

MEMBER QUESTION NO.1
2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Royston

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

Retrofitting is perhaps the most challenging and expensive area in which we as a Council must make progress to meet our climate emergency targets and reduce emissions locally. What progress has been achieved in relation to retrofitting buildings across the borough? What has been achieved in relation to privately-owned housing, and particularly in conservation areas?

Reply

The Council intends to publish a Housing Retrofit Strategy in 2024/25 and the Council's Asset Management Strategy (2024-34) sets out the approach to decarbonising the Council's corporate and schools estate. Work underpinning these strategies identifies the scale of the challenge of retrofitting.

In relation to buildings owned by the Council the cost of full decarbonisation across corporate, schools and housing stock is likely to be in excess of £700m. The retrofitting costs to decarbonise all housing across the borough is estimated at £3.2bn. Given these costs the Council's approach to retrofitting needs to be targeted and proactive in accessing external funding to support delivery.

Recent progress on retrofitting buildings includes:

- Publication of new guidance on 'Retrofit advice to improve the energy efficiency of historic buildings'.
- Delivery of works supported with £2.9m funding secured under Wave 2.1 of the Social Housing Decarbonisation Fund. 28 flats in The Hermitage sited in the Blackheath conservation area have had works including solar panels, new roof, windows and doors, insulation, lighting and ventilation. Retrofitting of a further 250 homes is planned between now and September 2025, a large proportion of which are in conservation areas.

The Council is also working to support retrofit in privately-owned properties, particularly where these are eligible for external sources of grant funding. Since 2022/23 115 Lewisham households have been supported to access the Energy Company Obligation (ECO) and the Mayor of London's Sustainable Warmth funding.

The Council is working with South East London Community Energy (SELCE) on a number of projects helping retrofitting in privately-owned properties. This includes:

- 'Lewisham Loves Lofts' a service offering a free loft inspection, an eligibility check for ECO funding, contributions toward insulation costs and a handyman service to assist with loft clearance.

- 'Future Fit Homes' helping households plan, finance, and install insulation, double glazing, and heating improvements. This project includes a pilot aimed at a cohort of households that are 'hard to reach, hard to treat' focusing on historic/period properties in conservation areas.
- Support for landlords and private renters. A new service to offer advice to private renters and engage with private landlords in the borough with the SELCE staff member working closely with the Council's private sector licensing team.

MEMBER QUESTION NO.2

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Bernards

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Kim Powell

Question

How are we supporting the local economy and encouraging people to shop locally?

Reply

Lewisham has some of the highest proportion of independent high street businesses in London and local offers that are unique and authentic to our borough. The Council has supported local shopping and the local visitor economy through 'Discover Lewisham this Summer'. The campaign showcases local businesses who won awards at the Mayor of Lewisham's Business Awards in 2023.

The Council invested some of its UK Shared Prosperity Fund allocation towards printed materials, billboards, bus stop adverts, railway adverts and social media encouraging residents to shop locally this summer. We will also run a similar 'Discover' campaign towards Christmas. The Council was also able to secure a half page article in the Evening Standard on Lewisham's thriving independent food scene.

The Council runs a range of programmes to support the local economy which include services to create, attract and grow the local business base. We have also focussed significantly on activating more workspace in the borough to continue growing the number of well-paid jobs in target growth sectors. Our full plan will be outlined in the 'Inclusive Economy Strategy' which will be adopted later this year.

MEMBER QUESTION NO.3

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Davis

Relevant Directorate: Housing

Member to reply: Councillor Will Cooper

Question

What are you doing to lobby the government to ensure we have the much-needed funding to improve our stock and build new council homes?"

Reply

The Council was one of the 20 original Councils involved in preparing a report, Securing the Future of Council Housing Report, which was launched in Westminster on 3 September.

The five solutions set out detailed and practical recommendations to the new government:

1. A new fair and sustainable HRA model – including an urgent £644 million one-off rescue injection, and long-term, certain rent and debt agreements.
2. Reforms to unsustainable Right to Buy policies
3. Removing red tape on existing funding
4. A new, long-term Green & Decent Homes Programme
5. Urgent action to restart stalled building projects, avoiding the loss of construction sector capacity and a market downturn

They make up a plan for a 'decade of renewal', with local authorities and central government working together to get 'Housing Revenue Accounts' (HRAs) back on stable foundations, bring all homes up to modern and green standards, and deliver the next generation of council homes.

