
From Alan Crawley

Councillor Jason Perry

Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Transport

Question No.

PQ81-13

What is the percentage of Queen's Garden that John Laing Ltd will take when the company develops the Taberner House site and will the council still own that area? Will the company be allowed to redesign the rest of the garden and remove the water fountain?

Reply

The redevelopment is being undertaken by CCURV, which is a 50/50 partnership between John Laing and the Council.

The principle of an 'area for potential development' within the gardens has been established by the adopted Mid Croydon Masterplan. Queens Gardens is currently 8,614 sq m. Taberner House, including its forecourt, occupies 4,183 sq m. The new development will occupy a footprint of 3,746 sq m including block footprints, access routes and buffer areas at the perimeter. Post development the amended Queens gardens will be 9,051 sq m, an increase of circa 5%.

The Masterplan outlines proposals for improvements to the gardens, including the following:

- *Existing garden refurbished with additional planting and seating*
- *Subway entrance enhanced*
- *Existing toilets relocated*
- *New steps to Katherine Street*
- *New ramp to Fell Road*
- *New children play area in the lower garden*
- *New planting scheme and seating areas*
- *New promenade path created along axis of Mint Walk*
- *Existing Connect 2 cycle route widened and resurfaced*
- *Public art and waterfeature*
- *Informal play areas with seating*
- *Street tree planting*
- *New paving to footpaths*

The provision of these improvements is associated with the development. The

CCURV team have developed more detailed designs for refurbishment of the whole Gardens. However, all proposed improvements will need to be agreed by both Planning and Environmental officers, and the planning application will require the approval of the Strategic Planning Committee.

With regard to ownership, it is intended that the northern section of the garden will remain in Council ownership and the southern section, between the buildings, will be owned by a CCURV subsidiary which will take on responsibility for its management.

From Mr. Robert Canning

Councillor Jason Perry

Cabinet Member Planning Transport and Regeneration

Question No.

PQ82-13

What discussions has the Council had with Transport for London about improving traffic flows at Fiveways junction in Waddon?

Reply

The Leader and I recently attended a strategic meeting with the Deputy Mayor for London, with responsibility for Transport, where Transport for London (TfL) set out their transport priorities for Croydon. Responding to the strategic importance of the A23 corridor, within which the Fiveways Junction is situated, the Deputy Mayor raised the GLA's desire to work with the Council to address congestion and traffic capacity along this strategic route. The objectives would be to enhance capacity, reduce congestion and support inward investment and development in Croydon's metropolitan centre.

In particular, TfL is proposing to prepare a detailed corridor study, leading to the development of an options report, outlining possible strategic highway improvements on the A23 corridor. TfL aims to complete this feasibility work within 12 months.

The study will inform future funding decisions for highway improvements including allocation of the TfL Growth Fund and, if approved, Council funds. A minimum funding package of £25 million from the TfL Growth Fund is being allocated to this project. A report to the Cabinet on the 18th November sought approval to the Council committing up to £20million to aid delivery of this TfL led scheme.

From Mrs Caroline Rendle

Councillor Phil Thomas

Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services

Question No.

PQ83-13

Can the Cabinet Member tell me how much the council has spent each year since 2006 on cycling proficiency, and break down into different projects.

Reply

The Council has received the following funding from Transport for London (TfL) for cycle training over the past five years:-

2009 / 10 = £100k
2010 / 11 = £110k
2011 / 12 = £120k
2012 / 13 = £150k
2013 / 14 = £175k

This funding has supported a wide range of cycle training for adults, children and more recently for drivers of heavy goods vehicles to help raise their cycle awareness. The Council also provides training on electric cycles, secure cycle storage for schools, scoot safety, cycle awareness campaigns, information booklets and supplies vital equipment such as cycle helmets and reflective fluorescent tabards.

Funding for cycle training prior to 2009 was included within a general road safety budget and is known to have been around 70k – 100k per year. The growth in cycle usage across the borough has led to greater demands for cycle training and hence the increase in the budget for this essential service.

