

## Council Questions and Response - 15 December 2020

### Questions from Members

Responses were given verbally at Council to the following:

Question	From/ To	Response
<p><b><u>Lib Dem A</u></b>            The UK is expected to end its Brexit transition period at the end of the year. Regardless of your view on leaving the EU, it is widely accepted that this will mean the British economy takes a hit, certainly in the short-term. Given the Council's finances are already under a great deal of stress from the Covid-19 pandemic, what is our readiness for the end of the transition period?</p>	<p><b>From:</b> Cllr Sharon Young  <b>To:</b> Cllr Caroline Kerr</p>	<p>You are quite right this is a very serious situation. Covid-19 has already affected the lives of our residents and as we approach a no deal with the European Union I fear that this government's incompetence will not serve us well.</p> <p>This week the Prime Minister announced that a no deal was very very likely. Our businesses have been given virtually no time at all to adapt to a new trading arrangement and even now they do not know if there will be a deal or there will not be a deal. We should not be in this situation.</p> <p>Locally, of course, the Covid response has taken precedence over planning for the EU exit and it is only now that officers have focused on brexit again. Covid-19 remains all encompassing and is still a major focus of effort, particularly in the second wave. The Council's Brexit plans and the risk register written prior to Covid have been adapted and updated and we have of course been supporting EU migrants with the settlement scheme and looking at what can be done to prepare and support our communities.</p> <p>The impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit with a no deal would be potentially very significant and felt across the whole country as well as across this Council and this borough.</p>

	<p>We are anticipating the same short term risks as before including shortages of potentially food, fuel and medical supplies; Pressures on trading standards and environmental health teams; Settlement status of residents and disruption to transport, but the lack of clarity between a no deal or deal is making the Brexit planning extremely difficult in terms of income generation and spend within the Council.</p> <p>We do have a contingency budget for unforeseen Brexit financial pressures and this currently stands at £445k. The Council also holds reserves to mitigate risks from Covid, Brexit and also other potential occurrences. This will be reviewed as part of the year end process.</p> <p>The difficulties lie with the medium and long terms where the implications of Brexit are unknown and therefore difficult to plan for. For our own retail sector in Kingston the combined impacts of Covid-19 and Brexit will leave them even more susceptible to economic decline. In turn this will have a further direct impact on the Council with our collection of local business rates. I recently met with Kingston's strategic partners and everyone there was exhausted by months of dealing with Covid. The impression I had was that very few people had the energy left to fight a man made disaster, something that really did not need to happen and certainly nobody needs right now.</p> <p>Kingston First updated that businesses do not have Brexit as a priority because they are getting through 2020. The Chamber of Commerce outlined results from the last Brexit survey carried out in 2019 in which the main concern for business was data and among hospitality and catering businesses a concern by the number of staff leaving. So all in all we are in the Council doing all we can to prepare for Brexit but we wish it wasn't happening and we particularly wish that whilst we are dealing with one crisis we are not having to brace ourselves for a second.</p>
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<p><b><u>Lib Dem B</u></b> What progress is the Council making on building desperately needed council homes for our residents?</p>	<p><b>From:</b> Cllr Steph Archer <b>To:</b> Cllr Emily Davey</p>	<p>The Council is committed to delivering the borough's first new build Council homes for over 30 years. In November, a significant milestone was achieved when the Development Control Committee approved plans for the first 60 homes in the programme, all of which will be available for low-cost rent. A further 41 homes have been approved by the Development Control Committee in December 2020 bringing us to 101 new affordable homes. Work on the new homes is due to commence in Spring 2021 and aim to be completed by early 2023.</p> <p>As members will also be aware, The Cambridge Road (RBK) LLP, a joint venture between RB Kingston and Countryside Properties UK Ltd, submitted a planning application for the redevelopment of Cambridge Road Estate on 13 November 2020. The Planning application is for 2,170 new homes of which 867 will be council homes. The proposals are that 767 of these will be council homes (an increase of 92 from the 675 rented homes currently on the estate) and the remaining 100 homes will be for shared equity. The first phase, currently forecast to start next year, includes 150 homes for council rent.</p>
<p><b><u>Lib Dem D</u></b> How will residents experience, when interacting with the Council, be enhanced as a result of the recent launch of our new website</p>	<p><b>From:</b> Cllr Kim Bailey <b>To:</b> Cllr Tim Cobbett</p>	<p>The fact that we have been really able to move on with our digital offer to residents is really timely because obviously this is a year where we have all spent a bit more of our lives engaged digitally than we might have planned to and as much as there are times where we want really deep engagement with residents and we want them to help and come up with ideas for co-designing projects, the reality is that a lot of the time when people come onto our website they are simply trying to get a problem sorted out or find out information about one of our services and people don't want to spend a long time on our site they want to get the answer and get the issue sorted out as quickly and painless as possible.</p> <p>I hope that what we have done goes a long way to that and it has also been significantly shaped by resident feedback that we have had very much in the initial stage with the workshops around how people wanted to use the website and what they wanted to see. More recently we have done the</p>

