

COUNCIL

26 JANUARY 2022

MEMBERS QUESTIONS

1 Question from Councillor Aidan Smith, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

At the [September 2021](#) Council meeting, an answer reported that TfL and Greenwich were to agree funding for the bridge redecking works for the Creek Road bridge in October 2021. Was this funding agreed, have the works started and if not, what progress has been made on agreeing the funding?

2 Question from Councillor Aidan Smith, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

At the [September 2021](#) Council meeting, an answer reported that "Officers are working with TfL to see how completed sections of [Creek Road] cycleway could be opened safely in an eastbound direction, as soon as possible, whilst other works continue." This section of cycleway has still not opened, despite appearing complete. What is preventing this section of the cycleway from being opened, what communication have officers had with TfL around opening this section of cycleway and when can residents expect it to open?

Combined reply -

I thank Councillor Aidan Smith for his questions.

Works to replace the decking panels on Creek Road Bridge were expected to be completed late last year.

Due to Transport for London's financial situation, they were not able to agree to the cost of works

The funding has now been agreed. Arrangements can now be made with our contractor to organise the works.

We have been unable to reach an agreement with Transport for London on a safe way to open the cycle route in the meantime, due to cycle safety

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concerns when accessing and egressing the cycle track, especially at junctions.

TfL have informed us the opening of the entire route has been delayed until Summer 2022.

However, once the works to the bridge are completed, we will be able to assess the risk to cyclists and agree with TfL if there is a possibility to partially open some sections.

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3 Question from Councillor Nigel Fletcher, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth

Can the Cabinet Member outline the decision-making process on the disposal of East Greenwich Library, and which Cabinet Member signed off the sale?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Nigel Fletcher for his question.

The disposal of East Greenwich library was agreed in principle in March 2007 by Cabinet. The subsequent decision on the formal disposal was undertaken under delegated authority in August 2019 by the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise & Skills having sought Legal and Finance comments.

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4 Question from Councillor Nigel Fletcher, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth

What options are the Cabinet Member exploring for match-funding of the available budget for restoration of Avery Hill Winter Garden?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Nigel Fletcher for his question.

The Council submitted a cultural bid into the Government Levelling Up Fund (LUF) which was unfortunately unsuccessful, with most of the funding going to areas outside London. We are very disappointed that the Government chose not to grant funding to help restore Avery Hill Winter Garden, when £300k was allocated to repairing potholes on the driveway of a Conservative Aristocrat.

We are waiting feedback on the reasons for the outcome of the bid. However, looking at the successful bids, we are extremely disappointed that the Government has chosen not to fund this relatively modest bid for investment to create an asset in an area that has one of our most deprived estates. We may well look to submit again for future LUF opportunities and in parallel to this we will review other funding opportunities that may be available such as Heritage Lottery Funding.

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5 Question from Councillor Charlie Davis, to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update regarding the collaborative policing pilot in Eltham?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Charlie Davis for his question.

I have personally spoken with the BCU Commander on this very issue along with the Assistant Director of Community Safety & Environmental Health.

We have started work to develop the pilot which involves working with local businesses to provide 'touch down' points for local officers whilst on patrol. This will help keep officers on the beat and provide continued visibility without the need to return to operational bases. It is also cost effective and offers confidence building with local communities without recourse to Council funding to offset Government cuts to policing over the last decade. Supporting the police in this way is very much in line with our manifesto commitment and our ongoing provision of assistance to date.

Although a relatively informal arrangement with businesses, this approach would provide welcoming venues to enable officers, as and when needed, to do things such as:

- Use any available refreshment and bathroom facilities
- Work on emails, reports, and charge their mobile devices.
- Chat with local passers-by, as well as staff should they have a quick enquiry or seeking advice.

Council officers have met with the Police to establish what they need, and appropriate communications are being drafted. There have been some delays with progress due to the re-emergence of COVID and the festive period.

We are currently looking to approach businesses in Eltham first within the next few weeks before moving onto our other main town centre areas. In

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addition to businesses, Council officers will be looking to roll this out to our library and leisure facilities.

I am happy to keep him updated on progress and when the pilot is due to launch.

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6 Question from Councillor Charlie Davis, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council

Can the Leader confirm whether he has personally met with Kidbrooke Focus to discuss finding the charity a suitable new space in Kidbrooke Village?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Charlie Davis for his question.

The Leader received representations from Kidbrooke Focus whilst attending the White Ribbon event at the OneSpace Community Centre on Thursday 25th November 2021.

Kidbrooke Focus are being encouraged to consider submitting a proposal to operate and manage the new community facilities space which will form part of the Kidbrooke development currently known as Block D.

