

Decision Maker: COUNCIL

Date: Monday 28 February 2022

Decision Type: Non-Urgent Non-Executive Non-Key

Title: PETITIONS

Contact Officer: Graham Walton, Democratic Services Manager
Tel: 0208 461 7743 E-mail: graham.walton@bromley.gov.uk

Chief Officer: Tasnim Shawkat, Director of Corporate Services and Governance

Ward: Orpington, Chislehurst

1. Reason for report

1.1 Under the Council's Petition Scheme, if petitioners are dissatisfied with the Council's response to their petition they can present their case to full Council, provided that the number of verified signatures exceeds the threshold of 500 signatures for a traditional paper petition, or 4,000 signatures for an online petition. The lead petitioner or their nominee can address the Council for up to five minutes, after which Members can debate the issues raised. Council can resolve to recommend the Executive, or the relevant Portfolio Holder, to take action, or it can note the petition and decide that no further action be taken.

1.2 Three petitions have been received for consideration at this meeting as follows –

(1) Orpington Town Centre

(2) Road Safety at Chislehurst War Memorial Junction

(3) Climate Emergency

Further details of each petition are set out in section 3 of this report.

2. **RECOMMENDATION**

The Council is requested to consider the cases made by each of the petitioners and either recommend action to be taken by the Executive or relevant Portfolio Holder, or note the petitions and decide that no further action be taken.

Impact on Vulnerable Adults and Children

1. Summary of Impact: Not Applicable
-

Corporate Policy

1. Policy Status: Existing Policy:
 2. BBB Priority: Quality Environment Vibrant, Thriving Town Centres Regeneration Not Applicable:
-

Financial

1. Cost of proposal: Not Applicable
 2. Ongoing costs: Not Applicable:
 3. Budget head/performance centre: Not Applicable
 4. Total current budget for this head: Not Applicable
 5. Source of funding: Not Applicable
-

Personnel

1. Number of staff (current and additional): Not Applicable
 2. If from existing staff resources, number of staff hours: Not Applicable
-

Legal

1. Legal Requirement: None:
 2. Call-in: Not Applicable: Full Council decisions are not subject to call-in.
-

Procurement

1. Summary of Procurement Implications: Not Applicable
-

Customer Impact

1. Estimated number of users/beneficiaries (current and projected): Not Applicable
-

Ward Councillor Views

1. Have Ward Councillors been asked for comments? Not Applicable
2. Summary of Ward Councillors comments: Not Applicable

3. COMMENTARY

- 3.1 The Council's Petition Scheme allows for petitioners to present their case to full Council if they are dissatisfied with the Council's response to their petition, provided that the number of verified signatures exceeds the threshold of 500 signatures from people who live, work or study in the borough. The lead petitioner or their nominee can address the Council for up to five minutes – they do not take part in any subsequent debate and must return to the public gallery. Once Members have considered the matter, they can choose whether to recommend any further action, or to agree that no further action should be taken.
- 3.2 Three petitions have been received that meet the threshold where the petitioner is dissatisfied with the Council's response. Details of the petitions, and the Council's responses, are set out in the following appendices as follows –

Appendix 1: Orpington Town Centre

Appendix 2: Climate Emergency

Appendix 3: Road Safety at Chislehurst War Memorial Junction

Non-Applicable Sections:	Impact on vulnerable adults and children/Policy/ Financial/Legal/Personnel/Procurement
Background Documents: (Access via Contact Officer)	Council Petition Scheme

Orpington Town Centre

The petition has over 700 signatures, and calls on the Council –

Not to agree to Areli's current redevelopment plan but to consult Orpington residents on the Future of the whole town centre.

The Council's response was -

The Council as Local Planning Authority is considering the current planning application submitted by Areli and this will be determined based on its compliance with development plan policies and other material planning considerations as required. This application has not been determined yet and local residents have the opportunity to comment on the application on our website. As a separate matter, the Council is currently consulting on a draft Supplementary Planning Document for Orpington Town Centre which will guide future development proposals. The consultation period for the SPD is being extended to 12 weeks to ensure that extensive feedback can be collected.

Climate Emergency

The petition from Bromley Climate Action Alliance has over 900 signatures, and calls on the Council to –

- Declare a climate emergency with the aim of reaching net zero greenhouse gas emissions by 2030 for the whole borough.
- Work with business, voluntary organisations, relevant experts, and neighbouring local authorities to devise a concrete plan to achieve that goal.
- Publicly call on the UK Government to provide the council with the necessary resources to achieve that goal, where funding is insufficient.

The Council's response was –

In order to address your first point I would draw your attention to the minutes of the meeting of the Full Council on the 15th July 2019 at which the following motion was tabled and agreed whereby:

"This Council welcomes the Government's decision that the UK will have net zero Carbon emissions by 2050. With its tree planting, energy efficiency programme, LED street lighting investment and other initiatives the Council has already been reducing its net emissions. This Council confirms its intention that direct Council activities will have net zero emissions within ten years (2029). The Portfolio Holder is strongly encouraged to include this commitment in the Environment and Community Services Portfolio Plan and Council also requests that annual reports are provided to the Environment and Community Services PDS."