		<p>user testing to see what works and to make the final tweaks and changes. So I think in terms of the website itself it is very much about the navigation through the website, the terminology that we use and using language that most people would describe things as rather than the Council speak you may otherwise see on such sites. We have also done a lot of work around the search so that you more quickly get to the result that you are looking for so our Kingston results appear higher up in the search engines that they did previously and we rationalised the content and got rid of some of the content that was in the way of doing that. It is not just around the site itself but it is also when you undertake a transaction with the Council and how much easier it is and we still have work to do but in a couple of key areas we have come up with new forms and processes around how you deal with registration services when reporting a birth or a death or a marriage or if you see a fight on the street and you want to report it reporting fight. It's about reducing the number of steps and making it quicker about getting a report to the people that can sort out the problem and that triggering an update for you so you can see if someone else has reported it and you can see what is happening with the issue you have reported.</p> <p>I think these are the kinds of things that are the day to day interaction that our residents have with us and we still have got more to do but I hope this is going some way to us catching up with the era we are living in and making that an easier process for residents to engage with us.</p>
<p><b><u>Conservative A</u></b> What is the point of the Opposition asking questions at Full Council when the Administration never answer them?</p>	<p><b>From:</b> Cllr Kevin Davis <b>To:</b> Cllr Caroline Kerr</p>	<p>I was surprised when I saw your question and I went through the records and over the course of this year since I have been Leader the opposition has asked 22 questions and they have all received full answers. It is true that for two full Council's you didn't ask any questions but that is your right but I am not quite sure why you feel you haven't received responses.</p>
<p><b><u>Green A</u></b></p>	<p><b>From:</b> Cllr</p>	<p>The preparation of a new Local Plan for the borough is to provide Kingston with an up to date</p>

<p>Given all the behind scenes lobbying on behalf of the Hook Park Village in Chessingtons Green Belt will Cllr Moll - on behalf of the administration - stand by both the Liberal Democrats Manifesto commitment and the more recent Appraisal of Kingston Greenbelt (where it states this parcel of land is still contributing to Kingston Greenbelt) and prevent any development on Chessington greenbelt.</p>	<p>Falchikov-Su mner <b>To:</b> Cllr Rebekah Moll</p>	<p>planning policy framework. A position which will enable DCC decision making to take place within a robust policy context. The plan will also identify the available development sites that will come forward which meet the (intend to publish) new London Plan requirement of 964 housing units per-annum. We are confident that the sites identified can meet the borough’s housing requirement without any need to consider the Green Belt sites which have been put forward for allocation as part of the 2016 Call for Sites process.</p> <p>Hypothetically, should the housing requirement for the borough increase beyond the numbers currently required and only if a shortfall is identified, the circumstances may necessitate a strategic review of the boroughs Green Belt. Were the borough to find itself in this position, such a review would have to demonstrate the suitability of any sites put forward against the 5 purposes of the Green Belt through objective assessment. Irrespective of this however, any proposition to develop a site within the Green Belt would be required to meet the National Planning Policy Framework’s stringent test of 'very special circumstances'.</p>
<p><b><u>Public A</u></b> The condition of Broad Oaks in Tolworth is appalling, we don't get recycling taken, the road is so dangerously rutted, nothing is done about the catastrophic fly tipping and cars fly down there a ridiculous speeds. How are the council going to help the residents who live down</p>	<p><b>From:</b> Megan Taylor <b>To:</b> Cllr Hilary Gander</p>	<p>Unfortunately, there have been ongoing issues with the recycling bins being heavily contaminated at this location and the recycling bins are emptied as refuse, due to the bins being filled with non-recyclable items. So the council has removed the recycling bins as a temporary measure. However, in Spring 2021 the flats-above-shops recycling bags service will be rolled out. This service will be better suited to the properties here; residents will be provided with single-use sacks that they only need to place out on collection day, which will help to reduce contamination and ensure that the contents are recycled.</p> <p>Regarding the flytipping and speeding, Broad Oaks is not public highway - the road is owned by the individual landlords of the buildings facing out onto the Broadway (not necessarily the shops), each owns a strip of land behind so it is a private road and the condition of the road and speeding</p>

