

COUNCIL

27 FEBRUARY 2019

PUBLIC QUESTIONS

**1. Composite Questions to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald,
Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm and Transport from;**

Question from Caolan Byrne, SE10

Following on from the ICC reports that we have just 12 years to act on climate change, in December 2018 the London Mayor Sadiq Kahn declared a climate emergency for London saying “We are in the midst of a climate emergency which poses a threat to our health, our planet, and our children and grandchildren’s future,”

Considering the huge environmental crisis we are facing here in this borough, particularly from air pollution, when will this council follow the examples of other councils throughout England, by declaring a climate emergency for Greenwich? and will it set out a goal to be carbon neutral by 2030?

2. Question from Tom Baylis, SE18.

Will the council declare a climate emergency?

3. Question from Tom Baylis, SE18.

Will the Council share its air quality and climate change action plan?

4. Question from Karen Janody

Will Greenwich Council declare a state of Climate emergency?

5. Question from Karen Janody

Will Greenwich become the greenest Council in the UK, as its name suggests and lead by example?

6. Question from Neona Allimi

Will there be any time we can declare State of emergency (climate) in the Borough of Greenwich?

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7. Question from Neona Allimi

Are there other ways in which you plan to impose sanctions which will inevitably bring about positive changes in our environment?

8. Question from Matt Mayer, SE18

In light of the most recent [IPCC special report \(Oct. 2018\)](#), describing a certain pathway to CLIMATE CATASTROPHY unless immediate and massive action is taken,

- (1) When will the Royal Borough of Greenwich declare a CLIMATE EMERGENCY? and
- (2) What immediate and massive action is the Royal Borough of Greenwich planning to take?

9. Question from Lucy Atkinson, SE18

What are the council doing to protect its residents and play their part in the continued Climate Emergency currently taking place? Will they declare a Climate Emergency in Greenwich and lead the way forward?

Composite Reply -

I thank the members of the public for their questions, which I would like to answer with one holistic response.

The Royal Borough has long recognised its role in responding to the huge challenge of climate change. It is committed to reducing emissions and safeguarding its communities.

In 2016 we published the Greener Greenwich Strategy, setting out the steps the Council is taking to tackle climate change. You can view the [Greener Greenwich Strategy](#) on the Council's website. It includes trajectories for reducing Carbon emissions that will enable Greenwich to play its part in meeting both national targets and the Mayor's ambitious targets. We are reviewing the Mayor of London's new "Zero Carbon London: A 1.5° C Compatible Plan" to assess whether there are any additional actions we as a Council could undertake to support this plan.

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We are developing an innovative new Local Implementation Plan for transport that will enable us to support the Mayor's aim for 80 per cent of all trips in London to be made on foot, by cycle or using public transport by 2041. Combined with our efforts to lead the way in ultra-low and zero emission vehicles, this will help us to decarbonise travel in line with the Mayor's aim for London's entire transport system to be zero emission by 2050. As local planning authority we work to ensure development in Royal Greenwich delivers the Zero Carbon objectives of the draft London Plan. We also continually review our work, to make sure we take advantage of best practice from other councils and the Mayor.

As the Royal Borough's first Cabinet Member with 'Air Quality' in their portfolio's title, I wholeheartedly support the Mayor's efforts to tackle climate change and to raise awareness of one of our biggest challenges. The Royal Borough has chosen not to declare a separate 'climate emergency' as it is fully focused on delivering its existing strategy for tackling climate change. That in no way detracts from how important we see it as – quite the opposite.

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10. Question from Shaun Slator, SE18, to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Integrated Enforcement

What is the timeframe for a response from the environmental protection team when reporting potential substances hazardous to human health?

Reply -

I thank Shaun Slater for his question.

Where a risk from a potential hazardous substance is brought to the attention of the Environmental Protection Team we will make an initial risk assessment of the situation within 4 hours of receipt of the report. Following the risk assessment, and if deemed necessary in accordance with its findings, a visit may be arranged the same or next working day. In circumstances where an imminent risk to human health is identified, or if a report is made outside of normal office hours, other services will provide the initial response and are likely to be the first point of contact for members of the public. This could include the Emergency Services, the Councils Emergency Planning Team, and the Health and Safety Executive (HSE).

