

COUNCIL

21 JULY 2021

MEMBERS QUESTIONS

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

What has been the total cost to the Council of the Woolwich Works project to date, and what the final projected cost will be?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Nigel Fletcher for his question.

As reported at the Regeneration Transport and Culture Scrutiny panel on 12 July, the works are not finished because the site is in a fit-out phase in preparation for opening in September this year. In addition, the construction work is in a final account review process, therefore the total cost and final projected cost is not yet known. It was agreed that a report will be brought forward in due course on this matter

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2 Question from Councillor Geoffrey Brighty, to Councillor Mariam Lolavar, Cabinet Member for Business and Economic Growth

Could the Cabinet Member kindly provide an up-date on the Shop Local and Welcome Back campaigns ?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Geoffrey Brighty for his question.

The Council, in partnership with Greenwich Leisure Limited (GLL), has an existing business discount card, called the Greenwich One Card, which have over 40,000 leisure members; 118,500 library members; and nearly 200 offers from local businesses for people who live or work in the borough.

We are now building on this work and plan to rebrand and relaunch the Greenwich One Card – with a formal launch in the Autumn. As part of this work, we are making improvements to our respective webpages, the operating and digital platforms to make it easier for businesses to sign up with offers and for residents and workers to find the offers and incentives provided by local businesses.

In the lead up to the formal launch, the Council in partnership with GLL and South East London Chamber of Commerce, will recruit ‘Shop Local Business Champions’ through the DWP Kickstart Scheme to enhance the extensive business engagement work being carried out, to make visits to as many businesses across the borough to promote the scheme and to secure further sign up of new offers.

We will continue to seek the views from local businesses particularly around branding and collateral packs to make this scheme a greater success. Businesses can email Shoplocal@royalgreenwich.gov.uk to provide suggestions and feedback.

Work is underway with Visit Greenwich to develop a Visitor-facing website, which seeks to combine Shop Local with Enjoy Local. The new website will be a mobile friendly site designed to support a hyper local experience based

on where people are with information on offers nearby e.g. what to do, where to eat, where to visit – to encourage greater dwell time and spend. To support retailers in our various town centres, we have commissioned the development of Shop Local online retail directories for each town centre. These online directories are almost complete and should be live by the autumn. The Plumstead/Wilton Road one was completed as a trial/pilot and has been live since June.

In relation to the Welcome Back Fund – the council has been allocated £258,441 and have developed an extensive programme of support, which has recently been signed off by MHCLG, enabling us to roll out these plans imminently. This includes temporary public realm improvements e.g. planters, memorial benches; events and activities to welcome shoppers back to physical stores and our venues across the borough; and testing new approaches including plans to develop our night-time economy – through extended opening times in our heritage and cultural venues and advancing our economic recovery work.

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

Is the Cabinet Member able to provide an up date on the funding arrangement with TfL for the installation of electric vehicle charging points and also where any new points are to be sited ?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Geoffrey Brighty for his question.

I can confirm that we have a funding agreement in place with Transport for London for further electric vehicle charging points to access funds in the current funding period.

Possible locations have been identified and are currently being assessed for technical suitability. As soon as we have more certainty about these locations, I will share them with you.

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4 **Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Miranda Williams, Cabinet Member for Health and Adult's Social Care**

Since the last Full Council, it has been reported that the NHS has been given the green light by the Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) to begin planning activity for a potential Autumn Covid-19 booster jab for specific groups. Can the Cabinet Member share any details of the work being done on this locally, by the Council and local health (and other) partners? Is specific local planning underway for a booster jab campaign, and can she share any details? Obviously the immediate focus is on completing the roll out, but any detail she can share on the planning necessary to get ahead of that next big (potential) vaccination challenge would be welcome.

Reply -

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Details regarding the booster programme are now emerging, and the Greenwich Vaccination Partnership Group has now been reconfigured to include Phase 3 (booster) planning alongside system partners. A clear plan will be developed as part of this work.

The JCVI advice states that the COVID 19 booster vaccines should be offered in two stages from September, starting with those most at risk from serious disease in stage 1, and to a second group of patients in stage 2, and that the seasonal flu vaccine should be offered alongside the booster dose of the COVID-19 vaccine. The NHS has asked systems to work with local providers, local authorities and regional teams to review their current Autumn/Winter plans, to ensure alignment with interim guidance. Our local considerations will include:

Consideration regards delivery model

- We will be exploring local delivery models which spread capacity across community pharmacy, vaccination centres and general practice.
- We are also considering the best delivery access for our population requirements and will want to make the most of community pharmacy,

pop ups, mobile units and other approaches. We have considerable learning from Phase 1 and 2 of the vaccination programme and will use this to maximise uptake of the vaccine in underserved communities.

