

Council

28th February 2022

Questions from Members of the Council for Oral Reply

1. From Cllr Mike Botting to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Can the Portfolio Holder please tell me how many trees have been planted in the Borough in the last year and how many does the Council anticipate in planting in the next year?

Reply:

I can provide you with details on the numbers for Street Trees and Park Trees.

In 21/22 we will plant 1,452 trees. In the coming three years, we will plant 1,250 trees plus at least the number lost in the previous year. In other words, we will plant them in the season after they are lost. Woodlands are best managed by allowing natural regeneration, and individual trees are not counted in the same way as Street Trees and Park Trees.

Additional supplementary question from Cllr Kathy Bance:

I understand that most of Bromley's ash trees are sick and are likely to be felled. Will replacing those trees be in addition to the numbers of trees that you have given?

Reply:

As I said, it will be 1,250 plus at least the number of trees lost either through health reasons or through storms in the previous year. So, by implication, in the season 2022/23 we will plant any lost through health reasons plus any lost through storms.

2. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett MA JP to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Following the survey of residents of Surrey, Sussex, North and Kent Roads and the High Street, West Wickham in June 2021 as to whether they would support a residents parking scheme and one-way system when is it proposed to implement the scheme?

Reply:

Once finalised the resulting scheme will be programmed and, subject to the workload of the contractor, will be installed as soon as possible and barring unforeseen circumstances this will be before the end of the calendar year.

Supplementary Question:

Can the Portfolio Holder ensure that when we install the new scheme we repair the roads as well?

Reply:

The road resurfacing programme will be coming to the March PDS, which will highlight those in priority need. Just before the March PDS, you can ask the relevant officer and he will be able to show photographic evidence of why the road was or was not included in the programme.

3. From Cllr Kieran Terry to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

How many fly tipping incidents were recorded in the London Borough of Bromley in the most recent financial year available and how do we compare to other London Boroughs?

Reply:

Fly tipping incidents are reported to DEFRA as part of the national waste data return. The latest figures cover 2020/21.

31 Local Authorities report as London Authorities, the attached graph details return made by all authorities. Bromley suffered from 3,575 incidents which is the seventh lowest total in London and less than 1% of the total return for London.

| | |
|------------------------|-------|
| Barking and Dagenham | 3494 |
| Barnet | 4218 |
| Bexley | 5684 |
| Brent | 33467 |
| Bromley | 3575 |
| Camden | 36696 |
| City of London | 2112 |
| Croydon | 22719 |
| Ealing | 13090 |
| Enfield | 7289 |
| Greenwich | 4376 |
| Hackney | 13609 |
| Hammersmith and Fulham | 16828 |
| Haringey | 21950 |
| Harrow | 7622 |
| Havering | 3242 |
| Hillingdon | 9323 |
| Hounslow | 30902 |
| Islington | 1982 |
| Kensington and Chelsea | 8043 |
| Kingston upon Thames | 2205 |
| Lambeth | 5040 |
| Lewisham | 4294 |
| Merton | 15857 |
| Newham | 20765 |
| Redbridge | 26053 |
| Richmond upon Thames | 2981 |
| Southwark | 21386 |
| Sutton | 4487 |
| Tower Hamlets | 7537 |
| Waltham Forest | 8606 |
| Wandsworth | 3924 |
| Westminster | 11478 |

Supplementary Question:

I have been meeting with various residents in Chislehurst recently and most of them are very happy with the Council's responses to fly tipping reports. Can the Portfolio Holder please tell me what is the typical turn-around time for a fly-tipping report made by a resident?

Reply:

I'm sorry I do not have that to hand, but depending on the type of material and the volume of material on average it is probably a day to two days.

Additional supplementary question from Cllr Kevin Kennedy-Brooks:

What residents really want to know is what is the difference in fly-tipping incidents in the borough over the last few years?

Reply:

I do not have those figures to hand but they are part of the scorecard that the PDS Committee receives. I am sure that Cllr Dunn could provide you with that, but if not, I will ensure that you get an answer.

4. From Cllr Angela Wilkins to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

As the Council is still paying for a “man in a van” because the UPS switch protecting the Council’s network & systems has still not been repaired, what does he expect to be the final bill for this night watchman service since its implementation?