From Mr Andrew Rendle

Councillor Dudley Mead

Question No.

PQ084 - 13

What help & to what amount or extent will the council give to groups wishing to lease The Old Ashburton Library in the following areas.

- 1) Financial
- 2) Planning
- 3) Legal
- 4) Community interest & involvement
- 5) Building & renovation
- 6) Security
- 7) Fixtures & Fittings
- 8) Disability access
- 9) Re-connecting utilities
- 10) Advertising facilities within the building

Reply

The Council are selling the long leasehold of Ashburton Library on an unconditional basis, and it has been made clear throughout the marketing process that the successful party will be wholly responsible for all aspects of the property, including the ten areas detailed in the question.

For clarification on the Council's position on planning, and community interest and involvement, it should be noted that the Council included a planning statement in the information pack for the property which outlines our broad expectations and requirements for the building to retain a community use. As part of the pre-application process, the Council's planning officers would advise on an organisation's more detailed plans for the property.

The Council will work with the successful party, as with any other community group, to help promote their proposed community uses for the building.

From Mt Stephen Mann

Councillor Phil Thomas

Cabinet Member Highways and Environmental Services

Question No.

PQ085-13

How many street trees were there for each year from 2006 to 2013 in each Croydon Council Ward and how many street trees have been planted as part of new developments since 2008.

Reply

The council currently has around 33,000 street trees, on average around 500 are lost a year through disease, damage or decay with an average of 400 a year being planted. It would be very time consuming to extract this information on a street by street basis (ward basis) although trees are generally replanted in existing locations where possible.

Tree planting in relation to new developments is ordinarily just within the application site, and not on the highway. However, if a street tree is required to be removed, for example to enable a new access to a development site, then it is common for a replacement street tree to be sought as part of the application process.

From Mr Shasha Khan

Councillor Phil Thomas

Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services

Question No.

PQ086-13

A new peer reviewed Spanish study has found a significant increase in dying from cancer in towns near incinerators. If in time it is shown that councillors have taken an ill-judged decision that actually affects the cancer rate in Croydon North west, what recourse do residents affected have?

Reply

The Environment Agency are the United Kingdom's appointed independent organisation who have total responsibility for ensuring that all waste processing and treatment facilities in this country operate to the required rigorous environmental standards.

The Environment Agency has approved the application made by Viridor for an Environmental Permit in respect of their proposed Energy Recovery Facility at Beddington Lane.

In addition the Environment Agency has a responsibility to monitor all waste treatment and processing plants, including the new proposed Energy Recovery Facility at Beddington Lane.

Any resident has the option to register a complaint with the Environment Agency who have a responsibility to investigate the said complaint.

From Mr James Thompson

Councillor Tim Pollard

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning

Question No.

PQ087-13

What were the costs, both in terms of legal bills and officer time, of the aborted and probably politically-motivated bid to judicially review the Council's decision to sell a small part of the Riesco collection? Do you think this was good use of taxpayers money?

Reply

The Council has incurred approximately £25,000 Ex VAT in respect of total legal costs to enable it to respond to the judicial challenge issued regarding the sale of items from the Riesco collection. Final figures for these costs have yet to be finalised pending receipt and agreement of any outstanding bills/fees.

The officer time has not been calculated but it was very considerable and involved a number of officers.

The Council has an obligation to respond to judicial challenge and incur associated costs. In this case this could be considered very poor use of taxpayers' money.

From Mr Mark Samuel

Councillor Mike Fisher

Leader of the Council

Question No.

PQ088-13

Can councillor Fisher explain why the Council he allegedly leads, has current legal proceedings against his fellow citizens for non-payment of council tax, whilst simultaneously writing to them implying that there is assistance available, to pay for some or all of your council tax for this year? Where's the sense?

Reply

Thank you for your question.

Our approach to collecting council tax is based very much on helping those that talk to us when there are problems, but at the same time giving no inch to those that just plain refuse to pay.

