

COUNCIL

29 JUNE 2022

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

I Question from Tim Anderson, SE10, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

The Council's Carbon Neutral Strategy sets out a 40% reduction in vehicle usage. The aborted West Greenwich LTN was consistent with that policy; reducing traffic in the area and encouraging walking and cycling. Can the Council confirm that it will implement, as soon as possible, a replacement LTN, consistent with its published decision removing the previous scheme, or are Counsellors still going to prioritise drivers over the safety of individuals and our children's future?

Reply –

I thank Tim Anderson for his question.

Our decision to remove the experimental LTN was informed by traffic flow data, the outcome of a public consultation and an equalities impact assessment. Because the scheme was introduced at speed and in response to an emergency, pre-scheme data relating to traffic patterns, journey time, vehicle numbers and air quality is incomplete. The gaps in this data (both in and surrounding the LTN) were sufficient to introduce a reasonable level of imprecision in terms of what effect the scheme had had on these (and other) variables. The scheme's effect on surrounding roads was further clouded by Greenwich Park having been closed to through traffic since March 2020. Removing the LTN allows baseline data to be gathered and stakeholders to consider whether, based on their post-pandemic experience, they would now support the introduction of traffic reduction measures. Council officers have begun developing an alternative to the experimental LTN that was removed in February 2022. I have committed to carrying out public consultation prior to deciding whether to introduce such a scheme. Because a fundamental principle of public consultation is that it is carried out with an open, I cannot make the commitment you have asked for.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

2 Question from Maria Freeman, SE18, to Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture and Communities

Last year, Plumstead Common lost a number of newly planted trees, due to vandalism, which thankfully were replaced. But with the hot weather, many trees are struggling - new trees in particular. Members of Friends of Plumstead Gardens have recently been rallying round to water the new Covid memorial tree and other plants but with no water on site this isn't easy. As housing developments are built (and new trees are planted to mitigate the impacts), as well as planted by RBG in line with Carbon Neutral Plan

https://www.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/news/article/1746/rooting_for_a_greener_future what steps are Greenwich Council Parks and Open Spaces team putting in place to support trees, shrubs and plants surviving the increasingly hot and dry summers in our Borough? For example, investment in watering systems, and more staffing resources such as a dedicated tree officer? If new trees/plants die after planting this is a huge waste of time, money and other resources.

Reply -

I thank Maria Freeman for her question.

Parks, Estates & Open Spaces have a programme for watering newly planted parks, street and housing trees during their first growing season (May to September) and in exceptional circumstances during their second year. Each tree receives 20 litres of water approximately every 2 weeks, which provides a 80-90% success rate for newly planted trees. It is important that trees develop their own rooting systems capable of supporting themselves as they mature without needing to rely on additional watering.

Residents have also adopted trees and routinely water the young trees, one great success of this is at Plumstead Common. The community support with this task, particularly during period of dry weather, is highly valued and much appreciated.

Were possible, we select trees appropriate for the local growing conditions to ensure that they have the greatest chance of survival.

In future we are looking to purchase an additional water bowser and, subject to budget funding, develop a dedicated member of staff responsible for young tree establishment including watering. Where routine inspections identify trees as requiring additional watering then we will schedule in extra visits.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

3 Question from Penny Tolson, SE10, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

What progress has been made on developing an alternative to the Experimental LTN in west Greenwich which was removed in February/March 2022?

Reply -

I thank Penny Tolson for her question.

Council officers have begun developing an alternative to the experimental LTN that was removed in February 2022. I have committed to carrying out public consultation prior to deciding whether to introduce such a scheme. Ahead of that consultation, council officers are scheduled to engage with the community and key stakeholders this autumn to understand the issues that currently need addressing and to help shape what scheme(s) will be consulted on. The outcome of that engagement is scheduled to coincide with the Council publishing its Transport Strategy. Together, these will inform what schemes progress to public consultation early in 2023.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

4 Question from Ann Broadbent, SE10, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

In all my years in Crooms Hill, the Low Traffic Neighbourhood scheme was the best thing I've ever seen for the street and the people.

Since the sad day the LTN was stopped and the traffic returned, I am increasingly worried for the safety of myself, my children, my grandchildren, and my neighbours and visitors.

Hoping you can restore the LTN as soon as possible, my question is: do you have to delay the Alternative LTN for west Greenwich until you establish a borough-wide Transport Strategy?

I do not understand why such a delay should be necessary, as borough-wide Transport Strategy was never mentioned as a pre-condition when you took your decision on 23rd February.

As a resident and voter, I support a borough-wide Transport Strategy, but I do not see any reason to delay taking any action until the full Strategy is ready

Reply –

I thank Ann Broadbent for her question.

Council officers have begun developing an alternative to the experimental LTN that was removed in February 2022. I have committed to carrying out public consultation prior to deciding whether to introduce such a scheme. Ahead of that consultation, council officers are scheduled to engage with the community and key stakeholders this autumn to understand the issues that currently need addressing and to help shape what scheme(s) will be consulted on. Coincidentally, the outcome of that engagement will become known at the same time as the Council publishes its Transport Strategy. Together, these will inform what schemes progress to public consultation early in 2023.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

5 Question from Paul Meins, SE10, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Change, Environment and Transport

Whether further consultation is envisaged before an Alternative LTN is installed (West Greenwich)? The need for further consultation was not mentioned in the decision of 23rd February, where the intention was clearly to base the Alternative LTN on the considerable feedback from the Experimental scheme.

Reply -

I thank Paul Meins for his question.

The February decision made clear that public consultation would be carried out before deciding what, if any, alternatives to the experimental LTN would be introduced. Because the experimental scheme was introduced at speed and in response to an emergency, pre-scheme data relating to traffic patterns, journey time, vehicle numbers and air quality is incomplete. The gaps in this data (both in and surrounding the LTN) were sufficient to introduce a reasonable level of imprecision in terms of what effect the scheme had had on these (and other) variables. The scheme's effect on surrounding roads was further clouded by Greenwich Park having been closed to through traffic since March 2020. Removing the LTN allows baseline data to be gathered and stakeholders to consider whether, based on their post-pandemic experience, they would now support the introduction of traffic reduction measures.