



LIST OF PUBLIC QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Public questions and answers for the Council Meeting of the London Borough of Lewisham to be held on Wednesday 28 February 2024.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 1

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Alan Hall

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

As LGBT+ History Month in February 2024 comes to a close, how will Lewisham Council review this and how much funding is to be allocated in the budget 2024/5 for any LGBT+ community activities for the financial year ahead? Please include all sources of funds.

Reply

The programme of cultural events is reviewed annually and allocated a budget; the review is based on the range of cultural events that the Council has agreed to support over the year, how funding was allocated in the previous year, and best spread of the available budget across the range of cultural events to ensure equity. In 2023/24 we ran a small grants programme for LGBTQ+ history month worth £5,000 and further provided a range of communication support throughout the month. It is intended that this allocation will continue for 2024/5.

The source of the cultural events budget is the General Fund.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 2

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Charlotte Bilciffe

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

We have received the generic response both in emails and in person when asking Lewisham Council to call for a cease fire, the underlying theme seems to be that we need to understand the difference between the government and the council.

If this is so, isn't part of the council's job to pass on the views, needs and wishes of the constituents. Your constituents want their voices asking for justice and peace to be heard. Will you allow our voices and demand to be heard and make it clear that Lewisham wants to be on the right side of history again and calls for a ceasefire!

Reply

Due to currently being in the pre-election period (PREP) for the upcoming Mayoral By-Election, Lewisham Council's communications activity is legally restricted. PREP guidance states the Council cannot publish any material that appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party or candidate.

This guidance restricts what I can say in this written response and any verbal response to a supplementary question posed at the Full Council meeting on 28th February.

I have been horrified by the loss of life of both Israelis and Palestinians following the events of recent months in Israel and Gaza – my thoughts are with everyone affected by this conflict, both in the region and here in Lewisham.

Our role at the council is to ensure that those affected by the conflict in our borough are brought together and supported.

The council has developed a dedicated web page on its website which directs residents to support services available both locally and nationally
<https://lewisham.gov.uk/articles/news/support-for-people-affected-by-the-middle-east-crisis>

The council will continue to work with its faith and community groups to establish what more can be done to bring communities together and offer support to those who continue to be affected.

I refer the questioner to my response given to council questions on this matter on 17 January 2024.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 3

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Rashid Irshad

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

Will Lewisham council condemn Israel as it has Hamas and now call for a ceasefire as the ICJ has requested of Israel to protect Palestinians and to afford them safety.

Reply

Due to currently being in the pre-election period (PREP) for the upcoming Mayoral By-Election, Lewisham Council's communications activity is legally restricted. PREP guidance states the Council cannot publish any material that appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party or candidate.

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I refer the questioner to my response given to council questions on this matter on 17 January 2024.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 4

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Grace Thompson

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

Will Lewisham Council condemn Israel as it has Hamas and now urgently call for a ceasefire as the ICJ has requested of Israel to protect Palestinians and to afford them safety?

Reply

Due to currently being in the pre-election period (PREP) for the upcoming Mayoral By-Election, Lewisham Council's communications activity is legally restricted. PREP guidance states the Council cannot publish any material that appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party or candidate.

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PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 5

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Alan Hall

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Councillor Paul Bell

Question

HM Government has updated its Guidance to support local authorities and their partners to deliver effective health scrutiny on 9th January 2024. Will Lewisham Council outline how this will be considered?

Reply

The guidance removes the ability of local health overview and scrutiny committees (HOSCs) to formally refer matters to the Secretary of State where they relate to reconfigurations of local health services. The Secretary of State themselves will have a broad power to intervene in local services - and Lewisham's HOSC (the Healthier Communities Select Committee) will have the right to be formally consulted on how the Secretary of State uses their power to "call in" proposals making reconfigurations to local health services. The terms of reference of Lewisham's Healthier Communities Select Committee will be updated in due course to reflect this change, which became effective on 31 January 2024. Other aspects of health scrutiny remain unchanged – Local HOSCs remain statutory consultees on reconfigurations; and health and care providers are required to engage with them as they do currently. The power to require representatives of NHS bodies to attend formal meetings; the power to get information from NHS bodies; and the power to require NHS bodies to have regard to scrutiny's recommendations also remain. The Healthier Communities Select Committee will engage with commissioners and providers when notifiable reconfigurations are under development; continue to work with Local Healthwatch; and where appropriate, help co-ordinate / support an appropriate request to the Secretary of State for intervention. The guidance reiterates the importance of health scrutiny principles (being outcome focussed, balanced, inclusive, collaborative and evidence informed). The guidance suggests that these principles will need to play a strong part in the redrafting of local memoranda of understanding between HOSCs and health system partners – and when our health and social care scrutiny protocol is updated, these principles will be central.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 6

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Jean Branch

Relevant Directorate: Corporate Resources

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

What service contracts has the Council awarded to, renewed or extended with Fujitsu or its subsidiaries since December 2019? Please specify the service provided, contract value and end date?

