

**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 1**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Howard Kanini

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

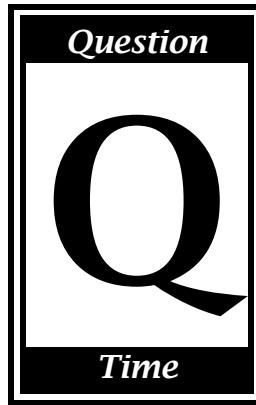
**Question**

Given the low traffic neighbourhood on the South Circular and the introduction of the ULEZ which will exacerbate through the Catford gyrator, what is the council doing to speed up the South Circular re-alignment so as to avoid worsening air quality along the route?

**Reply**

The realignment of the A205 is a shared objective of the Council, TfL and the GLA and all parties are working in collaboration to make this happen. All organisations have recently restarted working collaboratively to progress this project following a long period of TfL staff being furloughed. TfL are currently undertaking strategic modelling of their concept designs to assess the potential impact of realigning the road.

The Council are very keen to progress the road realignment project as soon as possible. However, TfL are the highway authority for this strategic route and there are many steps and internal processes that TfL are required to go through to obtain approval for this major project.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 2**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Margot Wilson

Member to reply: Councillor Bourne

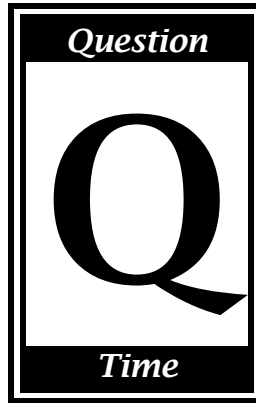
**Question**

I understand from the report on Leisure Management Arrangements to Mayor and Cabinet that Officers recommend that the Indoor Bowls Centre, an ancillary site of the Bridge Leisure Centre, could re-open 'in the forthcoming period' as its running costs are relatively low. Will the Council continue to support the Blind Bowls Club, particularly in the form of transport to and from the centre, provision of a helper, and recruitment of new members? Will they keep the organisers of the Indoor Bowls Club informed as to what is happening and consult with them?

**Reply**

The Council is committed to working with all users of the Indoor Bowls Centre, including the Blind Bowlers, on the future of the site.

To this end, a meeting has been set up in early March with users, including representatives from the Blind Bowlers, to discuss the best way forward.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 3**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: David Peet

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

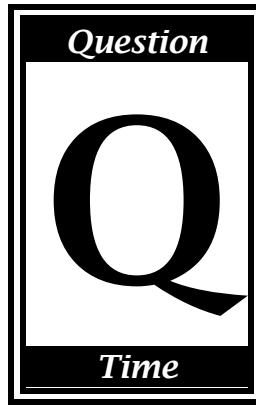
A group of residents on Leahurst Road have got together to sponsor the planting of a tree. Leahurst is in the middle of the LTN and has few trees. We have been told that the council will not permit trees to be sponsored on streets where there is pavement parking. How can the council justify giving cars preferential treatment having declared a climate emergency?

**Reply**

It is encouraging to hear that a group of residents have engaged with our partners Street Trees for Living (STfL) and have made contributions to sponsor tree planting in the Lee Green Ward.

We have in the past supported trees being planted in areas where pavement parking is permitted and have found that they are at much greater risk of damage from cars.

In line with Council policies that enable walking and cycling, and encourage tree planting, we recognise that pavement parking in the borough should be reviewed. Our intention is to remove pavement parking where possible with the roll out of new controlled parking zones (CPZs) and the review of existing CPZs. The Council has recently committed to rolling out CPZs across the borough where they are supported.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 4**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Sarah McCusker

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

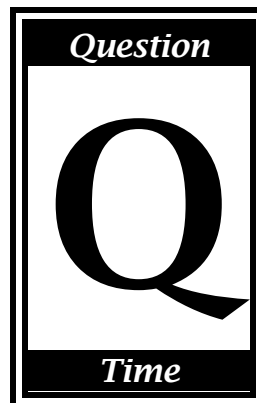
**Question**

Why have Lewisham Council implemented traffic road counters on many roads in Lee at this time? Traffic is at a fraction of what it usually is due to lockdown. Data collected will most definitely not reflect usual traffic levels out of lockdown which would be much higher. Please could you explain the decision to measure it now and not when lockdown has eased?

**Reply**

It is recognised that the traffic data that has recently been collected is at a time when national lockdown restrictions apply. However, even when lockdown restrictions are eased it is not known when, or if, traffic patterns will return to pre-pandemic levels. It was therefore considered helpful to collect monitoring data to inform the review of the Lewisham and Lee Green Low Traffic Neighbourhood, and before any potential further changes aimed at making children's journeys to school within the low traffic

neighbourhood safer and healthier are implemented. We will also have access to strategic data from TfL which will enable us to set the data collected in a wider context.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 5**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Susan Wardlow

Member to reply: Councillor Barnham

**Question**

In what form will youth services be provided in Lewisham's Adventure Playgrounds, including if the facilities will continue to be free and open access for 8-19 year olds, 25 years old if the child has additional needs?

**Reply**

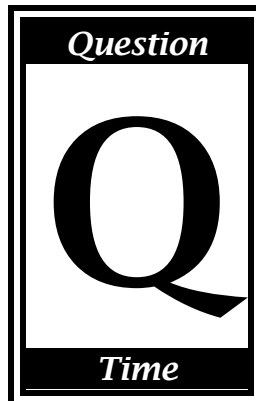
Lewisham is committed to ensuring young people in Lewisham have access to youth services and play activities – this includes universal services that anyone can enjoy and targeted services for our most vulnerable young people

We are still in the process of agreeing a delivery model for our five Adventure Playgrounds over the next 12 months, with free access for children and young people aged 8-19, and up to 25 for young people with additional needs.

We plan to spend the next 12 months working with residents to produce a play strategy for our borough that makes sure our children and young people have fair access to play areas and equipment, while acknowledging the massive financial pressures the Council is under.

This may involve considering other management and funding models for the adventure playgrounds to make them more sustainable and safe in the longer term.

There will be lots of opportunity for the local community and those who know the APGs best, to help to shape the new play strategy over the coming year.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 6**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Jane Alaszewski

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

Exempt drivers have been told they will receive a PCN for driving through Leahurst Road due to it being "dangerous to allow other vehicles to drive through due to emergency vehicles driving through the location at speed".

Given that One Lewisham warned the Council back in November that Leahurst was dangerous for exempt drivers, why has it taken 4 months for the council to act, leaving exempt drivers in a situation which the council now admits is unsafe. Is this a breach of health and safety and duty of care to the borough's residents with protected characteristics?

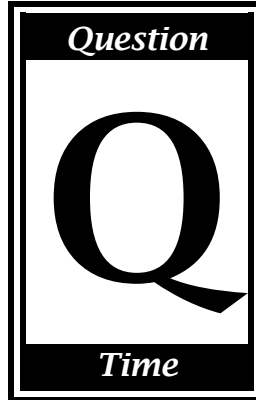
To follow on from this, why are the council prohibiting Blue Badge holders from accessing the Leahurst road restriction both ways rather than removing the planters



and closing the emergency gate, which would allow safe access to Leahurst bi-directionally?

**Reply**

We understand the confusion at this location and can clarify. Currently warning notices have been issued in error to Lewisham Blue Badge holders at this location. As previously agreed all Lewisham Blue Badge Holders are exempt from camera enforced locations within the LTN, subject to application. Officers are reviewing the modal filter at Leahurst Road to see if any adjustments need to be made to reduce the potential for conflict and reduce speeds along the street.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 7**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Hayley Atwere

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

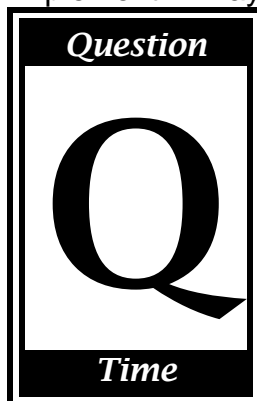
In the Mayor's October statement, he said that School Streets would be coming soon. I am particularly concerned about Trinity Primary and Brindishe Manor both of which have been massively negatively affected by the changes to the LTN. Please advise what is causing the delay and when the school streets already promised around the Lee / Hither Green area will happen?

**Reply**

We are working to deliver measures aimed at making children's journeys to school within the low traffic neighbourhood safer and healthier as quickly as possible.

Officers have been considering options to achieve this and undertaking a technical assessment to ensure what is proposed is deliverable. All schools within the LTN have been given consideration as part of this work.

We will be engaging with stakeholders and the public on this in March, and subject to views expressed, we will design and implement in May.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 8**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Adam Syed

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

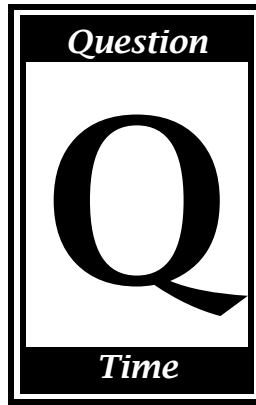
As per the "Lewisham & Lee Green LTN - monitoring data summary" report, there were clearly a number of contributing factors for the increase in traffic on roads surrounding the LTN - e.g end of first lockdown with traffic increasing across London, numerous utilities works etc. Were you able to determine what percentage of this increase was due to the LTN? And if not, how and why was it decided that it was enough of a contributing factor to remove/revise the LTN, rather than expanding it to Hither Green West? Bus journey times were actually on a downward trend through October, prior to the LTN removal/revision. Was this considered in the decision-making process?

**Reply**

Prior to implementing the changes introduced in November 2020 officers engaged with TfL to seek advice on how to extrapolate the LTN changes from the general background traffic picture, a similar question was being asked by many boroughs across London. However, it was not possible to do this as there were too many varying factors involved. The decision was therefore taken to amend the LTN based on the data available at the time and advice from TfL. Lewisham worked collaboratively with TfL on what changes would have the greatest benefits in terms of reducing bus journey times.

Consideration was also given to progressing a scheme in Hither Green West, but it was considered that this was not the appropriate time to do this. The changes made to the LTN at the time were considered the best short term option, but ones that would be kept under regular review.

Lewisham has previously committed to reviewing the Lewisham and Lee Green LTN and this will be undertaken in May 2021. In addition we remain committed to low traffic neighbourhoods and the principles they set out to achieve and are currently considering how they are progressed in the future LTNs so that the benefits can be experienced more widely across the borough.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 9**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Patricia Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

The traffic movements have almost never been measured in Manor Lane Terrace SE13, in living memory. The imposition of the LTN was based on little data for this, or pollution levels. Subsequently the council decided to measure traffic at the north end of MLT and the Lochabar Hall section. So, there was still no data.

In addition most measurements have been taken during various levels of Lockdown, so there was no true measure to level results against. In the past few days the cable at the north end of MLT has completely disappeared. The other one near Lochabar Hall had been damaged, re-instated and today is damaged again.

Can the council explain exactly what it is trying to achieve by such erratic cabling?  
When did the council last measure traffic in the area, in normal times? Where did the measuring take place? Please may we have a table of those results?

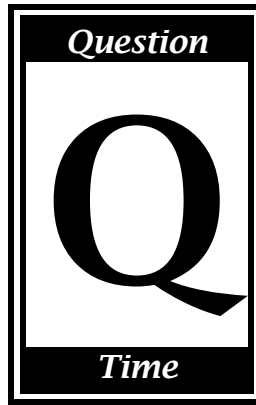
### **Reply**

The traffic monitoring data was not intended to monitor each and every street within and around the LTN, but with over 70 counters in total, it is considered this provides sufficient coverage.

