

COUNCIL Minutes

Place

**Council Chamber - Town Hall, Wellington Street,
Woolwich SE18 6PW**

Date

Wednesday 26 January 2022

Time

7.00 pm

Present

The Worshipful Mayor
Councillor Denise Hyland

Councillors:

Sandra Bauer	Bill Freeman	Odette McGahey
Olu Babatola	David Gardner	Sarah Merrill
Linda Bird	Patricia Greenwell	Matthew Morrow
Geoffrey Brighty	Matt Hartley	Anthony Okereke
Clare Burke-McDonald	Mick Hayes	Linda Perks
Angela Cornforth	John Hills	Denise Scott-McDonald
Charlie Davis	Adel Khairah	Aidan Smith
Garry Dillon	Averil Lekau	Jackie Smith
Spencer Drury	Chris Lloyd	Roger Tester
John Fahy	Mariam Lolavar	Miranda Williams
Leo Fletcher	Christine May	Danny Thorpe
Nigel Fletcher		

A webcast of the meeting of the Council is displayed on the Council's website <https://royalgreenwich.public-i.tv/core/portal/home> for a period of six months subsequent to the meeting.

Minutes

The Mayor advised that in line with the published Public Health advice; she would be adjourning the meeting the meeting for a few minutes, following Item 10, Public Questions and following Item 13 – Treasury Management & Capital Mid-Year Update

Before formally starting the business of the meeting, the Mayor invited Gerald Rose, the Warden at Catford & Bromley Synagogue, to the Chamber to say a few words with regard to Holocaust Memorial Day, after which he light a candle of remembrance.

Item No.

1 Apologies for absence

Apologies for absence were received from Councillors Norman Adams, Stephen Brain, Peter Brooks, Ann-Marie Cousins, Gary Dillon, Spencer Drury, Bill Freeman, Ian Hawking, Mick Hayes, Mark James, Averil Lekau, Chris Lloyd, Maureen O'Mara, Ivis Williams and Miranda Williams.

Apologies for lateness were received from Councillor Mariam Lolavar.

Apologies for leaving early were given by Councillors Councillor Bill Freeman Spencer Drury.

2 Minutes

Resolved –

That the minutes of the Council Meeting and Special Meeting of the Council both held on 24 November 2021 be agreed and signed as a true and accurate record.

3 Mayor's Announcements

The Mayor announced that Director of Communities and Environment had recently received a number of awards for excellence.

- The Royal Borough's Cemetery and Crematorium Service has received another Charter for the Bereaved Gold Award, demonstrating continued service excellence that meets the needs of the Bereaved.
- Parks & Open Spaces had won the Green Flag Award and has also received 3 ISO accreditations certified by the British Standards Institute which are internationally recognised.
 - ISO 9001 - Quality Standard,
 - ISO 45001 - Health & Safety Standard
 - ISO 14001 - Environmental Standard
- The Royal Borough of Greenwich was awarded a Silver Certificate in this year's London in Bloom competition and Well Hall Pleasaunce attained a Silver Gilt in the category of Best Small Park.
- Eltham Crematorium had also received a Gold Award for the "2021 Certificate of Excellence" for supporting the Royal Borough's "City" category."

The Head of Parks Estates and Open Spaces accepted these awards from Councillor Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Culture, Communities and Equalities.

The Mayor was incredibly pleased to announce that two awards are to be presented for projects delivered by Greenwich Builds.

- The first award was for the net zero-carbon project at The Underwood in Eltham, completed earlier this year, winning Social Housing Project of the Year award at the 2021 Offsite Awards.
- The second award was for the scheme at Kidbrooke Park Road, providing 117 sustainable homes and winning Best Affordable Housing Development £20m+ at the Inside Housing Development Awards

Councillor Anthony Okereke, Cabinet Member for Housing to present the awards to Thanh Le, Greenwich Builds Support Officer.

It was with sadness that that Mayor announced the recent death of former Councillors Derek Penfold, Harpinder Singh and Jim Gillman; also, Ann Grant, wife of David Grant, and Charles Medhurst, community activist.

Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council addressed the Council in tribute to former Councillor Jim Gillman stating that he was a tower of a man and whether you were an officer, a resident, or a colleague it was impossible to fail to be touched by the extraordinary way that he carried out his duties. First elected to the Council in 1974, he retired in 2008 only to come back as a Councillor in 2010 and served as Mayor of the Borough on two occasions. Jim was a no-nonsense man who focused entirely on the residents and the Borough was poorer as his passing.

The Mayor read a tribute to former Councillor Harpinder Singh, on behalf of Councillor Peter Brooks, who recounted that Harry came to live in England aged 8 with his family and did not speak any English, He went on to attend the University of Nottingham before moving to Greenwich. Harry was a kind man, often helping his neighbours, and on becoming a Councillor took numerous duties over the years including becoming Mayor, Chief Whip, Chair of the Highways Committee and served on the Cabinet as the Lead Member on the Greener Greenwich agenda. He worked hard for charities such as Demelza Hospice for children, which was his Mayoral charity and truly believed in family values. The Council was lucky to have him serve the residents of Woolwich and he would be sadly missed.

The Mayor read a tribute to former Councillor Derek Penfold, on behalf of Councillor Norman Adams, who recounted Councillor Derek Penfold was first elected in 1971 and during his time serving the Borough he sat on a number of committees and was Vice Chair, then Chair of Recreational Services Committee. He was a very influential figure and as the Chair of the Greenwich Theatre Board, during difficult financial times for the theatre, came to its rescue when it seemed certain that the theatre would have closed.

Councillor Denise Scott McDonald spoke in tribute to Ann Grant recounting her passion about libraries and ensuring their access for all as well as Ann's service as first lady of the Borough, during former Councillor David Grant's term as Mayor in 2012-13, during the Olympics, during which she played a key role for the Borough.

Councillor Aidan Smith read a tribute to former Councillor David Grant and Ann Grant from Councillor Matthew Morrow, who remarked on their exemplary service as Mayor and Mayoress in 2012 – 2013. That in his last days, David was aware he was to be honoured as an Alderman of the Borough, and David's family placed the award on his coffin at his funeral. Both David and Ann were constant campaigners with a particular passion for libraries, Ann being a former professional librarian, had left a legacy that had seen more libraries opened in the Borough than closed. He noted that Ann sadly passed away just two months after the death of her beloved husband David.

Councillor Mick Hayes spoke in tribute of Charles Medhurst who had received the lifetime achievement honour from the Borough in 2017. He was a fascinating man who served the Navy in the Far East, taking part in the D-day landings, and was awarded the Legion of Honour by the French Government. As a lifetime supporter of charities, he took up running at aged 62, undertaking 18 marathons and countless long distance running charity events and was always a passionate supporter of those less well off. He lived life to the full and to the full for the benefit of others, not seeing age as a barrier to ambition. He would be sorely missed by all those who knew him and all those organisations that he supported.

Councillor John Fahy spoke in tribute former Councillor Jim Gillman remembering that Jim was a leading light in the print union and a national figure during his time, fighting Maxwell over the pension Fund. His legacy showed how instrumental he was to the Borough, as Chair of Leisure Services creating Greenwich Leisure which was now a national and international social enterprise.

In tribute to former Councillor Harry Singh, Councillor Thorpe noted that he was an active Councillor, engaging with resident in a positive way and that, even when no longer serving as a Councillor he was still supporting his local community.

Councillor Nigel Fletcher addressed the Chamber saying that all Members on the Conservative bench shared in the fine tributes that had been paid to all those that were being remembered. He noted that the death of former Councillor Harry Singh was a great shock, taken long before his time. He concurred with the Leader of the Council that former Councillor Jim Gilman was a towering political figure, serving as Mayor at a time when Greenwich Council became a Royal Borough which the Authority will

shortly be marking the 10th anniversary of. He also spoke of the sad loss of former Councillor David Grant who, with Ann Grant as Mayoress, served as Mayor following Jim Gilman, during the Olympics. He expressed deepest condolences to the families of all those being remembering

Council joined the Mayor in standing for a minute's silence.

4 Declarations of Interest

The Mayor confirmed that the Monitoring Officer had advised that all Members should declare a personal interest in Item 17 but under the exception in paragraph 25 (d) of the Code of Conduct, Members could stay, participate, and vote on the item. Members agreed that the Committee Officer record their declarations of interest on item 17

In respect of Item 14, Councillor Hyland and Jackie Smith declared an interest, as the owner of a second home within the Borough.

Resolved –

That the list of Councillors' memberships as Council appointed representatives on outside bodies, joint committees and school governing bodies is noted.

1. That all Members personal interest in Item 17 be noted, but in line with the Monitoring Officers advice that under the exception in paragraph 25 (d) of the Code of Conduct, Members may stay, participate, and vote on the item.
2. That Councillors Hyland and J Smith declaration in respect of Item 14 be noted.

5 Notice of Members wishing to exceed the 5 minute rule

The Mayor noted that that no requests to exceed the five minute rule had been received.

