

ECS PDS: 7th September 2023

Oral Questions from Councillors:

1) Question from Cllr Alison Stammers to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

RingGo only payment for parking in the borough has been in place since 1st April 2023.

Please may I have the Portfolio Holder's assurance:

- a. that there will be a full and comprehensive review of the impact of this implementation on residents (and the elderly, vulnerable and digitally excluded in particular); that other methods of payment (e.g. contactless/scratch cards) will be considered and costed and that this will be presented to Environment Committee on 16th November;
- b. that committee members will receive full statistics (usage & revenue) for each council controlled car park/off street car parking per ward for each ward on a month by month basis from April to August inclusive with comparable figures for 2022, and thereafter on an ongoing monthly basis to April 2024;
- c. that the committee will receive data about enforcement notices issued in each of these Council controlled parking areas on a monthly basis since April 2023, again with comparable data for 2022.

Response to Question 1 from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

As promised, a full report based on the first six months of cashless parking will be made to the January 2024 meeting of the committee.

Supplementary Question:

Do you recognise that usage in all of Chislehurst's three car parks has declined since RingGo implementation. This is to the tune of 7184 users and is a loss of revenue to the Council of over £6k if one assumes a one hour stay. This revenue would have significantly offset the cost of the contactless machine I requested in June and would have generated more income for the Council. Do you acknowledge that RingGo has had a negative effect on footfall, spend and on well-being generally of our residents?

Response to Councillor Stammers from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways, and Road Safety.

No, is the answer I will give to parts two and part 3 of the question. As for part one, I look at the figures for the whole of the borough and after a decline in April and May, there was an increase in June and July.

Comment from Councillor Alison Stammers:

As you know I represent the Chislehurst Ward. This is the information that I have received from the Parking Department with respect to Chislehurst and also the information that I have received from local businesses and residents. They are telling me that they are no longer coming to Chislehurst because they cannot get to grips with the RingGo.

Response to Councillor Alison Stammers from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

Trade can move up or down for various reasons.

Supplementary Question from Councillor Alisa Igoe.

How much would it cost to implement a scratch card system?

Response to Councillor Alisa Igoe from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

The cost of this would be prohibitive and you would need ten different tariffs for on street parking. Ten scratch cards would cost the Council £11 to produce. These costs would have to be passed on to the motorist. We have eight different tariffs in car parks. If someone was parking for three hours in an expensive location would have to have a whole windscreen full of scratch cards. Looking at what other local authorities have reported, they have reported nil or minimum take up of scratch cards. The cost of doing it would be very expensive and you would need a separate accounting system, and only a very small number of people would be likely to use it.

Comment from Councillor Simon Fawthrop:

The uptake of Ringo has increased in the Petts Wood Ward, so it might be the case that there is a better business offering there than in Chislehurst.

Comment from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

It may be the case that there is a fear of downloading the App, but it takes just three minutes to download it. Its actually a very simple system to use. I don't think that it is a big ask, to ask someone who drives a tonne and a half of steel on the road, where they have all the hazards relating to other motorists and people walking out into the street, to spend a few minutes downloading the App and using it on their phone, or making a phone call.

Comment from Councillor Alisa Igoe:

Not everyone has a phone.

Response to Councillor Alisa Igoe from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Well, anyone who drives a car and does not have a phone will find it very difficult if they break down as there are not many phone boxes around. I don't believe that there are many motorists who will not have a mobile phone of some sort; this is the

reality of life. It is estimated that 94% of the population possess mobile phones and it is likely that anyone who drives a car will possess a mobile phone. We need to be very clear, that this Council is facing a £35 million deficit in 2026, and here we have the opposition asking us to spend extra money, when the existing system has already been put in place and is working.

2) Question from Cllr Alisa Igoe to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

On 29 June you said behavioural change was required (to reduce KSIs), noting the following reasons: cyclists running red lights, cycle lanes not being used. Pedestrians crossing roads whilst using their phone. Scooters being ridden in the dark, with no lights. Vehicles being driven under the influence of alcohol, of drugs, when using mobile phones, drivers not using seatbelts, having no insurance.

Why did you not mention speed, when TfL reported speed was a factor in 48% of fatal collisions in London in 2020?

