

# **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

## **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

### **I Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

Can the Leader of the Council outlines what changes he intends to make to his administration's policies and approach following the Mottingham Coldharbour and New Eltham ward council by-election – this council administration's first electoral test – which resulted in a 4.7% swing in support from Greenwich Labour to Greenwich Conservatives?

#### **Reply –**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

I think it is important for politicians of all political persuasions to reflect on the outcome of elections.

That includes the 2022 Council elections when residents returned the fewest ever number of Conservative Councillors since the formation of this Council.

The historic third term secured by the Mayor of London, Sadiq Khan, in May this year.

This month's landslide election of a Labour Government, bringing to an end of 14 years of Conservative rule, including Labour gaining the local seat of Eltham and Chislehurst.

Or Councillor Tester's recent by-election victory which saw his party hold the seat.

The Council is committed to being better at listening to communities and ensuring our communities feel they are heard. Indeed, it is one of our central missions in Our Greenwich, the Council's corporate plan. That is why Cabinet agreed the new Community Engagement Framework and Pledge, which has been produced following conversations with many hundreds of local people and organisations. We will use this as the basis of

how we engage people moving forward and ensure that when local residents speak, their voices are heard.

### **Supplementary Question**

The Leader has not reflected on the by-election Conservative victory which was fought on local issues. Will he make any changes to his plans to reflect this?

### **Response from Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council.**

I welcome the New Labour Government that has been elected. The public saw the previous government and removed them. I have reflected and will keep going until we get rid of all three of them.

# COUNCIL

24 July 2024

## MEMBERS QUESTIONS

### 2 **Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

Transport for London's consultation on the proposed Blackwall Tunnel and Silvertown Tunnel tolls closes on Tuesday 3rd September. What position does the Cabinet Member intend for Greenwich Council to take on the proposed tolls, in its formal response to the consultation?

#### **Reply –**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Transport for London (TfL) has just begun a [consultation](#) on its proposals for user charge levels, discounts and exemptions, for the Silvertown and Blackwall tunnels.

We are working closely with TfL to understand their proposals and the evidence behind them. We are doing this through the consultation, the Silvertown Tunnel Implementation Group (which is required to be consulted on the proposals, by the Development Consent Order for the Tunnel) and separate discussions with their technical experts.

We will respond to their proposals once we have fully assessed them.

You can [have your say](#) until Tuesday, 3 September 2024 and we encourage everyone to do so. This is vital so that we (and TfL) can understand your views.

#### **Supplementary Question**

Having seen the consultation, is she prepared to reconsider her position and the Council's position and support a full exemption from tolling for residents and local businesses?

#### **Response from Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

As I said earlier, when I have completed my response I will make it public.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**3 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

When I asked the Cabinet Member to provide the net financial impact of the Council's new emissions-based residential parking charges, the Cabinet Member responded that "as the scheme is less than a year old and part-way through a financial year, it would not be possible or appropriate to assess its financial performance at this stage." Now that the scheme is exactly a year old, can the Cabinet Member please provide the net financial impact of the implementation of the scheme in terms of revenue for the Council? And in her answer can the Cabinet Member please provide the following specific information – in the first year of the scheme:

1. How many residential parking permits were purchased?
2. Of these permits purchases, how many were renewals?
3. What was the average price paid for a parking permit overall?
4. Of permit purchases that were renewals, what was the average price paid for renewal?
5. How many and what proportion of renewals resulted in the resident paying MORE than under the previous system?
6. How many and what proportion of renewals resulted in the resident paying LESS than under the previous system?
7. Of the renewals that resulted in the resident paying MORE, what was the average PRICE they paid?
8. Of the renewals that resulted in the resident paying MORE, what was the average INCREASE they they paid compared to the previous year?
9. Of the renewals that resulted in the resident paying LESS, what was the average PRICE they paid?
10. Of the renewals that resulted in the resident paying LESS, what was the average DECREASE they paid compared to the previous year?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

As previously explained, I have requested a review of all permit charges and can confirm that the work is currently underway, for all permit costs including emissions-based charges, using London borough benchmarking and independent advisory reports.

My team estimate that this work will be completed by around Autumn 2024, and we will endeavour to answer all of your questions.

### **Supplementary Question**

The response hasn't provided any data despite much of it being done so already. Would she let me have this after the meeting.?