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7 Question from Councillor Charlie Davis, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth

Can the Cabinet Member confirm why the Council have so far failed to offer Kidbrooke Focus a new home in Kidbrooke Village with equivalent facilities to One Space?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Charlie Davis for his question.

To ensure continuity of service provision during the development and construction of the permanent Community Hub in Kidbrooke the former Ferrier Youth Club building was made available to One Space on a temporary basis in 2012, as the land would not be required for development for some time. Their tenancy has been governed by a series of short-term leases since then, the latest of which will expire at the end of April 2022. This is in line with the Council's obligations to provide Berkeley Homes with vacant possession of the land to facilitate the construction of 701 new homes in Phase 5 of their scheme, including 160 affordable homes, and new parkland.

One Space/Kidbrooke Focus have been aware of the temporary nature of their occupation from the outset and have been regularly updated on the construction programme for both Phase 5 and the new Community Hub in the Village Centre. Officers met with the One Space management in March & May 2019 to outline the process for selecting an operator for the new Community Hub. Planning permission was granted for the new Community Hub in December 2019 and Officers again met with One Space in February 2020 to share the plans for the building and give an update on the Operator procurement process. In April 2021 Officers met with the Chair of Trustees to discuss One Spaces intention on relocation, both into and away from the new Community Hub.

In May 2021 my Officers gave a presentation outlining the vision for the new facilities to the Trustees and management of One Space. It was suggested that One Space could partner with another organisation if they

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believed they could not meet all of the proposed selection criteria to manage the community space. Following this meeting the Chair informed the Council that One Space were unlikely to bid to operate the community space in the new building as they did not share the Council's vision for the operation of the Centre. Despite this, Officers provided One Space with details of organisations who had expressed an interest in managing the space during soft-market testing and who were willing to explore submitting a joint proposal. One Space were also provided with contact details for similar Centres in London that were considered to be examples of good practice and were invited to a presentation on the opportunities around the new Hub targeted at local Voluntary/Community organisations.

In November 2021 One Space requested an extension to their lease as they understood that Berkeley's construction Programme was behind schedule. Following discussions between Berkeley Homes and the Council, One Space have been offered a three-month extension to their lease, which will take them to the end of July 2022. This would ensure that One Space can remain in their current location until the new premises known as Block D are scheduled to open and the procurement exercise for an operator is complete.

Officers are also aware that the Chair of Trustees has indicated One Space do have the option of relocating to the church hall building at St James Church, which features a large space and several adjoining rooms.

One Space are also invited to meetings of the Kidbrooke Community Forum where residents and service providers share information, and the Council gives regular updates on progress with the new Community Hub at these meetings. At the most recent meeting on 11th January One Space again reiterated that they were unlikely to bid to operate the community space. The Council and Berkeley Homes is aware that One Space may have an option to locate into the St James Church hall building and Officers are also exploring whether or not the Halton Court Village Hall and catering facilities at Kidbrooke may be an option.

Comments on social media by you suggesting the Council has not engaged with One Space are ill-informed and do not reflect the work that Officers in the Council have done to engage with the organisation.

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Furthermore, it is simply not true that the Council is not providing community space. The Council is currently fitting out over 20,000 sq. ft of ground floor space at Peglar Square to create a sustainable and thriving hub of community activity alongside a GP surgery and associated health facilities. This state-of-the-art building will feature a large hall and rooms of various sizes that will be available to hire by local organisations and residents.

The Council will shortly be commencing the tender process to select an operator for the community space in the new Hub and I welcome all interested organisations to submit proposals. The Council is confident that residents of Kidbrooke Village and the surrounding areas will welcome the facilities available in the new Community Hub, and once a Community Centre operator has been selected that organisation will take up local engagement with residents.

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8 Question from Councillor Charlie Davis, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth

Given the Council's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030, will the Cabinet Member consider making it easier for residents to receive planning permission for installing external insulation on their property where they do not live in a conservation area?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Charlie Davis for his question.

The council is indeed committed to carbon neutrality by 2030, however, the Carbon Neutral Plan does not overrule the current national planning legislation that governs extensions and alterations to dwelling houses. The current guidance which covers external alterations to a single-family dwelling house is covered by the general permitted development rights allowed for properties. This national legislation is set out in a technical document known as the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended)).

Put simply, it is dependent on the property, its location, and the proposed schemes as to whether it falls as permitted development or planning permission is required. Permitted development typically would relate to a single-family dwelling house outside a conservation area provided the materials used in any exterior work are of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the exterior of the existing dwelling house. There are however limitations in that if the property falls in a conservation area works to introduce external wall insulation requires planning permission and these works are not covered by permitted development.

