

Council, 15 July 2020

Questions from Councillors

Wards: All

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Report summary

Questions and answers submitted by Councillors, in accordance with Standing Order 12, are set out below.

1. Councillor Jonathan Bartley

To: Councillor Jack Hopkins, Leader of the Council

Cabinet Meetings

At the last cabinet meeting the council leader was asked if he was concerned that the cabinet hadn't met for four months in the middle of a national crisis, and that when it finally did meet there was no report about the council's precarious finances. In response the council leader said that at Lambeth Council "things don't happen in meetings". What does the council leader believe is the purpose of the council's cabinet meetings and are the people who believe that cabinet doesn't properly scrutinise decisions at cabinet meetings - as the council leader himself seems to have suggested - right to be worried?

Party: Green

Answer:

My reflection at the Cabinet meeting was motivated by Cllr Bartley's contribution which, yet again, was obsessive about process and the minutiae of local government bureaucracy rather than real life challenges our residents face and the outcomes of the council's work to support them. During the pandemic, Lambeth council has delivered over 20,000 food packages to vulnerable people, helped to find accommodation for over one hundred and eighty people who were sleeping rough on our streets, invested millions in additional support schemes for residents facing a loss of income due to covid-19, been a leading local authority in introducing emergency transport measures and supported thousands of local businesses at this very difficult time.

At the meeting in June, Cabinet discussed a variety of issues, including the council's response to Covid-19, improved performance measures across council services, the financial challenges faced by the government's failure to fund local government for their covid-19 work, Lambeth's work to reduce inequality and the failure of the Green group to represent Lambeth's diverse communities. I can understand why Cllr Bartley doesn't want to talk about the latter but it's a shame he also appears uninterested in talking about real issues affecting Lambeth residents rather than process and bureaucracy.

The March Cabinet meeting was cancelled due to the outbreak of the pandemic and the council had to wait for appropriate regulations from government to hold virtual meetings. This council was the first to hold a virtual AGM and has subsequently held various scrutiny, council, cabinet and committee meetings, allowing councillors and residents an opportunity to scrutinise the council's response.

2. Councillor Tim Briggs

To: Councillor Jacqui Dyer, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Community Safety

Abolishing the Police

Black lives matter. But the Black Lives Matter political movement says on its GoFundMe page that it wants to dismantle the State, ie. this Labour-run Council, and abolish the police. Labour and Green councillors have rushed to pass an emergency motion supporting the Black Lives Matter political movement, and the Leader of the Council has expressed 'solidarity' with all of their aims in press releases and emails.

Residents in Lambeth are already appalled at the failure of Labour councillors and the London Mayor Sadiq Khan to keep our children safe in his role as Police Commissioner, despite the Mayor receiving record funding. As I set out in my response to the Wandsworth Guardian on 9th June 2020, residents of colour have many issues with poor policing, but they know, even if Labour councillors do not, that abolishing the police would have an immediate and devastating impact on them and their communities.

Can the Cabinet Member for Community Safety confirm whether the Borough Commander agrees with the support and solidarity shown by Labour councillors for abolishing the police?

Party: Conservative

Answer:

Black Lives Matter is a global social justice movement and Lambeth council is fully supportive of its ambitions to tackle systemic inequality and racism. It is sadly typical of Cllr Briggs' attitudes to these challenges that he would seek to misrepresent the aims of the movement, just as he denied the realities of structural racism at our last council meeting.

We work closely with the police to hold them to account and to collectively reduce crime, support young people and keep our residents safe. We do not believe in abolishing the police and do not believe that it is a key pillar of BLM's activism. The aims of the movement include focusing our approaches to criminal justice on prevention not just enforcement, challenging disproportionate outcomes in the system and adopting an anti-racist approach – all of which are central to the Lambeth Made Safer strategy.

Indeed, the only political movement in the UK that has pushed to defund the police is the Conservative government, with 10 years of cuts to police numbers and neighbourhood policing and the selling off of police stations. Every time there has been a debate in the council chamber about the need for more investment in policing or other public services that support our residents, Cllr Briggs has voted to defund them. I look forward to him renouncing those votes and finally denouncing the impact of Tory austerity on this borough.