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11. Question from Neil Robertson, on behalf of 'Greenwich Cyclists' to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm and Transport

Greenwich Cyclists are keen to support the Council's vision for increased active travel and the Healthier, Greener, Connected Greenwich objectives as stated in the LIP3 document. Unfortunately, it appears that cycling figures over the last year have not increased as the council's targets describe. Can the council create a network of protected, joined up routes across the borough to allow all people wishing to cycle to do so safely, thereby enabling the council to meet its targets?

Reply -

I thank Neil Robertson for his question.

As you note, the Royal Borough is committed to achieving its vision for increased active travel and this vision is outlined in our emerging Local Implementation Plan (LIP) for Transport. A critical component of this vision is to create a network of high quality routes that will enable everyone to enjoy walking and cycling across Royal Greenwich.

Progress is being made towards this ambition through the delivery of Quietways, the Greenwich Liveable Neighbourhood, Cycle Superhighways, Low Emission Neighbourhood, developer contributions and other programmes of investment. The Missing Link, Plumstead Road and Rochester Way provide some examples of great projects that have been completed. These successes do not currently translate to increased mode share for cycling because they are still being stitched together to create consistent routes.

It is anticipated that, once launched, these transformational routes will stimulate significant growth in the number and frequency of cycling trips made.

Our future programme of healthy walking and cycling routes is outlined in the LIP, and will complement these transformations. We will be delivering a package of 'modal filters' on residential streets over the next three years that

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will help to provide healthier streets for walking and cycling whilst addressing traffic issues for residents.

In addition to this network of routes, the Council is also looking to tackle other barriers to cycling. This is particularly important for potential new cyclists, less confident cyclists and groups which are less likely to be confident cyclists (such as women and older people). This work includes awareness campaigns, cycle training, cycle parking provision and access to cycles.

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12. Question from Carolyn Roberts, SE18, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm and Transport

As you may be aware, the Intergovernmental Panel for Climate Change (IPCC) has recently updated its guidance for governments to take serious, concerted action to keep global mean temperatures to just 1.5°C above pre-industrial baselines. Even at just 1°C warming as we have now, the incidence of wildfires, floods, extreme storms and heatwaves has increased in frequency by an order of magnitude. Every other year, records are broken.

Although this may seem faraway and abstract, this will affect Greenwich residents through increased costs of recovery from climate-inflicted damages, increased cost of flood defences, increased pressure on the health system to cope with climate-induced stresses and illnesses, spiralling costs of food because of decreased production in many regions of the world, and so on. Notwithstanding our parochial concerns, which are substantial, to declare a climate emergency and act upon dramatically reducing emissions shows that lives in the rest of the world matter in solidarity, not least in the Global South, which suffers the greatest impact of rapid emissions-induced climate change while being the least responsible for it.

The time for radical action has come. We must act to radically reduce our emissions, protect our environment and transform our economy to provide social and economic justice through sustainable local economies. We must think global and act local.

In light of the above, please would the borough review its support of the Silvertown Tunnel?

Reply -

I thank Carolyn Roberts for her question.

Further to my previous answer setting out how the Royal Borough has committed to responding to climate change, I would like to explain the Council's position on Transport for London's Silvertown Tunnel.

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The Royal Borough supports the development of a package of Thames River Crossings to improve access to key employment areas and address severance, with a strong emphasis on public transport.

The current Blackwall tunnel frequently causes significant congestion, regularly as far back as the Sun in the Sands roundabout. Queuing traffic emits significantly more greenhouse gas and other harmful pollutants; by improving traffic flow it is anticipated the tunnel will result in reduced emissions. This effect will be combined with user charging, to stop the tunnel generating unnecessary new trips.

The Tunnel is also an important public transport scheme. One lane in each direction is reserved for buses and HGVs. TfL is required to provide at least 20 buses per hour, in each direction, through the tunnels during peak periods. This will open up a raft of new bus connections across the river, where only a single bus route currently runs.

