

Oral Questions from Councillors

1) Question from Cllr Chloe Jane Ross:

(To be asked by Cllr Graeme Casey)

It has been recently reported that the borough of Bromley has the most abandoned cars of any London borough. We have experienced difficulty in getting long abandoned vehicles removed even when the road tax has run out. What can be done to strengthen Bromley's ability to get abandoned cars removed more quickly.

Ref: <https://www.newsshopper.co.uk/news/24027160.bromley-revealed-london-borough-abandoned-cars/>

1) Response to Question from Cllr Ross by the Environment Portfolio Holder

Legislation denotes that Bromley serves formal notice (up to 15 days) requesting removal of abandoned vehicles deemed to be abandoned, also that adequate and reasonable efforts to check for a keeper or interested party must be taken before removing, a process which unfortunately does take time. We welcome detail of any specific cases of concern, so that these can be reviewed to ensure that the process and timeframe for removal of vehicles (which have met the criteria) has been followed, whilst noting any which fall outside of the agreed process as a learning tool for future improvement to service delivery.

The Council also has an agreement with DVLA via APCOA that vehicles untaxed for a period of time can be removed. This is not aimed at dealing with abandoned vehicles but is more to target drivers avoiding paying road tax.

Supplementary Question:

I refer to an example of a vehicle with no MOT in Foxgrove Road. When do you check vehicle MOTS? Some vehicles could be insured but have no MOT, lack of an MOT invalidates the insurance; when do we undertake MOT checks?

Response from the Environment Portfolio Holder:

If you can send me the specific details of this case I can get it investigated. I can point to examples in the Mottingham and Shortlands wards currently where vehicles with no MOT are being investigated. By law we have to give 15 days grace. If someone then MOTs the vehicle within this grace period there is nothing that we can do. We do remove and impound illegal vehicles.

Comment from Cllr Alisa Igoe:

There is a vehicle in Plaistow ward that has been there before I was elected. You referred to a period of being untaxed, how long a period are we talking about?

Response from the Environment Portfolio Holder:

If a vehicle is untaxed by a day, then its illegal. The situation that we find ourselves in is that we do have to allow 15 days for the vehicle to be taxed, and the situation rectified. We can then intervene at that point. It is frustrating, but that is the law as it currently stands.

Comment from the Director of Environment and Community Services:

I will arrange for officers to send out a briefing note.

2) Question from Cllr Chloe Jane Ross

(To be asked by Cllr Graeme Casey)

It has been reported that the borough of Bromley has been given an additional £455,000 to spend on potholes in each of 2023-4 and 2024-25, and a pledge of a minimum of £14,240,000 to be spent in the borough up to 2033-34. How much has been spent on potholes in 2023-4 so far, how much is currently budgeted to be spent on potholes in 2023-4 and 2024-25 and can this be diverted to other road maintenance or safety needs if required?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety:

The additional £455k allocation from DfT is to be used on new highway maintenance initiatives, rather than subsidising existing budgets. Once full details are available from DfT a decision will be taken on possible projects. Potholes are not defined in our maintenance policies or contracts, but minor repairs are undertaken. Spend on minor carriageway repairs up to 1 sq.m to date is £66,047. The overall annual budget for reactive works is £858,480, which would include repairs up to 1 sq.m.

Maintaining highway safety is statutory duty, and as such emergency and reactive repairs would need to be prioritised over other highway repairs.

Supplementary Question:

What will the £14,240,000 be spent on? Is it just for pot-holes and how much additional budget did we get in the borough for such costs in addition to what has already been stated?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety:

I think that I have covered that in the answer to the question—but it has to be on new initiatives.

3) Question from Cllr Alisa Igoe:

A2212, Plaistow ward: we have no streetlights along three quarters of Burnt Ash shopping parade. With many street trees and some businesses shuttering their windows early, it can be dark in winter even in mid-afternoon. Could officers consider an assessment of light levels with a view to adding streetlights, for amenity/safety reasons?

Response from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety:

A survey will be conducted to see if lighting reaches the required standard at this location.

4) Question from Cllr Alisa Igoe:

Reference:

Report No. ES20343 - UPDATE ON ELECTRIC VEHICLE CHARGING STRATEGY

3.20. "Tranche 1 of the LEVI funding (underway this financial year) came too soon for Bromley's purposes."

Question:

On 21 March 2022, Cllr Harmer, Chair of Environment PDS Committee, said it would be good to speed up the EV charging initiative in the borough. What were the reasons Bromley were not ready to take advantage of Tranche 1 monies of the LEVI funding for EV charging infrastructure, as other councils did?

4) Response from the Portfolio Holder for Transport, Highways and Road Safety

Bromley have elected to be part of Tranche 2 for the following reasons:

The willingness of other London boroughs to work collaboratively in 24/25.

The development of the on street EV charging trial which will enable the Council to ensure installations carried out with LEVI funding are in the right locations with the right technology.

To learn from the experiences of other Boroughs taking part in Tranche 1.

To cater for developments in both battery and charging technology between 2022 and 2025.