



LIST OF MEMBER QUESTIONS AND ANSWERS

Member questions and answers for the
Council Meeting of the London Borough of
Lewisham to be held on Wednesday 2
March 2022

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 1

Priority 1

Question asked by: Luke Sorba

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor Patrick Codd

Question

Last year, the Council announced £700,000 of funding to upgrade playgrounds in parks in Deptford at Evelyn Green, Sayes Court and Folkestone Gardens. Can the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport provide an update of the progress of the play developments?

Reply

I am pleased to be able to inform you that good progress has been made on all of these projects:

Sayes Court Park

Following a process of consultation with parks users the purchase order for the play area and park improvements has been issued and work will commence in March 2022.

I am also very pleased to advise you that the project is also being recommended for an additional £30k of funding from the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL) process, increasing the initial project budget from £148k to £178k. This money will further enhance the play opportunities offered to the children of the Evelyn ward.

Evelyn Green

Again, I am please to inform you that the project to extend and upgrade the Multi Use Games Area (MUGA), install a new outdoor gym and a children's play area is progressing well. There is ongoing dialogue with the current users of the MUGA regarding the improvements with many of their ideas being considered to make the facility even better. Work on site will begin soon.

Folkestone Gardens

Further to site visits and consultation with park users, officers are currently working with our contractors to develop initial plans for the park improvements that reflect the aspirations of park users. Once this has been completed further discussions with park users will take place in advance of work commencing.

The initial deadline set to complete the work has slipped slightly to facilitate due consideration of an additional £80k assigned to the project from the Neighbourhood Community Infrastructure Levy (NCIL). This brings the total budget for the Folkestone Gardens project to £270k, again enhancing the opportunity for quality

play for the children of the Evelyn ward and I'm sure neighbouring wards in the north of the borough will also benefit from all of these improvements.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 2

Priority 1

Question asked by: James-J Walsh

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Kim Powell

Question

Last year, the Council unveiled the results of its ground-breaking study of high streets which found that 70% of businesses on Lewisham's high streets are independent, and more than two thirds of the independent shops and services are owned by Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic entrepreneurs. Can the Cabinet Member for Business and Community Wealth Building explain how the results of the study have been used to support the borough's businesses as we emerge from the pandemic

Reply

We are proud to have been the first local authority in the country to conduct a headcount and survey of independent businesses and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic entrepreneurs. Some of the key findings revealed that 70% of businesses on Lewisham's high streets are independent and that two thirds of the independents shops and services are owned by Black, Asian or Minority Ethnic entrepreneurs. We wanted to use the study to understand and address the unique challenges local retailers face as they emerge from the pandemic. Two of the main issues raised by businesses were the need for an increase in footfall in town centres to help increase sales and revenue; and to increase awareness of the support available to independently-owned local businesses.

We are building on our existing communication channels to businesses such as our fortnightly newsletter (received by over 4,000 subscribers), social media, and working with partners such as the Federation of Small Businesses and local Chamber of Commerce. We are now conducting more direct visits to businesses on our high streets across the borough to outline the support available and promote grants and advice services. We are also creating new business networks and organising more online webinars, the latter having proved successful during the last year in helping to reach a large number of businesses.

To help increase footfall in our town centres and high streets we have been running a "Shop Safe, Shop Local" campaign to encourage residents to spend more locally. We have also recently delivered a Town Centre Small Grants programme to fund initiatives by businesses or community organisations which will help attract visitors to town centres. This funded 22 different projects in town centres across the borough. In addition, we are investing in our street markets, most recently in Lewisham town centre. We have also created a new partnership for Lewisham town centre bringing together representatives from the public, private, community, cultural and education

sectors. This is alongside our broader regeneration activities to ensure that our town centres are vibrant, attractive and inclusive.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 3

Priority 1

Question asked by: Samantha Latouche

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Kim Powell

Question

In 2020, the Council partnered with key stakeholders in the borough to sign the Lewisham Deal, committing to tackle poverty and support inclusive growth in the borough.

Can the Cabinet Member for Business and Community Wealth Building provide an update on the progress made by the Lewisham Deal partnership?

Reply

The Lewisham Deal is a common commitment by local public sector institutions to promoting inclusive growth in the borough. Based on the principles of community wealth building, the Lewisham Deal seeks to ensure we build an economy that works for everyone in the borough.

In the last two years the Lewisham Deal partnership has:

- Promoted contract opportunities to local small and medium sized businesses. A Meet the Buyer event in November 2021 was attended by over 100 local businesses providing an opportunity to hear about upcoming contracts and to gain an understanding of public sector procurement processes.
- Collectively worked towards the Mayor's Apprenticeship Programme target of 250 new apprenticeships in 2018-2022. In the last two years 142 apprenticeship starts have been achieved, taking the cumulative total to 247 out of the 250 target. The target is on track to be achieved by the end of March 2022.
- Supported the increase in Living Wage accredited employers from 47 in 2018 to 85 now.
- Set up new workstreams to additionally focus on collective effort to tackle the climate emergency and support the progression of Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic staff. This is alongside existing workstreams on apprenticeships; procurement; Living Wage; and information, advice and guidance.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 4

Priority 1

Question asked by: Juliet Campbell

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Patrick Codd

Question

Fly tipping has become a real issue across the borough, the Cabinet Member for Environment and Transport recently wrote a blog about the work the Council is doing to tackle fly-tipping and enviro-crime. Can he comment on how the new Environmental Crime Enforcement team is working to tackle this crime?