6 Submission of Petitions

The following petitions were presented at the meeting:

Subject and Number of Signatures	Presenting Councillor	Lead Department
Delafield Road Parking Petition 89 signatures	Linda Perks	Director of Communities, Environment and Central
Residents of Upper Colomb Street request that consideration given to identifying and implementing an appropriate solution to the obstructed pathway outside 21/23 Colomb Street,(not including the removal of the tree). 39 signatures	Denise Scott-McDonald	Director of Communities, Environment and Central
Stop the West Greenwich 'low traffic neighbourhood' 422 signatures	Aidan Smith	Director of Communities, Environment and Central
Supporting outside eating and drinking for Westmount Café 2691 signatures	Spencer Drury	Director of Regeneration, Enterprise and Skills

7 Petition Responses

The Mayor advised that a revised version of Appendix 7 had been published in advance of the meeting.

The Mayor accepted an address from the lead petitioner, in respect of the petition 'Request For Edgehill To Be Made Designated Parking To Residents Houses', set out at appendix I. The lead petitioner urged the Council to deal with the issues raised as a matter of urgency and make the entrance road to Edge Hill safe for residents and pedestrians by bringing in measures to remove and deter commercial vehicles. That the behaviour of a minority was

impacting on the health and safety of the majority of residents and reducing the quality of life and eroding residents' enjoyable habitation of their neighbourhood. The main perpetrators had got away with this anti-social behaviour for so long they were confident they could continue to do so and boasted of 'having the authorities in their pockets'. Residents urged the Council to end this situation in the quickest time possible.

Councillor David Gardner thanked the speaker and the resident of Edge Hill advising that there was a full discussion at the Highways Committee, at which Councillor Ivis Williams had represented the residents who had lived with this long-standing issue on Edge Hill which was unsightly as well as inconvenient and dangerous. Council Officers had tried a number of solutions to the issue, and it would appear that the only real solution was to include this area into a Controlled Parking Zone (CPZ). He also hoped that officers would be able to progress this as soon as possible.

Councillor Geoffrey Brighty addressed the Council, as the Member who submitted the petition 'Wricklemarsh Residents Unite Against Enforcement Camera & Call For End To No-Left-Turn Restriction', set out at appendix 3, advising that the lead Petitioner wished to attend Council, but could not, due to illness. Like the petitioners he welcomed the Officers recommendations, and it was important that the options and implications for Westbrooke Road and other roads in that area should be fully investigated and residents properly consulted.

The Mayor accepted an address from the representative for the lead petitioner, in respect of the petition 'Keep Rat Running Away from West Greenwich & Across the Borough', set out at appendix 4 who stated that before the introduction of the West Greenwich Traffic Reduction Scheme cars and vans would race down the road, 18 inches from residents front doors. Children knew not to step outside for fear of being hit, Her front porch collapsed and window ledges cracked due to traffic vibrations. Now residents felt safe, without the fear of cars mounting the pavements, dramatically changing the area for the better; the benefit of cleaner and safer living streets should be extended to the rest of West Greenwich as soon as possible and not reduced.

Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport advised that it would not be appropriate to offer a response, due to the ongoing consultation process.

The Mayor accepted an address from the representative for the lead petitioner, in respect of the petition 'Equitable Consultation and decision making for West Greenwich Traffic Reduction Scheme', set out at appendix 5. The speaker advised the petition called on the Council to honour its public agreements and act equitably in respect of the West Greenwich Traffic Reduction Scheme. Residents felt the survey questions should have been about safety and active travel not about accessibility and questioned why Lewisham was included, as this appeared designed to invite negative comments. The residents felt that the survey was seriously flawed and ignored the safety for those within the area and urged the Council not to believe the vocal lobby, incorrectly claiming the scheme had no support.

Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport advised that it would not be appropriate to offer a response, due to the ongoing consultation process.

Councillor Aidan Smith addressed the Council on the petition, noting traffic levels had increased over the past 10 years as drivers used apps to find shortcuts, turning backroads into main routes. The implementation of these schemes had been transformative to residents' living conditions. He noted that it was forecast that other areas would see an increase in congestions as a result of the Silvertown Tunnel and there was a need to protect residents from rat running traffic.

The Mayor accepted an address from the representative for the lead petitioner, in respect of the petition 'Residents of Messeter Place and Elm Terrace urge the council to consider all options to prevent the 2 roads being used as a rat run', set out at appendix 6. The speaker advised the petition sought action from the Council to do something about traffic constantly using these small streets as rat runs, which was added to by drivers trying to avoid queues at the Footscray Road/Eltham High St traffic lights. Residents would like to see a formal and proper consultation on the the three solutions proposed to this situation.

Councillor Pat Greenwell addressed the Council on the petition and concurred with the speaker's comments, and that there was a need for cross department co-ordination, due to a planning application for building works around Elm Terrace flats. That Officers commitment to consult with the residents on possible solutions was welcomed and she requested that Ward Councillors were involved in any discussions and meetings that took place.

Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport confirmed that she had met with the South Greenwich Forum, last week, to discuss this and it was a situation that Officers were investigating.

The Mayor accepted an address from the lead petitioner, in respect of the petition 'Reject Meridian Home Start's Shepherd Leas planning application unless the height of the proposed building is reduced to six storeys or less', set out at the revised, tabled, appendix 7. The speaker understood that the petition would be forwarded to the Planning Committee in due course. The 5,000 people who signed the petition did so because they made a connection between the imminent climate crisis and the failure to protect nature and a loss of biodiversity. The first step to reversing that process was to protect nature and to reverse the loss of biodiversity and considered that the proposed Shepherd Leas development was a step in the wrong direction. The Council should show leadership and commitment to the 2014 Local Plan which promised to restrict the growth of high-rise buildings in the Borough: the 2016 Greener Greenwich strategy and 2019 Climate Crisis declaration by rejecting the proposed development.

Councillor Spencer Drury addressed the Council agreeing with the lead petitioners' comments and that he felt that the response was not entirely in-keeping with the substance of the petition. He noted that in October Cabinet agreed to fund the development of the Shepard Leas site, increasing the requirement from 40 to 70 homes, as originally proposed, and a review of the site included 70 flats, the exact number the Council wanted and funded. He did not feel this petition was just one for Planning to consider, given that the Council funded the development through a company created by the Council, and Council owed it to the almost 5,000 people who signed the petition to provide a proper response to the concerns raised and he requested that officers provide a proper response to the petition presented.

Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council, advised that all Members were aware that this related to a live planning application which had to be processed in line with the Planning Process and any application had to be judged in line with Planning Policies. Meridian Housing was an independent company not a Council owned company; the Council did have a representative on the Board of Meridian Housing, which was correctly declared and recorded in the Members' Register of Interests.

As a point of explanation, Councillor Spencer Drury clarified that he has said the company had been created by the Council.

Resolved –

That the action taken in response to petitions presented at recent meetings of the Council be noted.

8 Public Deputations on matters not otherwise on the agenda

The Mayor noted that there would be no public deputations made at this meeting.

9 Public Questions from cancelled December 2021 meeting

Resolved –

That the questions and written responses to the Public and Member Question's submitted for the cancelled meeting of the Council of 15 December 2021 be noted, without debate.

10. Public Questions

The Mayor stated that Council had received 10 written questions by members of the public. The questions and replies are attached as Appendix A to the minute.

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The Mayor adjourned the meeting at 8.35pm. The meeting recommenced at 8.50pm.

11. Questions from Members

The Mayor stated that 21 written questions had been received from Members of the Council. The questions and replies, together with the supplementary submissions made during the meeting are attached as Appendix B to the minutes.

Under procedures for oral questions, the Mayor invited questions to Members of the Cabinet for response.

Councillor Matt Hartley asked the Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement if she had been consulted on and what was the Council's position on, the Mayor of London's proposal to introduce a pilot scheme in Greenwich Lewisham and Bexley which would effectively decriminalise cannabis use for the under 25's. Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement advised this was inaccurate and the proposal, led by Lewisham Council, was looking at methods, other than using the criminal justice system, in respect for people between 18 and 25. Greenwich had not been consulted and the proposal would not be implemented without consultation with the public. She noted that the report appeared to be a convolution of Lewisham's proposals and the Mayor's proposal to have a commission on making the use of cannabis legal, which were two completely different proposals.

Councillor Spencer Drury advised it had been raised with him that two sections of the pavement had been built out in Westmount Road, at the Rochester Way end, which had resulted in an appalling accident and created a danger to cyclist who had to pull out into heavy traffic. He requested that the Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport look at this as a matter of urgency. Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport confirmed that this situation had been raised and Council Officers were looking at the situation. She indicated that she would provide Councillor Drury with an update on the situation.

Councillor Nigel Fletcher in respect of his written question on the disposal of the Greenwich Library asked if the Leader was comfortable that the library had been sold to a Church whose head pastor had made public derogatory comments about women and that same-sex marriage was evil. He said those comments did not reflect the values of the Borough and were profoundly offensive. Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council, responded that the sale of the Library was necessary to invest in a better facility. It was a lawful decision and the property disposals would be subjected to various forms of regulations. Councillor Thorpe stated that he would continue to make sure LGBTQ+ rights were advanced in the Council. He and Councillor Khaireh were working with more than 100 organisations to sign up to the Council's Equality Charter to deliver real improvements in equality.

Councillor Patricia Greenwell sought clarification to when or if the Better Together residents' scheme was going to be reinstated.

Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council responded that a lot had happened since the last Better Together, including funding which has been allocated to 96 local community projects across Borough. He recalled that at the last Better Together event he attended, the public were outnumbered by Council Officer and Councils and there was a need to examine the community engagement structures and the ways to actively engage with residents, as one size did not fit all.

12. Matters for early debate

The Mayor noted that no requests for matters to be taken early had been received.

13. Treasury Management and Capital Mid-Year Update

Councillor Linda Perks, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources formally moved the recommendations in the report advising that it was a technical report and the full strategy report for the Treasury Management and Capital Strategy 2022/2023 would be presented to the next meeting of the Council. Section 7 set out the details of the uptake of a borrowing opportunity through the Mayor's Energy and Efficiency fund, used to replace 9000 streetlights with LED bulbs, at a lower interest rate than available from the Public Works Loan Board. For 9 years the Council had been able to fund capital investment through the prudent use of reserves, however, a report was presented to Audit & Risk Management on the external borrowing of £40million, at very favourable rate, and further details would be presented in the full strategy report.

The Mayor put the matter to the vote, and it was –

Resolved –

1. That the Treasury Management Mid-Year Report for 2021/22 (Sections 4-11) be agreed.
2. That the Capital Mid-Year Report for 2021/22 (Sections 12-13) be agreed.

14. Council Tax Base 2022/23

In line with their declarations Councillors Denise Hyland and Jackie Smith left the Chamber for the duration of this item. The Deputy Mayor, Councillor Leo Fletcher, took the Chair.

Councillor Linda Perks, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources moved the recommendations, noting that this was another technical report. She advised Council that the decision to set the Base was required, in order to inform the Council Tax Setting 2022/23 report which was to be presented to the next meeting of Council.

She drew Council's attention to the new provision, agreed by Cabinet, which would provide a 100% Council Tax discount for foster carers households and shared lives households and that the Council would continue providing 100% discount for care leavers. It was proposed to retain the existing Council Tax for second homes and to disincentivise allowing housing stock to remain empty. Also, there was retention of the existing local Council Tax support scheme to support the more vulnerable, low paid families and pensioner households, noting that consultation was currently being undertaken on broadening the scheme to benefit more vulnerable households going forward, the results of which, including any proposals to expand or revise the scheme, would be set out in the final report to Council in February.

Councillor Nigel Fletcher, Leader of the Conservative Group, addressed the Council, welcoming the Conservative Group's proposals on exempting foster carers and shared lives households as a positive move. Further, he looked forward to receiving further details on the review of the Council Tax support scheme and would welcome a conversation with the Cabinet Member, before February's submission to Council, on how this may be targeted.

The Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources welcomed the support of the Conservative Group and formally moved the report.

In line with legal requirement for the Council to conduct a recorded vote on this item the Chief Executive called on each Member to cast their vote:

In favour Councillors Sandra Bauer, Linda Bird, Geoffrey Brighty, Clare Burke-McDonald, Angela Cornforth, Charlie Davis, Gary Dillon, Spencer Drury, John Fahy, Leo Fletcher, Nigel Fletcher, David Gardner, Pat

Greenwell, Matt Hartley, Mick Hayes, John Hills, Adel Khaireh, Averil Lekau, Chris Lloyd, Christine May, Odette McGahey, Sarah Merrill, Matthew Morrow, Anthony Okereke, Linda Perks, Denise Scott McDonald, Aidan Smith, Roger Tester, Danny Thorpe, and Miranda Williams

No Members voted against or abstained.

Resolved Unanimously -

1. That the Council Tax discount of 100% in respect of Royal Borough of Greenwich foster carers & shared lives households in the borough with effect from 1 April 2022 (subject to this item being discussed at Cabinet on 26 January 2022) be noted.
2. That a council tax base for the whole authority area for 2022/23 of 83,695.60 be agreed in accordance with the Local Authorities (Calculation of Tax Base) (England) Regulations 2012.
3. That an additional council tax base for the Gloucester Circus Garden Square area of the authority for 2022/23 of 98.25 be agreed.
4. That a continuance in 2022/23 of the Council Tax discount of 0% on Class A & Class B dwellings (second homes) and Class C & D dwellings (empty homes) be agreed.
5. That a continuance of a Council Tax premium of 100% in 2022/23 in respect of Long term empty dwellings for dwellings empty for up to 5 years be agreed.
6. That a continuance of a Council Tax premium of 200% in 2022/23 in respect of Long term empty dwellings, for dwellings empty between 5 and 10 years be agreed.
7. That a continuance of a Council Tax premium of 300% in 2022/23 in respect of Long term empty dwellings, for dwellings empty longer than 10 years be agreed.
8. That it be agreed that the LCTS 2021/22 approved at Council on 27 January 2021 continues in place for 2022/23 and to note that the Council is consulting on whether to undertake a focussed review of LCTS, with a view to broadening support to the borough's most vulnerable residents.

9. That a continuance in 2022/23 of the Council Tax discount of 100% in respect of Royal Borough of Greenwich resident care leavers, aged under 25, in line with the decision of Council in March 2017 be noted.
10. That it be noted that the council tax base relevant to the Southern Region of the Environment Agency for flood defence levy apportionment purposes in 2022/23 is 8,315.24
11. That it be noted that the council tax base relevant to the Thames Region of the Environment Agency for flood defence levy apportionment purposes in 2022/23 is 75,380.36

15. Gambling Act 2005 – Adoption of Revised Gambling Policy

Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement formally moved the recommendation of adoption of the revised Gambling Policy, which had been considered and recommended, with no substantive comments or contradiction, by the Licensing Committee and Cabinet for adoption.

The Mayor put the matter to the vote, and it was

Resolved Unanimously –

That it be agreed to adopt a revised Statement of Gambling Policy in respect of the Gambling Act 2005 (at Appendix A) for the Royal Borough.

16. Review of Parliamentary and Local Government Polling Districts and Polling Places 2022

The Mayor moved recommendation of the review of the Polling arrangements and put the matter to the vote, and it was

Resolved Unanimously –

1. That it be agreed to approve the polling arrangements proposed in the report and appendices, that being the Royal Borough of Greenwich polling places and polling districts for UK Parliamentary and Local Government elections.
2. That it be agreed to approved that the polling places and polling districts shall take effect at the next publication of the register of electors

(scheduled for 1 February 2022 or soon after) which will form the base of the register for the May 2022 Royal Borough of Greenwich elections.

17. Royal Borough of Greenwich Parental Leave Policy for Members

The Mayor invited Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council, to address the Council. He stated that this it was important that this policy was adopted, and that Councillors reflected their community and that they not only encourage women into politics but were able to support them to continue to participate in Governance as well as becoming a parent.

Councillor Nigel Fletcher, Leader of the Conservative Group, concurred with Councillor Thorpe's comments noting that this had been an issue raised in the Chamber in the past and that it should apply to shared parental leave and adoption leave, as it was important to reflect that families came in all shapes and sizes.

The Mayor put the matter to the vote, and it was

Resolved Unanimously –

1. That it be agreed that the Royal Borough of Greenwich adopts the Parental Leave Policy for Members as attached at Appendix A.
2. That it be agreed to authorise the Director of Legal & HR to make any consequential changes to the Members' Allowances Scheme in Part 6 of the Constitution.

18. Proposed changes to the Constitution

The Mayor moved reception of the report.

Councillor Nigel Fletcher, Leader of the Conservative Group, noted that this was one of the first reports that had reflected the change to the Constitution to allow the Monitoring Officer, under delegated powers, to make amendments to the Constitution, noting changes were notified to the Leader of the Council, the Chair of Overview and Scrutiny and himself as Leader of the minority group and despite initial reservations and with some minor amendments he felt this was an efficient process.

The Mayor put the matter to the vote, and it was

Resolved Unanimously -

That it be agreed to approve the Officers' Code of Conduct in Appendix A for insertion into Part 5 of the Constitution.

19. Changes to the Constitution arising from the Monitoring Officer's delegation in Article 15.02 of the Constitution

The Mayor moved reception of the report and putting the matter to the vote it was

Resolved -

That the changes to the Constitution arising from the Monitoring Officer's delegation in Article 15.02 of the Constitution be noted.

20. Decisions on Executive Functions taken under Urgency Procedures

The Mayor moved reception of the report and putting the matter to the vote it was

Resolved -

That the decisions taken under urgency procedures at Section 4 of the report be noted.

21. Changes to the Executive Functions Scheme of Delegation

The Mayor moved reception of the report.

Councillor Charlie Davis asked the Leader of the Council, as the relevant decision maker, when the decision on the Controlled Parking which had been due on the 19th January, would be made and if he could confirm the reason for the delay or if the decision was imminent. Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council, responded that he would reply to Councillor Davis directly, in due course.

The Mayor put the matter to the vote it was

Resolved Unanimously-

That the changes made to the executive functions scheme of delegation be noted.

