

COUNCIL

27 FEBRUARY 2019

MEMBER QUESTIONS

I. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Adult's Social Care, Health and Anti-Poverty.

The report of the Fairness Commission set up by the council was published nearly two years ago, in April 2017, and its 61 recommendations were accepted by Cabinet in July 2017. Cabinet resolved at that meeting to "set up a Fairness Commission Working Group to oversee the implementation of the recommendations and monitor outcomes".

How many times has the Working Group met, who are its members and how is the implementation of the Fairness Commission recommendations being monitored?

Of the 61 recommendations accepted in Appendix A of the Cabinet decision in July 2017, can the Leader of the Council provide an overview (completed/in progress/not completed with a summary as needed) of the council's progress in implementing each of the recommendations that were for the Council itself, its subsidiaries, or schools to act on?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

The overall Fairness Commission Review and Development Group has met twice, whilst the themed individual working groups each met between two and four times. Each of the groups called officers from across departments to provide evidence – there were around 26 meetings in total.

The following individuals were members of the Group:

Councillor Averil Lekau
Stephen Howlett
Sam Parrett
Councillor Linda Bird
Councillor Christine Grice
Councillor John Fahy
Councillor Averil Lekau
Naomi Goldberg
Allison Vance

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Rosie Lawrence
Ian Tasker

The implementation and progress of the Fairness Commission recommendations have been monitored by the Review and Development Group and supported by the Council.

Many of the recommendations have been further developed and integrated into the Social Mobility Delivery Plan. Others have now been built into Council service delivery and are the responsibility of those areas, where they will continue to be a priority and/or aspiration.

The majority of the 60 recommendations from the Fairness Commission are long-term priorities and aspirations of the Council and our partners. Therefore, many of these recommendations will be on-going, as we will continue to strive for high standards across all of our services. As a result, recommendations have been integrated as service priorities or aspirations and are now 'business as usual'.

Of the 60 recommendations their progress can be denoted as follows:

Status	Total recommendations
Completed	8
Business as usual	27
In progress	9
In progress and integrated into the Social Mobility Plan	8
Not completed	2
Central Government recommendation	6

I will write to Councillor Hartley with a more detailed breakdown of progress against each recommendation.

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2. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council.

Since the May 2018 elections the Council has passed a number of motions on subjects outside of its control, which resolved to "urge the Government" (or similar wording) to take various actions. For the motions whose formal titles are listed below, can the Leader confirm how the administration has implemented each motion?

In each case, how was the 'urging' in question carried out - for example, did the administration write a letter to the relevant minister, if so on what date and what was the reply?

December 2018 - "The Government's Spending Review"

October 2018 - "People's Vote on the final Brexit deal"

October 2018 - "To resist further academisation"

July 2018 - "Council calls on the Government to provide a designated budget for emotional wellbeing in schools"

June 2018 - "Levy for Tobacco companies"

Reply -

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

Following the acceptance of these motions by Council, these policy positions have led to a number of actions – whether it be lobbying MP's or responding to consultations.

Our experience of Government for the past few years is that they are in complete paralysis, locked in an internal struggle about their views on Europe, unable to govern with no attention being given to anything other than Brexit.

To give one example, the long awaited Green Paper on Adult Social Care has still not appeared, despite repeated promises. Plans to tackle childhood obesity and help women suffering sexual and violent abuse have also been shelved.

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So, with the greatest of respect, urging this incompetent and broken Government to do anything is about as useful as rearranging the deck chairs on the Titanic.

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3. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council.

The administration's Budget proposal includes £100,000 to cover the costs of the Ward Boundary Review. Further to our exchange on this at the January Full Council meeting, could the Leader of the Council provide a breakdown of these planned costs?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

As mentioned at the January Full Council meeting there remains no planned expenditure in relation to the forthcoming Ward Boundary Review.

The Local Government Boundary Commission for England has yet to meet Council officers to begin the process. Only once the meeting has taken place and officers have been informed of the Council's responsibilities in relation to the review, will they be able to produce a costed proposal.

The £100,000 has been set aside, as part of our prudent financial management, to ensure that funds are available over a three-year period to cover a range of possible requirements including the following items.

It cannot be assumed, however, that all these funds will be spent on the review process:

- Signposting residents to the consultation process
- Informing residents of the outcome of the review and any changes to their electoral Ward and polling station
- Supporting Councillors with their responses to the Commission

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4. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Christine Grice, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources.