Reply

Fly-tipping is a key focus of our new Waste Management Strategy for 2021-2031. The actions set out in our new Waste Strategy will build on our ongoing work to tackle fly-tipping in the borough. This includes setting up a dedicated Environmental Crime Enforcement team who engage with residents to ensure that they know how to responsibly get rid of unwanted items and take action against the small minority of people who fly-tip in our borough.

Enforcement officers are undertaking a number of initiatives to tackle localised fly-tipping and environmental crime. This involves highly visible uniformed patrols, engaging with community groups, partnership working with the Police, private housing sector and a multitude of other agencies.

The team also deploy CCTV to monitor hotspots and use the latest technology to gather evidence on known fly-tipping hotspots which is being used to prosecute offenders.

Since its establishment in August 2021, the team has issued almost 800 fines for environmental offences, including littering and illegally dumped rubbish.

Leaflets raising awareness of the council's #CleanerLewisham campaign are also handed out to the public and posted door to door in regards to correct refuse disposal and recycling. These leaflets along with stickers placed on discarded waste items contain our direct fly tipping hotline/ email address should anyone be willing to step forward as a witness or if they prefer to report fly tipping anonymously.

As a means to deter unauthorised waste deposits from commercial or domestic premises we are also erecting signage in affected high streets, residential areas and council housing estates. These signs inform the public that a team of enforcement officers are monitoring the area who will issue on the spot fines to anyone caught littering or fly tipping.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 5

Priority 1

Question asked by: Tauseef Anwar

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Patrick Codd

Question

More than 30 school streets have been implemented across the borough which appear to have been very successful and are popular with schools, parents and children. Can the Cabinet Member provide an update on plans to deliver more school streets in Lewisham?"

Reply

The Council has made great progress in the rollout of the School Streets programme across the borough. Since the start of the pandemic the Council has delivered 45 school streets at 37 schools, implementing measures that reduce traffic down roads around schools at drop off and pick up times to make it safer and easier for children to walk, scoot or cycle to school.

School Streets are an important part of our work to continue delivering on our Climate Emergency Action Plan, as the reduced traffic around schools also helps to improve air quality and protect young lungs from harmful emissions.

We've been working closely with primary schools across the borough to ensure that even more children can enjoy the benefits that come with having a School Street outside their school.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 6

Priority 1

Question asked by: Eva Stamirowski

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Paul Bell

Question

Could the Cabinet member for Housing and Planning please update us on the Council's proposals for the introduction of selecting licensing for landlords in parts of Lewisham.

Reply

As councillors will be aware, selective licensing requires a successful application to the Secretary of State for permission to introduce the scheme. This means that there are a number of precursor steps we have to take before this application can be made.

A survey of private rented sector housing in the Borough was prepared in October 2021. This makes up the core evidence base of the application for selective licensing.

The data identified three potential schemes. Schemes have to identify specific designation criteria that they will help to address. These include antisocial behaviour, poor housing conditions and deprivations. A single scheme can address more than one criteria. The three we propose are:

Designation One would cover Brockley, Lewisham Central, New Cross, Rushey Green, Catford South and Perry Vale wards (focused on reducing anti-social behaviour and improving housing conditions).

Designation Two would cover Evelyn, Ladywell, Lee Green, Sydenham and Crofton Park wards (focused on improving housing conditions).

Designation Three would cover Bellingham, Downham, Forest Hill, Grove Park and Whitefoot wards (focused on raising the living conditions of the most deprived).

We have launched the public consultation about this scheme which can be accessed [here](#). This consultation closes on 20th May 2022.

Once the consultation is complete we will report to Housing Select Committee.

If the outcome of the consultation supports proceeding, we will make the application to the Secretary of State.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 7

Priority 1

Question asked by: Louise Krupski

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Patrick Codd

Question

Please could you give a brief explanation as to how the work to convert Dalmain Primary School to an air source heat pump system was achieved, both in terms of funding and the practicalities of doing the work while the school was in operation. What plans do you have to roll this excellent work out to other schools or institutions in the borough?

Reply

Decarbonising Lewisham's schools is a key priority within the Council's response to the climate emergency and delivery of the ambition to be net zero carbon by 2030.

The work at Dalmain Primary School was made possible through accessing funding in 2021 under the Government's Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme. £3.5m grant funding has enabled a range of heating, insulation and ventilation works in seven corporate buildings (Brockley Rise CEL, Granville Park CEL, Grove Park CEL, Leemore Resource Centre, Lewisham Crematorium and Chapel, Lewisham Town Hall Chambers, Sydenham Centre) and three schools (Dalmain, Donderry and Myatt Garden).

The application for funding under the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme was based on an earlier successful grant-funded project supported by £175k from the Government's Low Carbon Skills Fund in 2020. This funding enabled the detailed specifications of the work needed. Five schools were involved in this on the basis of representing a geographical spread and a range of building typologies as a way of developing wider learning on the costs and opportunities.

The award of funding for the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme in February 2021 required the procurement and delivery of works to complete by the end of March 2022. To deliver on this tight timetable at Dalmain Primary School the Council worked with local architects Retrofit Action For Tomorrow and through the Council's School Minor Works Contracts to specify and deliver the work. The school played an important role in enabling the project to progress on time with the majority of the works completed during school holidays.