### **Response from Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

As my response indicates when the full report is ready it will be shared and will contain all that data.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**4 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the council's planned introduction of a 'new methodology for street sweeping frequency' (MTFS pro-forma 26)?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Good progress has been made to date, the anticipated implementation date is early 2025.

**Supplementary Question**

**Can I request that details be made available to ward councillors ahead of the implementation date so that we can assess the likely impact on our wards and input into the process?**

**Response from Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

Yes. As I said, there will be a consultation and part of that would also include talking to a ward councillors and getting a sense of what they feel about the way forward

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**5 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Denise Hyland, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Social Value**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on progress in implementing the 118 savings proposals (totalling £33.7m in savings) that the Council approved in the Medium Term Financial Strategy in February? Specifically, how many of these 118 savings proposals have begun their implementation? What is the current forecast performance against the budgeted savings figure of £33.7m?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Work has been undertaken on all 118 proposals. The financial management PMO has been mobilised and is tracking delivery of those proposals across the organisation.

The majority of proposals are forecast to deliver on target, more detailed output of this will be reported via the quarterly revenue monitoring reports to Cabinet and subsequently Scrutiny.

**Supplementary Question**

Has the Cabinet Member's level of confidence in the £33 million in savings being achieved increased, decreased or stayed the same since our last exchange?

**Response from Councillor Denise Hyland, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Social Value.**

I would say the same. As you know we over-programmed savings as we knew not all 118 would go flying through. The old government did not bring in the new recommended levels for penalty charge notices so that put £300k at risk. We have assistive technology enable care services at £200k which has

been delayed. With regard to the £2m for Children's Services including children's centres, this has been delayed due to the impact on the consultation which was extended by two pre-election periods. We always knew there would be some that wouldn't make it to the finish. Our job now is to make sure that as many of those are delivered as possible and we remain confident that it will be the case.



## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**6 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Denise Hyland, Cabinet Member for Finance, Resources & Social Value**

Is the Financial Management Project Management Office now up and running, and the Cabinet Member provide an update on its implementation?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

The Council has mobilised its Financial Management PMO which is tracking delivery of the saving proposals across the organisation. This output is regularly reviewed by the Greenwich Strategic Leadership Team, with an update included in the Council's quarterly budget monitor report to Cabinet and subsequently to Scrutiny.

**No Supplementary Question**

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**7 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Mariam Lolavar, Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care & Borough of Sanctuary**

At December's meeting the Cabinet Member's predecessor provided figures to me showing that 225 RBG social care staff had taken up the offer of a flu jab via RBG's in-house flu vaccination clinic. At that point, overall, 463 RBG staff (i.e. not just in Childrens and Adults) had taken up the offer of a flu jab, compared to a total of 681 staff the previous winter.

Can the Cabinet Member please provide the following specific information:

1. the final figures for the whole of the campaign over the winter, for both RBG social care staff, and all RBG staff
2. comparable figures for the previous winter for both RBG social care staff, and all RBG staff
3. The proportion of all RBG social care staff who took up the offer of a flu jab, and how this compares to the previous year
4. The proportion of all RBG staff overall who took up the offer of a flu jab, and how this compares to the previous year

The Cabinet Member's predecessor also agreed to my suggestion to explore a different approach to next year's flu jab campaign, and the suggestion of convening a meeting with officers to progress this in the New Year. Did that meeting take place, what work has been done on this since, and what are the new Cabinet Member's thoughts on how RBG can dramatically increase the proportion of RBG social care staff (in particular) who take up the offer of a flu jab?

#### **Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

As you are aware, in RBG we fund and promote free flu vaccination for our staff over the autumn / winter period. Most councils do not provide this

offer, but we remain committed to seeking to help to protect our staff from this potentially serious disease.

In the winter 2023-2024 period, a total of 612 RBG staff took up the offer of a free flu vaccination, 226 of who work within Adults and Children's departments.

This compares with 681 RBG staff and 243 Adults and Children's department staff in 2022-2023.

We do not have the data for all social care staff as they are able to obtain the vaccination free of charge from all providers including GP and Pharmacy. Many people will take up the offer of vaccination from their own GP practice or a pharmacy local to their home. Staff do not have to disclose their vaccination status to their employer therefore we are unable to obtain a full picture of social care vaccinations.

