

Reigate and Banstead Borough Council
Meeting of Council 30 March 2023
Questions by Members

	Question by	Answered by	Subject
1.	Councillor (James) King	Councillor Ashford, Executive Member for Community Partnerships	Antisocial Behaviour
2.	Councillor Booton	Councillor Lewanski, Executive Member for Corporate Policy & Resources	EV charging rollout
3.	Councillor Ritter	Councillor Schofield, Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance & Governance	Voter ID
4.	Councillor Essex	Councillor Archer, Executive Member for Investment & Companies	Cafes in Redhill and Reigate Parks
5.	Councillor Chandler	Councillor Archer, Executive Member Investment & Companies	Single Use Plastics
6.	Councillor Proudfoot	Councillor Brunt, the Leader of the Council, on behalf of Councillor Sachdeva, the Executive Member for Leisure & Culture	Promotion of the arts
7.	Councillor Sinden	Councillor Mrs Bramall, Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services	Commercial Recycling Services
Written response given after the meeting			
8.	Councillor (James) King	Councillor Biggs, Executive Member for Planning Policy & Place Delivery	Woodhatch Road/A217/Prices Lane Junction and Road Maintenance

Councillor (James) King asked the **Executive Member for Community Partnerships, Councillor Ashford** the following question:

Question 1: Antisocial Behaviour

Recently there has been an increase in antisocial behaviour in South Park and Woodhatch where both graffiti and vandalism to private property are causing residents to have safety concerns and costing them significant amounts of money at a time when many cannot afford it.

Could the portfolio holder for community safety explain how this council is currently working with the police to prevent this from happening, and what more can be done by the Joint Enforcement Team and Joint Action Group?

Response

Thank you, Councillor King.

There is currently a prolific increase in graffiti from a particular group of taggers which goes beyond South Park and Woodhatch. The Joint Enforcement Team (JET) are not able to prevent this from happening however they do attend each site, photograph and report the details to Surrey Police prior to actioning a clean-up from the Street Cleansing team.

JET is able to report into the Joint Action Group (JAG) with photographs and intelligence of locations and evidence. The Street Cleansing Team remove graffiti from public realm areas within 24hrs if offensive and within 2 weeks in other cases. Graffiti on private property is the responsibility of the owner to remove.

With regards to vandalism, this is criminal damage which is a matter for the Police. It is extremely important for residents whose property has been damaged to report such incidents to the Police either online or via the 101 telephone reporting line. Reported crimes receive a reference number which can be referred to as well as building intelligence about the type of crimes and the specific areas where crimes are being perpetrated.

From a community safety perspective, it's vitally important that residents do not confront those engaging in crime but call 999 to report a crime is in progress.

Our Community Safety team work closely with the Police to share intelligence about specific areas where crime is taking place through the Joint Action Group or about specific individuals whose behaviour is impacting on the community through the Community Harm and Risk Management Meeting (CHARMM).

Where incidents have been reported, the recently re-named "anti-social behaviour case review", formerly known as the community trigger, gives victims of persistent antisocial behaviour, reported to any of the main responsible agencies, the right to request a multi-agency case review.

No supplementary question was forthcoming.

Councillor Booton asked the **Executive Member for Corporate Policy and Resources, Councillor Lewanski**, the following question:

Question 2: EV charging rollout

The government has a target of installing 300,000 EV charge points by 2030. To aid this the government has rolled out several funding schemes. Current latest records show that nationally we are just 12% towards reaching the 300,000 target. Does this authority have a charge point strategy in place either for our Borough or through working with the County Council and if not, by when will one be in place? What work is being done in conjunction with the County Council to access funding for the borough to increase the number of EV charging points?

Response

Thank you, Councillor Booton.

The Government target you mention relates to public EV charging points.

It is important to be aware of the different areas of responsibility in a two-tier area such as Surrey.

Districts and Boroughs have the opportunity to install 'off street' public EV charging points on their own land.

In Reigate & Banstead specifically, we have a commitment in our Environmental Sustainability Strategy to install more charging points in our car parks and across Council-owned assets.

To date we have 7 public charging points in our car parks with more being planned. In terms of our ongoing strategy, last year we commissioned the Energy Saving Trust to recommend priority locations for future charging point installation across our network of car parks – this will inform our future activity.

