

EXECUTIVE

9th February 2022

QUESTIONS - FOR WRITTEN REPLY

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

What are the Council's plans for the public toilets in Norman Park? Are there any plans to reopen them, or demolish them? The current buildings are in considerable disrepair.

Reply:

The Council will review its plans for the public toilets in Norman Park as part of the action points contained within the recently endorsed Open Space Strategy by the Environment and Community Services PDS Committee which include:

1. A review of the use of all Open Space Building stock for which proposals will be developed to ensure that we have a fully occupied stock reflecting current and future objectives.
2. A review of the public convenience offer within the Portfolio with recommendations. Within the feedback to the Open Space Strategy, we are aware that respondents did frequently note that they felt Norman Park would be improved by public conveniences and this would be taken into consideration when considering any future use.
3. An audit of the Open Space Portfolio, to address any under provision in facilities within different geographic locations.

The three workstreams now form part of the Action Plans for the implementation of the strategy and will work concurrently to develop proposals for vacant buildings within the Open Space Portfolio including the Norman Park toilet block, and also be reflected in the individual management plans for the site.

2. From Peter Noorlander to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

In what ways has the Council helped owner-occupied homes to be more energy efficient, for example by supporting energy companies to provide fuel-poor or vulnerable households with insulation. How many of these homes have been upgraded as a result of such initiatives in the last 3 years?

Reply:

The Council recognises that some residents will struggle to afford adequate heating to stay warm during extreme cold spells, recently compounded by the current volatile energy market.

Hence, the Council has mobilised several programmes to help fuel poverty households including:

- A recent successful application for £920,000 under the Local Authority Delivery scheme (LAD2). The programme will enable the retrofit of an estimated 130 domestic properties. The funding criteria will ensure works tackle poorly insulated homes – ensuring residents save money on their energy bills whilst also mitigating the most amount of carbon emissions.
- Working in partnership with the South East London Community Energy group to reach out to fuel poverty households and identify energy saving initiatives and available grant funding.

3. From Peter Noorlander to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

What is the Council's view on developing a borough-wide heating and energy efficiency strategy with the aim of systematically improving the energy efficiency of buildings, both public and private, and decarbonising heat?

Reply:

Residents are invited to read the Council's Carbon Neutral 2029 plan regarding how it intends to manage its own public building stock and we continue to make good progress in this area, such as the Orpington Library air source heat pump installation.

The Carbon Management Team will also be presenting a report at the Environment and Community Services PDS meeting in June 2022, specifically about signposting residents, businesses and community groups to various grants, services and other initiatives aimed at energy savings and reducing CO₂ emissions.

4. From Sheena Roberts to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Given the potential link between dementia and air pollution, and Bromley's 'significantly higher rates of young-onset dementia compared to London and England', what is being done about air pollution in Bromley?

Reply:

Chronic exposure to poor air quality is known to have a number of negative health effects. The Borough's recently reviewed Air Quality Action Plan 2020 – 2025, which contains many targeted actions to improve air quality in Bromley, is available on the

Council's website here:

https://www.bromley.gov.uk/downloads/file/6391/air_quality_action_plan_aqap_2020-25

5. From Sheena Roberts to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

What policies are there in the Local Plan requiring new housing development to be zero carbon by 2025 - for instance, including the incorporation of renewable energy in new developments, using low carbon building materials, and building to the extremely high energy efficiency standards (eg Passivhaus or similar) which will be necessary to limit carbon emissions enough to meet our COP26 commitments?

Reply:

Planning applications are assessed in accordance with the Development Plan unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Policies in the London Plan and Local Plan will be the key policies used in the determination of planning applications; in particular, policy 124 of the Local Plan and policies SI2, SI3 and SI4 of the London Plan focus on achieving carbon reductions and promote energy efficiency measures and renewable energy.

Government planning policy is set out in the National Planning Policy Framework; as and when this is updated to take account of new environmental aims, for example to incorporate any COP26 commitments, it will be capable of being a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. Any review of the Local Plan or London Plan would also need to address the relevant requirements of national policy at the time.

6. From Rachel King to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

To encourage uptake of public transportation in Bromley, would the Council consider free travel for all residents travelling on the most congested and polluted routes in the borough?

Reply:

The Council and the GLA (i.e. the tax payer) already provide a large number of residents with transport passes, the cost of those journeys comes from Council Tax. For example the Freedom Pass and the Zip pass. We do encourage residents to consider active travel options which has benefits without an ongoing cost to the tax payer. Public transport is generally well used in peak hours when congestion is highest.

7. From Rachel King to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

To encourage active modes of travel in Bromley, would the committee support regular closures of a select number of roads to motorised transport every month? This could be supported by events, such as cycle races and free electric cycle sessions for residents.

Reply:

Bromley Council supports the one-off closure of streets for residents to engage in community-building street parties. The Council's Road Safety team also support and promote cycling through events such as Dr Bike in parks, cycling events in schools and have bikes of various types available to let residents try. The Council is also trialing School Streets whereby streets are closed to motorised traffic at the start and end of each school day.

Bromley has improved cycleways and cycle lanes across the borough over many years. The Council also offers cycle training and route planning to help those residents who are looking to change their transport choice. The Council considers that it is better to help those residents who wish to cycle more, to cycle safely, to substitute journeys, rather than close roads just for recreational cycling.

8. From Brayley Small to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

How much support does the Council give to provisions detailed in the "Blueprint for accelerating climate action and a green recovery at the local level" produced by a group of local government, environmental and research organisations, including the LGA, London Councils, Friends of the Earth and the Grantham Institute?

<https://www.adeptnet.org.uk/documents/blueprint-accelerating-climate-action-and-green-recovery-local-level>

Reply:

The Council agrees in principle to all the themes highlighted in the report although it should be noted that these reports require context at the local level. The Council has established its Green Recovery Working Group, which directly addresses the themes highlighted in the report and more.

The Carbon Management Team are members of several London Councils steering/working groups that are working hard to develop a pan-London approach to delivering their seven climate priorities. The resulting action plans will help inform the best approach for accelerating climate action across the capital.

9. From Brayley Small to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

At the Borough Climate Conference in October 2021 Harrow Council put forward a proposal, the One World Living Programme, to reduce consumption emissions across London, focusing on the categories of food, textiles, plastics & electricals. It set a provisional target of a 2/3 reduction in emissions across these categories by 2030. What is the Council's view of this proposal?

Reply:

We are limited in our assessment without seeing the methodology. This is an ambitious target that will require accurate emissions baselining, recording, apportioning to the relevant sector and subsequent monitoring.

The Carbon Management Team are members of several London Councils steering/working groups that are working hard to develop a pan-London approach to delivering their seven climate priorities, which includes consideration of consumption emissions.

The Carbon Management Team will also be presenting a report at the ECS PDS meeting in June 2022, specifically about signposting residents, businesses and community groups to various grants, services and other initiatives aimed at reducing CO₂ emissions.