The Silvertown Tunnel is a part of meeting our sustainable transport objectives.

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13. **Question from Lucy Atkinson, SE18, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm and Transport**

When will effective and proper parking conditions be implemented in Plumstead, the current system is not working?

14. **Question from Candice McQueen, SE18, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm and Transport**

Back in October/November 2018 the Council sent out a consultation about new and existing Controlled Parking Zones in Plumstead, and asking for residents' views etc. When are we going to get these results and when will it be implemented?

Composite reply -

I thank Lucy Atkinson and Candice McQueen for their questions.

A further survey regarding parking issues commenced in October last year. The survey covered a substantial area and documents were delivered to over 7,000 properties, including residents, businesses and other stakeholders, to ask about their views on parking. In addition to this officers visited businesses on Plumstead High Street to encourage participation in the survey. Around 900 responses were received equating to around 12%, which is lower than anticipated given the level of interest prior to the survey being carried out. Officers are finalising analysis of the responses and comments received and are preparing proposals based on these.

A petition on this matter was received recently and a response reported back to the January meeting of this Committee. Part of that response stated that proposals would be prepared and that consideration would be given to 30 minute free parking in those Pay & Display bays in the Plumstead Central (PC) zone.

It is anticipated that the outcome of the survey and details of any proposed changes will be presented to myself and local Ward Councillors around mid-March, following which they will be circulated to residents and businesses.

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Detailed designs will then be prepared which will form part of further consultation following which there will be a statutory consultation on any associated traffic management orders.

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15. Question from Stephen McArdle, SE10, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm and Transport

Chevening Road is the first street east of Vanbrugh Hill without metred control of parking. Consequently, it has become the go-to place for free parking for users of the Greenwich Centre, shoppers at Sainsbury's local, employees of the Bright Horizons nursery, visitors to Greenwich Pleasaunce and a large number of business permit holders. The result is that residents are often unable to park anywhere on the street. We first requested a review of parking in September 2018.

Please can you expedite this process and release the necessary funding for a reconsultation of parking restrictions on Chevening Road?

Reply -

I thank Stephen McArdle for his question.

The initial stage of consultation regarding the review of the Westcombe (W) Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ) was the Parking Attitude Survey (PAS) which included within the consultation document a statement that consultees should consider the implications of displacement and that *“your street may not have parking problems now, but it may if new restrictions were introduced nearby.”* It is difficult to predict how far displacement effects will reach, so the Council relies heavily on the views of consultees when deciding where to draw parking control boundaries.

In the subsequent consultation on detailed designs, based on responses to the PAS, those roads where changes were proposed were clearly set out and, furthermore, those roads where no changes were proposed, where the majority had expressed satisfaction with the proposals, were also listed. Given this officers believe that the implications of possible displacement are made clear during the consultation process.

Nonetheless, the Council recognises that there has been displacement of parking into roads on the periphery of the part of the W CPZ where changes were made, including Chevening Road and some other local roads such as Dinsdale Road.

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A petition on this matter was presented to the January Council meeting, and a response is being prepared for this, and a similar petition was submitted by residents of Dinsdale Road who were experiencing similar parking pressures. The response to that petition was that a further review of the W CPZ will be conducted, in conjunction with a review of the East Greenwich (EG) CPZ later this year.

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16. Question from John Taylor, SE10, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Air Quality, Public Realm & Transport

The response of Strategic Transportation to our request for a new consultation came with the suggestion that the current dire parking situation is the fault of residents for not responding in greater numbers to the earlier consultation. This is far from the truth. The limited response from residents was not because of our indifference but because Strategic Transportation failed to communicate with the necessary clarity the possible overspill outcomes. Had the department actually been able to predict the extent of the crisis that has occurred, it would, or should, have issued suitable warnings. Rather it has permitted the continuation of inadequate restrictions on Chevening Road, which consistently deprive residents of the opportunity to park in their own street, despite paying among the highest rates in the Borough.