3. Councillor Jess Leigh

To: Councillor Jennifer Brathwaite, Deputy Leader (Housing and Homelessness)

Community Groups and Tenants and Residents associations

The outbreak of COVID-19 has been a very dark time in Lambeth and across the country, however there have been some wonderful glimmers of hope in our communities coming

together. Mutual aid groups have popped up across our borough and neighbours have been the good Samaritans we have needed. In Ferndale many of those groups are now wanting to become Tenants and Residents Associations, what are you doing to ensure we expand this network and support our residents in setting these up and supporting their ongoing work?

Party: Labour

Answer:

COVID-19 has posed an unprecedented challenge to us all but Cllr Leigh is absolutely correct that one of the biggest positives of the crisis has been seeing how neighbours have come together to support one another. Mutual aid groups have sprung up across the borough and, alongside the council's comprehensive package of support, have provided vital lifelines to many residents.

Where members of mutual aid groups live on our housing estates or in areas where there is an existing tenant and resident association, new members are already joining TRAs. Our aim is to grow our engagement with residents – be it through traditional means such as TRAs or non-traditional methods such as by growing our innovative online engagement platform the Lambeth 500. If there are groups of residents in street properties or on Lambeth estates where there isn't an existing TRA, I am sure our officers will be happy to work with them to look to set up a new TRA.

I am happy to meet with you and your Ferndale ward colleagues if support is required to maximise resident engagement in your ward.

4. Martin Tiedemann

To: Councillor Jim Dickson and Danny Adilypour, Cabinet Members for Health and Adult Social Care

Support for the Latin American Community

Reports from Public Health England and from NHS Lambeth have started to expose the huge inequalities faced by BAME residents arising from Covid-19. These inequalities are not just in terms of health outcomes but also jobs, business survival, education and lost opportunities in the future. One group who did not figure in the PHE report was the Latin American community, despite an estimated 250,000 in the UK, with the largest concentration here in Lambeth.

I am grateful for the leadership the Council has already shown, through the publication of Lambeth Talk in Spanish, engagement with Latinx groups and advocates, and ongoing data collection thanks to the monitoring of Latin American ethnicity pioneered by Lambeth and Southwark. What more can we do to support this community and how can we show leadership by ensuring other public bodies such as the NHS, schools and the ONS start to

use the Latin American ethnicity category so we can properly monitor the impact of Covid-19 on the community?

Party: Labour

Answer:

In terms of the data collection, the council is attempting to collect both prospectively and retrospectively information regarding all its ethnic minorities, including a category for Latin Americans in all our monitoring. We will continue encourage local partners to use the same categories to get consistency in ethnicity collection as well as the analysis of this data to monitor impact. We have already done this for example with local GPs who recently sent out a survey to patients.

Nationally, the Office for National Statistics has looked at ethnicity in COVID-19 deaths by linking mortality data with data from the 2011 Census. This is a useful approach but has a number of limitations, which the ONS explains in its report.

Country of Birth, and ethnicity, do not necessarily give us the full picture of how different communities have been affected by COVID-19. For example, ethnicity recorded on the national Census does not include a specific category for people originating from countries in Latin America. Although certain recommendations have been made to improve ethnicity data collection for the 2021 Census, these recommendations did not include an option for capturing individuals of Latin American origin.

Currently, the only option for recording certain ethnicities not included in the Census is to select 'other' in one of the existing categories and write the chosen ethnicity in free text. This makes it very difficult to understand health inequalities for certain groups, including those of Latin American, Kurdish and Turkish origin.

The Office for National Statistics, in an upcoming report on COVID-19 mortality, is expected to provide a breakdown by faith, which will contribute to our understanding of how COVID-19 is impacting different communities.

There has been some more work with the Portuguese speaking community (some of whom may be from Latin America) as well as Spanish speaking communities as part of the wider Covid-19 engagement work and we will continue to encourage this and promote with partners to ensure that the specific issues and challenges experienced by these communities are captured.

5. Councillor Jon Davies

To: Councillor Matthew Bennett, Cabinet Member for Planning, Investment and New Homes

HfL consultations

How have the consultations by HfL during the lockdown compared with ones held before and how are we ensuring those without access to the internet can still be engaged?

Party: Labour

Answer:

I'm pleased that the consultations during lockdown have actually seen more engagement from residents than those that took place before lockdown. One online consultation had over 200 participants, compared to less than 30 attending consultations before the lockdown.

