

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**I Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

Following his becoming Leader of the Council in May, when can the public expect the Leader to share his plans for the future of the borough?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Following the elections in May which saw a record number of Labour Councillors elected in the borough, we are now working to convert our manifesto into the Council's new corporate plan.

I can say on behalf of all my colleagues we are truly humbled by the overwhelming mandate the residents of this borough gave our plans to Build A Brighter Greenwich.

We will deliver on our promises and continue to make Greenwich a place that people are proud to call home.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**2 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

Does the Leader consider his new administration to be bound by the Greenwich Labour Party's 2022 manifesto?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

A record number of Labour Councillors were elected on a mandate to deliver our Manifesto which sets out Labour's vision for Greenwich.

I can say on behalf of all my colleagues we are truly humbled by the overwhelming support the residents of this borough gave our plans to Build a Brighter Greenwich and that is what we will do.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**3 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

What consideration did the Leader give to geography, in the process of forming his first Cabinet?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

As I have stated in response to an earlier question, the mandate local residents gave my colleagues and I, in electing a record number of Labour Councillors to this Chamber, was truly humbling.

Our priorities include supporting residents through this cost of living crisis, tackling climate change and improving the health of local people.

Residents of this borough would expect me to select Cabinet members who can deal with the issues they are facing and it is pleasing that they represent all parts of the borough.

## **COUNCIL**

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### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**4 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

Firstly, which member of the Cabinet has responsibility for Anti-Poverty policy?

Secondly, can he confirm which member of Cabinet is responsible for the 'Benefits and welfare rights' brief that was held by the previous Deputy Leader?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Given the increasing number of children and pensioners living in poverty and the number of families relying on foodbanks rocketing during the time this Conservative Government has been in power, I am determined we will do all we can to support every resident in this borough through these difficult times.

The responsibility for both these areas sits with the Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Business and Skills, though many of the other portfolios held by my Cabinet colleagues mean they will have a role to play.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**5 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

Can the Leader provide a list of meetings he has held with the Council's external partner organisations, since becoming Leader on 25th May 2022?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

My Cabinet colleagues and I have been out and about meetings residents and other local stakeholders, since the election of a record number of Labour Councillors.

This includes face to face meetings, virtual meetings and formal meetings which are advertised in the council calendar.

Whilst the Council is having to deal with the Tory cost of living crisis and the fastest rise in inflation in forty years, I'm sure Councillor Hartley would agree it is not a good use of mine or my Cabinet Member's time to list individual meetings that I have held.

Instead we will get on with dealing with the issues that we were elected to deal with and which saw a record number of Labour Councillors elected to this Council.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**6 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

Can the Leader confirm reports that he has promised members of Labour Group that his new administration will set up a new “consultation and communications unit”? How many staff does he propose that this unit will have?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

I am really proud of the fact our Comms team enable local residents to access vital Council services across a range of channels. These include our Twitter, Facebook and Instagram accounts, which are in the top three most followed London Council accounts, and our fortnightly publication, Greenwich Info.

I have made clear that this new administration will seek to put residents at the heart of everything we do.

Staffing resourcing levels are, however, the responsibility of the Council’s Head of Paid Service and her team of officers and not Councillors.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**7 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

Can the Leader confirm reports that he has promised members of his Group that his new administration will recruit a taxpayer-funded Political Assistant for the Labour Group to “help with policy and political messaging”?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

I have many discussions with the other Councillors in my group - as I'm sure he does with his two colleagues - and those conversations are confidential.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**8 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

Has the Leader met with Newham Mayor Rohksana Fiaz since his election as Leader, regarding the Silvertown Tunnel? What was the outcome of any meeting held?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

One of the first things I have done since becoming Leader was to arrange a meeting with the Deputy Mayor of London responsible for Transport and the Mayor of Newham. The meeting was set up to discuss a range of issues relating to our boroughs – including sustainable transport – and we will continue those discussions over the coming months.



## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**9 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

What is the new administration's policy on the Silvertown Tunnel?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Our priority is to improve the quality of life for our residents and work towards our ambitious target to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030 – as set out in the Council's Carbon Neutral Plan.

Transport for London's (TfL) Silvertown Tunnel Project has a long and complex history pre-dating the Council's current administration. The project was approved by the Conservative Government's Transport Secretary (the Rt Hon Chris Grayling MP) in 2018.

On 16 March 2022 a motion was submitted to Full Council, calling on the Mayor and TfL to pause work on the Silvertown Tunnel project immediately. The motion was agreed.

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### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**10 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

What is the new administration's policy on Low Traffic Neighbourhoods? Secondly, can the Deputy Leader confirm the timetable for the production, consultation and implementation of the new Transport Strategy?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

A draft Transport Strategy is currently being developed. The Transport Strategy will set out the Royal Borough's overarching approach to transport issues, such as Low traffic Neighbourhoods.

I encourage everyone to have their say, on this issue and others, when we consult on the Transport Strategy.

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## MEMBERS QUESTIONS

### 11 **Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

What contact has the Deputy Leader had with the Mayor of London and/or Transport for London regarding the Mayor's proposed expansion of the ULEZ charging zone to cover all of Greater London? Is the Council aware of how many vehicle owners would be effected in the borough if the ULEZ expansion goes ahead?

#### **Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Transport generated 31% of the Royal Greenwich's total carbon emissions in 2019. 95% of these transport emissions come from the vehicles on our roads. If we don't take significant action we will not meet our ambitious target to reach net zero carbon emissions by 2030 – as set out in the Council's Carbon Neutral Plan.

The Royal Borough's Carbon Neutral Plan and Local Implementation Plan for transport support the extension of the Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ). This would: improve health in the area covered; reduce 'boundary effects' caused a boundary that cuts through Royal Greenwich (eg parking displacement); *and* help us meet the net zero carbon targets.

However, it is important that any changes to the ULEZ are made in the best way for all. We will engage with Transport for London to ensure there is appropriate support for people during any change. TfL's current proposals include a scrappage scheme, to help support the switch to cleaner alternatives.

[TfL's consultation](#) on its proposal is ongoing to 29th July and I encourage everyone to have their say through that consultation. The Royal Borough will continue to engage with Transport for London as it responds to the consultation.

The current ULEZ influences vehicle owners who live inside and outside of the zone. It would not be accurate to say all vehicle owners in an expanded zone would be newly affected - the picture is not that simple. However, as an indication of scale, only 18 per cent of vehicles in outer London are not already ULEZ compliant.

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29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**12 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

Can the Deputy Leader confirm reports that the new administration intends to introduce a “polluter pays” system for parking permits, with owners of vehicles with greater emissions charged more?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

The Royal Borough’s adopted Carbon Neutral Plan includes a proposal to “*Develop and adopt banded parking permit charges that vary with vehicle emissions*”. This was agreed by both political Parties. These charges would aim to encourage people have fewer and cleaner cars. They can be effective levers to deliver the ambitions and targets set out in the Borough’s Carbon Neutral Plan, Equality and Equity Charter, Health and Wellbeing Strategy, and Air Quality Action Plan.

The Council is currently developing a draft Transport Strategy which will develop key transport themes, objectives and policies.

Once again, I encourage everyone to have their say when we consult on the Transport Strategy.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**13 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

Can the Deputy Leader lay out the timetable for the implementation of the Towards Zero Waste Strategy adopted by Cabinet in late 2020? When will the Council's move to fortnightly black bin collections go ahead?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

The communications campaign informing residents of the imminent changes in the waste collections is being launched week commencing 27 June 2022.

