

RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE
19 JUNE 2024

QUESTIONS FOR WRITTEN REPLY

1. From Sheila Brown on behalf of Bromley Friends of the Earth to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

What steps is Bromley Council taking to ensure that any development properly complies with the new Biodiversity Net Gain requirements? How has Bromley Council used Government funding provided to prepare for BNG? How much is it costing to use external consultants for advice and what would in-house expertise cost?

Reply: Like many local authorities, Bromley Council is taking steps to ensure that the recently introduced Biodiversity Net Gain requirements can be implemented effectively. This has included bespoke training for planning officers, funded using part of the DEFRA BNG grant funding. At this stage, the Council is confident that the BNG process will be managed effectively, in line with relevant requirements. The Council cannot commit to creating a specific post to cover BNG, as there are no existing resources to fund this; the Council is not alone in this regard, with recent evidence suggesting that 61% of local planning authorities across are not intending to employ specific biodiversity officers to assist with BNG implementation. The Council will consider the use of external consultants on a case-by-case basis, but this will likely only be necessary in particularly complex cases; to date, the Council has not utilised external consultants to assist with the statutory BNG requirements on specific applications.

2. From Ian Dunn, Local Resident to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

In relation to Item 7b: Housing, Planning and Regeneration Portfolio Plan Update - 2023/24 Q4 Update:

The Strategic Project Tracker shows the planning application for the Beckenham Triangle being submitted in June 24. Please clarify which date the application will be submitted and when you expect it to appear on the Planning Portal.

Reply: The planning application for this site will be submitted by the end of June. As soon as the Planning Authority have validated the application it will be available on the portal.

RENEWAL, RECREATION AND HOUSING PDS COMMITTEE
19 JUNE 2024

QUESTIONS FOR ORAL REPLY

3. From Bill Miller, Local Resident and Chair of the Avalon Area Action Group to the Portfolio Holder for Renewal, Recreation and Housing

In relation to Item 9a: Proceeding to Procurement: Manorfields Transitional Accommodation:

Does the Committee agree there has been an oversight in conducting a consultation with local residents and clarifying whether existing side agreements on eligibility etc will be honoured and will the Committee correct this by holding a consultation in the local neighbourhood involving the Regeneration team, Bromley Housing, local residents and interested groups?

Reply: The proposals for Manorfields involve internal refurbishment and improvement works to the building only. At this stage proposals would not require a planning application for the works, and the only elements of planned works that may require a planning application is the installation of a substation if necessary. Works include rewiring, updates to the heating system, new windows/doors, roof repairs, installation of bathrooms and kitchens and the tidying of landscaped areas. There are no changes to how the site will be managed and the site will continue to operate in line with existing policies, procedures and practices. Local residents living nearby will see no change and therefore a public consultation was not required. Only where there are planned service changes is the Council obliged to consult with residents, such as the extensive engagement the Council has undertaken with regards to the Walnuts Leisure Centre.

However, on this occasion, officers will be happy to hold a meeting to share proposals with residents if the funding is granted and approved if this is something that residents would like.

Supplementary Question: At what stage will the proposals for Manorfields be shared with local neighbours?

Reply: Local Authority Officers will make arrangements for a meeting with local residents once funding for the project has been confirmed.