Reply

The Council has not been in any service contracts with Fujitsu or its subsidiaries since December 2019.

Our Shared Technology Partner (STS) purchased two Fujitsu Siemens document scanners in the financial year 2019/20.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 7

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Jean Branch

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

Which housing associations attended the last partnership working meeting and when is the next one scheduled?

Reply

The next partnership meeting is scheduled for April 2024. The following housing associations attended the last partnership meeting held in December 2023 : L&Q Group, Hyde Housing, Phoenix Community Housing, Hexagon Housing Association, Notting Hill Genesis, Peabody Housing Association, Southern Housing Group, Clarion Housing Association, Wandle Housing Association and Housing for Women. The meeting was also attended by Pinnacle Group who manage around 1,800 homes on behalf of the council under the Brockley Private Finance Initiative.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 8

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Josh Lucas Mitte

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor Juliet Campbell

Question

With regard to my question (12 of July 2023) when will the Council publish its response to the Lewisham Disabled People Commission report of March 2023 and the Equal Pavements Pledge?

Reply

The Council responded to the Lewisham Disabled People's Commission report on 6 December 2023, in a paper which was published on the Council's website and approved by its Mayor and Cabinet. This response noted that "The Council are additionally considering the Equal Pavement Pledge, and assessing the viability of the commitments contained within it. At present, this cannot be committed to as a result of the financial implications on the Council and businesses, but it remains under consideration."

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 9

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Josh Lucas Mitte

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

What progress has the Council made in ensuring EV charging points it has installed are next to parking bays that are exclusively for the use of electric vehicles (PQ3 of 12.07.23 refers)

Reply

The Council have adopted a strategy for Lewisham's electric vehicle infrastructure implementation plan 2023-2026, which can be found in [Highways and Transport Appendix](#). This is being used to develop a policy for electric vehicle charge points.

There are currently 244 electric vehicle charging points throughout the borough that will be reviewed and dedicated bays will be implemented. As part of the Sustainable Streets programme, the Council will also be installing further dedicated bays in Catford and Deptford. The Council will be consulting on other areas later this year.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 10

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Kate Richardson

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

In response to PQ52 of 27.09.23 about mobility issues when accessing trains from Catford Bridge due to traffic restrictions in Adenmore Road the Council said it would publish by the end of the year a review of access to all railway stations across the borough. Where will I find it on the Council's website?

Reply

The responsibility rests with the relevant rail companies. The Council has previously pressed for the requested information through the Transport Liaison Forum and will follow it up at the next Forum in March.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 11

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Kate Richardson

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

Due to residents concern around HMO developments across the borough especially in the south, when will residents have access to the updated HMO register taking into account the new rules around Article4 on HMOs?

Reply

The HMO register has not been recently updated due to the implementation of a new licensing IT system. Once the data is migrated into the new IT system, we will be able to provide a full up to date HMO register, that will be updated in real time as we make decisions on licences. This will include licences issued under the Mandatory and Additional Licensing Schemes. We are aiming to have the data migrated and the system implemented in April 2024.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 12

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Rohit Tiwari

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

It seems the Council has stopped enforcing pavement parking restrictions pending the roll-out of its Controlled Parking Zones. How many penalty notices for pavement parking has the Council issued in each of the last three years? Please provide the figures for each year separately.

Reply

The Council takes pavement parking very seriously and continues to enforce against erroneous pavement parking. The table below provides information on the number of penalty charge notices issued across the borough over the last three full years. To assist, the public may contact the Council's enforcement line on 0208 787 5397 to report contravening vehicles.

Calendar Year	No of Penalty Charge Notices (PCNs) Issued*
2021	1125
2022	857
2023	1033

*This is Inclusive of PCNs issued to vehicles parked wholly or partly parked on footway, cycle track, verge on a footway, verge or land between two carriageways, central reservation or footway comprised in an urban road.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 13

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Rohit Tiwari

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

How has the Council exercised its newly acquired discretion and increased the penalty charge for fly-tipping which is a growing nuisance in the borough?