From September 2022, mixed dry recycling (blue top) and food and garden waste (green top) wheelie bins that are found contaminated with wrong items will not get emptied and households will be required to take responsibility of their own waste and clear their bin.

The fortnightly collections of the black top wheelie bins will launch in February 2023. This change will only affect properties that use wheelie bins and not properties that use sacks only and flats with large communal bins. Mixed dry recycling (blue top) and food and garden waste (green top) wheelie bins will still be collected weekly.

The 'no side waste' policy will also be introduced at the same time. All general waste must be put inside the black top wheelie bins, no additional extra bags of general waste will be removed.

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## MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**14 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

Can the Deputy Leader provide a list of meetings she has held with external stakeholders relevant to her Cabinet brief, since becoming Cabinet Member on 25 May 2022?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Like my other Cabinet colleagues, I have been out and about meeting residents and other local stakeholders, since the election of a record number of Labour Councillors.

This includes face to face meetings, virtual meetings and formal meetings which are advertised in the council calendar.

Whilst the Council is having to deal with the Tory cost of living crisis and the fastest rise in inflation in forty years, I'm sure Councillor Hartley would agree it is not a good use of my time to list individual meetings that I have held.

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29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**15 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Ivis Williams, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Social Value**

Can the Cabinet Member give an update on the implementation of the Government's Council Tax Rebate scheme? In particular:

- a) How many and what proportion of households eligible for the £150 Council Tax Rebate in Bands A to D have now received this? Can this please be broken down into Direct Debit payers, and non-Direct Debit payers.
- b) From the Discretionary element of the scheme, how many and what proportion of Council Tax Support (CTS) households eligible for the £150 Council Tax Rebate in Bands E to H have now received this? Can this please be broken down into Direct Debit payers, and non-Direct Debit payers.
- c) From the Discretionary element of the scheme, how many and what proportion of non-CTS households eligible for the £65 Council Tax Rebate in Band E? Can this please be broken down into Direct Debit payers, and non-Direct Debit payers.
- d) In total how many and what proportion of Council Tax Support households (in all Bands) have now received their Rebate?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Whilst the Council is progressing well with making payments under the Council Tax Rebate scheme, it is proving to be quite an administrative challenge for many councils including Greenwich. In order to reduce potential levels of fraud, checks are required on each payment. Additionally, where tenants in HMO's are in need, we have to look at each case individually as they are ineligible for the Council Tax Rebate and we look to support them through our Emergency Support scheme.

The table below provides a breakdown between Direct Debit and non-Direct Debtor payers.



- a) There are 98,623 households in Bands A – D eligible for the Council Tax Rebate of £150. A total of 69,074 (70.04%) have received payment.
- b) There are 949 households in Bands E – H in receipt of Local Council Tax Support eligible for the Discretionary element of Council Tax Rebate of £150. A total of 287 (30.24%) have received payment.
- c) There are 10,393 households in Band E eligible for the Discretionary element of Council Tax Rebate of £65. A total of 8,104 (77.98%) have received payment.
- d) There are 20,807 households in receipt of Local Council Tax Support across all Bands eligible for payment under the Council Tax Rebate schemes. Currently, 9,676 (46.50%) have received payment.

<b>Council Tax Rebate Bands A - D £150</b>	Eligible	DD	Non DD	Paid	DD	Non DD
	98,623	55,021	43,602	69,074	53,053	16,021
		55.79%	44.21%	<b>70.04%</b>	76.81%	23.19%
<b>Discretionary Scheme Band E - £65</b>	Eligible	DD	Non DD	Paid	DD	Non DD
	10,393	8,532	1,861	8,104	7,935	169
		82.09%	17.91%	<b>77.98%</b>	97.91%	2.09%
<b>Discretionary Scheme Bands E - H LCTS £150</b>	Eligible	DD	Non DD	Paid	DD	Non DD
	949	213	736	287	163	124
		22.44%	77.56%	<b>30.24%</b>	56.79%	43.21%

\*The government advice is for the Council to wait for the first DD Council Tax instalment to clear before making the payment of Council Tax Rebate. Some customers are yet to have reached their first instalment date - this can be due to the timing of the Direct debit set up, change in liability etc.

Furthermore, there are a significant number of cases where the bank account payee details do not match with the name of Council Tax liable

person - the system is set to flag these for further review and require manual intervention, taking longer to authorise and require further interaction with the household

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### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**16 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Ivis Williams, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Social Value**

The Cabinet Member will remember from her time serving on scrutiny that I and others had urged her predecessor to use the Government's Council Tax Rebate scheme as an incentive to encourage more residents to sign up to pay Council Tax by Direct Debit.

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on whether this has been successful? What specific activity has been undertaken to encourage Direct Debit sign-up using the Rebate as an incentive? How has the proportion of households paying by Direct Debit changed so far in the 2022 calendar year, broken down by month?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

As part of the activity surrounding the implementation of the Council Tax Rebate Scheme, the Council publicised that those households who paid their Council Tax via the Direct Debit scheme would have the payment awarded to their bank account without the requirement to submit an application form.

The publicity and communications issued by the Council surrounding the Council Tax Rebate has proven to be successful and there was a notable increase in the requests to pay Council by Direct Debit in March of this year which continued into April.

All Council Tax bills sent by the Council include reference to the availability for residents to view their council tax online and to sign up for Direct Debit as a method of payment.

The table below provides a breakdown on the monthly totals.

	% Direct Debit	% increase
January 2022	65.42%	0.36%
February 2022	65.64%	0.22%
March 2022	69.01%	3.37%
April 2022	70.04%	1.03%
May 2022	70.49%	0.45%

The Council ran a social media campaign and provided messaging on its website highlighting the scheme and that Direct Debit payers would receive payment without an application form (once their first payment of Council Tax via Direct Debt had been successfully received by the Council).

Using our Social Media channels such as Twitter, Facebook and Instagram, the Council has been able to reach those digitally enabled. The Council also utilised its Resident Bulletin, sent via email and Greenwich Info, which is dropped to the majority of borough residents, to encourage signing up to Direct Debit.

All households deemed eligible for the Council Tax Rebate who did not pay their Council Tax via Direct Debit received a letter inviting them to apply for their payment. This letter also highlighted that households paying Council Tax via Direct Debit would be able to receive the award without application.

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### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**17 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

Can the Leader update on the implementation of the Ward Budget Scheme 2022-26, which was agreed as part of the MTFS by Full Council in February 2022?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

The Ward Budget Scheme provides an important tool for Members to fund local priorities in their wards, and I am pleased to confirm the continuation of the scheme for the 2022-26 administration.

The Ward Budget Scheme 2022-26 will be considered by the Cabinet on 20 July 2022. Full details of the scheme will be set out in the report published in advance of the Cabinet meeting.

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### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**18 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture and Communities**

Why has the 2023-2027 Voluntary Sector Commissioning Round been delayed? Can the Cabinet Member provide an update?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

The 2023-2027 Voluntary Sector Commissioning Round hasn't been delayed and will still run from 1 April 2023 to 31 March 2027.

The application window was postponed slightly to August-September 2022, although this does not significantly impact the rest of the commissioning round. This slight pause was to allow the priorities identified to be reviewed following the recent election, and to allow further consideration of the impact of the worsening cost of living crisis on our most vulnerable residents. We have also listened to feedback from groups and have doubled the length of the application window from four weeks for the 2019 to 2023 round to eight weeks for the 2023 to 2027 round.

