



LIST OF MEMBER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Member questions and answers for the Council Meeting of the London Borough of Lewisham to be held on Wednesday 20 July 2022.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 1

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Harding

Relevant Directorate: Chief Exec's

Member to reply: Councillor Brenda Dacres

Question

How many homes in Lewisham have been lost to Right To Buy between 2018-2022

Reply

The total number of properties sold under the Right to Buy scheme between April 2018 to March 2022 is 234. The breakdown is as follows: -

2018 to 2019 : 86 properties

2019 to 2020: 43 properties

2020 to 2021: 42 properties

2021 to 2022: 63 properties

I believe that the Right to Buy policy has a detrimental impact on the number of social homes in our borough and the UK. We support more funding for more social homes from the government. As a Labour council we will continue to fight for safe and affordable homes for every resident.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 2

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Eiles

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

I would like to submit the following question to Louise Krupski in July's full council meeting:

Tackling toxic air pollution is a priority of this administration. What is Lewisham doing to make Lewisham's air cleaner?

Reply

The Council has recently had its Air Quality Action Plan (AQAP) agreed by Lewishams Mayor and Cabinet. This is an in-depth document that is required by the Greater London Authority (GLA), as part of London's statutory plans, to fit in with National measures to tackle air pollution. A summary of this document in a more readable format is available for residents, businesses and other interested parties. The plan lays out our aims and ambitions for the next five years as a baseline, as follows:

Continuation and expansion of our Air Quality Monitoring programme.

- Will assist to identify parts of the borough most affected by pollution.
- Will allow the Council and partners to consider actions to improve the air quality in these areas, and includes the introduction of new air quality monitors and real time monitoring.

Reduce emissions from developments and buildings

- Working to minimise emissions from existing buildings and new developments, this includes policies, enforcement, an awareness campaign and engagement with businesses, residents and other partners.
- Included in this are projects based on tackling indoor pollution, including an awareness campaign on wood burning and working with landlords to ensure that private-rented accommodation follows legal requirements on the environment alongside enforcement of those who breach air quality based legislation.

Public Health and Awareness Raising

- The Council, Lewisham's Clinical Commissioning Group (CCG) and other partners will continue to raise awareness about the causes of air pollution, measures that are being taken to reduce harmful emissions, and steps that residents, businesses and organisations can take to help improve air quality.

- The Council will work closely with the Clinical Commissioning Group, GPs and pharmacies to raise awareness of the health impacts of air pollution within local communities, to help reach vulnerable residents, who are most impacted by air pollution.

- Alongside this are plans around improved Air Quality for schools which link with the further introduction of schools streets.

Supporting vulnerable people

- Specific measures have been included that focus on protecting vulnerable people in our action plan.

- This includes the prioritisation of schools, care homes, hospitals and lower-income areas for air quality monitoring and support schools to help children walk and cycle more, through initiatives like free cycle lessons, and encouraging them to gain STARS accreditation.

Transport and Travel

- The work that the Council is doing to deliver the borough's Transport Strategy and Local Implementation Plan will also contribute to improving air quality.

- One of the objectives of the strategy is that travel by sustainable modes will be the most pleasant, reliable and attractive option for those travelling to, from and within Lewisham.

- Introduce more Electric Vehicle charging points across the borough, increase the number of cycle hangars and improve the council's fleet.

- Champion the use of cargo bikes and other non-direct combustion powered delivery vehicles.

- Enhancing our campaign and enforcement around our anti-idling message to road users.

- Supporting the further extension of the Mayor for London's Ultra Low Emission Zone (ULEZ).

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 3

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Shrivastava

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

As the 2022 London Borough of Culture, what have been some of the highlights so far for Lewisham? What else can we expect over the next 6 months and are you able to share your thoughts and plans on how we can ensure this year of culture leaves a lasting legacy for the borough?

Reply

The first 6 months have seen a diverse programme ranging from a Creative Careers Fair designed to help young people find their way into the creative industries, a small grants programme that supported communities and businesses to develop their own events in every ward, to two music festivals showcasing the Borough's music scenes. Most recently the internationally renowned Sun & Sea production at the Albany attracted wide media attention and sold out audiences as part of the Climate Emergency programme.

The next six months will feature a wide range of opportunities for all of Lewisham's communities to join in events, ranging from the first People's Day for several years on July 16th, to a new programme of family friendly activities in places like libraries, parks and shopping centres throughout the summer. Coming up are: the Liberty Festival (22-24 July), showcasing the work of d/deaf, disabled and neuro-diverse artists; Climate Home, a youth-led temporary venue and festival; the Beyond Borders music programme, featuring outdoor and family festivals; and Close to Home, the culmination of local participation throughout the year for the UK's largest Black-led mass dance event. More details at <https://www.wearelewisham.com/whats-on/> Work on a lasting legacy was a fundamental part of the Borough of Culture planning, and work continues to cement both a physical and cultural legacy within the Council and across community organisations.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 4

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Olaru

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Juliet Campbell

Question

Lewisham is a proud Borough of Sanctuary, with many people from all corners of the world finding the home and safety that they needed here. Could the Cabinet Member inform us regarding how many households have stepped forward to help and how many Ukrainian citizens have moved to Lewisham through the Homes for Ukraine scheme?