Consultations are being run with both an online and offline offering to accommodate residents needs and preferences. All residents were sent a letter detailing the consultation process, which included the following options for residents to engage:

- a) Online
- b) Through a freephone telephone number
- c) By writing to a freepost address

Where residents have made contact through phone or post, requests for information have been addressed by writing back to residents at their homes providing responses and the info needed

6. Councillor Pauline George

To: Councillor Ed Davie, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Black lives matter

Does the cabinet member for Children and Young People Cllr Ed Davie agree with me that changes has happened over the past few decades however much more change is required to stop inequality especially police using the lockdown power to criminalise young black male?

Party: Labour

Answer:

I thank Cllr George for her question and the important work she has done organising community meetings on reducing violence affecting our young people. I also want to acknowledge her work as a volunteer ICU nurse during the height of the Covid-19 crisis.

Her public service is typical of the contribution made by Lambeth's Black residents many of whom work in health and social care, education, transport, retail, cleaning and other key areas.

Too often their contribution, and the heightened risks they take on behalf of the whole community, has been undervalued as part of anti-Black racism in our White supremacist society.

This can manifest itself in disproportionate policing of Black communities in general and stop and search of young Black men in particular. Cllr Hashi, for example, has been stopped more than 60 times, despite having no criminal record and many honours for his charity work – I have been stopped and searched zero times in contrast.

Seven years ago Cllr Dyer and I chaired the Lambeth Black Health and Wellbeing Commission following the death of Sean Rigg following inappropriate use of force by police officers. Some progress, in policing, health and other areas has been made and it is important to acknowledge positive work by the police and others, but there is still much more to do.

Our institutions, including the police, NHS and the council, need to change further to be more representative, at all levels, of the communities they serve. An anti-racist approach is needed to tackle institutional racism and we need to do more to support our young Black residents to fulfil their potential in a safe and nurturing environment. The council is committed to playing its part and I look forward to listening to and supporting Black colleagues and residents as we take this forward as a community.

7. Councillor Malcolm Clark

To: Councillor Jacqui Dyer, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills, and Community Safety

Anti social behaviour in Streatham

There has been a recent increase in reporting of and residents' concerns around Anti Social Behaviour and drug dealing in certain parts of Streatham, particularly around Russell's Footpath and Streatham Green. Several of the Council Estates in Streatham Wells have also reported similar concerns too. What is Lambeth Council doing to tackle these specific hotspots? And can you update on the progress of the Our Streets funded-work to remove the wall at the High Road end of Russell's Footpath, and replace it with more transparent railings - to reduce ASB in the area by the steps?

Party: Labour

Answer:

Although Streatham has not been highlighted as a persistent hotspot for anti-social behaviour (ASB), the Public Protection Team undertake a daily patrol tasking to Streatham High Road. In addition, regular multidisciplinary Joint Action Day operations in partnership with the police, targeting the Town Centre area and vicinity of Streatham Green/Plaza, the most recent of these taking place on 22nd May, 2nd June and 30th June. The aim of the operations is to provide visible reassurance to the local community through a high-profile patrolling presence, engagement with businesses and citizens, advising re social distancing, enforcement against anti-social parking, unlicensed street trading, and businesses breaching Coronavirus Regulations.

Streatham Green is a directed patrol area and the Public Space Protection Order is enforced

to prevent nuisance street drinking. Public Protection work collaboratively with Streatham's Safer Neighbourhood Teams, to problem-solve prevalent forms of ASB in this area. Environmental ASB eg Littering, Public Urination, Fly Tipping, Nuisance and Abandoned Vehicles in partnership with Highways and Parking Enforcement colleagues. The scope of the operations extends to patrols of St Leonards Church courtyard, Gleneagle Road and Gleneldon Mews.

This Our Streets programme of work is currently on hold while resources have been redirected to the Council's Covid 19 Transport Response Programme, however the structural design package is in place for the proposed replacement of the wall with a guardrail at this location of the High Road.

8. Councillor Annie Gallop

To: Councillor Jacqui Dyer, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills, and Community Safety

Violent Crime in Vassal Ward

Vassall Ward has been experiencing a recent spate of violent crime including a double stabbing this weekend and a recent shooting. There is a lot of responsive police activity to the gatherings of groups of young people and several section 60 notices. Could Cllr Dyer update us on plans going forward to improve our communities and make our Wards safer?

Party: Labour

Answer:

Sadly, Vassal has seen several incidents recently and we are committed to addressing violent crime across the borough through the Lambeth Made Safer strategy. This takes a long term, public health approach that will be led through our communities to reducing and removing the causes of violence in the first place, particularly those linked to systemic racism.

