taken to allow our local High Streets to provide a Covid-safe environment for customers so they feel safe to return to them? Please also provide a summary of actions taken to support social distancing outside shops.

**Reply:**

Thousands of social distancing signs and floor-stickers were installed in 33 shopping parades and town centres across the Borough by July. In normally busy shopping areas the signs were supplemented with barriers to allow additional footway space, both for pedestrian movement and to help accommodate suitable shops being able to utilise space outside their premises to trade, without obstructing pedestrians. This was achieved in the main town centres with support and guidance from the BIDS.

The barriers are reviewed each week and some have been relocated or removed. As the pandemic is unfortunately continuing, the Council and the BIDS are intending to install some more aesthetically pleasing planters in some locations to replace the slightly unattractive barriers initially used.

Since September, the Council has also deployed a small team of Covid-advisors, wearing high-vis jackets, to add new “avoid-lockdown” stickers in shopping areas and to also speak with shoppers to offer advice and reassurance in respect to the Council’s response to Covid-19.