We are keen to maximise the number of staff taking up the vaccination offer and this year the team that oversees the RBG Flu Clinic have reviewed the programme and the data and are pursuing the following developments:

**Communications:** initiating comms at an earlier stage with the aim to commence the campaign towards the conclusion of summer. This is likely to involve disseminating a council-wide text to work phones and strategically placing posters well in advance, ensuring visibility in high-traffic areas like bathroom stalls. A proposed strategy includes the distribution of a recorded GP webinar and message from the Chief Exec or other Chief Officer stressing the significance of flu vaccinations.

**Booking system:** exploring modifications to the booking system, such as incorporating calendar reminders and a dropdown menu for attendees to specify how they learned about the flu clinic (intranet, posters, or word of mouth). We are planning to work with the digital to make booking and completion of forms as quick and easy as possible.

**Birchmere:** we again saw relatively low engagement was consistent from staff based at Birchmere. Many of staff, due to the nature of their roles, do not have regular sight of comms on the intranet or via email and so plans for future clinics involve encouraging Birchmere managers to proactively discuss flu vaccinations with their teams. We also plan to schedule sessions on days with higher staff presence.

**Clinics for Teachers:** this year we saw the highest number of teachers accessing the vaccination clinic, highlighting the success of the Woolwich Centre flu clinic, where 68 schoolteachers attended. We are also considering the logistics regarding expanding clinics into schools or extended

clinic hours, including twilight sessions after 5 pm to assist teachers to be able to attend.

### **Supplementary Question**

Has the Cabinet Member looked at what other public sector organisations have done around this?

### **Response from Councillor Mariam Lolavar, Cabinet Member for Health, Adult Social Care & Borough of Sanctuary.**

We need to remember that individuals can have the flu vaccine privately and so we need to be mindful of that when looking at the figures. There is a comprehensive plan and I know officers continue to have discussions with partners about how we can improve take up and I am happy to listen to any suggestions you may have. I think it is important to note that we choose to pay for a free vaccine and remain committed to that.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**8 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Pat Slattery, Cabinet Member for Housing Management, Neighbourhoods & Homelessness**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the industrial action in the council's repair service? What has been the impact of the industrial action on the repairs backlog, and ongoing service provision?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

We continue to be available to negotiate with Unions to achieve an affordable outcome which leads to a sustainable service for the future. The current pay arrangements cannot continue. During this period of industrial action there have been 3 days of strike, with 4 days cancelled. We are very cognisant of the impact of strike days for our residents and have put in place mitigations to minimise that adverse impact. These include moving to an emergency only service on strike days to ensure we will deliver critically required repairs. As 2 weeks advance notice is being provided before any strike action, we have been able to put in place necessary alternate arrangements for the majority of pre-scheduled jobs. A minority of larger or more complex jobs were required to be rebooked. The notice period also enabled us to manage residents' expectations on strike days.

The safety of our residents is of course of paramount importance, and we have ensured that resources are in place to undertake such works. There has been minimal impact on our voids (empty homes) business and we have been able to maintain the good progress in this area in making properties available to let.

**Supplementary Question**

Has a review taken place into the apparent failure of controls that gave rise to the situation where unsustainable pay arrangements evolved leading to industrial action in the first place?

## **Response from Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council**

I know from my former role as Cabinet member for Housing we were constantly reviewing how we work with our operatives and throughout that time we have kept an eye on our pay and reward scheme. We continue to negotiate with the Trade Unions and operatives to get the best deal for residents.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**9 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Business, Skills & Greenwich Supports**

Have the dates on which the Council's planned statutory consultation on changes to the Council Tax Support Scheme will begin and end now been confirmed, and if so what are they?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

We are currently finalising the modelling for the options to be considered, and the consultation and community engagement plans are being prepared. The exact dates for the consultation have not yet been confirmed. When the consultation is launched it will be online with paper versions where needed and we will be promoting through all our available channels to maximise the opportunities for residents to provide a response. Throughout the consultation we will seek to ensure that we are in particular taking into account the views of residents who are already in receipt of council tax support.

**Supplementary Question**

The previous Cabinet Member agreed to discuss the issues around the consultation that's planned on the Council Tax support scheme with me and I wonder if she will honour this and we can have a conversation about it before it's finalised.