It is important to acknowledge that any transport related monitoring carried out within a pandemic will always need to be considered within this context before drawing any conclusions. The tightening and easing of restrictions during the pandemic have had an impact on travel behaviour and as a result traffic levels during this period have been volatile. The monitoring period is covering conditions that are not normal and even when lockdown restrictions are eased it is not known when, or if, traffic patterns will return to pre-pandemic levels. However, it is considered helpful to collect monitoring data to inform the review of the Lewisham and Lee Green Low Traffic Neighbourhood.

As part of the 'before' monitoring undertaken for the development of the healthy Neighbourhood scheme, counts were undertaken in March 2019. The results of this exercise are included in the monitoring report which are available online at <https://lewishamcovidresidentialstreets.commonplace.is/proposals/lewisham-lee-green-ltn-monitoring>. The raw data will also be uploaded to the Council website.

Unfortunately traffic counters do suffer damage on occasions and are also sometimes vandalised. The survey company, working on behalf of the Council, will always seek to reinstate these as quickly as possible once notified.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 10**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Mark Morris

Member to reply: Councillor Bonavia

**Question**

In relation to the publication of key performance information by Lewisham Council will the Mayor please state:

- (a) Why is no council performance information published on Lewisham Council's website more recently than March 2018?
- (b) Has no resident survey been undertaken by Lewisham Council since 2015, or if surveys haven been undertaken why have they not been published?
- (c) Why has Lewisham's annual monitoring report on planning decisions not yet been published, despite the repeated claim on Lewisham Council's website that it will be published each year in December?

(d) Why in general is such outdated and seemingly inaccurate information published by Lewisham Council? At the very least if there are delays for the publication in information why is it not possible that the reasons for the delays to be provided to the public

### **Reply**

Work was underway to consider how we can improve the presentation and content of corporate performance information we publish, after the introduction of our new corporate priorities, adopted within our new Corporate Strategy in September 2018, and given limited engagement with it in its previous format. This was also part of the focus of the work carried out as part of the Local Democracy review in 2018/2019 into how residents wanted to receive information from and engage with the Council, and was specifically a focus in the recommendations regarding open data.

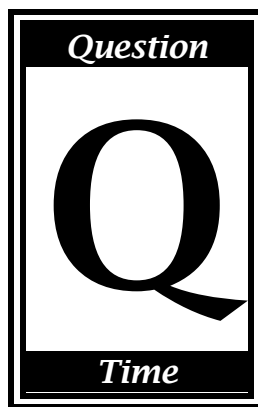
Unfortunately the pressures of responding to the Covid-19 pandemic understandably means that this has been delayed; however to ensure transparency and accountability throughout this period of emergency, relevant data and information is regularly published and scrutinised at the Council's Business Panel.

The last residents' survey was carried out in 2015. We were planning to conduct one last year but again, this has been delayed as a result of the pandemic. Residents' surveys provide a snapshot of residents' feelings and experiences at a particular moment in time, so consideration will be given as to when the most useful time to conduct the next survey will be. However, we of course understand the importance and value in speaking to residents to understand their experiences and views – particularly as the pandemic is affecting us all in different ways. This is why we launched the Voices of Lewisham project, to capture a wide range of voices, experiences and opinions. Elsewhere, the Council continues to consult and engage with residents on a wide range of issues to understand local concerns and priorities and, despite the challenges brought by the pandemic, we have carried out 22 consultations via Commonplace in the last year alone.

The Council's annual monitoring report is a significant piece of work to collate and prepare. This has been delayed due to resourcing pressures within the planning service as a result of the Covid-19 pandemic. However, the report is now complete and is due to be published imminently.

Whilst some delays in providing information are the result of individual oversight as with any Council service from time to time, the impact of the Covid-19 pandemic on the organisation has been immense, and I appreciate the understanding and patience of the public in this unusual time. I remain keen to deliver on our plans to provide more and clearer performance information as soon as possible.





**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 11**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Mary McKernan

Member to reply: Councillor Bonavia

**Question**

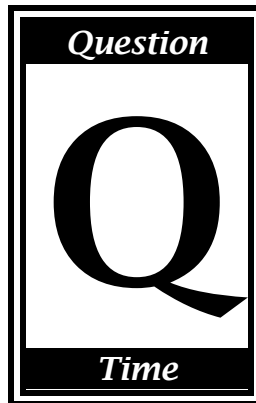
Please can you tell me how long I should expect to wait for Lewisham to fulfil a Freedom of Information Request for information that was held on the Council's public system? Do you consider it acceptable that I have been waiting since October 2020 for my FOI request to be actioned?

**Reply**

The Council would normally respond to a Freedom of Information (FOI) request within 20 days.

In relation to the FOI request to which you refer, I understand that the information has now been provided and the Council offers its sincere apologies for the delay.

I expect all FOI requests to be replied to within 20 days even if the response is that the information requested cannot be quickly supplied or should not be supplied for legitimate legal reasons. However, I recognise that the Council is currently under immense strain in responding to the Covid 19 pandemic and unfortunately this has meant some delays in responding especially where the information is sensitive or complex.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 12**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Karen Pratt

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

If the figures reported on the OneLewisham website are correct (<https://www.facebook.com/groups/453504975580693/permalink/781977409400113/>) then Lewisham Council has spent £276K to date on the Lee Green LTN when the budget was £184K.

What caused the overspend?

Which budget was the additional money taken from?

Could this money not have been better spent on proper Covid-related traffic arrangements, and on enforcing speed limits, installing additional pedestrian crossings, improving pavements and cycle lanes, etc.

Why did Lewisham Council not tackle the problem of polluting through-traffic during rush hour rather than inflicting draconian measures on us all?

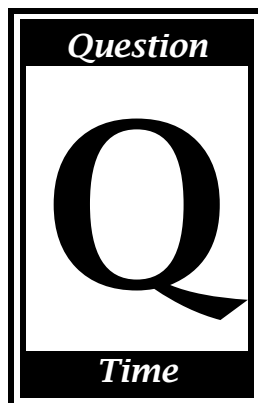
### **Reply**

Lewisham has consistently stated that the Council would make changes to the LTN if necessary and we have introduced changes in response to feedback from residents and TfL. Any changes made has cost implications. All costs have been funded from TfL London Streetspace Plan (LSP) Funding and the DfT Active Travel Emergency Fund.

LSP funding was made available to boroughs specifically for the implementation of temporary low traffic neighbourhoods, school streets, the creation of more pedestrian space on high streets and the creation of pop-up cycle lanes. There was no scope to use this funding for measures such as pedestrian crossings or pavement resurfacing. The Metropolitan Police Service are responsible for speeding enforcement in London, not local authorities.

Initial feasibility work on a number of pop-up cycle lane schemes was undertaken, as shown on the Commonplace website. However, at the time of assessment, none were considered to be viable under the strict criteria stipulated by TfL, which included ensuring a minimum width of continuous cycle lane, and no civil works such as kerb realignments.

If there was no intervention, information from TfL issued at the start of the pandemic showed that there would be a doubling of car use, assuming a third of pre-lockdown journeys returned and those who cannot get on to public transport shift to their cars. This would result in increased car journeys. To support this we acted on advice from central government and TfL, by rolling out a series of schemes to create safer conditions for walking and cycling whilst socially distancing. By supporting people to walk and cycle more rather than drive, this will help keep traffic volumes lower than they might otherwise be, reducing congestion and improving air quality. The initial monitoring data on the website shows that the measures have not had an adverse impact on air quality. However, the measures will be kept under review.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 13**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Mark Bennett

Member to reply: Councillor Bell

**Question**

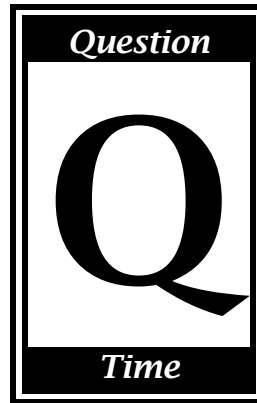
I understand the current Gross Development Value of the Council's interest in Kitewood Creekside East Development is £8.793m for 16 units. If this turns out to be correct at practical completion and if the Council were to sell its entire interest for £8.793m, based on current rules how much of the realised capital would the Council be allowed to invest in building or buying homes for the socially rented sector?

**Reply**

Should the Council decide to sell the residential units then it will utilise any proportion of the receipt towards the funding of affordable social rented homes. In doing so, however, the Council would need also to find a route to replacing the revenue funding

that it would be foregoing – which has already been incorporated in the Council's budget.

Therefore, we have no plans at this time to sell our interest. We are also making excellent progress on the delivery of 1,000 new social homes. We need more and we have also bought new developments such as 1 Creekside to deliver on our corporate plan.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 14**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Julia Webb

Member to reply: Councillor Bell

**Question**

The Ladywell Playtower has been allowed to deteriorate, and there is no end in sight of this situation. Lewisham Council's record with historic buildings is not good; they are understandably not the council's top priority at the moment.

Given this, is Lewisham Council prepared to consider transferring the building to a community trust, to allow the people who care about it to take action?

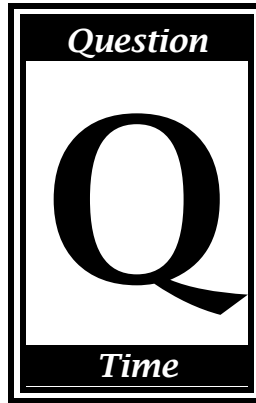
**Reply**

We appreciate that there are concerns for the much-loved Playtower building and I can assure the questioner, fellow Councillors and the Community that the protection and restoration of this landmark building remains a priority.

Officers continue to meet with the intended developer – Guildmore – to advance the scheme that we all want to see refurbish the Playtower. The Mayor and I shall be stressing to Guildmore that we want to see progress in 2021.

We have no plans to transfer the building to a community trust. In the last administration, the previous Mayor and Cabinet agreed to enter into the agreement with Guildmore. Work is underway to meet those commitments. Sadly, the COVID-19 pandemic has impacted on many parts of the Council's work.

The Mayor and I are committed to securing the future of the Playtower.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 15**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Annie Kirby

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

Is Lewisham council considering any other alternatives to the current healthy streets plans other than Low Traffic Neighbourhoods?

- If so, will these be presented to the community for consultation?
- If so, which groups are you speaking with and / or successful schemes are you following?
- If not, why wouldn't you?

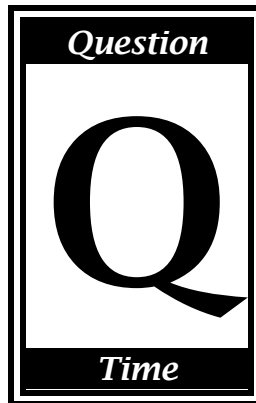


### **Reply**

Following suspension of the funding that the Council usually receives from Transport for London (TfL) to deliver the majority of our transport programme, last year, TfL started to reinstate a limited amount of this funding. Using this funding we are seeking to progress a range of schemes that are in alignment with our [transport strategy and local implementation plan 2019–2041 \(LIP3\)](#). This includes additional school streets, pedestrian improvements, the re-starting of the 20mph compliance programme, a cycle route link, further cycle hangars, further Electric Vehicle Charging Points, proposals aimed at making children's journeys to school safer and healthier within the LTN and other complementary measures, some interim measures as part of the Deptford Parks Liveable Neighbourhoods programme, and a range of road safety education initiatives.

