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Council

17 July 2023

Questions from Members of the Public for Written Reply

1. From Janet Worth to the Portfolio Holder for Public Protection and Enforcement

What is the Council doing to enforce TPO 2888?

Reply:

The Council's strategic response to the apparent breach of TPO 2888 comprises three strands. The first is the injunction which has been granted by the court, pending a second hearing on 6th July. The purpose of the injunction is to provide an even greater deterrent to further unauthorised tree felling. The second is the process of enforcing replanting of the felled area. There is a lot of preparatory work preceding any actual physical action on-site, which we expect to be taken when the planting season commences in autumn. The third strand is the investigation into the apparent breach of TPO that could potentially lead to prosecution of those responsible if legal tests are passed. This process commenced on 12th June when we began gathering evidence. We are currently processing the evidence received so far. Once we have a clear understanding of all the evidence any suspects will be interviewed under caution. Finally, an expediency assessment will be undertaken to determine what if any further action should be taken, one of the options being prosecution.

2. From Dermot McKibbin to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

What is happening regarding the installation of solar panels on the spa and pavilion leisure centres, when will they be fully operational and how much savings will be generated. Will the Council roll out these win-win projects throughout the borough?

Reply:

The solar panel scheme is still in its early stages with discussions on going between Mytime and the Council as to the installation and lease terms. At this time a planning application has been progressed for the Spa but not yet for the Pavilion. Officers will update Cllrs once there is further news. The process will determine the viability of taking similar schemes forward on other buildings. Officers in the Environment and Public Protection Department are working with the Property team to identify energy efficiency projects on Council buildings as part of initiative 2 in the Council's Carbon Net Zero Action Plan.

3. From Kyle Sewell to the Portfolio Holder for Resources, Commissioning and Contract Management

Does the Council agree that, in solidarity with LGBTQ+ people who have faced a rising number of homophobic attacks and discrimination, the Council should have celebrated Pride in June by raising the rainbow flag?

Reply:

No, the Council does not agree. Although it is true that the number of hate crimes recorded by the police in England and Wales has risen year on year, in their latest data release Home Office statisticians note that “due to significant improvements in police recorded crime made in recent years, it is uncertain to what degree the increase in police recorded hate crime is a genuine rise, or due to continued recording improvements and more victims having the confidence to report these crimes to the police” (<https://www.gov.uk/government/statistics/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022/hate-crime-england-and-wales-2021-to-2022>). As for the claim regarding discrimination, it is not clear why this would be the case, considering that the British public’s acceptance of homosexuality has increased dramatically since the 1980s (e.g. see graph on page 129 of a recent British Social Attitudes report: https://www.bsa.natcen.ac.uk/media/39363/bsa_36.pdf).

It is Bromley Council’s policy to fly only the Union Flag and on occasion the Cross of St George. These flags represent the unity of the people of Bromley both as part of England and the United Kingdom. The only exception to this is the Armed Forces Day Flag. We have no intention of changing this policy. Bromley Council fully supports the right of private organisations and individuals to fly flags of their choice from their buildings or residences, or wear and display them about their person, in full exercise of their rights to freedom of speech.

As an employer the London Borough of Bromley complies with all its obligations under the Equality Act 2010 and all related legislation with respect to LGBTQ+ people.

4. From Gary Kent to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Will the Council urgently consider greater flexibility in car parking payments by, for instance, allowing scratch cards to ease difficulties for residents?

Reply:

At this current time there are no plans to introduce a voucher system for car parking. To implement such systems would be expensive and these costs would need to be passed back to the customer. Officers are holding 2 future drop-in sessions in Beckenham and Orpington Library where they will be happy to help motorists with any queries they have using the RingGo system.