**Response from Councillor Jackie Smith, Cabinet Member for Inclusive Economy, Business, Skills & Greenwich Supports**

Yes, of course. I will also contact you regarding the consultation for the anti-poverty strategy as well.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**10 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture & Communities**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the implementation of the recommendations made via Overview & Scrutiny to offer

- 1) transitional relief and
- 2) business support to park café operators, following the Council's decision to charge them for electricity and water bills?

The Cabinet Member's predecessor confirmed to me in March that operators were due to be contacted by "mid-April" to discuss both on an individualised basis. Were all operators contacted?

What 1) transitional relief and

- 2) business support arrangements have been put in place as a result of that engagement?

#### **Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

All Café operators were contacted in April and written to in June 2024 advising on next steps.

The Council has commissioned GCDA to deliver a Food Business Support Programme. GCDA will be in touch with all the existing cafe operators who will be offered access to free business advice bespoke to their circumstances to follow up discussion with officers regarding transitional relief as the programme provides access to some micro grants.

Once businesses have accessed the programme, I would be happy to provide an update on the outcome of our engagement and the impact of support provided.

#### **Supplementary Question**

Will utility charges only be transferred to a park cafe operator after transitional relief and business support has been put in place?



## **Response from Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture & Communities**

Early discussions have started but there is nothing concrete yet and it was too early to say what or how it will be done. They need to speak to the café owners first.

# **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

## **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

### **11 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture & Communities**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the council's 'review' of libraries and leisure centres (MTF savings proforma 8)? When will the review take place and what form will it take?

#### **Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

Good progress has been made to date and Officers continue to discuss the library and leisure services with GLL. We will keep members informed on progress and any changes in due course.

#### **No Supplementary Question**

# COUNCIL

24 July 2024

## MEMBERS QUESTIONS

### 12 **Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People**

What work is being carried out to improve attendance across RBG maintained schools? What approach will he be taking to ensuring this work is prioritised, in his new Cabinet role?

#### **Reply –**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

The DfE *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* non-statutory guidance was introduced for the academic year 2022/23. All Local Authorities(LA) and schools were asked to implement the principles of the guidance in readiness for it becoming statutory in August 2024.

The vision of the DfE via the guidance was ‘prevention’. For support and intervention to be put into place at the earliest stage possible, to address irregular school attendance, with legal intervention being the last resort.

Children’s attendance at school is a priority for Council services, Public Health, schools, partners, third party providers and the voluntary sector. All staff in children’s services and across the partnership are focused on attendance with everyone being responsible for ensuring that the position they hold and the service or sector they work, takes action to ensure the children and young people are enabled and supported to access their education.

Royal Greenwich has for many years utilised a preventative approach when dealing with irregular school attendance, with the majority of schools and services working collaboratively with the Attendance Advisory Service, to ensure that support is provided to children, young people and families where barriers to regular school attendance are identified. Legal action is not undertaken on a punitive basis.

To ensure that local authorities were ready to implement the statutory guidance, the DfE required all LAs to undertake a self-assessment. The appointed DfE Attendance Advisor has commended the approach in Greenwich and children's services were able to evidence a whole system approach in the preventative work being undertaken and embedded in the work we do for our children and young people.

We demonstrated that the requirements are clearly understood with developments undertaken at both strategic and operational levels, with plans in place to deliver the next steps. For example, the development of the 'Wellbeing Hubs' in schools, how data is being used to inform practice and school attendance being a key element of the Early Help and Prevention Strategy.

Our new Wellbeing in Schools Hubs will be launched in eight secondary schools from September 2024 and will strengthen our response to the root causes of non-attendance, some of which include mental ill-health (parental and child/young person), exploitation, caring responsibilities as well as other contributing factors. This new service will act as the bridge between Home and School for our families who need our support to ensure that their children are able to achieve and sustain good school attendance.

At the final DfE self-assessment review RBG was judged as having made excellent progress towards delivering against the *Working Together to Improve School Attendance* when it becomes statutory in August 2024.

**No Supplementary Question**

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**13 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the council's 'review' of Children's Centres (MTFS savings pro-forma 117)? When will the review take place and what form will it take?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

A review of Children's Centres has commenced with the aim of a more flexible integrated service that reaches beyond the walls of buildings utilising community spaces. The review builds on learning from implementing the Family Hubs and is being undertaken to ensure required savings are achieved whilst ensuring a modern approach to early years and family services.

There are plans to shortly launch a consultation as part of the formulation of these proposals and gather people's views for a decision later in the year. Once launched the Council will provide different opportunities for communities to feedback and input into the development.

