

COUNCIL

21 JULY 2021

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

I Question from Simon Radford, SE10, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

With the announcement of ANPR being applied for emergency services access, the idea of opening Hyde Vale for 2 hours in the morning peak to alleviate traffic on Maze Hill has been mooted by the Council.

Please note that West Greenwich is a small residential area (compared to East Greenwich for instance) with hardly any protection against large traffic volumes and vehicle sizes besides the LTN. The streets to/from A2 are interconnected by 2 streets including King George Street and Burney Street so excessive traffic on one road impacts the others. The proposal to re-open Hyde Vale or any other street in the area would invite rat runs throughout West Greenwich. So opening Hyde Vale with ANPR at the bottom would also result in rat runs accessing Royal Hill/Blissett St /Greenwich High Street via General Wolfe Rd/Crooms Hill and onto King George Street; latter is essentially a single lane road. Heavy traffic would run past 3 school entrances on Royal Hill, King George Street and Crooms Hill.

Please can Cabinet Member confirm the Council's plans for managing and mitigating rat runs which will appear throughout West Greenwich area before and during the proposed morning peak re-opening of Hyde Vale, that will protect the safety of school children and other pedestrians and cyclists?

Please can Cabinet Member discuss what other mitigations within East Greenwich have been considered. We are aware that you have written to Greenwich Park but have you explored re-opening Park Vista westbound in the short term also in the morning peak to relieve standing traffic on Maze Hill in the morning peaks, caused by the very short traffic lights which prevent turns onto Trafalgar Road rather than the excessive volumes on narrower roads in West Greenwich.

Reply -

I thank Simon Radford for his question.

The COVID-19 emergency continues to bring about changes in travel patterns unprecedented in recent history. The network in this area has seen significant changes made by the Royal Borough, TfL and the Royal Parks and it has limited capacity to cope with disruption from incidents.

Whilst the measures in West Greenwich have benefitted that area, they may have had an impact on the surrounding road network. The Royal Borough is working to understand what more it can do to manage the traffic, health and road safety impacts on the surrounding road network, whilst pursuing its healthy and sustainable transport objectives

I have asked for options to be considered for modifying the West Greenwich experimental traffic reduction scheme to:

- improve access to emergency services and waste vehicles; and
- consider the possibility of allowing motorised vehicles access to Hyde Vale for a short period in the morning only.

The aim of these modifications, if made, would be to offer a more equitable approach to managing through traffic in the area. They would help to redistribute the traffic from some roads currently experiencing high traffic volumes during the morning peak.

In assessing these options, their impacts will be carefully considered, including any impacts on road safety.

It is not anticipated that the option of allowing traffic access to Hyde Vale for a short period in the morning only would have the area-wide impact suggested as most of the area would still be protected by modal filters. The Hyde Vale modal filter would also remain in-place for the rest of the day, with through traffic permitted for a minimal period only.

It was always made clear that the LTN in West Greenwich was experimental and was subject to modifications at any point. It is vital that we listen to people's experiences and adapt the scheme to provide the best balance, based on what we hear.

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2 Question from Sarah Montgomery, SE12, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

Will the Council be representing its residents by submitting a response to the Lewisham Council consultation on the Lee Green LTN that closes on 8th August to highlight the negative impact the scheme has had on the residential Greenwich roads bordering the scheme? If not, why not?

Reply -

I thank Sarah Montgomery for her question.

I can confirm that RBG will be submitting to Lewisham Council's Consultation.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

3 **Question from Shaun Slator, SE18, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth**

On a RBG Zoom meeting on 13 July called Sustainable, Resilient and Vibrant Neighbourhoods, I learned that RBG is spending money on bringing fibre broadband to Woolwich. What is the cost of this? How much does that equate to per household? How long has the Council been working on this project?

Reply –

I thank Shaun Slator for his question.

Ensuring that residents and businesses have access to the highest connectivity speeds is a priority for the Council. We recognise that digital connectivity is critically important to our Borough, and will become ever more so. This has been very evident during the Pandemic and the associated lockdowns, with more and more residents working and learning from home and engaging with friends and family online, and with businesses transacting digitally. Connectivity speeds and resilience vary across the Borough generally fall short of what is required both now and in the future.

The Council is responding in two ways. Firstly, through an investment in a joint venture with a commercial provider, to provide fibre to the premises. The first phase of which is focused on the wider Woolwich area. The choice of area was based on analysis of currently levels of connectivity across the Borough. Subject to the outcome of the first phase, coverage will be extended to further areas of the Borough.

Secondly, by encouraging the private sector to invest by removing barriers through, for example the issuing of wayleaves to access council land and properties. Council officers are currently actively engaged in discussions with many of the main broadband providers about bringing fibre-based broadband to housing estates in the Borough, some of which, like Strongbow Crescent and parts of Abbey Wood, experience very poor levels of connectivity. It is expected that work on some estates will be completed this year.

We believe this 'mixed-economy' approach of actively investing alongside a commercial provider, as well encouraging other providers to invest in the Borough best meets the Council's aim of securing high speed digital connectivity.

The Council intends to invest £1M in the Joint Venture to be matched by the private sector partner. This is an investment made on the market economy operator principle ie it is intended to generate a commercial return. Funding comes from Local London which secured funding through the Strategic Investment Pot to improve connectivity across the Local London Boroughs, and CIL. The specific number of households that will be covered by the first phase of the Joint Venture (and therefore the cost per household passed) will be determined via the outcome of the section process.