Reply

The Council intends to use the discretionary increase for fixed penalty notices for fly tipping as soon as possible. The increased amounts, as indicated in the table below, will shortly part of the annual Fees and Charges process.

As normal, and to assist with educating the public on the expectation of the Council's determination to reduce fly tipping, the increased fixed penalty charges will be promoted as part of an awareness campaign before the introduction of the increased charge.

The Council will continue to tackle the minority of people who continue with this anti-social behaviour that is unhygienic, unsightly, and unlawful.

Offence	Previous maximum amount	New maximum amount	Early payment discount
Fly tip - more than a small car boot load	£400.00	£1000.00	£650.00

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 14

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Mark Morris

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

Camden Council has successfully used its planning enforcement powers to require the removal of 19 redundant phone kiosks on Tottenham Court Road. In Lewisham there are many phone kiosks which are often vandalised and some are not even working. Redundant phone kiosks can attract flyposting and other anti-social behaviour, while also adding to street clutter. Will Lewisham Council consider using its planning enforcement powers and ability to negotiate with TfL to remove any redundant phone kiosks, especially in areas where there is currently a high number of phone kiosks, such as between Lewisham Broadway Theatre and Lewisham Hospital?

Reply

The phone boxes which Camden Council had taken enforcement action, were subject to a planning condition that required their removal in the event that they were no longer in use. As the phone boxes were no longer in use as functional telecommunications equipment, Camden Council were able to take enforcement action for their removal.

Should a similar situation arise in Lewisham, the Planning Service would be able to take enforcement action as that would be a breach of planning control.

We will of course look at this matter further if the author can provide specific details of the phone boxes not in use and officers will also explore putting into place a way for residents to share the locations of phone boxes with us that they believe not to be in use so that we can investigate further with a view to enforcing.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 15

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Mark Morris

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

Lewisham Mayor and Cabinet papers from the 24 January 2024 set out that the Catford Regeneration Partnership Limited (CRPL), which is a wholly owned company of Lewisham Council, faces post COVID levels of arrears of rent and service charge in the region of £1.2M, which is posing a challenge to the cashflow of Catford Regeneration Partnership Limited. Please state how many tenants currently do not have repayment plans in place and what level of arrears is in total owed by these tenants.

Reply

There are nine tenants with arrears, eight of which have repayment plans in place and the Company is in advanced discussions with the remaining tenant to arrange a re payment plan.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 16

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Marcus Mayers

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

Concerning Q16 of 22.11.23 what efficiency savings has the Council identified to cover the cost of bringing Lewisham Homes in-house? Please specify the amount to be saved and in which area of expenditure using the headings in the Expenditure summary on page 106 of the Council's 2023 accounts.

Reply

Since the transfer of Lewisham Homes into the council on 1st October 2023 we have worked over the last 4 months to make a number of efficiency savings based on the merger of corporate functions. This has delivered £131k of in-year savings, with a further £167k in progress. These savings fall under the header: Supervision and Management - General Expenses.

We have also improved contract management and how we allocate works to our repairs contractors. This will deliver better value for money and efficiency savings going forward but this has not yet been quantified.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 17

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Marcus Mayers

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

When did the Council first become aware that its wholly owned subsidiary, Lewisham Homes was failing tenants and leaseholders?

Reply

Prior to bringing Lewisham Homes back in house, Lewisham Homes reported their performance to the council via contract management meetings and to the council's Housing Select Committee.

Therefore, the challenges that Lewisham Homes was facing in terms of achieving Decent Homes Standard and delivering the repairs service in particular, were known and the council monitored the almo's performance.

These challenges are common to many social housing providers, especially those operating in London.

Once Lewisham Homes had transferred into the council, the difficult decision was taken to self-refer to the Regulator of Social Housing in December 2023, based on potential breaches of the Home Standard. This followed further data analysis and an understanding of ongoing challenges in achieving compliance with the current and impending consumer standards. We continue to work with the regulator on our repairs transformation programme and will continue to update residents on our progress with this.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 18

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Peter George

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

With reference to the answer to Q10 of 17.01.24, I'm aware that a number of people did not receive an email inviting them to submit a supplementary question. When did the Council check that its initial invitation had gone to all those concerned and what were the results?

Reply

All residents who had not requested a supplementary question before the meeting, received an email inviting them to ask a question.