As stated on the Council's Forward Plan, the arrangements for the funding round will be considered by Cabinet on 20 July 2022.

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29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**19 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture and Communities**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on Woolwich Works? What is his assessment, as the Cabinet Member, of outcomes from the project so far? In his view is Woolwich Works' commercial performance meeting the Council's expectations?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

In the short amount of time Woolwich Works has been open, it has already won plaudits in the form of being awarded Best New Culture Spot in [Time Out London's 2021 Best of the City Awards](#). It is also well on the way to achieving a number of key performance indicators the Council agreed with the Trust. These include:

- created 39 permanent full time equivalent jobs, with local residents being appointed to 11 roles;
- an active pool of 41 Borough residents working on a flexible basis, the vast majority of which were recruited via GLLaB, three of which have already benefitted from upskilling and development that has enabled them to progress to manager-level jobs;
- presented free schools performances to hundreds of children from across the Borough;
- delivered 108 public performances and events spanning a diverse range of art forms, genres and cultures;
- brought in external funding to support the project for the benefit of residents totalling over £1.4m.

It has achieved this in spite of opening during unprecedented times in the form of the Covid 19 pandemic. In turn, this had a knock-on effect on the opening of the Woolwich Crossrail station which has always been envisaged to be a key driver for visitor numbers to the venue.

Like any new venture, it will take time to establish itself. We will continue to work with the Trust in order to help sustain it in the early stages of operation in order to help it go from strength to strength.



## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**20 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture and Communities**

In February 2020 unpopular proposals were published by the Council - as part of cost reduction 'pro-formas' in that year's Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) update - to close Glyndon Adventure Play Centre, and relocate Coldharbour Adventure Play Centre and Library into Coldharbour Leisure Centre. Before the relevant Cabinet decision was taken these proposals were downgraded into a 'Review' of play centres across the government - however with the same budget saving attached, causing concern to residents who petitioned against these proposals that these plans will resurface in the future.

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on any 'Review' that has taken place since that Cabinet decision as taken?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

The Adventure Play Centres are extremely popular facilities that offer free, fun and safe environments for young people from across the borough.

At the present time, there is no intention to implement any savings.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**21 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture and Communities**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the very welcome initiative to install 23 memorial benches and trees across the borough to commemorate those who lost their lives during Covid-19? Now the memorials are now in – and being so appreciated by our communities – what measures are in place to ensure their appropriate maintenance?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question and positive comments regarding the Council's Covid Memorial Scheme.

The Covid-19 memorial benches and trees are low maintenance but they are routinely inspected by officers and any required maintenance will be arranged.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**22 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture and Communities**

Can the Cabinet Member provide a list of meetings he has held with external stakeholders relevant to his Cabinet brief, since becoming Cabinet Member on 25 May 2022?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Like my other Cabinet colleagues, I have been out and about meeting residents and other local stakeholders, since the election of a record number of Labour Councillors.

This includes face to face meetings, virtual meetings and formal meetings which are advertised in the council calendar.

Whilst the Council is having to deal with the Tory cost of living crisis and the fastest rise in inflation in forty years, I'm sure Councillor Hartley would agree it is not a good use of my time to list individual meetings that I have held.

Instead, I will get on with dealing with the issues that residents elected us to deal with.

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29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**23 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Matthew Morrow, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

The Labour manifesto for the 2022 local elections committed to developing a post-Covid 'Children's Recovery Plan'. Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the production of this Recovery Plan?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Children's services are monitoring demand and nature of contacts and referrals to ensure that all services can respond to the impact of Covid. All Schools have put robust intervention strategies in place to ensure rapid catch up for children who may have been impacted on Covid.

While the full impact of the pandemic on children and young people is not yet known, there is work going on to support young people as we begin to emerge in a post-Covid environment. This includes:

- We have introduced new speech and language programme across approximately 80% of our primary schools to aid recovery and lost learning. We have invested in staff training so that this new programme will be sustainable for the next cohort of children.
- Schools themselves have put in place robust intervention strategies in place to ensure rapid catch up
- Young Greenwich has been delivering support across the borough including the establishment of a new programme to support parents/carers of adolescent children.
- Establishing a third new Mental Health in Schools Teams to support children and young people with their emotional wellbeing in education.
- Re-establishment of the National Child Measurement Programme for Reception and Year 6
- Delivery of the Holiday Food and Fun programme across the borough providing additional activities across Easter, Summer and Christmas.
- Making payments to families with children claiming free school meals during holiday periods to support with food and utility pressures.

The Council is closely monitoring key potential impacts that Covid through areas such as social care, mental health services and educational settings.

The Children and Young People Partnership Board will consider the overarching partnership post- Covid Recovery Plan at its next meeting.

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### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**24 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Matthew Morrow, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Council's joining of the Adopt London South (ALS) Regional Adoption Agency in April. What are the intended outcomes of joining this agency, and how and when will success be measured?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Central Government passed legislation requiring local authorities to join Regional Adoption Agencies. In Royal Greenwich we have had a high performing adoption team for many years and were determined to maintain these standards in any new arrangement and so proceeded with caution.

We joined Adoption London South, ALS, on 1<sup>st</sup> April 2022 having determined that in terms of practice and outcomes for children this was the best option for us. There will be regular meetings between RBG and ALS to look at performance and outcomes for children and performance data is regularly reported to us and to the Department for Education. This data, as well as feedback from staff and other quality assurance activity will determine future success.

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**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**25 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Matthew Morrow, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

Can the Cabinet Member provide a list of meetings he has held with external stakeholders relevant to his Cabinet brief, since becoming Cabinet Member on 25 May 2022?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Like my other Cabinet colleagues, I have been out and about meeting residents and other local stakeholders, since the election of a record number of Labour Councillors.

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## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**26 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Pat Slattery, Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Homelessness**

What is the new administration's plan to address under-performance in the Repairs Service?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

For context, the Housing Repairs Service completed over 60,000 repairs a year and it's satisfaction rate with completed repairs was 91% in May. The service employs many local people, through our direct labour force, providing training, skills and good salaries and also provides apprenticeships for Greenwich young people to give them skills for life. We also employ local people indirectly through our repairs supply chain. We should also not forget that over the Covid Pandemic our responsive repairs team continued to provide key front line services throughout dealing with emergency repairs and keeping our residents safe.

We absolutely know that there are areas for improvement and continuing to improve the repairs service is a key priority for me and a key priority for the leader of the Council and I very much look forward to being in a position to update Councillors soon on the service.



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**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**27 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Pat Slattery, Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Homelessness**

It has been reported that the new administration plans to conduct a “Review of estate maintenance”. What are the Objectives and Terms of Reference for this Review, which Cabinet Members and Officers will be involved?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question. We have a Service Level Agreement with Parks and Open Spaces which will be reviewed as part of this year’s work programme, and which we will seek to involve residents with. We are also reviewing governance arrangements for small estate improvements and looking to introduce better project management to ensure residents are fully engaged and projects better defined and implemented.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**28 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Pat Slattery, Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Homelessness**

Can the Cabinet Member provide a list of meetings she has held with external stakeholders relevant to her Cabinet brief, since becoming Cabinet Member on 25 May 2022?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Like my other Cabinet colleagues, I have been out and about meeting residents and other local stakeholders, since the election of a record number of Labour Councillors.

This includes face to face meetings, virtual meetings and formal meetings which are advertised in the council calendar.