Workforce

- Planning will include the need to ensure sufficient workforce is in place to deliver Phase 3 alongside the national flu vaccination programme and the continuation of routine immunisation programmes.

Estates

- Many estates used in Phases 1 and 2 are now returning to their business as usual function, and therefore we are planning to maximise existing NHS estate use, commissioned provider premises, or Local Authority or other estate where offers best value for money

Co-administration with flu

- We will be working through the implications of coadministration with the flu programme and all settings where possible.

Ongoing delivery of Phase 1 & 2

- We will also be considering COVID-19 second doses to those who receive their first COVID-19 vaccination over the summer and continue to offer a new first and second dose of the COVID-19 vaccine to all eligible patients (the “evergreen offer”)

Vaccine supply

Making Every Opportunity Count

- We will be exploring as part of this planning whether we can use the 15 minute wait as an opportunity to bolster other initiatives e.g. Pulse checks for Atrial Fibrillation, blood pressure monitoring.

Financial Resourcing

The first two enhanced service specifications became available yesterday (15/7), one for primary care networks and one for pharmacies. We are awaiting guidance on the booster programme for 16/17 year olds.

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5 Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Culture and Communities

I note that in June 2020, the Royal Borough of Greenwich Council announced a review of statues, monuments, historic figures and names of public spaces across the area. At the time the Leader of the Council stated that this review would cover the whole of the public realm to develop a way forward.

I was advised in May that “Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust has completed an initial draft review of monuments and street names. This has formed part of a draft report which is currently with the cabinet member for his input.” At that time I asked for a schedule for when this report would be published and when the Cabinet Member or Leader would be ready to put their way forward into the public domain, but I have yet to receive an answer.

Could the Cabinet Member inform me when he aims to publish the report presented to the Council by the Royal Greenwich Heritage Trust and what the Council intends to do as a result of this review?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Spencer Drury for his question.

The report detailing the review and next steps will be tabled after recess.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

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

I note that the Council has announced new(ish) proposals for Controlled Parking Zones in Eltham under the title “Proposed Extensions and Amendment To CPZ ‘E’ and CPZ ‘EO’ with Creation of CPZ ‘EN’”. Many residents and businesses have been in touch with Cllr Davis and myself to express their continuing concerns about the proposals and the detrimental impact that they are likely to have on the viability of shops and quality of life of residents. Will the Cabinet Member commit to publishing a full report including all the responses to the latest consultation and the way in which the Council intends to respond to them?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Spencer Drury for his question.

As you will be aware the council agreed to re-consult, in relation to the Eltham CPZ, due to concerns raised by businesses and residents regarding the impact of the original proposals.

Therefore, I can confirm that a parking beat survey was carried out in Kidbrooke Lane and also Well Hall Road. This was carried out on a weekday and also on a Saturday to investigate parking turnover and also the number of ‘residents’ parking on street, to alleviate concerns around the availability of parking for various businesses.

As a consequence, we made some revisions, which were included in the revised scheme and they have been subject to the re-consultation.

The Traffic Management Order (TMO) was subsequently advertised as per the agreed timescales which was shared with ward members and posted on the Councils website.

We wrote to all those directly affected by the proposals to notify them with the revised plans and provided a link on the Councils website to the

proposed scheme and the public consultation. In addition, notices were placed on street and the scheme was also advertised in the local press to help promote the changes to those that do not live but may visit or work in the area.

All comments and objections that have been received will be taken into consideration with this scheme. Whilst I appreciate that we do have some objections, this is expected with a consultation of this size and for a CPZ. With over 3,000 letters being sent out and extensive consultation, we have received to date around 35 formal letters/emails with comments (for and against).

Once comments have been fully reviewed, the outcome will be shared with ward members and a decision will be taken on the next steps, which will require a report to be issued to the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport.

The report that is issued will include a summary of all comments and objections received and also include recommendations. The final report will be published and all those that have commented during the public consultation and all those directly affected will be notified of the final decision.

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

Before the first lockdown in March 2020 I met with Councillor Thorpe to discuss the future of the former Wide Horizons site on Bexley Road. I have heard nothing since. Does this mean that all plans are still on hold for this valuable community asset?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

Plans are still being actively progressed for the use of the entire site and a number of options are being explored. To support this there was an open day in September 2020 where the local community and other interested parties attended site to undertake some volunteering and meet to discuss proposals for the future of the site.

Since then, further feasibility work has been undertaken in relation to options for the use of both the built part of the site and the green space. Once the proposals are at a far enough advanced state of development a report will be brought forward for consideration and agreement on the way forward.

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8 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement

The number of delivery bikes still continues to grow on Eltham High Street. Not only do they take up valuable parking places but they are a major health and safety concern. They turn around and drive up onto the pavement area putting the lives of pedestrians at risk. I am aware that they do not have to display a parking ticket but please can this problem be looked at carefully?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

I am aware of the issues caused by delivery bikes, motorcycles and cars in Eltham High Street, which appear to have increased during the Pandemic period.