Everyone who supplied their supplementary question before the meeting, received a response.

Two residents indicated before the meeting that they wished to ask a supplementary question but had not supplied their questions. We have since been in touch with both residents.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 19

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Peter George

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Councillor Schmidt

Question

Does the Chair of Overview & Scrutiny agree with Amanda de Ryk (Q11 of 17.01.24) that restricting the number of written questions Councillors can submit has been a success because the amount of time required to answer oral supplementary questions has not exceeded 30 minutes?

Reply

I do not believe the change has impacted our ability to scrutinise the Council, so yes, I would agree it has been a success. Asking questions in Full Council is an important tool that local councillors have in holding the Council accountable in a public forum. However, it is not practical or effective to use this mechanism for all the work that councils carry out in ensuring accountability. We have 7 scrutiny committees and 3 task and finish groups that all carry out public scrutiny. These are supported by work happening informally in meetings, briefings and via emails.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 20

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Mark Bennett

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Schmidt

Question

The Council has carried out consultations with the intention of creating new Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) that will cover the entire borough starting with Catford, Honor Oak Park & Deptford. When will Councillors review these consultations to consider their effectiveness including whether they are run in an ethical and competent manner?

Reply

The Council's Sustainable Streets programme set out a phased consultation approach to identify and prioritise areas across the borough that would potentially benefit from improvements and help encourage active travel. One of the measures proposed is the introduction of permit parking to help ensure parking is managed and regulated fairly, whilst ensuring parking congestion is reduced.

All such consultation results are considered by the Council's Mayor and Cabinet Committee for decision. Results of the consultations that were carried out across the Catford / Crofton Park and Deptford areas in early 2023 were reported to Mayor and Cabinet Committee, as part of the agreed Council decision making process, on the 19th July 2023. It was agreed that the Deptford, Honor Oak Park and Ravensbourne Park areas be taken forward.

The report also set out the Council's commitment to review any new measures introduced after a period of approximately six months to help identify any potential issues. This can be found within the recommendations of the report. Any changes or improvements will be considered at this time.

A link to the 19th July Mayor and Cabinet has been provided below.

[Lewisham Council - Agenda for Mayor and Cabinet on Wednesday, 19th July, 2023, 6.00 pm](#)

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 21

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Mark Bennett

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

What proportion of the Council's housing stock is known to suffer from damp / mould and what proportion of category 1 or 2 cases receive a mould wash within 24 hours of being identified?

Reply

There are currently 601 open damp and mould cases in the council's housing stock of circa 13,800 homes. This constitutes around 4.3% of homes.

We have just mobilised a stock condition survey that will provide a full dataset on the number of homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard, including homes where damp and mould may be an issue.

We are in the process of identifying category 1 and category 2 cases under the Health and Housing Safety Rating System in order to better prioritise remedial actions, including mould washes within 24 hours where required.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 22

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Patricia Richardson

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

In 2001 the then residents of Lewisham were asked in a postal referendum to choose whether to have an elected Mayoral system of local government. The result from a low turnout was a very small majority in favour.

Since then, 23 years ago, the population has increased considerably and the demographics have changed.

Is there any way in which the council could consult its current electorate to determine whether this system of local government should continue?"

Reply

Please see the notice below from the Chief Executive and Electoral Registration Officer which can be found on the councils website -

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/mayorandcouncil/elections/the-electoral-system>

Any petition which meets the threshold set out in the notice would trigger a local governance review.

"In accordance with the Local Authorities (Referendums) (Petitions & Directions) Regulations 2000 and the Local Authorities (Referendums) (Petitions) (England) Regulations 2011, I am giving notice that the number equal to 5% of the number of local government electors shown in the electoral register for the authority's area, as of 15 February 2024, is 10,127 electors.

The number published above shall be used for verification purposes in relation to any petition presented to us in the period of 12 months beginning with 1 April 2024. [*]

Jennifer Daothong
Chief Executive and Electoral Registration Officer
London Borough of Lewisham
Laurence House
Catford
SE6 4RU

[*] Where the number published in any year is less than the number published in the preceding year, the number to be used for verification purposes, in relation to any petition presented to the authority in the period beginning on the date of publication of the lesser number and ending immediately before 1 April in that year, shall be that lesser number." The council has no plans to review this model of governance.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 23

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Patricia Richardson

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

As the Lee Neighbourhood Forum link to be notified of planning applications in the designated LBN Forum area, i.e. Lee Green Ward and part of Blackheath Ward, the notifications have not been consistent for quite a period of time, in spite of the Forum reporting back on this glitch in procedure.