Whilst the Council is having to deal with the Tory cost of living crisis and the fastest rise in inflation in forty years, I'm sure Councillor Hartley would agree it is not a good use of my time to list individual meetings that I have held.

Instead, I will get on with dealing with the issues that residents elected us to deal with.

# COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

## MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**29 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Denise Hyland, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Business and Skills**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Council's use of the Apprenticeships Levy? How much of the Levy has been reclaimed in each of the last three financial years?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

- The government launched its apprenticeship levy in May 2017. This requires all employers in the UK with an annual wage bill of over £3 million to pay 0.5% of it towards funding apprenticeships.
- The levy can only be spent on the training costs of an apprenticeship, which has proved challenging and for some employers acts as a disincentive to take on new apprentices.
- A public sector target was also introduced, requiring public bodies with 250 staff or more to employ an average of 2.3% of their headcount as new apprenticeship starts – this requirement ended in March 2022
- Unspent levy funds expire after a two-year period and are returned to central government.

The table below shows the Council's contributions and spend for the last three years.

<b>Year</b>	<b>2019</b>	<b>2020</b>	<b>2021</b>	<b>Total</b>
<b>Levy contribution by RBG</b>	£1,985,108	£1,915,600	£1,926,993	£5,827,702
<b>Levy Spend</b>	£152,865	£450,285	£466,644	£1,069,794
<b>Levy Spend by %</b>	8%	24%	24%	18%

GDA - New to RBG	69	32	32	133
CPD - Existing Staff	33	77	44	154
Trainee/Career Grade	3	4	1	8
<b>Total No. of apprentices</b>	105	113	77	295

\* Greenwich Direct Apprenticeship

\*\* Continuous Professional Development

Not only have we seen significant falls in the number of apprenticeship starts since the reforms were introduced, in 2019/20, £300m of unspent levy was returned to Government across all regions in the UK and £250m in 2020/21.

This cannot be right, after a decade or more of austerity, the impact of the pandemic still being felt by many and spiralling inflation adding further financial pressure on Council budgets. Not to mention labour shortages faced in many sectors particularly those still struggling to recover from the Pandemic.

Apprenticeship reforms are clearly not working and simply tinkering around the edges while largely ignoring calls for those flexibilities in the system that can help address the challenges, such as:

- Extending the period for spending levy funds to three years
- Allowing employers to use some levy funds to contribute towards the wage costs of new apprentices
- Allowing funds to support other forms of training.

# COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

## MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**30 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Denise Hyland, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Business and Skills**

It has been reported that the new administration has plans to “reinvigorate” Greenwich Local Labour and Business (GLLaB). How does the administration intend to do this?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

GLLaB was established by the Council in 1996, providing a mechanism to link borough residents to jobs created locally, and ensure local businesses secure contracts and supply chain opportunities arising from regeneration.

The service has supported tens of thousands of people into work, and equipped residents with the skills to move closer to the labour market and into work, often working with residents who face complex barriers to work.

The service continues to evolve and innovate, responding to the changing needs of job seekers and to keep pace with the labour market.

The successful service delivery model has been replicated in other parts of the country and has proved to be invaluable in mobilising a rapid response to residents during the pandemic, which included:

- Establishing an Integrated Furlough Support Service, to support those recently unemployed or at risk of redundancy, by providing a single point of access to Employment Support, Welfare Rights advice, including emergency support payments and Advice on housing related queries, support for private sector tenants and prevention of homelessness.
- In 2021, GLLaB commenced delivery of the Government’s Job Entry Targeted Support (JETS) programme, responding to high unemployment, caused by Covid-19. Which to date, the service has supported almost 250 into new jobs.

- Since December 2021, the Council through the work of GLLaB acted as an intermediary gateway organisation for the Government's national £2bn Kickstart scheme. The scheme has now ended but supported 118 young people, aged 16-24 into Kickstart placements, working with 41 employers.

Initial discussions and plans to further strengthen the service to build on these successes include:

- Embedding the 'No Wrong Door' approach and promoting Good Work standards, as part of ongoing work to tackle low pay, inequality, and cost of living crisis
- Explore joining up complementary aspects of the offer locally with other Anchor organisations in the borough, such as through a 'Jobs Portal' and an electric Community Outreach Bus
- Improving communication and promotion of the service offer, programmes, outcomes, and impacts, through a quarterly publication.
- Publishing more data and information on how the service is performing for all groups in the borough, including results of external and independent evaluations and quality kite-marks assessments, held, and sharing ways in which we are continuing to improve
- Exploring further modernisation opportunities through ICT to enhance the online presence of the service.

These are just some of the areas currently being discussed and a series of member briefings will follow in due course.

# COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

## MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**31 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Denise Hyland, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Business and Skills**

Does the Council hold data on how many shops in the borough are currently empty? What assessment has the Cabinet Member made of new powers in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill to give councils the power to hold a 'rent auction' where a town centre shop has been empty for more than a year?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

The table below details the town centre vacancy rates for each of the respective town centres and while lower than the **14.1%** national figure are still much higher than we would like.

Table 1 – Town Centre Vacancy Rates – April 2022

Area	Total number of units	Total number of vacant units	Vacancy rate - April 2022
Eltham town centre	222	7	3.1%
Greenwich town centre	356	36	10.1%
Woolwich town centre	358	42	11.7%

We welcome the Government's plans in the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill, to give Councils more power to hold 'rent auctions' but whether these powers will support regeneration of our high streets is unclear at this stage.

If the Levelling Up and Regeneration Bill is going to have serious impact on vacancy rates, the government needs to move ahead with the urgent reform of the Business Rates System to make occupying premises on a high street more affordable to small independent businesses, start-ups, and social enterprises.



## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**32 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Denise Hyland, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Business and Skills**

Can the Cabinet Member provide a list of meetings she has held with external stakeholders relevant to her Cabinet brief, since becoming interim Cabinet Member on 25 May 2022?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Like my other Cabinet colleagues, I have been out and about meeting residents and other local stakeholders, since the election of a record number of Labour Councillors.

This includes face to face meetings, virtual meetings and formal meetings which are advertised in the council calendar.

Whilst the Council is having to deal with the Tory cost of living crisis and the fastest rise in inflation in forty years, I'm sure Councillor Hartley would agree it is not a good use of my time to list individual meetings that I have held.

Instead, I will get on with dealing with the issues that residents elected us to deal with.

## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**33 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement**

What is the Cabinet Member doing to ensure close co-operation between the Council and the Metropolitan Police, in her role as Cabinet Member for Community Safety?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

I am pleased to advise that close cooperation is already well-established and embedded in all key areas of work, with senior police representatives involved with the Council (and partners) both strategically and, where appropriate, operationally. I will of course ensure this continues, including through my role as joint chair (along with a senior police leadership team member) of the Safer Greenwich Partnership, the borough's statutory partnership for community safety, crime reduction and prevention.

Senior police officers are members of all relevant strategic forums and case panels (such as the domestic abuse Multi Agency Risk Assessment Conference (MARAC), Hate Crime strategic partnership group, Safer Spaces delivery group) and contribute to development and delivery of activity to strengthen work under the Safer Greenwich Partnership's strategic priorities.