Can the Cabinet Member provide a summary of the council's application of the Social Value Act?

Can she give examples of where procurement decisions have changed as a result of the Act?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

“Social value” is a way of thinking about how scarce resources are allocated and used. It involves looking beyond the price of each individual contract and looking at what the collective benefit to a community is when a public body chooses to award a contract. Social value asks the question: "If £1 is spent on the delivery of services, can that same £1 be used to also produce a wider benefit to the community?" This approach means that we can harness additional benefits whilst still obtaining value for money, which are both important in these times of austerity.

The work on the procurement approach over the last year has improved the focus on how we consider Social Value through a range of actions, including training on procurement for both members and officers, a move to a business partner approach in departments, whereby advice can be offered on Social Value at an earlier stage, as well as a move to improved planning of procurements to allow earlier consideration of the potential opportunities. We have also been developing a Social Value Framework (a dynamic document that lists relevant social value outcomes to be targeted in contracts) and guidance for procuring social value.

Departments run their procurements and will consider Social Value as part of the process. We are looking at as one of the next stages of the procurement review as to how we can capture Social Value benefits in procurement reporting. Some example of where Social Value have been incorporated/captured in contracts are as follows;

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- The Council's Corporate Capital team has let 8 contract to local businesses to deliver the following projects ; Pound Park Refurbishment works; Invicta School Phase I Refurbishment ; Plumstead Manor Refurbishment; Plumstead Manor Food Pod; St Mary Magdalene Refurbishment and the Royal Greenwich Free School hoardings. These contracts have resulted in £1.54m spend in local businesses, the safeguarding of jobs, creation of apprenticeship opportunities and work experience placements.
- Public Health Nursing Contract 2016–2020 (£8.4m per annum) – As part of the Service Specification the Council set out our expectations of providers in respect of the need to deliver Social Value. This included examples of how providers could deliver this within the contract. As part of the evaluation criteria, 6% of the total score was then allocated to Social Value.
- Integrated Therapies Contract 2016–2020 (£2.7m per annum) – the Royal Borough of Greenwich and Greenwich CCG went out jointly for this contract and as part of the Service Specification it set out our expectations of providers in respect of Social Value. The Specification also provided examples of how bidders could deliver added value. As part of the evaluation criteria, 6% of the total score was allocated to Social Value.
- Short Breaks 2019-21 (£331k per annum) - Social Value was taken into consideration as part of the tender evaluation for Short Breaks for children and young people with disabilities. This included scoring providers on how their proposals linked with the local community, businesses and services to support and enhance their service delivery. The evaluation also included an assessment on how families would be supported to access local support in their community.
- Integrated Advocacy 2019–22 (£95k per annum) – As part of the Service Specification Social Value was set out as a requirement of the service. This included examples such as employing local young people as part of the contract. Bidders were then assessed as part of the evaluation criteria on the quality of their social value. This constituted 5% of the total scoring.

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- 5. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Adult's Social Care, Health and Anti-Poverty.**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the Social Mobility Strategy?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

The Social Mobility Delivery Plan, scheduled to be considered by Cabinet in March 2019, contains 26 recommendations, each of which is designed to improve the well-being of residents. The development of the proposed Social Mobility Delivery Plan has taken into consideration the work of the Greenwich Fairness Commission and wider anti-poverty work undertaken by the Council.

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6. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Cabinet Member for Growth & Strategic Development.

Could the Cabinet Member provide the timetable for Round 3 of the Greenwich Neighbourhood Growth Fund?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

Round 3 of the Greenwich Neighbourhood Growth Fund will be launched on 2nd September 2019. The provisional timetable will be as follows:

- The application window will be open for a 6 week period closing on 13th October 2019.
- The public vote is scheduled to run from 18th November to 22nd December 2019,
- The final decision on which projects are awarded funding will be taken at February 2020 Cabinet.

This will be publicised on the website by no later than June 2019 to allow sufficient time for groups to prepare their proposals. I hope all Members will promote this opportunity amongst their local groups and networks.

I am also arranging a review of the Greenwich Neighbourhood Growth Fund in April to see where improvements to the application process and allocation of funding can be improved. Lessons learnt from this review will be factored in to the proposed timetable. If you have any feedback please do let me know.

