

**QUESTION No. 1**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**24 JUNE 2015**

**Question by Councillor Coughlin  
of the Mayor**

**Question**

Will the Mayor and Cabinet give its support to making Lewisham Council a Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP)-free zone?

**Reply**

The Transatlantic Trade and Investment Partnership (TTIP), has the potential to provide real benefits in terms of jobs and growth across Europe, but there are legitimate concerns, which I share, around the Investor State Dispute Settlement (ISDS). I know that my Labour colleagues in the European Parliament, most notably Jude Kirton-Darling MEP, have been working hard to ensure that the public concern around this issue is addressed properly, and have also been making the case to the government, the European Commission and US negotiators, that having ISDS in TTIP is not a good idea.

It is worth noting that any trade deal has to be ratified by the US Congress and all 28 EU member states, and could be vetoed by MEPs if it does not meet their demands.

I am of the opinion that promising to make Lewisham Council a TTIP free zone at this stage of the negotiating process, when a whole range of concerns are yet to be addressed, would be premature. However, I will raise the already growing number of concerns about TTIP directly to the London representatives on the EU's Committee of the Regions, as well as informing the relevant government Minister, MEPs and local MPs, of concerns raised by both Lewisham residents and Members, directly.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**24 JUNE 2015**

**Question by Councillor Walsh**  
**of the Cabinet Member for the Public Realm**

**Question**

Given that the play area in Mountsfield Park was due to be open before Christmas, why is it still not open and when does the Council think it will be open?

- If the issue is drainage, why was this not taken into account in the design? It was well known that drainage on the site was an issue before any work was undertaken and the appropriate scoping work should have taken place.

- Is the Council completely satisfied with the level of service provided by the design consultant, BDP, who have been overseeing the work?

- What penalties exist in the contract for the late delivery of the project, and are these being enforced?

- How much has been spent dealing with the drainage issues? Why should the Council foot the bill when the issue was well known from the start and should have been factored in?"

**Reply**

The revamped play area in Mountsfield Park reopened to the public on 2<sup>nd</sup> April 2015 in time for the Easter weekend and has been proving extremely popular since.

Problems were experienced with heavy rain and drainage on site during works causing some delays. In the end a decision was made by officers to include new drainage to help water drain away.

Officers are satisfied that the design consultants provided a good service; they sought to balance improvements to the play environment that would meet the community's aspirations without sinking large sums into an extensive drainage network.

Delays to deliver the finished playground were as a result of legitimate claims made by the contractor related to adverse conditions or were required by officers to observe the effectiveness of additional drainage work. A decision was taken to add drainage incrementally and observe the effect in order to avoid excessive work which would have exceeded the project contingency.

A total of £20,834 has been spent on improving drainage, of which £3,528 relates to clearing the parks previously existing drains which were blocked. In line with normal project management practice, the Council set aside a contingency for dealing with issues that arise on site and this has been utilised in part to fund additional drainage measures.

Had the additional drainage works been planned from the beginning, they would have been specified and priced into the job from the outset and the Council would still have had to meet the cost in full.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**24 JUNE 2015**

**Question by Councillor Hall**  
**of the Mayor**

**Question**

What is the Mayor's assessment for the future of Local Government following the General Election?

**Reply**

The election of a Government determined to pursue a misguided policy of extreme austerity involving cuts to welfare and public services is very bad news for local government and the communities it serves. The pressure on this Council's general fund budget will be very severe and it will be compounded by the impact of cuts and lack of funding in other sectors. The appointment of a new Secretary of State for Communities and Local Government who is clearly intending to pursue an agenda of devolution to Local Government was at least one positive outcome. However if the policy of cutting hardest those areas with the greatest need continues unabated, the future will be very challenging.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**24 JUNE 2015**

**Question by Councillor Ogunbadewa**  
**of the Cabinet Member for Community Safety**

**Question**

Can CCTV and speed cameras be installed on Downham Way?

**Reply**

With regards to speed cameras, these are installed by the Police in consultation with the Council.