TfL will be seeking to reinstate LIP funding in full from 2021/22, subject to the DfT agreeing a funding deal. This would enable the Council to return to its intended LIP3 programme, but with adjustments to take account of the schemes that have been delivered over the past year and any lessons learnt. This programme is currently being refined and will be taken to Mayor & Cabinet for approval.

We will be consulting and engaging with the community in relation to these schemes and the extent of that consultation and engagement will be proportionate to the scheme being developed. For instance with some schemes, such as with future LTNs, pre-engagement will be undertaken prior to advancing the scheme, whereas smaller interventions, such as amendments to double yellow lines, may only involve the statutory notification/consultation on the associated Traffic Management Order.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 16**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Etienne de Villiers

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

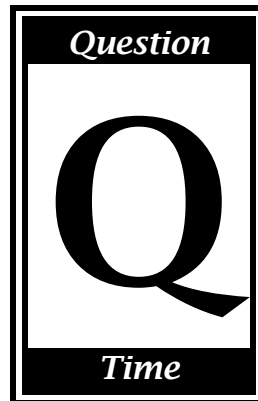
Recently the Government announced that the Green Homes Grant scheme of £1.5bn is, from the end of this financial year, to be reduced to £350m to continue till year end 2022. Difficulties with administration and the availability of the requisite technical skill seems to be behind this regrettable decision. Whilst we can only hope that the Council's application for a Green Grant is successful, will there be a similar capacity issue in Lewisham as well? What measures have been put in place to train contractors' staff to a level of skill, in the numbers required? No doubt, building up a workforce skilled in Green Technologies will take time to achieve. Will there be collaboration

between the Boroughs of S.E London, so as to attract contractors to this part of the UK?

### **Reply**

Delivery of Lewisham Council's ambition to be carbon neutral by 2030 is reliant on sustained and significant action at a national level to drive decarbonisation of our economy and housing. The Council will continue to lobby Government for the consistent and long-term approach to funding and policy required to create jobs and build the supply chain to meet the scale of challenge that exists. It is hoped that today's Budget Statement by the Chancellor of the Exchequer will provide clarification on the future of the Green Homes Grant scheme and the Government's plans to invest in housing retrofit.

Lewisham Council's Green Homes Grant application was for funding under the Local Authority Delivery element, which is separate from the voucher scheme that has been the focus of concerns on administration and supply chain capacity. The bid is intended to extend Lewisham Homes' investment programme to include a wider range of energy efficiency retrofit works and will be delivered through the contractors in place under Lewisham Homes' framework. These contractors meet the required standards of accreditation. Looking forward we will work with partners locally and sub-regionally to ensure Lewisham can make the most of the economic opportunities that a long-term programme of investment could bring.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 17**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Gerard Ambrose

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

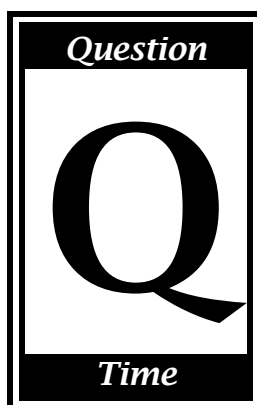
**Question**

In Manor Lane Terrace we have large vans that are parked. Could you tell me how much you charge vans for parking permits to enable them to park wherever they want?

**Reply**

Residents Permits charges are based on emission charges and a yearly permit can cost from £70 to £300 depending on carbon dioxide gas it produces.

Manor Lane Terrace is within zone MH controlled parking zone which is enforced 10am to 12 noon, therefore outside the enforcement times any vehicle can park free of charge.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 18**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Peter Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor Slater

**Question**

The Borough of Lewisham's website, under the heading 'Services' and 'Libraries' now states "All Lewisham's Libraries are now closed due to Covid-19 Restrictions".

An added statement shows this will be reviewed every two weeks during Lockdown.

However, I am old enough to know that in most areas of Governance, precedence generally ends up as a Rule - especially if applied to a Service which does not make any money.

So what guarantee do I have that when Lockdown is lifted (if ever) normal service may be resumed to the Public Library Service in Lewisham and readers may be able to hold and read a printed book rather than be confined to an e-service?

Please be aware that not all citizens in the borough have a device in their homes which enables them to read an e-book - or listen to a 'audio book' for that matter- facilities which are normally available in library buildings, including those managed by outsourced organisations.

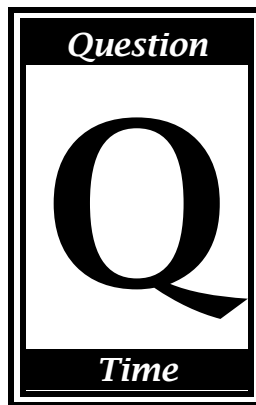
### **Reply**

Nothing has changed to the statutory duty that the local authority has to provide library services. Therefore, the council will look to restore as much of the library service as possible, as quickly as possible.

There are factors that the council needs to consider as it deploys staff to library (and other) services, including the continued need to support the resident population and other critical services at a time of unprecedented need. Indeed, many library staff have been supporting Befriending, Test & Trace, and more throughout the pandemic, where I would like to take this opportunity to acknowledge the vital contribution that they have made to Lewisham's Covid response.

Since the start of the pandemic, we have offered a Click & Collect service at Deptford and Downham libraries, and have continued operating a [Home Library Service](#) during the temporary closure of our library buildings to support our residents who do not have access to, or prefer not to use, our popular and greatly enhanced e-Library service.

In addition to this, I am pleased to inform you that Lewisham has been successful in attracting additional funds to support the Reading Agency's "Reading Friends" project that specifically reaches out to residents who suffer from loneliness, offering books, discussion groups, and internet enabled iPads. The latter will contribute to bridging the gap that stops citizens who do not have a device in their homes which enables them to read an eBook or listen to an audio book.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 19**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Caroline Kurup

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

The air quality monitoring report ("Air quality Monitoring Report: Lewisham and Lee Green Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) ") states: "Due to the speed at which Transport for London and the Department for Transport have asked boroughs to

work at, the borough does not have the full baseline of air quality data it would do in normal circumstances". If it has no appropriate baseline data, how can the Council objectively determine the impact of the LTN measures on the air quality of the surrounding roads?

How can the Council accurately assess the impact of the LTN on the air quality of the roads surrounding the LTN, given the significant changes to traffic levels and pollution levels as a result of the various stages of lockdown?

How has the Council satisfied itself that appropriate monitoring of the surrounding roads, to which traffic will be displaced as a result of the LTN, is accurately monitored?

Does the Council agree that the priority for air quality monitoring must be on the surrounding roads, rather than the roads inside the LTN, which will inevitably benefit from lower traffic?

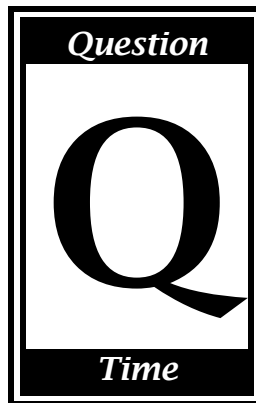
### **Reply**

The Council undertakes air quality monitoring in accordance with the GLA/DEFRA prescribed guidance and collects data on a monthly basis and will use this to compare how well the scheme has been operating taking into consideration the traffic conditions in the surrounding area. This is an ongoing study of air quality and we continue to monitor as we review the LTN.

It is important to acknowledge that any transport related monitoring carried out within a pandemic will always need to be considered within this context before drawing any conclusions. The tightening and easing of restrictions during the pandemic have had an impact on travel behaviour and as a result traffic levels during this period have been volatile. The monitoring period is covering conditions that are not normal and even when lockdown restrictions are eased it is not known when, or if, traffic patterns will return to pre-pandemic levels. However, it is considered helpful to collect monitoring data to inform the review of the Lewisham and Lee Green Low Traffic Neighbourhood.

As outlined in the monitoring strategy we have looked to capture impacts of the LTN within the LTN area on the surrounding road network to monitor the extent to which traffic may be displaced to other routes, particularly the distributor road network.





**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 20**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Diana Cashin

Member to reply: Councillor Bell

**Question**

We are seeing more and more telecom cabinets on our streets but some look neglected and others have been vandalised. This may mean they are no longer needed. Does the Council have any authority over installers to remove redundant cabinets?

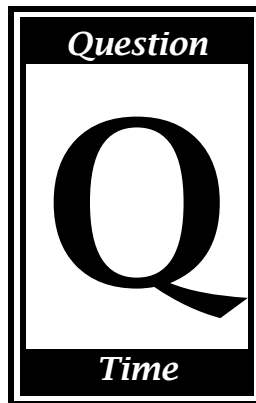
### **Reply**

Permitted Development regulations include a condition which require cabinet installations are removed once they are no longer required for telecommunications purposes. The Council's planning policies also require the removal of redundant equipment from sites when new telecommunications proposals come forward.

However, cabinets that are poorly maintained by the operator may still be required for telecommunication purposes. If a cabinet contains equipment, it is generally deemed to be in use.

In cases where there are empty 'shell' cabinets that do not contain equipment situated on Lewisham's Highway Network, their removal would need to be undertaken by the operator, rather than the Council.

We will continue working to ensure telecommunications operators fulfil their obligations in this regard. Residents can email the council at [planning@lewisham.gov.uk](mailto:planning@lewisham.gov.uk) if they see such an empty cabinet. We will then determine what action is needed.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 21**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: David Lewis

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

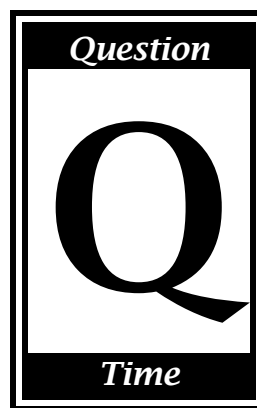
**Question**

I'm a resident in Horn Park Lane and as a family the implementation of the barrier in Upwood Road has had an adverse effect on our lives with the Doctors, station and local shops now a problem to get to as well as the main roads at gridlock for hours on end. At a meeting held for residents in November 2019 by Greenwich council the

possible closing of Upwood Road by Lewisham council was discussed and out of just over 100 residents present only 2 were in favour of the proposal. At closure the representatives of Greenwich said they would put this to Lewisham council as the numbers were so overwhelming. So could you please tell me did Greenwich consult with Lewisham about the almost unanimous anti LTN feeling of the residents and if so why were our opinions not considered.

### **Reply**

Greenwich Council did advise Lewisham Council of the outcome of the meeting with residents. However, the concerns raised were taken on board alongside many other ways we have been consulting with residents on the LTNs.



### **PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 22**

### **Priority 1**

## **LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

### **COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: John Hamilton

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

### **Question**

I know you and the Council are keen to show that you understand the need to reduce carbon emissions in Lewisham to help slow global warming.

During the recent discussions you had with members of the Extinction Rebellion group it became apparent that you have done very little in the 2 years since declaring a climate emergency and that you explain that lack of progress by referring to a shortage of funding and the Covid-19 pandemic.

Are you planning to employ additional staff to encourage low carbon domestic heating (the greatest contributor to carbon emissions in Lewisham).