Enforcement against motorcycles has always been difficult due to the type of vehicle, collecting the details required for a PCN and the fact that the riders / drivers tend to be very close by (and can therefore move very quickly when a CEO arrives).

That said where we can we do enforce, however the Council does not have the powers to enforce against the driving of vehicles on the footway as this is a matter for the police.

The Royal Borough has worked hard to improve the walking (and cycling) environment in Eltham High Street. Illegal parking and footway use should not be allowed to undermine our efforts to make it a great place to walk, cycle, shop, eat and enjoy.

We are looking closely at the options for addressing the issue. These options are likely to include:

- Ensuring we have the right restrictions in-place and looking at how enforcement can be targeted at illegal parking;
- Working with food outlets and delivery providers to encourage them to act safely and responsibly; and
- Exploring whether improvements to parking provision could help to address the issue. For example, more cycle parking or dedicated short-stay motorcycle parking.

I have a visit to Eltham High Street scheduled with officers soon and will take that opportunity to consider this issue further too.

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9 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Mariam Lolavar, Cabinet Member for Business and Economic Growth

In October 2019 a motion was agreed by Council on ways of tackling the ever increasing problem of litter. Local shops, food and drink outlets were to be approached and asked to take on ownership, voluntary clean ups, of the front of their properties. I realise this could not progress during COVID but have we now restarted these conversations with businesses?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

Following the motion approved in January 2020, engagement has taken place with a number of businesses in respect to the increasing problem of litter during the pandemic and to agree action to address this issue. This has been met with a positive response from businesses in most cases and has led to changes in operating arrangements to reduce the likelihood of littering recurring. This has included:

- Increased signage to notify customers to dispose of their waste responsibly
- The provision of extra bins for their customers to dispose of their waste
- increasing the level of their cleansing arrangements
- staff patrols to clear litter emanating from their business that may have been discarded by members of the public in the surrounding streets

In respect of businesses that have been issued with a Forecourt or Pavement Licence to place tables and chairs on the highway, businesses are also required to ensure that they have appropriate measures in place to avoid any issues arising that may cause a nuisance to residents, businesses and users of the public highway.

Following restrictions being lifted from 19th July, this provides an opportunity to intensify our engagement with businesses, and garner further support to maintain the attractiveness of our high street / local shopping parades.

We plan to build on this work through a targeted marketing campaign and engagement through upcoming traders, business forums and through other business communication channels. This is with the aim of securing further commitment, for example through businesses becoming a street champion to take greater responsibility of the forecourt areas immediately in front of their premises.

This can be done by ensuring:

- ensuring they have appropriate waste management plans in place, relating to the storage, collection and disposal of their commercial waste
- encouraging their service users to responsibly dispose of their litter
- encouraging participation in 'Street Champions' to take part in a periodic clean-up of their area

I hope this provides a sufficient update on the progress being made and ongoing work to tackle this issue.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

10 Question from Councillor Matt Clare, to Councillor Linda Perks, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Regularly we are made aware of poor quality highway or utility contractor work, delays or other issues such as rubble left in the road recently in Kings Orchard for weeks on end. How much has the Council claimed in service credits, compensation or refunds over the last 2 years from Riney/other contractors/utility companies ? What performance management is in place of key contractors such as Riney?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Matt Clare for his question.

The Royal Borough of Greenwich implemented the London Permit Scheme (LOPS) in September 2011. Through this we monitor utilities as well as our own Highway works. As part of the monitoring process, the Council inspects 30% of the works carried out by utility companies. These inspections are done at each of the three different stages of work every year. Any defect found is discussed with the company for resolution. The utility company can incur a fine if they don't comply. In some cases, the Council can complete the works itself, and charge the company for costs incurred. Of note, the Council has limited powers to charge companies for not completing their work as soon as is practical. Companies can apply for an extension of time due to unforeseen circumstances.

The highway network is regularly inspected to assess the condition and safety of our roads and to also inspect the work undertaken by utility companies. If the NRSWA (New Road and Street Work Act 1991) inspector finds a defect or poor-quality reinstatement, they will inform the utility company and follow the defect process and we re-charge these additional costs to the utility company. This includes any defective or damaged apparatus that they encounter while on their site inspections. If the utility company leaves rubble, (under section 74 of the act) they are informed and incur a daily charge until the rubble is cleared. Furthermore, we inform the Highways Manager, and they discuss this in the monthly contract meetings.

Additionally, the Royal Borough can issue Fixed Penalty Notices (FPNs). FPNs are designed to ensure that enforcement is proportionate, and that information and support is given where necessary, but that firm action is taken against undertakers who fail to comply with their duty. FPNs are also issued to our own contactors to improve compliance but they do not incur any financial penalty under current legislation. This performance is discussed at NRSWA Quarterly coordination meetings attended by all road work promoters, including RBG's contractors.