We do have one camera on Downham Way. This is camera 635 and it is located at the junction with Launcelot Road. This camera is managed by the Council's CCTV service and is in place to deter and support crime reduction and anti-social behaviour. It cannot be used for speeding offences.

It would be possible to install new cameras if it is shown that there is a need for them and funding can be identified to do this. We would have to meet the Information Commissioner's Office requirements to comply with the Data Protection Act 1998. We would also need to comply with the Surveillance Camera Commissioner guidance on this matter.

If it is not possible to fund such a project, then we could look to install mobile CCTV cameras in an area or location for a given period to help address any anti-social behaviour or crime related issues faced by our residents. Unfortunately, the Council's cameras are not speed cameras and therefore cannot be used for speed enforcement.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**24 JUNE 2015**

**Question by Councillor Bernards**  
**of the Cabinet Member for Health, Wellbeing and Older People**

**Question**

What measures have the Council put in place, or intend to put in place, for the provision of a GP's surgery in Forest Hill because there are no Doctors' Surgeries in the Ward?

**Reply**

GP services in Lewisham fall within the remit of Lewisham NHS Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG). This issue has been raised with the CCG who will respond to you in due course.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**24 JUNE 2015**

**Question by Councillor Till**  
**of the Cabinet Member for the Public Realm**

**Question**

In the light of the recent death in Glasgow when a gravestone fell on a young boy and killed him, what is the procedure in Lewisham for memorial safety, to what standard, and how often?

**Reply**

The Council has responsibility under the Health and Safety at Work Act 1974 and the Occupiers' Liability Act 1957 to ensure that, as far as reasonably practicable, its sites are maintained in a safe condition. Bereavement Services manage 3 large cemeteries across the borough, containing tens of thousands of graves with memorials. There are two members of staff engaged in checking memorials across all 3 sites. However, these staff also manage a dispersed workforce, carry out grave selections with members of the public and oversee all burials and therefore their time is not fully dedicated to memorial safety.

Whilst responsibility for general safety lies with the burial authority, specific responsibilities for memorials lie with both the owner of the memorial and the memorial mason responsible for installing it. The owner of the memorial is responsible for maintaining it in a good condition. Memorial masons are legally liable for the work they carry out and should ensure that memorials are erected safely and in accordance with current industry standards, such as quality specifications like the NAMM (National Association of Memorial Masons) Code of Working Practice or similar.

Managers within Bereavement Services have focused on three main areas of memorial management:

1. Inherited unsafe and poorly constructed memorials
2. Strict guidelines for new memorial installation
3. Planning the layout of new burial plots to encourage proper memorial installation.

Current practice is to check the memorials immediately surrounding the graves that we are digging for burial. This involves visually inspecting and hand testing anything between 4 and 12 memorials each time we excavate a grave for a burial (depending on the type of plot and location within it) and we carry out in the region of 600 burials per year across all of our sites. We record any problems and try to contact the grave owner. Where the owner is no longer living or we receive no response, we engage a stonemason to make safe the memorial, or we make it safe by either laying it down on a board, with the inscription facing upwards or an anchor and strap are used to hold the memorial to prevent collapse until the memorial can be made safe and the adjacent burial has taken place.

In Ladywell and Brockley cemeteries where memorials are larger than those within the boroughs other cemeteries and they pre-date the ending of the granting of perpetuity, signs are displayed warning visitors to remain on paths at all times and not to wander onto the plots due to the possibility of memorials being unsafe. Cemetery managers work with the cemetery friends group to identify unsafe memorials. Due to the larger size of the memorials on this site, the approved action is to cordon off a memorial and the 'crush zone' to completely restrict access until further action can be taken. In some circumstances controlled toppling may take place to prevent damage to the memorial, costly repairs and injury to visitors.

We are currently reviewing our practices and procedures and have taken advice from the Institute of Cemetery and Crematorium Management (ICCM).

The Health and Safety Executive (HSE) advise that each memorial receives a test at least once in every 5 years, therefore, a rolling programme testing 20% of memorials each year would cover this.

