

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.1

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Sian Hill

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

The signs on Dacre Park for the School Street Scheme for St Margaret's Primary School have been replaced so I assume the scheme will now finally come into operation. The access to the Dacre Park allotment site is within the School Street area and when the signs were initially put up in April 2023 the Council's allotment team confirmed to me that plot-holders would not be eligible for an Exemption Permit and so effectively be denied car access to their plots when the School Street is in operation. Please can you confirm whether this is still the case?

Reply

Yes, this is the case.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.2

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Rashid Irshad

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Mayor Dacres

Question

When will Lewisham Council unequivocally condemn israel in the same way it condemned Hamas ?

Reply

As I said earlier this year, I have been horrified by the loss of life of both Israelis and Palestinians since the terrorist attack by Hamas on October 7th and the Israeli military response, the intolerable suffering of Palestinian civilians in Gaza and the ongoing treatment of hostages.

I agree with the Prime Minister that there must be an immediate ceasefire in Gaza, no escalation in the conflict, the return of all hostages and a recommitment to the two state solution: a recognised Palestinian state alongside a safe and secure Israel.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.3

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Phil Bridger

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

Lewisham Borough recently came bottom (of all inner city London boroughs) and dropped one place on the 2024 'Healthy Street Scorecard'. Key quotes include:

"Lewisham continues to promise much but deliver little." and "Again, we have high hopes that next year will see more rapid progress – or Lewisham will continue to fail its residents on Healthy Streets delivery, and concomitant issues of pollution, climate emissions, road danger, inactivity-related ill health, congestion and more."

Does the council agree with the assessment that it is failing residents on healthy streets and underdelivering on promises?

Reply

The Council is delivering an ambitious and progressive programme of improvements to improve the borough, support more sustainable travel, improve air quality and improve road safety. Lewisham has the single biggest LTN in London and has adopted a blanket 20mph speed limit, with improving cycle connectivity and improvements to bus journeys. Through the innovative Sustainable Streets programme the Council has an ongoing expansion of new Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) to complement existing ones. Unfortunately, not all the new CPZs were taken into account when the score was being calculated and the Council has raised this to Healthy Streets Scorecard and they have stated they will update the score at the next opportunity when they assess the next round. Lewisham has the most school streets of any London Borough; interventions which are expensive and officer capacity intensive. We are also rolling out a programme of crossing improvements outside schools which are not included in the Healthy Streets Scorecard despite the clear benefits to pedestrians and cyclists.

We are working hard with TFL to ensure we have more segregated cycle ways and we have just started work on doing this on Deptford Church Street. We have also put in many cycle contraflows which are not counted as part of this scheme.

In addition we have an extremely high level of tree planting in the borough, More trees on our streets encourages pedestrians to choose to walk as their routes have more shading and are more attractive. We have the highest survival rate of trees due to our very successful relationship with Street Trees For Living who ensure our trees are watered by volunteers. Again this is not a factor included in the Healthy Streets Scorecard.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.4

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Phil Bridger

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

In the context of it's much publicised 'Climate Emergency', the results of this year's Healthy Street scorecard and the resounding mandate given by residents at a Local, Mayoral and Constituency level, does the Council plan on being more ambitious in the next year to prevent itself coming last again?

Reply

The Council is delivering an ambitious and progressive programme of improvements to improve the borough, support more sustainable travel, improve air quality and improve road safety. Lewisham has the single biggest LTN in London and has adopted a blanket 20mph speed limit, with improving cycle connectivity and improvements to bus journeys. Through the innovative Sustainable Streets programme the Council has an ongoing expansion of new Controlled Parking Zones (CPZ) to complement existing ones. Unfortunately, not all the new CPZs were taken into account when the score was being calculated and the Council has raised this to Healthy Streets Scorecard and they have stated they will update the score at the next opportunity when they assess the next round. Lewisham has the most school streets of any London Borough; interventions which are expensive and officer capacity intensive. We are also rolling out a programme of crossing improvements outside schools which are not included in the Healthy Streets Scorecard despite the clear benefits to pedestrians and cyclists.

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PUBLIC QUESTION NO.5

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Patricia Richardson

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councilor Edison Huynh

Question

The Manor House, Lee, Old Road, SE12, is undergoing, and has undergone external maintenance.

What has been the cost of this maintenance and what parts of the exterior of the building have been treated since April 2023?"