Reply

We are pleased and proud that over 300 sponsors have made themselves available for Ukrainian citizens. It's not possible to give a precise number for Ukrainian citizens that have arrived in Lewisham, I can however, confirm that a total of 253 citizens have arrived in Lewisham through the Homes for Ukraine scheme.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 5

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Johnston-Franklin

Relevant Directorate: Children & Young People

Member to reply: Councillor Chris Barnham

Question

The draft Play Strategy aims to highlight the opportunities for play across the borough. The vision for this is that all children will have a variety of supervised and unsupervised places to play within walking distance of their home. The strategy outlines various options to work at improving, updating and funding play spaces in the borough. However, it does not mention about the maintenance and conditions of the Adventure Playgrounds and the need to look at the play offer provided for children and young people. Embedding a strategy and implementing recommendations will take time to arrange but meanwhile there is currently one Adventure Playground situated in Ladywell Fields that has been closed for some considerable time due to roofing problems. Could an update be provided on :

- 1 The repairs that are required to meet health and safety standards
- 2 The cost of the repairs
- 3 The planned reopening of the playground

Reply

Play is crucial to children's development and wellbeing. That's why I'm proud of the commitment we made in our May Labour manifesto to:

"Launch a ground-breaking Play Strategy, to support children's quality of life, wellbeing and development, creating a new long term investment programme to refurbish or replace all Lewisham's play areas"

The strategy we are developing is intended to set in motion a five-year plan to put Lewisham on track to be a borough leader on play. Of course, not everything can be achieved at once, but the strategy will set out what can be done within a short to medium term, set ambitions for going further, and take stock of opportunities and barriers for doing so.

Following the approval of the Play Strategy (due to go to Mayor and Cabinet in October 2022) an action plan will be developed to detail the recommendations coming out of the strategy. Among other things, this will include proposals for our existing adventure playgrounds. Lewisham is one of the leading London boroughs for adventure play, and we want to continue our commitment in that area.

I expect the detail of any necessary repairs and costs for existing playgrounds, including that in Ladywell Fields, to be drawn out during the action planning stage of the strategy. In the meantime, far from being closed, I'm pleased to note that our partner organisation Youth First plan to run an extensive programme of activities at the Ladywell playground over the summer period. The nearby Ladywell Centre is being used for the indoor delivery.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 6

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Royston

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

Establishing district heat networks in Lewisham is a critical way of ensuring we reduce carbon emissions from buildings. Can the Cabinet Member update us on the rollout of district heat networks across the borough in recent years, and of any future plans for heat networks?

Reply

In 2020 the Council completed an Energy Masterplan <https://lewisham.gov.uk/-/media/files/imported/accessible-lewisham-energy-masterplan.ashx?la=en> which assessed the potential for district energy to contribute to decarbonising Lewisham. This study identified three opportunity areas in Catford, Lewisham Town Centre and an extension in Deptford of the existing plans to connect the South East London Combined Heat and Power facility (SELCHP) and the development at Convoys Wharf.

Three detailed technical economic assessments of these opportunity areas have recently been completed with funding from the Government's Heat Network Delivery Unit and will be published on the Council's website shortly. This work will support ongoing discussions with developers in these locations and bids for further funding to support delivery.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 7

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Tam

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Brenda Dacres

Question

Community members, including colleagues here, have been and are being told very differing answers on the plans for the Thames Path as part of the Convoys Wharf development. As local ward Councillors, we are concerned that it should be accessible, well upkept, inclusively and sustainably designed and open as soon as possible. Can we restate our Council's position on this so as to be unequivocal about our expectations for the site?

Reply

The Outline Planning Permission granted in 2015 secured the continuation of the Thames Path along the riverfront of the Convoys Wharf site. The S106 agreement linked with the Outline Planning Permission secured this as a Publicly Accessible Route and it is a conditional requirement of the permission that the developer provide details of the Thames Path extension prior to submission of Reserved Matters Applications for any of the riverfront plots. The Council supports the Thames Path extension through the site and will continue to engage with the developer to ensure timely delivery of this important route.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 8

Priority 2

Question asked by: Councillor Royston

Relevant Directorate: Children & Young People

Member to reply: Councillor Chris Barnham

Question

In addition to its use by local schools, what is being done to enable greater public access to and use of Whitefoot Fields, in order to provide the widest possible benefit to the local community?

Reply

Officers are currently working with potential funding partners in relation to improving the facilities at Whitefoot Lane Playing Fields. The facilities themselves are designated under planning policy as School Playing Fields so the main priority area and majority of use is by local schools, however we do currently have 4 other community based users that access the facilities out of school hours, including 2 football clubs, an archery club and American football. We hope that funding can be obtained to enable improvements that will allow further intensification of the use of the site with a particular focus on community use whilst not being detrimental to the core school users.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 9

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Lahai-Taylor

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor Brenda Dacres

Question

Can you confirm if Lewisham will be celebrating Black History Month this year and, if so, what can we expect?

Reply

Yes. As part of the Council's strong commitment to recognising the diversity of our Borough we will be working with partners to deliver a range of activities through services like libraries as well as providing opportunities for community organisations to lead their own activities. We will of course also be connecting up with events being planned for the month through London Borough of Culture such as A Caribbean Couturier in Lewisham – a project that will explore the forgotten textile legacies of the women of the Windrush Generation through design collaborations. In response to the #morethanjustamonth message developed by the council's black staff forum we are also ensuring that activities take place throughout the year such as Pioneers and Protests by IRIE! dance theatre and the Sybil Phoenix Exhibition in the We Are Lewisham unit in Lewisham Shopping Centre

<https://www.wearelewisham.com/event/sybilphoenix/>

I am also delighted this Council administration has a manifesto commitment to bring artists, community groups and businesses together to launch a Black Arts Festival – with the aim to make it an annual event.