22. Motion “End Fuel Poverty”

In moving the motion Councillor David Gardner noted it was prepared for submission in October 2022 and in the intervening period the forecast of a 50% increase in household fuel prices had been made, putting an estimated six million more people into fuel poverty and the average household fuel bill raising to £2,000 per annum. He stated the motion set out a clear ambition for a strategy to address fuel poverty locally and called for national action through an upgrade of the warm homes discount from £142 to £400 and widen the eligibility; the freezing of or stopping of VAT on fuel for a year and a windfall tax on the fuel providers that have profited from the price increases. Many people in Greenwich already faced a cost-of-living crisis, having to decide whether to eat or heat their homes and the winter would see more residents in this position and urgent action was needed.

Councillor Linda Bird seconded the motion noting that 46% of children in the Borough were living in poverty, before the impact of fuel poverty. The motion described a list of positive actions the Council could take to improve conditions and offered a way forward to make fuel and energy supplies more efficient and more accessible and bring about improvements to ensure no family, elderly resident or disabled person in this Borough will need to choose between food and warmth. In setting out the Council’s long and impressive record of providing support where needed she noted support was also needed from Central Government, including an increase in the Winter Homes discount, which also needed to be processed far quicker than it currently was. She addressed the adverse disparity of fuel charges for those households forced to use pre-payment meters, particularly as the best energy deals on the market were not available to prepayment meter users which also required manual updating, as prices fluctuate, which may take months. The motion demonstrated the Council commitment to make improvements, and that the Council would continue to lobby the Government for better funding to provide better outcomes for the residents of the Borough.

Council Nigel Fletcher moved an amendment to the Motion, noting that whilst the Conservative Group welcomed the motion, there had been slight changes from that initially published. He welcomed the award of a Stay Safe

Grant to Charlton Athletic Community Trust to deal specifically with fuel poverty in the Borough. Councillor Fletcher continued that the amendment tabled put forward the additional suggestion to ask the Cabinet to bring forward proposals to help Council tenants by freezing communal heating and hot water charges or offering fuel credits to residents, as was being implemented by other Councils. The Conservative Group would support the call on the Government to take action and the amendment proposed that the Government was approached to abolish VAT on domestic fuel completely, rather than for one year, supporting not just the residents of the Borough but the County, which was within the power of the Government to do.

Councillor Charlie Davis formally seconded the amendment, reserving his right to speak.

Councillor David Gardner advised that he could not accept the amendment as it removed the specific demand to increase the Warm Homes discount and extend the eligibility and would remove reference to the windfall tax in order to fund that.

The Mayor called for a vote on the amendment, and with the minority group in favour and the majority group against it was lost.

Councillor Nigel Fletcher expressed disappointed and given there were elements in the in the motion which the Conservative Group disagreed with, it would be abstaining. However, on the elements where they concurred, he would be happy to join with the Labour Group in lobbying the Government Minister, particularly on the extension the warm homes discount.

Councillor David Gardner, as mover of the substantive motion, formally closed the debate.

The Mayor put the motion to the vote, and it was

Resolved -

1. To note the work to date on ending fuel poverty in Greenwich but acknowledges that 17% of households are estimated to be in fuel poverty and more must be done to end fuel poverty by 2030. We appreciate the significant work done over the years to support measures to improve insulation and energy efficiency and the *Stay Warm, Stay Safe* scheme through Live Well Greenwich, but in the light of the spike in energy prices and the climate emergency, believe it timely to refresh our approach.

2. To invite Cabinet (consulting with the Chief Executive and Directors) to create a strategy with the ambition of ending fuel poverty in Greenwich by 2030. This will take account of the Carbon Neutral Plan commitments and the following principles:
 1. Improving the energy efficiency of Council and social housing association housing stock
 2. enforcement of existing regulations on energy efficiency and property standards, particularly in the private rented sector
 3. consider publishing a statement of intent and setting locally appropriate eligibility criteria to access Energy Company Obligation funding via the Local Authority Flexibility arrangements
 4. Leveraging in funds to improve the energy efficiency standards of all housing
 5. improving the accessibility of information for private tenants as to the minimum standards expected in their properties and guidance to improve the energy efficiency of rented property.
 6. Maximising the incomes of low-income households through the efficient delivery of Council-administered benefits, continued support for the London Living Wage through the supply chain and throughout the Borough and sensitive recovery of debt and the provision of advice and support
 7. Working in partnership with other agencies and voluntary and community groups to implement and monitor delivery of the Strategy and the Carbon Neutral Plan.
 8. Joining the South London Healthy Homes Partnership providing energy advice via the phone, WhatsApp, energy advice cafes and home visits.
 - To ask for an update report of progress within six months.
 - To become a Member of the End Fuel Poverty Coalition.
 - This Council further urges immediate national action to avert a further wave of fuel poverty from 1 April 2022 including a one-year suspension of VAT on domestic fuel; an increase in the Warm Homes Discount from £140 to £400 and widening of the eligibility criteria and a windfall tax on the profits of North Sea oil and gas producers.

23. Motion “Local Neighbourhood Planning”

Councillor Nigel Fletcher formally moved the motion. He noted that the tabled amendment from the Labour Group related to the proposed planning reforms by the government in the in the White paper. He felt the Bill

aimed to get residents and communities involved at a much earlier stage of the planning process, as currently residents had the opportunity to contribute and help shape Local Plans, but it was an opaque process. Despite Officers best endeavours to engage people in that process it was not always successful, mainly as it dealt with hypotheticals and abstract notions of land allocation, Use Class etc., making it difficult for people to realise the implications. Residents became actively interested when a planning application came forward for decision but at that point Members' ability to refuse consent of an application, that was recommended for consent, and accorded with the local plans was difficult. Residents would often be frustrated by this process with Planning Committee or Board often having to explain that the legal requirement to adhere to the Local Plan or face the decision being overturned at appeal which happened. The White Paper aimed to get people involved at an earlier stage of the process, however the proposal to reduce the input that the public could make, set out in the second part of the Paper, was less welcome. He noted the success of the Charlton Riverside Local Plan, developed in association with residents and residents representation groups. He summed up that the motion called for the Council to make a commitment to the principle of Neighbourhood Planning, and proactively encourage and support local communities, across the Borough, to bring forward applications to establish Neighbourhood Forums, bringing planning to the neighbourhood and community level to ensure that Local Plans were genuinely shaped by local people in their communities.

Councillor Charlie Davis formally seconded the motion, reserving his right to speak.

An amendment was tabled by Councillor Denise Scott McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth, who reserved her right to speak.

Councillor Danny Thorpe seconded the amendment stating that there would be many communities supporting this idea but also many that would not. The Council had a proven record of involving communities in regeneration and more money was going to local communities and residents to determine what improvements and projects they want to see in their communities and on their streets that must clearly benefit everyone. However, the Council was the strategic Planning Authority and had a duty to ensure that there was provision for the wider infrastructure such as schools, healthcare provision and Crossrail stations. The Council welcomed

residents taking an active part in their community and in shape decisions on regeneration.

Councillor Anthony Okereke, Cabinet Member for Housing, spoke in support of the amendment commenting that the Council did engage with communities on Local Plans and Greenwich New Builds, but this did take resourcing. The White Paper would enable the Government a greater level of comment, whereas the real need was for more resourcing to support engagement with the public.

Councillor Nigel Fletcher said that the tabled amendment was not accepted as it deleted the purpose of the motion to actively encourage Neighbourhood Planning. He added that, if the amended motion was passed, he would welcome a statement that Council welcomed and encouraged local residents to get involved in shaping Local Plans and developments in their neighbourhoods.

The Mayor put the amendment to the vote, and with the majority group in favour and minority group against it was carried.

Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald formally closed the debate and the Mayor put the amended, now substantive motion, to the vote

Resolved -

Council notes that a review of Royal Borough of Greenwich's Local Plan is due to begin shortly, with a "Big Themes" document scheduled for public consultation during Spring 2022.

Council welcomes local communities in the Borough who want to get involved in helping to shape development in their neighbourhoods, and desire to play an active and an ongoing role in the formulation and implementation of the new local plan.

Council notes that since 2018, just under £1.7 million has been allocated to 96 community projects across Greenwich which have been developed by local residents and communities.

Whether it is a local planning issue, or involvement in a wider regeneration scheme, Council is committed to the active involvement of all residents in these matters. Whether it is applying for funds from the Greenwich Neighbourhood Growth Fund (GNGF) or more active involvement in shaping

planning policy for their neighbourhood, the Council remains fully committed to working with residents and communities across the borough.

Finally, Council notes that the "Levelling Up" white paper has been delayed, following the scrapping of previous Government proposals for planning which would have given residents even less of a say over what happens on their street or in their neighbourhood.

Council waits anxiously to find out whether the rhetoric of Ministers is matched by the resources and policies to support local communities and deliver planning reform which will truly benefit local people.

The meeting closed at 10:25 pm

Chair

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

I Question from Kate Jaconello (Greenwich Covered Market Traders), and Kevin Fewster & Tim Barnes (The Greenwich Society), SE10, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

Looking to the future, we welcome the recent announcement of a £166K grant to look at ways of increasing the attractiveness of Greenwich Town Centre to visitors. Quality public realm is central to the success of a town centre. For too long though traffic has blighted the attractiveness of Greenwich Town Centre, one of London's four World Heritage Sites. Its narrow pavements hinder the easy movement of its eight million visitors plus, pre the Pandemic.