**Supplementary Question**

When will the consultation start?

**Response from Councillor Adel Khaireh, Cabinet Member for Children & Young People**

Any time soon. It is being finalised now.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**14 Question from Councillor Matt Hartley, to Councillor Rachel Taggart-Ryan, Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Enforcement**

Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the council's Rethinking CCTV programme?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Matt Hartley for his question.

RBG has one of the largest public space surveillance camera networks in London and this system has recently undergone a £3.2k modernisation programme, replacing outdated and end of life hardware equipment as well as key investment in top spec front-end software. This phased modernisation programme is now moving from phase one (public space) to phase two (estates based). The control room currently monitors over 280 public space cameras and 500 estate-based cameras in various council blocks across the borough. The control room is currently staffed 24/7 365 days a year and is widely accepted as offering a premium service staffed by 14FTE working in shifts of 2 or 3.

We are embarking on an ambitious but yet untested plan to commercialise our CCTV assets under the working title of 'Safer Greenwich Camera Network' (SGCN). Where 'Rethinking CCTV' seeks to reduce operating costs, the SGCN is looking to try and generate income by looking to offer key stakeholders on the borough services associated with their existing camera networks amongst others. This project is exploring the market viability of expanding the current remit of RBG CCTV suite to include a range of services to be offered to external stakeholders.

We are also working closely with colleagues in our enabling services (legal, comms, procurement, Digital Greenwich) to determine our offer and are in the process of creating a corporate brochure of prospective services. This is a pivotal product to present to stakeholders and will require further development with key experts to pitch as a commercial prospect.

## **Supplementary Question**

Since taking on the Cabinet role, is she intending any changes based on what she's seen, or is she content that the arrangements are going in the right way?

## **Response from Councillor Rachel Taggart-Ryan, Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Enforcement**

I agree we have a very Premier Service across our borough in terms of our CCTV. We are one of a few London boroughs that operate a 24/7 365 days a year camera service across public spaces and Estates. We will be going through a rethinking CCTV process with officers looking at ways in which we can maximise its efficiency and cost savings. We are also looking at how we can bring in income from this very valuable asset.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**15 Question from Councillor Sammy Backon, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

Please could I ask for an update regarding progress to removing or extending expiry dates from online visitors car parking permits?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Sammy Backon for his question.

I can confirm we have had a number of representations and dialogue with residents and Councillors on this matter. Currently all permits expire within 12 months of the date of issue, however if the resident makes the council aware of expiring permits the service can extend or refund those permits at the residents request.

I have asked the service to better inform residents of these conditions when purchasing parking permits.

**Supplementary Question**

How will 'better informing residents of the conditions' be done?

**Response from Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

Unfortunately the technology we use doesn't have the flexibility to be able to do what seems to make sense. IT are looking at how we can change this. A suggestion is that we put something on the permits when they are purchased reminding residents that they can be submitted back before they expire.



## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**16 Question from Councillor Sammy Backon, to Councillor Aidan Smith, Cabinet Member for Planning, Estate Renewal & Development**

Please can I ask for an update regarding the disused public toilets/old tram information office located outside St John's Church in Eltham. Residents are keen to see this put back to much better use.

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Sammy Backon for his question.

Council Officers have previously reviewed the condition of the buildings to determine what repairs would be required.

This property will be part of the Strategic Asset Review to ensure all possibilities are considered.

**Supplementary Question**

Is there an approximate timeframe for the review?

**Response from Councillor Anthony Okereke, Leader of the Council.**

We are accelerating it as much as possible. We are working to be able to provide timescales over the summer.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**17 Question from Councillor Majella Anning, to Councillor Olu Babatola, Chair, Pension Fund**

What progress has been made to identify and divest from funds in the portfolio of the Greenwich Pension Fund which provide finance to build illegal settlements in the occupied territories of the Palestinian West Bank.

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Majella Anning for her question.

The Pension Fund's primary objective is to pay the pension costs of its beneficiaries when they are due - the consideration of financial factors is therefore at the heart of its fiduciary duty and it should exercise its investment powers in a manner directed towards what is best for the financial position of the fund. This also means that it should not seek to impose its particular views.