The installation of an air source heat pump has meant heating in the school could switch from a natural gas boiler that was coming to the end of its functioning life and replace it with a net zero carbon ready technology powered by electricity. Installation

of the heat pump needed to be supported by a range of improvements to the fabric of the building to reduce overall energy demand to ensure that the school runs more efficiently, reducing exposure to rising energy costs. Improvements to air tightness and ventilation also create the chance to improve the standards of indoor air quality and improve the learning environment.

Lewisham has 89 schools (including Abbey Manor College and 2 nursery schools), the oldest of which date from the late 19th century with the latest built in the 21st. Each of these has its own unique challenge in getting to net zero carbon, including differences in relation to ownership and responsibilities for school buildings. The cost of retrofitting all Lewisham's schools to be net zero carbon ready would require detailed site by site assessment. Based on the work undertaken with grant funding from the Low Carbon Skills Fund and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme delivery of similar works across all 89 schools would cost approximately £40m.

Further rounds of funding from the Low Carbon Skills Fund and the Public Sector Decarbonisation Scheme are expected and officers will be working to try and ensure that Lewisham's schools continue to benefit from this opportunity. These sources of funding will not in themselves be sufficient and works will need to be prioritised and other sources of funding found. Further details of plans to decarbonise Lewisham's Council's buildings including schools will be set out in the Council's new corporate strategy expected to be published in 2022.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 8

Priority 1

Question asked by: Octavia Holland

Relevant Directorate: Children & Young People

Member to reply: Councillor Chris Barnham

Question

Please provide details of preferences for our secondary schools this year and if we continue to see an increase in families choosing Lewisham schools?

Reply

Please find the table below detailing the on-time applications for Lewisham Secondary Schools. These figures represent an increase of 169 first preferences and 226 total preferences compared to last year. This increase, at a time when the Year 6 cohort was actually a little smaller, clearly shows a very welcome increase in parental confidence in Lewisham secondary schools.

| School | Preference | | | | | | |
|--------------------------------------|-------------------|-------------|-------------|-------------|------------|------------|--------------|
| | 1st | 2nd | 3rd | 4th | 5th | 6th | Total |
| Addey & Stanhope School | 117 | 90 | 97 | 52 | 37 | 42 | 435 |
| Bonus Pastor Catholic College | 282 | 159 | 116 | 74 | 56 | 43 | 730 |
| Conisborough College | 82 | 80 | 83 | 53 | 41 | 43 | 382 |
| Deptford Green School | 102 | 117 | 73 | 60 | 64 | 60 | 476 |
| Forest Hill School | 107 | 90 | 67 | 55 | 52 | 52 | 423 |
| Haberdashers' Aske's Hatcham College | 259 | 220 | 177 | 135 | 108 | 72 | 971 |
| Haberdashers' Aske's Knights Academy | 145 | 104 | 88 | 62 | 36 | 37 | 472 |
| Prendergast Ladywell School | 185 | 177 | 154 | 139 | 88 | 69 | 812 |
| Prendergast School | 172 | 163 | 103 | 76 | 67 | 33 | 614 |
| Prendergast Vale School | 54 | 68 | 78 | 69 | 68 | 51 | 388 |
| Sedgehill Academy | 91 | 90 | 88 | 64 | 43 | 42 | 418 |
| St Matthew Academy | 95 | 120 | 104 | 79 | 55 | 48 | 501 |
| Sydenham School | 222 | 157 | 104 | 107 | 68 | 54 | 712 |
| Trinity Lewisham CE School | 75 | 75 | 70 | 57 | 55 | 35 | 367 |
| Grand Total | 1988 | 1710 | 1402 | 1082 | 838 | 681 | 7701 |

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 9

Priority 1

Question asked by: James Rathbone

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Kevin Bonavia

Question

Since Lewisham became the UK's first Borough of Sanctuary in 2021 what has been done to put the principles of sanctuary into practice and tackle the Home Office's hostile environment policies

Reply

Lewisham is strongly committed to further embedding its work on the Borough of Sanctuary. Since receiving the recognition, we have been working on the following:

- General Practice (GP) surgeries to the Safe Surgeries initiative for undocumented migrants as promoted by [Doctors Of The World](#). Currently 27 of 33 GP Practices in Lewisham are signed up, with efforts being made to sign up those that remain.
- We have developed a [promotional campaign](#) to encourage landlords to rent to refugees. As local landlords sign up, we will compile a list of Sanctuary Lettings Agents to be shared with service user groups and online.
- We remain very mindful of the consequences of Brexit on our residents who are European Union nationals. In terms of EU Settled Status (EUSS), as of 30 September 2021 nearly 60,000 Lewisham residents (up from 58,000 in the previous quarter) made EUSS applications. The Home Office data indicates that 56,500 Lewisham residents (up from 53,000 in the previous quarter) had been granted Settled or pre-Settled Status. The Council continues to encourage EU residents living in the borough, who have not already done so, to apply for Settled Status. The Council has also played an active role lobbying on behalf of EU nationals living in the borough, urging the Government to extend its arbitrary EUSS applications deadline and for additional resource to be available for EU nationals.
- Following the crisis in Afghanistan last year, the Council wrote to the Home Secretary urging the Government to do all it can to support those fleeing violence and persecution in Afghanistan and to offer Lewisham's commitment to provide sanctuary to those fleeing conflict and persecution. The Council specifically committed to resettle at least 10 families under the Afghan Relocations and Assistance Policy (ARAP) – this commitment was met last month.
- The Council is embarking on a drive to encourage all of Lewisham's schools to become accredited Schools of Sanctuary, following the example of St Mary's Primary School in Lewisham, where pupils, staff and parents have worked on campaigns to support migrants and have provided training from lived experience to Council staff.