This is a top priority for the Council and we are investing an extra £1m in reducing violence every year to make Lambeth the safest place for young people in London.

In terms of Vassal Ward specifically, we are prioritising this ward in our summer violence prevention plan which is putting extra resources and activities for young people and families into key wards where we know violence has increased following the lifting of the COVID-19 lockdown. This will both support individuals most at risk of being victims of violence and improve safety in those most vulnerable areas such as Vassal Ward. Vassal ward will also be the first pilot as part of our development of community ward forums, which will be a new locally based way to engage residents in safety and disorder discussions, focusing on residents unable to access traditional panels and forums, and aiming to be more representative of our diverse communities.

9. Councillor Pete Elliott

To: Councillor Claire Holland, Deputy Leader (Sustainable Transport, Environment and Clean Air)

Inefficient buildings

Around 40% of greenhouse gases are released via our inefficient buildings. If Lambeth Council took steps to address this by making our buildings more efficient as a priority, we could take a huge step to achieving carbon neutrality across the borough by 2030. Could the relevant Cabinet Members provide an update on what progress has been made by the council, firstly in terms of plans to retrofit the existing housing stock and secondly to improve building standards to make new buildings carbon neutral so that future retrofitting (which is many times more expensive than designing sustainability in) will not be required?

Party: Green

Answer:

The council is already taking action to make our council homes more energy efficient and ensure that our residents have warm, dry and safe home within which to live. We are rebuilding housing estates using sustainable methods to last us long into the future, where retrofitting isn't an option.

Over the past year, the council has focused on producing its own robust baseline of carbon emissions arising from its operations. The baseline indicates that 98.9% of the carbon emissions arising from the council's operations and estate relate to the gas and electricity used to heat and power our buildings. If we are to meet our goal of carbon neutrality by 2030 we will have to reduce the amount of energy these building use and ensure that we are using low carbon energy wherever possible.

However, retrofitting isn't simple, as Cllr Elliott knows, because it requires leveraging external funding as the costs are significant. Until this government properly funds a green a recovery rather than tinkering around the edges, it proves very difficult. Whilst we are fighting at a regional level for investment in a green recovery, it requires a national funding strategy.

The council has achieved significant carbon savings by reducing the number of corporate buildings it operates, and working out of fewer, more efficient buildings. The council is also responsible for a large number of other public buildings, including schools, libraries and buildings in parks. We have recently retrofitting two schools through a GLA-led programme, and have identified a further 48 that are suitable for this programme over the next 5 years. We have also worked with Repowering London to install solar panels on schools and estates across the borough. However, we are open that there is more work to be done and that is we intend to ramp up the borough's clean energy supply over the coming years.

As part of the Draft Revised Local Plan, Lambeth has set out how it believes the plan responds to the challenges posed by climate change. Our approach to planning is critical to improving the borough's resilience to climate change, and the building regulations set by government will determine the carbon impact of new development. While Lambeth has limited opportunities to influence these, we are working collaboratively with other London boroughs on the Low Carbon Development working group, recently established by London Councils, and are responding to the consultation on the Future Homes Standard.

The council does have greater influence over the homes it builds through Homes for Lambeth (HfL). By demonstrating high sustainability standards, the council can provide leadership and influence others building new homes in the borough. The HfL sustainability strategy and business plan sets out the approach HfL intends to take to ensure that the homes it builds are as energy efficient as possible, use low carbon energy, and adopt circular economy principles to reduce the impact of embodied carbon.

10. Councillor Jane Pickard

To: Councillor Jenny Brathwaite, Deputy Leader (Housing and Homelessness)

Fern Lodge Estate improvements

Residents of the Fern Lodge Estate are anxious to know what is happening in regards to the planned improvements and redesign of parts of their estate. Could the Cabinet Member please provide an update on how this work is progressing?

Party: Labour

Answer:

A planning application submitted in August 2019 (19/02590/RG3). The application was extended for additional comments over concerns about the potential loss of open spaces. The original application included some loss of green space around the edges of the estate to be replaced by more parking provision and a new footway. Previous applications had supported this, as had the residents at that time.

In July at the Fern Lodge AGM officers discussed the design with around ten residents present. The majority were in favour of the designs and planned proposal. However, concerns remain about the loss of open space. Advice from planning colleagues earlier this year was that it would not be approved in its current form. The planning drawings were revised under a new application which uses less open space and includes a reduction in car parking spaces and a one-way system.