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7. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Miranda Williams, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and Third Sector.

How many of the 2,022 trees promised in the Labour manifesto in May 2018 have been planted and where?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

Since last May to March of this year a total of 901 trees will have been planted across the borough, as part of the programme to plant a total of 2,022 by the year 2022.

This includes over 400 street trees across the borough, 25 trees on Housing sites, Community Orchard plantings at Queenscroft Park and Well Hall Pleasance and plantings within our parks and open spaces.

The figure also includes tree planting activities undertaken with the Friends Groups including East Greenwich Pleasance, Eltham Park South, Wyncroft Way and Maryon Wilson Park.

We shall be providing a map on our web site that will be continuously updated, indicating the progress of planting the trees.

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8. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Christine Grice, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources.

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the council's corporate review of procurement?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

The review is ongoing and has resulted in a 4 year programme of procurement work that contains activities that will take forward both the strategic direction of procurement and improvements in its operation. Over the last year work has been undertaken including the following.

- An overview of the future of procurement has been developed along with a draft Procurement Strategy and Social Value Policy. These have been the subject of consultation with GMT and Departmental Management Teams. This resulted in additional supporting documents being developed including; a definition of the role of the Central Procurement Service, the development of a Social Value Framework (i.e. a dynamic document that lists relevant social value outcomes to be targeted in contracts) and guidance for procuring social value. This work is going back to GMT in March.
- The overview of the future of procurement includes the adoption of a business partner approach, whereby the Corporate Centre allocates central resources to work with departments to provide support and guidance and the development of plans. This allows for greater joined up working across the Council and to reach out to other bodies. This has been operating as a pilot scheme pending GMT considering the future.
- Training has been developed and delivered to both members and a range of officers.
- The Council's procurement guidance to officers has been rewritten. This will be a live document that will evolve as other activities are undertaken.
- Work has begun on the opening up of opportunities for local suppliers to bid for work through the London Portal. This will involve working with current local suppliers and then other local businesses to ensure they are

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registered on the London Procurement Portal and work under £100k advertised in a way that allows them the opportunity to access the opportunity. The key thing here is to open up the opportunity potentially increasing local spend, whilst still gaining value for money.

- Initial work on spend analysis has been undertaken to support procurement planning and decision making.

More work is planned over the next year including.

- Further consultation and agreement on the Procurement Strategy and Social Value Policy. Review and updating of other related policies and strategies.
- Continuation of training and support to officers in procurement.
- Development of the planning and coordination of procurements with the view to achieving improved value for Money.
- Detailed work on spend analysis to support procurement activities.
- Review and development of the reporting arrangements in respect of procurement activities.
- Undertaking more work with SME's and the Voluntary Sector to help them be better placed to compete for opportunities in Greenwich, potentially increasing local spend whilst obtaining value for money.

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9. **Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Adult's Social Care, Health and Anti-Poverty.**

What discussions have taken place with Citizens Advice on their central government funded delivery of the Universal Credit Support service from April 2019?

How will the council's planned continuing Universal Credit Support team operate with the support to be provided by Citizens Advice?

What conversations has she had as Cabinet Member with Citizens Advice on this?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

Officers have held several meetings with the local Citizens Advice Bureau (CAB), and have more scheduled. The full details of the service which they are providing, and how they fit into the nationwide Citizens Advice service, have only very recently been confirmed (to the local CAB themselves, who have then been able to update us on their position). They are being commissioned by the DWP to provide a 'Help to Claim' service. This will assist residents to make an application for Universal Credit, and provide support to ensure they get to their first payment. The CAB service is **not funded** to provide any support from after they receive a payment of Universal Credit (UC), which leaves a clear gap in provision.

Clearly, we want to avoid duplication of effort/resources and are sharing our experiences from supporting residents to claim so far to assist the CAB in shaping their service. The Council's Universal Support team will focus support for residents once they have received a payment Universal Credit and are experiencing problems, as well as access to specialist advice in the Welfare Rights Service. Our experience shows that claimants on Universal Credit more commonly require personal budgeting support at a point after the first payment, which would not be provided for under the CAB's 'Help to Claim service'. The Universal Support team is also working on developing and sharing training and resources to front line services across the borough in supporting claimants on Universal Credit.

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The CAB will take over co-location at Woolwich JCP to assist claimants making their first application for UC, however we are keen for the Council's team to maintain a co-location role also to support residents already on UC.