In addition to the above, the Council continues work on sanctuary action plans for all services, so that staff are better able to assist residents with migrant backgrounds. In the meantime, the Council is regularly updating its webpages to provide detailed information for refugees, asylum seekers and migrants about support and services available to them from the Council and partner agencies.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 10

Priority 1

Question asked by: Stephen Penfold

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Kevin Bonavia

Question

Lewisham Council has been leading the way in resettling refugees and challenging the Government's hostile environment approach to immigration. How many refugee households has the council resettled to date and what are its plans for future resettlement?"

Reply

Lewisham Council has resettled 55 refugee households to date, being the largest number of all London boroughs. The Council remains committed to resettling a total of 110 households as part of our Sanctuary Borough commitments. This represents an increase on our original commitment of 100 and includes an additional 10 Afghan households that the Council agreed to resettle in response to the humanitarian crisis in Afghanistan.

Currently we are making good progress in meeting our targets with five families due to arrive in the next three weeks. As more families are settled in the borough it remains our priority to ensure families receive all the support that is required to integrate into our borough. The programme has benefitted from the support package provided to families from our partners at The Refugee Council and Lewisham Refugee and Migrant Network and also considerable community support, providing help such as language classes and employment opportunities. We remain confident in realising our ambition to provide a welcoming home to those fleeing persecution.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 11

Priority 1

Question asked by: James Royston

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor Chris Best

Question

Please can the Cabinet Member give details of work undertaken to support residents' mental health throughout the pandemic, anything significant learned from that work, and any future plans or opportunities to harness that learning and ensure we prioritise our residents' mental health in future?

Reply

The Lewisham Mental Health Alliance has met during the COVID-19 response period to develop a collaborative response to the pandemic, preventing and addressing emerging mental health concerns.

During the pandemic, our services moved predominantly online to support continued access. Due to the success of this, moving forward, we will now combine online support and face-to-face sessions across our mental health services including children's.

Work also focused on supporting people with Dementia during the closure of existing services in the borough and a new befriending service will go live this year to promote ongoing independence.

COVID-19 disproportionately impacted Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic communities, embedding existing inequalities and promoting the conditions to generate new ones. In response to this, an insight study was undertaken to identify barriers to access and a series of emotional wellbeing workshops and resilience workshops were delivered to staff and residents in the borough to support them in coping with changes resulting from COVID-19. This work will be taken forward via a new health inequalities group to be launched in Spring 2022; this work will seek to promote an all age view.

As COVID-19 restrictions ease we will continue to develop stronger community engagement mechanisms and coproduction opportunities in the planning and development of new services and improvements to existing ones.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 12

Priority 1

Question asked by: Alan Hall

Relevant Directorate: Corporate Resources

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

What is the definition of a 'balanced' budget?

Reply

A briefing published by the Chartered Institute of Public Finance & Accountancy (CIPFA) in March 2016, titled 'Balancing local authority budgets and section 114 notices' notes that whilst local authorities are required by law to have a balanced budget, what is meant by 'balanced' is not defined by law.

CIPFA go on to state that:

“a prudent definition of a sustainable balanced budget for local government would be a financial plan based on sound assumptions which shows how income will equal spend over the short- and medium-term.

Plans would take into account deliverable cost savings and/or local income growth strategies as well as useable reserves. Normal preference is that day-to-day income covers day-to-day costs and at year-end there is no variance.

For local government, at its very simplest, a balanced budget means that the council is content that the combination of income, the sensible use of reserves and having robust savings plans in place means that underlying income will cover on-going costs and future commitments in a sustainable and manageable way (emphasis added).

The context of 'medium-term' is crucial. It is entirely possible that abrupt financial shocks, such as sudden losses in funding or unplanned increases in cost, may mean year-end overspend is inevitable even with an emergency savings plan. If that overspend can be covered by the use of reserves in the current year and the Chief Finance Officer (CFO) is confident other measures being taken will bring the position into balance in the following year, the CFO still has a balanced budget.”

The Council ensures that it plans for the medium-term through the annual Medium Term Financial Strategy (MTFS) which is presented to Mayor and Cabinet in the summer of each year. The purpose of this report is to set out the medium-term financial position for the Council over the next four years and the assumptions on which it is based, as well as the likely levels of budget reductions which will be required to present a balanced budget. This was presented to Mayor and Cabinet on the 9 July 2021 for the period 2022/23 to 2025/26.

This is then built upon in preparing the annual budget each year as the funding envelope is announced through the provisional and final Local Government Settlement, and specific and deliverable budget reduction proposals are identified to meet the shortfall between the level of funding available and the proposed

expenditure required to deliver Council services against its agreed Corporate Strategy.

The budget report presented to Mayor and Cabinet on the 9 February 2022 and full Council on the 2 March 2022 clearly sets out the combination of income, the availability for use of reserves if required, and the robust savings plans in place such that the underlying income will cover on-going costs and future commitments for 2022/23 in a balanced manner.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 13

Priority 1

Question asked by: Liam Curran

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Patrick Codd

Question

Will the Cabinet member commit the Council to enabling a full hydrological survey of the area of the borough's part of Sydenham Hill to include all water flows, springs, underwater streams and drainage of the hill down to Lower Sydenham, potentially impacted by increased development and hard-standing on Sydenham Hill and given the possible impact of flooding on Lower Sydenham, Catford and Lewisham?

