

ECS PDS—September 2022: Oral Questions from Councillors:

1) Question from Cllr Alisa Igoe:

Brindley Way car park, Plaistow, has been without its 11 recycling banks since the Zed Pod housing build over ran by nearly a year. I have just been told the banks will not be replaced. Could the Portfolio Holder please explain why, in a ward blighted by fly-tipping, where we're due to house an additional 25 families at Brindley and 78 households next door at Pike Close, the ward's number of recycling banks has been reduced by more than half.

Response to Councillor Igoe:

Thank you for your question. I regret that unfortunately, the recycling banks had to be removed to make space for the housing development, which delivered needed new homes for Bromley residents. All of these new properties have been provided with more than enough waste and recycling containers for their needs.

The recycling materials (plastics, cans, glass, paper, card, textiles, small electricals) that are accepted at recycling sites across Bromley can also be recycled directly from residents' homes, which is a far more convenient way of recycling. The banks are only provided for those times where residents have excess recycling e.g. Christmas/ spring clean. They are not there for materials like bulky items like white goods and rubble that are typically items that may be fly-tipped.

The recycling banks themselves have been redistributed across the borough so there is no overall reduction in the number of banks provided for Bromley residents recycling. Officers are also continuing to look for alternative locations to site the banks in the Plaistow area and are happy to receive suggestions from Ward Councillors.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Igoe:

That was eleven banks in that car park and I was told by officers that the reason that we could not have them put back in was because we had to have an electrical sign put in and because that had not been thought of before we started to build the site. You say that there is recycling all over the borough, which is excellent, but I am particularly worried that as we are going to have an additional 25 families move into Brindley, (to those houses on the stilts) and we are going to have a big development next store of 117 households we are going to need a large recycling centre there. I would really like officers to look closely with me, perhaps come out with me, to find other locations--or could some be put back in that car park?

Response to Cllr Igoe:

I would need to speak to our Property and Regeneration Teams who built the social housing to find out exactly why they could not be added. I have been told by officers that they have looked at the site and they have said it's not suitable. I am happy for officers to go out with you to try and find other suitable locations.

2) Question from Cllr Kathy Bance.

Since the withdrawal of the recycling pilot for flats above shops in High Street Penge are there any viable alternative solutions to allow these flats to recycle and reduce the fly tipping on our streets?

Response to Cllr Bance.

Thank you for your question. Currently, residents in flats above shops in Penge High Street can continue to use the On Street Recycling banks to recycling.

In one section of Petts Wood recycling pilot area, communal containers were provided in June 2022 and so far, have proven to be successful. It is unlikely that this solution can be applied to Penge High Street due to space availability, but officers will continue to consider alternative solutions.

The Council continues to build on the successful 'Your Waste is Your Responsibility' engagement exercise across the borough through adverts on RCV's and a digital marketing campaign, and in Penge. Currently, Street Cleaning Operatives are placing fly-tipping stickers on any fly-tipping identified and pass information to our environmental investigations team.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Bance

It said in an answer that I received from Full Council, 'that the Council continues to investigate other ways of making it easier to recycle for the people who live in flats above the shop'. Can you confirm that this is ongoing? It's important that we do this, but I do appreciate all the work that you and your Team have been doing in Penge; particularly I thank you very much for the speedy and professional way you respond every time I send an e-mail. That is something very new from the Environment Portfolio.

Response to Cllr Bance:

Thank you very much for the compliment. I am very happy to visit with officers at the site that you mentioned to see if there is anything else that we can do. Thank you for your compliment to the Environment Client Team. They are excellent.

3) Question from Cllr Sam Webber.

Could the Portfolio Holder advise when the main ponds and lakes in the borough's parks were last dredged and desilted including but not limited to lakes in Church House Gardens, Betts Park & Priory Gardens?

Response to Cllr Webber:

Thank you for your question. The council do not appear to hold records identifying when these particular water bodies in parks were last dredged or desilted. Although this was removed from the council's revenue budget in 2015 due to budgetary restraints.

4) Question from Cllr Sam Webber.

Given the extreme heat and drought conditions recently would the Portfolio Holder consider getting a quote for this dredging and desilting work to be done in the borough's worst effected ponds & lakes (such as Church House Gardens in Bromley) if it falls outside of our existing Idverde contract?

Response to Cllr Webber:

Thank you for your question. One of the first things I did was ask officers to look at costs and benefit of adding dredging back to the contract. Officers are looking to see if this would significantly improve biodiversity, or if there is another action we should consider that would be more effective. Value for money must also be a consideration given all of the budgetary pressures facing the council, but I'm actively looking at options.

It should be noted that although, sadly, Church House Gardens dried up at the peak of the drought, no other Bromley lake or pond did. It is not certain that dredging would have stopped this from happening in Church Hill Gardens as it is a rain-fed pond, unlike a number of our ponds which are fed through natural rivers in addition to rain.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Webber:

I recognise the work done by Idverde to get into the dry pond and to clean it as best they can over a period of a few hours or a day. I think that more needs to be done. I also recognise that fencing has gone up to prevent people from falling in, I think that if we are now going to have very dry summers then getting a cost and getting it done would be very useful.