Reply

There has been work carried out to the site, under the Corporate Estate Maintenance Programme, which started earlier this year. The exterior works have included timber repairs to the windows, painting of the windows and brickwork, painting of the pipework, new lead valleys, a new Dormer window, improvements to the drainage system. The CEMP spend for the whole site to date has been about £140k.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.6

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Patricia Richardson

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

Several residential properties in our area have seen the erection in back gardens (varying sizes) of what is termed as an office. These vary in size and height.

What policies does Lewisham council have on possible business use, impact on the area and changes in Council tax valuations?"

Reply

The creation of an outbuilding in a rear garden usually does not require planning permission, provided it meets size and location criteria set out in the General Permitted Development Order. Planning permission will be required where the primary residential unit is not a single dwelling house (i.e. a subdivided flat, or purpose built flat), or where permitted development rights have been removed (typically on newly built dwellings).

Planning permission is not normally required for home businesses provided the property remains primarily used as a private residence and that business activities do not result in a marked rise in people, traffic, or disturbance. The Council is supportive of home business where these do not result in unacceptable levels of disturbance to the surrounding area.

There is no policy in place covering this and all changes to Council Tax liability are decided by the Valuation Office Agency.

Planning permission is not required for most out buildings if they are permitted developments (i.e. 15 square metres maximum). Anything bigger than this would require planning permission.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.7

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Peter Richardson

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

Do residents building offices in gardens which are part of their residential property call in to question planning laws governing change of use and/or permitted development?"

Reply

The creation of an outbuilding in a rear garden usually does not require planning permission, provided it meets size and location criteria set out in the General Permitted Development Order. Planning permission will be required where the primary residential unit is not a single dwelling house (i.e. a subdivided flat, or purpose built flat), or where permitted development rights have been removed (typically on newly built dwellings).

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PUBLIC QUESTION NO.8

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Peter Richardson

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

I have been part of the development of Lewisham council's policy on S106, CIL and NCIL, both with local groups and attending council meetings/events over the years.

As this is finally coming to fruition I would like to know how the council measures feedback from the general public to indicate public awareness and participation in the choices for and distribution of large amounts of public money for the benefit of the various communities affected?

Reply

S106 and CIL processes are subject to governance arrangements which have been agreed by Mayor and Cabinet. The agreed governance sets out a threshold approach to allocating funding, delegating permission to the officer meeting to allocate smaller amounts, with larger allocations having to go through Mayor and Cabinet for approval. Applications to use s106 or CIL must demonstrate that they contribute to the corporate strategy and support existing infrastructure plans or department strategies which have been through appropriate scrutiny, including public consultation such as the Infrastructure Delivery Plan (IDP), The Local Plan, Parks and Open Space Strategy for example. We are also guided by infrastructure partners such as the Lewisham and Greenwich NHS trust for example, on how health contributions should be spent. All applications must also demonstrate that they meet the legal obligations set out in the s106 and/or the CIL regulations.

Developer contributions can be broken down into 3 broad areas:

- S106 contributions – Contributions to mitigate the impact of development. This is a legal agreement which tends to agree targeted contributions or works either close to or within the vicinity of the development. Because of the nature of these contributions the public are not involved in project allocation, except in specific circumstances. These being: where a constituted group seeks s106 monies through a Council Department to deliver a proposal in an adopted plan or in directly related to the group's purpose. For example, a Neighbourhood Forum seeking funds to deliver a proposal within an adopted Neighbourhood Plan or a Park Friends Group seeking to use play space monies within their park. Requests can be made through the relevant council department and are considered in the round with other requests and in discussion with the relevant Council department. The gateway consideration is whether the project would meet the legal obligations attached to the s106 sums. Other considerations include whether the project delivers on Council strategies, the Infrastructure Delivery Plan, the Local Plan and other adopted

plans or the Capital Strategy and whether the proposal is value for money, future maintenance implications, delivery timetable, etc

- Strategic CIL – Contributions to fund infrastructure to support development. This is a pooled pot which is then used to fund strategic infrastructure projects identified within the IDP, the Capital Delivery Programme and/or other endorsed strategies. The public are not involved in project allocation.
- Neighbourhood CIL – A proportion of CIL, (25% in Lewisham's case) has been pooled for Neighbourhood CIL. This is an opportunity for the Council to consult with and to receive project proposals from the local community to use funding from development to support infrastructure and revenue projects in their local area. Lewisham launched its second NCIL programme in July 2024 and the programme will provide up to 2 years of funding for a wide range of community projects. The opportunity to submit a project proposal to the Council or show support for a Council led capital project via the consultation portal closed on the 23rd September.