With such a vast number of memorials to inspect, many of which are over 100 years old and a small team with limited time available, we believe that more resources may be required to ensure that the authority meets HSE requirements. To this end, we have approached the Council's Insurance & Risk section who have offered to provide a risk management consultant to carry out an initial review of our procedures and make recommendations for any improvements that are considered necessary.

The authority may also need to review access to cemeteries. We currently encourage their use as open, green spaces but we may need to reconsider the balance between public safety and leisure. Cemeteries should not be used in the same way as parks or be seen as places for children to play in. Our existing rules and regulations stipulate that children under the age of 14 must always be accompanied by a responsible person when entering the Crematorium or Cemetery grounds.



**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**24 JUNE 2015**

**Question by Councillor Elliott**  
**of the Cabinet Member for Resources**

**Question**

Given the increase in Cyber-crime and a recent Freedom of Information request highlighting that 55% of local authorities have fallen victim to breaches of 'official' level data; are you confident that Lewisham has adequate data protection facilities in place, and do we know where and how that data is stored?

**Reply**

The Corporate Information Team have an Information Asset Register that lists all the sets of information held within the Council and the systems where it is held. Each information set has a designated person responsible for it, namely the Information Asset Owner. We also have a range of policies that address the matter of information security, including a data protection policy.

Information Asset Owners have been provided with guidance on how to protect their information and the Corporate Information Team regularly provide training and guidance to all staff. In addition, we are required to comply with security standards that show the Council has adequate levels of security in place to protect its IT infrastructure and the information held on it.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**24 JUNE 2015**

**Question by Councillor Coughlin**  
**of the Deputy Mayor**

**Question**

Will the Council give an update on progress in relation to the campaign 'Space for Cycling' launched last year by Lewisham Cyclists Campaign (LCC)?

**Reply**

Space for Cycling is a national campaign which is promoted locally by Lewisham Cyclists. The Council is supportive of the key objectives which resonate with many of the Council's aims as set out in its transport strategy, the Local Implementation Plan

Over the past year, the Council has been working on plans to deliver its commitment to implement a 20mph limit on all borough roads. This will contribute significantly to three of the Space for Cycling objectives: lowering speed limits; providing cycle-friendly town centres; and providing safer routes to schools.

The Council has also secured funding to deliver a new Quietway through the borough. The route from Waterloo to Greenwich will provide investment of around £2million in new and improved cycle infrastructure in the borough, with the route passing through New Cross and Deptford. This will contribute significantly to three further objectives: providing protected space on main roads; removing through motor traffic in residential areas; and providing routes through green spaces.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**24 JUNE 2015**

**Question by Councillor Walsh**  
**of the Deputy Mayor**

**Question**

Council will note the planning decision made before Christmas regarding the planning application to remove restrictions on the retail site located (Aldi Store) at the corner of Rushey Green and Bradgate Rd.

For over a year now, near neighbours of the site have had to put up with heightened disturbances, including deliveries before 6am and after 1am in the evening.

Despite Planning Officers rejecting the extension, the retailer continues to flout the trading and delivery restrictions, and to add insult to injury they have had the audacity to erect new signage prominently displaying the time.

When will Bradgate Road Residents, get the peace and quiet they rightly deserve?

**Reply**

The Council, as Local Planning Authority, and having regard to the issues raised by residents and Environmental Health officers, resolved to take enforcement action against Aldi in March 2015. A breach of condition notice, concerning planning conditions 4 and 12 (relating to opening hours and delivery times, respectively) of the planning permission DC/96/0351, was issued on 4 March 2015. The period for compliance was 28 days beginning with the day the notice was served, which is the minimum time allowed to be given under the legislation.