I am due to meet the BCU Commander for our first formal meeting in July. I am also aware and proud of the relationships between Council Officers and the local police at various levels. As you may recall, the Council also help to fund the award-winning Integrated Enforcement Policing Team, something we reinvested in again for the next three years using S106 monies from local development.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**34 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement**

What contact has the Cabinet Member had with the Mayor of London and/or The Mayor's Office for Policing and Crime (MOPAC), since her appointment, regarding the reported pilot programme under development that would see police officers in Greenwich, Bexley and Lewisham boroughs employ 'alternatives' to arrest when young people under the age of 25 are found in possession of cannabis in the three boroughs?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

For those who are unaware, the Mayor of Lewisham has engaged in discussions with the Mayor's Office of Policing and Crime (MOPAC) to possibly pilot a different enforcement approach for the personal possession of small amounts of cannabis in Lewisham. This has involved neither the Royal Borough nor Bexley to date formally. This proposal mirrors a couple of other schemes being run in other parts of the country.

The South-East BCU police leadership team advises that the Metropolitan Police would need to approve any such pilot centrally through its Management Board and the local BCU leaders have not been consulted so far. If the proposal progresses, we would of course expect to be consulted if it develops to become a three-borough initiative and to be kept informed if it remains with Lewisham only. This is so we can ensure any potential cross-border effects can be identified and managed.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**35 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement**

Can the Cabinet Member confirm whether the Council has commenced discussions with the Metropolitan Police about a potential Police Base in Kidbrooke Village? If so, what has been the outcome of those discussions so far?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

It is important to remember that police presence, not specifically premises, is what residents want. As a Council, we are already supporting the local police with new initiatives such as ‘Walk & Talk’ and ‘Beat Stop’ which are about increasing visibility and engagement.

I can advise however that the police have engaged positively with the Council and with Berkeley Homes towards establishing a base in Kidbrooke Village and an outline business case has been produced by the Met Police which seeks their Board's authorisation of a feasibility and full cost assessment.

As previously stated, the deployment and accommodation of police staff does remain an operational decision for the Met. We will of course continue to support the police, and would welcome any additional base in the area if deemed viable.

## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**36 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on HMO Licensing in the borough? How many licenses have now been granted, and how many have been revoked?

What estimate has the Council made of the number of unlikely unlicensed HMOs in the borough? How well used is the 'Report a HMO' page on the Council's website? How many 'reports' overall (via the website and other means) has the Council received over the last year (broken down by month)?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

How many licenses have now been granted, and how many have been revoked?

*Currently No licenced HMOs - 1395  
Total Revocations = 51*

What estimate has the Council made of the number of unlikely unlicensed HMOs in the borough?

*4916 (as reported recently in the Local Authority Housing Statistics)*

How well used is the 'Report a HMO' page on the Council's website?

*The form is being consistently used since its introduction in December 2017  
(We will advise the councillor how often the page has been used in due course)*

How many 'reports' overall (via the website and other means) has the council received over the last year (broken down by month)?

	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	Grand Total
<12/12/2017													
2017												7	7
2018	8	12	6	5	3	4		4	2	4	2		50
2019	10	4	10	25	20	27	15	19	23	12	6	11	182
2020	12	14	16	12	10	10	21	25	27	6	13	5	171
2021	8	9	14	10	9	7	18	15	10	15	14	7	136
2022	18	10	9	7	13	10							67
Grand Total	56	49	55	59	55	58	54	63	62	37	35	30	613

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**37 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement**

Can the Cabinet Member provide a list of meetings she has held with external stakeholders relevant to her Cabinet brief, since becoming Cabinet Member on 25 May 2022?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Like my other Cabinet colleagues, I have been out and about meeting residents and other local stakeholders, since the election of a record number of Labour Councillors.

This includes face to face meetings, virtual meetings and formal meetings which are advertised in the council calendar.

Whilst the Council is having to deal with the Tory cost of living crisis and the fastest rise in inflation in forty years, I'm sure Councillor Hartley would agree it is not a good use of my time to list individual meetings that I have held.

Instead, I will get on with dealing with the issues that residents elected us to deal with.

## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**38 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Health and Adults' Social Care**

Can the Cabinet Member give an update on the Public Health team's actions so far in response to the Monkeypox outbreak?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

London is at the centre of the current Monkeypox outbreak with most cases in the country occurring amongst men who have sex with men (MSM) who are London residents. Inner London boroughs are seeing a far higher number of cases than outer London Boroughs, where the cases are very small. This includes Greenwich where there have only been a few cases to date. Nevertheless, the council's Public Health team has been working with local sexual health services and with organisations who work with MSM to respond appropriately.

Staff working in sexual health services, people diagnosed with Monkeypox and their closest contacts are all being offered Smallpox vaccination, which provides some protection against infection and more serious disease. The NHS is also beginning an exercise to offer vaccination to higher risk MSM beginning with those who already access PREP (pre-exposure prophylaxis) which protects against HIV infection.

A range of ongoing communications are being targeted to MSM through social media, networks, venues, sexual health services and through organisations who work with MSM, including the Metro Centre locally.



## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**39 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Health and Adults' Social Care**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the launch of the new NHS South East London Integrated Care Board (ICB) on 1st July? What is her assessment of the implications for the council's Health, Adult Social Care and related functions?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

The new Integrated Care Board for South East London will formally become established on 1<sup>st</sup> July 2022, when the South East London Clinical Commissioning Group will become disestablished. One of the aims of the setting-up of these new organisations is to create a more joined-up health and care system across three levels; South East London, Boroughs and more local neighbourhoods.

In Greenwich, the local Executive lead role for the ICB will be fulfilled by the council's Director of Health and Adult Social Care, Sarah McClinton. This will mean that the council will have a more formal link into the NHS arrangements for Greenwich, with Sarah having responsibility for NHS functions delegated to the borough, in addition to the existing responsibilities she has for adult social care and public health. It should be more straightforward in the future to ensure that these services and functions are co-ordinated and joined-up in the interests of local residents.

The council's Chief Executive, Debbie Warren, is also joining the Board of the new ICB as a representative of the Chief Execs across South East London council, meaning RBG will have a strong presence on this governance committee.

The ICS arrangements will have a wider partnership bringing together all key partners across South East London called the Integrated Care Partnership

(ICP). This will be jointly chaired with a local authority council Leader from one of the 6 Boroughs in SE London.

A new borough level Local Care Partnership (LCP) will also be formally part of the NHS arrangements in Greenwich. The Healthy Greenwich Partnership, as we are calling our LCP, brings together RBG, NHS and third sector partner organisations to support the drive to collaborate in the planning and delivery of health and care services in the future.

This Partnership will report into the Greenwich Health and Wellbeing Board where elected members sit, and which has overall responsibility for the Health and Wellbeing Strategy for the Borough.

## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**40 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Denise Hyland, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Business and Skills**

The Labour manifesto for the 2022 local elections commits to work with NHS partners to “develop apprenticeship opportunities”. Can the Cabinet Member elaborate on the Council’s plans for this?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

We are committed to providing apprenticeship opportunities across Health and Social Care. Some of the examples of this are:

- We have introduced a Social Work apprenticeship this year.
- We have also agreed worked as a system to review how we can better support therapists on their career path. Oxleas offer a preceptorship programme which is a period of structured transition for the newly registered practitioner during which they will be supported by a preceptor to develop their confidence as an autonomous professional. There are plans to extend this approach to other teams in the health and social care system to support staff retention and promote life long learning.
- We are also working with Homecare providers who are commissioned by both Health and Social care and are committing to offer apprenticeships as part of their strategy for recruitment and retention of staff.

These are three examples we will continue to work across the ICS to develop more options.