With regards to King's Orchard, the works were undertaken by the Council's Highway Contractor (Riney) who frequently separate excavated material for recycling purposes. We are aware instances where excavated material is being left for long periods and we are working with our contractor, who is introducing a new system that will alert them of sites where they are yet to clear excavated materials.

Greenwich is a permitting Borough and must provide monthly performance information to the Highway Authorities and Utilities Committee (HAUC) on 5 Key Performance Indicators (KPIs), 9 Operational Measures and Quarterly Traffic Management Act performance Indicators (TPI). For the last two years we have received a total inspection income of: (1) £180,255.00 (2019/2020) and (2) £163,137.00 (2020/2021) including fines.

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11 Question from Councillor Matt Clare, to Councillor Linda Perks, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

Given the likely ongoing hybrid mix of working from home and office-based work will the council look to reduce its office and other facility footprint by hotdesking with the potential opportunity to raise funds (through divestment/subletting) or to convert space into much needed housing?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Matt Clare for his question.

It is too soon to say what the long-term effect of the epidemic on the Council's estate will be.

Now that Government requirements concerning working from home have been relaxed the Council will be embarking upon a detailed exercise in Directorates discussing and evaluating working arrangements with staff which may result in opportunities in the long term to release some parts of the estate for alternative use.

In meantime and in parallel, the Council is also undertaking a review of all its non-housing property assets. Further information will be released as these programmes of work develop.

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12 Question from Councillor Matt Clare, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

A number of Tesco and Sainsbury's stores have begun to recycle soft plastics (e.g. film). Currently only 17% of local authorities recycle soft plastics. Clearly there are challenges in terms of potentially contaminated loads. However significant increases in the amount of material recycled can be achieved. What thought has the Council given to this so far?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Matt Clare for his question.

For clarity, soft plastics are lightweight plastics that often cannot be placed in recycling bins at home and include;

- Plastic bags
- Fruit and vegetable bags
- Toilet paper packaging
- Crisp packets
- Biscuit packs
- Bread, rice and cereal bags

The materials that local authorities can accept in the recycling stream is determined by the contract specification and the Material Recovery Facility (MRF) that the recyclate is taken to for the sorting and separating process. Although the material we can collect has been extended during the contract period to include additional recyclable items, a major change to the recycling of soft plastics would likely be considered at the point of a new contract (2027) because of the capital costs involved in updating the processing facility.

Currently, Royal Greenwich residents cannot recycle soft plastics via our Blue top bin collection service. Soft plastics such as carrier bags and cling film are always difficult to recycle, particularly when collected as part of a co-mingled collection as often these materials become entangled in the high-

tech machinery in the MRF and can bring the entire facility to a stand-still, leading to expensive down time at the facility.

The market for recycled soft plastics has a quality requirement of 94% which is difficult to achieve when the material is part of a co-mingled collection. Contamination impacts on the quality of the soft plastics and unfortunately the authority is reliant on residents putting the right materials in the blue top bin and not contaminating. Frequent messaging to remind residents of what can and cannot be recycled is required to achieve this and the Council does this through regular publicity through Greenwich Info, the Council's website and social media, as well as leafletting and door-knocking which has resource and cost implications.

In respect of new recycling initiatives recently introduced in a number of Sainsbury's and Tesco stores, these supermarkets produce significant amounts of soft plastics on a regular basis and as a producer, they have a responsibility to handle it in an environmentally and economical way, hence the in-store recycling facility. As Tesco and Sainsbury's and also the CO-OP, now collect some of these hard to recycle soft plastics, we would encourage residents to fully utilise these facilities. This will also help remove them from our blue top recycling service as we are currently unable to recycle them, so helping to reduce contamination levels in the Blue top bins and helping to increase our recycling.

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13 Question from Councillor Matt Clare, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

Some residents in the west and south of our borough are much closer to neighbouring boroughs recycling centres than Birchmere. Reducing journeys could not only reduce carbon emissions but also encourage more materials to be taken to recycling centres. Has the Council considered a simple method of corporation with neighbouring boroughs such as Bexley and Lewisham ?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Matt Clare for his question.

The council has always worked closely with colleagues in the neighbouring boroughs of Bexley and Lewisham and whilst there are no formal reciprocal arrangements in place, the boroughs have allowed at times, out of borough residents to use their facilities for a fee to cover the additional disposal costs. This has had the benefit of reducing carbon emissions due to reduced numbers/length of journeys.

Unfortunately, COVID has impacted on this arrangement as all authorities have restricted usage to residents within their own Boroughs. However, once restriction are fully lifted, this will be reviewed, with the aim of agreeing a more formal reciprocal arrangements for cross borough usage.