If the Forum is officially recognised by the electorate in the coming Referendum, Thursday 15th February 2024, it will be even more important that the glitch is ironed out. Will this be done?"

Reply

The Planning Service has recently identified the anomaly in our software that reverts to the historic and now incorrect email address. Whilst we explore a solution to the software, an interim measure has been taken to manually check each application in Lee Green and Blackheath wards on a weekly basis to ensure correct consultation of applications. We apologise for this inconvenience but for now will be ensuring that the correct communications will be made whilst our software providers find a permanent solution.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 24

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Clare Terry

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

In March 2023 I notified Lewisham Homes of a leaking downpipe on the outside wall of my flat that is causing severe damp inside (Job Reference 5244079 refers). How long should it take the Council repair leaks that could resolve the damp problem?

Reply

The service standard is that the repair to a downpipe should be completed within a 20 day timescale.

The Repairs Service accepts that there were significant delays in carrying out this repair with the target completion date moving from November 2023 to February 2024 for a range of reasons including the implementation of a new housing management system and contractor capacity. The works have now been scheduled and the resident advised.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 25

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Janet Hurst

Relevant Directorate: Children and Young People

Member to reply: Councillor Chris Barnham

Question

I appreciate that 67% of SEND appeals upheld (Q15 of 17.01.24) is lower than the national average. It is however still a high failure rate and implies unnecessary stress for the parents & carers involved as well as being a waste of public money. At the very least, how does the Council intend improving its review procedures to identify cases that are likely to be won on appeal and therefore best settled before going to tribunal?

Reply

I appreciate the pressures families can face when children need additional support in education. We are committed wherever possible to resolving issues through mediation, avoiding families having to appeal unnecessarily to the formal Tribunal.

Tribunal appeals have increased nationally (for example, by 29% in 2021-22 compared to the previous year). The appeal rate for Lewisham has been below the national rate (1.6% nationally in 2021, while 1.3% for Lewisham).

Where appeals are made, the Council's SEN Team works with the Tribunal Officer on reviewing the decision making on a case-by-case basis to ensure robust reviews and decision making processes are in place for these cases.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 26

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Janet Hurst

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

Where on the Council's website will I find the report referred to in Q5 of July 2023 concerning road safety improvements?

Reply

The evidence-led approach to improving road safety mentioned in the response to Question 5 of the July 2023 Council meeting was referring to the road danger reduction assessment and prioritisation methodology. This was adopted as policy following approval by the Mayor and Cabinet on 19 July 2023 and it is used to assess and prioritise all locations where concerns have been raised by local residents, community groups, and elected members, including smaller residential streets.

The methodology gives priority to areas based on a number of factors, including personal injury collisions, speeds, traffic volumes and any other local features such as proximity to schools, when making decisions about where the Council's limited available funding is spent. More information on that methodology can be found at Section 4.4 and Appendices D and E within the attached report.

<https://councilmeetings.lewisham.gov.uk/documents/s110853/Highways%20and%20Transport%20Capital%20Programme%20report.pdf>

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 27

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Khalil Malouf

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

In the past 127 days, Israel has killed over 27,000 Palestinians in Gaza, some 13,000 of which are children. This is over 1% of Gaza's population, the equivalent to 3,000 people in Lewisham killed or 97,000 Londoners killed. They have blocked aid, creating disease and a chronic shortage of medical supplies, establishing conditions for hundreds of thousands more Palestinians in Gaza to die of preventable illnesses, according to public health experts. What is the number of Palestinians in Gaza that need to be killed before Lewisham Council will call for a ceasefire?

Reply

Due to currently being in the pre-election period (PREP) for the upcoming Mayoral By-Election, Lewisham Council's communications activity is legally restricted. PREP guidance states the Council cannot publish any material that appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party or candidate.

This guidance restricts what I can say in this written response and any verbal response to a supplementary question posed at the Full Council meeting on 28th February.

I have been horrified by the loss of life of both Israelis and Palestinians following the events of recent months in Israel and Gaza – my thoughts are with everyone affected by this conflict, both in the region and here in Lewisham.

Our role at the council is to ensure that those affected by the conflict in our borough are brought together and supported.

The council has developed a dedicated web page on its website which directs residents to support services available both locally and nationally

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/articles/news/support-for-people-affected-by-the-middle-east-crisis>

The council will continue to work with its faith and community groups to establish what more can be done to bring communities together and offer support to those who continue to be affected.