Reply

As a Lead Local Flood Authority (LLFA) the Council has made assessments of a number of hydrological features within the borough. In the last year this has included surveying, mapping and designating features that convey surface water within the Upper Sydenham area as Ordinary Watercourses – and providing updated maps to Planning to ensure these features are highlighted during the planning validation process.

In 2019 officers completed an in-depth surface water modelling study across locations in the borough at risk of flooding, which included the area around Sydenham Hill. This study improves on the existing Environment Agency surface water mapping and enhances the understanding of water flows within the borough. Officers have provided this modelling data to the Environment Agency to improve the accuracy of the information they publish.

Pressures on budgets means the Council needs to secure funding in order to undertake additional work and hydrological studies and modelling of surface water can run into several tens of thousands of pounds. The modelling work conducted in 2019 was funded by a grant from central government for £64,562. Officers are seeking funding to carry out further investigations into flood risk in the Sydenham Hill area, and, in particular, to survey an underground watercourse that runs from Sydenham Hill towards the River Pool in Bellingham.

The Council will be publishing its new Flood Risk Management Strategy for 2022-2027 this year which will update current policies to reflect new national strategies and programmes as well as local priorities and opportunities.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 14

Priority 2

Question asked by: Juliet Campbell

Relevant Directorate: Children & Young People

Member to reply: Councillor Chris Barnham

Question

I read the Cabinet Member for Children's Services and School Performance update about the expansion of young people's mental health provision. Would the Cabinet Member expand on the work the Council is doing around mental health support in schools?

Reply

Since 2018, this Lewisham administration has had a strong focus on the importance of children's mental health and wellbeing, in its broadest sense. This is in response to the growing importance of children's mental health on the national agenda, and concern within Lewisham about the mental health needs of our young people. I'm pleased to note that during this period, our partnership with the local NHS, informed by feedback from families and young people and a number of local reviews, has delivered significant steps forward. These include:

- substantial progress in funding and performance. As a result of increased NHS funding, the budget for NHS CAMHS has risen 50% 2018-20
- waiting times from referral to assessment at the South London and Maudsley have fallen significantly, and A&E attendances have also reduced (although there remains more to do on waiting times for treatment after assessment).
- A dedicated CAMHS team for looked after children, accessed through the Lewisham Virtual School, meaning children aged 5-18 in our care can seek help without GP referral.

In addition, I believe strongly that a wide range of services is important, and we should strive so far as possible to help young people before problems become so severe that they need a specialist referral to an NHS service. Accordingly, Lewisham is rolling out a further wave of the Mental Health Support Team (MHST) Programme to an additional 20 schools across the borough, following the establishment of an initial 19 schools during Jan 2020.

The programme aims to ensure that education settings are supported in delivering whole school approaches in tackling these issues, as well as liaising with external services so that young people get the right support when it is needed.

Feedback from schools and wider stakeholders including children and their families has been extremely positive.

NHS England has made a further funding commitment in 2023/24 to further expand the programme in Lewisham from January 2024. In the meantime Lewisham Council and the South East London Clinical Commissioning Group are looking at options for developing the mental health offer in all Lewisham secondary schools in 2022.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 15

Priority 2

Question asked by: Louise Krupski

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Patrick Codd

Question

How has the council worked to improve recycling rates and what plans do we have to continue improving into the future?

Reply

The Council introduced fortnightly refuse collections and weekly food waste collections in 2017, and this led to a considerable increase in recycling rates. Since 2018, we have reduced household waste by 18%, increased recycling rates by 11% and increased organic waste recycling by 90%.

Recognising that more needs to be done to increase recycling further and reduce the amount of waste generated, the Council has recently approved a new 10-year plan for waste. The Waste Strategy creates a framework for how Lewisham can manage its waste and recycling for the foreseeable future.

Mindful of the London Reduction and Recycling Plan, published by the Greater London Authority, the Council has set a target of a 45% household recycling target by 2025. To meet this challenge, the Council has committed to a variety of initiatives, including:

- Introducing a separate food waste collection service to flats, estates and a trial at schools;
- Developing and implementing a revised suite of waste management policies that encourage and promote recycling, and which tackle waste bin contamination;
- Creating a specific and targeted waste communications campaign, including workshops in schools around the borough;
- Hosting a number of events around the borough – which includes litter picking sessions as part of the Cleaner Lewisham Campaign;
- Reviewing waste collection and recycling arrangements to residents living in flats above shops;
- Working with businesses to introduce a commercial food waste collection service;

The Waste Strategy sets a vision for management in waste in Lewisham and the Council is looking forward to working with its partners, and with the many communities in Lewisham to increase recycling and improve waste management practices.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 16

Priority 2

Question asked by: James-J Walsh

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Paul Bell

Question

The Old Job Centre site at Rushey Green is being turned into new homes. Would you be able to tell us more about the progress of the scheme?”

Reply

The ‘Velo House’ development is a Phoenix Housing Scheme. Built on the old Job Centre site on Rushey Green, the building’s name is a nod to the history of the local area and the old ‘Cafford Velodrome’ which stood close to Mountsfield Park from 1895 to 1900. Demolition works began in early 2020 and construction began in August 2020. The contractor for the project is Elemento. The planned completion date for the scheme is currently 30th March 2022.