Reply:

The Council’s operations are accessed by both staff and residents 24 hours a day, 7 days a week via various on line portals the Council uses and serviced via the Council’s on site servers. These servers need an uninterrupted power supply to ensure that they can operate. The UPS switch protecting the Council’s network & systems has now been replaced and equipment has been installed to provide an early warning system in the event of power failure so that on site staff can ensure full operability as a safeguard. The watch service will now be dispensed with. To date this has cost the Council £140K, however it should also be borne in mind that this service has not only ensured that the Council’s operations have continued to be maintained but also ensured that there has been no power loss to the Covid Vaccination Centre which has been housed at the Civic Centre since the beginning of 2021, thus ensuring refrigerated vaccination doses are stored correctly and appointments are maintained.

Supplementary Question:

Would he like to recalculate that because my understanding is, based on the answer given by Cllr Arthur, where we were told a short while ago (Cllr Bance asked the question) that the monthly cost of this was £7,200 and according to an Audit report the man in the van has been there since October 2019. I calculate the cost to be £201,600.

Reply:

That figure was provided to me only last week by officers, but certainly I will ask them to validate it and get back to you.

Additional supplementary question from Cllr Ryan Thomson:

It is good news that this issue has been resolved and the switch repaired. I was curious to know what was the delay in terms of it taking since 2019 to resolve – what was the hold up in getting it repaired?

Reply:

There have been a variety of technical issues. Certainly it was originally fixed last autumn and there were some follow-on problems. There was a previous question that I answered that it was closer to being finished than it was because of these failures. It was incredibly important that the vaccination centre did not lose its power – if we had lost power we would have lost a whole load of vaccines so we were super cautious with it.

5. From Cllr Ian Dunn to the Portfolio Holder for Adult Care & Health

Can the Portfolio Holder please explain why the Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board only publishes Executive Summaries of its Safeguarding Adult Reviews, while many other Safeguarding Adult Boards publish the full document, sometimes with names redacted?

Reply:

As Members should be aware, and has been confirmed by the Independent Chair of the Safeguarding Adults Board, there is no statutory requirement to publish Safeguarding Adults Reviews. LBB has a Safeguarding Adults Committee which agrees on any publication arrangements on conclusion of a safeguarding review and when all linked multi-agency investigations have been completed. The decision will be made on a case by case basis taking into account the terms of reference of the review and the views of the individuals affected and their families.

Supplementary Question:

The Bromley Safeguarding Adults Board website has a single report from Bromley – that is a four page summary which tells us very little. It also has summaries from other authorities, including one which is ninety six pages long with eighteen individual learning points. Why is it we are showing other authorities reports but not our own?

Reply:

I can confirm that this authority is not out of kilter with other London boroughs. Lewisham, Lambeth, Croydon, they all produce executive summaries and so we are not out of kilter with other boroughs.

Additional supplementary question from Cllr Simon Jeal:

What use do the Adult Safeguarding Team and the Board make of the full reports published by other boroughs?

Reply:

We use those as learning opportunities. The report, even the executive summary, will have action plans and things that we need to implement to make sure that our vulnerable people are protected and that we learn, multi-agency, across the board, the lessons that are learnt.

6. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Leader of the Council

On 25th January organisations were informed that applications for the Bromley household support fund had closed early and those submitted could take up to six weeks to process. Would you agree this shows many residents across the borough are struggling with the current cost of living crisis, more support is needed and that six weeks is too long for a family to wait to be able to buy food or pay their energy bills?

Reply:

I don't believe so personally, especially given that the Council's Hardship Fund for 2021/22 remains significantly underspent with just one month of the financial year to go, despite being doubled in size in 2021/22 from £100k to £200k per year.

I believe that the Council's early launch of the Household Support Fund back in November, one of the first Boroughs in London to do so, and our ability to expeditiously process the grant at a time of year renowned for staffing shortages across all industries, even before Covid-related problems added to the concerns, is thanks in very large part to the streamlined distribution processes we set in place for previous generous Government Covid grant schemes, as well as our ability to cross reference back to previous recipients already identified as requiring assistance.

Supplementary Question:

Could he confirm what the average processing time was for the applications and how many remain unprocessed?

Reply:

I will have to get back to you on the average time, but I can confirm that none are unprocessed. There, I believe, about fifty waiting for residents to return potentially necessary paperwork.

7. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection & Enforcement

The local StreetSafe survey ended in July with the objective of compiling the data and identifying locations which would benefit from either CCTV or additional lighting. Is Bromley Council committed to ring fencing funds for areas identified in Bromley?

Reply:

Although I have not been able to find details of the surveys set out in your question, I am aware of the Police's on-going StreetSafe initiative where members of the public can report online areas where they feel unsafe. We are still waiting to hear when this data will be made available from the Police to the local authority. Whilst there is no current commitment for ring-fenced funds for CCTV, the Council does have seven re-deployable cameras which can be placed in emerging crime hotspots.

Supplementary Question:

There is a typo because the survey ended in February, not July – that is the local survey which is part of our tri-borough. If there are locations identified in Bromley will there be ring-fenced money to consult, because this whole consultation depends on the Police then liaising with their Councils and other third parties to fund the initiatives for CCTV and or lighting.

Reply:

At the moment, there are no plans for, and no commitment to ring-fenced funds, but once we do have further data there may be a need to look at things further. At this moment in time it is very difficult to comment on that.

Additional supplementary question from Cllr Angela Wilkins

Are those seven CCTV cameras deployed at the moment, and if so where are they deployed to?

Reply:

There are fourteen overall, of which seven are deployed, but there are seven available on request via the Police to be put into crime hotspots.

8. From Cllr Josh King to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Services

Given Bromley's relatively low performance on the Healthy Streets Scorecard for London and the decision to sever the Albemarle Road segregated cycle lane, what alternative provision for cycling is going to be made?

Reply:

The percentage of trips made by bike in Bromley is lower than in many inner London boroughs but is mid-table when compared to all outer London boroughs and higher than in some nearby boroughs such as Croydon, Bexley and Sutton.

Cycle routes have been introduced in a number of locations in Bromley over the last couple of years, including the pop-up cycle lane in Albemarle Road, which is now being modified in light of feedback from public consultation. The Council is looking at ways to continue the cycle route in Shortlands and Beckenham, to hopefully meet up with the cycle route that is nearing completion between Kent House Station and Lower Sydenham.

With regard to the Healthy Streets Scorecard, Bromley does not ascribe to their system of scoring. For example it is not clear to us that all or possibly any Low Traffic Neighbourhoods are necessarily healthy, particularly considering the scheme trialled by Croydon near to Crystal Palace.

Supplementary Question:

Is the Portfolio Holder aware of negative comments by cyclists about the suitability and maintenance of the cycle lane in Albemarle Road and was this cycle lane designed in consultation with user groups and other expert groups such as Sustrans?

Reply:

That specific scheme was a result of the lockdown and was introduced quickly. The route, rather than that particular implementation, was part of the Shortlands Villages Scheme which Sustrans were fully involved in.

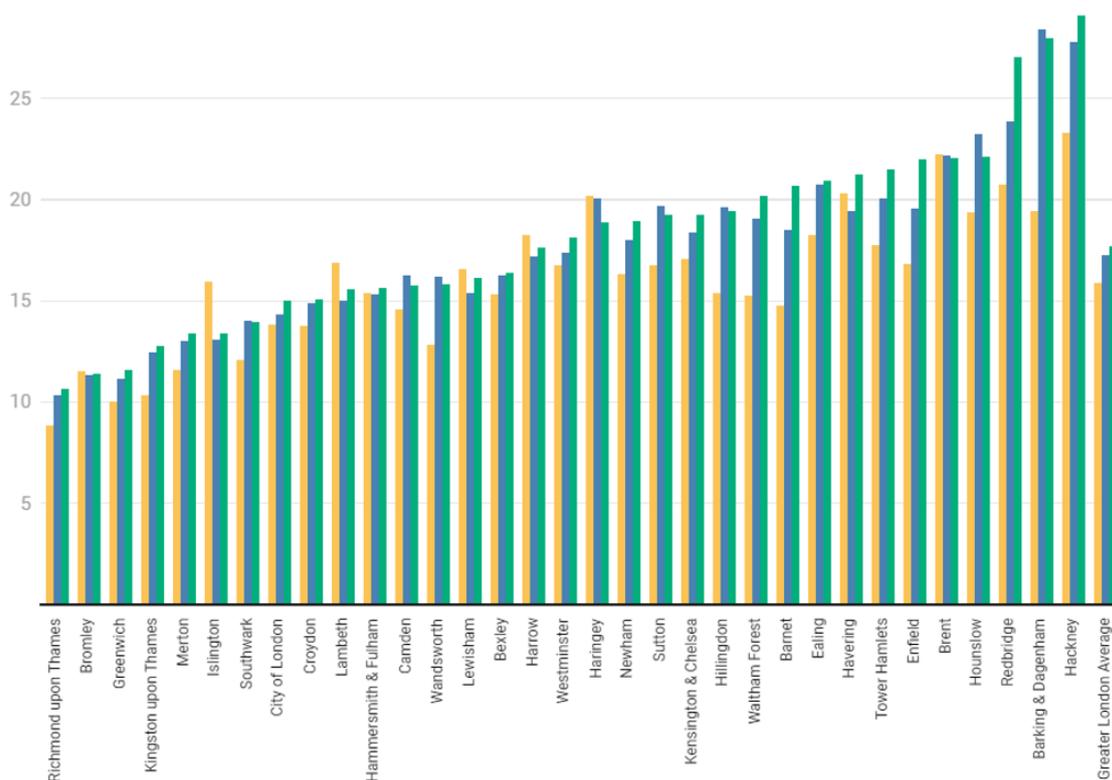
Additional supplementary question from Councillor Kieran Terry:

In his question Councillor King references the Healthy Streets Scorecard. Is the Portfolio Holder aware of this graph from the Healthy Streets Scorecard that shows on the critical performance measure of average annual pedestrian serious and fatal casualties per hundred thousand, Bromley is the second safest in London and that we are safer than any Labour run borough in London?

Road collision pedestrian casualties, 2019, 2020 and 2021 Scorecard data, by London borough

Average annual pedestrian serious and fatal casualties per 100,000 daily walking stages for each borough and London average, comparing 2019, 2020 and 2021 Scorecard data. [View all results](#)

Year 2019 Year 2020 Year 2021



Annual average is the total number of pedestrians killed and seriously injured over three year period 2015-2017, 2016-2018 and 2017-2019 divided by three.

Reply:

We do not subscribe to the whole scoring system, but it is quite noticeable just how well we do perform in a system that seems to be stacked against us.

9. From Cllr Tony Owen to the Chairman of the Development Control Committee

Do you think the Planning Inspectorate should be challenged for allowing a linked detached house to be downgraded to a semi-detached house by the neighbour converting the linked garage into an adjoining habitable room?

Reply:

If you are referring to the appeal at 11 Kennedy Close in Petts Wood I agree that this was a very odd decision by the Planning Inspector to allow this appeal and I do share your concerns about any future precedents. However, it is only possible to challenge appeal decisions on procedural grounds and not because of a differing view on a decision made. Officers would be happy to review any specific decision to see if there are any procedural issues, however genuine procedural mistakes are uncommon, the cost of challenge is high and outcomes unpredictable. A successful challenge would only lead to a redetermination of the appeal which could potentially result in the same outcome depending on the points raised.

Supplementary Question:

Can I say how incredibly helpful the Chairman has always been, visiting the Houses of Parliament in her own time and generally looking after the interests of people in this borough. Could the Legal Team of this Council, if they are not prepared to mount a challenge please explain to my constituent and his Ukrainian wife why you cannot buy a detached house in the UK with any certainty that that is how it remains?

Reply:

I will be happy to speak to the Legal Team to see how I can take this forward.

10. From Cllr Nicholas Bennett MA JP to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

What was the money terms and % increase in the Mayoral precept for the following periods?