As part of the annual process of setting the Council's forthcoming Budget, the Council runs a consultation process which encourages residents and businesses in the borough to engage on the draft budget to seek feedback on their priorities to help shape its allocation of resources in the general fund budget setting process. This is then considered by the Mayor and Cabinet in its Budget Report for the forthcoming year.

Quantifying public engagement and satisfaction with the process is not straightforward as it covers a range of activities including prioritisation, application, assessment and, most importantly, delivery and on-going usage. Notwithstanding this, it is clear that there is significant public engagement with these processes as the most recent NCIL consultation has been one of the most engaged with over the past few years.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.9

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Carol Spurling

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councilor Edison Huynh

Question

Scaffolding has recently been erected on the front of the Manor House, Old Road, Lewisham SE13.

What is the purpose and cost of the works planned?

Reply

The scaffolding at the front of Manor House recently was to facilitate the repair and painting of the windows and the painted stonework. The cost for this work is approx. £10k.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.10

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Charlotte Bilcliffe

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Mayor Dacres

Question

When we have previously asked you to divest from companies complicit in war crimes you have answered that we need to understand the difference between the governments role and the councils role. However Lewisham Council had the autonomy and power to divest from fossil fuels, please can you explain this further ?

Reply

The point made in previous council question responses regarding the difference between the governments role and the councils role was not in relation to the matter of divestment, but in distinguishing that 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-eastcrisis>

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.

The only companies that the Council is directly invested in are its subsidiaries, Lewisham Homes Limited and Catford Partnership Regeneration Limited. Neither of these have any involvement in operations outside of the UK.

The Council's cash investments, via its treasury management activities, are all in branches of financial institutions registered in the UK, and as such are regulated and their operations must comply with UK law.

The Pension Fund is not Council monies, but rather funds administered and managed on behalf of the Fund members. The Lewisham LGPS is governed by Councillors appointed to the Pensions Investment Committee (PIC) by the Council under its Constitution. The primary duty of the Councillors appointed to PIC is their Fiduciary Duty. This means their foremost responsibility is to deliver for the members of the Pension Fund and not in their political interests.

Since 2018 the PIC has had a strong focus on how the Fund is invested responsibly. With a specific focus on lowering the exposure to fossil fuels and avoid holding stranded assets as the world moves to more sustainable energy sources. It also has

general responsible investing principles to avoid investing directly in arms, gambling tobacco and pornography (see Responsible Investment Beliefs – appended of the Fund's Investment Strategy Statement – and available here: [Lewisham Pension Fund Investment Strategy | Lewisham Pension Fund \(lewishampensions.org\)](https://www.lewishampensions.org)).

Since the events in Israel of the 7 October 2023, the pension team have contacted all our Pension Fund managers to confirm our compliance with these investing principles. In respect of investment in arms manufacturing, the fund managers have all replied they are confident none are directly supporting arms manufacturing.

However, three mandates, under the global passive listed company index tracking investment approach, invest in the Aerospace & Defence sector. The exposure to the Aerospace & Defence sector is just over 0.2% of the total Fund.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.11

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Mark Bennett

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

What percentage of homes managed by Lewisham Homes did not meet the Decent Homes Standard in (a) 2015/16 and (b) 2020/21?

Reply

The figures reported by London Borough of Lewisham for properties not meeting the Decent Homes Standard were:

2015/16 = 8%

2020/21 = 27%

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.12

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Mark Bennett

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Mayor Dacres

Question

What issues did the Mayor raise with the local Met Commander at their meeting that was due to take place before the summer recess?

Reply

The most recent meeting between the Mayor and the Borough Commander took place on Wednesday 31st July and the agenda items were:

- Live Facial Recognition
- Use of S35 and other powers to tackle ASB
- Recruitment Campaign
- Casey Review Progress
- Communication (particularly post incident communication)

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.13

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Marcus Mayers

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

Who will regularly carry out an independent assessment of the Council's housing service and when will their next report be published?

Reply

The Social Housing Regulation Act 2023 gave the Regulator of Social Housing the responsibility for regular inspections of all registered providers with over 1,000 units in England. The Regulator will assess Council registered providers against the Consumer Standards and will grade Councils from C1, the highest level to C4, where a provider would be non-compliant. This inspection programme started from April 2024 and a number of local authorities have been inspected and graded.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.14

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Marcus Mayers

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

Please provide an update on phases 1&2 of the improvement work on Milford Tower.