We believe residents are entitled to park within a reasonable distance of their homes and on behalf of future applicants seeking similar redress, can I ask that Strategic Transport establish a policy that when a consultation is undertaken they will set out and present in graphic detail - as they are presumably professionally competent to do - the likely implications of changes in parking controls, so that residents can make a genuinely informed decision?

Reply -

I thank John Taylor for his question.

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17. Question from Eileen Glover, SE9, to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Integrated Enforcement

Can the Cabinet Member confirm that funding for VOCU will end in April? Will this funding be redirected to investment in other initiatives to reduce violent crime in the borough to plug the gap in police numbers due to recent cuts?

Reply -

I thank Eileen Glover for her question.

The funding for the VOCU is time limited funding that will come to an end on 31st March. There is no on-going budgetary provision after this date. The budgetary report to be considered by the Council contains a proposal to fund a new Exploitation and Serious Youth Violence Reduction Unit to tackle the current worrying levels of youth violence and the prevalence of exploitation that often drives violence between and against young people.

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18. Question from Siobhàn Trethewey, SE18, to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Integrated Enforcement

Given that it was said in Public Questions in January that parking tickets can take up to 18 months to be pursued/paid etc., please advise of the data held at the present time. How many tickets were issued in the Borough and how many have been paid, for the financial years 2015/6 and 2016/17, by each area of the Borough?

Reply -

I thank Siobhàn Trethewey for her question.

It is not possible to readily extract the data based on geographical areas but borough-wide 30,476 Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) were issued in 2015/16 and 88 remain in the database as open. In 2016/17 38,885 PCNs were issued and 312 remain open.

Cases can remain open for a variety of reasons. For example, where a case has been issued to an Enforcement Agent (Bailiff), possibly after having gone through several stages of appeal, witness statements to the Traffic Enforcement Centre etc., it may take from six to eighteen months (and sometimes longer) for the lifespan of the PCN to completely run its course. Cases with the Enforcement Agents may remain open for a considerable time for the vehicle and vehicle owner to be located and many may also have a payment plan in place with the agents. It is also the case that some open cases may be being paid through a payment plan arranged directly with the Council, where they have not reached the enforcement agent stage. These instalment payments can be in place for some time, particularly where a motorist is paying for multiple tickets.

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19. Question from Candice McQueen, SE18, to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Integrated Enforcement

I live in Plumstead on Blendon Terrace and we've been having notorious problems with Marwan Motors on Vicarage Road. Dumping dangerous cars with sharp edges etc., although these have been reported time and time again to keep being told that because they are taxed etc., the Council cannot remove them. I understand there is legal action being taken against the garage. Also apparently, he is doing things illegally with cars. Why can't the Council move faster on this case or the police get involved? As the garage is taking up valuable parking spaces with their dumped cars. What is going to be done about this garage, and when?

Reply -

I thank Candice McQueen for her question.

Officers from the Enviro Crime Enforcement Team periodically monitor Blendon Terrace and Vicarage Road for suspected abandoned or untaxed vehicles. For the purpose of clarity a vehicle being untaxed does not necessarily mean that the vehicle is abandoned, likewise a vehicle that may be taxed and has an owner does not automatically mean that it is not abandoned.

Where a stationary untaxed vehicles is identified on public roads, a check will be made with the DVLA to confirm whether the vehicle has been untaxed for a period of 2 months and a day, or has a Statutory Off Road Notification (SORN) in place before any enforcement action is taken.

Blendon Terrace and Vicarage Road currently have no parking restrictions, with the exception of the street corner (Blendon Terrace junction with Plumstead Common Road and Vicarage Road junction with St Margarets Terrace)

There is no legal definition of abandoned, however, the Council considers that any vehicle that has been left without lawful authority on any land in the open air or any land forming part of the highway is potentially abandoned. Council Officers will, during the first inspection, form an opinion by using a number of factors to determine whether a vehicle is finally deemed

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abandoned. This means that a vehicle is only abandoned when the Council Officer decides that it is abandoned, having considered those factors.

