Appendix D

COUNCIL MEETING

1st March 2021

QUESTIONS FROM MEMBERS OF THE COUNCIL FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. From Cllr Michael Tickner to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Since the first lockdown in March 2020 until the most recent figures available, what changes in air pollution have been recorded, compared with the same period in 2019, at the Council's continuous monitoring sites:

(1) for nitrogen dioxide (NO^2) levels? How does this compare with the Government target of 40 micrograms per cubic meter?

(2) for particulate matter (PM10) concentrations? How does this compare with the World Health Organisation standard of 20 micrograms per cubic meter?

What plans are there to maintain low pollution levels after lockdown?

Reply:
In 2019 the annual mean ratified and bias-adjusted data for Harwood Avenue showed 24.7 µg/m3 for NO2 and 18.8 µg/m3 for PM10, levels for both pollutants were below the annual thresholds set by the Air Quality Directive of 40 µg/m3, and in the case of PM10, the level was beneath the guideline annual level of µg/m3 as determined by the World Health Organisation.

The data collated at Harwood Avenue is not analysed by Officers, it is sent for ratification by Kings College London who then determine the annual mean. Comparison between years is done on an annual basis and analysis will commence in April 21. The results will be presented as part of the Council's statutory Annual Status Review (ASR).

The actions pertaining to improvements with air quality are contained within the Air Quality Strategy 2020 (AQAP).

The AQAP and ASR's are available online here - *https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/413/pollution_control_-_air_quality*

2. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation & Housing

Please provide a list showing all the Heritage Lottery Fund applications the Council has made over the past three years, including whether the application was successful or not and if successful, the amount received.

Reply:
The Culture and Regeneration department has made one application for the Heritage Lottery Fund in October 2019 for Crystal Palace Park which unsuccessful. In applying for grants the Council must always consider the eligibility criteria and how a particular project may meet with that criteria, this very often includes timing of works.

3. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Services

Can the Portfolio Holder please describe the process which is being used to incorporate the over 800 consultation responses on the Council's Open Space Strategy.

Reply:
There were 769 responses to the survey, 733 from individuals and 36 from a group or organisation. An additional 68 emails were received. The views of all respondents to each question of the survey have been captured with questions and feedback documented in Excel Spreadsheet format for each respondent. These are now in the process of being analysed with the results to each question presented in full in a *Parks and Open Spaces Strategy Responses* Excel Spreadsheet. This document will provide a summary of the main trends found within the responses to the consultation and will result in a road map directing how the Council will proceed with the redrafting.

4. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Services

What were the levels of carbon emissions in the Borough for the last two years?

Reply:
Performance reports detailing the levels of Bromley's borough emissions are available online at:

https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/download/980/co2_emissions_local_authorities_performance_reports

These reports are based on national data provided by the Department of Business, Energy & Industrial Strategy (BEIS) released each year, generally 18 months after the reporting year-end. Bromley emitted a total of:

2018: 973 ktCO2
2017: 1MtCO2

5. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Leader of the Council

Are members of the public now able to ask oral questions in person at online Council meetings in the same way as they were in person meetings prior to COVID arrangements and is it not time that the Urgency Committee met to review the arrangements made last March, a review that was agreed by this Council should have happened last June?

Reply:
As you aware, the review in question was held at the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS at its meeting on 10th September where a vote was taken to defer any changes until January 2021, to enable further investigation and opinion to be formed concerning the availability and reliability of the various platforms capable of hosting such meetings.

You made further reference to the matter at subsequent Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS meetings on 6th January 2021 and 3rd February 2021, at both of which you were offered further reassurance by the Chairman that questions were set to return, as indeed they have since started doing.

Officers in Democratic Services are currently gathering details as to how public questions are handled in neighbouring Boroughs and will complete this exercise over coming weeks, to reconfirm that Bromley's 'offer' remains as generous as others, with a view to reporting back to Members formally as shortly as possible thereafter.

There is no need to convene an 'Urgency Committee' for these reasons.

6. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning & Contract Management

How much unspent and unallocated COVID funding from central government is currently held by the Council?

Reply:
The Council is currently expected to receive funding of £212m (which consists of £53m for service impacts, £104m for grants to businesses, and £55m for business rate reliefs) of which it currently expects to have spent over £200m by the end of the financial year – part of this funding allows spend into the following financial year (2021/22). Any unspent monies by the year end will be reported to Executive at its meeting on 31st March as part of the updated budget monitoring report 2020/21. The budget monitoring report will consider the carry forward any unspent monies to fund the impact of the continuation of the pandemic period into the new financial year as well as setting aside funding to support the future recovery from the pandemic. This will ensure that funding is fully utilised to address the pandemic impact and to support the future recovery from the pandemic. Any estimates need to be treated

with some caution as further funding may be provided this year as well as the requirement for new commitments to be made.

7. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning & Contract Management

How much has this Council spent on commercial property investments in the last 10 years and what is the current capital value of that property portfolio?

Reply:
The Council has spent £89,366,000 on commercial property. The 2019/20 Asset Valuation figure for these properties is £72,528,165. The 2020/21 Valuation is currently being progressed.

Investment properties are long term investments and we have to recognise that the UK property market at present is going through a period of uncertainty, due to a multitude of factors but with the Covid-19 pandemic exacerbating the situation. Therefore, the current Covid situation creates uncertainty in the market which results in spot vales not provide realistic longer term values (e.g assets may be underpriced in view of uncertainty at current time). Over the lifetime of the investment portfolio, the additional income to the Council over and above Treasury Management returns stands at circa £24.5m, calculated until the end of December 2020. This additional revenue generated from these investments more than offsets the decline in capital values and has helped protect key services with the additional funding provided.

Further details are available in the 'Investment Portfolio Review# report to the Executive, Resources and Contracts PDS on 3rd February 2021.

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https://cds.bromley.gov.uk/documents/g6891/Public%20reports%20pack%20Wednesday%2003-Feb-2021%2018.30%20Executive%20Resources%20and%20Contracts%20Policy%20Developm.pdf?T=10