Reply

Phase 1 is completed. The works included:

- Roof replacement
- External and internal stairs painting and floor coating.
- Drainage
- New windows
- New kitchen and bathrooms
- Brickwork and balcony work.
- Phase 2 includes the following:
 - Stop Cock Replacement and Adaptation
 - Water Mains and Cold water down service
 - Works arising from fire risk assessment
 - Void flats (16 flats)
 - Communal windows on 5th and 7th floors.
 - CCTV
 - Lateral mains
 - Lining soil stacks
 - Gulley repairs to walkways
 - Door entry system
 - Lifts

The phase 2 works are progressing well, and the contractor is working to complete all works and interacting well with residents to obtain access where required.

The new door entry system was installed in May 2024 and went live in July 2024.

The watermains riser and cold water down service, and void refurbishment works are completed. The phase 1 lateral mains riser works were completed and the phase 2 is ongoing with individual properties (block by block) being transferred over to the new lateral mains.

Gulley repairs to walkways including landings, surface water drainage clearing and below ground floor drainage is 95% completed. Lining of the soil stacks cleaning and cctv camera survey including the repairs required is completed.

FRA works to 66no maisonettes, alarms have been fitted to 85% of the properties and the Housing management team is assisting with gaining access. The internal

door surveys are completed, and new internal fire doors have been ordered. Below each door fire separation works will also be carried out to separate the floors of each room.

Void properties 17no (622 burn out flat was added) the refurbishment works were completed in December 2023. The contractor is currently laying carpet which has also resulted in doors being planed.

The CCTV cameras is almost completed. Most of the cameras have been installed and system is due to go live end of October 2024.

The lift refurbishment and renewal works are currently taking place on site. Lifts LM145,146 are being replaced and 147 is a major refurbishment and are due to completed mid November 2024. For the remaining lifts updated programmes are due to be provided. However, currently all works are due to complete March 2025.

Installation of the Turrett Staircase windows is completed and making good on internals are due to commence. The external staircases windows on the fifth and seventh floor will commence shortly.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.15

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Margaret Clarke

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor Paul Bell

Question

Which of the recommendations have been fully implemented from the Eileen Dean Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) that was published on 11th November 2022 and when was implementation last reviewed?

Reply

Multiple agencies were given either all or some of the 13 Recommendations in the Eileen Dean Safeguarding Adults Review (SAR) Report.

From these agencies only the LBL Adult Integrated Commissioning Team and the South London and Maudsley NHS Foundation Trust have outstanding actions.

- LBL Adult Integrated Commissioning still have Recommendations 2 & 4 to complete.
- SLAM have Recommendations 1, 2, 4, 6 & 12 to complete.

There are links across the agencies because of the need to commission a new treatment pathway, and also links across the actions for SLAM as these are all inter-linked and also connected to the development of the new treatment pathway for Wernicke- Korsakoff's Syndrome which was a complex and lengthy process (this is currently in the trial phase).

Updates are requested and monitored every 3 months by the LSAB Case Review Sub-Group, and we are expecting the majority of this work to be fully completed during the Autumn of 2024.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.16

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Margaret Clarke

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

When the current work on Milford Tower has been completed, will all the homes on the estate meet the Decent Homes Standard?

Reply

The major works at Milford Towers cover a broad range of improvements across the estate and in communal areas that deliver benefits to residents outside of what would be classed as Decent Homes Standard. This includes building safety works, a new door entry system and upcoming improvements to lifts.

Stock condition surveys are currently being undertaken to give a full view of our asset base and to identify where properties require improvements internally. We will also be commissioning independent surveys on the properties at Milford Towers that are currently managed by Notting Hill Genesis. This data will enable us to identify properties that need internal improvements in order to fully comply with the Decent Homes Standard.

We continue to work with residents at the estate and regularly communicate updates with them. I will also be holding regular surgeries at Milford Towers from November to ensure we are responding to any ongoing resident concerns.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.17

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Janet Hurst

Relevant Directorate: Children and Young People

Member to reply: Councillor Chris Barnham

Question

How much has council spent in each of the last 3 years on residential care for young people?

Reply

We pledged in our 2022 manifesto to improve children's social care and to offer top-quality support for those children in our care. I'm pleased that progress in this has been strong, with Ofsted rating our performance Good across the board earlier this year.