During our investigation, there appeared to be no evidence to suggest Marwan Motors were directly responsible for dumping cars at the said location, however there was evidence to support some vehicles being parked at this location by customers, awaiting repairs from Marwan Motors.

There is an ongoing investigation in relation to the business called Marwan Motors and Council Officers are assisting an external agency with their enquiries.

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20. Question from Jessica Currie, SE18, to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Integrated Enforcement

In answering two Public Questions in January in relation to parking, you stated that the Council is looking at more robust enforcement regime for parking, including clamping and removal. When will the recommendations for improved enforcement be made known, and what is the timescale for their introduction?

Reply –

I thank Jessica Currie for her question.

We are already making significant improvements in parking enforcement, including an increase in enforcement staffing levels, adoption of powers for moving traffic contraventions (MTCs) by CCTV, renewal of the entire back-office IT system and a review of working practices.

Ten additional staff are in place now and the impact of the increased resource is already being seen with a significant rise in tickets being issued. An application to adopt MTC enforcement is being prepared, and, presuming this will be approved by London Councils (which seems likely as most boroughs have been granted this), we will be going out to tender later this year for the CCTV infrastructure and processing system. This is anticipated to be in place by the end of this calendar year and the back-office system will be going out to tender around the end of March. A review of our enforcement practices is under way and is looking at enforcement hours, shift patterns, having a more mobile team allowing quicker response to reports of illegal parking for example.

Once the above are in place and their success reviewed we will consider whether additional measures are necessary. If evidence shows persistent evaders are a problem then this could include clamping or removal.

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21. **Question from Jessica Currie, SE18, to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Integrated Enforcement**

As part of your forthcoming enforcement regime for parking, are you considering the introduction of CCTV, given that Greenwich is reported to be one of only three London Boroughs who do not enforce in this way?

<http://www.fromthemurkydepths.co.uk/2019/02/05/greenwich-council-just-one-of-three-london-boroughs-not-to-use-cctv-for-traffic->

Reply –

I thank Jessica Currie for her question.

The Council is preparing an application to London Councils to adopt from the police the power to enforce moving traffic contraventions by CCTV. We will also seek enforcement powers to keep clear bus stops, bus lanes and school zig-zag markings, utilising the same infrastructure to give us much more robust means of tackling these contraventions. Regrettably this does not extend to CCTV enforcement of other parking contraventions, as these powers were revoked by the Government in 2015.

It is anticipated that this CCTV enforcement will be operational around the end of this year.

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22. Question from Maria Freeman, SE18, to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Growth and Strategic Development

In January 2019 Council

Questions, <http://committees.royalgreenwich.gov.uk/documents/s72049/09%20-%20Public%20Questions%20-%20January.pdf> there was reference to improvements in Plumstead which stated that “*Feedback also showed local people’s desire to create more green space garden and this is being considered*”. Can Councillors please say more about what this means?

For example will there be more green spaces made, such as pocket parks, in Plumstead?

Reply –

I thank Maria Freeman for her question.

Public realm improvements and the inclusion of additional green open spaces in Plumstead has been a key proposed deliverable for the Good Growth Fund.

These public realm improvements along both Plumstead High Street and White Hart Road are designed to:

1. Activate underused spaces
2. Soften the environment through tree planting and opportunities for resident gardening
3. Provide play-space
4. Create a sense of arrival in the town centre
5. Improve lighting to help foster an active night-time economy and improve security
6. Strengthen the unique identity of the area
7. Identify new opportunities for urban greening through a green infrastructure audit

At present the following two sites have been identified, but will be subject to further engagement.

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- I. Although pleasant to look at, the open space between Gavin House and the High Street lacks identity and purpose. There is the opportunity, subject to full community consultation, to put in place community focused improvements on the open space.
2. Through the Good Growth Fund, it is proposed White Hart Road will also become a key link between the new Plumstead Power Station business hub and the high street.

In respect to the public realm improvements, subject to consultation and approvals, the following improvements could include,:

- i. A pocket play space to re-purpose some of the under-used car parking east of White Hart Road
- ii. New feature lighting along White Hart Road
- iii. Tree planting along the western pavement.