The Fund is not directly invested in any of the specific companies on the UN Human Rights Office's list of business enterprises active in Israel's illegal settlements; instead, it invests through pooled passive index holdings. As the Pension Fund is not the owner of the index, we can't pick and choose the constituents of the index. The fund has little way of influencing the index provider, other than to divest out of the whole pool.

However, the Fund believes in collective engagement and is a member of the Local Authority Pension Fund Forum (LAPFF), which is the UK's leading collaborative shareholder engagement group. LAPFF exists to promote the investment interests of local authority pension funds in the UK and to maximise their influence as shareholders to promote corporate responsibility and high standards of corporate governance amongst the companies in which they invest.

The Forum has engaged with 17 companies whereby they are operating in the Israeli settlements/occupied Palestinian Territory and has focused on

requests for these companies to produce robust, independent, and credible human rights impact assessments (HRIAs) in line with the UN Guiding Principles on Business and Human Rights. The Forum will continue this approach with these companies.

The Forum has also said it will consider employing appropriate escalation strategies such as providing members with voting recommendations for relevant company AGMs, exploring and instigating collective investor engagement initiatives, and using targeted press coverage to facilitate accountability.

The Panel also continue to be aware of the Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill, which aims to prohibit public bodies (including those that administer the Fund) from campaigning, boycotting, seeking divestment from, or sanctioning a specific territory internationally, unless it is endorsed by the government's foreign policy. This Bill has passed through the House of Commons and is working through the House of Lords towards becoming an Act. The actions mentioned here could potentially place the Fund contrary to those Regulations if a boycott was in place.

Finally, the Fund's investment managers who oversee the day-to-day management of investments are expected to undertake appropriate monitoring of current investments against their policies and practices on all issues which could present a material financial risk to the long-term performance of the fund such as corporate governance and environmental factors. The Panel holds meetings with these asset managers to discuss their performance as well as their responsibility towards ESG matters.

### **Supplementary Clarification & Question.**

There was an error in the report. The Economic Activity of Public Bodies (Overseas Matters) Bill referred to was not passed before the dissolution of Parliament before the election. As such all Bills which had not passed before a change of Government fall, therefore this Bill does no longer exist.

### **Question**

What steps can be taken to consult with the Forum to present the case for collectively divesting in companies invested in the occupied territories in the light of the recent judgement of the ICJ that the Israeli occupation of the Palestinian territories was illegal.

## **Response from Councillor Olu Babatola, Chair, Pension Fund**

With regard to the developments since the ICJ ruling I would need a full briefing on that. We have listened as a Panel we have diverted £210m away from some companies into more climate change friendly companies. We are always focused on what we could do better. I will escalate your concern to the necessary authorities but wish to assure all those in the Pension Fund that it is secure and growing. I will email an update to all councillors with any information that I am able to share under the Local Government Act 1972, Section 12 when I have been further briefed.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**18 Question from Councillor Danny Thorpe, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

The Presence of the Kings Troops in our borough is a great source of pride for many people. However, I have received reports from a number of residents in Shooters Hill about damage to their property by the horses. In one case, the resident has been waiting more than a year to be compensated for the damage, and I have made enquiries which have been seemingly ignored.

Can the deputy Leader agree to;

1. An immediate review of the plans for their use of the borough roads and temporarily suspend the use of all residential roads pending a full review of the plan
2. Agree to convene an urgent meeting with the Troop Commander to convey our expectation on how residents should be treated when something goes wrong.

#### **Reply -**

I thank Councillor Danny Thorpe for his question.

Transportation has no legal powers to prevent members of the Kings Troop from riding on the public highway. However, we will contact them to get a better understanding of their routes, travel requirements and plans and assist in agreeing a preferred route, where possible

#### **Supplementary Question**

Will the Cabinet Member use her influence to make a personal intervention in this matter?

#### **Response from Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

This is something that we all take really seriously. There are certain powers we have and others that we don't. We will be using whatever partner influence we have to have these conversations on behalf of our residents. However, we do need more information and evidence that we can take to the table.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**19 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture & Communities**

What is the annual fee charged by the Council for an allotment plot and what exactly does that cover in terms of maintenance work carried out by the Council?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

We currently charge residents the following allotment rent per annum:

- £210 for a 250 sq.mtr plot.
- £105 for a 125 sq.mtr plot.
  
- £100 for a 250 sq.mtr plot with a concession (residents in receipt of benefits or over 65 years old).
- £50 for a 125 sq.mtr plot with a concession (residents in receipt of benefits or over 65 years old).