The scheme included the demolition the former job centre building at 9-19 Rushey Green, to develop a mixed-use building of 6 storeys in height, comprising of 45 one, two and three-bedroom affordable rent flats. The development will include a commercial space on the ground floor, along with associated ancillary space including bike store, refuse and recycling storage and landscaping.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 17

Priority 2

Question asked by: James Royston

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor Patrick Codd

Question

Please can the Cabinet Member provide an update on the number of trees (including street trees and mini orchards) planted across the borough since 2018, and plans to continue to plant more trees as part of its ongoing work to tackle the Climate Emergency?

Reply

As part of the regeneration of Beckenham Place Park, 24,000 young trees were planted in recent years. In addition to that, a total of 1,456 trees have been planted across the borough since 2018. The Council continues to work with residents, Street Trees for Living, and ward assemblies to identify internal and external sources of funding to support the planting of more trees.

A further 600 trees were planted in Durham Hill on Monday 28 February as part of the Tiny Forest tree planting, to further enhance biodiversity in Lewisham's award winning parks.

The plan is to continue to plant around 350 standard street trees per year and to plant more trees in parks where appropriate, with planting of new trees balanced against supporting the various park uses and functions.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 18

Priority 2

Question asked by: Alan Hall

Relevant Directorate: Chief Exec's

Member to reply: Councillor Kevin Bonavia

Question

What response has the Council made to the parliamentary boundary review?

Reply

The Returning Officer submitted a response to the first stage of the Boundary Commission for England's consultation on new parliamentary constituencies. The full response is below:

Dear Commissioners

Thank you for the proposals published on Tuesday 8 June 2021. I am responding as Acting Returning Officer for Lewisham. Because my role requires impartiality, my comments will be limited but I hope that you will find them helpful. I wish to make the following observations:

1. I support the methodology outlined in the legislation for this review
2. The 3 constituencies that contain Lewisham electors meet the requirements in so far as:
 - a. All 3 constituencies have an electorate within the quota of 69,714 and 77,062
 - b. The disruption to existing constituencies is minimal
 - c. Local ties and communities have been considered
 - d. Most importantly, you have used our future wards as the building blocks. I strongly approve the use of these wards and am particularly pleased that no wards have been split
3. With regards to the splitting of wards, I strongly support the use of whole wards mainly because it is extremely beneficial for the effective administration of elections I expect there will be representations regarding the makeup of the 3 constituencies, and that the initial proposals will likely be amended as a result of the consultation. I feel it's important that you continue with your methodology for any revision of the scheme, in particular the use of whole wards as the building blocks.

Yours faithfully

Kim Wright

Acting Returning Officer and Chief Executive, London Borough of Lewisham

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 19

Priority 2

Question asked by: Samantha Latouche

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor Brenda Dacres

Question

The launch of Lewisham's Borough of Culture Day One programme saw events that celebrated the best of Lewisham's creativity and diversity across the borough, including a number of events in my own ward of New Cross. Can you provide an update on how the Council is keeping the excitement going on the Borough of Culture programme over this year, what are some of the key events taking place and how can the community get involved?

Reply

The Council has a series of events planned throughout the year designed to engage the whole community which can be found in the What's On section of the [Borough of Culture website](#). Some of the highlights include:

- Love is Attention, a series of contemporary music events in March
- In Living Memory, seven community-led projects bringing Lewisham's oral history to life and celebrating its diversity and heritage.
- The return of People's Day at Mountsfield Park in July after a four year break.

There are a number of ways that residents can get involved – through participating in our year-long series of creative challenges, volunteering to assist in delivering events or registering their own events to be listed as part of the programme. They can also respond to call outs for artists and opportunities for funding. All of these options are listed on the [Get Involved section](#) of the website. Residents can also join our mailing list to receive regular updates on events and projects throughout the year and find regular posts on the Council's social media channels.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 20

Priority 3

Question asked by: Louise Krupski

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor Patrick Codd

Question

How many trees has the council planted since 2018?

Reply

As part of the regeneration of Beckenham Place Park, 24,000 young trees were planted in recent years. In addition to that, a total of 1,456 trees have been planted across the borough since 2018. The Council continues to work with residents, Street Trees for Living, and ward assemblies to identify internal and external sources of funding to support the planting of more trees.

A further 600 trees were planted in Durham Hill on Monday 28 February as part of the Tiny Forest tree planting, to further enhance biodiversity in Lewisham's award winning parks.

The plan is to continue to plant around 350 standard street trees per year and to plant more trees in parks where appropriate, with planting of new trees balanced against supporting the various park uses and functions.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 21

Priority 3

Question asked by: James-J Walsh

Relevant Directorate: Corporate Resources

Member to reply: Chair of Pensions Committee

Question

Lewisham Council are stewards for a pension pot worth around £1.4bn, what has LBL done to ensure a good return for its members and an ethical investment strategy?

Reply

The overriding responsibility of the Pension Investment Committee is its fiduciary duty to the Fund's members, Lewisham Council staff and pensioners, to protect the Fund's assets and ensure that the Fund remains able to meet both its current liabilities and those anticipated in the future.

In order to be able to do this the Committee continues to plan for a fully-funded position in the medium term, now 17 years, with the Fund outlook having risen from 78% to 90% funded in the three years 2016 to 2019. The most recent triennial valuation was at March 2019 with the next to be undertaken from the 31 March 2022. The Fund continues to perform broadly in line with its strategic benchmark over the longer term and despite the economic downturn during the pandemic it has still returned 11.6% over the last three years and it is just behind its benchmark performance since inception of 7.9% per annum.