Extinction Rebellion's second demand is: Act Now - not when funding permits. We rely on you to press Central government for funding to put in place the measures so well laid out in your plan to reach net zero by 2030.

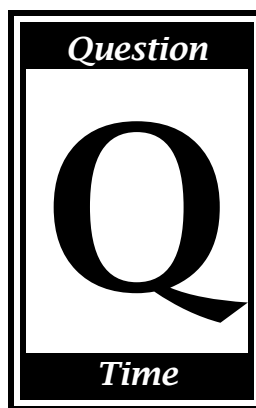
### **Reply**

Lewisham Council was the second local authority in London to declare a Climate Emergency and in 2020 was one of the first to publish its Action Plan.

We respectfully disagree with your assertion about the actions taken by the Council since February 2019. At the meeting you are referring to which took place on 2<sup>nd</sup> December 2020, a number of proposals were put forward by Extinction Rebellion Lewisham. The meeting was predominantly spent discussing these proposals and not the actions taken by the Council in response to our Climate Emergency declaration. The majority of the proposals put forward by Extinction Rebellion Lewisham members were felt by myself and officers to be impractical, with some presenting a financial risk to the Council and, in one instance, a risk to existing protected habitats.

Despite the significant disruption caused by the COVID19 pandemic the Council has continued to pursue an ambitious and active agenda to meet our aim of a carbon neutral Lewisham by 2030.

Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan was clear that this urgent issue is not the Council's alone to respond to, and requires sustained and significant investment and action by Government, business and all of us as individuals and communities. The Council is committed to lobbying Government and working with partners regionally and locally to galvanise that collective effort but it is not the Council's responsibility to take on all aspects of the work needed to reach the target and so we will always need to make decisions about priorities. A report giving an update on progress in delivering on Lewisham's Climate Emergency Action Plan and our priorities for the coming year is due to be considered by Mayor and Cabinet on the 10 March 2021.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 23**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Barbara Veale

Member to reply: Councillor Barnham

**Question**

On behalf of the voiceless young people in Lewisham, and in the light of the overwhelming evidence pointing to a coming tsunami of mental health needs, will the

Mayor/Council reconsider, even at this late stage, the decision to hold back the £250,000 of the Lewisham CAMHS contribution in 2021/2022 financial year?

The Council will be aware of the concerns raised by many Lewisham residents, and especially the parents/carers of young people with mental health needs. Over 1,300 people have signed a petition published by the Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign and have seen the documents produced which argues persuasively against the case for doing this. Will the Mayor/Council respond to the community concern and reinstate the £250,000 to the Lewisham CAMHS budget?

### **Reply**

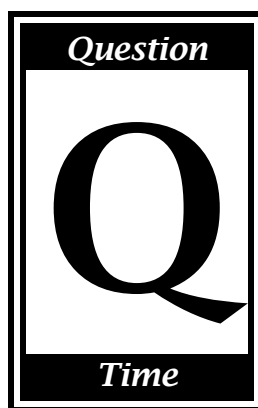
CAMHS is an NHS service, provided by the South London and Maudsley Hospital. The Council contributes to it as a minor partner, and also supports a wide range of other services dedicated to supporting the emotional wellbeing and health of our children and young people. I strongly agree on the importance of this work, to which the Council has given a high priority under this administration since 2018.

It is widely acknowledged that the NHS has not always given sufficient priority to mental health. I am however pleased that in recent years our partnership with the local NHS has improved funding and waiting times. The overall funding for children and young people's emotional and mental health services in Lewisham this year is £7.1m. This is an increase of £1,127m compared to the previous year, and a rise of 36% in three years. We expect funding to continue to improve: NHS England are increasing national funding levels to support children's mental health annually up to 2023/24, although local allocations have not yet been confirmed.

Lewisham Council's budget has unfortunately been cut by central government in real terms from over £400 million to £240 million. Given the scale of the funding crisis we face, it would be shortsighted to use the Council's very limited funds to top up NHS funding for an NHS service. Instead, we aim to ensure that our young people have a better range of local services that offer support early, to avoid problems escalating and prevent more young people needing acute specialist interventions.

We have not in fact seen an increase in referrals to CAMHS over this year, but we have committed to a £250,000 contingency, in response to concerns about the impact the pandemic might have on children's mental health. This money can be spent on mental health and wellbeing services if needed.

Looking ahead, we will continue to give young people's mental health and wellbeing the highest priority, and campaign for better central government funding for NHS mental health services. We welcome the support of the Save Lewisham Hospital Campaign in that.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 24**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Chris Maines

Member to reply: Councillor Barnham

**Question**



Digital poverty will have affected many Lewisham pupils during the epidemic, reducing learning opportunities for children from the poorest families. What support has been provided for individual pupils while the Catford hub and libraries have been forced to close during the current lockdown?

Has there been an audit of the number of pupils who do not have access to IT equipment at home and the number of homes without broadband. Can the Council give assurances that all these pupils have been considered vulnerable and have continued to attend school or college during the current lockdown

### **Reply**

Throughout the pandemic, the government has failed to support schools, children and families as it should, with late and unclear guidance, rapidly-changing decisions and a consistent failure to anticipate and prepare for the difficulties that the emergency poses for vulnerable and disadvantaged children.

In these challenging circumstances, I am proud that Lewisham schools have worked tirelessly to support children, both in school and when they have to learn at home. In order to support remote learning, during the first “lockdown”, between April and July 2020, Lewisham Council worked with schools, academies and colleges to distribute over 1700 digital devices including laptops, notebooks and 4G internet connectivity. All Lewisham education providers were involved with the allocation of devices and the Council undertook the role of liaison between the Department for Education (DfE) and distribution to Lewisham education providers. All those devices were allocated to:

- Looked after children, care leavers and children with social worker involvement.
- Disadvantaged Year 10 pupils in maintained schools (this includes voluntary aided schools)

Under the current lockdown Lewisham is expecting more digital devices and the DfE is increasing the help available through its ‘[get help with technology](#)’ programme’. This includes providing hundreds of thousands more laptops and tablets – reaching a total of more than one million and supporting disadvantaged 16 to 19 year olds in further education, in particular to:

- disadvantaged children in years 3 to 11 who do not have access to a device and whose face-to-face education is disrupted
- disadvantaged children in any year group who have been [advised to shield](#) because they (or someone they live with) are clinically extremely vulnerable
- disadvantaged children in any year group attending a hospital school

This offer applies to maintained schools, pupil referral units, academy trusts and hospital schools, as well as sixth-form colleges who have enrolled 14 to 16 year olds.

DfE is in direct contact with schools, colleges, trusts and local authorities when they're able to order these devices during the spring term 2021. This is already happening for Lewisham education providers with over 2750 laptops and notebooks ordered and /or delivered. There is still a small number of devices unclaimed and Lewisham education is following up with schools to ensure access to all available devices.

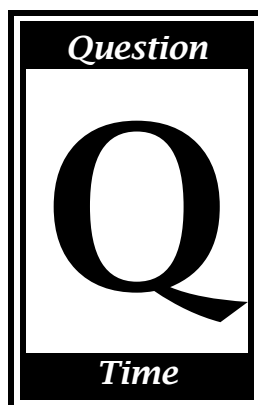
Lewisham education is currently in dialogue with the DfE '[get help with technology](#) programme' to ensure that children and young people who attend alternative provision and 14-16 provision at Lewisham College are not digitally disadvantaged during this lockdown.

More recently, our schools-led partnership, Lewisham Learning, undertook a survey with Lewisham primary, secondary and special schools and it is estimated that 99 per cent of children now have access to a device, but there is still significant inequality between families. Some children have a laptop or desktop for their own exclusive use while other children are sharing a mobile phone with parents and siblings. The quality of Wi-Fi / connectivity varies greatly between families as does the appropriateness of the space and environment children from different families are working in.

In order to address this, Lewisham Learning has set up a [crowd funding page](#) to raise financial resource for schools to purchase additional digital devices and connectivity for the most vulnerable children and families.

Lewisham Learning is also working with Lewisham schools to improve remote learning by encouraging:

- Schools to support each other by providing coaching and modelling good practice where needed.
- Compliance checks on school websites to ensure Lewisham schools are meeting new remote learning Department for Education requirements.
- School / peer review teams to use the new Department for Education toolkit to evaluate the quality of schools offers.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 25**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Chris Francis

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

What substantive quantitative outcomes were expected from the changes to the Lee Green LTN that were enacted on the 9th Nov and what were the predicted timescales for said expectations to emerge.

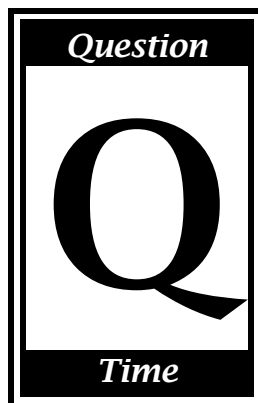
What metrics are under consideration and what is the expected changes to the value of said metrics in what timescales?

### **Reply**

Lewisham have previously committed to making changes to the low traffic neighbourhood scheme if necessary and the changes that were introduced in November 2020 were in response to resident feedback and discussions with TfL about the impact on bus journey times.

However, we have ensured that a comprehensive monitoring programme is in place to help us understand the impact of the scheme. This includes undertaking traffic counts and air quality monitoring, as well as considering the views of residents. The monitoring is being carried out in neighbouring areas, as well as within the LTN itself. We will work collaboratively with Transport for London and the emergency services to understand the impact on the TfL Route Network, on bus journey times and on emergency services.

Traffic patterns are dynamic and traffic levels and travel behaviour are impacted by a variety of factors. The outcomes expected by the changes and the success criteria have not been quantified. The review of the scheme will be based on a balanced assessment of the above datasets.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 26**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Paul Lomax

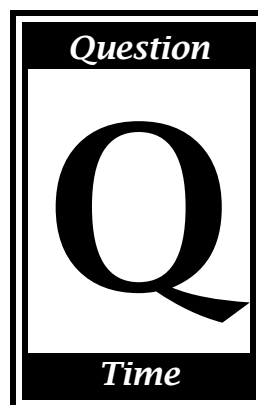
Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

### **Question**

What is the status of travel for registered Blue Badge holders in the Lee Green LTN? The council website says "Lewisham blue badge holders can apply for a vehicle exemption to drive through our Low Traffic Neighbourhoods road closures", and in the Mayor's statement on 23rd October it said that "Lewisham Blue Badge holders who register their vehicles can travel freely". Since the camera enforcement started on the Leahurst Road gate, Leahurst Road has been omitted from the list of roads allowed in communication to blue badge holders who registered. Some disabled drivers have now received penalty notices for driving through the Leahurst gate. On appeal, they have been told by parking enforcement that the gate is "for emergency services only" and that "emergency vehicles will be driving through the location at speed in both directions, and it would therefore be dangerous to allow other vehicles to drive through". Does that warning apply to all drivers in both directions? If safety is a concern, why not simply move the planters at the width restrictions, rather than forcing drivers through the old emergency gate? Or has the decision been made not to allow Lewisham Blue Badge holders to travel freely?