The service does however face challenges, in common with most other local authorities. The number of vulnerable children with complex needs appears to be rising, following the pandemic and alongside economic pressures on families. This is compounded by the dysfunction and rising cost of a placements market dominated by profit-seeking private providers. A recent Local Government Association report noted a sharp increase nationally in the number of placements costing at least £10,000 per week.

Lewisham is not immune to such pressures. Residential care for children in care has cost Lewisham the following in the last three years:

£m

21-22 11.9

22-23 10.4

23-24 14.2

I am pleased that the new Labour government has pledged to introduce soon a Children's Wellbeing Bill, including measures to tackle profiteering in the children's social care placement market.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.18

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Janet Hurst

Relevant Directorate: Children and Young People

Member to reply: Councillor Chris Barnham

Question

In each of the last three years how much has the Council spent on early intervention measures for young people?

Reply

The total spend in the last 3 years on early intervention measures for young people in Lewisham is approximately £23m. This is the total spend in different areas such as youth services, youth justice services, targeted early help and children and family centres and includes grant contributions and partner contributions.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.19

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Sian Hill

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

The Leegate Centre now looks virtually empty so please can the Council confirm when the construction work will start and what their plans are to manage the HGVs going to and from the site so that they do not end up going through Blackheath Village?

Reply

The Leegate Centre is in private ownership. Planning permission will be issued once the S106 legal agreement has been completed and signed by the applicant, we expect this to complete in the next few weeks.

As the centre is in private ownership, we do not hold information regarding a planned construction start however, before construction can commence, the applicant will need to discharge pre-commencement conditions which include a construction logistics plan which will need to provide details of travel and traffic routes to and from the site along with details of the number and time of construction vehicle trips with the intention of reducing the impact of construction vehicle activity. The details will need to be submitted to the local planning authority for approval.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.20

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Peter George

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

How many low rise properties are there in the borough of Lewisham with unsafe plastic or other flammable cladding and how many of them are managed by the Council?

Reply

We do not have the information for the borough of Lewisham as a whole. The number of blocks that Lewisham Council manages with non-compliant cladding products attached to the façade is 13. We are actively managing fire safety in these blocks and have capital works planned over the next 2 years that will replace these products.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.21

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Peter George

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

What proportion of homes managed by housing associations, in Lewisham, do not meet the Decent Home Standard?

Reply

Housing associations, (also known as Registered Providers, RPs) are separate organisations from the council and responsibility for regulating and holding RPs to account is held by the Regulator of Social Housing, through the Consumer Standards. The council itself does not have power to manage the performance of RPs and therefore this information is not held by the council.

The Transparency, Influence and Accountability Standard within the Consumer Standards requires all registered providers of social housing to collect and report to the Regulator of Social Housing annually on their performance using a core set of defined measures. These are called the Tenant Satisfaction Measures (TSMs). The TSMs provide tenants with greater transparency about their landlord's performance. RPs are required to publish their TSM results annually in a way that tenants can easily access and understand.

One of the TSMs (RP01) requires landlords to report the proportion of their homes that do not meet the Decent Homes Standard. The information about Decent Homes performance can therefore be found on individual websites for each RP. It should be noted that many RPs operating in Lewisham also operate in other boroughs and therefore the information published will be for their entire stock, and will not show the figures for the stock in the different boroughs that they operate in.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.22

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Mark De-Laurey

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

Considering the return of schools and the normalisation of traffic levels, Lee Road remains heavily congested during peak hours. Given that the Low Traffic Neighbourhood (LTN) has not resulted in any noticeable traffic reduction in this area over the past four years, what specific measures does the council intend to implement to alleviate congestion on Lee Road?

Reply

The Council is directly in contact with TfL with regards to the re-routing of traffic from a TfL A-Road (Kidbrooke Park Road) into the Blackheath Village area. A-Roads are designed to take large and heavy numbers of vehicles. The Council has made strong representations to reverse this action to alleviate the congestion issues in this area and has met TfL several times, including in Blackheath Village and Lee Road, and await their response and action.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.23

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Mark De-Laurey

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

Does Lewisham Council possess data on the bus routes that utilise Lee Road, and can it provide information on whether these routes are impacted by traffic displacement in the area?

Reply

The Council does not hold this data and will request it from TfL to review.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.24

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Jean Branch

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councilor Edison Huynh

Question

With regard to the current NCIL consultation, how much weight does the Council give to the results of its online NCIL survey in deciding the amount of NCIL to allocate to projects?