Response to Cllr Webber:

Obviously my first instinct is to protect bio-diversity and secondly is the water levels. We do have a difficult financial outlook.

5) Question from Cllr Julie Ireland:

The three years post-implementation evaluation of Edinburgh's 20 mph network reports safer and more pleasant environment for walking, cycling and enjoying time in neighbourhoods. Will Bromley Council reconsider its position on 20mph limits and take the opportunity to make safer, liveable streets and boost active travel in the borough?

Response to Cllr Ireland:

No

Supplementary Question from Cllr Ireland:

I wonder if its possible to ask that given that so many more Councils have set up 20 MPH limits all across the country. There is more and more data coming back, more and more feedback, more and more analysis, whether its possible to ask officers to

come back and report to this Committee on what the arguments are now given this new set of data. We have a 20MPH limit I believe in West Wickham.

Response to Cllr Ireland:

There is no point. We do have 20 MPH limits in High Streets and we do have them courtesy of TfL in West Wickham, we have not objected to this as its difficult to go more than 20 MPH in West Wickham to start with. We also have them outside schools at the beginning and the end of the day. The purpose of having them at specific locations is that they are obeyed. Making them ubiquitous would mean that the public would start to ignore them. There is research that has been done by the Department of Transport which shows that there has only been a 1 MPH reduction and no significant changes in road collisions and casualties.

6) Question from Cllr Julie Ireland:

Residents have been calling for the relocation of the R7 Oldfield East bus stop for 2+ years, TfL have agreed to the relocation and to cover the costs. I understand the council's traffic officers passed the papers to Cllr Smith for approval in January 2022. Ironically Cllr Smith is the ward councillor for this area, but entreaties from residents and, on their behalf, from various elected representatives including Peter Fortune have not elicited a response or any action. When will this issue be resolved and when will the Portfolio Holder contact the local residents who have become increasingly frustrated in order to explain the reason for the long delay, the lack of action and the lack of communication?

Response to Cllr Ireland:

Officers are in contact with TfL regarding the siting of the bus stop, however I am reviewing the matter in the light of the informal response from TfL regarding the proximity to the previous stop for proposed new stop and the objection from other residents to moving the stop.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Ireland.

This has been going on for 2/3 years now. I understand that TfL have agreed to pay to reposition the bus stop. Cllr Smith has said on many occasions that he agrees to it. Its not even in my ward but there has been a large amount of enquiries that have gone by MPs, London Assembly Members, assistants to MPs—all saying please can you let the residents know of your decision. Please can you give me a timeframe when they can reasonably expect a decision?

Response to Supplementary Question:

Its not in the gift of the Council, its TfL that decides the location of bus-stops. Personally I have my doubts about the wisdom of moving the bus stop. Others have argued that the bus-stop should just be taken away. We have to wait to hear what TfL have to say.

7) Question from Cllr Simon Fawthrop:

How much does the Council expect to accumulate/benefit in CIL contributions for carbon offsetting projects from the current pipeline of approved developments?

Response to Cllr Fawthrop:

Thank you for your question. The Council receives Section 106 Carbon Offsetting payments for new major developments that do not achieve net zero carbon emissions on site. To date, around £2,254,605 has been approved (secured by legal agreement) of which £485,842 has been collected.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Fawthrop:

You refer to Section 106 rather than CIL, is there a distinction between that or was the breakdown for what you are expecting on CIL?

Response to Cllr Fawthrop:

I thought it was CIL but I would have to take advice. Whichever one it is the principle is the same, that is the money available to spend on carbon emissions.

8) Question from Cllr Simon Fawthrop:

Does the Portfolio Holder expect the Council to have any increase in the cost of street lighting following recent energy price rises?

Response to Cllr Fawthrop:

This question is disallowed on the basis it was submitted after the 10 day deadline and is not specific to a report on the agenda.

9 Question from Cllr Adam Grant:

I would like to ask if the member can explain how they managed to secure grant funding for the new woodlands establishment and what they plan to do in the future.

Response to Cllr Grant:

Thank you for your question. I'm very pleased that we are lucky in Bromley to have such a proactive Carbon Management Team who actively seek grants and ways to improve our environment in Bromley. They were able to secure funding from the Forestry Commission's Woodlands Creation Planning Grant to assess the feasibility of three potential sites and develop a woodlands management plan. If member approval is later granted tonight to proceed with tree planting at any of these sites, separate grant funding will be sought from the Forestry Commission to cover the cost of the new trees, planting and maintenance.

Supplementary Question from Cllr Grant:

Is there scope for any more opportunities for new sites?

Response to the Supplementary Question:

I will need to take advice from officers on this but just knowing the geography of Bromley I would assume yes.