As part of our emerging Community Wealth Building work, there have been several productive meetings with the NHS as a key Anchor organisation in the borough. There is keen interest to collaborate further around employment, skills, and apprenticeships. As large public sector apprenticeship levy payers, both organisations face similar challenges around spending the

levy, with large amounts of funds expiring and being returned to government. There is a commitment to explore scope to join up approaches to 'growing our own' by using apprenticeships as a route for addressing recruitment challenges facing the NHS and other occupational areas within Local Government.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**41 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Health and Adults' Social Care**

Can the Cabinet Member provide a list of meetings she has held with external stakeholders relevant to her Cabinet brief, since becoming Cabinet Member on 25 May 2022?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Like my other Cabinet colleagues, I have been out and about meeting residents and other local stakeholders, since the election of a record number of Labour Councillors.

This includes face to face meetings, virtual meetings and formal meetings which are advertised in the council calendar.

Whilst the Council is having to deal with the Tory cost of living crisis and the fastest rise in inflation in forty years, I'm sure Councillor Hartley would agree it is not a good use of my time to list individual meetings that I have held.

Instead, I will get on with dealing with the issues that residents elected us to deal with.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**42 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Aidan Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration**

Can the Cabinet Member give an update on the forthcoming Community Infrastructure Levy? What work has been undertaken on the Review already, and what actions has he taken since his appointment in relation to the Review?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

The Council has commissioned consultants to undertake the CIL Charging Schedule Review to ensure the review is undertaken at pace. The review will involve the full process of evidence preparation, drafting a new Charging Schedule document and undertaking the statutory consultation and examination processes.

BNP Paribas have been appointed to undertake the production of viability evidence, which the new CIL rates will be based upon, and which is due to be completed by the end of July. This evidence will then be presented to officers to review and provide recommendations on the appropriate scope and level of CIL rates. This may include different rates for different types of development, or different rates based on the location of development. A draft Charging Schedule will then be drawn up and presented to Members to consider. A public consultation will follow, which is scheduled to take place this Autumn, and it is anticipated that the formal examination process will begin by Spring 2023.

## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**43 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Aidan Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update, with timings, on Phase 2 of the Greenwich Builds programme?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Building on the success of Greenwich Builds Phase 1, you will recall in February 2022 Cabinet agreed the overall budget envelope and decision in principle for Greenwich Builds Phase 2 with a target of 1,000 new Council homes.

Due to resource constraints and to ensure a steady progression the sites will come forward over a three to four year period.

Officers have been undertaking the due diligence on each of the proposed sites identified for inclusion in the Phase 2, year 1 programme. This includes site surveys, design work, pre planning discussions and an initial viability appraisal. The development of each individual scheme is managed by a gateway process, which identifies and approves all the necessary actions that should be undertaken in a phased manner to ensure the scheme is deliverable at each stage before progressing to the next gateway. This process provides assurance that staff resources and budgets are prudently managed.

I anticipate bringing forward a Cabinet report naming the year 1 sites, of which there are sixteen to Cabinet in July. Subject to Cabinet approval Officers will then be able to proceed with consultation and engagement, design and preparation of planning applications with a view to securing this permission by the end of this financial year.

Similarly, there will be further Cabinet reports for the following years.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**44 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Aidan Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration**

Can the Cabinet Member provide a list of meetings he has held with external stakeholders relevant to his Cabinet brief, since becoming Cabinet Member on 25 May 2022?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Like my other Cabinet colleagues, I have been out and about meeting residents and other local stakeholders, since the election of a record number of Labour Councillors.

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Whilst the Council is having to deal with the Tory cost of living crisis and the fastest rise in inflation in forty years, I'm sure Councillor Hartley would agree it is not a good use of my time to list individual meetings that I have held.

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## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**45 Question from Councillor Chris Lloyd, to Councillor Aidan Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration**

Will the cabinet member for regeneration please consider supporting my request, supported by residents of Erebus Drive, for the creation of a new safe walking and cycling route through a wall that currently separates West Thamesmead from the Woolwich Arsenal development, linking Erebus Drive and Armstrong Road as original envisaged in early plans?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Chris Lloyd for his question.

Whilst I would be happy to endorse the ambition of creating a walking and cycling link between Erebus Drive and Armstrong Road, both these roads are privately owned and maintained. The wall, too, is privately owned and maintained. Accordingly, the decision as to whether such a link is created in the future is at the discretion of those who own, and are responsible for, this infrastructure. Whilst a connection between the two may have formed part of early illustrative layouts for the Woolwich Arsenal development, this was not translated into the detailed designs that were approved as part of that site's planning permission.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**46 Question from Councillor Issy Cooke, to Councillor Pat Slattery, Cabinet Member for Housing, Neighbourhoods and Homelessness**

In 2020, 11 of the Borough's estates were rewilded with wildflower seed and daffodils. During 'No Mow May', grass was cut back in green spaces across the borough, including in Plumstead Common ward. Can the cabinet member confirm whether she is seeking to expand the Council's rewilding programme and commit to taking part in 'No Mow May' in appropriate green spaces next year?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Issy Cooke for her question.

We have identified at least 5 new locations for rewilding on our estates this year, and more for next year next. We will also commit to taking part in 'No Mow May' in appropriate green spaces next year.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**47 Question from Councillor Nick Williams, to Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture and Communities**

In Greenwich Peninsula ward we are proud of our greens spaces but acknowledged further greening is required, particularly around the Woolwich road area. However I was concerned to note trees are often trees are planted surrounded by plastic. Can the cabinet confirm they will review the relevant policy and ensure only biodegradable material is used to prevent additional plastic pollution in Greenwich?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Nick Williams for his question.

Most street trees are supplied in woven plastic containers that allow a fine fibrous root network to develop and provide the best chances of survival.

The historic procedure for retaining the upper part of the tree planting bag as a root barrier (encouraging the roots to go deeper) has not been carried out for several years – trees now being entirely removed from their plastic bags before planting.

There is currently no commercial alternative for the buried plastic irrigation pipes although these are only installed where necessary to ensure tree survival. Wooden stakes, metal tree cages, tree bags and other irrigation sundries are removed from site and recycled as appropriate. We have also experimented with biodegradable tree shelters for young trees and will specify these in future when establishing new woodland areas.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**48 Question from Councillor Peter Baker, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

What can be done about the lack of public bins, particularly recycling bins, in the east of the borough and is there any plan for a fresh policy of investment in this area?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Peter Baker for his question.

Street Services aim to provide adequate street litter bins in all parts of the borough. Street litter bins are only sited in areas of high footfall, near transport hubs, large schools, town centres, high streets and the majority of bus stops. All bins are emptied daily, with some twice a day by Street Services.

The majority of our bins are general waste bins due to the fact that getting good recycling from on-street litter is very difficult. This is common and a nationally recognised challenge. In order for us to be able to recycle any litter collected in our on street litter bins, it must contain only clean recycling and cannot contain non-recyclable items. Unfortunately the waste we collect from the on-street recycling bins is always contaminated, so has to be disposed of as general waste.

In terms of provision, Street Services can review and assess the requirements in the East of the Borough with you and will ensure that bins are sited where they are most needed.

## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**49 Question from Councillor Cathy Dowse, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

Given the massive cuts to TFL, what can the council do to help improve north south transport in the borough and connect my residents to the fantastic transport services in other parts of the borough?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Cathy Dowse for her question.

The Royal Borough's adopted Local Implementation Plan identified "*Good north south connections including better access for all residents to rail stations*" as a key challenge for achieving our transport objectives.