Greenwich Hospital Estates (the borough's major commercial landlord) has recently come together with the Greenwich Society and local councillors to urge support for pavement widening in the town centre on specific streets. This initiative enjoys the support of Greenwich Covered Market traders. Further, we have provided our plans to Council Officers.

We ask if you will authorise Council Officers to cost these new proposals now so they can be considered along with the work around the Grant?

Reply -

I thank Kate Jaconello (Greenwich Covered Market Traders), and Kevin Fewster & Tim Barnes (The Greenwich Society) for their question.

We previously submitted a bid to TfL for a more limited pavement widening scheme.

The scheme was not considered good enough to secure funding from TfL and this led to broader proposals currently being developed.

Since the Covid-19 pandemic significantly reduced its income, TfL reduced and then paused funding for the whole Liveable Neighbourhoods programme.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

TfL has stated its desire to re-start the programme. However, like all TfL funding, the funding remains uncertain at present.

No supplementary question.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

2 Question from Deborah O'Boyle, SEI8, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

Recent studies have shown that blue LED areas halve insect populations - which play an important role in the diets of many species, pollination and much, much more - and create "islands" that bats don't cross. Bat protection is a legal duty.

There is anecdotal evidence, locally, that some varieties of birds are now singing all night and that people's sleep is being affected. After all, we are advised to turn off screens at least 30 minutes before going to bed, as the blue light emitted tricks the brain into thinking it is daytime. It is too early in the year to gauge the wider affect on bats, birds, insects and other wildlife.

Good practice is to use <3000K (red, like old style lights) in bat areas, 3000k in residential streets (to avoid disturbing sleep patterns) and 4K on fast roads/high traffic areas. Ultra blue >5500K lights are recognised as inappropriate except in high risk areas.

They are also far too bright, there is spillage at near horizontal levels (it is good practice to have none) and with seemingly no dimming mechanism or movement sensors, which would provide additional benefits in terms of power saving.

Is there an explanation for the ubiquitous installation of ultra blue >5500K lights?

Reply -

I thank Deborah O'Boyle for her question.

There are no lighting units in with a colour temperature of 5500 Kelvin and never has been. With regards to LEDs the maximum current colour temperature is 4000k (Neutral White).

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

We have a pre-set dimming profile of a 30% reduction between the hours of midnight and 6am for the whole borough.

Within our programme we are also looking at reducing the colour temperature to between 2700k – 3000k only where there are wildlife concerns.

We use guidance from the Institution of Lighting Professionals, The Bat Conservation Society and we are in talks with the GWAG – Greenwich Wildlife Advisory Group.

No supplementary question.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

3 Question from Simon Pirani, SE18, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

In view of the facts that (i) the Silvertown Tunnel project will either keep traffic at its current level, or increase it, (ii) the Greenwich Carbon Neutral Plan (page 16) aims to reduce traffic volumes by 45% by 2030, and (iii) therefore either the tunnel project or the plan will have to be abandoned, will the council leader write to the Mayor of London to ask for the tunnel project to be paused and reviewed, while this issue is resolved?

4 Question from Simon Pirani, SE18, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

In view of the fact that the Stop the Silvertown Tunnel coalition has provided legal advice that the tolling scheme for the Silvertown Tunnel could be scrapped by a future mayor, will the borough of Greenwich now seek its own legal advice on this issue?

5 Question from Victoria Rance, SE18, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

Given that tolls on Blackwall and Silvertown Tunnel are the only thing preventing increased car use, congestion, pollution and carbon emissions in Greenwich, have you asked TfL to provide detailed modelling to demonstrate what will happen to air pollution and congestion if tolls are reduced to inefficient levels or even scrapped in the future?

Reply -

I thank Victoria Rance and Simon Pirani for their question.

These questions closely relate to, and in some cases repeat, recommendations which will be considered by the Overview & Scrutiny Committee on 15 February. It would not therefore be appropriate for me to comment on these questions at the moment.

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Supplementary to question 3 -

(Kate Middleton on behalf of Simon Pirani)

The cross-party Stop the Silvertown Tunnel coalition expected to speak of the December Council meeting, that was cancelled, and were told that we were not allowed to bring a deputation to talk about this incredibly serious issue. Can Stop the Silvertown Tunnel coalition make a deputation to the next Council meeting?

Reply -

We must wait until the public meeting of Overview and Scrutiny on the 15th February. I'm happy to meet with members of the Silvertown coalition to discuss potential representations at that meeting.

Supplementary to question 5 -

Following legal advice that the tolls are not legally safeguarded by the Development consent order and a future Mayor could cancel or reduce tolls to ineffective levels, what is the Council doing to ensure traffic will not increase by the 15% to 30% predict?

Reply -

This question is bound up with the other two. I have been taking legal advice and at this moment and for the reasons outlined by Councillor Lloyd and the Mayor I can't respond to you on this tonight.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

6 Question from Michael Snowden, SE18, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

What environment assessments and plans have been done, to lead to the current design, particularly re residential street brightness and colour temperature?

Reply -

I thank Michael Snowden for his question.

Lighting design was carried out using the current lighting British Standards, Guidance from the ILP and government recommendations.

The LED rollout is an ongoing process where we will listen to the various comments being received and act accordingly.

Supplementary question -

The right balance needs to be reached between the lighting British Standards and protecting the environment and meeting Greenwich Councils own environmental standards. Could we have the working to actually show that the Council is making the maximum possible effort to increase protection for nocturnal insects and bats?

Reply -

All out lights are 4,000 Kelvin and we will be reducing them by 1/3rd between midnight and 6 am

We did consult with the British Wildlife Action Group without adverse comment. There is a need to balance human safety, supporting the campaign for women's safety and benefits to wildlife. All new lampposts installed from the middle of March are going to be fitted with their own device to allow for individual light levels to be lowered. In areas with bats and other wildlife concerns we will dim the lights further. This will

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require a fine balance between protecting wildlife and maintaining public safety and I am happy to engage with you on this.

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7 Question from Michael Snowden, SE18, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

What capabilities are available to allow “tuning” of the street lighting to a better brightness and pattern? E.g. selective late night dimming or remote control

Reply –

I thank Michael Snowden for his question.

We have introduced a borough wide dimming of a 30% reduction from the hours of midnight and 6.00 am.

We are currently investigating two further options to dim our lights further using a Central Management System (CMS) or Near Field Communication (NFC).

Supplementary question –

I haven't observed selected dimming yet on my street.

Reply –

This hasn't been commenced yet.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

8 Question from Neil Robertson on behalf of Greenwich Cyclists, SE8, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

The cycle lane on Creek Road has been completed for some months now but remains closed to cyclists who now have to share the reduced road space with motor vehicles whilst the cycle lane stands empty. This annoys vehicle drivers who blame it for increased traffic jams.

We are told by RBG that the reason it has not been opened is that the section over the bridge needs resurfacing. This makes no sense as the surface has not changed and cyclists, as others, still have to use the bridge in its current condition.

Please identify the real reason the route has not been opened and when it will be opened to allow people riding to feel safer on their journeys?

Reply -

I thank Neil Robertson for his question.

Works to replace the decking panels on Creek Road Bridge were expected to be completed late last year.

Due to Transport for London's financial situation, they were not able to agree to the cost of works

The funding has now been agreed. Arrangements can now be made with our contractor to organise the works.

We have been unable to reach an agreement with Transport for London on a safe way to open the cycle route in the meantime, due to cycle safety concerns when accessing and egressing the cycle track, especially at junctions.

TfL have informed us the opening of the entire route has been delayed until Summer 2022.

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However, once the works to the bridge are completed, we will be able to assess the risk to cyclists and agree with TfL if there is a possibility to partially open some sections.

No supplementary question.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

9 Question from Shaun Slator, SE18, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council

Does the Council discriminate in its provision of services to residents based on resident's (real or perceived) religious, philosophical or political beliefs?

Reply -

I thank Shaun Slator for his question.

The Council, in accordance with the Equality Act 2010, does not discriminate in its provision of services to residents based on religion and/or beliefs which is one of the protected characteristics as set out in the legislation.

No supplementary question.

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PUBLIC QUESTIONS

10 Question from Shaun Slator, SE18, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council

If a resident has lodged a complaint with the Council's complaint department and had no response or acknowledgement for over a month, what is the point of having a complaints department?

Reply -

I thank Shan Slator for his question.

We are sorry about this and I can assure you that the Council takes complaints very seriously. We have a standard of replying to Stage one complaints within 15 working days.

Complaints are not dealt with centrally but through each department. If you would like to provide details through me, I would be happy to pick this up with relevant services and to ensure that you receive a response as soon as possible.

No supplementary question.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

1 Question from Councillor Aidan Smith, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

At the [September 2021](#) Council meeting, an answer reported that TfL and Greenwich were to agree funding for the bridge redecking works for the Creek Road bridge in October 2021. Was this funding agreed, have the works started and if not, what progress has been made on agreeing the funding?

2 Question from Councillor Aidan Smith, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

At the [September 2021](#) Council meeting, an answer reported that "Officers are working with TfL to see how completed sections of [Creek Road] cycleway could be opened safely in an eastbound direction, as soon as possible, whilst other works continue." This section of cycleway has still not opened, despite appearing complete. What is preventing this section of the cycleway from being opened, what communication have officers had with TfL around opening this section of cycleway and when can residents expect it to open?