As of 30th January, 4626 residents from Woolwich JCP had received their first payment of UC. Every week the number of residents who move on to UC increases, and it is anticipated that the numbers experiencing problems will go up. Whilst the government has announced delays to Managed Migration (when the DWP will select claimants to move to UC), there are no delays to residents having to claim UC due to a significant change in their circumstances.

We envisage that our service will work closely with the CAB and this will provide an opportunity for more joint working between our organisations to support residents. We are also in discussions with other organisations in the borough, such as the pilot Universal Credit hub at the Clockhouse Community Centre in Woolwich Dockyard.

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10. Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council.

Which two backbench Labour councillors are receiving the increased Members allowances introduced in July 2018?

When were they appointed and what work have they carried out since?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Hartley for his question.

Councillor. Matthew Morrow and Councillor. Anthony Okereke were appointed as project assistants following the Councils decision in January 2019. Councillor. Morrow is working on a range of community engagement work. Councillor. Okereke is working on developing a new approach to the work we do on learning disabilities within health and adult social care.

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11. Question from Councillor Nigel Fletcher, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council.

To ask the Leader if there is any update on negotiations with the University of Greenwich over the future of the Winter Garden?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Fletcher for his question.

As you know the Royal Borough of Greenwich is committed to retaining the Avery Hill campus as a site for education and preserving the Winter Gardens as a historical gem for all to enjoy.

I reported in January that we are in negotiations with the University of Greenwich about the site. This includes an aspiration to safeguard the Winter Gardens creating a workable, revenue generating venue.

As I have said previously this is a commercial negotiation and not one that can be discussed in the public domain. I cannot share any further details until such time as provisional terms are agreed and considered by Members.

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12. **Question from Councillor Nigel Fletcher, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm and Transport.**

To ask the Cabinet Member for regeneration if he will seek access restrictions to prevent the continuing damage caused by vehicles driving into and onto the pedestrianised area of Passey Place?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Fletcher for his question.

I am aware that the Council has responded to several incidents of vehicle damage to street furniture in Passey Place, namely granite street benches and cycle stands. Loading and parking is restricted through a current Traffic Management Order, which permits loading between 4pm and 10am. However, it appears that damage has been caused during both restricted and non-restricted hours.

I understand that the Council will look at options to prevent the damage referred to and contravention of the loading and parking restrictions with a view to maintaining and enhancing both the functionality and attractiveness of Passey Place.

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13. Question from Councillor Nigel Fletcher, to Councillor Miranda Williams, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and the Third Sector.

To ask the Cabinet Member for Culture if the council will be bidding for funds from the government's new £13m parks funding, which was recently announced?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Fletcher for his question.

The Government have announced three streams of parks funding which local authorities will be able to bid for:

- £9.7 million for local authorities to improve their parks and green spaces
- £2.75 million for the Pocket Parks plus programme
- £1.2 million investment in the National Trust and The National Lottery Heritage Fund's Future Parks Accelerator initiative.

This latest funding will support proposals to help renovate and restore our existing parks and create new vibrant, safe green spaces for our communities.

In particular, the £9.7 million of new funding will provide Royal Borough Parks officers an opportunity to submit bids to support projects detailed in the Parks & Open Spaces Strategy Action Plan.

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14. **Question from Councillor Geoff Brighty, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm and Transport.**

Can the Cabinet Member confirm whether there has been any increase in complaints from residents in the Borough over recent months about noise from aircraft and whether the Council is making any representations on future Heathrow flight paths?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Brighty for his question.

To date, the Royal Borough has received very few complaints about aircraft flyover noise and no notable increase in recent months. One complaint was received in January and a further enquiry in February 2019.

Heathrow's flight paths are variable and do sometimes fall above parts of Greenwich. Heathrow's flight paths over Greenwich may also be active at the same time as flight paths from City Airport therefore increasing the frequency of overhead aircraft. However, Heathrow flights are much higher (generally above 5000ft) and as a result Greenwich experiences lower noise levels due to the altitude.

Heathrow is currently holding a consultation on proposed changes to flight paths. Residents can check if their postcode is within an area where flight paths may be positioned in future, and if affected can participate in the consultation at <https://afo.heathrowconsultation.com/>. The consultation period will end at 11.55pm on 4 March 2019 and the Council will be making a representation with regard to any likely additional noise impact the proposed changes may have.