I refer the questioner to my response given to council questions on this matter on 17 January 2024.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 28
28 February 2024

Question asked by: Stephen Locke

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

I have been told that the Council is planning to replace all street litter bins with a new fox-proof design. In our ward (Crofton Park) these are urgently needed. What is the timetable for this project, and when is the target completion date?

Reply

The Council is working towards providing litter bins with a type that have a closed top. These bins will allow waste to be deposited but will have a small aperture to deposit waste in which should deter foxes.

Once a new design is agreed, litter bins will be replaced as and when required and on a case by case basis. Wholesale roll-out is currently not planned due to budgetary constraints.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 29

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Stephen Locke

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

How does the Council intend consulting residents about the location of replacement bins and for getting feedback on the effectiveness of the rollout as the project proceeds?

Reply

The Council is working towards providing litter bins with a type that have a closed top. Once a new design is agreed, litter bins will be replaced as and when required and on a case by case basis. Wholesale roll-out is currently not planned due to budgetary constraints.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 30

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Richard Elliott

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

What is the overall cost to Lewisham Council of concessionary fare schemes and how much of that is met from parking fines and charges?

Reply

In 2022/23 the overall cost to the Council of concessionary fares is £7m. The total of parking fines and charges is £5.9m, which was used to subsidise the £7m concessionary fares.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 31

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Margaret Clarke

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

What role if any does the Council envisage for co-housing communities and how does it support their creation?

Reply

The Council's Housing Strategy 2020-2026 commits the Council to delivering the homes that Lewisham needs. The Strategy states 'We will ensure that the diversity that makes Lewisham so strong is reflected in our housing with mixed communities and a variety of tenure types' which could include co-housing communities. The UK Co-housing Network defines co-housing as follows : 'Co-housing communities are intentional communities, created and run by their residents' and they include homes for ownership and rent and for a variety of demographic groups, so they would fit with the strategic commitment set out above. However, the Strategy is clear that the priority for the Council given the ongoing housing crisis, rising levels of homelessness and current housing register demand, is the development of social housing as this is the tenure that offers the greatest affordability and security and can best meet these needs.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 32

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Margaret Clarke

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

Does the Council currently use or have plans to use digital 3D representations (also known as mirroring) in development control and highways planning?

Reply

The Planning Service use software called “Vu.City” which is a digital 3D modelling tool designed to assist officers in assessing the impact any proposed development may have on the surrounding area in terms of design, impact on heritage assets and impact on neighbouring amenity.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 33

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Gina Raggett

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

The Blackheath Village library at Age Exchange has 1) No access to computers; 2) No study space; 3) Limited after-school openings – currently 3 days a week for a total of 7 hours if a volunteer is present. Does the council have plans to improve this wholly inadequate provision?

Reply

The library area within the Reminiscence Centre has a volunteer present for 24 hours per week at these times:

Monday 9:00AM-12PM & 2PM-5PM (6 hrs)

Tuesday 9:00AM-12PM & 2PM-5PM (6 hrs)

Wednesday 9:00AM-12PM (3 hrs)

Thursday 12PM-2PM & 3PM-5PM (4 hrs)

Friday 9:00AM-12PM & 3PM-5PM (5 hrs)

However, the Centre is open Mon-Fri 8:30AM-5PM and Sat 10AM-4PM, that is 48.5 hours per week, when the library collections remain fully accessible to visitors.

The Reminiscence Centre offers numerous seats across the building, which are often used by visitors who use their own laptop for research and/or work.

The council is in regular conversation with Age Exchange about the library provision at the Reminiscence Centre, which is about to undergo some reorganisation of the space to improve the user experience and better promote the wider library offer. We will share further details about this in due course.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 34

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Gina Raggett

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

The Council's website claims that EcoCommunities are still running Grove Park and Crofton Park libraries. This contradicts previous announcements. Can the council please provide an update as to what the future holds for these libraries?

Reply

The Grove Park community Library reopened in January 2024 and successfully celebrated the 70th anniversary of the building, with community activities and visitors. The organisation responsible for this library is S&B Childcare.

Crofton Park Library is now run by V22 and operating as usual.

The related web pages have been updated and reflect the correct tenant information.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 35

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Chris Maines

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

How many (by ward) Electric Vehicle charging points are there in the borough and how many are projected to roll out over the next 12 months ?