The Council formally agreed the approach at the end of 2019 and since that time has been engaged in a complex selection process. It is anticipated this will be concluded by September enabling work to start at the end of 2021.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

4 Question from Paul Billington, SE18, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Cabinet Member for Housing

In the latest quarterly report published by the Housing Ombudsman, it revealed that Greenwich Council was one of six social landlords that had been issued with a “Type I” non-compliance failure order for not complying with its complaints handling code. This is where they relate to the landlord’s unreasonable delays in either accepting or progressing a complaint through its process.

In the Ombudsman’s own words, “the issuance of failure orders shows landlords in “real-time” problems with their complaints handling”. What steps are the Council taking to ensure such complaints are dealt with effectively, not being ignored - as has clearly happened here - and more importantly, dealt with, in view of this rebuke by the Housing Ombudsman?

Reply -

I thank Paul Billington for his question.

The Housing Ombudsman issues “Type I” complaint handling failure orders when a landlord has unreasonably delayed accepting or progressing a complaint through this process. The Housing Ombudsman issued a “type I” order to the Royal Borough of Greenwich on 13th April 2021. The order arose due to a failure to produce a timely response to a “stage I” complaint.

The reason for this late response was a backlog of work due to staff shortages during the pandemic, which we are working towards reducing. RBG has been in regular contact with the complainant and the matter is ongoing.

We are building capacity to maintain and improve the resilience of our complaint handling teams, which remain an ongoing priority for us. Through our Housing digital programme, we will build greater resilience into our systems and complaints handling process.

All complaints are important to us and when we fall short of the high standards our residents expect of us, we endeavour to address any shortcomings as soon as possible. We aim to resolve cases with our residents without the need to involve the Housing Ombudsman.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

5 Question from Paul Billington, SE18, to Councillor Matthew Morrow, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Can the Council provide details - grouped by primary and secondary school - of any instances of 1) full school and 2) individual class closures per ward, each month since January 2021 to early July 2021, as a consequence of further COVID outbreaks in the borough?

Reply -

I thank Paul Billington for his question.

During the period of the pandemic schools have worked tirelessly to comply with the regulations and guidance in order to keep children and staff safe. Changes to guidance have occurred at very short notice and has often been updated during school holiday times, but our Headteacher have responded amazingly and have worked in partnership with Children's services and public health.

Please refer to the attached PDF files for the data on school closures. At this time it's not possible to provide information at Ward level.

2021	Primary School Class closures	Secondary School Class closure	Primary full school closure	Secondary full school closure
January	28	5	2	1
February	11	0		2
March	22	4		
April	5	0		
May	22	23	2	
June	53	28		1
July	130	28		
TOTAL	271	88	4	4

2021	Primary school class closures	School names	Secondary School Class closure	School names	Primary full school closure	School names	Secondary full school closure	School names
January	28	Fossdene Eglinton Morden Mount St Thomas More Primary Middle Park Notre Dame Woodhill Thorntree Rockliffe Manor Blackheath Prep Boxgrove South Rise Cardwell St Alfege & St Peters Timbercroft Greenacres Hawksmoor Foxfield Horn Park Discovery	5	St Ursula's Thomas Tallis Plumstead Manor Leigh Academy Blackheath	2	Wingfield; South Rise	1	Breakthrough AP

February	11	Fossdene Cherry Orchard St Thomas a Becket South Rise St Patricks Woodhill Nightingale Cardwell De Lucy Morden Mount	0				2	Woolwich Poly for Girls; Woolwich Poly for boys
March	22	Montbelle Eltham CE Charlton Manor Morden Mount Invicta Blackheath Wyborne Nightingale	4	Leigh Academy Blackheath Thomas Tallis St Pauls				
April	5	Montbelle Morden Mount Boxgrove St Mary Magdalene Peninsular Boxgrove	0					

May	22	Morden Mount Fossdene Conway Plumcroft Bannockburn Heronsgate	23	The John Roan Thomas Tallis St Pauls Academy Royal Greenwich Trust School	2	Conway; Deansfield		
June	53	Boxgrove Ealdham Henwick Gordon Horn Park Plumcroft Haimo South Rise Boxgrove Christ Church Shooters Hill Charlton Manor Wyborne St Margaret C of E St Margaret Clitherow Gallions Mount Greenslade Meridian St Thomas More Primary Windrush (Thamesmead)	28	Plumstead Manor Eltham Hill Breakthrough AP Thomas Tallis Woolwich Poly Boys St Pauls Leigh Academy Blackheath St Thomas More Comprehensive The John Roan			1	Breakthrough AP

		Halstow Timbercroft					
July	130	Meridian Horn Park South Rise Eglinton Middle Park St Margaret's CE De Lucy Invicta Deptford Windrush Kidbrooke Park Wingfield Discovery Deansfield Gordon Millennium Timbercroft Halstow Sherington Henwick Ealdham Bannockburn Invicta Blackheath Conway Gordon James Wolfe St Josephs Foxfield Alex McLeod Gallions	28	Royal Greenwich Trust School Woolwich Poly Girls St Ursulas St Pauls Plumstead Manor Thomas Tallis St Thomas More Comprehensive Leigh Academy Blackheath Woolwich Poly Boys Street Vibes AP Breakthrough AP The John Roan			

		Mount Mulgrave						
TOTAL	271		88		4		4	