I met with the Minister for Housing Matt Pennycook, alongside council and industry leaders to discuss this report in early September. This was an extremely productive meeting and I will continue to make representations to government on the need for better funding for existing and new council homes.

MEMBER QUESTION NO.4

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Schmidt

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Kim Powell

Question

Lewisham's Creative Enterprise Zone in Deptford rightly celebrates the depth of culture in our borough and recognizes the potential of the creative sector to drive inclusive economic growth. However, a thriving creative sector often inadvertently leads to rising property prices which risk pushing out the very people who make our centres so vibrant. What steps is the council taking to keep both homes and workspaces affordable, so these creative, independent communities can continue to thrive?

Reply

The Creative Enterprise Zone was established in 2018 with a founding principle to protect and expand affordable workspace provision. Retaining affordable space for creatives preserves the artistic character of Deptford and New Cross. The CEZ has seen growth in creative sector employment and workspaces.

In 2023 the Council published the 'Affordable Workspace Strategy'. This strategy defines affordability, includes targeting towards the Creative Industries and helps ensure long-term affordability for creatives while securing community benefits from workspace providers. The Council has awarded nearly 30 workspace grants off the back of this strategy to support workspaces aligned to these principles.

This is complimented by initiatives to help keep homes affordable. These include ambitious affordable housing targets in new development including developments led by the Council as well as community-led housing projects and protecting creative enterprise conditions through planning policy.

MEMBER QUESTION NO.5

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Schmidt

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Kim Powell

Question

A recent council-commissioned report highlighted those certain parts of Lewisham, particularly those with poor transport links, experience higher levels of unemployment and limited access to jobs and opportunities. In these areas too, services for young people too may be disconnected from the broader creative sector. As the council develops a hub-and-spoke model to improve access to services, could this approach be extended to ensure that the benefits of Creative Enterprise Zone — such as networking, job pathways, workshops, and business opportunities — are accessed throughout the entire borough?

Reply

While the Creative Enterprise Zone is designated to Deptford and New Cross, the Council recognises that the creative sector continues to grow across our borough and provide great opportunities for young people.

Our UK Shared Prosperity Fund workspace grants have awarded funding to creative workspaces across the borough. The Broadway Theatre team have a focussed programme of engagement and participation in south Lewisham where we know engagement with culture is lower.

In direct response to a lack of insight and engagement with creative sector careers, the Council will launch a youth employment and opportunity space in Downham Library. Funded by Youth Futures Foundation, this hub (part of a national pilot programme) will create a one stop shop for local young people to engage with employers and opportunities in the creative sector. Tackling the transport accessibility challenge means bringing opportunities closer to the young people in south Lewisham.

MEMBER QUESTION NO.6

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Howard

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor Paul Bell

Question

Following the recommendation of the former Task and Finish Community Gardening Report and the agreement of Mayor and Cabinet last year to appoint a Community Food Growing Officer, what has been the progress towards fulfilling this decision?

Reply

Preparatory work for recruitment is in progress by public health in conjunction with the parks team. The role will sit within the parks team and be fully funded by public health. They will have a remit to link into existing work and funding which supports the sustainability of community food growing. The aim is to have this post advertised and a person appointed by the end of the financial year (March 2025).

MEMBER QUESTION NO.7

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Anifowose

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Edison Huynh

Question

What cultural activities are happening in the autumn, that celebrate the diversity in our borough?

Reply

We are delivering cultural activities throughout September and October to celebrate East and Southeast Asian Heritage Month and Black History Month. These activities include a range of community grants, activities run from Libraries and key cultural community groups across the borough as well as programming of productions and events at The Broadway Theatre.

Thousands of people turned up to the Mid-Autumn Festival event run at Deptford launch as part of our inaugural ESEA Heritage Month which we hope to have as an annual celebration.

Meanwhile, the theme for this year's Black History Month is 'Reclaiming Narratives,' marking a change towards recognising and correcting the narratives of Black history and culture. While it's important to acknowledge the national Black History Month campaign each October, in Lewisham, we believe in action 365 days a year. As such, October's BHM follows earlier events throughout the year including our inaugural SEEN festival which spotlighted our Black and Global Majority artists.

