

Council

12th July 2021

Questions from Members of the Public for Oral Reply

1. From Jasper Bell to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services (as Mr Bell was unable to attend the meeting, a written reply was sent.)

A number of pedestrian crossings near schools have been installed recently in the borough, for example near Newstead Wood and Tubbenden Primary, Bishop Challoner and Valley School. Could the Council please confirm the rationale for pedestrian crossings approved in the borough last year and the exact KSI levels they hit in order to gain approval?

Reply:

The KSI assessment is applied to direct Bromley's finite spend on casualty reduction schemes most effectively. That is not the only criterion for interventions. In the case of crossings care also has to be taken to ensure that crossings will not increase pedestrian collisions, a PV2 criterion is used to help.

The parallel zebra crossing in Crofton Road, near to Newstead Avenue, has been installed as part of a TfL funded scheme to improve cycling and walking in the vicinity of Orpington Station. The location seeing a very high concentration of pedestrians being the location of the second busiest station plus being in the vicinity of 5 schools. The parallel zebra crossing installed near to Bishop Challoner School forms part of an experimental cycling scheme, funded by DfT through TfL for emergency active travel schemes in response to the Covid pandemic, as part of the London Streetspace Plan (LSP). The zebra crossing near to Valley Primary School was also installed utilising LSP funding, but also in support of ongoing work to make improvements to Shortlands as part of the Shortlands Friendly Village programme. No casualty threshold was assessed before introducing these schemes.

2. From Jasper Bell to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services (as Mr Bell was unable to attend the meeting, a written reply was sent.)

How does South Eden Park Road currently "score" from a KSI perspective versus previous years and what thresholds would need to be met in terms of accident levels and severity for road safety improvements to be funded?

Reply:

Bromley prioritises finite spend on casualty reduction schemes based on the number of road casualties occurring at a location over the previous 36 months for which data is available. This is to ensure that the most casualties are saved per pound spent.

The minimum intervention level is set at five or more casualties in a 50m radius. Serious injuries are weighted more heavily in the analysis.

The only location in the vicinity of South Eden Park Road to meet the criteria is the roundabout where South Eden Park Road meets Monks Orchard Road and Links Way; this location is being investigated for a possible road safety improvement.

3. From Irene Bell to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

We have reason to believe the casualty reduction budget in the borough has recently decreased despite rises in council tax and obvious risks on local roads. Could the Council confirm whether this is the case and whether this reduction was in line with wider budget reductions and if so in which areas?

Reply:

The funding received from TfL for casualty reduction has not changed in recent years, save for during 2020/21 when no funding was received for casualty reduction. Due to the impact of the pandemic on TfL's income, overall transport funding decreased and at the directive of the DfT, funds were all allocated by TfL to active travel schemes.

4. From Irene Bell the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

I believe the absence of safe walkways and crossings on South Eden Park Road could be resulting in 'severance' issues and discouraging people from walking in favour of using cars, an issue that could worsen as the new developments adjacent to the road are occupied. Has the Council undertaken any modelling relating to this issue and have 'walking scheme' budgets or funding models similar to those utilised for the 2019 'Hayes Village Scheme' been considered?

Reply:

South Eden Park Road has a number of pedestrian islands to provide safe crossing points. The Council responds to residents and schools' concerns in respect to severance, and this can of course change in respect to developments or changed travel patterns. In the case of schools' requests for improvements to the walking infrastructure, these are normally communicated to the Council as part of a school's School Travel Plan. We encourage all schools to have achieve a silver or gold accreditation for their school travel plan.

The Council's budget for Walking Schemes is currently being utilised to commission counts at various locations along South Eden Park Road. The Council's budget for walking schemes is limited and priorities do and will need to be made.

As Mr Bell was not here I will read for context from one of his answers –

The only location in the vicinity of South Eden Park Road to meet the criteria based on KSIs for interventions is the roundabout where South Eden Park Road meets Monks Orchard Road and Links Way. This location is being investigated for a possible road safety improvement.

5. From Alisa Igoe to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

The Government's Covid Winter Grant Scheme

Table 2 of the following Management Information Returns show the total amount provided to vulnerable households and the administration costs, from Bromley's allocation:

14 February (period 1 December to 31 January)

5 May (period 1 December to 16 April)

Could you kindly provide me with copies of both?

Reply:

Yes, we can certainly provide the tables to you. Just as a point of interest, the administration costs in the first instance were £10,000 and from May the administration costs were £28,141, but the full figures in tabular form will be made available to you.

6. From Alisa Igoe to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

The Council website states the Covid Essential Fund (CEF) is a government initiative, specifically to support households suffering financial hardship as a direct result of the pandemic. There appears to have been no Bromley press release mentioning CEF which started on 17 April and ended 20 June. Why is this and on which date did the Council inform agencies of the opening of the CEF?

Reply:

Funding for the Covid Essential Fund was very limited fund for the extension period as set out above (the grant was previously entitled the Covid Winter Fund). As such the decision was made to continue the arrangements already in place under the Covid Winter fund Scheme for agencies to continue to refer clients on that basis that they were best positioned to assist clients who needed to access this funding. The webpage which had previously been set up to publicise the Bromley Covid Winter Grant was updated to reflect this extension, advising of the continued grant funding and how this could be accessed. The funding was also advertised with partner organisations and agencies across Bromley and those agencies were kept updated advising them of the closing date several weeks in advance.

Supplementary Question:

You say that you told the agencies and partners that you work with, but I am very curious to know why that was not also put out publicly? I have looked at Facebook, Twitter and all of your social media. With the Covid Winter Grant you did tell the public, although not as much as I would liked. I am wondering why you would not advertise this extra fund?

Reply:

It was purely because the grant was very limited, and it was an extension of the grant that was already in existence. We did not feel that it was necessary at that time to try to engender a greater expectation that funds were available that were not available.

We had to live within the means of the grant, and the important thing was to make sure that we targeted the money to the people that needed it rather than broadcast it far and wide. That was the judgement we took.