Planning has not typically dealt with a large amount of planning applications for properties falling outside of conservation areas for external wall insulation but as residents start to address this issue more this may very well increase in the future.

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9 Question from Councillor Charlie Davis, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth

Can the Cabinet Member confirm what contact Greenwich Council has had with Galliard regarding their plans for the Leegate development since the November meeting of Full Council?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Charlie Davis for his question.

I met with Galliard Homes in early January 2022. They presented the proposed redevelopment scheme to us which is currently at the pre-application stage. Galliards intend to formally submit an application to Lewisham Council in March 2022. Once submitted as an application Lewisham will formally notify Greenwich inviting the Borough to make representations. At this stage planning officers will make a strategic assessment of the proposal and consider its impact on the Borough. Following this assessment, it is intended to make formal representations to Lewisham (which I will review and approve as Cabinet lead).

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10 Question from Councillor Geoffrey Brighty, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment Sustainability and Transport

In answer to my question for the [cancelled December](#) Council the Cabinet Member said “ A decision on the Westcombe Park and Maze Hill Area Low Traffic Neighbourhood proposal is on the Council’s forward plan to be taken in January 2022” Can the Cabinet Member provide a further up-date on that decision and confirm that the results of the consultation which closed in March 2021 will be made public with any decision?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Geoffrey Brighty for his question.

The report was published on Thursday 20th January 2022 and a decision is due to be taken on Thursday 26th January 2022.

The procedure is that the decision is taken 5 working days after the report is published.

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11 Question from Councillor Geoffrey Brighty, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Cabinet Member for Housing

Can the Cabinet Member confirm what plans are under consideration for the future of the former Sheltered Housing facility at 133 Langton Way, Blackheath ?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Geoffrey Brighty for his question.

As you know the original residents were all given options to move to appropriate alternative accommodation based on the fact that the plan was to use Langton Way for conversion into an extra care service for people with a learning disability. Following feasibility work about remodelling the building it was established that the building could not be converted in situ into an extra care service. This is because it would be difficult to remodel the building in order to provide self-contained accommodation in general and for people with a learning disability in particular.

I can confirm that Langton Way is being used in the short term as a step down from hospital provision managed by Health and Adult Services. This is to accommodate people for a short period of time up to a few weeks, while awaiting their home to be cleaned or adapted or for their long-term accommodation to become available. Housing colleagues continue to work in partnership with Health & Adult Services and have responsibility for the property. Colleagues in Health & Adults have confirmed that they would like to continue using the building until such time as any development comes forward (the plan is to continue the hospital step down provision with or without the pandemic and a small number of the flats for young people transitioning from children's to adults services).

In terms of the longer term my officers are exploring options and will consult the relevant parties accordingly.

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12 Question from Councillor Geoffrey Brighty, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth

I understand that the future of the former underground public conveniences at the Royal Standard, Blackheath is being considered as part of a Strategic Asset Review. Can the Cabinet Member provide an up-date on how that is progressing ?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Geoffrey Brighty for his question.

The position with this former public convenience is that the Council has an arrangement to manage the facility as a public toilet under the London Squares Preservation Act 1931. The property is not registered in the Council's name and a previous attempt to have it registered was unsuccessful. The Council therefore has no legal interest in the property and is not in a position to either dispose of it or let it.

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13 Question from Councillor Geoffrey Brighty, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment Sustainability and Transport

Can the Cabinet Member advise when the data from the HGV survey in Kidbrooke Gardens, carried out in October, will be made available?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Geoffrey Brighty for his question.

I am making the data available now in the answer to this question.

Surveys were conducted at 3 entry points onto Kidbrooke Gardens to capture the number of vehicles over 3 tonne contravening the restriction.

Surveys were for a duration of 2 days (19 and 20th October 2021) and **45** contraventions were recorded.

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14 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Matthew Morrow, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Can we have an update please on the number of staff and pupils who are absent from our schools due to Covid and, where necessary, have retired teachers and supply staff been recruited to cover ?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

Since the beginning of term in January, in total 1231 pupils and 241 staff in schools have tested positive and had to self-isolate.

On the 19th January there are were 535 pupils and 78 staff self-isolating following a positive test result.

Schools actively recruit supply staff where required. Headteachers in RBG have consistently reported since the beginning of term that supply agencies do not have supply staff available to provide cover in schools. This is a national issue and the appointing of retired teachers to fill vacancies is complicated by both the schoolteachers pay and conditions and DBS requirements. Teachers pay and conditions requires contracting for a term at a time and teachers must hold a valid, enhanced DBS. Therefore, this arrangement would only be possible if retired teachers were employed by supply agencies to work in schools.

