

COUNCIL MEETING

1st March 2021

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE PUBLIC FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. From Steve Isted to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Will the Council consider halting the Crofton Road cycle scheme until a new risk assessment has been undertaken to address the numerous and serious safety issues that its implementation has/will create?

Reply:

As part of the design process the scheme has been subject to a two-stage road safety audit process and two more audits will follow once the scheme is completed.

2. From Suraj Gandechea to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

During the 12 months ending 31 Mar 2020 what percentage of non-paper recycling (e.g. plastics) collected from residents was not recycled, and how was it disposed of?

Reply:

100% of the recyclable plastics, cans and glass that are collected by Bromley Council are recycled.

However, 11% of items placed in the green box for plastics, cans and glass recycling are not accepted for recycling in Bromley, for example plastic bags, food waste or nappies. These items are separated from the recycling at the Material Recycling Facility and then sent to an energy recovery facility.

3. From Suraj Gandechea to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

Secondly, as a member of the LGBTQ+ community, I would like to know what the Council is doing to recognise LGBT History Month and what it has in place to support people from different backgrounds and minorities?

Reply:

The Council takes seriously its public sector equality duties namely;

- a) Eliminate unlawful discrimination, harassment and victimisation and other conduct prohibited by the Equality Act 2010;
- b) Advance equality of opportunity between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not; and
- c) Foster good relations between people who share a protected characteristic and those who do not.

The Council's approach and unequivocal commitment to these duties is rooted in our leadership values REAL (Respect, Empower, Ambition and Learn). The recent

Stronger Together staff thematic discussions led by our Chief Executive Ade Adetosoye (OBE) and our Director of HR & Customer Services is a very good example. The sessions which were open to all staff promoted and celebrated individual differences and the positive impact on individual and organisational efficiency and performance.

In the LGBT month, the Chief Executive also reached out to all staff on the importance of the history with reference to notable achievements by the LGBT community. We expect and demand fairness and tolerance from all our staff. We have a clear zero tolerance policy/procedure on discrimination, victimisation and harassment on any of the protected characteristics including sexual orientation. We gather and use the equality profile of our customers including applicants/candidates for Council jobs to inform or and review services and policies. We offer equality impact assessment to all our managers. We deliver equality and diversity training to all our staff.

The Council's Equality, Diversity and Inclusion Group which is chaired by the Director of HR & Customers is currently looking at how to gather some of the more sensitive equality profile through customer engagement/consultation. The group is fairly represented by staff at different levels not just managerial levels from different protected characteristics including sexual orientation"

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

The Open Space Consultation list of open spaces did not include Plaistow Green. Also, open spaces within Bromley boundary but managed by others such as Warren Avenue Playing Fields and West Wickham Common were not mentioned. Will these be included in the next version of the consultation document and can you guarantee that these are also safe from disposal?

Reply:

Many of the LBB owned open green spaces are known by different names and documented by their formal reference according to LBB asset data in the open space strategy. We will ensure that Plaistow Green, Warren Avenue Playing Fields and West Wickham Common appear alongside their formal respective names in the next version of the strategy. Our press release on 8 January applies to these green spaces.

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

Following the press release by Cllr Huntingdon-Thresher on 8 January promising that the Council "are not about to sell any park" would he now confirm that no open space listed in the Open Space Consultation will face "reassignment (including development or disposal)".

Reply:

Residents' expectations from Our Parks and Greenspaces changes over time. The terms alteration, investment, reassignment and development found within the Open Space Strategy refer to the enhancement and improvement of Bromley's open spaces: An example of this would be the recent clearance of the disused Upper

Kelsey Park Depot and its return to parkland, where an area previously inaccessible to the public has been reassigned for public use. Other types of reassignment/development include such concepts as sport facilities, sensory or memorial gardens, play area, biodiversity, trees and natural habitat areas to name just a few.

6. From Julie Ireland to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

How many laptops have Bromley Council received from the Government to help school children access online learning, and how many of these have been given out?

Reply:

The LA received 734 laptops and tablets from the DfE. To date, more than 800 devices have been given out in accordance with the guidance, including additional devices purchased by the Council for vulnerable children, such as for children looked after and care leavers.

7. From Julie Ireland to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

How many laptops have schools, academies, colleges and FE institutions in Bromley received from the Government to help students access online learning?

Reply:

The LA managed the quota of laptops and tablets from the DfE and supplemented this with additional devices purchased directly. Schools were able through a portal to order laptops and tablets and the DfE will hold this information as Academies and schools were not required to inform the LA only the DfE.

8. From Christopher Bentley to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

How many Freedom of Information requests did the Council receive between 01/04/19 - 31/03/20 and how many were answered in the regulatory 20 days?