The Council therefore was in 2019 already acknowledging the issues that you raise and was taking significant steps to address them. In actual fact, prior to this, the Council has established its first Carbon Management Plan as far back as 2008, aimed at driving down emissions and energy consumption. Since the 2019 declaration, this Council has continued in developing a wide range of strategies and programs aimed at reducing carbon emissions. Following the adoption of the above motion, the 2029 Net Zero Carbon Strategy was reviewed and approved at the Environment and Community Services Policy Development and Scrutiny (ECS PDS) Committee meeting on 29th January 2020, with an associated action plan being presented to Committee in the autumn (2020). Year two progress against the 2029 Net Zero Action Plan is reported on the Council's website.

In addressing your second point, the Council continues to work with contractors (our scope 3 emissions) and has outlined an approach for future engagement with the public, whilst also providing updates on the current borough-wide carbon reduction activities the Carbon Management Team is managing. During December 2021, the Carbon Management Team undertook an assessment of the council's environmental contracts in order to establish service providers' commitments to reducing their own emissions (including specifically through the delivery of their services in Bromley). Having identified the high-level commitments of those largest providers, the Council will now work with these organisations to monitor progress, identify new innovation that can be applied to service delivery and report any future achievements through the annual contract monitoring progress reports and carbon programme updates.

Training has also been delivered to all Council Contract Owners on the Social Value Act, covering topics such as encouraging the use of local employers, efficient material use and carbon

reduction through the supply chain, ensuring that Contract Owners are aware of how to address these important issues through the procurement of new council goods and services. The Procurement Board, chaired by the Assistant Director of Procurement and Commissioning ensure that all contracts are scrutinised for their social value impacts (including carbon emissions)

Through the Council's Green Recovery Working Group, established in December 2020, a group of officers from key service areas are working together to build back better from Covid-19, aligning LBB with national aspirations which place climate and ecological policy at the heart of an economic and socially resilient recovery. Officers aim to improve the sustainability and social value of their departments to reduce emissions and achieve co-benefits on borough wide initiatives, which include: The Big London Energy Switch; Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, the Tree Planting and Woodlands Establishment Programme, Maintained Schools Decarbonisation Programme, external funding for Solar PV appraisals on community buildings, the Local Authority Delivery Scheme (LAD2) retrofit programme.

The council promotes the Big London Energy Switch which provides residents across the borough with an opportunity to get a better deal on gas and electricity bills through a group energy auction. When many residents register as a group, they have greater bargaining power than they would individually. The scheme uses this group buying power to get energy companies to compete for customers by offering the lowest prices. Electricity supplied to homes signing up to the scheme is backed by 100 per cent renewable electricity, helping residents achieve cheaper and greener electricity tariffs. Average savings in London are £250 per annum with tariffs fixed for one year.

As part of the authorities Electric Vehicle Charging Strategy, adopted in November 2021, a 'Residential Charging Pilot' was approved to trial a variety of residential charging solutions which we will be launching in 2022. The aim is to develop insights from the pilot to scale up the public charging network in Bromley to meet projected increases in electric vehicles due to the 2030 ban on the sale of new petrol and diesel cars and vans, this strategy and associated pilot is receiving a huge amount of interest from residents who are interested in taking part as the uptake in electric vehicles in the borough increases.

Similarly the Council through its Carbon Management Team are represented at the London Councils 'Renewables for London' Steering Group and associated Working Group. The role is to provide advice, endorse and make decisions to enable the delivery of the Renewable Power programme outputs for London and the achievement of associated programme outcomes. Scope of the group includes accessing or buying more affordable renewable energy, providing energy advice (access to fairer renewable tariffs & reduction in carbon usage of buildings) and decentralised energy projects, which covers opportunities relating to district heating and power networks. An action plan for collective work across London to reduce boroughs' emissions has been drafted.

The Council's ambitious four-year tree planting programme which is currently underway, will support a reduction in carbon emissions as well as contributing to the Queen's Green Canopy as part of the Queen's Platinum Jubilee. These events will encourage increased resident participation in the tree friends scheme and in supporting planting initiatives locally which will further contribute to local environmental and health improvements. In addition to this, some 24 hectares of unused land have been identified for potential woodlands establishment, not only capturing carbon but enhancing the borough's eco-systems. The Forestry Commission have awarded grant funding to conduct further ecological studies so that a compliant Woodlands Management Plan may be developed. This plan will enable the Council to access considerable grant funding for planting and the subsequent maintenance to ensure woodland maturity.