Discussions are on-going with the planners and residents to reach an agreed position and approval. We will then tender these works with the intention of starting on site towards the end of the year.

11. Councillor Nicole Griffiths

To: Councillor Matthew Bennett, Cabinet Member for Planning, Investment & New Homes

5G aerials

Will the Council ensure that residents living near telecommunications aerials are fully informed, even when their consent is immaterial, before any upgrade to 5G?

Party: Green

Answer:

Advanced, high quality and reliable communications infrastructure and digital connectivity is essential for economic growth and social well-being and can help relieve pressure on the transport network by reducing the need to travel. It supports every aspect of how people work and take part in modern society, helps smart innovation and facilitates regeneration. This is particularly relevant as Lambeth addresses the challenges arising from the Covid-19 pandemic.

Consideration of proposed development works involving the installation of electronic communication equipment is managed by the council as part of its statutory function as local planning authority (LPA).

The installation of certain forms of electronic communications equipment benefit from permitted development rights, i.e. they do not require a planning application to be made to the LPA. Electronic Communications operators are required by the Electronic Communications Code to notify councils of their intention to install equipment. The majority of correspondence the council receives from operators is to advise that the operator will be availing of permitted development rights to carry out development. As this is simply a notification rather than an application submitted for formal consideration and decision making, there is no requirement for residents to be informed and no consultation is carried out.

Other forms of electronic communications equipment require the operators to seek prior approval from the LPA that specified elements of the development are acceptable before work can proceed. This is a light-touch planning process which allows for local consideration of matters relating to the siting and appearance of the development only, as the principle of the development has already been established nationally through permitted development rights.

Consultation requirements for prior approval applications is set at a national level within published regulations. These requirements are also contained within paragraph 3.25 of the Council's Statement of Community Involvement (September 2015). A number of methods of consultation are used which can include letters to adjoining properties, site notices or the publication of press adverts.

Adopted procedures are in place to ensure that consultation requirements are adhered to when prior approval applications are submitted to the LPA for its consideration. When determining the application the LPA must take into account any representations made to them as a result of the consultation.

12. Councillor Fred Cowell

To: Councillor Claire Holland, Deputy Leader (Sustainable Transport, Environment and Clean Air)

Encouraging walking and cycling

With the TfL now being forced due to central government austerity, into zero-funding the healthy route on Rosendale Road, which cuts across Thurlow Park and Gipsy Hill Wards, what interventions can we make to encourage walking and cycling decrease car usage in the area? To help this can the Our Streets programme for road closure and traffic calming of Dalmore Road, set up in 2018 with a ring fenced budget, be prioritised?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The government's treatment of Transport for London, and by association, Londoners, has been appalling throughout the pandemic. By forcing TfL to accept an inadequate bailout agreement with disgraceful conditions such as removing free travel for under-18's, it has put politics above the lives of everyone in the capital.

The delivery of the Gipsy Hill to Brockwell Park healthy route along Rosendale Road remains a key priority for us and will provide a safe and accessible route to Brockwell Park and beyond for many people in Thurlow Park and Gipsy Hill wards and beyond. We have been successful in securing some funding from TfL to develop a temporary scheme as part of Lambeth's Covid-19 emergency transport programme which we will look to deliver over the next couple of months, should full funding be made.

Engagement on the designs for the permanent solution in the area concluded before the pandemic and our officers are working with TfL to write up those findings into a report for publication.

I am conscious of the fact that there remains Our Streets funding attached to a traffic reduction scheme on Dalmore Road, which was put on hold until the outcome of the healthy route engagement was complete. I am grateful for the patience of both residents and the Thurlow Park ward team as I know they are eager to see those changes made. Our approach is being reassessed in light of our emergency transport programme and to be clear, funding still remains for the Dalmore Road scheme. I will be happy to brief Cllr Cowell and his ward colleagues once the final funding situation in relation to TfL's emergency streetspace programme becomes clear.

13. Councillor Paul Gadsby

To: Councillor Maria Kay, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

It was a good news for the future of Slade Gardens Adventure Playground when the council announced match funding for a joint scheme to renovate the community hall for the benefit of the area. Can I ask the cabinet member to confirm that the council's funding commitments will be maintained in spite of the coronavirus pandemic and on its view on the future of the project?