Combined reply -

I thank Councillor Aidan Smith for his questions.

Works to replace the decking panels on Creek Road Bridge were expected to be completed late last year.

Due to Transport for London's financial situation, they were not able to agree to the cost of works

The funding has now been agreed. Arrangements can now be made with our contractor to organise the works.

We have been unable to reach an agreement with Transport for London on a safe way to open the cycle route in the meantime, due to cycle safety

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concerns when accessing and egressing the cycle track, especially at junctions.

TfL have informed us the opening of the entire route has been delayed until Summer 2022.

However, once the works to the bridge are completed, we will be able to assess the risk to cyclists and agree with TfL if there is a possibility to partially open some sections.

Supplementary Question –

Was there a start date for the works on the bridge to begin?

Further, the reason given for not being able to open the section of the cycle track was due to safety however, the bridge is in a condition where it can be cycled across. Could the Cabinet Member explained why the completed sections could not be opened?

Reply –

I don't have an exact start date. This is a TfL cycle way, and I have been pushing them for a resolution. I understand it looks stupid that there appears to be a perfectly useable cycle lane which is completely blocked off causing cyclists to join in with the main traffic flow. However, there may be safety reasons I am not aware of and if we were to remove the barriers the Council would then be responsible for any accident.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

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

Can the Cabinet Member outline the decision-making process on the disposal of East Greenwich Library, and which Cabinet Member signed off the sale?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Nigel Fletcher for his question.

The disposal of East Greenwich library was agreed in principle in March 2007 by Cabinet. The subsequent decision on the formal disposal was undertaken under delegated authority in August 2019 by the Director of Regeneration, Enterprise & Skills having sought Legal and Finance comments.

Supplementary Question -

Can I ask the Deputy Leader to clarify that there was no Member involvement in the decision of disposal of that site, as surely a sale this significant would have input from the Cabinet Member or the Leader of the Council.

Reply -

Once the decision was made it was handed off to officers to deal with.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

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

What options are the Cabinet Member exploring for match-funding of the available budget for restoration of Avery Hill Winter Garden?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Nigel Fletcher for his question.

The Council submitted a cultural bid into the Government Levelling Up Fund (LUF) which was unfortunately unsuccessful, with most of the funding going to areas outside London. We are very disappointed that the Government chose not to grant funding to help restore Avery Hill Winter Garden, when £300k was allocated to repairing potholes on the driveway of a Conservative Aristocrat.

We are waiting feedback on the reasons for the outcome of the bid. However, looking at the successful bids, we are extremely disappointed that the Government has chosen not to fund this relatively modest bid for investment to create an asset in an area that has one of our most deprived estates. We may well look to submit again for future LUF opportunities and in parallel to this we will review other funding opportunities that may be available such as Heritage Lottery Funding.

Supplementary Question -

We had a very useful meeting with the Council appointed consultants to develop a business plan. I would ask, given the disappointed at the Government's failure to grant the this relatively modest bid, will she be prepared for the Council to underwrite the match funding of that bid to enable the redevelopment of the winter garden to go ahead?

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Reply –

We will continue to look at others forms of funding. I met the team this afternoon and they did say that there will be other opportunities that can be pursued.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

5 Question from Councillor Charlie Davis, to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update regarding the collaborative policing pilot in Eltham?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Charlie Davis for his question.

I have personally spoken with the BCU Commander on this very issue along with the Assistant Director of Community Safety & Environmental Health.

We have started work to develop the pilot which involves working with local businesses to provide 'touch down' points for local officers whilst on patrol. This will help keep officers on the beat and provide continued visibility without the need to return to operational bases. It is also cost effective and offers confidence building with local communities without recourse to Council funding to offset Government cuts to policing over the last decade. Supporting the police in this way is very much in line with our manifesto commitment and our ongoing provision of assistance to date.

Although a relatively informal arrangement with businesses, this approach would provide welcoming venues to enable officers, as and when needed, to do things such as:

- Use any available refreshment and bathroom facilities
- Work on emails, reports, and charge their mobile devices.
- Chat with local passers-by, as well as staff should they have a quick enquiry or seeking advice.

Council officers have met with the Police to establish what they need, and appropriate communications are being drafted. There have been some delays with progress due to the re-emergence of COVID and the festive period.

We are currently looking to approach businesses in Eltham first within the next few weeks before moving onto our other main town centre areas. In

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addition to businesses, Council officers will be looking to roll this out to our library and leisure facilities.

I am happy to keep him updated on progress and when the pilot is due to launch.

Supplementary Question -

I will be very happy for the Cabinet Member to keep me updated and would ask if she can confirm the timeline and which leisure facilities would be used for this pilot.

Reply -

As soon as I have further information, I will let you know.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

6 Question from Councillor Charlie Davis, to Councillor Danny Thorpe, Leader of the Council

Can the Leader confirm whether he has personally met with Kidbrooke Focus to discuss finding the charity a suitable new space in Kidbrooke Village?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Charlie Davis for his question.

The Leader received representations from Kidbrooke Focus whilst attending the White Ribbon event at the OneSpace Community Centre on Thursday 25th November 2021.

Kidbrooke Focus are being encouraged to consider submitting a proposal to operate and manage the new community facilities space which will form part of the Kidbrooke development currently known as Block D.

Supplementary question -

Can you commit to meeting with OneSpace, who are very keen to sit down with you personally?

Reply -

The Council is committed to improved new community spaces for the whole community and would be very happy to receive an application from OneSpace or any other organisation that wants to come and help us to do that.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

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

Can the Cabinet Member confirm why the Council have so far failed to offer Kidbrooke Focus a new home in Kidbrooke Village with equivalent facilities to One Space?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Charlie Davis for his question.

To ensure continuity of service provision during the development and construction of the permanent Community Hub in Kidbrooke the former Ferrier Youth Club building was made available to One Space on a temporary basis in 2012, as the land would not be required for development for some time. Their tenancy has been governed by a series of short-term leases since then, the latest of which will expire at the end of April 2022. This is in line with the Council's obligations to provide Berkeley Homes with vacant possession of the land to facilitate the construction of 701 new homes in Phase 5 of their scheme, including 160 affordable homes, and new parkland.

One Space/Kidbrooke Focus have been aware of the temporary nature of their occupation from the outset and have been regularly updated on the construction programme for both Phase 5 and the new Community Hub in the Village Centre. Officers met with the One Space management in March & May 2019 to outline the process for selecting an operator for the new Community Hub. Planning permission was granted for the new Community Hub in December 2019 and Officers again met with One Space in February 2020 to share the plans for the building and give an update on the Operator procurement process. In April 2021 Officers met with the Chair of Trustees to discuss One Spaces intention on relocation, both into and away from the new Community Hub.

In May 2021 my Officers gave a presentation outlining the vision for the new facilities to the Trustees and management of One Space. It was suggested that One Space could partner with another organisation if they

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

believed they could not meet all of the proposed selection criteria to manage the community space. Following this meeting the Chair informed the Council that One Space were unlikely to bid to operate the community space in the new building as they did not share the Council's vision for the operation of the Centre. Despite this, Officers provided One Space with details of organisations who had expressed an interest in managing the space during soft-market testing and who were willing to explore submitting a joint proposal. One Space were also provided with contact details for similar Centres in London that were considered to be examples of good practice and were invited to a presentation on the opportunities around the new Hub targeted at local Voluntary/Community organisations.

In November 2021 One Space requested an extension to their lease as they understood that Berkeley's construction Programme was behind schedule. Following discussions between Berkeley Homes and the Council, One Space have been offered a three-month extension to their lease, which will take them to the end of July 2022. This would ensure that One Space can remain in their current location until the new premises known as Block D are scheduled to open and the procurement exercise for an operator is complete.

Officers are also aware that the Chair of Trustees has indicated One Space do have the option of relocating to the church hall building at St James Church, which features a large space and several adjoining rooms.

One Space are also invited to meetings of the Kidbrooke Community Forum where residents and service providers share information, and the Council gives regular updates on progress with the new Community Hub at these meetings. At the most recent meeting on 11th January One Space again reiterated that they were unlikely to bid to operate the community space. The Council and Berkeley Homes is aware that One Space may have an option to locate into the St James Church hall building and Officers are also exploring whether or not the Halton Court Village Hall and catering facilities at Kidbrooke may be an option.

Comments on social media by you suggesting the Council has not engaged with One Space are ill-informed and do not reflect the work that Officers in the Council have done to engage with the organisation.

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Furthermore, it is simply not true that the Council is not providing community space. The Council is currently fitting out over 20,000 sq. ft of ground floor space at Peglar Square to create a sustainable and thriving hub of community activity alongside a GP surgery and associated health facilities. This state-of-the-art building will feature a large hall and rooms of various sizes that will be available to hire by local organisations and residents.

The Council will shortly be commencing the tender process to select an operator for the community space in the new Hub and I welcome all interested organisations to submit proposals. The Council is confident that residents of Kidbrooke Village and the surrounding areas will welcome the facilities available in the new Community Hub, and once a Community Centre operator has been selected that organisation will take up local engagement with residents.