Details of all events in autumn can be found on Lewisham's website:

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/articles/news/celebrate-esea-heritage-month-in-lewisham>

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/articles/news/grants-of-up-to-1000-available-for-black-history-lewisham-365-events>

MEMBER QUESTION NO.8

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Shrivastava

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

How is the Council ensuring Lime are adhering to the terms of its Memorandum of Understanding, which includes a commitment to remove e-bikes that are parked obstructively or discarded within 12 hours once reported.

Reply

The Council are working closely with both Lime and neighbouring Boroughs to ensure the MoU in place with Lime is being adhered too. We have fed back to Lime specifically on issues of bikes being left inappropriately across the Borough and on the timing of bikes being delivered and maintained (ie the changing of batteries) which can be noisy activities. To date Lime have been responsive and we await an action plan on how they will tackle these areas going forward.

Please note dockless e-bikes operated by Lime will need to be parked in designated bays around the borough, helping to reduce issues caused by inconsiderate parking. The Council is introducing marked designated bays in a phased approach. Phase 1 was completed in Autumn/Winter 2023, and Phase 2 bays are currently being designed. The Council intends to go out to statutory consultation shortly, which residents will be able to engage with.

Once parking bays are active, the Council will regularly meet with Lime to discuss parking compliance and address engagement with Lime bike riders to ensure that compliance is met.

More information about the Council's partnership with Lime can be found here:

<https://lewisham.gov.uk/articles/news/lewisham-agrees-new-dockless-bike-partnership-with-lime>

MEMBER QUESTION NO.9

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Shrivastava

Relevant Directorate: Chief Executive

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

Please set out the process the Council follows for making changes to its constitution, including whether there are any instances where a change can be made without member ratification or consultation. Please provide examples of such changes and the reasons why a change may not require members' involvement.

Reply

There are three routes for the Constitution to be amended.

Firstly, proposed amendments to the Constitution are required to be taken to the Council's Governance Committee (formerly the Constitutional Working Party) for consideration with recommendations being agreed at a meeting of Council. For virtually all constitutional amendments this process is followed and can be evidenced through an analysis of the minutes of the Council meetings.

Secondly, the elected Mayor has authority pursuant to Part IV D(6) of the Constitution, which states the Mayor may amend the Mayoral Scheme of Delegations of Executive Functions throughout the year. Any amendments to the Mayoral Scheme of Delegations of Executive Functions must be notified to the Proper Officer and the Proper Officer is required to notify any such amendments to all councillors and take a report to an appropriate meeting of Council for noting.

Thirdly, and by exception, in circumstances where the Monitoring Officer considers it necessary for amendments to be made to the Constitution in order to give it legal effect and protect the Council, there is a well-established practice at Lewisham of amendments being made in advance in a timely manner and reported to the Governance Committee (formerly the Constitutional Working Party) and approved at a meeting of Council. One example is the removal of all constitutional references to the Local Authorities and Police and Crime Panels (Coronavirus) (Flexibility of Local Authority and Police and Crime Panels Meetings) (England and Wales) Regulations 2020, which if allowed to remain would have been contrary to legislation. Other examples include amending the provisions in the Constitution insofar as they relate to the thresholds contained within the Public Contract Regulations 2015. Without such amendments, the Council's constitutional provisions would be contrary to statute with the potential for any relevant procurement process to be challenged.

There have also been many other amendments to the Constitution that have been done over time, i.e., correcting typos, amending contradictory provisions within rules,

updating job titles, removing references to gender and updating appendices to the Constitution, e.g. the members' allowances scheme.

MEMBER QUESTION NO.10

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Ingleby

Relevant Directorate: Place

Member to reply: Councillor Louise Krupski

Question

Can you give more details of the geographic range, timings and cultural/demographic extent of the consultation and participation processes that will be carried out for the Riverdale Sculpture Park project being done in partnership with the Mayor of London's Civic partnership Programme "to encourage the local community to play a greater role in shaping how the area grows and delivers better public spaces to live, work and play?"

Reply

The geographic range for consultation for the strategy phase was focussed on Lewisham Central and adjacent LSOAs who have been identified as experiencing extreme deprivation. The 3-month programme to deliver the CPP Strategy Phase demanded a targeted pilot engagement process, focussing on reaching young people (through Lewisham Youth Theatre-LYT) and adults with learning disabilities (through Lewisham Speaking Up-LSU).