2001-2 to 2008-9 by levied by Mayor Livingstone

2009-10 to 2016-17 levied by Mayor Johnson

2017-18 to 2022-23 levied by Mayor Khan

Reply:

The answer is being provided in tabular form. If I was to summarise, I would say that under Ken Livingstone there were very large increases in the GLA's council tax. If I was to summarise for Boris Johnston's time as Mayor of London I would say entirely either zero or negative tax changes, and under Mayor Sadiq Khan I would say very high increases, currently a 43% increase since he took office only a few years ago.

| | GLA (%) | GLA (£) | Mayor |
|---------|---------|---------|-------------|
| 2001/02 | 22.7 | 150.88 | Livingstone |
| 2002/03 | 15.2 | 173.88 | Livingstone |
| 2003/04 | 30.8 | 227.4 | Livingstone |
| 2004/05 | 6.1 | 241.33 | Livingstone |
| 2005/06 | 5.5 | 254.62 | Livingstone |
| 2006/07 | 13.3 | 288.61 | Livingstone |
| 2007/08 | 5.3 | 303.88 | Livingstone |
| 2008/09 | 2 | 309.82 | Livingstone |
| 2009/10 | 0 | 309.82 | Johnson |
| 2010/11 | 0 | 309.82 | Johnson |
| 2011/12 | 0 | 309.82 | Johnson |
| 2012/13 | -1 | 306.72 | Johnson |
| 2013/14 | -1.2 | 303.00 | Johnson |
| 2014/15 | -1.3 | 299.00 | Johnson |
| 2015/16 | -1.3 | 295.00 | Johnson |
| 2016/17 | -6.4 | 276.00 | Johnson |
| 2017/18 | 1.5 | 280.02 | Khan |
| 2018/19 | 5.1 | 294.23 | Khan |
| 2019/20 | 8.9 | 320.51 | Khan |
| 2020/21 | 3.6 | 332.07 | Khan |
| 2021/22 | 9.5 | 363.66 | Khan |
| 2022/23 | 8.8 | 395.59 | Khan |

Supplementary Question:

Councillor Rutherford was a little bit coy about the figures for Ken Livingstone – it was over 100% in eight years, and under the present Mayor 43%. Under Mayor Johnson it fell, by 10% - what conclusions does he draw.

Reply:

I would draw the conclusion that you get lower taxes under the Conservatives.

Additional supplementary question from Cllr Peter Fortune

Is the Portfolio Holder aware that last week the London Assembly met to discuss the Mayor's £19bn budget and the suggestion in there to be an 8.8% council tax

increase for the Mayor's precept? Is he aware that of the 25 member committee 14 members voted against that 8.8% increase and only 11 members voted for and sadly those were the 11 members who represented the Labour party. Does he agree with me that it is no longer fair that the cost of Khan is passed on to hard working Bromley residents?

Reply:

Yes, I do agree.

11. From Cllr Kieran Terry to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

In July 2019, the Council moved a motion to be net carbon neutral (in terms of its direct activities) by 2029, one of the most ambitious targets for any London Borough. How is the Council performing to date on this and are we still on track to meet it?

Reply:

You will have already heard this answer as I supplied it as part of the response to the petition.

In year 2 (2020/21) of the Net Zero Action Plan, the Council's emissions totalled 3,985 tCO₂e, equivalent to a 45% reduction against the 2018/19 baseline and a reduction of 39.5% on year 1 (2019/20).

Further information can be found in the NZAP Year 2 Annual Performance Report, available on the Council's website.

Supplementary Question:

Will the Portfolio Holder agree with me that the very strong target and our very strong performance against it is testament to the hard work that this Council is putting in to protecting our environment and contrary to many people's beliefs, saving the environment does not need to cost the earth?

Reply:

I agree.

Additional supplementary question from Cllr Simon Jeal:

I wish to ask the Portfolio Holder to what extent he believes the reductions may have been attributed to the pandemic and to the restrictions under lockdown around transport?

Reply:

There will obviously be some attributed to the amount of working from home. If the country is moving towards more of a hybrid working environment then we would expect there to be an overall benefit. Yes, but it is not all down to that.

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

“Levelling up” is a favourite mantra of the current government. What plans does he have for levelling up in Bromley?

Reply:

We have been levelling up locally for years to the benefit of Bromley residents as the impressive array awards won by various departments across the Council attests.

I will not list all of the awards in question, but there was one in 2017, 2 in 2018, one in 2019, three in 2020, five in 2021, there is one so far in 2022 with our contact tracing team also having been short-listed for Team of the Year at the Local Government Chronicle Awards.

Recently we have been rated locally as one of the ten nicest places to live in the country by Mr Gove’s team. This is how we are levelling up in Bromley, by making things better for everyone.