We understand that people may run into difficulties from time to time and, when that happens, our advice is always to come and talk to us first so that we can look at options available to help get back on track as quickly as possible.

However, those people that refuse outright to pay their council tax and don't take the opportunity to work with us will be pursued through the courts for the money that they owe.

Our approach continues to deliver successful results with 96.22% of all council tax collected in 2012/13, which is the best collection rate ever achieved.

From Mr Colin Weaving

Councillor Dudley Mead

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Housing

Question No.

PQ089-13

What checks do the council carry out in regard to a privately owned property, which is subsequently let out under the bonding scheme?

Reply

The Council carries out a range of checks as follows:-

- Council Tax registration, arrears, and outstanding Housing Benefit overpayments.
- Historical landlord and tenant disputes.
- Any outstanding planning notices/permissions.
- Any outstanding housing act notices or prohibition orders on the property.
- That the property is free of any hazards under the housing health and safety rating system.
- Valid gas safety certificate and electrical safety certificate.

Further information in relation to the above can be viewed on the council website under Housing "Letting Property – advice for landlords".

From Mr Andrew Stevensen

Councillor Phil Thomas

Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services

Question No.

PQ90-13

A lot of people are concerned about the increase in fly-tipping, can the Council tell us what extra resources have been agreed to fight this?

Reply

Additional investment 1 (£200,000)

This funding will be used to increase the capacity of the Enforcement team in order that they may increase the attention given to fly tipping offences and other environmental violations. The Council is currently undertaking a restructure to fulfil this objective. It is expected that this additional money will allow for 4 additional officers.

Additional investment 2 (£130,000)

This investment will be spent on staff overtime and a specific fly tipping programme which establishes a number of preventative measures including additional CCTV cameras, alley gates, additional bins and other preventative measures.

From Ms Joy Prince

Councillor Phil Thomas

Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services

Question No.

PQ91-13

Relatively recently someone has been regularly fly-tipping in the through-way between Borough Hill and Harrison's Rise in Waddon; in addition to clearing it up once reported, what proactive action does the Council intend to take in order to catch, or at least deter, the persistent offender(s)?

Reply

The Area Enforcement Team has visited Borough Hill and Harrisons Rise and arrangements made to get the area cleared. Both of these roads are swept weekly, and as such any items would be removed as part of this cleanse. The team will undertake regular patrols though to ensure that it stays tidy and to try and identify anybody that is depositing waste illegally.

We have checked the Council's system and this area does not flag up as a particular hotspot for fly tipping. However, we will keep this under review through the ongoing patrols and if there is a regular pattern emerging at this location the team can employ a number of measures such as signage, door knocks and letter drops to inform residents of the correct way to dispose of their waste and seek further information on who may be responsible. If necessary the team can also undertake surveillance and install CCTV.

The Area Enforcement Team has visited Borough Hill and Harrisons Rise and arrangements made to get the area cleared. Both of these roads are swept weekly, and as such any items would be removed as part of this cleanse. The team will undertake regular patrols though to ensure that it stays tidy and to try and identify anybody that is depositing waste illegally.

We have checked the Council's system and this area does not flag up as a particular hotspot for fly tipping. However, we will keep this under review through the ongoing patrols and if there is a regular pattern emerging at this location the team can employ a number of measures such as signage, door knocks and letter drops to inform residents of the correct way to dispose of their waste and seek further information on who may be responsible. If necessary the team can also undertake surveillance and install CCTV.

From Mr Andrew Pelling

Councillor Jason Perry

Cabinet Member for Planning, Regeneration and Transport

Question No.

PQ92-13

What amounts of monies have been agreed to be provided by the applicants under Section 106 agreements at the Hammerson/Westfield development?

How much CIL does the authority expect to accrue from the development?