Reply:

Number of FOI Requests – 1,316

Number of requests responded to within 20 days – 1,078 (82%)

Number of requests responded to outside 20 days – 238 (18%)

The requests dealt with outside of 20 days includes requests where extensions have been agreed or can be applied.

9. From Christopher Bentley to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Recent Imperial College research states that Bromley suffers the highest number of air quality related deaths in London. Has Bromley Council met its AQAP commitment to begin deploying 20 new diffusion tube monitors and will the Council commit to more live monitoring in population centres?

<https://www.london.gov.uk/WHAT-WE-DO/environment/environment-publications/health-burden-air-pollution-london>

Reply:

The research demonstrated that Bromley's pollution levels are very low, with the second lowest anthropogenic pm2.5 and NO₂ levels in London. The additional diffusion tubes were deployed in January 2021, and the commitments approved by the GLA to improving air quality are contained within the Air Quality Strategy 2020 (AQAP).

https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/413/pollution_control_-_air_quality

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

The tender for the Beckenham Public Halls provides for 15% community use, how does this compare to the current (notwithstanding COVID issues) space for community use and if there is a shortfall how will this be resolved?

Reply:

The 15% community use is comparative to the pre Covid regular community use of the halls. However, we would very much hope that future use of the building will mean a greater use of the facility.

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

What are the street cleaning provisions around the wards in Albemarle Rd and Bromley Rd cycle scheme (debris is starting to accumulate)?

Reply:

Existing schedules will be adhered to, but through applying a different resource to that which would ordinarily be applied for channel sweeping on carriageways due to these installations. By working with our Service Provider, we have identified a compact sweeping appliance that can fit in the narrower pathway. We have implemented this and will ensure any accumulations are minimised.

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

Will the Council now consider wheelie bin style bins or bins with fixed lids for recycled paper to save the cost (both environmental and financial) of wet paper and cardboard put out for recycling being rejected as it is too wet?

Reply:

The council continually reviews its collection methodologies to maximise recycling and considers the environmental and financial cost of any changes. For example, we are currently trialling a collection methodology to increase recycling from flats above shops. That includes options to ensure paper and card can be recycled. Given the environmental (and financial) cost of providing and emptying plastic wheelie bins for the whole borough, it is not clear that there would be an overall benefit considering the relatively low volumes of current rejections and the ongoing decline in volumes of paper. We encourage residents to cover their recycling boxes between collections.

13. From Sam Webber to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

Please supply a list of all high-rise residential buildings in Bromley Borough in the private sector with ACM cladding and identify those where remediation work is either complete or has commenced.

Reply:

None.

14. From Jill Hollamby to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

Please supply a list of all buildings in Bromley Borough over 18 metres in height with unsafe non-ACM cladding.

Reply:

There is one building over 18 metres high where unsafe cladding has been identified and remediation is being progressed, and there is one further building where investigation is ongoing.

Publishing the names and addresses of these buildings could enable someone to identify particular buildings which have failed or are inferred to have failed cladding tests. There are concerns that this information could be used by those with malicious intent to attack or otherwise compromise the safety of these buildings and their residents.

15. From Jill Hollamby to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

Please supply a list of all buildings in Bromley Borough over 11 metres and under 18 metres in height with unsafe ACM cladding and non-ACM cladding.

Reply:

There are no buildings which have been identified at present. There is one building between 11 and 18 metres high where unsafe cladding has been identified.

Publishing the names and addresses of these buildings could enable someone to identify particular buildings which have failed or are inferred to have failed cladding tests. There are concerns that this information could be used by those with malicious intent to attack or otherwise compromise the safety of these buildings and their residents.

16. From Rick Das to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

How many Snow Friends (groups and/or individuals) are currently authorised in Bromley Borough?

Reply:

There are currently 4,032 Snow Friends in 426 Snow Friend groups.

17. From Rick Das to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Given the widespread disruption caused by icy roads and pavements during the cold weather in February, will the Council now revise their strategy for keeping all roads and pavements safe?

Reply:

Unfortunately, it is not possible to keep all roads and footways clear of ice and snow during winter months. The Council have a published policy and plan for winter maintenance, which includes precautionary treatment of nearly half of the road network when cold weather is forecast. Additional busy roads and residential roads on steep hills are also treated following any snow fall. Footways in shopping centres, transport interchanges and schools are also cleared after any snow fall.

18. From Allan Tweddle to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Given the short notice given to councils to apply for TfL funding and consult with local people, have the Council prepared/are working on other road or active travel schemes and if so what are they?