Most plots are £125 sq.mtrs but we have some sites with smaller plots and they are charged at pro-rata rate from the fees above.

The fee is mainly related to the rental of the land per annum. The fee includes use of water on the site and 4 cuts of the grass on the main paths per annum. Allotment tenants are responsible for cutting the grass between their plots.

#### **Supplementary Question**

There is an issue with a fence that borders the west side of Pippenhall Allotments, Bexley Road. I am sure a notice to remedy should have been sent to the owner but nothing has happened and it now needs officer intervention by way of an inspection, to establish whether the Council are

responsible for this health and safety risk. I am happy to accompany the visit. There is also a fallen fence which is blocking the pathway that goes along the perimeter of the allotments.

**Response from Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture & Communities**

The Council has a good asset in the allotments which the community can access. I am sorry to hear about the problems and wonder if it has already been raised as casework? Nevertheless, I have indicated to officers that I would like to go on a ride along to see these sites, so I am happy to add that location to my list. Some allotments are privately run so we would need to check if that was. I can then review what's going on overall and hopefully come up with a good model of what works and how we can encourage other allotment owners to look after the site rather than relying on the Council whose resources are stretched.



## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**20 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Rachel Taggart-Ryan, Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Enforcement**

The delivery bikes on Eltham High Street continue to cause many problems. Not only do they mount the pavements, drive down cycle lanes, break speed limits, and tailgate, but they are also now totally ignoring road closure signs. They are often causing a danger to pedestrians. As the Cabinet Member will be aware I have raised this repeatedly. In her new role, would she agree to work together with officers and ward councillors to try and find a solution to this growing problem?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

The rise of food delivery bicycle and scooter delivery couriers since the pandemic, continues to cause nuisance and presents problems across all our town and district centres. Officers responded to this same issue in Eltham Town Centre when reported earlier this year as a result of concerns raised and endeavoured to address some of these issues in the following ways:

- Getting riders to use dedicated motorcycle parking bays on the high street with signage.
- Engaging with riders and the businesses that use them to educate on best practice and responsibilities.
- Exploring whether businesses can offer parking bays on their own premises. Unfortunately, this was not a potential option.
- Exploring the possibility of coordinated enforcement action days to dissuade this kind of behaviour.

The Community Safety Enforcement Team (CSET) have recently met with some of the delivery companies such as Uber and Deliveroo due to this being a borough wide problem.

It was agreed that if the team came across any delivery drivers that may be causing Anti-Social Behaviour, they would pass this information on to the companies to investigate and take appropriate action. This does however depend on us getting relevant information such as the time, date, location of offence and VRM if possible. The more information obtained the easier it will be to narrow down who is causing the problems. The delivery companies have also agreed to send out a generic message to all delivery drivers in the Royal Borough of Greenwich about conduct and appropriate behaviour.

CSE Team are regularly patrolling Eltham Town Centre and monitoring this behaviour. Enforcement will continue as well as continued engagement with local businesses and partner teams/agencies to explore alternative options to tackle this problematic behaviour.

To date 21x Fixed Penalty Notices have been issued to delivery drivers for breaches of our Public Spaces Protection Order by operating the vehicle in an anti-social manner. 10x Interventions held with delivery drivers under the same Public Spaces Protection Order but did not escalate to Fixed Penalty Notices.

Given the nature of the problem with respect to dangerous driving, which is totally unacceptable and poses a significant health and safety risk to pedestrians, I will work closely with my Cabinet colleagues Councillors Lekau and Jackie Smith, together with the police to ensure a holistic approach is considered using all the levers we have available. Officers will be in touch regarding a meeting to take this forward.

### **Supplementary Question.**

I have raised this issue many times over the years and it is a massive problem. Would the Cabinet Member please keep all councillors involved in how you plan to address this problem and would you speak to other Councils to see how they are addressing this issue?

### **Response from Councillor Rachel Taggart-Ryan, Cabinet Member for Community Safety & Enforcement**

This is a serious issue and we have spoken to the restaurants and Uber and Deliveroo about managing the bikes and codes of behaviour for their delivery drivers. We have issued 21 fixed penalty notices in that area and will continue to enforce. I am happy to meet and discuss the issues with the ward councillors and continue to try and find a way forward.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**21 Question from Councillor Pat Greenwell, to Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture & Communities**

What plans if any have been made for Eltham Christmas Lights Up this year?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Pat Greenwell for her question.

