

Oral Questions from the Public to Portfolio Holders with Answers

1) Question from Richard Gibbons:

305 Bromley borough streets opened for residents to celebrate the Platinum Jubilee; free from cut-through traffic, neighbours of all ages enjoyed the occasion. Do you agree that it would be a fitting legacy to review policies and enable residents to organise regular 'community streets' events where neighbours meet and children play out?

Response to Question 1:

The Platinum Jubilee was a one-off national celebration. The highway is a public thoroughfare.

Street closures inconveniences the public, preventing free movement and deliveries and can impede emergency services and has the unwelcome effect of redirecting traffic along other nearby streets to the detriment of residents living there. Such closures are therefore kept to the absolute minimum. The Borough has many green spaces suitable for play and residents are, of course, very welcome to make use of them

Supplementary Question from Richard Gibbons:

Are you aware that Michael Gove wrote to local authorities on 20th May saying, quote "I would like to hear from you to understand what more we can do to make it quicker and easier for communities to come together regularly in the future, including loosening any rules to deliver a lasting legacy". If the Secretary of State for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities; the Local Government Association; Active Travel England and Sport England all support Community Play Streets; why not Bromley Council?

Response to Supplementary Question:

I have nothing further that I wish to add to my answer.

2) Question from Brendan Donegan

All Bromley schools exceed WHO guideline for NO2. Children are at most risk of dangers of air pollution. 60% of their pollution intake is during school run and breaks. 25% of cars driving at peak times is doing school run. How can you justify not actively rolling out School Streets?

Response to Question 2:

This matter is being discussed by the committee later this evening.

The Council has supported a number of schools to implement such a street and has provided barriers and the necessary signs, however it is clear from the report, that without the support of the school and/or local residents to operate the barriers, a number of schools have either not joined the scheme or are finding it difficult to continue the necessary commitment. The Council has no additional money to provide ANPR cameras at an estimated cost of £60,000 per school and has numerous other requests for safety improvements across the borough.

Supplementary Question from Brendan Donegan:

I would like to ask for clarification about what is meant by 'no additional money' when on the agenda is an item for the use of reserves for parks to the value of £1m. Also my understanding is that over the last 10 years on an annual basis, there has been an underspend of between £10 and £15m. I am aware that the Council has won awards for sound financial management, but I'm confused by this, as I would have thought that part of sound financial management would be to provide services to the public within budget rather than under spending.

Response to the Supplementary Question:

All budgets have to be controlled. If you take for example the £60k for two ANPR cameras, for that money I could buy two zebra crossings. These would be there for residents 24 hours day, 365 days per year. So I have to use the money that I have to balance priorities. I would also remind you that this is only one part of the Council. We have other parts of the Council that are grossly over spending at the moment, particularly in education for example which is a demand led service. We have an example of a child that is costing £14k per week. So this is not an isolated budget.