A draft Transport Strategy is currently being developed. It is vital that people have their say, on this and other issues, when we consult on that Plan.

The Transport Strategy will consider how we address issues like this. This will include contuning to secure the widest possible range of funding sources, alongside TfL funding.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**50. Question from Councillor Sarah-Jane Merrill to Councillor Aidan Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration**

Is there is an update on plans for the Bexley Road Environment Centre?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Merrill for her question.

As previously explained the Council is developing a proposal to use the built part of the site for SEND education purposes with the woodland retained for community use.

The SEND scheme is currently being developed and a paper on the proposed scheme will be brought forward to Cabinet later this year. Options for use of the woodland are being investigated and will be the subject of a later report.

**51 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Aidan Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Avery Hill Winter Garden?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

The Council is currently developing a bid for submission into the next round of Government funding for Levelling Up. The bid is due to be submitted on 6 July and at present there is no timing for when decisions on bids will be made by Government, but we expect this will be towards the end of this year.

In the meantime, the Winter Garden remains under the ownership and management of the University of Greenwich and they have recently completed large scale repairs to the roof to resolve several issues that the Council's conservation team raised with them.

## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**52 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Health and Adults' Social Care**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Council's implementation of the Homes for Ukrainians scheme in Greenwich? What overall support are we offering to refugees from Ukraine who are settling in Greenwich and how does that compare to neighbouring boroughs?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

The Homes for Ukraine Scheme was launched by the Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities on 14th March 2022.

The scheme placed responsibility overnight and with limited guidance on the Local Authority to manage and administrate the scheme at a local level. This has been challenging because we have had to undertake safeguarding checks and home visits as well as administering payments for 339 Greenwich residents who have come forward as sponsors to support 670 guests. These numbers are high when benchmarked against some other South East London Boroughs. We have had to do this by calling on existing social work and housing teams to undertake the work, when they are already managing high levels of demand for their core services.

The focus of the Government has been on Local Authorities undertaking the safeguarding checks and payments. This has meant that the potential for placement breakdown and the threat of homelessness hasn't been anticipated or supported by DLHC. We are now seeing cases where there has been placement breakdown. We are having to take local initiative to rematch to other sponsors and have had to recruit temporary staffing to support this. We have had to develop a support offer with the voluntary and community sector to supplement this.



There are also concerns about what will happen for Guests after the 6 month sponsorship commitment ends from Sponsors. The government haven't yet provided any indication about what the expectation is so there is a risk of pressure on housing and other services.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**53 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Ivis Williams, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources and Social Value**

I have been approached by a resident to ask why it is only 'In House' Foster Carers who receive the 100% discount on Council Tax that was recently introduced? The resident in question fosters using an outside agency but the children she looks after are all our children from the Royal Borough of Greenwich.

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

Royal Greenwich value the work that all foster carers do. This policy is for foster carers who are approved and registered as Royal Greenwich carers only. Carers who foster for other local authorities are able to access support from them, this scheme is designed to support our carers. We welcome applications from anyone who wishes to foster for Royal Greenwich and they would then, subject to approval, be eligible for this support.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**54 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Aidan Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration**

Can we please have an update on the present facilities available in the Eltham Centre? The promised new Cafe is at present being used for storage and the main customer services area is often totally unmanned leaving residents at a loss as to where to go for help.

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

I can confirm that the marketing of the café at the Eltham Centre has concluded and a potential tenant has been identified. We are awaiting a proposal from the tenant explaining their plans for configuring café area and how much time they want to allow for this. We expect to receive this in the next few weeks and I will then have an indication of the opening plans.

The customer services team has a member of staff at the Eltham Centre every day to help residents. However, we'd like to do more, and the space isn't set out well for this at the moment. In response, we plan to move the customer services presence to a different area of the ground floor of the Eltham Centre, expanding and maturing what we can offer. This is subject to Cabinet approval of the customer services strategy, which this proposal forms part of; this is being tabled for discussion at Cabinet in July.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**55 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture and Communities**

Residents in my ward have asked why, as a Royal Borough, Greenwich Council did not decorate Eltham High Street in celebration of Her Majesty's jubilee?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

The Council is proud of our celebrations for the Jubilee which included a free two-day event in Charlton Park attended by almost 30,000 local residents from across the borough. It also supported over 60 street parties put on by local residents, many of which I had the pleasure of attending. The Council waived fees totally of £7,485 to facilitate the road closures required to enable these street parties to safely take place.

The Council was unable to decorate local high streets due to the savage cuts to our funding overseen by Cllr Greenwell's Conservative Government.

I would welcome her support in fighting for a fairer funding settlement for local government in future so that we can support families through the cost of living crisis, let alone buying bunting for our high streets.

## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**56 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the promised 'Beat Stop' programme to provide facilities for local police officers. What is the full list of facilities and how will the programme operate in practice? Will she ensure that this programme includes the ability for local police officers to use the Eltham Centre?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

The Beat Stop initiative has gone live and there are now currently 47 venues across the borough who have agreed to sign up to the scheme. This is primarily led by the police with the Council providing administrative support. It is a light touch and simplistic initiative to aid officer presence and visibility in local communities.

Beat Stop venues are not publicly advertised as they are for officer use on a discretionary basis and not designed to replace any front counter or contact point services that the police provide. This initiative is also in addition to others that local policing teams may run themselves, such as advertised drop-in clinics or advertised street briefings.

Patrolling officers simply make use of nearby venues during operating hours as they so wish, be it to take refreshment or relief, charge mobile devices or complete some reports. It often depends venue by venue how they may be used, the consistent element is the welcoming host.

I can provide the Councillor a current list of sites if she emails me.

The police, supported by the Council, will review the current batch of venues at some point later in the year and any learning identified. A decision can then be made whether to promote the initiative further.

## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**57 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement**

As the Cabinet Member will be aware, Nitrous Oxide is a colourless gas sold in cannisters, and when in the wrong hands it is used to inhale using balloons. If inhaled directly from the cannisters too much can make you faint, lose consciousness or can cause sudden death through lack of oxygen. We all come across these cannisters littering our streets on a regular basis. What are we doing as a Council to help stamp out the use of these dangerous drugs?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

Thank you, Councillor Pat Greenwell, for your question, and please be assured I echo your concern in this matter.

Growing numbers of councils have been calling for greater powers to be able to tackle the sale of 'legal highs'. The availability of 'legal highs' has been unfortunately increasing and they are openly available on the streets and via the internet. As it is not illegal to sell a number of these substances and Councils and partners need to find creative solutions to protect their communities both from a health perspective, as detailed in your question, as well as the antisocial nature of how these psychoactive substances are used.

In Royal Greenwich we fully recognise nitrous oxide canisters are a blight in our public spaces due to the disproportionately high levels of litter produced and that witnessing their open use is distressing for our communities. In response to growing levels of concern, Royal Greenwich implemented a Public Spaces Protection Order in Oct 2020 introducing a broader range of tools and powers to tackle various forms of anti-social behaviour across the borough. This includes a condition not to use a psychoactive substance in public spaces and the use of nitrous oxide is covered under this condition.

Enforcement is not without its difficulties however as it relies on the individual being over the age of 18 to receive a fixed penalty notice and often this particular type of psychoactive substance abuse is undertaken by youths in their early/mid-teens. We also know that many incidents involve individuals in vehicles which can add further enforcement and detection challenges for Council staff on foot and with limited powers.