All of the above could improve the urban greening of the neighbourhood.

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23. Question from Siobhàn Trethewey, SE18, to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Growth and Strategic Development

It is stated in response to a resident question last Council meeting, that the Plumstead Stakeholder Forum is proposed for late March.

When will the Council advise stakeholders of the date, as this is now only a month away?

Reply -

I thank Siobhàn Trethewey for her question.

The date of the Stakeholders Forum will be set following the conclusion of the procurement process to appoint an architect for the High Street Urban Improvement and shop front design. The appointed architecture team would then attend the Stakeholder Forum.

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24. Question from Deborah O'Boyle, SE18, to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Growth and Strategic Development

Whilst national heritage listings can occur during a live planning process (for example, the Covered Market), the Royal Borough of Greenwich (Royal Borough) decided just a few years ago, to not allow this in the case of local heritage listing. My understanding is that this policy was introduced by the Royal Borough, and is not a legal requirement. Presumably, other local authorities have different policies. Will that of Royal Borough be reviewed in this respect?

Reply -

I thank Deborah O'Boyle for her question.

The Local Listing Procedure Note was adopted in 2015. Given it is almost 4 years old we will commit to reviewing the current procedure. This work will be undertaken in 2019 in consultation with elected members.

The risk of not proceeding with a live application is that the applicant has a right to appeal for non-determination. In considering any application or appeal the decision maker will only be able to consider policies relevant and material to the proposal at the time the decision is taken. If is not statutory listed or locally listed at the point the decision maker will not be able to specifically apply the relevant heritage policies until such a time as it was either locally or statutorily listed.

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25. Question from Maria Freeman, SE18, to Councillor Denise Hyland, Cabinet Member for Economy, Skills and Apprenticeships

The Government recently announced a call for proposals to bid for the “Futures High Street Fund”. <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/future-high-streets-fund-call-for-proposals> Plumstead High Street is designated as a District Town Centre. Will the Royal Borough of Greenwich be applying for any money from this fund to support the regeneration of Plumstead High Street, and to supplement the forthcoming investment from the Mayor’s Good Growth Fund, and if not, why not?

Reply –

I thank Maria Freeman for her question.

As previously indicated, the Council is intending to submit an expression of interest bid for the Government’s £675m Future High Streets Fund which is intended to help local areas make their high streets and town centres fit for the future. It is anticipated that the fund will be highly competitive so putting forward a strong transformative bid that meets all the eligibility criteria is essential. Proposals will also be selected to get a good geographical spread across regions so it is extremely unlikely that a local authority will get more than one bid approved in any given funding round.

The focus to date has been on developing a proposal around Woolwich Town Centre which has a strong fit with the eligibility criteria, which indicate that bids should cover town centres or high streets facing significant challenge; that exhibit high levels of social and economic activity; contain a variety of uses and functions; and act as important service centres for extensive catchment populations.

The Council will review the guidance and explore potential for a further bid in a subsequent round of the High Street Fund, which could include Plumstead or any other areas within the Borough that best meets the MHCLG eligibility criteria.

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26. Question from Deborah O'Boyle, SE18, to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Growth and Strategic Development

There are instances where owners take destructive action on buildings, to pre-empt a possible positive national heritage listing. However, local planning authorities are reluctant to apply for Building Preservation Notices, as an interim measure whilst awaiting a listing decision, as they may become obliged to pay compensation should the building then not be listed. Will Royal Borough of Greenwich be taking advantage of Historic England's two year pilot indemnification scheme?

<https://historicengland.org.uk/content/docs/listing/bpn-advice-note-2018/>

Reply -

I thank Deborah O'Boyle for her question.

A Building Preservation Notice (BPN) is a means for a local planning authority to protect a building which it considers to have special architectural or historic interest, but which is in danger of demolition/major alteration, by a form of temporary listing. Once a BPN is served, it remains in force for 6 months and while it is in force the building is treated as if it were a listed building.