No school in Greenwich has had to close in its entirety due to staff shortages or pupil outbreak of Covid-19 infections

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15 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Linda Parks, Cabinet Member for Finance & resources.

On the 11th January we received an update from the N.H.S on the progress and future priorities for the vaccination programme. We were told that the 12-15 age group take up was low. Do we have the latest figures on vaccinations carried out on this age group in Greenwich ?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

As of 10th January 2022, 35.95% of the Greenwich 12-15 population have been vaccinated (1st dose).

On 29th November 2021, The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advised that a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for young people aged 12 to 15 years is advised no sooner than 12 weeks after the first dose

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust has been providing the in-school vaccination programme, which commenced for 1st doses in September 2021. On 18th January 2022, Oxleas began to revisit schools to offer 2nd doses, as well as provide 1st doses for those that had missed the initial offer.

In addition, we have sought to publicise widely that 12-15 year olds can now book a vaccination appointment through the NHS national booking service, and that there are a number of sites in the Borough where this age group can be vaccinated outside the school setting and where parents can accompany their children if they wish to do so. This was a significant part of the messaging contained in a recent Borough wide all household leaflet drop.

Vaccination sites in the Borough publicised in the leaflet which are able to vaccinate this age group are:

- Queen Elizabeth Hospital
- Charlton House Vaccination Centre
- Heronsgate Medical Practice, Thamesmead

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- Plumstead Health Centre
- Wensley Close Vaccination Centre, Eltham
- Wallace Health Centre, Deptford

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16 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

I am extremely concerned about the ever increasing number of delivery bikes that are taking over Eltham High Street. I know that this is not the first time that I have raised this issue in Council. The changes that have been made have only exacerbated the situation.

I have asked before and now I am asking again if we as local councillors can have an on-site meeting ,with yourself and relevant officers, to try and resolve this problem before the situation escalates even more?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

We have been on a site visit and have spoken to the drivers and local businesses who rely on them for deliveries. It is clear that bike deliveries are part of the new gig economy and are essential to a thriving town centre. The main users are food outlets, but a lot of the businesses use them to deliver items ordered online.

If delivery bikes are parking illegally then they are subject to the same penalties as other vehicle parking, although parking for the first 30 minutes is free in the High Street. If they are parking legally then they are as entitled to be there as anyone else.

They take up much less space than a car and they emit far less pollution, and they are responding to delivery requests made by residents who are not then forced to get in their cars and try to park in Eltham High Street.

There are four substantial car parks immediately behind the High Street.

A site visit is not necessary as I know Eltham High Street very well.

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17 Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth

Can I thank the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth for her reply to my question concerning the Deansfield from [the cancelled December](#) Council meeting. I was disappointed to read her reply as it suggested that the possibility of creating a BMX track on the site was being considered. Could the Cabinet Member explain why it is that another BMX track is needed when there is already one in the Royal Borough at Hornfair Park? Given the issues which arose with Hervey Road, can the Cabinet Member also assure me that no taxpayers money will be contributed to the development of a new BMX track in the Royal Borough of Greenwich?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Spencer Drury for his question.

Following the sale of the current BMX land by the University of Greenwich the Avery Hill Bikers Club is seeking to relocate an existing BMX track from Avery Hill to another site in the borough. The club approached the Council having identified Deansfield as a potential site to accommodate their BMX track, however this has been discounted.

I can confirm that the Council has not agreed to any funding associated with the Avery Hill Bikers Club aspirations.

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18 Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

Over the 18 months there appear to have been a number of serious accidents on the Rochester Way, including one at the junction with Westmount Road. Can the Cabinet Member confirm, for the last 18 months, how many accidents the Council is aware of along the Rochester Way between Kidbrooke and Falconwood Field? Is the Cabinet Member concerned by the accidents and what action has been taken to address this problem?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Spencer Drury for his question.

Collision and casualty data from Transport for London is currently available up until the end of September 2021. Officers have analysed data for the three most recent comparable 18-month periods.

In the 18 months from the 1st of April 2020 to the 30th September 2021 there were 23 collisions within this 2.4-mile section of Rochester Way.

This compares to 15 in the previous comparable 18-month period (1 April 2019 to 30 September 2020), and 21 in the comparable 18-month period before that (1 April 2018 to 30 September 2019).

We have a work programme in place to identify sites for priority intervention.

Officers will continue to monitor collision rates on all of our roads, including Rochester Way, to ensure that we identify the most urgent sites to be considered for improvements.