In response, Aldi submitted an appeal on 20th March against the Council's refusal in November 2014 of their application DC/14/88926 to extend the opening and delivery hours. This has been confirmed in a letter (sent on 1st May) to all those who were originally consulted by the Council or commented on the application. The Council's legal advice was that, while the appeal is being considered by The Planning

Inspectorate, it would be unreasonable for the Council to proceed to a prosecution. Enforcement action has therefore been put on hold pending the outcome of the appeal. A decision is expected from the Inspectorate in July 2015. If the Council's decision is upheld by the Inspector, the Council intends to proceed with enforcement action.

Officers are very much aware of the impact that Aldi's operations have had on local residents to date and have therefore sought commitment from Aldi to limit those activities that have caused greatest disturbance until the appeal is determined, including limiting deliveries to the hours of 7am-9pm Monday to Saturday (as approved) and 10am to 4pm on Sundays and Bank holidays and adopting new delivery and car park management measures. The interim agreement (May 2015) was shared with Councillors and residents and they have been encouraged to alert both the Planning and Environmental Health Services of any breach by Aldi so that it can be followed up by officers.

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**24 JUNE 2015**

**Question by Councillor Bernards**  
**of the Cabinet Member for Children and Young People**

**Question**

In the wake of a Lewisham School girl leaving the comfort that London has to offer and joining ISIS, what measures has the Council put in place to tackle the radicalisation of our school children and make sure this does not happen again?

**Reply**

On dealing with the question of recruitment to extremist and terrorist organisations, it is important to note that this is not an incident isolated to the London Borough of Lewisham, or even the United Kingdom. The phenomenon of people travelling to conflict zones in the Middle-East to join extremist groups is a transnational problem, affecting over half of the world's countries, as societies struggle to get to grips with the lure of ISIS and al-Qaeda linked groups. As such, it may be misguided categorically to state that any measures we implement can completely ensure that such occurrences never happen again, rather that we can do our utmost within the Local Authority and working with trusted partners to keep extremism out of Lewisham as much as possible.

Having said this, the Council has been taking a number of steps in recent months towards building resilience to extremism across the community and safeguarding individuals' vulnerable to radicalisation. The London Borough of Lewisham has been implementing the 'Prevent Strategy', part of the UK's overall Counter-Terrorism Strategy ('Contest') since its conception in 2007 and its subsequent review in 2011. Prevent, as it is known, aims to stop people being drawn into terrorism or supporting terrorism. In Lewisham, the Prevent Strategy broadly focuses on two key areas: building resilience in the community, and safeguarding individuals.

The Council recognises the vital importance of education in both key areas outlined above. Colleagues in Education, from Primary to Further and Higher education have been working hard with the Prevent team in Lewisham to help give frontline staff the tools to support students who may be being drawn towards extremist groups or ideologies. Staff training has been rolled out across the borough with well over 1,000 colleagues having received training on extremism and radicalisation in the borough.

Further to this, the Lewisham Prevent team have also been working on introducing curricular material in schools in order to build resilience to extremist arguments and rhetoric among children and young people; as well as arming them with the tools to support their peers and to become strong voices against extremism in the community. They have done this through lesson plans and discussions which aim to raise awareness of online propaganda, foster critical thinking skills and confront issues around radicalisation, extremism and terrorism head-on. One such notable example is the invitation of Imam Asim Hafiz, a highly distinguished religious leader and adviser to the Chief of Defence Staff, to a number of Lewisham schools to talk about extremism as well as his personal experiences in Afghanistan alongside British and Afghan troops.

Aside from Education, Prevent in Lewisham has worked over the last 12 months with a number of community groups on projects designed to further the reach of our resilience-building efforts. We are hoping to run similar projects in the borough with a number of trusted community partners in the coming months.

Finally, the Council runs the multi-agency Channel panel, which aims to provide interventions when individuals may be at risk of being radicalised. Channel is a multi-agency approach to preventing people being drawn into extremism and terrorism, following a similar format to multi-agency panels around other concerns such as domestic violence and gang crime. The aim is to provide a support package for individuals which can serve as a diversion away from the path towards radicalisation. Channel infers no criminality and no criminal record for any individuals which its interventions are offered to. More information about the Channel process can be found on the Home Office website.