Reply

There are currently 244 publicly available EV charge points within Lewisham. A link to locations can be found below, and unfortunately the Council does not keep a ward by ward record at this time.

<https://chargefinder.com/en/london/charging-station/gked88>

The council is planning to deliver a further 39 EV charging points via the Sustainable Streets programme and is currently assessing various models and applying for additional funding to increase these numbers further. This number may increase based on the rolling programme for Sustainable Streets.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 36

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Sophie Hodson

Relevant Directorate: Children and Young People

Member to reply: Councillor Chris Barnham

Question

What steps are the council taking to ensure children in socially deprived areas of Lewisham aren't further disadvantaged by school redundancies in the current school funding crisis.

Reply

Funding for Lewisham schools – as for all schools in England - is largely determined by a national funding formula and not by the Council.

The biggest factor in school funding relates to pupil numbers. In recent years we have unfortunately seen a decline in the number of primary age school admissions (although admissions to our secondary schools continue to be more healthy). As funding is determined by a national formula set by central government, the ability of the Council to direct funding to more socially deprived areas of the borough is limited.

The Council is very aware of the financial challenges facing Lewisham schools. School governors are responsible for financial management in their schools and the Council has been supporting schools to set 3-year rolling budgets. As part of the budget-setting process by schools, each will consider opportunities for longer term sustainability, with redundancies very much a last resort.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 37

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Andra McMillan

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

Brenda Dacres said at the last council meeting that the council 'will be focussing on residents in Lewisham' and will 'continue to work with our faith groups, community groups' in Lewisham. So far, 27 local community groups have signed the open letter backing a ceasefire statement and pension divestment. Will Lewisham council listen to these community groups and back the same demands?

Reply

Due to currently being in the pre-election period (PREP) for the upcoming Mayoral By-Election, Lewisham Council's communications activity is legally restricted. PREP guidance states the Council cannot publish any material that appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party or candidate.

This guidance restricts what I can say in this written response and any verbal response to a supplementary question posed at the Full Council meeting on 28th February.

I have been horrified by the loss of life of both Israelis and Palestinians following the events of recent months in Israel and Gaza – my thoughts are with everyone affected by this conflict, both in the region and here in Lewisham.

Our role at the council is to ensure that those affected by the conflict in our borough are brought together and supported.

The council has developed a dedicated web page on its website which directs residents to support services available both locally and nationally
<https://lewisham.gov.uk/articles/news/support-for-people-affected-by-the-middle-east-crisis>

The council will continue to work with its faith and community groups to establish what more can be done to bring communities together and offer support to those who continue to be affected.

I refer the questioner to my response given to council questions on this matter on 17 January 2024.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 38

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Shezara Francis

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

Brenda Dacres said in response to several questions that she was horrified by the death of Palestinians and had joined David Lammy in calling for a 'cessation to hostilities' in Gaza, or in other words, a ceasefire. If this is the case, when will she make a statement in favour of this?

Reply

Due to currently being in the pre-election period (PREP) for the upcoming Mayoral By-Election, Lewisham Council's communications activity is legally restricted. PREP guidance states the Council cannot publish any material that appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party or candidate.

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I refer the questioner to my response given to council questions on this matter on 17 January 2024.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 39

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Michael Bachmann

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

In October 2023 we asked the Council to collect surplus wheelie bins at York House in Sydenham (CAS-3865541-G3X2D9 refers as well as follow up in December CAS-3928199-N2R8K9 and January CAS-3946636-P7L8T9). The bins have still not been taken away. How has the service review referred to in Q31 of 28.09.22 affected the Council's ability to collect surplus wheelie bins from residents?

Reply

The Council apologises for the delay. A collection has been scheduled by 20th February and the collection service will be reviewed to improve service times.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 40

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Michael Bachmann

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

Before he resigned, when did the previous Mayor last meet the local Met commander and what was discussed?

Reply

The last meeting between the Mayor and the BCU Commander took place on Wednesday 4th October. I refer the questioner to the response given on this matter (PQ17, 17 January 2024).

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 41

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Lee Powell

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

What percentage of Catford Regeneration Partnership Ltd tenants are up to date with both their rent and service charge payments; and how much is now owed in unpaid rent and service charges?

Reply

57% tenants are up to date with both rent and service charge. Currently the portfolio is owed approximately £1.3M in commercial rent and service charge.