Party: Labour

Answer:

The council committed match funding in the form of capital investment of £1m in 2019 and we are working with Slade Gardens to find credible donors that can help meet this match funding, as well as putting in place an appropriate lease arrangement in support of this to give potential donors confidence that the Council is committed to the organisation and the important community work it does.

The Council is also providing Slade Gardens with Covid-related support to deliver vital services for our communities in the shape of provision for children and young people with SEND and acting as a food hub delivering to our most vulnerable residents. We are keen to continue a positive relationship with a valued and organisation that does great work in the community.

14. Councillor Becca Thackray

To: Councillor Maria Kay, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Evictions and Council Tax debt

What decisions has the Cabinet made about evictions and Council Tax debt based on the feedback from Advice Centres and the anticipated prosecutions once courts re-open?

Party: Green

Answer:

To support our residents through this historic period the Council took the decision to pause council tax debt collection until July 2020. During this period many residents have continued to pay their council tax, however the council has not been actively pursuing the debt of those who have not paid. Soft reminders have been sent to residents to ensure residents are mindful of this and also encouraging those that are able to pay if they can.

Now that restrictions from central government are being eased, and lockdown is lifted, the Council is now reviewing how we can support residents to manage their debt and payments. Any decision around when to begin collecting council tax debt will consider:

- Advice from CAB Merton and Lambeth who are our partners in supporting residents managing their council tax debt.
- A supportive approach to the households who have already told us covid has impacted their ability to pay their council tax.
- The approach to the households who have reprofiled their payments due to covid.
- An approach to other residents who may be affected by covid but are yet to make this known to us.
- Ensuring those who can pay do so and those who can't pay are not landed with additional debt they cannot afford to meet.

The council already has measures in place to support those in receipt of council tax support and we will apply the same approach to those whose incomes are clearly impacted by covid. This, combined with a discretionary fund to support residents struggling with their council tax costs due to covid, will help to mitigate any adverse impacts. This will allow the council to maximise council tax income without adding to the burden already faced by hard pressed residents impacted by covid.

In respect of tenancies, the council took the decision before the Government to suspend any evictions and this is in place until 23 August in line with government direction. This means that we are not applying for any new warrants, and we have not rescheduled any evictions which were cancelled due to covid.

15. Councillor Joanne Simpson

To: Councillor Matthew Bennett, Cabinet Member for Planning, Investment and New Homes

Has the Council given any thought to introducing a local lettings policy for the small site development programmes? This would allow those Council tenants with the most housing need (such as chronic overcrowding) living on estates most impacted by the new developments, being allowed 'first dibs' in applying to move in to a brand new high quality Council home. This worked well on the Lollard Street development in Prince's ward, creating a feeling of local ownership and support for the new homes, and I would welcome such a scheme for other sites across the borough.

Party: Labour

Answer:

Homes for Lambeth's business plan for 2020-23 will deliver hundreds of new homes, 79% of them affordable, including over 200 new council homes for local families. This is the biggest direct council investment in new homes in Lambeth for a generation and represents a real opportunity to help local families who are living in overcrowded, substandard or unaffordable

homes move into a new home built to the highest of standards which will provide them with a genuinely affordable place to live for a lifetime.

At Lollard Street in Kennington we took a mixed approach with some homes reserved for residents in the immediate area of the development and some set aside for residents on the council's waiting list, irrespective of where they lived in the borough. I think this was the right approach - making sure that families who see the new homes being built have access to them while also making sure that Lambeth families in the greatest need are also prioritised.

As we develop lettings policies for the small sites programme within HfL we will incorporate a mix of local priority and allocation based on need so that we have a fair and inclusive approach for this new generation of council homes. New council homes built on estates within the council's estate regeneration programme will, in line with the Key Guarantees for Tenants and Homeowners, continue to be reserved for the residents of that estate.

16. Councillor Scott Ainslie

To: Councillor Maria Kay, Cabinet Member for Finance and Performance

Reserves

In light of the financial situation we now find ourselves in, does the council regret reducing its reserves by more than the green group suggested in its alternative budget?

Party: Green

Answer:

I'm glad that the Green Group have recognised that their alternative budget was flawed, and in particular their decision to raid the council's reserves at a time of enormous uncertainty. Despite their rhetoric at the time, it is welcome that Cllr Ainslie now seems to support the administration's sound financial management, which has meant that the council is now in a better place to withstand these hugely uncertain times better than if the Green Group had been listened to.