Supplementary question –

The facility offered to OneSpace, in Block D, is equivalent in size to a GP waiting room with no food preparation facilities, which is key requirement for the charity. A Greenwich New Builds planning application is due to be submitted for a nearby location; can the Cabinet Member commit to include an equivalent community facility in that development?

Reply –

The answer is no.

There will be a community facility as part of the Kidbrooke Village, part of which will be set aside for medical facilities and pharmacists as well as space for culture and community events.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

8 Question from Councillor Charlie Davis, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth

Given the Council's commitment to carbon neutrality by 2030, will the Cabinet Member consider making it easier for residents to receive planning permission for installing external insulation on their property where they do not live in a conservation area?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Charlie Davis for his question.

The council is indeed committed to carbon neutrality by 2030, however, the Carbon Neutral Plan does not overrule the current national planning legislation that governs extensions and alterations to dwelling houses. The current guidance which covers external alterations to a single-family dwelling house is covered by the general permitted development rights allowed for properties. This national legislation is set out in a technical document known as the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development Order 2015 (as amended)).

Put simply, it is dependent on the property, its location, and the proposed schemes as to whether it falls as permitted development or planning permission is required. Permitted development typically would relate to a single-family dwelling house outside a conservation area provided the materials used in any exterior work are of a similar appearance to those used in the construction of the exterior of the existing dwelling house. There are however limitations in that if the property falls in a conservation area works to introduce external wall insulation requires planning permission and these works are not covered by permitted development.

Planning has not typically dealt with a large amount of planning applications for properties falling outside of conservation areas for external wall insulation but as residents start to address this issue more this may very well increase in the future.

No Supplementary Question

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

9 Question from Councillor Charlie Davis, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth

Can the Cabinet Member confirm what contact Greenwich Council has had with Galliard regarding their plans for the Leegate development since the November meeting of Full Council?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Charlie Davis for his question.

I met with Galliard Homes in early January 2022. They presented the proposed redevelopment scheme to us which is currently at the pre-application stage. Galliards intend to formally submit an application to Lewisham Council in March 2022. Once submitted as an application Lewisham will formally notify Greenwich inviting the Borough to make representations. At this stage planning officers will make a strategic assessment of the proposal and consider its impact on the Borough. Following this assessment, it is intended to make formal representations to Lewisham (which I will review and approve as Cabinet lead).

Supplementary question -

Can the Cabinet Member give any indication of the Council's view on the proposed development or is she waiting for the application to go in before taking a view?

Reply -

The application must be submitted to Lewisham, as the Planning Authority, and until this happens there is not a lot I can say. I will be happy to continue that conversation with you by e-mail or telephone.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

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

In answer to my question for the [cancelled December](#) Council the Cabinet Member said “ A decision on the Westcombe Park and Maze Hill Area Low Traffic Neighbourhood proposal is on the Council’s forward plan to be taken in January 2022” Can the Cabinet Member provide a further up-date on that decision and confirm that the results of the consultation which closed in March 2021 will be made public with any decision?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Geoffrey Brighty for his question.

The report was published on Thursday 20th January 2022 and a decision is due to be taken on Thursday 26th January 2022.

The procedure is that the decision is taken 5 working days after the report is published.

Supplementary question -

Wouldn't it be a fairer option to reverse the West Greenwich closures, which are causing displacement of traffic, whilst the strategy is developed, and would the Cabinet Member agree that it is unfair to expect people to put up with this in these circumstances?

Reply -

I can't make any comment on this at the moment.

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26 JANUARY 2022

MEMBERS QUESTIONS

11 **Question from Councillor Geoffrey Brighty, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Cabinet Member for Housing**

Can the Cabinet Member confirm what plans are under consideration for the future of the former Sheltered Housing facility at 133 Langton Way, Blackheath ?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Geoffrey Brighty for his question.

As you know the original residents were all given options to move to appropriate alternative accommodation based on the fact that the plan was to use Langton Way for conversion into an extra care service for people with a learning disability. Following feasibility work about remodelling the building it was established that the building could not be converted in situ into an extra care service. This is because it would be difficult to remodel the building in order to provide self-contained accommodation in general and for people with a learning disability in particular.

I can confirm that Langton Way is being used in the short term as a step down from hospital provision managed by Health and Adult Services. This is to accommodate people for a short period of time up to a few weeks, while awaiting their home to be cleaned or adapted or for their long-term accommodation to become available. Housing colleagues continue to work in partnership with Health & Adult Services and have responsibility for the property. Colleagues in Health & Adults have confirmed that they would like to continue using the building until such time as any development comes forward (the plan is to continue the hospital step down provision with or without the pandemic and a small number of the flats for young people transitioning from children's to adults services).

In terms of the longer term my officers are exploring options and will consult the relevant parties accordingly.

No supplementary question.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

12 Question from Councillor Geoffrey Brighty, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth

I understand that the future of the former underground public conveniences at the Royal Standard, Blackheath is being considered as part of a Strategic Asset Review. Can the Cabinet Member provide an up-date on how that is progressing ?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Geoffrey Brighty for his question.

The position with this former public convenience is that the Council has an arrangement to manage the facility as a public toilet under the London Squares Preservation Act 1931. The property is not registered in the Council's name and a previous attempt to have it registered was unsuccessful. The Council therefore has no legal interest in the property and is not in a position to either dispose of it or let it.

No supplementary question.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

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

Can the Cabinet Member advise when the data from the HGV survey in Kidbrooke Gardens, carried out in October, will be made available?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Geoffrey Brighty for his question.

I am making the data available now in the answer to this question.

Surveys were conducted at 3 entry points onto Kidbrooke Gardens to capture the number of vehicles over 3 tonne contravening the restriction.

Surveys were for a duration of 2 days (19 and 20th October 2021) and **45** contraventions were recorded.

Supplementary question -

Can you elaborate as to what measures you or officers are planning to take in respect of these contraventions and future contraventions?

Reply -

I can't give you an answer until all the data is collected and assessed. I will get back to you about this.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

14 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Matthew Morrow, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Can we have an update please on the number of staff and pupils who are absent from our schools due to Covid and, where necessary, have retired teachers and supply staff been recruited to cover ?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

Since the beginning of term in January, in total 1231 pupils and 241 staff in schools have tested positive and had to self-isolate.

On the 19th January there were 535 pupils and 78 staff self-isolating following a positive test result.

Schools actively recruit supply staff where required. Headteachers in RBG have consistently reported since the beginning of term that supply agencies do not have supply staff available to provide cover in schools. This is a national issue and the appointing of retired teachers to fill vacancies is complicated by both the schoolteachers pay and conditions and DBS requirements. Teachers pay and conditions requires contracting for a term at a time and teachers must hold a valid, enhanced DBS. Therefore, this arrangement would only be possible if retired teachers were employed by supply agencies to work in schools.

No school in Greenwich has had to close in its entirety due to staff shortages or pupil outbreak of Covid-19 infections

Supplementary question -

We can understand the difficulty our teachers and school staff have experienced and the checks that are needed for teachers returning to school. Would it be possible to convey our thanks, as a Council, to schools, teachers, and staff that we do appreciate their work?

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Reply -

All school staff have done an amazing job throughout the pandemic and continue to do so. We all owe them a debt of thanks as one of the essential services that kept going right throughout the pandemic, and very much agree with you.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

15 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Linda Parks, Cabinet Member for Finance & resources.

On the 11th January we received an update from the N.H.S on the progress and future priorities for the vaccination programme. We were told that the 12-15 age group take up was low. Do we have the latest figures on vaccinations carried out on this age group in Greenwich ?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

As of 10th January 2022, 35.95% of the Greenwich 12-15 population have been vaccinated (1st dose).

On 29th November 2021, The Joint Committee on Vaccination and Immunisation (JCVI) advised that a second dose of the Pfizer-BioNTech COVID-19 vaccine for young people aged 12 to 15 years is advised no sooner than 12 weeks after the first dose

Oxleas NHS Foundation Trust has been providing the in-school vaccination programme, which commenced for 1st doses in September 2021. On 18th January 2022, Oxleas began to revisit schools to offer 2nd doses, as well as provide 1st doses for those that had missed the initial offer.

In addition, we have sought to publicise widely that 12-15 year olds can now book a vaccination appointment through the NHS national booking service, and that there are a number of sites in the Borough where this age group can be vaccinated outside the school setting and where parents can accompany their children if they wish to do so. This was a significant part of the messaging contained in a recent Borough wide all household leaflet drop.

Vaccination sites in the Borough publicised in the leaflet which are able to vaccinate this age group are:

- Queen Elizabeth Hospital
- Charlton House Vaccination Centre
- Heronsgate Medical Practice, Thamesmead

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- Plumstead Health Centre
- Wensley Close Vaccination Centre, Eltham
- Wallace Health Centre, Deptford

Supplementary question -

Thank you for the update you sent on the 17 of January. What actions are schools taking to get the message across to this very vulnerable age group given that, sometimes, we're fighting a losing battle against social media.

Reply -

They are doing what they can.