What are the weightings for the other selection criteria?

Reply

The NCIL consultation was undertaken to give us an idea of which of the projects identified were recognised as needed and supported by residents. However, we know from analysis of NCIL and other consultations, that responses vary across wards dependent on a range of factors such as digital inclusion, how engaged residents are in their local area and the existence of voluntary and community and resident-led organisations in an area who can promote and advocate for resident engagement.

For this reason, the number of likes alone will not be the key consideration in awarding funding. The assessment process will involve consideration of the following alongside the number of likes that a project has received on the consultation platform, and the comments made about the project.

- If the project meets an urgent and/or important local need in addition meeting corporate priorities
- The number of ward residents who are likely to benefit from the project
- If the project has a positive impact on vulnerable groups and/or particular communities
- If the project represents value for money and/or is affordable in the context of available funding for the ward/borough.

Broadly speaking each of the criteria will have equal weighting but if an application is particularly weak in a particular area this may impact the overall assessment e.g. bids that represent very poor value for money or exceed the available funding will not be recommended. The Council has provided direct support to organisations considering applying for NCIL funds to ensure that they understand the process and the assessment criteria.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.25

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Janet Gainey

Relevant Directorate: Corporate Resources

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

With the Council referring vulnerable people to a volunteer service to help with benefit applications ie, Attendance Allowance, housing, pension credit, blue badges, etc. what are the Council's plans to support the volunteers and the vulnerable individuals?

Reply

Unfortunately the Council has limited resources to provide some activities and is required to focus on those areas that we are responsible for delivering services. Where possible, we work closely with external partners in the voluntary sector to provide some of the support services we are unable to deliver.

For example; we run a number of community libraries, work with the Pensioners Forum, have used some of the Household Support Funding to extend the services offered by Citizens Advice Bureau in Lewisham and provide serviceable laptops and phones the Council is no longer able to use to the local Bank of Things and a charity to assist residents use them for accessing services online.

If you have any examples where you feel this could have been arranged better, please let me know and I will review with officers to see where we might improve.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.26

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Kate Richardson

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

In view of the Outcomes of the Grenfell Inquiry including the appalling lack of official scrutiny, what measures are the Council taking to ensure that all tall buildings in the borough are or have had safety checks both externally and internally, and on their ongoing management procedure?

Reply

Following the Grenfell Tower disaster in 2017, the Government ordered an independent review of the Building Regulations and Fire Safety. This was carried out by Dame Judith Hackett who released the 'Building a Safer Future Report' which came to be known as the Hackett report. Following the release of the report the Government accepted the recommendations and implemented new legislation which was the Building Safety Act 2022.

The Building Safety Act 2022 overhauls and strengthens the regulatory framework and makes clear how residential buildings should be constructed, maintained and made safe. The council's Building Safety Team assess and manage building safety risks as defined in the Act. We employ dedicated Building Safety Managers who carry out regular checks on the high rise stock, reporting any deficiencies and ensuring these are addressed.

All of the council's high rise residential buildings have also had PAS 9980 intrusive external wall surveys and structural surveys carried out. A capital works programme is delivering building safety works as required under building and fire safety legislation and wherever we identify risks that need to be mitigated.

We also recently refreshed the Building Safety Resident Engagement Strategy and initiated the process of creating dedicated building safety case reports which must be submitted to the Building Safety Regulator every 5 years.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.27

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Kate Richardson

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

Lewisham made a self-referral to the Housing Regulator in December '23. In March 2024 the findings from the regulator were published, confirming the council was not meeting the needs of tenants.

What progress has the council made with repairs and fire safety issues that were highlighted by the report?

Reply

The Council has put in place a programme to rectify the failures highlighted by the Regulator of Social Housing. As at the end of August:

- There were 2,502 overdue fire safety actions. This is a reduction of 2,711 actions since the council's self-referral was made.
- Lewisham had 6,852 work in progress repairs. This is a reduction of 11,934 compared when the self-referral was made.
- The percentage of emergency repairs completed on time has increased from 31% at the point of self-referral to 36% this year to date. However, there have been more recent improvements with 52% completed on time in August.
- The percentage of non-emergency repairs completed on time was 56% at the point of our self-referral. This has reduced to 55% this year to date, however there have been recent improvements with 74% completed on time in August.
- Call answering within the repairs contact centre improved from a 70 minute wait to a 14 minute wait by August 2024. Work continues to improve this situation further.
- A stock condition survey commenced in February 2024 in order to give officers the most up to date information on the council's stock. As a result of these surveys, 23.8% of homes surveyed do not comply with the Decent Homes Standard.