The Carbon Management Team has developed a decarbonisation programme for the Council's maintained schools, a first in London as it is a holistic programme which includes innovative data collection, educational development and bespoke net zero pathways for each school – these will inform any future grant funding applications - making applications more attractive due to the granularity of the data recorded and the identified decarbonisation pathways. The inclusion of the educational development means the children will be brought along their school's journey to net zero, making for a holistic educational approach. The programme also includes government kick-starter employment opportunities for two young Bromley residents.

Most recently Bromley Council has provided funding from their Section 106 Carbon Offsetting fund to set up a Library of Things (LoT) in Bromley Town Centre. This will be co-located in the proposed Sustainability Hub being established in the Glades shopping centre by the Greener and Cleaner Bromley and Beyond group. The Library of Things aims to enable people to save money and to make a positive environmental impact through borrowing things rather than buying them and this reducing the amount of goods entering the waste stream

These examples illustrate the wide ranging programmes that the Council is engaged in as it seeks to meet its objectives of not only becoming carbon neutral, but also assisting its residents, businesses and suppliers to achieve this aim and I would envisage more significant and exciting announcements over the coming months as this authority continues in its resolve and determination to drive this agenda forward.

With regard to your third point, senior officers and elected members regularly meet with the boroughs elected Members of Parliament to discuss a wide range of issues which impact on the lives of borough residents and businesses and the topic of carbon reduction is clearly one of these, so I feel confident that Government is aware of the very real practical and financial challenges that all local authorities face in dealing with this issue.

Road Safety at Chislehurst War Memorial Junction

The petition from Safe Crossings for Chislehurst has over 4,000 online signatures, and states -

“We call on Bromley Council to improve road safety for pedestrians at the junction on the A222 and the A208 – the Chislehurst War Memorial.

- We request the installation of a pelican/puffin push-button to be installed at the traffic light
- Road safety measures/installations for the road and pavement leading-up and into the junction – crossing over from Kemnal Road to the Royal Parade via The Shaw (slip road) and from the Royal Parade bus-stop over to the otherside of the Royal Parade – be this in the form of a dedicated lollipop person at school times, zebra crossing, a refuge etc.
- This junction is dangerous not just for parents and children crossing it but for all local residents using it including the elderly and disabled.
- How can active travel – walking, cycling – to schools or locally be encouraged without safe crossings?”

The Council’s response was –

Thank you for your petition received on 31 January 2022 regarding a request for a pedestrian (green man) phase at the traffic lights and improved crossing facilities over the A222 Bromley Lane from Kemnal Road to The Shaw and over the A208 Royal Parade near to the bus stops to Church Row.

For many years the Council has been looking at what could be done to improve road safety at the Chislehurst War Memorial junction. However, we must not do the wrong thing or we may inadvertently make matters worse. The Council needs to be confident that any scheme which comes forward does not increase congestion because as well as the inevitable resulting pollution, the local “rat running” that would result could increase collisions on nearby local roads, such as Watts Lane close to Coopers School, thereby compromising road safety.

A review of injury collisions in the vicinity of the War Memorial junction shows the recorded collisions do not have a discernible causation pattern that would make an engineering measure successful. If road safety can be improved we will make changes, but we need to be confident that we will not make the situation worse.

Some years ago now, the Council conducted extensive research to see what could be done to improve matters at or near the junction, both in terms of delays to bus services and in respect to the difficulty pedestrians face crossing the A222 at this location [see [Supplementary information 1.pdf \(bromley.gov.uk\)](#) and [Supplementary information 2.pdf \(bromley.gov.uk\)](#)]. A central conclusion of this work was that if a pedestrian phase at the traffic lights were to be introduced without widening the road, then significant congestion would result, with the concern that more motorists would look to take short cuts on residential roads, thereby causing road safety concerns on nearby residential roads. Another implication to this would be further delays to bus services and the likely termination of buses.

A possible solution would be to widen the road at the junction which would increase capacity and allow a pedestrian phase to be added. However, this would mean losing valuable Common Land which at the time the matter was discussed the Trustees of the Common were understandably

not willing to support. There would also be a high cost associated with that solution and funding is of course finite.

So far I have really only addressed the issue of there being no green man phase at the traffic lights and no obvious way to add one without a negative impact on safety overall. Let me now address the issue of improving other crossing facilities over the A222 and A208.

Ward Councillors met with Council Officers before Christmas to look at the possibility of introducing a crossing facility in this area. Bromley Officers have now shared their feasibility designs with staff at TfL, as any crossing close to the traffic lights may have an impact on the successful operation of the traffic lights and could still lead to the significant traffic and bus delays that we are trying to avoid. (TfL operate all traffic lights across London and also manage bus routes.)

Whilst the Council's traffic engineers have not yet found an acceptable crossing solution for the traffic lights, I hope that their current investigations will help with the second aspect of the request you have made in the petition. Please be in no doubt that this whole matter is extremely important, with the Council being committed to road safety. But what we cannot do is take forward a scheme which will be ultimately detrimental to road safety, however well intended.