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- 15. Question from Councillor Geoff Brighty, to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Growth and Strategic Development.**

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that the Council is now seeking to dispose of the former public conveniences at the Blackheath Royal Standard and on Blackheath (Shooters Hill Road/Blackheath Gates, Greenwich Park) subject to ownership issues?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Brighty for his question.

Both these former public conveniences are included on the list of assets for disposal. Their use as toilets ceased many years ago and they are surplus to requirements. If the land ownership issues can be resolved the properties will be offered on the open market. All interested parties would then have the opportunity to bid.

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16. Question from Councillor John Hills, to Councillor Chris Kirby, Cabinet Member for Housing.

Can the Cabinet Member for Housing please provide the following information in relation to the Housing Policy regarding Ex-Armed Forces personnel:

- What is the current policy in relation to access to housing for ex-armed forces personnel?
- How many ex-armed forces personnel have we provided housing for in the last 5 years once they have left the forces?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Hills for his question.

I am pleased to be able to confirm that the Council's Allocation Policy covers access to housing for ex-armed services personnel. Housing needs for those who have left our armed forces is assessed under Band B1 and Band B2 of our Allocations Policy.

I have a copy of the relevant extract for Councillor Hills.

I can also advise that 53 ex-forces families have been housed in the last 5 years.

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17. Question from Councillor John Hills, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Adult's Social Care, Health and Anti-Poverty.

Can the Cabinet Member for Adult Services please provide information on what support is currently available within the Borough for ex-armed forces personnel who are diagnosed and suffering with post traumatic distress disorder and or other mental health challenges?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Hills for his question.

These services are provided by the Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust as part of NHS Mental Health Services.

Officers have asked Oxleas to respond and Oxleas response is set out below for information the PCP Team is the Primary Care Plus Team, this a service where Oxleas staff provide extra Mental Health support in GP surgeries. IAPT is improved access to psychological Therapies, e.g. counselling.

If further information would be helpful, I am sure colleagues in Oxleas will be happy to help.

There is have a single point of entry to Oxleas services and all referrals go through the PCP team. Oxleas has adjusted the assessment form to focus on identifying veterans. We have done a lot of work to ensure that ex - army personnel receive a seamless service from us and we specifically ask people to declare their status so we ensure we are fast track accordingly if needs be or we ensure that the patients are seen by the most appropriate clinician as soon as possible without the need for protracted and extended re - assessments. The same work happens in the inpatient services namely clear early identification and signposting to relevant community teams. We have a dual diagnosis specialist who is part of the steering group for veterans embedded in Oxleas House who supports the early referral and conveyance of ex veterans to the appropriate service.

IAPT service has a specific branch offer for veterans and ex army personnel and we are jointly working with the Army barracks to ensure appropriate in reach services to their Health and wellbeing clinics. We have specialists ex

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veterans in IAPT team and in Prisons who are part of the steering group and are developing a core skills training package for front line staff. We are in close partnership with the national organisations such as (TIL) and (CTS) from the Transition Intervention Team and Complex Treatment Service for Kent and Sussex South East & London area and they operate a clinic within Oxleas for the SE area. We can refer if we need to or joint working on some cases to utilise their expertise.

In addition, if there is a complex case of PTSD that we feel the local services do not have the clinical skills required to support the ex - army veterans we are using the tertiary panel for referrals review and we signpost for specialist treatment to SLAM. This is not often the case as we have local capacity to deal with what people need locally.

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18. Question from Councillor Matt Clare, to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Growth and Strategic Development.

Feedback from residents on the Greenwich Growth fund public vote was that there were insufficient paper ballot papers at libraries and no easy way for people of limited mobility to vote, also that the count was very slow indeed despite being essentially electronic. What learnings are there from the exercise?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Clare for his question.

A large number of voting papers were provided to the libraries, and officers checked with libraries during the voting window to ensure there were still papers available.

Officers only received one report of ballot papers having run out (at Eltham Library). Eltham Library were provided with an electronic version of the voting paper in order that they could print themselves when papers ran out. The April review of the Greenwich Neighbourhood Growth Fund will consider issues such as these and seek to identify improvements. I will be suggesting to officers that all participating libraries be provided with the electronic ballot paper so that they can print out as required, and that the paper form also be available to download from the Council's website, so that it can be printed out by residents as required. If the Councillor has any recommendations as to how the vote could be improved for people of limited mobility I'd be very happy to consider these adjustments for Round 3. I am sure you will appreciate that a lot of time and effort goes into this process particularly where there are two parallel activities some on line and the other in paper form. Our primary objective is to ensure inclusivity for all those wishing to bid and to vote and my officers are working hard to streamline the process where possible.