### **Reply**

We understand the confusion at this location and can clarify. Currently warning notices have been issued in error to Lewisham Blue Badge holders at this location. As previously agreed all Lewisham Blue Badge Holders are exempt from camera enforced locations within the LTN, subject to application. Officers are reviewing the modal filter at Leahurst Road to see if any adjustments need to be made to reduce the potential for conflict and reduce speeds along the street.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 27**

**Priority 1**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Praveena Fernandes

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

### **Question**

I am expecting a baby (my first) this year - I often see so many single use plastics being discarded all around my estate and I am sad what kind of future I will be leaving behind for my future generation. I promised I will try and make greener choices in my life. I researched Reusable nappies, being from India this is a common feature in my home country. My husband and I are preparing to take the time and upfront cost investment this would involve. Overall it looks like it will save a lot of single-use plastic being discarded (Most parents go through 4000 to 6000 nappies per child from birth to about age three)

Other councils (Real nappies for London) have set up a budget for vouchers for parents who want to try reusable nappies. It is part of your Lewisham Mayor manifesto to reduce the use of single-use plastics in Lewisham, especially since we incinerate our rubbish in the council. It currently costs the council to collect, separate and recycle these household waste - Could we please take some care towards reducing the usage of single-use plastic in the first place.

Can Lewisham council too support a similar initiative?

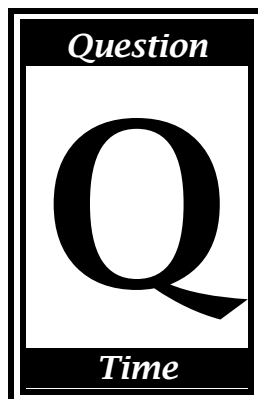
### **Reply**

During 2019/20, the Council subscribed to the Real Nappies for London scheme for a year, in which we had four bespoke events, though we did not subscribe to the voucher element of this service. Nappy Neighbours now run their own sessions with new parents, encouraging them to try real nappies. Advice and assistance can be achieved by emailing [nappy.neighbours@gmail.com](mailto:nappy.neighbours@gmail.com).

Nappies represent a significant proportion of non-recyclable rubbish by weight, and so we will look again at what more we can do as a local authority to encourage the use of re-usable nappies as part of the internal reviews and external consultations taking place in 2021.

We have implemented several schemes which aim to reduce the amount of single use plastic. Schemes such as stopping the use of plastic cups within the Council complex buildings and providing a majority of front line staff with reusable bottles to prevent the purchase of plastic water bottles. Prior to COVID 19, the Council were in the process of rolling out a Plastic Pledge for businesses—which involved working with local businesses to try and reduce the amount of single use plastic in use, but COVID has delayed the roll out of this scheme and will now be launched later this year.





**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 28**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Adam Syed

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

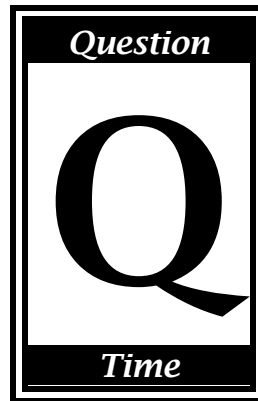
### **Question**

Since the LTN revision, speeding from one-way traffic down Leahurst Road is a major issue. Due to pavement-parking, the road is made wide enough for drivers to feel they can speed, with the knowledge that oncoming traffic is unlikely (although residents, blue-badge holders and cars with purposefully-covered plates often are coming the other way). Pavement-parking also makes it impossible for pedestrians to socially distance on the pavement, meaning the road itself needs to be used, which compounds the danger of speeding cars.

Since the LTN revisions appear to have actively encouraged speeding, what measures are in the pipeline to negate this issue?

### **Reply**

Further amendments to the scheme are currently being progressed, to help reduce traffic volumes on streets outside schools. We will be engaging with residents and other stakeholders on these proposed measures in early March. Alongside this work, officers are reviewing the modal filter at Leahurst Road to see if any adjustments need to be made to reduce the potential for conflict and reduce speeds along the street. In addition, we will contact TfL to report the community concerns regarding speeding at this location. TfL will review the speeds at this location and if there is an issue the road will be added to their enforcement programme.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 29**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Mark Morris

Member to reply: Councillor Bell

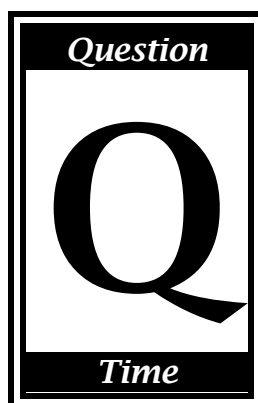
### **Question**

Has Lewisham Council received a planning application from Network Rail for step free access provision at Catford station or received any information about Network Rail's intention to submit a planning application during 2021?

### **Reply**

The Council have not received a planning application for step-free access and are not aware of any planned submission.

I would welcome action from Network Rail to improve step-free access at Catford station. I would urge Network Rail and Thameslink to get this done ASAP. It is unacceptable that any stations in 2021 do not have step free access. People living with disabilities, older people and those with children should not be turned away from accessing public transport.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 30**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Mark Bennett

Member to reply: Councillor Bell

### Question

What proportion of the housing capital budget for 2020/21 has the Council spent and how does that compare with 2019/20? What work scheduled for 2019/20 was not delayed or unfinished in that year and how many of the delayed or incomplete projects were finished in 2020/21?

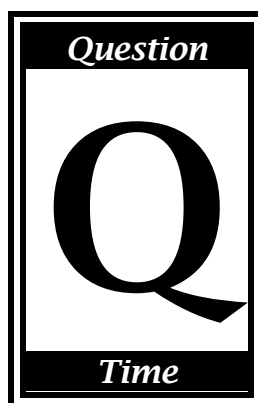
### Reply

The table below shows the capital budget, expenditure and slippage for 2019/20 and 2020/21.

LEWISHAM HOMES - CAPITAL EXPENDITURE								
	2019/20			2020/21				
Project Main Heading	Budget	Actual	Slippage	Budget	Slippage	Full Year Budget	YTD Spend	Total Forecast Spend
	£	£	£	£	£	£	£	£
External & Communal Works	6,911,284	4,832,087	2,079,197	5,500,103	1,470,718	6,970,821	740,561	771,207
Internal Works	10,700,000	8,815,766	1,884,234	5,050,000	1,725,000	6,775,000	3,704,004	4,704,473
Planned Works & Improvements (Major Works)	18,888,294	16,411,527	2,476,767	12,915,209	3,157,258	16,072,467	9,379,178	11,783,178
Fire Programme	12,163,772	10,437,060	1,726,712	13,871,000	1,913,934	15,784,934	12,055,393	18,731,919
Unallocated Budgets	578,609	0	0	2,200,000	(100,000)	2,100,000	1,655,494	2,680,494
<b>Total</b>	<b>49,241,959</b>	<b>40,496,440</b>	<b>8,166,910</b>	<b>39,536,312</b>	<b>8,166,910</b>	<b>47,703,222</b>	<b>27,534,630</b>	<b>38,671,272</b>

As part of the 2019/20 works programme, there was a total of £8.2m of works that were not completed and slipped into 2020/21. During 2019/20, there were 54 work streams of which 25 experienced slippage into 2020/21.

In 2020/21 there were also 54 work streams. The majority of these work streams have elements of work that will move into 2021/22. Over this period, slippage has occurred predominantly due to Covid-19 and contractual delays with developers.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 31**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Julia Webb

Member to reply: Councillor Reid

**Question**

The Ladywell Playtower and the Catford Constitutional are in dire need of consolidation to protect them from further deterioration. At the same time, Lewisham is promoting apprenticeships, to create job opportunities for young people.

Would the council consider exploring the possibility of apprenticeships in historic building techniques, in association with one of the heritage charities? The apprentices could work on the Playtower, and consolidate it as they learn the skills.

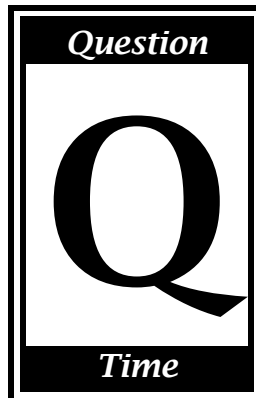
### **Reply**

I can confirm that the Council is seeking to play its part fully in tackling the massive increase in youth unemployment. The Council has secured a new DWP funded Youth Hub as the first part of a new employment support offer in Central Catford, within the former Town Hall. We have also given and received strong support for the Mayors '100 in 100' Apprentices programme – resulting in 186 placements being made available by local employers and advertised to local residents.

You will be aware that - with several Phase 1 workstreams about to commence in central Catford – we are seeking to refurbish the Catford Constitutional Club, the former Town Hall for new tenants and undertake a range of public realm and associated improvements at the Station Approach and at Holbeach. Across these various works and investments we will actively seek to maximise opportunities for skills acquisition and paid work at London Living Wage, including apprenticeships in a range of vocational areas, making these accessible to our local residents including crucially, those young people currently not in education or employment.

In terms of working in partnership with a heritage specialist, the opportunity to refurbish both Ladywell Playtower and the Catford Constitutional will require some level of expertise in restoration of heritage buildings. As part of the refurbishment process the Council will seek the development of a social value commitment which will likely include skills and training opportunities for local residents.

The nature of any apprenticeships or specialist training offered by the successful contractor will depend on the skills required to deliver the project and the availability of relevant training. In the case of a heritage refurbishment project it is likely that the apprenticeship training opportunity will be a generic Multi-Skills Construction Apprenticeship delivered ideally by a local construction training provider. Specialist training in heritage restoration skills would need to be commissioned separately as there is no apprenticeship standard that covers this niche area available at present. Our Employment and Skills team is available to broker partnerships with relevant organisations including specialist training providers if required by the successful contractor.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 32**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Karen Pratt

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

Is vandalism the only reason for replacing fixed barriers with camera-operated modal filters in Manor Lane North, Woodyates Road and Upwood Road? Is Lewisham Council planning to introduce more flexibility into the system and allow more exemptions, which respondents to a 2020 political party sponsored LTN survey would largely welcome?



Why has nothing been done about the Manor Lane Terrace barrier and distress caused to its residents?

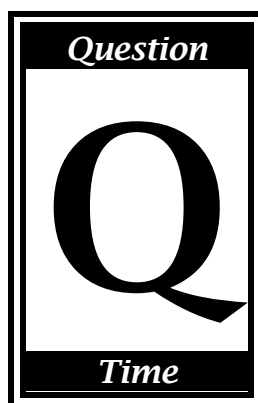
**Reply**

The installation of cameras is to discourage vandalism at the bollard and planter enforced filters. However, this could also benefit the emergency services as they will have direct access at these locations.

A mixture of bollard and planters were used at the outset as TfL had advised that there was insufficient funding for all modal filters to be enforced by camera. This position has since changed as TfL recognises that in some locations there are benefits of camera enforcement.

The transition to camera enforcement will enable the exemptions that apply to other camera enforced locations to be replicated. Such exemptions will be kept under regular review to ensure that the LTN objectives of improving pedestrian and cycle safety by reducing traffic flows continue to be met.

As further funding becomes available further locations could be considered for conversion to camera enforcement, subject to the outcome of any scheme review.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 33**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Etienne de Villiers

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

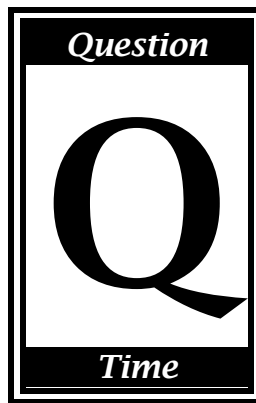
A careful reading of the Council's recent Climate Emergency Action Tracker shows that there are eight plans to communicate with the residents of Lewisham.