Repayment plans are in place for the majority of those in arrears with one tenant in advanced discussions to arrange a repayment plan.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 42

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Lee Powell

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

Is Lewisham council legally required to recover the loans it has made to Catford Regeneration Partnership Ltd and if so, when does it expect Catford Regeneration Partnership Ltd to start repaying those loans?

Reply

Lewisham Council is required to recover any loan it makes to third party organisations. To this end, it has been working closely with CRPL to regenerate the wider Catford Town Centre, although this remains in the pre-development stage. In the development stage the Council does not have to make any provision to repay its own borrowing until the assets have been re-developed and ready for use. This has allowed the Council to grant a repayment holiday to Catford Regeneration Partnership Ltd (CRPL).

The Council has agreed that CRPL can have a further repayment holiday until 2026 as they finalise the plans for the Catford Town Centre Regeneration

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 43

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Amy Humphries

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Deputy Mayor Dacres (Acting as Mayor)

Question

Over 28,000 Palestinians have been killed by Israel in Gaza in what the ICJ has called a 'plausible genocide'. A petition calling for a ceasefire statement and divestment from the council's pensions scheme away from complicit companies and companies funding other human rights abuses and war crimes has gained over 1K signatures. Will the council commit to these demands now?

Reply

Due to currently being in the pre-election period (PREP) for the upcoming Mayoral By-Election, Lewisham Council's communications activity is legally restricted. PREP guidance states the Council cannot publish any material that appears to be designed to affect public support for a political party or candidate.

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The council has developed a dedicated web page on its website which directs residents to support services available both locally and nationally
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The council will continue to work with its faith and community groups to establish what more can be done to bring communities together and offer support to those who continue to be affected.

I refer the questioner to responses given to council questions on these matters on 17 January 2024.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 44

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Peter Richardson

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

A previous answer from council confirmed that the cannon installed at the Manor House Garden, Lee were in the ownership of the council. As the cannon carriages now need reconstruction and the cannon seem to fall under the clauses of the Lease and so the responsibility of V22 Foundation is there no way the council could contribute funding to the tenant who is trying to raise funds to complete the restoration?

Reply

While the ownership of the cannons remains with the council, V22 are responsible for their upkeep and more generally for the safety of visitors to the House.

V22 understand that the cannons are worthy of new mountings and are working, with a local building contractor, to have the situation addressed.

Whilst the council is not in the position to allocate funding directly to this project, we will continue to review and explore the opportunities for external funding.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 45

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Peter Richardson

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

The Lease and Service Agreement signed between Lewisham Council and V22 Foundation to run the library service in the building and buildings at the Manor House Lee contain many clauses for maintenance and upkeep of both the interior and exterior of the building. It is noticeable that since the completed restoration of 2009 there are now signs of wear and tear, and damage to plaster work, paint work, and general deterioration. Under the Lease and Service Agreement does the Council have its own duty to examine what needs to be done and if so when was this last carried out?

Reply

Council officers visit the building regularly and are aware of the programme of works that V22 has in place to adequately maintain the building.

In fact officers were impressed by the restoration work that completed very recently on the upper ground floor, which sensitively restored the paintwork within the West End extension.

V22 have a maintenance programme, through which the Baring Room was redecorated in 2022, as were the lights. Room 1 was decorated while the work at the upper ground floor was being carried out. All the internal doors are due for assessment and repair where needed later in the year.

Substantially larger works would be subject to successful grant funding applications, which V22 would submit as part of a wider heritage bid to funders.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 46

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Julia Webb

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

.Now the 2-question limit has been in place for a while, there seems to be no reason why secondary questions and answers can't be formally recorded. We need a full and transparent record of statements made in council. Is the council prepared to do this?

Reply

Secondary questions and answers will be summarised in the minutes and a web cast of each full council meeting is available on the councils website.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO. 47

28 February 2024

Question asked by: Julia Webb

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

How many weeks during this year will councillors attend meetings? In particular, how many working weeks will there be between the end of the second run of electoral purdah, and the councillors' summer break? There seems to be a lot of political campaigning at home and around the country, and little attention paid to urgent casework.

Reply

Committee meetings are scheduled throughout the year. Most committees do not meet during the school summer holidays – for the academic year 2023/24 this is 26 July to 27 August inclusive - however regulatory committees continue to meet throughout the summer. The pre-election period for the Greater London Authority elections comes to an end on Thursday 2 May 2024. Many council meetings will continue during the pre-election period, as they have done during this pre-election period for the Lewisham Mayoral byelection. Committee meeting dates for 2024/25 will be agreed at the Council AGM on 27 March.