there who feel forgotten and unhelped by the council?

issues are outside of the council’s jurisdiction.

Councillors and council officers including our neighbourhood rangers have worked with businesses and residents since 2013, the Broad Oaks Action Group was formed in 2016, and they all arrange an annual clean-up, paid for out of councillors’ ward funding. Unfortunately, this year had to be cancelled due to Covid-19. And during Lockdown fly tipping here increased; the council managed to get the landowners to clear up in some cases; Broad Oaks Action Group paid to clear a large fly tip with the support of the councillors.

Broadoaks Action Group has raised funds through crowdfunding to buy equipment for the clean-ups and to pay for disposal of the fly tipping. Some businesses have CCTV and have agreed to direct them onto Broadoaks to help against the fly tippers, which was how one was caught a few months ago and successfully fined: in October 2020, a £400 fixed penalty notice was issued. Another investigation is ongoing.

Councillors have met with residents on numerous occasions over the years. The members of the Group have visited and spoken to all the businesses about taking collective responsibility and supporting resolving the issues. Most of the businesses have not shown interest nor contributed funds to help with resolving the issues and the clean-up. Installing CCTV cameras, signages, making it one way and installing barriers are some of the ideas being looked at and discussed at meetings between officers and residents. It cannot be achieved without the permission of the landowners and the business owners. Tracing and getting responses from the land owners has proved difficult. Finding a permanent solution can only be achieved if the landowners, residents and businesses take ownership and support the councillors and Broad Oaks Action Group.

<p><b><u>Public B</u></b> When is the multiple occupancy 'Kupe' barge/boat mooring along the Queen's Promenade leaving permanently?</p>	<p><b>From:</b> Janet Brannigan-Croggon <b>To: Cllr John Sweeney</b></p>	<p>The Council does not have bylaws to regulate the use of its moorings, although there is legislation unique to Kingston that can be used to remove unlawfully moored boats after the service of a notice. This is effective for unoccupied boats, but has proved ineffective where boats are occupied. There are numerous itinerant vessels that moor unlawfully along the river bank or overstay on the 24 hour moorings. The owners of these boats can be issued with an enforcement notice requiring them to move on within 28 days. Typically, owners move on or move just before the end of the period, but often return shortly after and currently if they return, to another Council mooring in the Borough, the process starts again and a fresh notice has to be served giving another period of 28-days. Where these boats are occupied as in the case of KUPE the council has been legally advised to apply for an injunction to require removal of the boat and to prevent its return. An application to the court for a possession order and injunction on October 19 2020 was not granted but the council was invited to resubmit its application and we are awaiting dates for the injunction to be heard. This is unlikely to be before February 2021. If successful it would mean that the boat could not moor on Kingston Council land.</p>
<p><b><u>Public C</u></b> On behalf of some residents Parking is a major problem on the Alpha Road Estate It's used as a car park for Surbiton Station and Berrylands Surgery. And some of shops on Ewell Road. Residents need to park here not 1 mile away. Resident parking bays are constantly full but most of</p>	<p><b>From:</b> Mary Parmar <b>To:</b> Cllr Emily Davey</p>	<p>It is recognised that parking on the council's estates as with other areas around London is becoming more difficult with the ever growing levels of car ownership. In order to tackle this problem on RBK council housing estates, a parking review on all of the council's housing estates, including the Alpha Road Estate is planned for 2021. The review will explore ways in which the problem of inappropriate parking can be managed and thereby ease the inconvenience experienced by residents on the estates.</p> <p>There is currently a PPA in Browns Rd, Warwick Grove, Alpha Rd &amp; Britannia Rd, all of which form part of the Alpha Road estate. If resident bays are full of 'non residents' then I suspect this occurs outside of the time of enforcement (11am-2pm Mon-Fri). The hours could be extended and rolled out to other roads on the estate however it is worth noting that many road here have their own off street parking (town houses in The Retreat, Smith Street &amp; Howard Rd) and placing further bays</p>