As there is most likely to be an overlap within these communications, (and even if this isn't the case), it would make administrative sense to send one letter/pamphlet/leaflet

from the Mayor to all LBL households. Such a leaflet should seek to inform Residents about Global Warming and about the behavioural changes that must be made if we are to meet the +/-7% reduction in our Carbon Footprint this year, and for each of the forthcoming nine years, and beyond. The annual Council Tax Invoice letter to Households may be a practical means to communicate to Householders. The council's own magazine could also carry more detailed information about Global Warming. Simple "Low hanging fruit" suggestions might be appropriate in the first instance. In addition to communications to households, the Council could adopt, without great cost, a public information campaign employing Banners over public buildings, banners attached to lamp-posts, signs painted on roads, and posters on bus-shelters. If there could be a publicity campaign about Covid 19, surely we need one for Global Warming too?

### **Reply**

This past year the majority of our communication efforts have been focussed on the pandemic. We recently appointed a Climate Emergency Officer to lead on our climate communications. In spring we aim to have a clear guide for residents on our website setting out what actions or changes individuals can make. This will be supported by social media posts, newsletter content and Lewisham Life articles. Furthermore, we will be embedding the climate crisis into communications of other council departments within the website. Given one of our key messages is around use of resources there are no plans as yet to print banners but we are always open to ideas.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 34**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Patricia Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

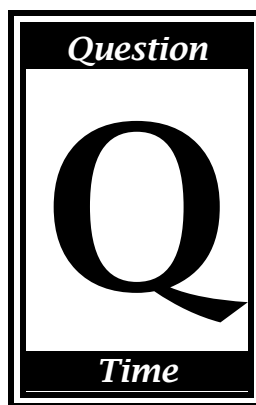
Can the council explain how some roads, turned into dead ends in the Lee LTN area, can be opened by unlocking the barriers by members of the public, and allowing free flow of traffic? This ability is not available to emergency services in Manor Lane

Terrace, and residents are still experiencing police and emergency vehicles (ambulances) blocked therefore causing considerable obstruction/noise/delay. Why has this public nuisance not been effectively dealt with by the council and/or the emergency services involved since 29th June 2020?

### **Reply**

Unfortunately there has been some abuse of the bollard locking mechanisms meaning that the bollards are sometimes left lowered. The Council is in the process of converting some of these modal filters to camera enforced filters, which means that only those granted exemptions will be permitted to pass through. As further funding becomes available further modal filters could be converted to camera enforcement, subject to the outcome of any scheme review.

The issue of access by emergency services is discussed at regular meetings between Lewisham officers and the emergency services, where they have the opportunity to raise any issues or concerns. To date no significant concerns in relation to response times have been raised. Local London Ambulance Service crews have been equipped with bollard keys.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 35**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Diana Cashin

Member to reply: Councillor Bell

**Question**

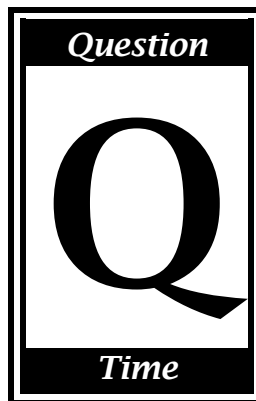
Given the widely-reported decline in London's population of 700,000 is the Council pressing the Mayor for lowering his imposed housing targets for Lewisham?

### **Reply**

We will continue to work with the Greater London Authority (GLA) around population projections as we begin to understand more about any medium to long-term implications caused by COVID-19 and/or Brexit.

However, the government housing target is significantly higher than that of the GLA. Furthermore, the housing challenge facing Lewisham remains significant, with over 10,000 households on the Council's housing waiting list in Lewisham. As a result, there is no indication that housing targets will reduce at this time.

While the overall population of London could reduce, the reality of genuinely affordable housing means there is a housing crisis for many of our fellow residents. Therefore, we still do need new council and social homes as a matter of urgency.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 36**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Mary McKernan

Member to reply: Councillor Bell

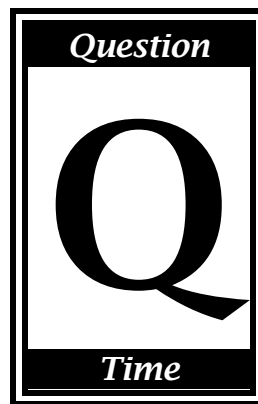
**Question**



As to applications for discharge of Planning Conditions: please explain what the Statement of Community of Involvement's stance on this. I find it worrying that there is no public or amenity society consultation on applications to discharge planning conditions.

**Reply**

The Statement of Community Involvement (2006) does not require public consultation to be undertaken on submissions seeking to discharge planning conditions.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 37**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Caroline Kurup

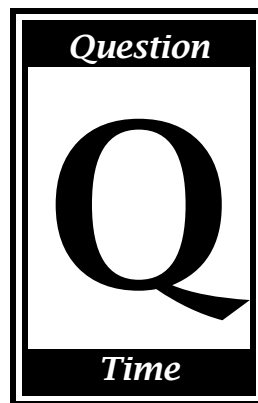
Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

In circumstances where there has been no adjustment made for the season, the impact of lockdown on traffic, and critical missing data, is it misleading to suggest in the air quality monitoring report "In view of the current assessment presented in this report, the current results show that the Lewisham and Lee Green Low Traffic Neighbourhood have had very little to no impact on the surrounding air quality"?

**Reply**

The tightening and easing of restrictions during the pandemic have had an impact on travel behaviour and as a result traffic levels during this period have been volatile. The monitoring period is covering conditions that are not normal and even when lockdown restrictions are eased it is not known when, or if, traffic patterns will return to pre-pandemic levels. We have used the best available data and information to assess air quality as outlined in the LTN air quality monitoring report.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 38**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Chris Maines

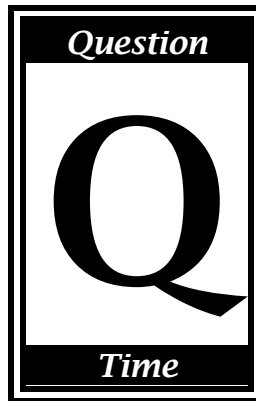
Member to reply: Councillor Bell

**Question**

Were all known rough sleepers in Lewisham offered accommodation over Christmas and during the recent cold weather?

**Reply**

Yes. All known rough sleepers in Lewisham were offered accommodation under the Severe Weather Emergency Protocol (SWEP). All rough sleepers verified and supported by Street Outreach were made an offer during the periods that SWEP was activated. SWEP has been activated on nine occasions since December 2020, for a total of 31 days.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 39**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Chris Francis

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

### **Question**

On the 4th August Councillor McGeevor was quoted in the press as saying:  
"We know that traffic has moved to busier trunk roads and this was an expected short-term consequence of the introduction of these measures."

However a recent answer to an FOI response (Reference No: 6951737) has stated that:

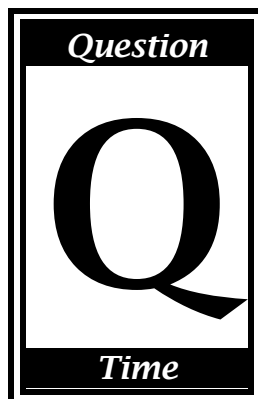
"As the traffic modelling processes ... was not completed the conclusions were not presented to Councillors" and only offers supposition of the basis of the Councillor's remarks.

Therefore I ask what exactly led the Councillor to 'expect' the move of traffic from one set of residential roads to another and what is the Councillor's exact meaning of 'short term'.

### **Reply**

When a road closure is put in place, motorists will respond in different ways. Some will re-route onto alternative routes, some will change the time at which they travel, some will switch to more sustainable modes such as walking or cycling, some will change their destination, or others won't travel at all. It is therefore reasonable to expect that initially some traffic will move to other roads. We have also learned from other boroughs, such as Waltham Forest, that there has been an overall reduction in traffic as a result of the borough making residential streets safer for walking and cycling by eliminating rat-runs.

Typically short term would mean three to six months, however, the current context is complicated as a result of a volatile background of traffic patterns, the easing and tightening of lockdown restrictions and people having reduced confidence in using public transport. This means that the initial settling period may be longer than under normal circumstances.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 40**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Peter Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

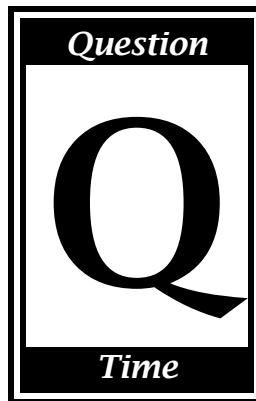
### **Question**

During the week the Lee High Road was closed both ways due to a tree falling. It occurred to me that if, in the future, the road was closed, for any reason, from Eastdown Park to Old Road residents in the LTN, who can only leave their area via the Lee High Road by car, would be trapped. Does the council have any emergency plans ready should this occur?

### **Reply**

Should there be an occasion when residents within sections of the LTN are unable access/egress to their streets, as a result of an extensive emergency road closure in Lee High Road, the enforcement camera at Manor Park, which prohibits southbound movements, could be de-activated, thus allowing both north and southbound movements at this point.

In tandem with this the one way working in Old Road could be suspended if it was considered necessary and safe to do so.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 41**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Gerard Ambrose

Member to reply: Cllr De Ryk

### Question

Please advise what the increase in the forthcoming council tax will be. How much will the council tax increase be and what is the total sum that you and the council will increase this tax by, namely the council's percentage increase and the Mayor of London percentage increase?

### Reply

While the Government claims to have increased the spending power of local authorities for 2021/22, that relies on us raising Council Tax. In order to ensure we can continue to provide crucial local services, we will need to raise Council Tax by 4.99% this year – the maximum possible amount.

The proposed overall Council Tax increase on a Band D property for 2021/22 in the Budget report before Council on the 3 March is 5.9%. This comprises a 4.99% increase for the Council's element and a 9.5% increase for the Greater London Authority precept.

