

## ECS PDS for 11<sup>th</sup> March 2021

### List of questions from the public for oral response :

#### 1) Question from Julian Freestone:

'Significant damage to footpaths & fauna is being done in Elmstead Woods through the regular unauthorised use of motorbikes & quad bikes in the woods. There is also a significant amount of noise pollution caused by them at times of high public use (weekends). Can you please tell me how the Council intends to tackle this problem?'

#### Answer to Question 1:

A) The Council and Police are working together to develop an action plan of joint site patrols involving the Councils Parks Security contractor / Ward Security and the police

B) Council officers, The police and the Council's Parks contractors will undertake site visits to identify and assess official key pedestrian and vehicle access points into the park to determine what action / physical improvements are required prevent the illegal access by these motorbikes while still maintaining access for pedestrians, those in wheel chairs and people with buggies.

C) The site visit will also look to identify illegal motorbike access points with a view to blocking them with appropriate infrastructure. We strive to maintain the paths and fauna in Elmstead Woods in a good condition as far as reasonably possible. the budget however will be stretched to repair additional damage so it may take some time to achieve those repairs. If we are successful in catching any of the culprits we will seek to impose fines which we can then use to help with repairs

#### Supplementary Question to Question 1:

You mentioned that this matter falls under the remit of two committees as it also relates to matters of public safety. Am I right in thinking that this will be a joint effort as well as involving the police, given that the activity is illegal.

#### Answer to Supplementary Question 1

The Environment Committee cover the policy aspects of the Parks Security Service and Councillor Lymer (Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement) has more to do with the parks security service. So yes, we will be dealing with this jointly. Councillor Lymer has regular contact with the police. As you pointed out, we require joint action to be effective. Ward security use body worn cameras and patrol with dogs. This give them a good ability to act in the situation regarding the quad bikes and motor bikes.

#### 2) Question from Daniel Mirea:

I have serious concerns about the damage done to the whole ecosystem in Elmstead Woods brought by an increasing number of motorbikes motocross users in this area. It is not just the noise but also the damage done by aggressive off-road driving through Elmstead Woods on a regular basis. In spite of numerous complaints, the council does not seem to take action. Can you please minute these concerns and update on any future action plans?

### **Answer to Question 2:**

- A) The Council and Police are working together to develop an action plan of joint site patrols involving the Council's Parks Security contractor / Ward Security and the police
- B) Council officers, The police and the Council's Parks contractors will undertake site visits to identify and assess official key pedestrian and vehicle access points into the park to determine what action / physical improvements are required prevent the illegal access by these motorbikes while still maintaining access for pedestrians, those in wheel chairs and people with buggies.
- C) The site visit will also look to identify illegal motorbike access points with a view to blocking them with appropriate infrastructure.

We strive to maintain the paths and fauna in Elmstead Woods in a good condition as far as reasonably possible. The budget however will be stretched to repair additional damage so it may take some time to achieve those repairs. If we are successful in catching any of the culprits we will seek to impose fines which we can then use to help with repairs.

### **3a) Question from Richard Gibbons:**

Would Portfolio Holder (a) provide definitive list of land and building assets idVerde is currently contracted to manage and maintain within Open Space Portfolio; (b) list of land and building assets subject to development and/or disposal in 2015/16, 2016/17, 2017/18, 2018/19, 2019/20, 2020/21?

### **Answer to Question 3a:**

A) A list can be provided of definitive land assets that idverde manage and maintain. We would require more information regarding the format of the information requested.

Idverde are not currently contracted to manage or maintain buildings and property assets.

B) Since 2015 the Council has not disposed of any land or building assets within the Open Space Portfolio – as managed by Idverde. The only exception to this is that the Council have granted a lease for a term exceeding 7 years to FC Elmstead so that they could build their new pavilion at Chislehurst Recreation Ground and the Open Space notification process was followed.

### **3b) Question from Richard Gibbons:**

Has the Portfolio Holder undertaken SWOT analysis for Demand Responsive Transport (DRT) to (a) enhance/extend bus routes currently serving borough; (b) support regeneration/development of Orpington Town Centre, Cray Business Corridor, Biggin Hill SOLDC; (c) improve services to/from rural villages, nearby housing developments such as Fort Halstead, and Sevenoaks?

### **Answer to question 3b:**

The Council understands the importance of the bus as part of the Borough's public transport network and how it could be further developed, incrementally, based on changes in demand and travel behaviour. The Council holds regular Public Transport Liaison meetings, some of which are held in public. These meetings are held to raise service issues and general coordination between users, providers and funders of public transport (the local TDA is invited) TfL is the body in London funded to deliver bus services, the Council, does make requests of TfL in this regard. As and when TfL undertakes studies to develop the network and investigate new and innovative bus services, the Council, as a stakeholder will provide advice and commentary. In July 2018 we wrote to TfL to suggest, in response to a TfL approach, that when they trialed a DRT service that they **consider** the rural part of our borough. You will also have seen the Council's Press Releases on supervised autonomous vehicle tests in 2018 and 2019, which could be a method for delivery of DRT. TfL primarily delivers bus services to Greater London residents and tax payers to reach their destination rather than Kent residents to reach destinations in London. It is my expectation that future developments, such as Fort Halstead as part of their environmental commitments in the planning process should be considering supporting public transport and/or active travel options for residents. The outline planning application for Fort Halstead appears to include the provision of a community bus service probably to Orpington Station. Bus services are only part of the public transport offer, which includes rail.

Our LIP did make a number of requests for new connectivity, particularly orbital routes and links to the Elizabeth line, in addition looking for a timetable for zero emission buses. In addition public transport has been a consideration of the SOLDC and when we become aware of connectivity gaps we will engage with TfL to address them. Future work though remains dependent on TfL finances.

### Supplementary Question relating to 3b

The last meeting that I can find on the LBB website for the Public Transport Liaison Group was in September 2015. Has the Group met since then, and when will it be meeting next? Have TfL's DRT trials in Sutton and Ealing been discussed at London Councils' TEC meetings? If so, when was this? Otherwise, please can this be raised at future meetings?

### Answer to Supplementary Question 3b

No further meeting is planned. There was a meeting in early 2020, but this was probably not a public meeting. We will be setting up a meeting as soon as we can meet in person again. I will liaise with the PDS Chairman who formerly chairs these meetings to see when another one might be organised. The DRT meetings cross over into the Supervised Autonomous Vehicle Transport Trials. That was probably last discussed at a London Councils TEC meeting a couple of years ago in September 2019.

I will ask the Chairman of the TEC to see when there is a further update, but this will probably not be of much use until TfL have finances available to take this further. Most of these would have been delivered by other parties and TfL and the boroughs are actually only stakeholders and observers, rather than participants in the trials.

(The Chairman commented that the last meeting of the Public Liaison Committee was in mid-January 2020)