Unlike normal applications for listing, which must meet one of the three measures set by Historic England (including if the building is under serious threat of demolition/major alteration) to be taken forward to an initial assessment, applications for BPNs will always be taken forward for a full assessment. Assessments of BPNs by Historic England are subject to the same criteria as normal applications for listing.

If a BPN is served, but the building is not subsequently listed, compensation may be payable by the Local Authority for losses sustained by those with an interest in the building as a result of the BPN. We therefore welcome Historic England's two year pilot scheme, and were there a situation where a building potentially eligible for listing was judged to be under threat we would certainly engage with Historic England regarding the potential for indemnification should a BPN be issued.

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27. Question from Eileen Glover, SE9, to Councillor Chris Kirby, Cabinet Member for Housing

How many Council Houses excluding New Build, Meridian Homes and Affordable Homes does the council plan to build in the next two years?

Reply -

I thank Eileen Glover for her question.

As a direct provider of Council homes we intend to provide 750 new homes starting on site by 2022. This is the biggest Council housing building programme in a generation. In addition, we are supporting Meridian Homes to deliver on five sites with a commitment to support a further 300 homes over the period to 2022. Alongside this the Council monitors the affordable housing programme delivered by Registered Providers. The Council has also been successful in recycling 100% of its Right to Buy receipts into new social housing and for use as temporary accommodation to respond to the increase in demand for emergency accommodation.

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28. Question from Deborah Cavill, on behalf of 'Greenwich Toy & Leisure Library Association' to Councillor David Gardner, Cabinet Member for Children's Services and Schools

We applaud the Council's commitment to safe and healthy living as epitomised in its £600,000 funding of the Slade Cafe to include a much reduced lease for 5 years. We would like to know if this same commitment extends to disabled children and young people?

Greenwich Toy & Leisure Library Association has invested in a sensory room in a Council property in Abbey Wood for people of all ages with complex needs which requires funding/investment to maximise the potential of this very important borough wide asset. Is this something the Council can assist with?

Reply -

I thank Deborah Cavill for her question.

The Council and partners have a firm commitment to children and young people with disabilities. This is embedded within our Children and Young People Plan, where 1 of our 4 borough priorities is on Children with Special Educational Needs and Disabilities. Alongside the £40.28m invested last financial year into support through the High Needs funding block, the Council has invested further in services including additional Educational Psychology, Health Visiting and School Nursing totalling over £8m per year.

The Council has also invested £12k through the Abbey Wood Ward Budget to upgrading the sensory room at 47 Abbey Grove for the use by children with special needs on the autism spectrum. Subject to the Cabinet decision on the recommendations on short breaks, we will discuss with all providers how we can maximise the use of such assets for all children with special needs and disabilities across the Borough.

As part of a recent re-commissioning of our Short Breaks for children and young people with disabilities, £331,317 per year is proposed to be invested from April 2019. This would expand the number of places and range of activities on offer across the borough compared to previous years. As part of this work providers have been encouraged to work with MetroGAVS to

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embed sustainable delivery models, in particular around supporting the delivery of an offer that families are able to purchase directly through their personal budgets and other sources of income.

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29. Question from John Edwards, on behalf of ‘Speak Out Woolwich’, to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Growth and Strategic Development

On 2nd February Speak Out Woolwich hosted a very successful community conference, attended by approximately 120 local people, to gather community views about the Council’s proposed New Vision for Woolwich (leading to a new Masterplan/SPD). Why did the Council’s Department for Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills (DRES) refuse to attend or engage with this grassroots community event, and also refuse to provide any information for it, and who gave this instruction? For information, the Council’s own Statement of Community Involvement (SCI December 2016)) clearly states:

*“The Royal Borough **will take opportunities to link up with other programmes of public consultation or community.... events....at such events or consultation programmes the council can publicise and encourage comments on relevant planning policy documents.** (s 4.35)*

They can be a good way of engaging with harder to reach groups, **particularly through linking up to existing forums.**" (s 4.34)

Reply -

I thank John Edwards for his question.