Response to Question 2:

There are many causes of road collisions, the causes I gave were, of course, not an exhaustive list. Speed is a relevant factor in many collisions and drivers need to drive at appropriate speeds, which will vary according to the weather, the presence of pedestrians and many other hazards.

Supplementary Question from Alisa Igoe:

On page 173 of the agenda we have a list of highway improvements which include 12 vehicle activated signs reminding drivers about speed restrictions, and also 13 flashing signs outside of 13 schools. All these are designed to slow drivers down. In your view, does this mean the Bromley has a speeding problem?

Response to Councillor Igoe from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

We do have a problem in certain locations and people need to be warned when passing schools regarding the school opening and closing times. We don't have the 20 MPH zones in force outside of those times, unlike some authorities. We do of course have to warn motorists who step over the speed limit. Having warning signs is very useful.

3) Question from Cllr Alisa Igoe to the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

On 25/01/23 you said an application had been approved for 5g aerials on lamp posts.

How many small cell equipment have been installed on lamp posts as of 07/09/23, in which wards, and has there been an audit of all street furniture held within the Environment Portfolio that would be suitable to host digital infrastructure?

Response to Question 3:

To date, 27 small cells have been installed on lamp columns in Bromley, Beckenham, Penge, Orpington and Chislehurst. Most lamp columns would be suitable for small cell transmitters, although the rollout is driven by the service providers who are currently only considering sites within busy shopping areas.

4) Question from Cllr Bance to both Portfolio Holders:

Many of us are aware that there is a climate emergency even though we as a Brough have not yet declared one. Does Bromley except there is a climate emergency?

Will Bromley use its powers to ban high carbon advertising on Council-owned ad spaces?

Response to Question 4 from the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces.

I don't think that it is appropriate to create unnecessary concern for residents by declaring a climate emergency. I would rather talk about various things that we have done in recent years in response to climate change. We have initiated the Grass Verges Trials, the Tremendous Programme and the Borough Parks Fund. The Council also won an award for recycling. There was also the Woodlands Project for Sustainable Planting. This Council's stance towards the environment is based on actions and not words.

Supplementary question from Councillor Bance to the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces:

There is no argument from scientists regarding the fact that we are in a climate emergency. Why are you reluctant to agree what the whole world knows--that we're in a climate emergency?

Response to Councillor Bance from the Portfolio Holder for Sustainability, Green Services and Open Spaces:

What would it achieve. It doesn't help the problem and will not achieve anything. I'm particularly mindful of people with mental health issues. I would rather focus on solutions which is what we are doing.

Response to the second part of Question 4 from Councillor Bance, from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety:

The Council does not own any advertising spaces as such, but it does have an agreement with JCDecaux (and others, i.e. advertising on roundabouts etc.) for digital screen advertising. Even if we were minded to support this in the JCDecaux contract, following Executive approval, we have just extended our contract with JCDecaux, with this now ending in 2032 and this was not part of our extension contract agreement.

For background, you will see the Green Party have called for a similar ban for a little while now <https://www.greenparty.org.uk/news/2020/10/11/green-party-to-end-advertising-for-%E2%80%9Chigh-carbon%E2%80%9D-goods-and-services/>.

You may recall that at PDS in January when the contract extension proposal was scrutinised, that there was a Member comment about the environmental impact of digital advertising. We were able to reassure members that JCDecaux had considered the environmental impact of their infrastructure. The minutes confirm some of this

<https://cde.bromley.gov.uk/ieListDocuments.aspx?CId=127&MId=7423&Ver=4> but the JCDecaux digital information screens: use 100% renewable energy, only operated at 70% brightness in the day and 20% brightness at night and are switched off between midnight and 6am. They also avoid the need to print advertising on paper and there are consequently less vehicle journeys to the sites to service the screens.

The issue of high carbon advertising did not come up at PDS, but the contract has very much taken the view that as long as the advert conforms to the ASA standards, then it is acceptable, and therefore we do accept high fat food adverts for instance.

Response from Cllr Bance

I think that we missed something in the contract by allowing high carbon adverts.

Comment from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety.

I am not sure if I have correctly understood your question. We follow the standards set down by the Advertising Authority and only accept adverts that are lawful.