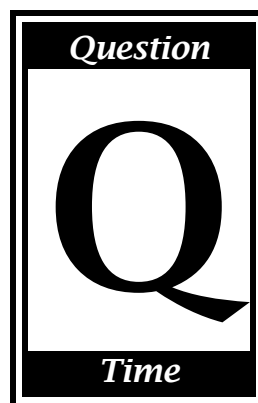
In cash terms, subject the Council's decision on the 2021/22 Budget, these increases convert to:

#### **Proposed 2021/22 Council Tax bands**

Band	Fraction	Lewisham Council Tax £	GLA Precept £	Total Council Tax £
A	6/9	919.97	242.44	1,162.41
B	7/9	1,073.30	282.85	1,356.15
C	8/9	1,226.63	323.25	1,549.88
<b>D</b>	<b>9/9</b>	<b>1,379.96</b>	<b>363.66</b>	<b>1,743.62</b>
E	11/9	1,686.62	444.47	2,131.09
F	13/9	1,993.27	525.29	2,518.56
G	15/9	2,299.93	606.10	2,906.03
H	18/9	2,759.92	727.32	3,487.24

#### **Current 2020/21 Council Tax bands**

Band	Fraction	Lewisham Council Tax £	GLA Precept £	Total Council Tax £
A	6/9	876.24	221.38	1,097.62
B	7/9	1,022.29	258.28	1,280.57
C	8/9	1,168.33	295.17	1,463.50
<b>D</b>	<b>9/9</b>	<b>1,314.37</b>	<b>332.07</b>	<b>1,646.44</b>
E	11/9	1,606.45	405.86	2,012.31
F	13/9	1,898.53	479.66	2,378.19
G	15/9	2,190.61	553.45	2,744.06
H	18/9	2,628.74	664.14	3,292.88



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 42**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Paul Lomax

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor



### **Question**

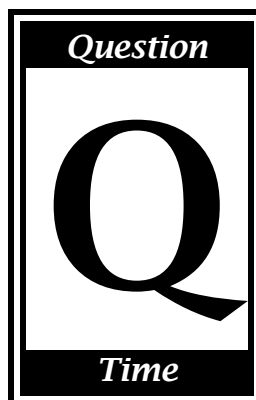
In light of the High Court ruling that TfL's Streetspace Plan and Bishopsgate Traffic Order was unlawful, what changes will you be making to the Lewisham Lee Green LTN? Given it was uncontested that hackney carriages are public transport, and to restrict them would be a failure of public sector equality duty, will Black Cabs be given an exemption through ANPR gates? Will you extend the dial-a-ride exemption to all gates, not just Manor Park? Will you be correcting the signage to note the exemptions?

### **Reply**

Following a hearing on 25th and 26th November 2020, on 20 January 2021 a judgement was handed down in relation to the two conjoined claims for judicial review brought by two trade bodies representing the 'Black Cab' industry against TfL and the Mayor of London to challenge the Mayor of London's Streetspace Plan and Guidance, and a Traffic Management Order prohibiting the use of motorised vehicles, including Hackney Carriages, on Bishopsgate in the City of London.

Our understanding is that TfL are seeking permission to appeal the judgement. As the effects of the judgment have been stayed, TfL has no immediate plans to remove any of the existing schemes pending an appeal and at present, the schemes implemented as part of the London Streetspace Plan and in response to the Guidance are still lawful.

Lewisham has previously committed to reviewing the Lewisham and Lee Green low traffic neighbourhood, which will consider whether any amendments should be made in relation to taxi access.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 43**

**Priority 2**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Jane Alaszewski

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

**Question**

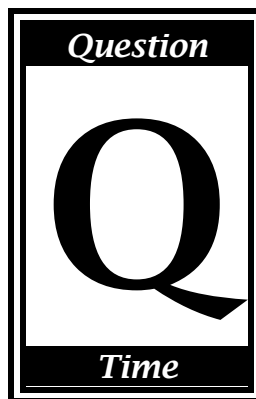
Which current ANPRs can exempt drivers' access?

The council has stated it will install cameras on Upwood, Manor Lane north and Woodyates. Will exempt drivers be able to access these roads once the physical planters are removed?

**Reply**

The current policy, as stated on the Council [website](#), is that Lewisham blue badge holders can apply for a vehicle exemption to drive through our Low Traffic Neighbourhoods camera enforced road closures. This includes Dermody Road, Ennersdale Road, Manor Park, Manor Lane and Leahurst Road.

The same exemptions that apply to the existing camera enforced locations in the LTN will be extended to apply at the new locations of Upwood, Manor Lane north and Woodyates Road, when fully operational. These exemptions will be kept under regular review.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 44**

**Priority 3**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Mark Bennett

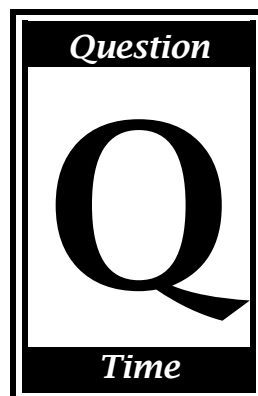
Member to reply: Councillor Bell

**Question**

Who is responsible for adding a consultation to the Consultation Hub on the Council's website and at what point in the consultation process is a consultation supposed to appear in the hub? The Housing Allocation Scheme Policy Review was opened on 27.11.2020 and is scheduled to close on 14.03.2021. On what date was it publicly available in the hub?

**Reply**

The consultation can only begin once it is available on the Consultation Hub. It was made publicly available on the Hub at 6pm on 27.11.2020. The Policy and Governance team is responsible for adding a consultation to the Hub.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 45**

**Priority 3**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Julia Webb

Member to reply: Councillor Bourne

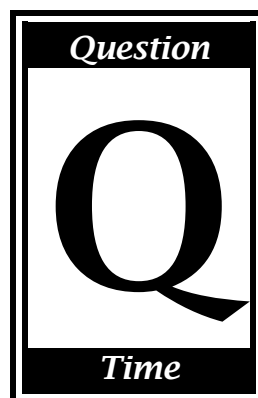
### **Question**

Given that Lewisham cannot afford to reopen The Bridge Leisure Centre after lockdown, it is important to secure the building and prevent deterioration while we search for funding.

Is the council considering meanwhile use for the site, to cover the next two years? That would keep the building heated and ventilated, and secure from intruders. It would work as a decant site for OLSPN school, or for Sydenham Green Group Practice, when they redevelop their surgery. It would make an excellent covid-19 screening venue, or an astonishing facility for organisations like St Andrew's Amateur Boxing Club, currently operating from the bowls pavilion at the Livesey Hall. Please don't waste this useful building while the long term decisions are on the back burner.

### **Reply**

The Council is committed to exploring all options for the building in the future and is already in contact with several local sports groups to explore whether they could access the building during the period of closure. However, there are extremely high fixed costs when opening a building of the age of the Bridge and these may be prohibitive for the majority of users. Notwithstanding this Officers will consider any reasonable proposals that come forward and activity explore other options.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 46**

**Priority 3**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Patricia Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor Bonavia

### **Question**

CommonPlace seems to be taking a greater and greater part in Lewisham council affairs.

Would the council please explain what departments of the council it is part of? Does it have statutory and/or legal powers to enact policy and who at the council decides what that policy should be before being passed on to CommonPlace to deal with it? Can it be held to account through the democratic process, if so, how? Is the staff at CommonPlace regarded as local authority staff, by employment, salary, pensions? Or, is the employer regarded as another body?

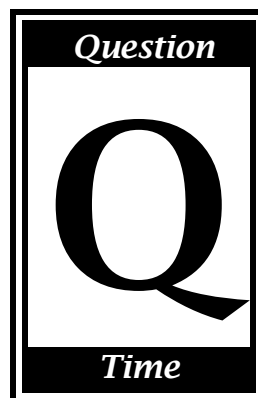
As CommonPlace appears part of the local authority level of government how is it funded and can the council admit what are its costs for using CommonPlace?

### **Reply**

Commonplace is a consultation tool which allows local residents to submit their views and feedback via a website and in map format.

The tool is used across a range of Council departments including Communities, Transport, Planning and Regeneration but it has no policy input and no power or influence over any decisions. It is simply a tool that the Council uses for collecting the views of its residents.

The cost for unlimited use of Commonplace across the Council is £50,000 per year.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 47**

**Priority 3**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Paul Lomax



Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

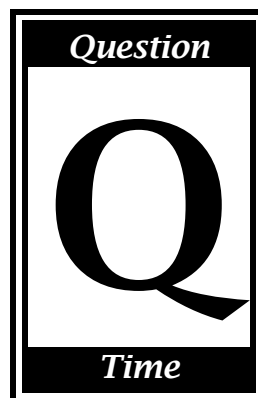
### **Question**

It has been reported in Private Eye that the barriers are causing delays to London Ambulance Services, and the letter from a paramedic says somebody may have died of cardiac arrest following such a delay in Lewisham. In previous meetings councillors asserted that emergency services carry keys to the bollards. We now know from FOI requests that this was not true and LAS do not carry keys, and that they do not approve of any physical barriers. Will these issues be properly investigated? Would you consider a public enquiry before you propose making this scheme permanent?

### **Reply**

The issue of access by emergency services is discussed at regular meetings between Lewisham officers and the emergency services, where they have the opportunity to raise any issues or concerns. To date no significant concerns in relation to response times have been raised. In addition there is a London liaison meeting between TfL, the emergency services and borough representatives and we have requested that the issue relating to Paramedics' ability to report issues is raised at the next meeting.

Lewisham has previously committed to reviewing the Lewisham and Lee Green low traffic neighbourhood and access by emergency services and the impact on response times will be part of the review.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 48**

**Priority 4**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Mark Bennett

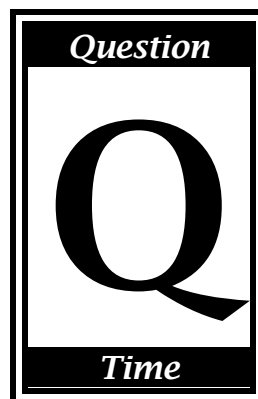
Member to reply: Cllr Bonavia

**Question**

30 minutes are allocated to public questions at Council meetings. How can the person chairing the meeting ensure Councillors answering a question do not speak at length unnecessarily and thus waste time? Can the chair add time to the allocated 30 minutes to compensate for the time wasted by Councillors waffling?

**Reply**

The Speaker has the authority to manage the meeting subject to the arrangements prescribed by the Council's Constitution, which sets a time limit of 30 minutes for any supplementary questions. Within that timeframe, should the Speaker consider a Councillor or questioner to be taking unreasonable time to answer or ask a question, he can take appropriate action to ensure the prompt and effective delivery of the meeting.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 49**

**Priority 4**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Chris Francis

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

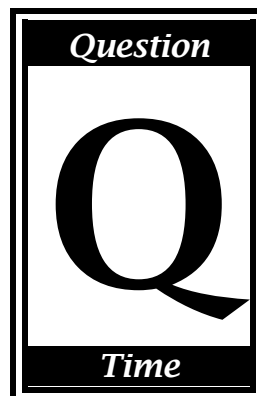
**Question**

FOI response Reference No: 6951737 states in response to the request of 'Any minutes covering the decision to impose said congestion and pollution on members of the electorate as an acceptable cost for the LTN.' that the information is 'not held'.

I therefore ask the Councillors who made that decision for the record.

**Reply**

The decision to implement the Lewisham and Lee Green Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) was taken under delegated powers by the Executive Director (Housing, Regeneration and Public Realm) and the Head of Highways and Transport.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 50**

**Priority 5**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Chris Francis

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

### **Question**

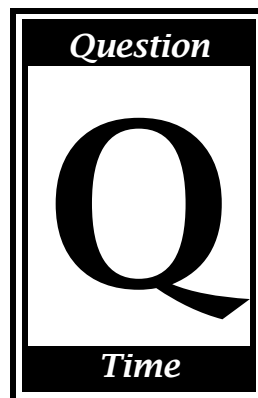
FOI response Reference No: 6951737 states that in response to the request for any information on 'Any debate on the ethics and legality of imposing such impact on the surrounding populations without consultation' only answers with details of the Legal Implications and consideration of consultation not the decision itself.

I therefore ask the Council if they are willing to host an independently moderated public debate on the ethics of displacing congestion and pollution from one part of the borough to another before any decision are made on the future of the Lee Green LTN.