The Regulator now holds monthly meetings with the Council to oversee progress. These meetings are attended by senior management, and the Lead Member and key officers from the Council as appropriate.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.28

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Jack Berry

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councilor Edison Huynh

Question

A recent BBC report (3/4 September 2024) showed that “more than 180 council run libraries have either closed or been handed over to volunteer groups. A government spokesperson said it recognised pressures facing libraries and it was committed to giving stability back to local councils to enable services such as these to best meet the needs of communities.” What can Lewisham Council do to help and support this increasingly important community resource?

Reply

Lewisham Council successfully bid for £19 M of funding from the Government's Levelling up Fund (LUF) and have match funded £5M for the revitalisation of Lewisham Town Centre. £7M of this fund is being invested into Lewisham Library to create a new culture and business hub containing a renovated space for the Library and Heritage services to safeguard the future of this vital service.

Lewisham Libraries operate a delivery model based on the collaboration between the council and local partner organisations and one that has managed to maintain all libraries open, while costing 55% less than in 2010. This innovative approach demonstrates Lewisham Council's commitment to retaining library provision throughout the borough as valued community assets. Working with the community to meet needs as well as maintaining services and resources, our community library model ensures a locality based offer which reflects the local resident population. Being run by a range of community groups ensures a hyper local approach within the heart of the community, through creating volunteer opportunities or partnering with local groups and organisations who can offer support, activities or information and advice to residents which is tailored to local needs.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.29

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Mark Morris

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

A recent Audit and Risk Committee report highlighted that there were 2548 overdue fire safety actions as at 12/8/24 in Lewisham Council's housing stock, although this information is not provided in the recently published annual report for tenants and leaseholders. Please state whether there are plans to provide updates on tackling overdue fire safety actions in future annual reports for tenants and leaseholders.

Reply

We aim to be transparent in sharing data. Although overdue fire safety actions are not part of the Tenant Satisfaction Measures we take the point on board and will include the data in next years annual report. We will be communicating an update for all residents of our progress since self-referring to the regulator, in the coming months. This will include updates to fire risk actions and progress against other areas reported in the self-referral.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.30

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Mark Morris

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

Lewisham Council's website currently states that the Authority monitoring report (AMR), which sets out information about the operation and performance of the Planning Service, has not been published for the year 2022 – 23, but will be by the end of February 2024. Please state the reasons for the continued delay in the publication of this report.

Reply

The 2022 – 23 AMR has been delayed further as a result of the policy team focusing on the emerging Local Plan, specifically the Inspectors Matters Issues and Questions (MIQs) in spring, the public hearings held in June and July and then the actions arising from this.

The Council did however publish its annual housing figures in a summary document titled – Summary of Housing Completions and Approvals 2022 – 2023 as well as publishing its Infrastructure Funding Statement (IFS) thereby discharging its statutory duties. These documents can be found: Lewisham Council - Authority monitoring report and Lewisham Council - Community infrastructure levy respectively. The AMR is in draft form and is due to be published imminently.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.31

2 October 2024

Question asked by: John McGrath

Relevant Directorate: Corporate Resources

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

The UK, as a state party to the Genocide Convention, has a legal responsibility to take action to deter and prevent further genocidal acts being committed against Palestinians.

Stemming from this obligation, what actions can Lewisham Council take to divest funds they administer from companies enabling Israel's genocide, such as companies providing Israel with weapons and military technology to carry out its attacks?

Reply

The only companies that the Council is directly invested in are its subsidiaries, Lewisham Homes Limited and Catford Partnership Regeneration Limited. Neither of these have any involvement in operations outside of the UK.

The Council's cash investments, via its treasury management activities, are all in branches of financial institutions registered in the UK, and as such are regulated and their operations must comply with UK law.

The Pension Fund is not Council monies, but rather funds administered and managed on behalf of the Fund members. The Lewisham LGPS is governed by Councillors appointed to the Pensions Investment Committee (PIC) by the Council under its Constitution. The primary duty of the Councillors appointed to PIC is their Fiduciary Duty. This means their foremost responsibility is to deliver for the members of the Pension Fund and not in their political interests.