The Council's events team are in the process of working up proposals for Christmas events which will include Sparkle in the Park again this year.

I will keep members informed as the plans develop.

#### **Supplementary Question**

Would the Cabinet Member agree to come along to the Eltham Town Center Partnership to discuss what more could be done to involve local businesses in potentially enable this event to continue?

#### **Response from Councillor Ann-Marie Cousins, Cabinet Member for Equality, Culture & Communities**

Yes, I am happy to work in partnership and come along to any meeting. I am aware from my handover discussions that there used to be a parade but due to concerns regarding costs it's been harder to do. There are possibilities but it would need greater business and community engagement, so if that is on the cards I would be happy to come along.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**22 Question from Councillor Roger Tester, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

Can the Cabinet Member please provide an update on what actions the Council intends to take in response to the petitions handed in from  
1) West Hallows residents and  
2) Larchwood Road residents on the acute traffic problems on these roads?

As she is aware there has been a significant delay in responding to these petitions – when can residents expect to receive an update?

**Reply –**

I thank Councillor Roger Tester for his question.

In relation to the above as explained previously both locations have been included within our 24/25 delivery programme. As the work progresses I will continue to provide updates to residents and councillors.

In the meantime with regards to any traffic violations on Larchwood Road I encourage the residents to contact the Community Roadwatch team at the Metropolitan Police Service

**Supplementary Question**

Is it possible to have a clearer timetable as residents have waited long enough?

**Response from Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

Residents will be informed as and when decisions are made. Once that happens they will be the first to find out.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**23 Question from Councillor Roger Tester, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

What is the Council's policy on the use of glyphosate to treat weeds on roads and in parks?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Roger Tester for his question.

The Council policy is to use a weed treatment to manage weeds on the public highway. At present, the current method of weed treatment is to use a glyphosate-based product which is applied three times a year.

The Council is currently undertaking a small-scale pilot in two roads where residents are managing weed control in their streets using manual methods. Expansion of the scheme will be considered once the trial is completed and the results have been evaluated in Autumn 2024.

Parks and Open Spaces use of Glyphosate is kept to a minimum amount where alternative forms of weed on vegetation control are inappropriate. For example, control of Japanese Knotweed via direct stem injection, controlled dose application on pathways and to control re-growth from cut tree stumps. Where alternative solutions exist, such as mechanical removal and stump grinding, we use these in preference to chemical control.

**Supplementary Question**

Which roads are in the pilot and when will the results be published?

**Response from Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

I can't remember exactly off the top of my head, but they are in the Blackheath ward where many residents were keen to try it, so we thought we would use that area for the pilot due to the pre-election periods it has been difficult getting it started, but residents have met with officers and are keen to get it going. Once we have more information I will be happy to feedback to members.

## **COUNCIL**

**24 July 2024**

### **MEMBERS QUESTIONS**

**24 Question from Councillor Roger Tester, to Councillor Averil Lekau, Cabinet Member for Climate Action, Sustainability & Transport**

What position does the Cabinet Member intend to take on the specific issue of tolls that will have to be paid by local small business owners, under Transport for London's proposed Blackwall Tunnel and Silvertown Tunnel tolls being consulted on currently?

**Reply -**

I thank Councillor Roger Tester for his question.

Transport for London (TfL) has just begun a [consultation](#) on its proposals for user charge levels, discounts and exemptions, for the Silvertown and Blackwall tunnels.

TfL is proposing a £1 discount<sup>[1]</sup> on the proposed standard off-peak charges for eligible small businesses, sole traders and charities based in the host boroughs (including Royal Greenwich) for a period of at least 12 months.

We are working closely with TfL to understand their proposals and the evidence behind them. We are doing this through the consultation, the Silvertown Tunnel Implementation Group (which is required to be consulted on the proposals, by the Development Consent Order for the Tunnel) and separate discussions with their technical experts. We will respond to their proposals once we have fully assessed them.

You can [have your say](#) until Tuesday, 3 September 2024 and we encourage everyone to do so. This is vital so that we (and TfL) can understand your views.

## **No Supplementary Question**

<sup>1</sup> Off of the proposed standard off-peak rate (if made by Auto Pay): £1.50 for cars and small vans; £2.50 for large vans; and £5 for HGVs.