The administration had a policy of modestly increasing reserves to build them back up to prepare for Brexit, an uncertain economic outlook and government cuts, and while no-one could have anticipated the events of the last few months, that need to be prepared for future uncertainties was precisely why we took those decisions, in the face of Green opposition. I look forward to Cllr Ainslie's speech admitting the Green Group's error at the next council meeting.

17. Councillor Iain Simpson

To: Councillor Claire Holland, Deputy Leader (Sustainable Transport, Environment and Clean Air)

CPZ in Streatham Hill Ward

On December 5 2018 Lambeth Council carried out a Stage 1 Consultation on the potential introduction of a CPZ in the east of Streatham Hill ward. This consultation closed on 15 February 2019. A report was issued on 8 July 2019 recommending the introduction of a CPZ across much of the east of Streatham Hill ward in response to residents' demands for parking controls. The statutory consultation on these proposals launched on 1 November 2019 and closed 29 November 2019. As it is now more than 6m since the statutory consultation closed, is the cabinet member able to provide an update on the findings of the statutory consultation and next steps.

Party: Labour

Answer:

The decision to proceed with the introduction of a CPZ to the east of Streatham High Road in Streatham Hill ward was originally due to be published on 3 April but the COVID-19 pandemic meant that we had to delay this. I am grateful to residents and Streatham Hill colleagues for their patience and understanding of the unprecedented challenges COVID-19 has posed at all levels. The travel restrictions put in place and the shielding of residents vulnerable to the virus meant that we weren't comfortable with proceeding whilst in the midst of the worst of the pandemic.

These effects have now subsided to the degree that new parking controls can be introduced without disproportionately impacting on disabled or elderly people. Accordingly, the decision that the council will be introducing controlled parking is due to be published no later than 24 July.

Residents and business will receive newsletters advising them of this decision and how to apply for a permit in the second week of August 2020 (although permit applications will not be made before 1 October 2020). The supporting Traffic Orders will be made and advertised early September 2020 with the lining and signing works take place over the following five weeks. Parking controls will become operational during the last week of October 2020. For the first two weeks 'soft' enforcement of the parking restrictions will be carried out.

18. Councillor Lucy Caldicott

To: Councillor Ed Davie, Cabinet Member for Children and Young People

Health checks

What steps are being taken to sustainably increase the proportion of children who become the council's responsibility to get health checks within the 20 day deadline?

Party: Labour

Answer:

I thank Cllr Caldicott for her important question and look forward to working with her and the rest of the Children's Scrutiny Committee to continue improving support and services.

Lambeth Council, we councillors, are the corporate parents of these children and we should care for them as we would our own biological offspring - including ensuring their health needs are met in a timely way.

We have failed to meet this statutory requirement for far too long and I have made it a priority, as incoming Cabinet Member for Children and Young People, to ensure that we consistently and sustainably ensure that all children that become our responsibility have their health checked as required.

Since coming into post, we have improved performance on this measure and in June 100% of the 18 children who became the responsibility of the council had their initial health assessment in time.

The Council has drawn up an action plan and assigned dedicated business support officers to assist health practitioners in the health check process and follow up appointments. A practice group meets weekly across health and social care to ensure oversight of cases, in addition a strategic group meets monthly which involving senior leaders across the partnership in order to understand and resolve any strategic issues.

We will be looking to build on this improvement and ensure that children get the support they need without adding undo bureaucracy to our brilliant, hard-working social workers and other staff who have gone above and beyond during the Covid-19 crisis.

19. Councillor Nanda Manley-Browne

To: Councillor Jacqui Dyer, Cabinet Member for Jobs, Skills and Community Safety

Unemployment increase in the BAME community

The end of furloughing, will see the numbers of unemployed within our society drastically increase, especially for people from BAME backgrounds, who are disproportionately affected. Given our diverse local population, how is Lambeth preparing to support such residents, during the upcoming challenges?

Party: Labour

Answer:

Unemployment has increased significantly as a result of the economic impact of Covid-19. The Claimant Count has increased from 9,020 in March 2020 to 19,975 in May 2020, with the highest increases seen amongst residents aged 18-30. One in 10 of our 18-24 year olds are now claiming unemployment benefits.

A further 42,300 residents have been furloughed, representing 17.5% of our working age population. The Accommodation and Food sector has seen the highest level of furlough, with Administrative Services, Professional Services, Retail and Arts & Entertainment also furloughing high numbers of staff. The Government's Job Retention Scheme is in place until October, although with levels of support reducing over the coming months. There is concern that some people who have been furloughed will lose their jobs when the Government support ends.