Periscope, the appointed strategy phase design consultants, co-designed workshops together with LYT and LSU and their facilitators according to each group's specific interests and access requirements. The resultant 'engagement template' reflects on lessons learned in the process and will form the basis of further engagement processes for the CPP Riverdale Sculpture Park project.

Consultation reach will be broadened in the Riverdale Sculpture Park project, working with a greater number of established community groups that promote the interests of people with characteristics that we have identified to be missing from the conversations around regeneration, river restoration, and public realm.

The project design team will be expected to act dynamically, changing approaches to accommodate the diverse needs and requirements of different user groups.

Consultants who wish to be considered for the role of Design Lead will be required to demonstrate a track record of co-design and delivery as part of their response to the project brief. A full year+ will be allowed for an iterative and generative co-design process with community members.

MEMBER QUESTION NO.11

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Ingleby

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor Paul Bell

Question

In 2021 the Council created a type of low sugar/ healthy Charter for restaurants in the Borough to sign up to, which was launched in Downham/ former Whitefoot. Does the Council have plans or ambitions to build on this with a similar initiative against obesity (particularly for young people) for the amount of carbohydrate and fats in fast food chicken shops in the Borough? Could this be linked to a similar schools education and healthy food (and food growing?) initiative in schools – given the huge distraction of the chicken shops in the immediate period after school exit times?

Reply

As part of the Council's whole system approach to addressing obesity (WSAO), the Sugar Smart Lewisham campaign was developed to increase awareness of and reduce sugar consumption across all age groups and communities in the borough.

We are now in the process of refreshing our whole system approach to obesity, which will build on the previous approach, with due consideration being made to issues around young people and access to healthy and nutritious food.

Existing programmes that are in place around schools that will inform this refresh include the Greater London Authority (GLA) School Superzone programme, which creates 400 metre radius zones around schools where actions were taken to create healthier places for children, young people and their families to live, learn and play.

We have had School Superzones in Lewisham that have aimed to promote active travel, awareness of air quality and healthy eating. Access to healthy and nutritious food in the borough is also addressed within the priority actions outlined in our Food Justice Action Plan, which will inform our refreshed whole system approach to addressing obesity (WSAO).

MEMBER QUESTION NO.12

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Tam

Relevant Directorate: Corporate Resources

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

Can we get a breakdown of how much money and resource the council spent on additional security for Full Council and other public committee meetings from October 2023 onwards. For reference purposes, it would be helpful to have a similar breakdown with regard to meetings in previous years where a strengthened security response was deemed appropriate.

Reply

The council did not record the specific expenditure related to additional security for individual public meetings as the security budgets are managed in the round. The total council security expenditure between October 2023 – June 2024 is as below, including security related costs for all council premises, CCTV, and council housing stock.

Security Team	£629,422	
Security (excluding premises)		£149,912
Security (premises)	£1,396,854	
TOTAL	£2,176,188	

The total council security expenditure between October 2022 – June 2023 on the same basis is as below.

Security Team	£414,445	
Security (excluding premises)		£189,390
Security (premises)	£1,052,112	
TOTAL	£1,655,947	

The reader should note that the difference between periods will not relate solely or primarily to the security costs for public meetings. For example, the 23/24 period costs will include changes following the insourcing of Lewisham Homes and a rise in Housing activities undertaken by the Council while there were also fewer public meetings in first half of 2024 due to the number of pre-election restricted periods but higher security costs relating to running the elections themselves.

MEMBER QUESTION NO.13

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Malik-Smith

Relevant Directorate: Corporate Resources

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

What steps is the Council taking to review our pension fund portfolios to ensure that all investments align with our values?

Reply

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.

The Fund is required to agree and publish an Investment Strategy Statement and as part of this the Fund has agreed a set of Responsible Investment Beliefs available here: [Lewisham Pension Fund Investment Strategy | Lewisham Pension Fund \(lewishampensions.org\)](#). This is the document which sets out how the Fund will deliver on its Environmental, Social and Governance (ESG) values alongside the necessary safe stewardship of the Funds assets for its beneficiaries.

MEMBER QUESTION NO.14

2 October 2024

Question asked by: Councillor Dall

Relevant Directorate: Corporate Resources

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

How much money have we received through the Household Support Fund this year?

Reply

We received £2.66m in Household Fund 5 that was to be spent between 1 April and 30 September 2024. We have received confirmation that a further iteration of the scheme will run for the period 1 October to 31 March but no further details on the amount we receive or any restrictions on distribution have been received as yet.