Specific to the Government’s more recent use of the term, and of direct benefit to residents living across a vast swathe of south London, very much including Cllr Wilkins’ own ward of Crystal Palace and nearby Penge and Cator, the current plan to level up was demonstrated by the Council’s recent bid to pay for the regeneration of Crystal Palace Park, a scheme for £18.5m, focussed on conserving and repairing the historic Italian terraces, creating new gardens, landscaping, improving access, enhancing natural habitat, building a cultural venue to adjoin the grade 2 listed subway and restoring the grade 1 dinosaurs. Although that bid has thus far proved elusive and unsuccessful we have been politely invited to bid again because it has excited officials at Westminster and we are increasingly confident that that bid will be granted when we apply again.

So that is a snapshot of what we are doing locally to not only level up but level up even further than we have already levelled.

Supplementary Question:

I obviously support the grant application for Crystal Palace Park; however my question is whether or not he will undertake personally to do some levelling up for me in a housing problem because the Portfolio Holder has tried to help a similar problem in Orpington with the support of Cllr Cuthbert and Cllr Tunnicliffe. I have a man living in a house on which a section 40 notice was put three years ago. This gentleman is still in there, I can list his problems. It is Hyde Housing, the property has not been treated for the damp that is endemic throughout and I learnt this weekend from my colleagues in Orpington that there is a very similar case to Cllr Morgan, Cllr Cuthbert and Cllr Tunnicliffe. If the Portfolio Holder cannot sort out the housing in this borough, and this is with no disrespect to Cllr Morgan as I know you

have tried very hard with this particular case, then I am hoping that the Leader will be able to help. Will the Leader undertake to solve these problems? We have two of them, one in my ward and one in Orpington, which three of your own councillors are trying to resolve for people living in appalling conditions in Hyde properties.

Reply:

I am confident that Cllr Morgan can solve any problem relating to housing if it is solvable. If Cllr Morgan can email Councillor Wilkins in the morning copying me in I will be happy to read whatever correspondence has gone on previously.

Additional supplementary question from Cllr Nicholas Bennett:

Does the Leader agree that the best way to help levelling up for the people of Bromley is to keep personal taxation low so people keep more money in their own pockets to look after their own families?

Reply:

That is a quaint old-fashioned conservative notion and I certainly agree with it 100%.

(At this point the time allowed for questions expired – the remaining questions received written replies.)

13. From Cllr Simon Jeal to the Portfolio Holder for Environment and Community Services

Across the borough, how many trees have been removed by Council contractors in the past four years?

Reply:

Trees are only removed when absolutely necessary either due their own health or damage to buildings or facilities.

| | |
|----------------|-------------------------|
| 2018/19 | 383 |
| 2019/20 | 372 |
| 2020/21 | 663 |
| 2021/22 | 466 (01/04/21-14/02/22) |
| Total | 1884 |

14. From Cllr Kathy Bance MBE to the Portfolio Holder for Environment & Community Services

Bromley Parks signage reflects badly on Bromley's claim about the extent and value we place on our parks and this has been discussed many times on the Friends Forum. The latest advice was that this project would be picked up as part of the Parks' Strategy. Does Bromley Council have a plan to update the mainly, dated and random signage?

Reply:

Bromley Park's Satisfaction Surveys 2020 & 2021 revealed that Parks Signage was not a priority from the public's perspective. However, upgrading of Parks signage has been identified in the Open Space Strategy (2021-31) as a key objective. An Action Plan will be developed to include the designing of new signage in line with Corporate branding with the following objectives:

- Parks Invigoration: To include information around the biodiversity of open spaces and other sustainability information, encouraging and educating visitors to the borough to look after their natural world.
- Across Generations: Projects designed and led by young people who want to be more active in shaping the future of their communities.
- Community Renewal: Projects creating new opportunities for the people that live locally to contribute and/or to build skills and experiences.
- Our Shared Natural World: Projects initiating collective action in relation to the natural world locally - giving more people the opportunity to care for the planet at a local level.

15. From Cllr Tony Owen to the Leader of the Council

Given that it is nearly 60 years since the London Government Act created the London Boroughs, and the many disadvantages to Bromley of the current structure, is it time to campaign for something better?

Reply:

I fully agree with your sentiments, and yes, of course, it is always time to campaign for something better.

I would however caution to be very careful of what you wish for, as others' ideas and ambitions for reform may very well not align with our own.