Forecasts of unemployment levels in Lambeth show that it is likely to rise further as the Job Retention Scheme ends in the autumn, potentially reaching as high as 30,000 residents unemployed. Our borough already had significant inequalities in employment and skills rates with a marked gap between the average employment rate for all residents and the rate for BAME residents. There has been a significant gap in employment rates over the last decade and, while the gap has been closing over the last five years, the pattern indicates structural disadvantage for BAME residents in the borough.

Our plan to support BAME residents affected by the current economic crisis is aligned with our overall approach to economic recovery which is being considered in three phases – emergency response, recovery and resilience.

Emergency response describes the actions taken over the last couple of months from March to July. Council services expanded their provision to support more unemployed residents (both the newly unemployed and residents who were already out of work), including a dedicated telephone helpline for residents needing support (Opportunity Lambeth). Adult Learning courses have been moved online. We also supported local businesses and encouraged them to furlough staff rather than lay people off. This was in addition to employment support already in place such as a dedicated programme for Care Leavers and support for the long-term unemployed. 75% of the residents supported by Opportunity Lambeth in the last three months are from BAME backgrounds, with 45% of the overall total number supported are Black residents.

We are now moving into a Recovery phase, taking us through to March 2021. We are particularly concerned about the increase in youth unemployment, so we will be developing a Youth Guarantee so that every 16-24 year old in Lambeth can access training, education and support to help them access jobs and apprenticeships. This will be a partnership offer, so will include services provided by Lambeth College, local universities and Jobcentre Plus as well as council services. Youth unemployment is a nationwide issue so we hope the Government will recognise this and provide funding for wage subsidies and greater flexibility in the use of the Apprenticeship Levy.

We also intend to work with local partners to increase the scale and suitability of local employment support and training, targeting specific sectors where jobs are going to be available in the short- and long-term. Where possible we are bringing in external funding to fund this provision such as £240,000 recently secured from the GLA to provide retraining to people recently made unemployed, and £75,000 from DWP to provide employment support to Care Leavers.

Looking further ahead to April 2021 and beyond, we will move from Recovery to Resilience. It is still unclear when and if many employers will begin recruiting again. Sustained engagement with local employers is required to ensure we understand their plans and that local training provision is tailored to the skills required by these businesses. This will also provide an opportunity to promote apprenticeships and recruitment of local residents. We will also look at sector-based partnerships which bring together employers, training providers,

employment support and the council to promote local recruitment in our key sectors such as health and social care.

We will continue to work closely with local, sub-regional and regional partners to ensure our approach is coordinated. We will continue to develop the Skills and Employment Strategy to ensure we have a comprehensive and systematic approach to tackling unemployment, improving skills and reducing inequalities.

20. Councillor Joseph Corry-Roake

To: Councillor Jenny Brathwaite, Deputy Leader (Housing and Homelessness)

Rough sleeping support

What wrap-around support are the council providing to support those people who were sleeping rough but have been housed during the covid-19 pandemic?

Party: Labour

Answer:

I'm proud of the council's emergency response to support people off the streets and into accommodation during the pandemic. We were able to house over 180 people in hotels and we have worked hard to transfer at-risk households that we considered were vulnerable to the virus into self-contained accommodation and out of housing with shared facilities.

Daily food provision is supplied by our partners Streets Kitchen and support provided by Thames Reach, St Mungo's and Single Homeless Person (SHP).

Health support is also available via our specialist health inclusion team and we have a dedicated mental health professional attached to our rough sleeping team that is able to provide support too.

As part of our rough sleeping next steps strategy we have carried out a housing needs assessment of people housed in hotels in Lambeth. This has allowed us to identify people's support and health needs, ensure that residents are registered with GPs to access health services, and identify move-on plans for longer term accommodation.

We also have a dedicated education, training and employment advisor who is currently working with a group of people with no recourse to public funds, and we also have access to immigration advice and support.

Those who have low support needs are being assisted to move to the private rented sector and given tailored support with tenancy sustainment. Those who have higher support needs are being moved into our vulnerable adults' pathway so they can access a more intensive level of support, and to make sure they have some continuity as we guide them towards a life in secure accommodation.

Officers within housing meet weekly with colleagues from health, social care and mental health and substance use services as a Covid-19 Homelessness Response Group in order to ensure an integrated approach to supporting people into longer term, secure accommodation away from the streets.