Reply

The proposed Section 106 contributions are all clearly stated in the report to the planning committee which is publically available for inspection. The key elements of the contributions are:

£15m for the tram network

£10m for the bus network

£2.5m for local highways

£1.625m for sustainable transport

£1.35m for employment and training initiatives

The amount of CIL payable will not be known until any reserved matters have been discharged. This is because the application is in outline form and parameter based with the precise floor area not yet approved. Furthermore the CIL payment will be affected by the amount of floor space still occupied prior to 6 months of when the reserved matters are discharged.

From Mr David Ottley

Councillor Tim Pollard

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Young People and Learning

Question No.

PQ93-13

Is it still Council policy not to sell heritage items such as 1 VB? (currently estimated to be worth £30,000) especially in view of the decision made regarding the sale of the Riesco collection?

Reply

It remains the Council's intention not to sell heritage items such as 1VB.

From Mrs Deborah Edmonds

Councillor Simon Hoar

Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection

Question No.

PQ094-13

What does the council have to provide to VOSA to enable it to authorise a VTS?

Is it (1) Planning Permission,

(2) An Exemption?,

(3) Evidence of Established Use?,

or, (4) A Very Large Envelope?

Reply

The Council does not routinely pass documents directly to the Vehicle and Operator Services Agency (VOSA) in relation to the authorisation of a Vehicle Testing Station (VTS). A grant of planning permission is required to set up a MOT Testing Facility at a garage or other site when this is a new activity. The planning permission would ordinarily be vested in the land and not limited to the operator. It is for VOSA, not the Council, to determine what is necessary to authorise a VTS and for the site operator, not the Council, to make the application. The Council's understanding is that VOSA would have regard to the lawful nature of the activity (i.e. that it has planning permission) as part of the authorisation process.

From Mrs Holly King

Councillor Simon Hoar

Cabinet Member for Community Safety and Public Protection

Question No.

PQ095-13

How many cyclists have been stopped from riding illegally on footways in Croydon since the beginning of the year to date? And what enforcement action has been taken?

Reply

The enforcement of cycling offences is an operational matter for local police forces and is not something that the Council has authority to enforce unless it is contrary to one of its byelaws. The police can issue a Fixed Penalty Notice (FPN) of £30, which provides them with a direct means of dealing with most minor offences.

The Road Traffic Act 1991 defines the two most serious cycling offences in a similar way to those of dangerous and careless driving. The maximum fines are currently £2,500 for dangerous cycling and £1,000 for careless cycling.

Council Enforcement officers and Police patrol on foot and therefore it is often difficult for them to stop cyclists. However they do challenge cyclists where possible and on such occasions the incident is usually in the form of a warning that is recorded in note books as opposed to being logged centrally on to a database. It is therefore not possible to provide specific data.

From Mr Robert Elliott

Councillor Jason Perry

Cabinet Member Planning, Regeneration and Transport

Question No.

PQ096-13

Can the Cabinet Member tell me how much has been spent regarding Central Parade, New Addington, since May 06 (split between May 06 to May 10 and May 10 to date) on (i) advisors, consultants, lawyers, other professionals and similar costs; and (ii) capital works?

Reply

The expenditure relating to Central Parade has been obtained from a variety of sources including Council expenditure, Mayors Outer London Fund and Mayors Regeneration Fund.

The expenditure includes the cost to the Council in dealing with both Town and Village Green (TVG) applications relating to Central Parade. The total expenditure being £271, 056, (£147, 034 for TVG1 and £124, 022 for TVG 2), this amount however does not include the costs associated with officer time.

Below is the expenditure for Central Parade on advisors, consultants, lawyers, other professionals and capital works and covers the period from May 2006 to the present date.

	£	£
	2006-10	2010-13
Central Parade Redevelopment and Town & Village Green	86,779	272,502
Central Parade Public Realm Improvement Works		771,970
CALAT Hub Re-organisation		1,030,229
Total Expenditure		2,161,480

From Mr John Paterson

Councillor Phil Thomas

Cabinet Member for Highways and Environmental Services

Question No.