When it comes to charging points located 'on street', Surrey County Council is the Highway Authority, and therefore has responsibility of the provision of these.

You may have seen the press release last week from Surrey County Council announcing that it has agreed a contract with Connected Kerb to enable £60 million worth of investment to provide public charge points across Surrey. This will include Reigate & Banstead borough.

I can confirm that Borough Council Officers are already working closely with the County Council on EV charging infrastructure, including in the following areas:

Firstly, to inform development of an overall rollout plan for on-street charging points across the County.

Secondly, to consider whether Reigate & Banstead should enter into a partnership with Surrey County Council and Connected Kerb to install further EV charging points on our land. I should stress that this only one of a number of future delivery options open to us, and we have taken no decision yet in relation to future partnership working

with Connected Kerb.

Thirdly, to inform the upper tier authority's bid to the Government's Local Electric Vehicle Infrastructure (or LEVI) fund. This includes the LEVI capability fund which is currently open for bids, and the forthcoming LEVI capital fund.

Supplementary Question

Surrey County Council has put out a call to arms to residents to input into the interactive map indicating where they would like potential future EV charging points. What can this Council do to help raise resident awareness and get residents to respond to this request?

Supplementary Response

The Council is constantly looking at how our Environmental Sustainability Strategy is communicated to our residents. As already highlighted, this Council is already working closely with Surrey County Council and will apply all its comments to our strategy.

Councillor Ritter asked the **Deputy Leader and Executive Member for Finance & Resources, Councillor Schofield**, the following question:

Question 3: Voter ID

At a time when voter turnout for local elections in RBBC was as low as 29% in one ward last year and voters need to be encouraged to partake in democracy. Voter ID is the biggest change to the electoral process in decades, and it will affect voters in polling stations at the upcoming elections on 4th May.

It is therefore important that we have assurances that voters aren't being disenfranchised by this significant change. With that in mind, will the Returning Officer be gathering data on how many people are unable to vote at polling stations due to not having appropriate ID so that this data can be fed back to national government?

Response

Cllr Schofield:

Thank you, Councillor Ritter. I will ask the Returning Officer, Mari Roberts-Wood, to provide an answer to your question.

Mari Roberts-Wood:

Thank you Councillor Ritter and Councillor Schofield.

As the Returning Officer, one of my responsibilities is to encourage participation in elections, and so I fully support your points.

Last year the aggregate turnout for the borough was 35%, which is 2% higher than the national average last year. However, we can always do more, and with the introduction of Voter ID we need to do more than ever.

As you'll know from the last Council meeting, we've been busy informing voters about how they can vote at the elections on 4 May this year. However, we also need to measure how this affects voters in the polling station.

With that in mind, we will also be collecting data about the impact of Voter ID at polling stations, which will be sent to the Electoral Commission for their national report, which is expected to be published around November 2023. This data will include numbers of voters who:

- are refused a ballot paper due to suspected forgery or personation or they failed to answer the statutory questions;
- show the wrong ID, or don't have any ID with them;
- asked to show their identification in private;
- were refused a ballot paper but returned with a valid photo ID and voted –

and other information, such as the number of Voter Authority Certificates and Anonymous Elector's documents were presented by voters in polling stations.

Thank you.

Supplementary Question

I have received feedback from residents expressing their concern about their being required to provide ID to be able to vote. Does the category of 'anonymous voter' allow those who ask not to show their ID to be counted?

Supplementary Response (Mari Roberts-Wood, Returning Officer)

All activity in polling stations is recorded. However, this will be enhanced this year including recording the number of voters who ask not to show their ID and the reason why.

Councillor Essex asked the **Executive Member for Investment & Companies, Councillor Archer**, the following question:

Question 4: Cafes in Redhill and Reigate Parks

Please can you confirm when the cafes in Reigate Priory Park and Redhill Memorial Park will be reopened.

Response

Thank you, Councillor Essex.

The café in Reigate Priory Park is currently being marketed by an external agent and while we have received an encouraging level of interest it is currently too early to state an opening date for the pavilion. Viewings will proceed with prospective tenants and offers will be reviewed to ensure it meets our criteria on an exceptional catering offering for users and its financial benefits. Ideally we would like to have an operator appointed and opening prior to the summer holiday period but this subject to the offers we receive and subsequent level of tenant fit out works.