In 2018 the Pension Investment Committee resolved to baseline the carbon footprint of the Fund in order to inform the future investment strategy with a view to reducing the Fund's carbon footprint where possible. This ran in tandem with the most recent triennial valuation of the Fund. Both were completed in late 2019 alongside the Committee's updated Statement of Investment Beliefs, following an iterative process to refine and incorporate specific objectives around responsible investing and climate change.

The Committee agreed a set of Climate Objectives in November 2019, which cover commitments on: coal; extractive industries, carbon emissions, green revenues, and fund manager engagement.

Using these climate objectives and the investment beliefs in the context of the financial returns required from the Fund to meet its liabilities, the Committee has been able to consider increased diversification within its equities holdings and moves to other more illiquid assets (e.g. infrastructure).

The Committee agreed to diversify the investments of the Fund across a wider range of mandates to strengthen ethical investing through stronger Environment, Social, and Governance (ESG) practices. The changes agreed and commitments made to date by Lewisham include:

- all managers of Lewisham pension investments to be challenged on their ESG voting records and approach to engagement;
- shift in property investments into a Private Rented Scheme fund with community spaces and long leases to deliver improved social value - £45m;
- shift out of commodities held in the form of equities and diversified growth mandates to new infrastructure investment mandates with a portfolio of one mandate with at least a third renewable projects £75m and one mandate wholly focused on renewable projects £95m; and
- reshaping of passive equity holdings into two low cost : low carbon mandates with investments of over £700m which reduce the fund's exposure to fossil fuels via coal, oil, natural gas and other high-carbon investments and include a range of other exclusions such as controversial weapons and tobacco, and which actively seek out sustainable investments which address the climate emergency. To date £485m of this transfer has been completed with the balance in train.

Overall these changes are expected to significantly reduce the carbon footprint of the Fund and improve the quality of future decisions by those entrusted with Lewisham pension fund monies, while continuing to deliver the financial returns needed to pay members' pensions. Progress and next steps will continue to be reviewed, using the March 2022 valuation as the next milestone.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 22

Priority 3

Question asked by: Alan Hall

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Paul Bell

Question

How much has been allocated in the budget for Lewisham Homes to carry out repairs? How does this compare to the amounts allocated in the last four years?

Reply

Repairs and Maintenance (R&M) Allocation & Actuals for the last 4 full financial years and current forecast for 2021/22;

| | R&M Budget | Actuals | Variance |
|--------------|-------------|--------------|-------------|
| 2020/21 | £16,095,000 | £17,034,672 | -£939,672 |
| 2019/20 | £15,866,000 | £14,003,667 | £1,862,333 |
| 2018/19 | £15,693,000 | £18,791,973 | -£3,098,973 |
| 2017/18 | £15,545,000 | £15,425,392 | £119,608 |
| 4 year total | £63,199,000 | £65,255,704 | -£2,056,704 |
| 2021/22 | £15,242,000 | *£20,242,000 | -£5,000,000 |

*Current forecast. Officers are currently reviewing whether some of this expenditure can be capitalised, which would reduce the forecast R&M overspend noted above. There is a possibility that some work which has a HRA capital budget allocation, have been miscoded and charged to the HRA R&M revenue account instead, which is contributing to the forecast overspend in this area. An example of this could be decent homes void works which should be accounted for within the Capital allocations. An analysis of the charges placed into the HRA R&M revenue account will be undertaken by Lewisham Homes to identify these 'miscoding's' and correcting action taken to move the cost into the capital account. This will then contribute to reducing the current forecast overspend'

R&M allowances are reduced annually in line with stock loss through Right to Buy and other regeneration schemes e.g. Heathside & Lethbridge, Excalibur, Milford Towers etc.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 23

Priority 4

Question asked by: Alan Hall

Relevant Directorate: Chief Exec's

Member to reply: Councillor Amanda De Ryk

Question

What progress has been made on the pay negotiations for all grades of Council employees? Please list the agreed percentage increases and actual budget by category.

Reply

Lewisham are part of the national negotiations for pay awards for local government employees and chief officers.

The negotiations fall into three categories:

- Chief Executive
- Chief Officer
- Local Government Workers

Chief Executive and Chief Officers

Agreement on the pay award for Chief Executives and Chief Officers were reached in January and February 2022 respectively. The award for both is 1.5% with effect from 1 April 2021, and covers the period 1 April 2021 to 31 March 2022.

Officers covered by the above agreement are the Chief Executive; and Chief Officers on JNC grades 1-4.

The Council's Executive Management Team (EMT) have agreed that it will not implement any pay awards for the Chief Executive and Chief Officers, even though they have been agreed, until agreement has been reached for all staff. All awards when implemented will be backdated to 1 April 2021.

All other Local Government Workers Pay Award

The 2021 pay award is still pending for all other local government workers.

A full and final offer was made by the employers' side in July 2021 of 1.75% or 2.75% for those on the lowest pay points (NB: Lewisham do not have any staff on the lowest JNC salary pay points)

This offer was rejected by all three trade unions (UNISON, UNITE and GMB). The trade unions had taken the step of balloting their members seeking their support for industrial action over the pay offer.

UNISON's ballot closed on Friday 14 January 2022. Although there was strong support in favour of strike action (70%), the turnout was low (14.5% and therefore they will not be undertaking any formal action. An inactive ballot undertaken by GMB resulted in a similar position.