That said, the last six months, Safer Spaces officers have made 252 for drug related interventions, including nitrous oxide. Officers have issued instructions to surrender psychoactive substances in their possession for proper disposal and leave the area and not return for 48 hrs. In addition, we have issued a total of 5 fixed penalty notices for breaching our Public Spaces Protection Order for all types of drugs. This is a Borough wide enforcement approach with a focus on hot-spot areas including Estates, town centres and secondary retail areas.

Safer Spaces will be working in partnership with police, public health, street services and trading standards colleagues on a series of data led operations to specifically target and disrupt this behaviour over the summer months and welcome any intelligence from members and their constituents to inform these operation days.



## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

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

What is the present situation with the uptake of the Covid Vaccine in our schools?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

The uptake of COVID vaccination amongst children and young people has been considerably lower than amongst the adult population; that is the case nationally and in Greenwich. We know that children rarely experience serious illness when infected with COVID-19 which may have influenced decision making about whether or not to accept the vaccination offer. We also know that a high proportion of children will have had COVID-19 disease at some point during the pandemic, so will have acquired a degree of natural immunity through that infection, conferring similar levels of protection to that acquired from vaccination.

For those aged 0-9 (Greenwich residents), about 7% of the eligible population have received at least one dose of the vaccine.

For those aged 10-19 years (Greenwich residents). the figure currently is 37%

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**59 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Aidan Smith, Cabinet Member for Regeneration**

Has there been any progress on the use of the former Wide Horizons site on Bexley Road?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

As previously explained the Council is developing a proposal to use the built part of the site for SEND education purposes with the woodland retained for community use.

The SEND scheme is currently being developed and a paper on the proposed scheme will be brought forward to Cabinet later this year. Options for use of the woodland are being investigated and will be the subject of a later report.

## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**60 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

Residents are concerned about the various utility companies digging up Eltham High Street and replacing with tarmac. What happens to the expensive paving stones they dig up, and what can the Council do to influence the schedules and frequency of this activity?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

With Eltham High Street having been resurfaced in premium paving over five years ago, it no longer has “protected street” status. This means we have very limited circumstances in which we can withhold permission for a utility company to dig a hole in it. Be assured that when officers receive an application to do this, they use every mechanism at their disposal to ensure that the utility company responsible does so in a way that minimises damage to the premium paving. Despite these efforts, their contractors do sometimes fail to heed the working practices we have agreed with their client. This lack of care also occurs when a contractor attends without notice to carry out emergency works. Regrettably, the financial penalty we apply when this damage happens does not change the fact that the damage has been done.

Until recently we had a stock of matching materials that we would sell to the offending contractor. This stock is now exhausted so we are reluctantly having to accept temporary reinstatement while the utility’s contractor awaits delivery of matching materials to complete the permanent reinstatement. A challenging global market in these materials is proving a hindrance to them meeting the six-month period in which reinstatement must be completed. Whilst, again, a fine is issued if they fail to meet this deadline, the scar remains.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**61 Question from Councillor John Hills, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

Who in the Cabinet is responsible for the Armed Forces Covenant?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor John Hills for his question.

The Cabinet Member responsible for the Armed Forces Covenant is Cllr Denise Hyland, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Business and Skills.

# COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

## MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**62 Question from Councillor John Hills, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

In July 2019 we unanimously passed an Opposition Group motion at Full Council called 'Improving support for Armed Forces member and veterans'. This asked the Council to take the following steps, in line with the Royal British Legion's recommendations at the time:

1. Complement the existing role of an elected member acting as the Council's Armed Forces Champion by formally appointing, and making partner organisations and the public aware of, 1) an overall Armed Forces Officer Champion, and 2) an Armed Forces Directorate Champion working in each directorate, with all relevant details made available on a dedicated page on the Council's website
2. Provide support to all Council staff to raise awareness of the specific support available to Armed Forces members and veterans from the Council and other agencies – including exploring the delivery of appropriate training to Council staff
3. Pledge to gather more data about the Armed Forces community in Greenwich, to improve targeted support interventions in the future
4. Take steps to raise awareness of the Service Pupil Premium in local schools to ensure that more families who are eligible for this scheme, but may not currently be accessing it, are able to benefit
5. Continue to support Remembrance activities and show the borough's appreciation for our Armed Forces members and veterans at every opportunity

What has the Council done since that motion was passed? Can we please have an update on each of the 5 steps above?

## **Reply –**

I thank Councillor John Hills for his question.

This Council is very proud of our borough's links with the Armed Forces.

We commemorated Armed Forces Day at the Town Hall at a ceremony last week which I know Cllr Hills also attended along with representatives of our Armed Forces.

Councillors attended six Remembrance Day ceremonies last November to honour the memory of the fallen and pledge to care for the living.

The Council has an officer who is assigned as our Armed Forces Champion who coordinates any requests for support that they receive. Our website has a section regarding the Covenant which links through to the support we can offer with jobs and employment, housing, children's services and education, health and financial support.

We have raised awareness of the covenant in our internal and external communications and will continue to do so.

The Council has the skills in our in-house data team to build insights which would allow us to better target support at armed forces members and veterans, as part of our wider work to tackle the cost of living crisis.

## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**63 Question from Councillor John Hills, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

Can we please have an update on the roll-out of LED lighting across the borough? How many street installations are complete and how many are remaining?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor John Hills for his question.

The programme to convert our 18,000 street lights to low-energy LED started in October 2021 and is already three months ahead of programme. We have already converted 15,579 units and the remainder, most of which are on main roads, should now be converted by the time the clocks go back.

## COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

### MEMBERS QUESTIONS

**64 Question from Councillor John Hills, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport**

Can we have an update on the roll out of replacement road signs across the borough? How many street signs have been replaced since the Royal Borough street signs roll out began, in each ward?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor John Hills for his question.

The Council does not currently have a specific programme of replacing road signs or street nameplates. Nonetheless, within the scope of the street light modernisation programme, we have included a technical review of which illuminated traffic signs can be safely changed to being non-illuminated by virtue of being in a 20mph zone. This has already resulted in approximately 600 keep left bollards and 400 signs being de-illuminated. Once we conclude this review this winter we will determine what our future programme should be.

The replacement of traffic signs and street name plates continues on a needs-basis with work being identified either during officers' cyclic safety inspections or in response to reports we receive from member of the community.

Unfortunately, the above works have not been categorised by ward so it is not an effective use of officers' time to trawl databases in order to retrospectively classify works in this way.



## **COUNCIL**

**29 JUNE 2022**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**65 Question from Councillor John Hills, to Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement**

What is the Council doing about the problem of scrap metal dealers operating their businesses from residential properties in the borough?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor John Hills for his question.

The Licensing Team in the Directorate of Housing & Safer Communities is the team responsible for the enforcement of the Scrap Metal Dealers Act 2013 at premises within the Borough, alongside the police. They investigate in response to any reports of individuals undertaking activity which might fall within scope of the 2013 Act, although it should be noted that not all activities which residents report would necessarily trigger a need for one of the types of licenses available under the Act.

The Team report only having received a very limited number (less than 10) of inquiries and complaints over the past 12 months. Their usual approach involves making a householder aware of relevant legal requirements in writing and to undertake site visits in order to identify any disturbance which may be being caused as well as to verify the activities being highlighted by residents.

The team also liaise with other teams as part of the "Integrated Enforcement" initiative in order to look at the wider picture and consider other enforcement options. It is worth noting that prosecutions under this Act are comparatively rare and there are no fixed penalty notices available as there are under other pieces of legislation.