FOI response referenced is  
here [https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/data\\_and\\_decisions\\_on\\_imposing\\_a#/incoming-1718089](https://www.whatdotheyknow.com/request/data_and_decisions_on_imposing_a#/incoming-1718089)

### **Reply**

Lewisham has previously committed to reviewing the Lewisham and Lee Green low traffic neighbourhood and as part of this a public consultation will be undertaken in May 2021. This will enable residents from inside and outside of the low traffic neighbourhood and other interested stakeholders to express their views on the scheme. The feedback from this consultation will be used to inform a decision on the future of the scheme.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 51**

**Priority 5**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Patricia Richardson

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

### **Question**

This evening (16 February 2021) at about 7.20 pm 2 police vehicle with blue flashing lights were blocking Manor Lane Terrace as they could not get out of the dead end, yet again.

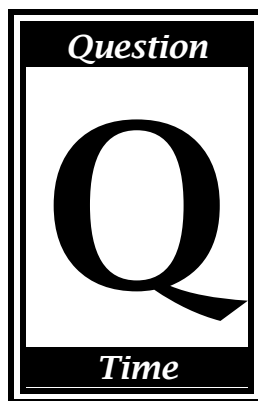
Since 29th June 2020 this has been a regular occurrence, sometimes it is ambulances. Over the past month there have been more occurrences than ever. This is regularly reported to the council, officers and councillors by residents but is met with utter disregard.

Can the council explain why this is allowed to happen? Does it keep records of these events? Do the emergency services involved keep records? Have they informed the council what is happening? Do they inform their own managers what has happened? If records are kept can we see them?

### **Reply**

The issue of access by emergency services is discussed at regular meetings between Lewisham officers and the emergency services, where they have the opportunity to raise any issues or concerns. To date no significant concerns in relation to response times have been raised.

Lewisham has previously committed to reviewing the Lewisham and Lee Green low traffic neighbourhood and access by emergency services and the impact on response times will be part of the review.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 52**

**Priority 3**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**



Question asked by: Caroline Kurup

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

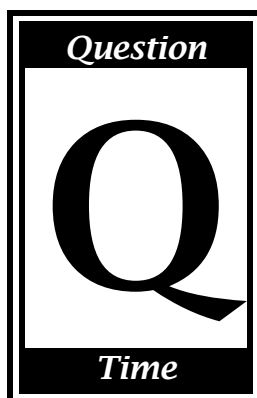
**Question**

Why is the data from September, at the L51 site on the South Circular marked as “missing” in the Air quality Monitoring Report: Lewisham and Lee Green Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN)?

**Reply**

The locations marked as “missing” in the LTN Air Quality Monitoring report are locations noted to have been vandalised during the site visit undertaken for the replacement of diffusion tubes.

Unfortunately, vandalism of diffusion tubes have occurred frequently during this year’s monitoring regime and this was especially pronounced across London during the lockdown as confirmed by most London Local Authorities officers during the recent South London air quality steering group meeting.



**PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 53**

**Priority 3**

**LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM**

**COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Mary McKernan

Member to reply: Councillor John Paschoud

**Question**

Does the Chair of the Strategic Planning Committee consider that the committee "acts out a charade" when it meets? This is the full quote from a recent public statement by Cllr Leo Gibbons-Plowright "I am sitting in Lewisham Council's planning committee. On a usual night, I would sit in faint bemusement as colleagues act out a charade".

**Reply**

**No.**

But I'm grateful to Ms McKernan for her interest in my personal opinions and my own subjective feelings about the experience of meetings of the Strategic Planning Committee, so to possibly save her the trouble of asking me a supplementary question on this topic (although one is of course always welcome), I offer the following fuller insight - formed by sitting as a member of various Planning Committees of Lewisham Council for most of the years since 1994.

I find many aspects of the role of a councillor in Lewisham really worthwhile and fulfilling. Being part of the processes of Urban Planning of our borough and our environment is one of the best bits of that, for me, because it's a way of directly influencing how that changes - and trying to make it better for people. It's one of the best ways I know of working "For the Many, not the Few". But it's also one of the most responsible and scary bits - because what we allow someone to build, or demolish, or change can go on dominating the environment of those who live or work or play around them for years or even lifetimes to come. I've been doing it for long enough that I can walk around most parts of the borough of Lewisham and think, "That looks just as nice now it's built, with dozens of families enjoying their homes in it, as the artist's impression that convinced us to permit it"; or, "I'm really glad we stopped the developer adding another ten stories onto that, it would have been really oppressive but now it fits in rather well"; or, sometimes, "However were we persuaded to let someone build that?". It's also one of the best illustrations of that old adage, "You can't please all of the people, all of the time". There's a lot of subjectivity about the architecture different people like or dislike, whether they have to live, work or go to school in it or just see it every day.

Councillors have to adopt different roles and different mindsets to do different parts of our jobs. Making Planning decisions is one of those where we act in a much less unified and collective way than for many others. We have to each make up our own minds. We may help in the process of persuading each other to reach a point of view and a decision, but we are strictly forbidden from following any political party whip, or reaching a judgement before we have seen and heard all of the reasonably available evidence - and then separated out the issues that are allowed to influence a Planning decision from all of those that are not, and thought of how we can explain the reasons why we've reached that decision, to anyone who wants to challenge it.

I'm sure Councillor Leo Gibbons (whom I happen to have first met when he was quite a small boy) has thought just as deeply and carefully about his role in the Urban Planning process as I have, even at this relatively earlier stage of his career in it. He has reached his own, different conclusions and personal opinions about some parts of it. I enjoy debating the differences between us with him, and I can respect his opinions without having to agree with them all. I read the whole of the article by Cllr Gibbons to which you refer, some time before your question was passed to me. I thought that some of it was really interesting and insightful; but I disagreed strongly with the parts that (I thought) were supporting the 'algorithmic' approach now being aimed at by the current Tory Government, described in their "Planning for the Future" white paper of Autumn 2020. I was involved in drafting and completely endorse [the Council's formal and detailed response to that, a copy of which I have appended to this answer for you.](#)

The current Government Secretary of State responsible for Planning, Robert Jenrick MP, might believe that there is little or no value in local authorities - arguably more in touch with local people than he is - spending so much time and effort carefully reaching each of these decisions. Reading (or quoting) parts of the article by Cllr Gibbons, out of context of the whole of it, might lead you to believe he feels the same way as Robert Jenrick about Planning, and thinks some of his time at Planning Committees, often far too late into the night, is wasted. But I'm as sure as I can be that Cllr Gibbons has never sat next to someone at a Conservative Party fundraising dinner, had a conversation about a multi-million pound property development in which that person is involved in a London borough, accepted a large cash donation to his own political party from that person, and then personally granted Planning permission to that property development. (Neither, for the record, have I.)

I'm also absolutely sure that Leo Gibbons feels passionate about Urban Planning, as I do. If we didn't, neither of us would bother to think or write about it. The fact that we are comrades in the same party group of the same Council doesn't mean we have to think the same things about it; nor that disagreeing about it has to make us enemies. I may have a great deal more faith (despite being notoriously cynical about many things) than Leo does, that locally elected representatives *should* play a significant role in regulating development and our environment. But I also think it's important that they (we) strive to be as good at it as we possibly can be. And of course, whatever the forms of words he uses, he does not speak for anyone except himself, and he may not be very good at detecting the thought processes behind the faces of others - either around a committee table or on a computer screen. I think I may have seen the behaviour he describes a few times - and I may even have been guilty of it once or twice over so many years. As Chair of Lewisham's Strategic

Planning Committee I have made several changes to procedure and I am discussing with Council officers more ways in which we could inform, improve and structure the decision-making process by councillors - who are not meant to be Planning or architectural professionals - to minimise the formal constitutional procedural 'performance' needed and reach robust and well-reasoned decisions that are demonstrably democratic. I have high hopes that I can help to inspire Leo in the future to have as much enthusiasm for that part of his role as I do; and what we discuss and what he writes can be a valuable sounding-board of how the process works - and which parts of it don't work so well.

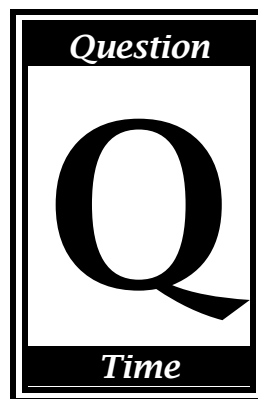
But I genuinely think that what we do in Lewisham's Planning committee meetings - informed by our impartial, professional officers and by the written and verbal evidence from those people who bravely approach us - has made countless developments better than they would have otherwise been. Sometimes by us rejecting them or deferring decisions so developers 'get the message' and can have the opportunity to negotiate substantial changes, and sometimes simply by adding conditions that either legally bind a developer to really deliver what they hint they might, or to carry out the work in a way that reduces the inevitable nuisance to neighbours, to something more tolerable. When you're talking about something that may be there, as a landmark or an eyesore, for the next 100 years, it pays to take your time.

I am awfully glad that the circumstances of my life, and the support of so many people around me have allowed me to do something like this: The family members and friends who have put up with all the time I've spent on it - and probably my grumpiness when a decision hasn't gone the way I thought it should. The Labour Party comrades who have selected me to be one of their candidates to stand for election. The voters of Perry Vale ward, and Forest Hill ward before that, who have voted to have me as one of their councillors, every time I have stood for election. The fellow councillors who have voted for me to take on the even more awesome responsibility of being Chair of one of their Planning Committees. The dedicated and really hard-working officers in our Planning Team (and the committee clerks and lawyers and IT technicians and Civic Suite attendants and all the rest who are needed too).

And most especially the many applicants and objectors who have come to make each of their cases at "the scary end of the table" - with trepidation, with enthusiasm, with passion, with anger, with homemade visual aids to show councillors just how high a wall will look, from their house. And sometimes with compelling and convincing arguments which change the minds of me, and enough of my fellow councillors, so that we see good reasons to vote against the rational and reasoned recommendations of our advisers, and explain why. And then the world is changed. Just a little bit, for the better.

I think that's far from a charade, and I'm glad I'm privileged to play such a part in it.

Appendix: [London Borough of Lewisham response to the Planning for the Future White Paper](#)



PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 54

Priority 3

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

## **COUNCIL MEETING**

**3 MARCH 2021**

Question asked by: Chris Francis

Member to reply: Councillor McGeevor

### **Question**

On the 10th August Councillor Rathbone publicly stated

We always anticipated short term increases in the surrounding area whilst the scheme was constructed and established. The data, traffic modelling and experience from elsewhere suggests that this isn't permanent and goes away once traffic has adjusted.

Similarly I ask what exact data and modelling the Councillor is referring to that led him to 'anticipate' the move of traffic from one set of residential roads to another and what is the Councillor's exact meaning of 'short term' noting that that, according to FOI response (Reference No: 6951737) , "No 'evaluation of the validity of the comparison' was undertaken"

### **Reply**

When a road closure is put in place, motorists will respond in different ways. Some will re-route onto alternative routes, some will change the time at which they travel, some will switch to more sustainable modes such as walking or cycling, some will change their destination, or others won't travel at all. It is therefore reasonable to expect that initially some traffic will move to other roads. We have also learned from other boroughs, such as Waltham Forest, that there has been an overall reduction in traffic as a result of the borough making residential streets safer for walking and cycling by eliminating rat-runs.

Typically short term would mean three to six months, however, the current context is complicated as a result of a volatile background of traffic patterns, the easing and tightening of lockdown restrictions and people having reduced confidence in using public transport. This means that the initial settling period may be longer than under normal circumstances.