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19. Question from Councillor Matt Clare, to Councillor Chris Kirby, Cabinet Member for Housing.

The news of new social housing construction is very welcome indeed. Each of us will however be aware of opportunities in wards we represent to either build on an infill basis with no land costs or for the council to divest small unusable parcels of land to residents bringing extra funding to the council to help build more. What is the council doing in the 2 above areas to ensure every single opportunity is capitalised upon?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Clare for his question.

The council is constantly reviewing the small areas of land that it owns, to assess their suitability for new affordable housing. A significant proportion of the sites to deliver 750 new council homes, will deliver less than 10 new homes per site. Currently these sites are garage sites, unused amenity areas and unused buildings.

Officers regularly receive requests from the public to purchase land. These requests are reviewed against a clear set of criteria. There are a number of small areas of land that are currently being reviewed which could be disposed of, and the receipt invested in new council housing. All potential land disposals will be approved by Cabinet.

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20. **Question from Councillor Matt Clare, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm and Transport.**

Sadly despite the very best efforts of the Highways team, residents and Councillors in addressing pavement trip hazards a number of residents trip each year on council pavements sometimes suffering serious injuries.

While some of those injuries may be due to pavement movements which don't meet the 'urgent intervention' threshold it is still extremely sad and regrettable to see people's lives disrupted.

Would the cabinet Member agree that over the long term there should be a move to replace slabs as they reach end of life with a more flexible tarmac type pavement which has less trip risk, especially around trees or where there are heavier vehicle movements?

This is the approach in many fellow European countries outside of key town or city centre streets and allows quicker, more selective maintenance.

Reply -

I thank Councillor Clare for his question.

The Council places a very high priority on the safety of pedestrians and has an established inspection regime and criteria that seeks to expeditiously rectify trip hazards on the public highway.

The Highways team aim to carry out routine repairs to replace footway paving slabs with similar materials, where possible, to ensure aesthetics are consistent within a particular area. However, they will consider the use of flexible surfacing where the intrusion of tree roots has occurred or where repeated repairs of the same nature have been carried out due to issues such as vehicle damage or subsidence.

The incidence of reported trips and falls are monitored and constitute a key determinant of the Council's highways inspection regime, intervention criteria and maintenance standards.

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21. Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor David Gardner, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools.

At the December Council meeting I asked for a breakdown of costs per week for Out of Borough placements for our Looked After Children. I was informed that a monthly placement Tracker meeting had been re-established to review all high cost placements. Has this group had the opportunity yet to identify and discuss with the relevant partners any areas where savings can be made in the interest of the children?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Greenwell for her question.

Placements are made for children in a number of different circumstances to a range of placements, that can include high cost placements, both in and out of borough. Sometimes children are placed in a neighbouring borough but with a Royal Greenwich foster carer, and therefore the costs are the same as for a child placed in-borough. There are children who are placed within the borough in placements where we have to pay fees. Children are also placed in out of borough placements where we have to pay fees. This may be a fee to an Independent Fostering Agency, a residential home or for a specialist or secure placement.

The daily cost of a placement can vary hugely from £113 per day for a foster placement to £987 per day for a secure placement. Children are placed according to their needs and a high cost placement is usually because the child is at significant risk of harm, for example from exploitation or going missing, or because of complex health needs. In the case of the latter we need to work towards agreeing a clear formula with our health colleagues about them contributing towards the cost of the placement. A meeting is being progressed with the Clinical Commissioning Group.

Since October 2018, monthly meetings have been held between the Senior Assistant Director for Children's Social Care with Finance colleagues who then meets with Service Leaders to review children's needs and placement costs. The Senior Assistant Director and Service Leaders are starting a new process to meet fortnightly with Team Leaders to review all placements to ensure that they meet children's needs and to reduce costs where possible.

