

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

20 January 2021

Question by Councillor Walsh
of the Cabinet member for Children's Services and School Performance

Question

Healthy Start vouchers provide free milk, fruit & veg to pregnant women, babies and toddlers but new data shows half go unclaimed. Lewisham Council has focused on Food Justice for many years and is noted as a leading council. Nationally however recently the take up of Healthy Start Vouchers has fallen, in some areas, dramatically.

How is Lewisham performing when compared to previous years? What plans do we have to maximise take up by eligible families?

Reply

It is regrettably true, as the table below shows, that take up of the Healthy Start vouchers has declined nationally in recent years, and Lewisham has not been immune to this (although over the last year Lewisham's performance has been a little above the London average). Current estimates suggest that in Lewisham £312,000 of Healthy Start vouchers are unclaimed annually.

The Coronavirus pandemic has unfortunately exacerbated this trend. Services including health have been significantly disrupted and the advice to all is to stay at home. This has meant that although more families have become eligible, they have had limited contact with health care professionals and valuable opportunities to promote the scheme have been missed.

It is important to promote the Healthy Start scheme – it supports key public health actions including, tackling obesity as well as food insecurity. Looking forward, and in addition to actions already taken to promote take-up, we aim to:

- refresh our food poverty action plan by holding an initial food summit. Covid-19 has sadly created a sudden income shock for many people and heightened awareness of food insecurity.
- Work with the nurses from the Family Nurse Partnership, who support young pregnant women under 18 years of age to apply for Healthy Start
- request data from the NHS Business Services Authority on Healthy Start uptake for Lewisham broken down by postcode, to pinpoint underclaiming by area, supporting targeted work to identify eligible families.
- Work with the Council's concessionary awards team to identify families with children who qualify for free school meals and also families who have children who qualify for free education and childcare - these groups of people are likely to be eligible for Healthy Start vouchers.
- Consider a Healthy Start page on the Council website.
- Raise awareness of the scheme as part of other financial support to potential eligible families, such as the Covid winter fund Scheme

Table shows: The number of entitled beneficiaries over eligible beneficiaries and the % take up of Healthy Start vouchers in Lewisham and nationally over a five year period 2015-2020.

Note: Figures provided below are snapshots taken at a single point during each 4 week cycle. Take-up is calculated as a percentage of entitled beneficiaries over eligible beneficiaries'.

Date	Entitled beneficiaries Lewisham	Eligible Beneficiaries Lewisham	%Take up of Healthy Start vouchers in Lewisham	% Average take up of Healthy Start vouchers nationally
April 2020	1688	3319	51	54
April 2019	1611	3022	53	55
April 2018	1807	2937	62	66
April 2017	2145	3331	64	66
April 2016	12400	3584	67	70
April 2015	2851	4083	70	73

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Question by Councillor Holland
of the Cabinet member for Culture Jobs and Skills

Question

How will schools be involved in The London Borough of Culture, both planning and delivery?

Reply

We want to make sure that schools have a central role in our London Borough of Culture programme and we anticipate that programme themes will provide strong connections with the curriculum as well as wider creative development opportunities for students. We recognise the importance of working closely with schools in the development process and to this end conversations have begun between senior officers in the Children & Young People directorate and members of the BoC team. We have also commissioned Lewisham Education Arts Network to engage and consult with schools directly and we will shortly be commissioning a Borough of Culture Education Partner to deliver this aspect of the programme.

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COUNCIL MEETING

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Question by Councillor Hall
of the Cabinet member for Environment and Transport

Question

Can the Cabinet Member explain the Council's policy in relation to Japanese knotweed?

Reply

The Council policy for the management of Japanese Knotweed (*fallopia japonica*) (JKW) is to act within the requirements of the law in relation to non-native and invasive species, i.e. it is our legal duty under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, to prevent JKW growing on land owned by the Council spreading in to the wild.

The council is not legally obliged to remove JKW from its land. However, once identified, a site specific management plan is put in place to eradicate an infestation. The usual methodology for management is via the application of the herbicide; Glyphosate, via spraying or stem injection.

This approach enables the Council to demonstrate that we are doing what is ecologically responsible and what is required by law to prevent the spread of JKW in to the wild. This also protects the biodiversity and utility of our land and reduces the possibility of the council being implicated in any civil claim by other land owners/occupiers in relation JKW infestations on our land alleged to be causing a private nuisance.

If we receive enquiries from residents about how to manage JKW we provide relevant information about the law, eradication and/or our powers in relation to Community Protection Notices (CPN) and anti-social behaviour powers where appropriate.

QUESTION No. 4
Priority 2

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

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20 January 2021

Question by Councillor Holland
of the Cabinet member for Environment and Transport

Question

What plans and targets do we have to reduce pavement parking?

Reply

Part of the process for the upcoming CPZ programme (and further plans to extend CPZ coverage across the borough from 2023/24) will involve reviewing any existing footway parking with a view to removal.

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

20 January 2021

Question by Councillor Hall
of the Cabinet member for Environment and Transport

Question

There was not a Christmas tree recycling point within Bellingham ward this year, will the Cabinet Member consider designating a location in Bellingham for next year and future years?