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19 Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Mariam Lolavar, Cabinet Member for Business and Economic Growth.

I believe that it is the case that the Royal Borough of Greenwich Council allocated £925,000 of the Additional Restrictions Grant to a Sector Recovery Grant to businesses providing support to other businesses or groups representing key sectors or areas in the Royal Borough of Greenwich economy. In an October report, it was confirmed that 13 grants had been paid out. [The Sector Recovery Grant criteria](#) were laid out on the Council website eg High Streets for All. Can the Cabinet Member confirm which criteria each of the 13 bids aimed to fulfill, how much was allocated to the bid and what it was hoped the grant would achieve?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Spencer Drury for his question.

It is the case that the Council allocated £925,000 of the Additional Restrictions Grant funding to support 13 Sector Recovery Grant (SRG) applications.

Grant funding supported a range of businesses operating across key sectors, providing urgent support to businesses and a major boost to the local economy with activity link to economic recovery objectives.

Eleven business organisations received grants of £75k and two were allocated £50k. Grant funded activity has been far reaching, ranging from delivery of sector recovery campaigns, cultural events to drive town centre footfall and helped safeguard 16,000 jobs in the tourism sector. The delivery of Green Business Audits to local companies will help them implement measures to reduce their carbon footprint and deliver on the borough's wider green recovery objectives and climate emergency actions. Funding has also been directed towards socially focused organisations to support post pandemic recovery, including a New Deal for Young People where over 600 young people are accessing support services, improving their mental health and wellbeing.

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Officers have prepared a briefing note with further detail which I hope you will find helpful

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20 Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Linda Perks, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

I note that the Royal Borough of Greenwich's income from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been in the news recently. According to local bloggers Greenwich Council has set a low CIL rate and failed to reach estimated income from the CIL as a result (£9.7m collected v £27.5 estimated). Can the Cabinet Member confirm the reasons behind the gap between estimated and actual CIL collections? In addition, can the Cabinet Member confirm whether a review of the current CIL rate is currently taking place?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Spencer Drury for his question.

In setting the Borough's CIL rate the Council completed a viability assessment to determine the appropriate rate(s) for Greenwich at that time. This evidence was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate through the Examination In Public, who approved the schedule subject to the rate in north east of the borough being reduced due to viability concerns. The CIL rate adopted in 2015 was the best rate that could be secured at the time but is lower than other London boroughs. We are currently seeking expert advice to undertake the review of the CIL rate, with the process likely taking up to 18 months to adopt an updated charging schedule.

To date the Borough has collected £11.5m in CIL. The level of collection is being monitored closely and over the previous two financial years has been lower than would have been expected. CIL receipts are driven by commencement of development and so additional resources were secured mid-way through 2021/22 to increase capacity to monitor development and identify schemes that may have commenced without informing the Council. I meet regularly with the department to keep the position under review and am satisfied that this is contributing to improved performance in collection. The amount collected so far, this financial year is just under £2 million, with more due to be collected by the end of the financial year, based on the demand notices that have been issued.

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Colleagues are reminded that developer contributions come from two sources, CIL and Section 106. Some of the large schemes (e.g., Kidbrooke and Royal Arsenal) currently being implemented in the borough actually secured their permissions prior to the introduction of CIL, meaning that developer contributions were secured through the Section 106 regime, rather than CIL. For those schemes granted permission prior to the adoption of the Greenwich charging schedule, Borough CIL will only be collected if those permissions are subsequently varied, and in these instances only on any uplift in floorspace created by the variations.

I would like to take this opportunity to correct inaccurate media reporting over the seasonal break which claimed that the Royal Borough would be unable to meet payments for Woolwich Crossrail Station. The Council continues to collect CIL and transfer half of the CIL receipt to TfL in accordance with the funding agreement and I am confident that the amount will be settled in full. To date the Royal Borough has transferred just over £8m. There is £5.4m in potential S106 money, secured for the fit out of the Crossrail station from schemes within 1 mile of the station, which will be collected where permissions are implemented, and payment trigger points reached. In order to ensure that the Council can meet the funding commitment in accordance with the agreement, the Council took the decision to set aside the Strategic CIL that has been collected since 2015 (to date just under £5m) to underwrite the funding commitment.

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21 Question from Councillor Aidan Smith, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment Sustainability and Transport

In March 2021 the designs and funding were secured to redesign the road outside Blackheath Gate. These changes were deemed necessary by both TfL and the Council for road safety. When will these essential works start?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Aidan Smith for his question.

Works to redesign the Blackheath Gate junction (Charlton Way junction with Duke Humphrey Road) are scheduled to commence on 22 February 2022.