PQ097-13

Clearances in Foxley Wood

Following notices posted on gates and fences, can the council clarify, in the interests of democratic accountability, where the funding has originated from, such as grants or council allocated expenditure, and when a report was discussed, by what committee, and who made the decisions concerning the destruction of this woodland?

Reply

No notices have been displayed recently regarding works in the woodland. These may be old and we will have them removed.

The woodland works are funded by The Forestry Commission and the works are managed in accordance with our management plan to ensure the long term sustainability of the woodland and to comply with the Council's 'duty of care' regarding Health and Safety. It is the responsibility of the council's professional Trees and Woodland officers, supported by other experts in the Industry to ensure compliance and meet the requirements

Woodland work in Croydon is regulated and supported by the Forestry Commission who ensure that the work meets the UK Forestry Standard. As such, they monitor the work to check compliance with sustainable forestry standards e.g. ensuring trees are replanted or regenerate after tree felling. The Commission have inspected and support the work Croydon has been doing and in addition there is the added assurance of Croydon being certified under the UK Woodland Assurance Scheme, which provides additional and independent verification that the woodlands are being managed sustainably and legally.

Sustainable woodland management is based on long term planning. Neglect and under management of woodland is a national issue and long term scientific research, such as the Bunce Report highlights the need to manage woodlands positively to help increase their biodiversity value. Creating a diverse range of tree species and ages, as well as a good level of ground vegetation and open space, not only increases biodiversity but the woodlands resilience to threats such as climate change and pests/diseases are increased. Therefore active woodland management ensures the woodlands of Croydon can be enjoyed now and by future generations

Croydon have been carrying out an active sustainable woodland management programme for many years and for the reasons mentioned above, are leading the way in London.

From Ms Susan Bennett

Councillor Tim Pollard

Deputy Leader and Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning

Question No.

PQ098-13

Would Cllr Pollard like to comment on the fact that Harris South Norwood has been invited to join the Mayor of London's Gold Club a group of the most effective schools in London and that the school received a letter of congratulation from the Minister of Education for their outstanding results.

Reply

I would like to congratulate the staff and students at Harris Academy South Norwood for their great achievement of admission to the Mayor of London's Gold Club, established to celebrate the success of schools across the capital that are succeeding in enabling the achievement of all pupils, especially those who are most disadvantaged, are in receipt of the Pupil Premium Grant or who have low starting points in their education.

Two schools within Croydon, Harris Academy South Norwood and Beaumont Primary School, were admitted to the club based on 2012 pupil outcomes; further members of the club are due to be announced next term based on 2013 test and examination results.

Those schools which have now joined the scheme will receive the recognition of the Mayor and their peers at his annual education conference on 22 November 2013 at City Hall.

I look forward to hearing of further successes for Croydon's schools and young people and wish the staff and students at Harris Academy South Norwood continued success.

From Mr Paul Sowan

Councillor Tim Pollard

Cabinet Member for Children, Families and Learning

Question No.

PQ099-13

As the Council has failed to keep proper records of the Riesco Collection, especially relating to the circumstances and date(s) of the loss of 128 of the 650 pieces, does it now have a complete and continuously updated register of its assets in its museum, local studies library and archives?

Reply

The historic collections owned by or on loan/deposit to the council are documented in a collections management system (called CALM), which is compliant with the expectations of the museum and archives sector. The museum collections, due to the more consolidated nature of the museum collections, are completely catalogued.

From Mr John Cartwright

Councillor Simon Hoar

Cabinet Member for Community safety and Public Protection

Question No.

PQ100-13

I have sometimes noticed people in North End selling children's helium balloons. Do they need a licence for selling such items? How are they regulated or controlled?

Reply

Selling of goods on the highway is classified as street trading and traders are required to hold a street trading licence that is issued by the Council.

In the case of street trading activities in North End, the allocation of pitches is determined by the Croydon Business Improvement District. If a pitch becomes available, traders are then required to obtain a temporary street trading licence from the Council.

Street trading without a licence is an offence and offenders can be prosecuted.