Officers are working with Oxleas to run the vaccination clinics as well as working with schools and the GPs to look at ways that they can encourage 12 – 15-year olds and parents to be vaccinated.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

16 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment, Sustainability and Transport

I am extremely concerned about the ever increasing number of delivery bikes that are taking over Eltham High Street. I know that this is not the first time that I have raised this issue in Council. The changes that have been made have only exacerbated the situation.

I have asked before and now I am asking again if we as local councillors can have an on-site meeting ,with yourself and relevant officers, to try and resolve this problem before the situation escalates even more?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

We have been on a site visit and have spoken to the drivers and local businesses who rely on them for deliveries. It is clear that bike deliveries are part of the new gig economy and are essential to a thriving town centre. The main users are food outlets, but a lot of the businesses use them to deliver items ordered online.

If delivery bikes are parking illegally then they are subject to the same penalties as other vehicle parking, although parking for the first 30 minutes is free in the High Street. If they are parking legally then they are as entitled to be there as anyone else.

They take up much less space than a car and they emit far less pollution, and they are responding to delivery requests made by residents who are not then forced to get in their cars and try to park in Eltham High Street.

There are four substantial car parks immediately behind the High Street.

A site visit is not necessary as I know Eltham High Street very well.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Supplementary question –

I'm disappointed with the response given the serious incident on the 30th of December which required police attendance and left pedestrians and shop staff feeling frightened and intimidated. A lot of residents have messaged me that they are intimidated by the bikers and their behaviour and have witnessed up to 22 bikes parked up with a number doing U-turns on the pavement and not wearing helmets.

I have asked Councillor Smith to meet with Ward Councilors, who residents are raising these issues with and that we should be involved in meetings that take place on this situation. Will you have a meeting with residents and Ward Councilors, as this situation needs to be addressed now?

Reply (Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Enforcement) –

A meeting was held with Councillor Merrill, myself and the local MP's, sadly you were not invited as this happened before you indicated your wish to be involved. We spent several hours talking to residents and business owners who give us their opinion directly.

We have looked at solutions, but as Councillor Merrill's response says, COVID has made deliveries by motorcycle far more prominent and that is likely to continue, and we can't interfere if they are conducting themselves lawfully.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

17 Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Denise Scott-McDonald, Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Good Growth

Can I thank the Cabinet Member for Regeneration and Growth for her reply to my question concerning the Deansfield from [the cancelled December](#) Council meeting. I was disappointed to read her reply as it suggested that the possibility of creating a BMX track on the site was being considered. Could the Cabinet Member explain why it is that another BMX track is needed when there is already one in the Royal Borough at Hornfair Park? Given the issues which arose with Hervey Road, can the Cabinet Member also assure me that no taxpayers money will be contributed to the development of a new BMX track in the Royal Borough of Greenwich?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Spencer Drury for his question.

Following the sale of the current BMX land by the University of Greenwich the Avery Hill Bikers Club is seeking to relocate an existing BMX track from Avery Hill to another site in the borough. The club approached the Council having identified Deansfield as a potential site to accommodate their BMX track, however this has been discounted.

I can confirm that the Council has not agreed to any funding associated with the Avery Hill Bikers Club aspirations.

Supplementary question -

Have you had a chance to look at the BMX track in Hornfair Park?

Reply -

No, I haven't but am happy to do so.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

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

Over the 18 months there appear to have been a number of serious accidents on the Rochester Way, including one at the junction with Westmount Road. Can the Cabinet Member confirm, for the last 18 months, how many accidents the Council is aware of along the Rochester Way between Kidbrooke and Falconwood Field? Is the Cabinet Member concerned by the accidents and what action has been taken to address this problem?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Spencer Drury for his question.

Collision and casualty data from Transport for London is currently available up until the end of September 2021. Officers have analysed data for the three most recent comparable 18-month periods.

In the 18 months from the 1st of April 2020 to the 30th September 2021 there were 23 collisions within this 2.4-mile section of Rochester Way.

This compares to 15 in the previous comparable 18-month period (1 April 2019 to 30 September 2020), and 21 in the comparable 18-month period before that (1 April 2018 to 30 September 2019).

We have a work programme in place to identify sites for priority intervention.

Officers will continue to monitor collision rates on all of our roads, including Rochester Way, to ensure that we identify the most urgent sites to be considered for improvements.

Supplementary Question -

Can you indicate whether there will be a review for priority intervention?

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Reply –

We are looking at restricting the speed along that road to 30mph.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

19 Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Mariam Lolavar, Cabinet Member for Business and Economic Growth.

I believe that it is the case that the Royal Borough of Greenwich Council allocated £925,000 of the Additional Restrictions Grant to a Sector Recovery Grant to businesses providing support to other businesses or groups representing key sectors or areas in the Royal Borough of Greenwich economy. In an October report, it was confirmed that 13 grants had been paid out. [The Sector Recovery Grant criteria](#) were laid out on the Council website eg High Streets for All. Can the Cabinet Member confirm which criteria each of the 13 bids aimed to fulfill, how much was allocated to the bid and what it was hoped the grant would achieve?

Reply –

I thank Councillor Spencer Drury for his question.

It is the case that the Council allocated £925,000 of the Additional Restrictions Grant funding to support 13 Sector Recovery Grant (SRG) applications.

Grant funding supported a range of businesses operating across key sectors, providing urgent support to businesses and a major boost to the local economy with activity link to economic recovery objectives.

Eleven business organisations received grants of £75k and two were allocated £50k. Grant funded activity has been far reaching, ranging from delivery of sector recovery campaigns, cultural events to drive town centre footfall and helped safeguard 16,000 jobs in the tourism sector. The delivery of Green Business Audits to local companies will help them implement measures to reduce their carbon footprint and deliver on the borough's wider green recovery objectives and climate emergency actions. Funding has also been directed towards socially focused organisations to support post pandemic recovery, including a New Deal for Young People where over 600 young people are accessing support services, improving their mental health and wellbeing.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Officers have prepared a briefing note with further detail which I hope you will find helpful

Supplementary comment -

Thank you for the reply and I look forward to receiving the briefing note.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

20 Question from Councillor Spencer Drury, to Councillor Linda Perks, Cabinet Member for Finance and Resources

I note that the Royal Borough of Greenwich's income from the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) has been in the news recently. According to local bloggers Greenwich Council has set a low CIL rate and failed to reach estimated income from the CIL as a result (£9.7m collected v £27.5 estimated). Can the Cabinet Member confirm the reasons behind the gap between estimated and actual CIL collections? In addition, can the Cabinet Member confirm whether a review of the current CIL rate is currently taking place?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Spencer Drury for his question.

In setting the Borough's CIL rate the Council completed a viability assessment to determine the appropriate rate(s) for Greenwich at that time. This evidence was submitted to the Planning Inspectorate through the Examination In Public, who approved the schedule subject to the rate in north east of the borough being reduced due to viability concerns. The CIL rate adopted in 2015 was the best rate that could be secured at the time but is lower than other London boroughs. We are currently seeking expert advice to undertake the review of the CIL rate, with the process likely taking up to 18 months to adopt an updated charging schedule.

To date the Borough has collected £11.5m in CIL. The level of collection is being monitored closely and over the previous two financial years has been lower than would have been expected. CIL receipts are driven by commencement of development and so additional resources were secured mid-way through 2021/22 to increase capacity to monitor development and identify schemes that may have commenced without informing the Council. I meet regularly with the department to keep the position under review and am satisfied that this is contributing to improved performance in collection. The amount collected so far, this financial year is just under £2 million, with more due to be collected by the end of the financial year, based on the demand notices that have been issued.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

Colleagues are reminded that developer contributions come from two sources, CIL and Section 106. Some of the large schemes (e.g., Kidbrooke and Royal Arsenal) currently being implemented in the borough actually secured their permissions prior to the introduction of CIL, meaning that developer contributions were secured through the Section 106 regime, rather than CIL. For those schemes granted permission prior to the adoption of the Greenwich charging schedule, Borough CIL will only be collected if those permissions are subsequently varied, and in these instances only on any uplift in floorspace created by the variations.

I would like to take this opportunity to correct inaccurate media reporting over the seasonal break which claimed that the Royal Borough would be unable to meet payments for Woolwich Crossrail Station. The Council continues to collect CIL and transfer half of the CIL receipt to TfL in accordance with the funding agreement and I am confident that the amount will be settled in full. To date the Royal Borough has transferred just over £8m. There is £5.4m in potential S106 money, secured for the fit out of the Crossrail station from schemes within 1 mile of the station, which will be collected where permissions are implemented, and payment trigger points reached. In order to ensure that the Council can meet the funding commitment in accordance with the agreement, the Council took the decision to set aside the Strategic CIL that has been collected since 2015 (to date just under £5m) to underwrite the funding commitment.

No Supplementary question.

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MEMBERS QUESTIONS

21 Question from Councillor Aidan Smith, to Councillor Sarah Merrill, Cabinet Member for Environment Sustainability and Transport

In March 2021 the designs and funding were secured to redesign the road outside Blackheath Gate. These changes were deemed necessary by both TfL and the Council for road safety. When will these essential works start?

Reply -

I thank Councillor Aidan Smith for his question.

Works to redesign the Blackheath Gate junction (Charlton Way junction with Duke Humphrey Road) are scheduled to commence on 22 February 2022.

No Supplementary question.