The Royal Borough has commissioned Urban Initiatives Studios to develop an Urban Design and Public Realm Strategy for Woolwich Town Centre. This strategy will act as part of the evidence base for the development of a Woolwich Town Centre SPD to guide future development. The Royal Borough held a public exhibition on the vision and principles that will underpin this strategy to solicit feedback and ideas from the local community.

At the time that Speak Out Woolwich held their event, Urban Initiatives Studios were preparing exhibition boards and this information was, therefore, not available to share at the time. Due to the conflicting timescales, the Royal Borough has prioritised the public exhibition, meaning that officers were unable to attend Speak Out Woolwich’s event.

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In order to reach as many local residents and workers as possible, the public exhibition has prioritised reaching out to a diverse range of groups through a variety of means. The Royal Borough delivered leaflets inviting local business operators to the exhibition events to 300 local businesses. We also reached out to many local community groups, including AJODA, which supports elders from the African community; Revolution, the young people's group based at the YMCA in Woolwich Dockyard; Greenwich Inclusion Project; and the Asian women's group based at the Glyndon Community Centre. We also met with the Caribbean Social Forum and discussed the strategy at their weekly meeting.

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30. Question from John Edwards, on behalf of ‘Speak Out Woolwich’, to Councillor Sizwe James, Cabinet Member for Growth and Strategic Development

On 6th February, the Council launched its own consultation on the draft New Vision for Woolwich (Urban Design and Public Realm Strategy). It was held in a freezing cold room in a shabby, dirty, unused building (the former Barclays Bank) with no refreshments. The eight exhibition boards were of poor quality and there was no ‘workshop’ as promised. The event was poorly promoted and poorly attended. Given the invitation stated that “**one of the most important elements of this work is gathering the views, opinions and ideas of the local community**”, could the Council explain why it has conducted a consultation exercise that is an insult to the local community, why it has said the work has been carried out in conjunction with community groups when it has not done so, and why it has allowed such a short consultation period (until 25th February)?

Reply –

I thank John Edwards for his question.

To support the public exhibition, the Royal Borough held two workshop sessions at the former Barclay’s Bank unit on Woolwich New Road. Officers selected that space to carry out the sessions due to the high footfall along the street outside, which gave interested passers by the opportunity to join the sessions, particularly the midday Saturday session at which quite a few visitors came in after seeing the signs on the windows. The other reason officers held the sessions in this space was because it was one of the sites identified for potential meanwhile uses and officers took the opportunity to create interest in the strategy and to discuss the types of uses that could occupy the space with attendees.

These sessions were envisaged as an opportunity for two-way communication between officers and local visitors. Recognising that numbers would be lower than the previous stakeholder workshops, the sessions were structured to allow for one-to-one and small group conversations and for visitors to drift in and out as their schedules allowed.

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Between the two workshops, there were about 35 visitors. The structure of the two workshops meant that officers had a chance to discuss the strategy directly with all attendees, either one-to-one or in small groups. Attendees provided a great deal of constructive feedback at these workshops which will inform the strategy.

Following the second workshop, the exhibition boards were placed in the windows of the former bank unit. These windows benefit from a significant level of footfall, being directly opposite the railway station and facing General Gordon Square.

Officers also held two, four hour drop-in sessions at the Woolwich library to allow members of the public to discuss the ideas one-on-one and to provide feedback in person. Between the two sessions more than 50 people stopped to discuss the strategy, and the response to the ideas has been largely positive.

All of these events were publicised via the Royal Borough's twitter and Facebook accounts and through a press release on the website. Officers distributed invitation leaflets to local businesses via the Woolwich Traders' Forum and posters in the windows of the Barclay's Bank unit promoted the library drop-in sessions. The exhibition boards are also up on the Royal Borough's consultation portal along with a survey to gather feedback.

The consultation on the exhibition is scheduled to end on the 25th February in order to allow Urban Initiatives Studios to go through the feedback and develop the final Urban Design and Public Realm Strategy. This strategy will form part of the evidence base to support the creation of a new Woolwich Town Centre Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). Once the SPD is drafted it will be made available for statutory consultation for a minimum of four weeks.