Since 2018 the PIC has had a strong focus on how the Fund is invested responsibly. With a specific focus on lowering the exposure to fossil fuels and avoid holding stranded assets as the world moves to more sustainable energy sources. It also has general responsible investing principles to avoid investing directly in arms, gambling tobacco and pornography (see Responsible Investment Beliefs – appended of the Fund's Investment Strategy Statement – and available here: [Lewisham Pension Fund Investment Strategy | Lewisham Pension Fund \(lewishampensions.org\)](https://www.lewishampensions.org)).

Since the events in Israel of the 7 October 2023, the pension team have contacted all our Pension Fund managers to confirm our compliance with these investing principles. In respect of investment in arms manufacturing, the fund managers have all replied they are confident none are directly supporting arms manufacturing.

However, three mandates, under the global passive listed company index tracking investment approach, invest in the Aerospace & Defence sector. The exposure to the Aerospace & Defence sector is currently just over 0.2% of the total Fund.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.32

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Stephen Locke

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

Use of cargo bikes. Businesses in five London boroughs - Westminster, Newham, Tower Hamlets, Hackney and the City of London - have been given the green light for grants from Sadiq Khan's Air Quality Fund to help with the cost of switching from vans to cargo bikes. Why isn't Lewisham in this list?

Reply

The Council supports changes to support more sustainable modes of transport, to reduce congestion and improve air quality. Through our business engagement work with local businesses, we encourage them to adopt more sustainable approaches to their business models. The Council has not received requests from businesses and will assess a bid for such a switch based on the needs of the businesses with the borough. The Council is pursuing a pilot scheme with Uze, who provide a roaming charging solution for EV charging. They have approached the Council about having a base in Thomas Lane Carpark, which the Council is actively engaging them upon. They have an agreement with Zip Car to charge their electric fleet and will improve the Zip Car offering to residents and businesses.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.33

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Stephen Locke

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

Southern Rail connections to East Croydon. Four stations in the west of the borough have lost all their direct train services to East Croydon. This is a major problem for residents working in Croydon, and for those dependent on East Croydon as an interchange for trains to Gatwick Airport and beyond. What representations has the Council made to get these direct East Croydon links restored?

Reply

The Council supports better connected public transport to allow the public to meet their needs on a daily basis. Using the train is one part of a wider transport network that allows flexibility and avoids less sustainable ways of travelling. The Council has previously made representation to train operators at the Public Transport Liaison Forum on imposed changes to timetables and routes. Unfortunately, Lewisham cannot impose its views but will raise this issue at the next session in October.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.34

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Michael Bachmann

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor James-J Walsh

Question

The Place Ladywell supposedly had a planned lifespan of 60 years. How much has the Council spent maintaining the structure since it was built and why has it failed to last barely 8 years?

Reply

PLACE/Ladywell was created as a temporary building on the site of the former Ladywell Leisure Centre, while long term plans were developed. It was intended to be on site for a maximum of four years – ie until 2021. We've carried out improvements and repairs to extend its lifespan.

Since the building was erected and following the tragedy at the Grenfell Tower, the regulatory position on residential buildings has changed significantly. The safety of our residents is paramount, and the changes led to the Council carrying out enhanced fire safety and upgrade works. The spend on these works is £1,015,090. However following changes to regulations, recent surveys indicate it's not economically viable to maintain the building for residential use in the long term. Earlier this year we wrote to those living in the building to let them know we'll be vacating the building over the coming months and we are supporting people into alternative accommodation.

No formal decision has been made by the Council to demolish the building. Feasibility work is underway to explore future use of the site. Once the feasibility work has concluded, officers will present the information to the Mayor and Cabinet for a decision on the PLACE building and the future use of the site.

PUBLIC QUESTION NO.35

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Michael Bachmann

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

How does it benefit Council Taxpayers when the Council through its housing manager, Lewisham Homes obtains non-disclosure agreements (also known as gagging orders) from leaseholders before the latter is repaid what they have been overcharged?

Reply

There is no benefit or disbenefit to any Council Taxpayer from these arrangements as all payments to and from leaseholders are held in the Council's Housing Revenue Account. This account is ringfenced by law to protect both the Council's tenants and leaseholders and the Council Taxpayers from their money being used for incorrect purposes.

Lewisham Homes signed 4 non-disclosure agreements on behalf of Lewisham Council as commercial settlements on cases brought to the First Tier Tribunal.