<p>time not by residents. Drop Curbs are also now used for parking so wheelchair, mobility scooters and parents with buggies walk on the road. Parking meters like Holyfield Road are needed, or a charge for parking. Some flats/houses have 3 or 4 cars.</p>		<p>could be difficult. The main issue appears to be for residents living in flats situated mainly in the middle of the estate where there is currently only limited parking provided by way of either underground car parking garages or small car parks (not currently controlled by Parking &amp; on housing land).</p>
<p><b>Public D</b> Recently it was anti-bullying week. In neighbouring Sutton, the Council have adopted the Anti-Bullying Alliance Pledge which a majority of Councillors have signed up to. The pledge reads: "I back the Anti-Bullying Alliance and pledge to "Choose Respect", reject bullying and lead by example in my actions and interactions as a councillor." Signatories believe in the Anti-Bullying Alliance which</p>	<p><b>From:</b> James Giles <b>To:</b> Cllr Caroline Kerr</p>	<p>This Council is vehemently opposed to bullying in any shape or form and the Anti-Bullying Alliance is a great organisation set up by the NSPCC and the Children’s Bureau to raise the profile of the effect of bullying on children. I am very glad to see that eight of our schools are signed up and indeed that all of our schools have their own anti-bullying policy.</p> <p>We fully support anti-bullying initiatives and for this reason our Members’ Code of Conduct, which every Councillor is bound to comply with, already contains provisions regarding bullying.</p> <p>The Local Government Association is preparing a new draft model Code of Conduct which will place Members under a specific obligation not to bully or harass another person and specifically sets out a range of behaviors which may be amount to bullying or harassment</p> <p>The Councils’ Audit, Governance and Standards Committee has also indicated its support and it would be my expectation and hope that when the model code is confirmed the Council will adopt these provisions in full. Individual members are of course welcome to sign the alliance’s pledge but it is the adoption of the new code that will formally incorporate anti-bullying standards into our governance arrangements and this is much more meaningful as it will ensure that sanctions are available where there is any breach of those standards.</p>

<p>means they: - believe bullying in any form is wrong and should not be tolerated, and that any environment that encourages bullying, or shows indifference to prejudice and discrimination is unacceptable; - believe bullying is a behaviour choice and that anyone can be encouraged to change their behaviour; - support a range of positive strategies to deal with bullying and actively challenge the use of humiliation, fear, ridicule and other similar approaches in an effort to reduce bullying; and - believe that people should be treated with respect and courtesy. Will Kingston Council formally support the Anti-Bullying Alliance, and formally ask all Councillors to 'choose respect' and sign the</p>		<p>And I would just like to add that we know bullying takes many forms and I for one would consider cyber bullying to be just as serious as any other form of bullying.</p>
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<p>pledge?</p>		
<p><b>Public F</b>          What can the Council do to ensure that children and young people with SEND receive information in a format they understand and that everyone working with them understands and supports their individual communication needs?</p>	<p><b>From:</b> Kirsty   <b>To:</b> Cllr Diane White</p>	<p>Thank you very much Kirsty,</p> <p>Thank you so much for coming along tonight Kirsty and thank you for the beautiful and informative film which really showed so well the challenges that some young people face. It's incredibly important that our children and young people with special educational needs and disabilities are able to access all information in a manner that is meaningful for them and we take that so seriously.</p> <p>I like to think that there is some progress. The Young People's Easy Info Group brings its expertise to help us create accessible communications, including the use of different formats such as symbols. We have also developed individual profiles for children and young people with more complex communication needs. So it's all around their understanding and specific to them and the best way forward the young person has suggested they need help.</p> <p>We use our Recruits Crew to test potential new employees' skills in communicating with young people, but we recognise that we need to continue to train all of our staff in accessible communication, so that they understand and are able to support the individual communication needs of the young people they work with.</p>