Reply

Please find below a list of the current Christmas Tree Recycling sites that are closest to the Bellingham ward:

Blythe Hill Fields
Forster Park
Mayow Park

Codrington Hill SE23 1SP
Whitefoot Lane SE6 1UA
Mayow Road SE23 2BN

Officers have confirmed that they will review the current list of recycling points and will advise you further if a more suitable location sited within the Bellingham Ward is identified for Christmas tree recycling in future years.

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20 January 2021

Question by Councillor Holland
of the Cabinet member for Environment and Transport

Question

Do we have a target to reduce parking space across the borough?

Reply

There is not currently a specific target to reduce parking space across the borough. The Council is committed to reviewing parking provision throughout the borough and introduce controlled parking zones, subject to resident consultation, over the next few years. This will potentially allow better management of parking across Lewisham.

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

20 January 2021

Question by Councillor Hall
of the Cabinet member for Culture, Jobs, and Skills

Question

Can the Cabinet Member please clarify the ownership of the Bellingham Leisure Centre and The Bridge Leisure Centre and their respective playing fields? Are there any covenants, trusts or other agreements in place for the land in question?

Reply

The Council is the freehold owner of The Bridge and has a lease of Bellingham from the Bellingham Community Project Limited which is due to expire on 14 October 2026 and that the Director of Law, Governance & HR will provide Cllr Hall with the relevant title information.

LONDON BOROUGH OF LEWISHAM

COUNCIL MEETING

20 January 2021

Question by Councillor Hall
of the Cabinet member for Democracy, Refugees and Accountability

Question

Can the Cabinet Member outline the terms of the contract with J C Decaux and the London Borough of Lewisham? What is the value of the contract? How long have the Council been contracting with the company?

Reply

Following a competitive tender process under EU Regulations, a £300,000 15 year contract was awarded to J C Decaux in 2015.

The contract is to design, supply, install, refurbish and upgrade, clean and maintain bus shelters and street furniture. The contractor will pay the Council for the right to advertise on those bus shelters and street furniture.

Prior to this the Council had a similar contract with J C Decaux from 1991. This covered bus shelters including advertising panels, street advertising, variable information signage, public automated conveniences, toilets, car park advertising and free information space provided within the above advertising.

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COUNCIL MEETING

20 January 2021

Question by Councillor Hall
of the Cabinet member for Health and Adult Social Care

Question

What progress has been made to provide independent advocacy and advice for people of all ages with disabilities since the borough wide, Lewisham Advice for People with Disabilities closed over two years ago? Please publish the budget available for this.

Reply

Following a procurement exercise POhWER were commissioned by the Council to provide Care Act advocacy in February 2019. The provision is part of an Integrated Advocacy service that also delivers the Independent Mental Health Advocacy service (IMHA) and the Independent Mental Health Capacity Service (IMCA). The annual budget for this service is £138,596 (2% inflationary increase in 20/21 and 21/22) and the contract was agreed for a three-year term with an option to extend for a year.

The Council also has numerous budgets available to support Disabled People (of all ages) in Lewisham. These include those within Adult Social Care, Joint Commissioning, CYP Commissioning, Transport, Culture and Community Development, amongst others. Indeed, the majority of Council departments work to support Disabled People in their service area and as such it is very difficult to give a fixed figure for the available budget to support Disabled People. Independent Advocacy and Advice is provided for people with disabilities through a wide range of organisations in the borough including Contact (for families with disabled children) and Lewisham Speaking Up (for Adults with a learning disability).

In addition to these budgets, the Council has also established a Disabled People's Commission. The Commission has a remit to examine every aspect of the lives of Disabled People in the borough and recommend how existing services, and budgets, can be refocused to ensure that any and all barriers are removed or diminished. It

will also make recommendations about areas in which the Council might lobby external bodies to improve facilities and services for Disabled People in the borough.

As part of its work, the Commission will be making recommendations about how the Council can best spend a £35,000 grant that has been set aside for representing Disabled People. The work of the Commission is currently paused due to the COVID-19 pandemic.

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COUNCIL MEETING

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Question by Councillor Hall
of the Member for Housing and Planning

Question

I asked about the death of a rough sleeper in my supplementary question about rough sleepers in November and I was given an undertaking that information would be relayed to me: Will the Cabinet Member please update the Council now?

Reply

Sadly, it was reported to Outreach services on 10th September 2020 that a male rough sleeper aged 36 years old tragically passed away on 5th September 2020 within the vicinity of the Bell Green retail park.

The individual was not known to Lewisham Council Housing Solutions or Rough Sleeper Team, having not been referred or made their own approach for assistance, but was known briefly to the London Street Rescue service that provides Rough Sleeper Outreach in Lewisham.

His only bedded down contact with London Street Rescue was on 1st July where he reported that he was returning to Brighton to stay with a friend via a planned lift on 4th July. London Street Rescue followed up with a visit to the sleep site on 22nd July but were unable to establish contact.

Police have reported that a post mortem was carried out but was unable to ascertain cause of death.

I would like to once again express my sadness about this tragic event. We will continue doing all we can as a Council to support rough sleepers in Lewisham. Every life matters.