Reply:

The Council is preparing a programme to submit to TfL during March that will be in line with the Council's transport policy document: "Bromley's transport for the future: Bromley's Third Local Implementation Plan", published in 2019.

https://www.bromley.gov.uk/info/200107/transport_policy/535/local_implementation_plan

19. From Allan Tweddle to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

I understand the Environment Agency is temporarily allowing yellow bag clinical waste to be processed at municipal incinerators due to increased volumes caused by Covid-19. Have Bromley Council's contractors processed additional medical waste locally in this way?

Reply:

The Council's clinical waste contractor is continuing to process clinical waste through facilities that are permitted to accept it in Rochester and Redhill.

The Council's Covid Rapid Testing programme procured an alternative clinical waste provider for best value. Our provider is processing waste through a facility permitted to accept clinical waste based in Kent.

20. From Stuart Benefield to the Portfolio Holder for Children, Education and Families

How many families have received vouchers for food to provide support for children who normally receive free school meals? Please provide number and value between 21 December 2020 and 31 January 2021.

Reply:

Supermarket vouchers were provided through schools to support vulnerable children during the Christmas and February half term school holidays. The data is not held at family level. To date 25,149 £15 vouchers have been issued to eligible children.

21. From Tony McPartlan to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

What support is the Council giving for businesses in the Borough who are facing financial difficulties due to the pandemic and will the Council ensure such support is in place for a suitable length of time to avoid a cliff edge in the future?

Reply:

In line with government guidance, the Council has been administering a range of grants that have been made available to businesses; these include mandatory grants as well as discretionary grants. The Council has supported businesses in accessing these grants through a variety of communication channels including direct contact, a live webinar and regular e-bulletins.

Since the start of the pandemic the Council has paid out over £60 million to support businesses in the borough and will continue to make payments in accordance with the government funding conditions for each of the grant schemes.

One of the discretionary grants established is to support business innovation as well as a business lounge to support new businesses, something Bromley has always been proud of the number of new businesses choosing Bromley.

In addition to this support the Council is drafting an Economic Strategy for 2021-2031, to support the longer terms recovery of our local economy. Officers are working on High Street recovery plans, as well as working with Business Improvement District to monitor, review and support where appropriate. Bromley is well placed to rise to this challenge.

22. From Tony McPartlan to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

What will the Council be doing to support residents who have lost their jobs during the pandemic to continue to be able to live in Bromley rather than be forced out of the area to find affordable housing?

Reply:

We have streamlined our money and debt advice service to ensure that we are able to help the increasing number of clients that require support. This has included working jointly with the DWP and partners such as Clarion to ensure that we are able to reach as many people as possible.

With evictions for rent arrears currently on hold until the end of March our aim has been to identify where there is a risk of homelessness in its early stages in order to minimise the impact on households and allow us more time to engage in early

prevention work. This has involved utilising discretionary housing payments and our prevention funds where appropriate, liaising with creditors in order to facilitate payment holidays, readjusting debts, facilitating affordable payment plans and providing the many residents that have never been in this predicament before with essential budgeting advice.

23. From Carolyn Heitmeyer to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Can the Albemarle consultation be changed in the following ways: (a) lengthened from 3 weeks to 6 months, as per statutory guidance, (b) modified so it's not just a binary choice (keeping vs removing), (c) supplemented with key contextual information about the long-term goals (i.e. modal shift)? If not, why not?

Reply:

The Albemarle Road cycling scheme was installed as an experimental scheme, with ongoing feedback being used to tweak and modify the design. The current consultation will report its results for Scrutiny to the Environment PDS committee on 11th March and thus is limited in duration. An option for the next amendment to the experimental scheme is the addition of Traffic Lights and the reintroduction of two-way traffic on to Westgate Road rail bridge, this has a cost associated with it and therefore we are asking residents for their views before spending the funds on this change.

24. From Dermot McKibbin to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

What has the Council done since June 2017 to identify buildings with fire safety risks, what is the plan to make them safe and when was this issue discussed in public by a council committee? How many buildings in the borough have "waking watches"?

Reply:

Under the Fire Safety Order 2005 the person responsible for the common parts of a building is responsible for identifying fire risks. The London Fire Brigade are the enforcement authority.

However, the issue of tall buildings with potentially dangerous cladding was discussed by Renewal and Recreation PDS in 2018, and again by the Development Control Committee later on in 2018.

There have been 4 waking watches.

25. From Dermot McKibbin to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

How many high-rise buildings in Bromley are currently under construction and have been built since June 2017 and what assurances can the Council give that they will be or have been built without dangerous cladding and with proper safety considerations?

Reply:

Four Buildings.

All new high rise buildings would be required to meet current Building Regulations standards at the time of approval for fire safety whether this approval is given by the Council's Building Control team or by a third party Approved Inspector for Building Control. The Council is also engaged with the MHCLG for their External Wall Systems data collection exercise which is an ongoing review of the cladding on all high rise buildings.