With regard to Redhill Memorial Park, The Property team have requested expressions of interest from prospective tenants and these will be supported by business plans for our review. For the reasons noted above a date cannot be confirmed at this stage but again the aim will be prior to the summer holidays.

Whilst we work on securing a tenant for priory pavilion, we will be installing a temporary food and drink offering within the park to service its users. The offering will provide hot and cold drinks as well as a mixed food service. We have received expressions of interest from a number of operators however only 4 can provide a daily service. The options are being considered by officers and will be assessed by the offering, financials including turnover rent, and the "look"/branding. The temporary provision will be by way of a mobile unit and will not operate from the demise of the pavilion. The appointment of the mobile operator will be made by 7th April. It is not proposed to provide a mobile option at Memorial Park Redhill.

Note: Public conveniences will remain open throughout.

RBBC works in conjunction with the above we are undertaking the following improvements:

- Essential works to improve the mains drainage
- Strip out of all equipment, fixtures and fittings
- Segregation of the public conveniences from the commercial demise
- Seeking planning advice on the potential installation of PV solar panels
- Essential repairs to the roof

All works are pre budgeted in the property capital programme.

Supplementary Question

Please can it be confirmed whether there will be a mobile/temporary food offering in other parks before the Summer and if the toilets in all three parks will be open in time for the Easter holidays.

Supplementary Response

Public toilets remain open because we realise how important such facilities are to our residents. Unfortunately, the Council has not been able to get a provider to offer a mobile/temporary food offer in the other parks before the Summer. The Council has sought expressions of interest for the other parks on a temporary/interim basis but has not been able to find a suitable operator willing to take it on despite being open to anyone who wishes to express interest.

Councillor Chandler asked the **Executive Member for Investment & Companies, Councillor Archer**, the following question:

Question 5: Single Use Plastics

In light of the Council's public commitment to avoid Single Use Plastic please can you confirm that the catering premises contracted by the Council are committed to avoid the use of non-recyclable packaging.

Response

Thank you, Councillor Chandler.

In relation to the parks cafes, yes I can confirm that any incoming tenant will be subject to meeting our sustainability requirements and this will form part of the criteria for the tender scoring exercise. In addition to the pavilion offering we will promote the use of the water fountain adjacent to the playground.

Note: While some measures were initiated to reduce the use of single use plastics by the previous operator Pistachios, we believe these to be inconsistent and we are without data to evidence this.

In terms of our wider catering provision:

Harlequin statement:

- We have stopped the use of SUP at the café in favour of reusable HQ branded cups. The water machine still has SUP as an option for users

Day Centres statement:

- In relation to the catering offering (including event catering) at the Community Centres, we only uses glass or reusable materials. We occasionally use single use plastics for our activities, such as balloons and tablecloths. A priority for 23/24 is for the team to assess the waste produced by the centre and its offering and reduce unrecyclable materials further

Our leisure centres are operated by GLL so we will need to obtain an update from them directly.

Supplementary Question

Several Council owned premises have been mentioned as already having managed to move packaging towards sustainable objectives. Would this be true for all Council premises?

Supplementary Response

This is correct as I have explained. However, it is not possible to give a full answer with regard to the Council's leisure centres which are operated by GLL.

Councillor Proudfoot asked the **Leader of the Council, Councillor Brunt**, on behalf of the **Executive Member for Leisure & Culture, Councillor Sachdeva**, the following question:

Question 6: Promotion of the Arts

With the arrival of a newly appointed Arts Development Officer at the Council I would like to ask if there could be greater provision of noticeboards on the High Streets of our towns. It would be an inexpensive means to amplify publicity for the activities of our very popular cultural societies. I for one would like to say that the 132 year old Redhill Sinfonia continues to be a cornerstone of my life and that the recognition by the Guinness Book of Records of my fellow Viola player, Anne Miller, for her 70 years world record of continuous playing is a significant contribution to the life of this Borough. Publicity is hard to achieve in the modern age with the demise of a newspaper culture and it is certain that noticeboards would make a major difference.

