



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 28 September 2022.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 1

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Cooper

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

What action is being taken to mitigate the impact of the Rotherhithe Movement Plan on traffic and congestion in the north of Lewisham, especially roads in Evelyn ward that border the new initiative in Southwark?

Reply

We continue to liaise with Southwark who consulted Lewisham on their plans in 2019. The Council's response to Southwark's plans was generally in support of the principle, however we raised some concerns about the detailed proposals, most notably their plans for the gyratory in the vicinity of Trundleys Road, which according to Southwark is currently on hold. We will continue engagement with Southwark on these matters.

Lewisham have completed our portion of Cycleway 4 and later this year a report will be presented to Mayor and Cabinet, setting out the Council's strategy and programme for the roll-out of controlled parking zones across the borough where they do not exist. The strategy will include resident and business engagement exercises, which will help shape any detailed proposals.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 2

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Warner

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councilor Sophie Davis

Question

Can an update be provided on the progress of the Lewisham Homes consultation?

Reply

Engagement events to shape the consultation took place throughout August on estates and in the community. The consultation documents and response questionnaires were sent out to all tenants and leaseholders and arrived in homes during week commencing 12 September. Drop-in support sessions are taking place from 22nd September across the Borough to provide assistance and support to tenants and leaseholders in responding. There will also be selective telephoning and visits to encourage and assist tenants and leaseholders to respond, which will be targeted at underrepresented groups and seldom heard groups.

The consultation will end on 16 October.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 3

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Jackson

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councilor Sophie Davis

Question

What action is Lewisham Council taking to tackle rogue landlords and the proliferation of poor-quality lettings in the private rented sector in the Borough?

Reply

In April 2022 the council introduced a borough-wide additional HMO licensing scheme. All Houses in Multiple Occupation in the borough are now licensable. The Private Sector Licensing and Enforcement Team are actively seeking out unlicensed HMOs, bringing them into licensing and fining or prosecuting landlords who do not comply. Approximately 900 large HMOs are also licensed by the council under the national mandatory HMO licensing scheme.

The service is also carrying out its statutory duty to respond to resident complaints about disrepair, harassment and illegal eviction in the wider private rented sector. In 2022 the council successfully prosecuted two landlords for allowing a tenant's ceiling to collapse, resulting in a £4,000 fine. A number of other cases are progressing through the courts.

The council recently consulted on the introduction of a selective licensing scheme to cover 16 out of 18 wards, bringing nearly all privately rented properties in Lewisham into the scope of licensing. The results of the consultation will be presented at the next Housing Select Committee meeting.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 4

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Ingleby

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councilor Sophie Davis

Question

Is the revenue from the Council's HMO Licence Fees hypothecated, to help build up resources for the considerable enforcement requirements that this sector can & does generate? Is there therefore a business plan for dealing with the still increasing amount of HMO applications and their management in Lewisham?

Do the Council's HMO Licensing Conditions specify garden maintenance responsibilities (eg at least every six weeks) by the licensee, their agent or their tenants, and can there be overall Key Performance Indicators in the agreements that can be used to hold to account licensees?

Reply

The council has set the additional HMO license fee at the correct level to fund the enforcement of the scheme for the full five year term of the licenses issued. This figure includes assumptions about new HMOs that will come into existence during the life of the scheme. The council has a statutory obligation to spend the income from licensing only on the administration and enforcement of the licensing scheme. We are also obliged to spend this income during the lifetime of the scheme, meaning that the council cannot legally make a profit on the proceeds of the licensing scheme.

The Private Sector Licensing and Enforcement Team are currently working to expand the team to fully resource the administration and enforcement of the scheme.

The additional HMO license conditions do not specify the need for garden maintenance, because this is already set out in the HMO management regulations 2006, section 7.4.(b), which apply to all Houses in Multiple Occupation.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 5

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor A Sheikh

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

Myself and co Councillor Huynh have been approached by residents to enquire what are the plans to refurbish Lewisham library and restore it as the community hub, and what is the proposed timeline for these plans?

Reply

Thank you, Councillor Sheikh, for your work representing residents of Lewisham Central on the matter of Lewisham Library and its regeneration. You and I both share a passion for Libraries as we know the value to communities that they afford. As the new Cabinet Member for Libraries I am committed to working towards finding solutions for Lewisham Town Centre Library & Archives, and securing them in the long-term.

As a Council we are exploring all options for the redevelopment of Lewisham Library, including funding through the central government as well as possible Council capital expenditure. However, following 12 years of Conservative Government austerity, the ability for Councils to fund capital projects directly themselves has declined, with an ever greater reliance on central government funding.

Since May the Council have identified funding, produced a strong and coherent funding bid, and applied for funding for the Library in your ward through the Government's Levelling Up Fund. This was agreed at Mayor and Cabinet in June 2022

(<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s100224/Levelling%20Up%20Fund%20Bid.pdf>)

A decision on the Levelling Up Fund was expected in September 2022 but has been subject to delay because of the recent changes in central government. As a contingency to the LUF bid, I continue to work with Council Officers to identify and develop an options appraisal for the Library, and how we can invest in it as an asset.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 6

Priority 1

Question asked by: Councillor Huynh

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

With residents facing a tough winter of high energy prices, does the council have any plans to identify council-owned buildings, and other community locations, to serve as 'warm banks' as has been done in our neighbouring borough of Greenwich?

Reply

The Council has a programme of work to mitigate the impacts of the cost of living crisis covering work around food justice, maximising income and energy advice which includes work to develop a network of warm spaces in the borough for residents to use over autumn/winter. Planning is taking place with the Council library service and partner organisations in the first instance to develop the network.

The lead Cabinet Member is happy to provide further information.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 7

Priority 2

Question asked by: Councillor Cooper

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

What progress is being made in rolling out Controlled Parking Zones across Lewisham, in light of several bordering areas of Southwark having full CPZs implemented this winter?

Reply

Later this year a report will be presented to Mayor and Cabinet setting out the Council's strategy and programme for the roll-out of controlled parking zones across the borough where they do not exist. The strategy will include resident/business engagement exercises, which will help shape any detailed proposals.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 8

Priority 2

Question asked by: Councillor Ingleby

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

Was an equalities impact assessment with regard to the banding of car parking charges done before car parking charges were introduced at Beckenham Place Park? The question has arisen in the context of older, cheaper cars potentially owned by those who cannot afford newer, more environmentally friendly vehicles being charged more for more polluting models at present. How did the assessment wrestle with this issue?

Reply

An Equalities Analysis Assessment was completed in Dec 2019 for the introduction of an emissions-based charging scheme. The scheme was proposed to promote the shift to more sustainable transport modes.

It had been determined that it was likely to benefit protected groups who are disproportionately exposed to negative externalities such as air quality impacts and who are also likely to benefit from health impacts associated with active transport.

The assessment acknowledged that whilst there may be impacts to persons on low incomes as a result of this scheme, as they are not a protected group they have not been considered in this assessment.

Equally, the increased cost of pay-and-display parking would still be significantly cheaper than the lowest rates in neighbouring boroughs - £2.80 across much of RB Greenwich and between £2.75 and £6 across LB Southwark.