Unite's ballot closed on Thursday 17 February 2022 and we are currently awaiting the outcome of this. UNISON and GMB have indicated that they will await the outcome of the Unite ballot before they consider their next step.

In respect of the question 'and actual budget by category' the total Council wage bill, comprising salary, employers national insurance, and employers pension contributions but excluding schools (as subject to separate negotiations and funded separately), is approximately £117.6m per year. Of this total the Chief Executive and those on the JNC grades (Chief Officers) make up £3m or 2.6% of the total.

The cost of the 2021/22 pay award will therefore be:

- £50k for the 1.5% award to the Chief Executive and JNC grades (Chief Officers); and,
- £2.05m, if agreed at 1.75%, for all other Lewisham staff (those below the JNC grades - i.e. for grades Scale 1, via SO and PO grades, to Senior Manager Grade 3).

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 24

Priority 4

Question asked by: James-J Walsh

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Kim Powell

Question

Please update us on the work that has gone in from Lewisham Council to protect Lewisham jobs, livelihoods and businesses in the face of the pandemic?

Reply

We know that the pandemic has had a significant economic impact on local residents and businesses. Unemployment has doubled, rising the highest amongst young people, exacerbating existing inequalities in the labour market.

The Council moved quickly to put in place new grants and support programmes including:

- Distributed £76 million to local businesses through over 14,000 grants. More grants have been made available at the start of 2022 and are currently being administered to get more financial support to local businesses.
- Our most recent grants and business advice services aim to help local enterprises make the most of the opportunities arising from our role as London Borough of Culture 2022, as well as supporting business resilience and growth.
- Made over 21,000 visits to local businesses to help understanding of the latest guidance and to promote the support and grants available.
- Commissioned a headcount and survey of Independent and Black, Asian and Minority Ethnic-owned businesses on our 10 key high streets – the first UK local authority to do so.
- “Shop Safe & Shop Local” campaign supporting businesses to trade safely while also building residents’ confidence so they feel reassured to venture back out onto the high street. Alongside this we took a supportive and permissive approach to enabling our local businesses to re-open and begin trading.
- In the last two years 142 apprenticeship starts have been achieved, taking the cumulative total to 247 out of the 250 target. The target is on track to be achieved by the end of March 2022.
- Set up a new Youth Employment Hub to support unemployed 18-24 year olds, initially operating virtually but now embedded alongside the Bank of Things in Lewisham Shopping Centre.
- Alongside this we are creating over 30 Kickstart placements within the Council alongside dozens of placements with local employers. This offers a six month paid work placement for unemployed residents aged 16-24.
- We are bringing forward plans to start a new all-age employment support and job brokerage service, Lewisham Works, to provide tailored and holistic support to any Lewisham resident who is out of work.

- Creating vibrant and attractive town centres by funding innovative and creative projects which will attract visitors and animate our high streets. This includes projects funded through our Town Centre Small Grants fund and the Creative Happenings programme.
- Seeking continued accreditation from the GLA of our Creative Enterprise Zone in Deptford and New Cross to support the ongoing expansion and development of the creative and digital industries.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 25

Priority 5

Question asked by: Alan Hall

Relevant Directorate: Community Services

Member to reply: Councillor Brenda Dacres

Question

How much has the Mayor allocated in his budget for a drug pilot?

Reply

In December 2020, Lewisham commissioned an organisation to undertake research into drug diversion projects in operation across Police forces in England in order to understand if such a model could assist with improving outcomes for young people in Lewisham.

It had been made clear that any pilot would need to be agreed and funded by MOPAC in agreement with the central MPS before local engagement could be undertaken.

Nothing has been agreed by MOPAC or MPS to date.

MEMBER QUESTION NO. 26

Priority 5

Question asked by: James-J Walsh

Relevant Directorate: Housing, Regeneration & Public Realm

Member to reply: Councillor Patrick Codd

Question

How does Lewisham Council compare to other London and England authorities in its work and commitment to tackling the Climate Emergency

Reply

As a sector local government has responded proactively to the climate emergency. Based on data from Climate Emergency UK, 79% of all local authorities in England, Wales, Scotland and Northern Ireland have published an action plan setting out the work they intend to cut carbon emissions and respond to the climate emergency.

In January 2022 Climate Emergency UK published a scored assessment¹ of each of these action plans. Lewisham was recognised as a top performing council with an overall score of 77%, making it the fourth highest score in London and 15th highest out of the 333 local authorities in England².

The scoring methodology included an assessment across nine themes. The individual scores awarded to Lewisham Council making up the overall 77% are shown in the table below.

| Theme | Max. points | Weighting | Lewisham's Score |
|-----------------------------------------|-------------|-----------|------------------|
| Governance, Development and Funding | 21 | 15% | 15/21 |
| Mitigation and Adaptation | 18 | 15% | 11/18 |
| Commitment and Integration | 7 | 15% | 7/7 |
| Community Engagement and Communications | 9 | 15% | 7/9 |
| Measuring and Setting Emissions Targets | 5 | 10% | 3/5 |
| Co-Benefits | 4 | 5% | 4/4 |
| Diversity and Social Inclusion | 5 | 10% | 4/5 |
| Education, Skills and Training | 5 | 10% | 4/5 |
| Ecological Emergency | 4 | 5% | 3/4 |

¹ <https://councilclimatescorecards.uk>

² The 333 local authorities in England are split by county councils (24), district councils (181), unitary authorities (58), metropolitan districts (36), London boroughs (32) plus the City of London and the Isles of Scilly.