Response

Thank you for your question, Councillor Proudfoot.

We are really excited about the introduction of the Arts Development post, which is being funded through a partnership with Surrey Heartlands.

This new post has been created to deliver targeted support for residents which improve their wellbeing and reduce their need for health, social care or other public/voluntary sector support. They will be responsible for developing and increasing and facilitating new creative and artistic opportunities for local people to engage and participate in.

Promotion of these activities, is, of course, critical, as is ensuring the rich variety of arts opportunities which already exist in the Borough – including the globally reknown Redhill Sinfonia - are shared with residents. There are many ways in which we can achieve this, which includes the use of high street notice boards. A particularly prominent one being the one in Reigate managed by the Harlequin. The installation of additional notice boards does not fall within the remit of the Leisure & Culture portfolio, but I would encourage you, and other societies, to make contact with our Leisure Development team to discuss ways that we could help with the local promotion of the arts. Local community boards and to make use of CIL funding. A good way to fund fixing their disrepair.

I would like to extend my personal congratulations to Ms Miller - her contribution to the arts in the Borough over the last 71 years is a remarkable achievement, and an excellent example of the way that the arts can positively impact the lives of people who engage with them. We continue to encourage residents to participate in the arts.

No supplementary question was forthcoming.

Councillor Sinden asked the **Executive Member for Neighbourhood Services, Councillor Mrs Bramhall**, the following question:

Question 7: Commercial Recycling Services

I am aware that the Council offers a charged service to collect recycling from local businesses. In these financially hard times would the council please consider reducing costs for charities and public sector organisations whom we collect rubbish from, including the NHS.

Response

Thank you, Councillor Sinden.

The Council's trade waste collections are operated as a commercial service. Collections are offered at very competitive rates and prices have not increased for 6 years.

Councillor Sinden will be aware that disposal costs for commercial waste, charged by SCC, have risen significantly this year and will further rise in 23/24 impacting on costs incurred and income generated.

We currently charge for commercial waste in line with SCC and Government legislation offering a reduced rate for publicly funded schools and local charities.

We do not charge VAT to any of our customers in the Borough.

We have only 3 out of a total of circa 600 customers that would fall into the NHS classification.

The NHS tend to procure waste collection services via regional contracts with larger providers, with many requiring specialist contractors due to the nature of the waste generated.

Furthermore, we offer financial and other support to charities across the Borough in a variety of ways.

Supplementary Question

I realise that the NHS waste is treated differently but would it be possible for the cardboard waste generate to be sectioned off?

Supplementary Response

I will consult with my Head of Service and respond.

Supplementary Response provide following the meeting

Due to the fact that the Trade Waste service is a revenue generating business, it would not be financially prudent to reduce the level of income we receive.

We run a very small business, our business model would not fit the requirement of large scale organisations, such as the NHS.

It's likely that the NHS's waste contracts are managed either regionally or centrally.

WRITTEN RESPONSES PROVIDED AFTER THE MEETING

Councillor (James) King asked the **Executive Member for Planning Policy & Place Delivery, Councillor Biggs**, the following question:

Question 8: Woodhatch Road/A217/Prices Lane Junction and Road Maintenance

Surrey County Council has carried out some repairs to the Woodhatch Road/A217/Prices Lane Junction.

However, further much needed repairs are awaiting UK Power Networks to do some underground cabling work.

With respect to this junction, will the Portfolio Holder and the Borough Council please work with Surrey County Council to both encourage and ensure that UK Power Networks proceed as soon as possible with their planned works in this area? For example, could the Council please write UK Power Networks to urge a date to be put on these works.

Response

Thank you for bringing this issue to my attention Cllr King,

Unfortunately, the Borough Council does not manage the highways network, including when utility companies undertake works, for this is a County Council function.

However, I do appreciate your concerns and to that end, I will be writing to the County Council about the proposed works to this very important and busy junction.

I am particularly keen, like I am sure you will be, to ensure that any works are undertaken in a timely manner and at an appropriate time of the year, such as school holidays, to minimise the disruption to our residents and businesses.

Moving forward the Borough Council will continue to work with Surrey County Council to bring forward a major scheme, like we are doing at Three Arch, which eases the major congestion that occurs and helps to reduce the number of accidents.