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We have little control over the cost of placements and there is limited availability of placements for hard to place children. For every bed in a secure placement in England and Wales there are around 30 local authorities interested in that bed for a child. Using money from a DfE innovations grant, we are seeking to improve the commissioning of residential and foster care placements to provide better choice to meet the needs of children and to provide a consistent commissioning framework that identifies savings as part of the South London Commissioning Consortia Innovation Project.

As corporate parents, our highest priority must be to ensure that we place children according to their assessed need and that placements contribute effectively to improving their outcomes. There will always be situations where we have to use high cost placements to meet children's needs and we need to ensure that the placements are of high quality and improving outcomes. Officers are working hard to monitor the cost of placements and to try and bring down costs where possible.

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22. **Question from Councillor Charlie Davis, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Adult's Social Care, Health and Anti-Poverty.**

At the December 2017 Full Council Meeting, this Council unanimously passed a motion entitled "*London Declaration on sugar reduction and healthier food*".

In that motion the Council committed to tackling advertising and sponsorship that promoted unhealthy food and sugary drinks. What progress has been made on this target?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Davis for his question.

The motion referred to relates to the Local Authority Declaration on Healthier Food and Sugar Reduction; a Declaration offered to Boroughs by the national sustainable food charity Sustain, and designed to encourage councils to take a range of actions to address the health impacts of excess sugar consumption in our diets. The Declaration addresses 6 strands of action, and the council has made good progress in taking action across most of these strands.

Your question relates to the strand which deals with taking action to reduce advertising and sponsorship associated with unhealthy food and drink. The council has established a senior level multi-agency partnership in the Borough, the 'Healthy Weight Taskforce', which I chair, designed to co-ordinate and lead the Borough's obesity strategy. At its January meeting, the Taskforce agreed to set-up a working group on advertising and sponsorship, to develop and implement agreed guidelines in this area, which will report to the Taskforce in the Spring.

It should be noted that the Mayor of London is implementing his restrictions on the advertisements of food and non-alcoholic drinks on the TFL network that are high in sugar, fat or salt (HFSS products) at the end of February 2019. This accounts for about 50% of the out-of-home advertisements placed in London and will therefore have a significant impact on the exposure of children and adults to HFSS advertisements across the capital. Some Local Authorities in London are considering how they may take similar action to

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mirror the Mayor's action in the out-of-home advertisement estate which they control. Lewisham Council, for example, has obtained national DHSC Trailblazer funding to develop a pilot which would restrict HFSS products on the advertising estate under its control. The Greenwich working group on advertisement and sponsorship will link in with these wider discussions and learn from experience elsewhere in the design of our local response.

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- 23. Question from Councillor Charlie Davis, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm and Transport.**

How often do the Council maintain and clean the marble Eltham sign installed at the top end of Eltham High Street?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Davis for his question.

The marble Eltham sign installed at the top of Eltham High Street is cleaned as part of the annual pavement washing schedule that runs between April and October every year. Last year it was cleaned 3 times during this period. It is due to be cleaned again at the beginning of April when this year's pavement washing programme commences.

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24. Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Chris Kirby, Cabinet Member for Housing.

I note that the Council claims that the automatic smoke vent system installed at Strongbow Crescent is serviced quarterly with the latest inspection taking place on the 10th January 2019. However, the Council has been unable to send residents or me a copy of the latest report or any of the ones from the previous four inspections. In addition, despite being serviced, the panel informing residents about whether the automatic smoke vents are working has been showing a fault for many months, which does not instill confidence in residents about this system.

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that in future the reports resulting from the servicing process will be published for residents and Councillors to view in addition to making a priority the replacement or repair of the panel which informs residents whether the vents are operating?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Drury for his question.

The automatic smoke vent system at 2-72 Strongbow Crescent was last serviced on 6th December 2018. I have asked the team to provide you with a copy of the service record from this inspection, and they can also provide previous reports if required. The issue in relation to the faulty panel was raised by a resident at the block on 17th December 2018, [and I've been advised that you also raised it on their behalf].

Whilst the panel is faulty and requires replacement, the system itself has been and continues to function correctly. This was checked when an engineer attended on 10th January 2019.

The panel itself has to be manufactured and an order has been raised with the supplier. The new panel will be installed by the end of March. As the previous panel appears to have been knocked and therefore damaged, we will also be installing a lockable box to house the new panel and reduce the risk of re-occurrence.

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25. **Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Integrated Enforcement.**

I note that at the December meeting of Council Councillor Smith stated that she had no intention of proposing the purchase of Eltham Police Station and went on to compare any such plan as having no rationale except for “someone that has fallen down the rabbit hole in Alice in Wonderland”.

However, elsewhere in London, Havering Council announced in September 2018 that they would take over Hornchurch Police Station and then lease it back to the Metropolitan Police to preserve a presence in the south of their Borough. Given the fact that something Councillor Smith has described in fantastical terms has actually been done in another Borough, is she prepared to review her negative attitude to the purchase of Eltham Police Station in order to support policing in the south of our Borough?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Drury for his question.

Back in December 2018, in response to a question from Councillor Fletcher, I made it clear that the Council provides no financial support for frontline policing in any part of the Borough.

We have campaigned against government cuts which have reduced the funding for local policing. As a council however, we do support policing activity through the Safer Greenwich Partnership; this is predominantly in the form of analytical and communication work.

We do not intend purchasing Eltham Police Station or indeed any other building for the purpose Councillor Drury describes.

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26. Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council.

I note that in reply to a resident of Eltham North Ward, the Leader of the Council admitted that soon after being jet washed, the paving on Eltham High Street Cleaning Eltham High Street *“looks dirty and stained again”*.

Given that equipment to clean the High Street was purchased with regeneration funds designated specifically for Eltham, is the Leader of the Council prepared to review the cleaning schedule so that Eltham High Street does not look dirty between the biannual jet washing?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Drury for his question.

Street Services jet washes Eltham High Street twice during the pavement washing programme which runs from April to October. There are currently no plans to review the schedule and clean it during the winter months. This is to avoid potential risks to members of the public associated with the cold weather and freezing conditions during this time.

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27. **Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Miranda Williams, Cabinet Member for Culture, Leisure and the Third Sector.**

I note from a poster produced last year entitled '*Let's stop Mopeds and Motorbikes in our Parks*' that the Royal Borough of Greenwich provides a number for residents to contact it to address this problem. However, it appears that the number provided by the Council is only answered during office hours & is not available at the weekend. This means that any resident who wishes to report a moped or motorbike being used in our parks at the most popular times (in the summer evenings or weekends) will have to wait until the vehicles have gone to receive any response from the Council.

What action has the Council taken to address the problem of mopeds and motorbikes in our parks as a result of calls to the number on the poster?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Drury for his question.

The telephone number that has been provided, as part of the poster and social media intelligence led campaign, provides the opportunity for residents to report information anonymously regarding mopeds and motorbikes engaging in anti-social behaviour in our parks and open spaces.

The information received helps officers identify motorbike riders and owners, that includes home addresses, registrations, make & model and moped/motor bike storage areas. This information is then passed to the Police who then take action.

The phone number is not intended as a live reporting line and not monitored proactively. Working in partnership with the Police and the Safer Communities Team, there has been a number of successful interventions as a result of information received via this phone number.

I would encourage residents to make a note of any issues of concern and use the phone number to report to officers during business hours. Should a crime be taking place, and residents feel unsafe, they should call 101 or 999; depending on the severity of the emergency.

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28. Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council.

Following on from questions at the January Council meeting from Councillor Davis and myself regarding the use of Hervey Road Sports Ground by Blackheath Rugby Club it appears that the lease agreement between the two parties should have been signed shortly before this meeting.

Can the Leader of the Council confirm that the lease has now been signed and will be circulated to all Councillors within the next month?

In addition, please can the Leader confirm whether third parties (e.g. The Pointer School or Leigh Academy) have been paying Blackheath Rugby Club for use of the ground despite there being no lease agreement in place and the Council receiving no payments from the rugby club?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Drury for his question.

As previously outlined in the January response there are some additional steps that need to take place before the fields are formally opened.

I am however pleased to report that the lease for Hervey Road between the Royal Borough of Greenwich and Blackheath Rugby Club – has been signed by both parties.

A provisional formal handover date has now been set for March rather than 10th February due to some final snagging issues. The lease will be dated by our solicitors in due course and then it becomes a legal document.

Blackheath Rugby Club will then register the Lease with the Land Registry and once done so will become a public document.

In relation to school use, Blackheath have been using a small area of the site for some school activities during the winter and received payment. Large areas of the field have been fenced or roped off during this period to ensure safety.

There has been an agreement to operate with Blackheath, at no charge, due to the delay in the development of the site.